



# THE SCRIBLERIAN

(Spring 2015) Edition

Sponsored by the English Department and the Braithwaite Writing Center, the Scriblerian is a writing contest and on-line journal for students by students. Revived during Fall Semester 2004 after a two-year hiatus, the essay competition is organized each semester by Writing Center tutors for ENGL 1010 and 2010 students. Winning essays are published on-line on the English Department website and past winners were also published in the print textbook SUU Guide to English Composition 2010-2011. The Spring 2015 Scriblerian Contest was planned and supervised by Chair Chris Christiansen with the help of Heather Gonzales, Allison Borzoni, Christine Casper, Shannon Sheppard, Hannah Ouderkirk, Kali Gillies, Payton Yerke, and Gardner Stevenett. A total of 30 essays were submitted for the contest.

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## Argumentative- English 1010

1st Place Winner: Amy Andre, "Feminism in Shakespeare"  
For Professor Joy Sterrantino

Many of Shakespeare's plays contain cross-dressing, with either a man dressing as a woman or a woman dressing as a man. In all, about one fifth of Shakespeare's thirtyeight known plays contain gender disguises. The effect of this gender confusion was certainly enhanced by the fact that during Elizabethan times, women's roles were played by young male actors. While no one can know why Shakespeare was so intrigued by the idea of cross dressing, there seem to be two general theories: Either Shakespeare enjoyed the comedic element of a man dressing up as a woman dressing up as a man, or he was secretly a feminist. While the humor of the situation can't be ignored, the fact that many of Shakespeare's female protagonists are strong, intelligent, capable women who go against the grain suggests that he was the 16th century equivalent of a feminist.

William Shakespeare wrote during the Elizabethan Era, otherwise known as the "Golden Age." This time was a brief period of peace in England and because the citizenry wasn't focused on fighting wars, theater, art and music flourished. Women had specific roles. Girls who were in noble families were highly educated and taught by the older women in their house, yet they were not allowed to enter into professions. Women were expected to be housewives and teach and care for their children. In families, everything was passed down to the sons, and girls were married off to men that their fathers picked. Ironically, the only exception to these rules of succession was the royal crown, which could be passed to a daughter. Because the Queen was a woman, she encouraged fathers to educate their daughters and hoped that all men would strive to educate the women in their lives.

Shakespeare seized the idea of intelligent, capable women and seemed to recognize that societal restrictions were not always fair. He used the device of crossdressing to show that many women are actually as competent as men. Some examples of female Shakespeare characters who spend much of the play as men are: Viola in Twelfth Night, Portia in The Merchant of Venice, Julia in The Two Gentlemen of Verona and Rosalind in As You Like It. In each of these plays, the women dressed as men so that they could perform a task that they would not normally be able to do as a woman.

In Twelfth Night, Viola dresses as her twin brother after they lose each other at sea. It was very dangerous for a woman to be on her own, so Viola dresses as her brother to enable her find work and provide for herself. She continued her deception because she fell in love with Duke Orsino and wanted to stay close to him. Dressing as a boy seems to embolden Viola, and allows both her and the Duke to show their true characters as they fall in love.

In The Merchant of Venice, Portia dresses as a man so she can travel to Venice and enter the courtroom as a lawyer to save her husband's best friend, Antonio. While this is a courageous move, Portia's assumption of a male identity also transforms her and allows her to take control of her own destiny. She starts out as a woman who is controlled by her late father's wishes, but by the end of the play, has taken control of her own destiny by testing Bassanio's fidelity to her.

Julia first dresses as Sebastian in The Two Gentlemen of Verona so she can safely travel by herself to Milan to follow the love of her life, Proteus, who was set to Milan to study. But then instead of revealing

her identity when she arrives, she takes a job as the pageboy for her lover Proteus. Similar to Portia, she enjoys the freedom to play a role she never could as a woman, and the measure of control she gains over her life by pretending to be a man. By pretending to be a pageboy, she gets to have a job that she would have been ineligible for as a woman, and thereby has control over the situation of her lover pursuing another woman because of his father.

The comedy of gender confusion is most evident in *As You Like It*, where Rosalind runs away to the forest to get away from Duke Frederick. Because it is scary to be alone on a journey through a forest, especially as a girl, she decides to disguise herself as a man named Ganymede. She then falls in love with Orlando but continues the farce. Rosalind does anything for her love, including having her disguised identity, Ganymede, pretend to be a girl for Orlando to practice his courting skills:

Were it not better,  
Because that I am more than common tall,  
That I did suit me all points like a man?  
A gallant curtle-axe upon my thigh,  
A boar-spear in my hand; and, ---- in my heart  
Lie there what hidden woman's fear there will, ----  
We'll have a swashing and a martial outside,  
As many other mannish cowards have  
That do outface it with their semblances. (Act 1 Scene 3)

Despite the societal restrictions on women during the time of Shakespeare, the women in his plays were just as competent as the men. The comedy of cross-dressing seems to be simply a side effect of what was surely a deeper theme by Shakespeare. Women were able to complete the same tasks men did just as well as the men, and sometimes, even better. Portia, for example, not only argued her case successfully in the courtroom, but she taught Bassanio a lesson as well.

Despite their strength, however, Shakespeare's cross-dressing heroines never let us forget they are women at heart. Even though each of them shows masculinity through how they dress and act, they still have the physical and emotional characteristics of a woman. This is a problem sometimes. For example, when Viola is challenged to duel with Sir Andrew Aguecheek, she is afraid that she will not be able to match up to him because of her lack of strength. Each woman also retains a compassion that is typically reserved for female characters, as we see in Portia when she begs for mercy for Antonio.

The cross-dressed women always tend to be independent, strong and determined instead of passive. Each woman takes the steps required of her in order to reach her goals. They travel alone and enter into situations most women wouldn't dare, especially when it is for love. They are able to do so without losing their essential femininity, and perhaps that is the best argument that Shakespeare was an early feminist. He recognized that women were ruled by men, and that their place in society was a difficult one. His plays showed that without the Elizabethan-era societal restrictions, women could actually compete with men in any arena.

Even though the women in Shakespeare's plays went against the rules of being a woman in the society of his time, is it fair to call him a "feminist" when feminism wasn't even a thing during the span of his life, nor did it come around for hundreds of years later? Should we look at Shakespeare's work with through the lens of modern feminism? In the end, men were still playing the roles, and technically it was a man

pulling off a woman being a man, so some critics may conclude that it is not fair to look at William Shakespeare as a true feminist. The problem is that it is nearly impossible for us to look at a play from the perspective of one who was watching the same play in the Elizabethan era. We can try, but we can't completely forget the events of the past 350 years and entirely disregard what we have learned and now know. We look at just about everything through the mindset of a person who lives in modern times. So, because it is nearly impossible, we are bound to look at his plays with the ideas of underlying racism or feminism or some other major idea that is prevalent in our modern world.

The key word connected to feminism is idea. Feminism is just an idea we have developed. Just because the word itself did not exist during Shakespeare's time doesn't mean there weren't strong women before, or that Shakespeare didn't have a thought that maybe women were worth more than what his society allowed. Perhaps he thought that women were just as strong, capable and intelligent as men were. Gender roles play such a major theme in almost all of Shakespeare's work, it's possible to think that he believed in an idea akin to modern day feminism. Instead of coming out and saying something about a woman's role in society he used gender roles in his plays to show the audience that a woman is capable of conquering a man's role.

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2<sup>nd</sup> Place Winner: Celine Cont, "Obedience to Authority in World War II"  
For Professor Nathan Price

During the holocaust, Nazi's killed 11 million people. The murderers were members of the National Socialist German Worker's Party. Every Aryan was allowed to join this party; humans just like you and me. How are people able to accept and support such barbarity that happened during that time? My family was involved in this topic and I am personally interested about how obedience to authority gets developed and how it influenced the people in the Second World War. It was through Hitler's techniques that he was able to create habits of groups, which influenced behaviors and changed people into mass murderers.

How is it possible that no one said anything against Hitler's doings? In 1963, Stanley Milgram published his study of obedience to authority, which is one of the most famous experiments in the history of psychology (Brannigan 623). In a newspaper announcement, Milgram searched for participants for his experiment. Those participants were told that they had to quiz a student sitting in another room about vocabulary words. If the student gave a wrong answer, the participant had to shock them with an electro shocker. The shocking appliance consisted of 30 switches numbered from 15 to 450, the highest voltage which could be deadly. However, the participant didn't know that the student was an actor. This student pretended to scream and cry, begging the teacher to stop. The participant had the right to leave the room anytime, but, appallingly, 65% of the participants administered levels of punishment that appeared to be lethal. Milgram's work showed how ordinary people could do things they never thought they would do. One of the common defenses from the German population during World War II is that they were just 'following orders,' like in Milgrams study the lab-coated scientist, who told the participants to send the electric shock (Brannigan 624). Milgram described that ordinary people "could be transformed into brutal Nazis without much difficulty" (Brannigan 623).

Furthermore, groups are not only influenced by behaviors but also by habits made in society. In his book *The Power of Habit* Charles Duhigg describes the habit loop, which consists of cue, routine and reward. A cue is something happening in our daily lives. In the case of the Second World War, the cue was fear in the German people. The routine was to follow the rules. Therefore, reward was to be safe. During the Holocaust the reward was peer pressure. Charles Duhigg describes peer pressure in *The Power of Habits* as the following:

Peer pressure- and the social habits that encourage people to conform to group expectations- is difficult to describe, because it often differs in form and expression from person to person. There social habits aren't so much one consistent pattern as dozen of individuals habits that ultimately cause everyone to move in the same direction (p. 225).

The habit of peer pressure is another aspect to explain the mass murder of European Jews in the Holocaust. No one wants to stick out of a group and everyone wants to be liked. Not only peer pressure influenced the people.

To understand how Hitler was so successful in that short amount of time, we have to imagine the circumstances people were living in. In the 1910s and 1920s the German people were suffering from the high costs of the First World War. During that time the Germans were living in hunger and poverty. One

reasons for that suffering was the hyperinflation, which declined the value of the current currency 'Mark' (Parsson). This time is called the Weimar's Demise, which is named after a historical city in Germany. Adolf Hitler used this situation, so that he was seen as the only hope for the frustrated people.

For example my grandmother was a teenager during the Second World War. Renate Cont described it as a time with a lot of possibilities and activities. My grandmother confirmed over and over again that she didn't know what was happening to the Jewish people. She saw people disappearing but her parents didn't allow her to ask and nobody questioned it. Furthermore, she was active in the league of German girls, which gave her the opportunity to make a lot of friends and provided a lot of exciting activities. Renate still says that it was a good time for her teenage years and people grew together as a nation. She was forced to feel proud of her country wearing uniforms and having symbols everywhere. My grandmother was a member of the 'Hitler Youth Generation', which is a term that refers to the generation of Germans born between 1919 and 1931 (McDougall 24). This generation played a decisive role in reconstructing the communist state. Those Clubs like the League of German Girls (BDM) and the Free German Youth (FDJ) functioned to give kids a home and to have leadership roles.

Another way to emphasize the power of habits in groups is if we take a look at scapegoating: The cue is that the people felt terrible about their life in hunger and poverty, the routine is to blame somebody else, for example the Jewish people, and as follows, the reward is to make the problem a problem for somebody else. The scapegoating of Jewish people started way back in history. In the bible it is written that Jews caused the crucifixion of Christ. This was the beginning of the punishment towards the Jews and continues today peaking at Hitler's time. Hitler not only changed the view of the people towards freedom of religion, but also changed daily actions and behaviors of the German people. One of the common arguments Hitler used against Jews was that they stole and ruined the German businesses, which is described by Kurt Hilmar Eitzen in his article Ten Responses to Jewish Lackeys: "Jewish crooks have driven thousands of German businessmen to bankruptcy with the glittering trash in their department store palaces (...). He who has bought good products cheaply from the Jew should never forget that the curse of a German worker and the tears of his hungry children come with them!" (6). This is a misguided view. One of the reasons why many Jews were wealthier was their tradition of family business in handicraft. Those jobs were safe regardless of the time, which differed them from the Germans during that time, many of whom lost their jobs during the Weimar's Demise. Moreover, the colonization of language was one of the Nazi's greatest achievements. Nazi's were preoccupied with language and gave new meaning to old terms. For example, an important word to the German nation gained a new meaning: 'homeland'. This word became the new meaning of an ideology homeland with peace and great opportunities (O' Shaughnessy 69). For the first time after 20 years of living in a depression of the Weimar's Demise the Germans felt proud of their country. They were their own community, who could take care of themselves.

To understand why people were excited about the Nazi party, we have to understand the Nazi's use of propaganda. Hitler's extraordinary success is almost understood and manipulated as the power of a brand. The propaganda was covered by everything from uniforms to technology, the costuming of policemen and soldiers, and the folk festivals and folk dress. People lived in a parallel universe of imagery and symbolism (O'Shaughnessy 56). Nicholas O'Shaughnessy, a professor of communication at the University of London, explains in this article Selling Hitler: propaganda and the Nazi brand: "The point is that a sense of injustice can be talked into people thereby leading to the rhetorical creation of

conviction: we offer a vision of rebirth, an enemy to hate, the righting of historical wrongs, a job, a home, bread on the table and cash in the bank" (56). Therefore, the cue was living in a hard time after, the routine is giving the people a place to work, to stay, and to entertain and the reward was to feel safe and proud.

Furthermore, Hitler used group effects like wearing uniforms and having a symbol that is seen everywhere. In Germany, symbolism took an important stage. Not only the building of banners and statues and the flashes of lightning or the SS Runes and the crosses, but most persuasive was wearing the uniform which stands for collective identity (O'Shaughnessy 70). Wearing the same color and the same uniform binds groups together and supports the peer pressure. If someone doesn't know the symbols or doesn't wear the uniforms he is not part of the group.

The propaganda strategies, group effects, and peer pressure explain why 13.75 million people voted in the year 1932 for Adolf Hitler (Darby 5). The problem of in and out groups, of searching for a scapegoat, and of peer pressure is still a daily issue. Even in small communities like schools, we can see bullies and their followers. Not every country allows people to live for their religion and people might even be killed for believing in their faith. Giving people safety, and feeling peer pressure because they were afraid to stick out of the group was all the people needed to let a mass murder of European Jews happen. All in all, every person could have turned into a Nazi, a person who kills millions of people, an ordinary person like you and I.

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## Expressive- English 1010

1<sup>st</sup> Place Winner: Jacob Richter, “Melodic Literature: The Art of Playing the Piano”  
For Professor Fawn Caparas

As I played the last note on the ivory keys of the old upright piano, letting the sound ring through the room, I felt a surge of success. I stood up, turned around and bowed, reveling in the applause from the audience. I was 6 years old, and had just completed my first piano recital. People say that music is the universal language. I have always had a deep connection with it, and felt that it is a part of who I am. From a very young age, I had an intense love for piano music. My parents told me that I would pick out songs like “Twinkle Twinkle” or “Mary Had A Little Lamb” with one finger by the age of 4 years old. This inspired my mother to enroll me in piano lessons, which is where my love of music and understanding of piano literacy (my understanding of all things piano) began.

I was very excited and eager to learn it all, from the characteristics, such as the 88 keys or the sustain pedal, to the different dynamics used when playing a piece of music. I learned to play by ear and by reading notes, along with their variety of sharps, flats, and scales, the importance of fingering, and many more things along the way. I soon realized there are an innumerable amount of methods and aspects involved with understanding all there is to know about playing the piano. I am always trying to learn new things or ways to better my talent.

At first, my attention span left a lot to be desired, and I had to be bribed to practice by my mother. She would use either Skittles or M&Ms, and would create a pile on one side of the piano. For each time I played my piece, I would move one candy to the other side of the piano. When I had moved all of them, and only when I had moved all of them, would my mother allow me to eat them. It was a wonderful incentive, which worked remarkably well in getting me to practice. Eventually, I developed a love for playing the piano. I am eternally grateful to my mother for pushing me to do it and for always being my biggest fan.

My first piano teacher, Ovella Dockstader, used the Suzuki method, which is a method that teaches students to play by ear, and later to play by reading notes. While I learned to play by ear, which is a great ability that I have and love, Ovella didn't stress the fact that I needed to be particular with some very important things, such as posture and fingering. I didn't learn these things in the beginning, which made it very difficult for me to retrain myself the right way, and is still a struggle for me every time I play.

When I was about ten years old, Ovella retired and my mother enrolled me in lessons with a new teacher, Norma Jeffs. I have a few memories from before this, but this is where the majority of my memories begin. I remember being terrified at first of the change and being intimidated by the elderly woman who was my new piano teacher. I vividly remember the musty smell of her classroom, and the mess of sheet-music that covered every available flat surface in the room. It was here that I learned more about timing and how to read notes. Unlike Ovella, Norma intentionally assigned me pieces that I had never heard, so as to force me to read the notes.

At first I hated it, and couldn't understand why I needed to be able to read notes. What was the purpose of all of this? Then one day, Norma gave me the assignment to learn a certain piece of music – one that I

still consider one of the most beautiful pieces of music ever written, “Canon in D” by Johann Pachelbel. The fast scales and beautiful chord progressions in this piece inspired me from the age of ten, and continue to be a huge inspiration in the way I play piano. It helped me realize and understand the importance of being able to read notes. The key of D-Major is still my favorite and is my go-to key for just about any piece that I play by ear.

Norma also helped me a lot with my stage fright and performing skills. Once a month, all of her students and their families would meet for a group recital. We would stand up, state our name and what pieces we planned on playing for the group – normally one solo, and either a duet or trio played with one or two of our peers. Once I overcame some of my stage fright, I grew to enjoy these recitals very much.

As I grew older and entered middle school, I started to be teased and ridiculed by many of the other kids. I was told that I was “a girl” or that I was “gay” because my talent was not common among other boys. My mother was a constant encouragement for me throughout these years, and if it would not have been for her, I probably would have given up. I remember that sometimes, when I was discouraged, playing the piano would help to brighten my mood. I felt as if playing my piano fixed everything and made my cares float away. A lot of what I would play was impromptu, and I was told by many people that they could tell my mood by the music I was playing. Playing impromptu was and still is very therapeutic.

Over the years, through lessons and countless hours of practice, I honed my talent. I performed for many community and religious gatherings, including the community's Harvest Festival, the Sunday Night Program, and I played accompaniment for my grandpa's Sunday-School. A few of the audiences I played for were numbered in the thousands. This helped me to overcome most of my stage fright, although I still do not enjoy being in front of a large crowd or being put on the spot.

Shortly after I was married, at the age of 18 years old, I was hired to play piano on the weekends for The Rex (a bar/restaurant) in Billings, MT. While I normally enjoyed this job, it could be very hard, because the majority of the requests I received from patrons were for songs I didn't know, because of the strict religious community I had been raised up in. I was told that I “sucked” on many occasions, which was very hard on my self-esteem. On the other hand, I was able to meet some people who genuinely appreciated my talent. I met Michael Mace, President of the Rocky Mountain College, which is located in Billings, on several occasions. He always tipped me very generously and was very kind and appreciative of my piano playing. Seeing him, and hearing him speak highly of my piano playing, brightened my spirits and made me feel that at least there was someone who understood and appreciated my talent.

Throughout my life, I often dreamed of going to Hollywood or Nashville. However, after my experience at The Rex, I realized that I do not take criticism very well, and I wanted to play for people that I knew would appreciate my talent. My literacy of piano playing is very important to me as it has helped me through many hard times in my life. In many ways, it helps to define the man that I am today; Piano playing taught me discipline and determination through countless hours of practicing, and it also gave me an immense appreciation and love for music, which is something that I hope to pass on to my descendants. It has helped me to further develop my social skills and make many great friends. These are just a few of the many ways that it has helped me throughout my life. While I have decided to focus on a different career choice, I will always love piano playing, and I will continue to share my talent with anyone who cares to listen.

2<sup>nd</sup> Place Winner: Taylor Minks, "Explanation"  
For Professor Toa Tawa

The men roared with laughter as the Nazi soldier slipped crazily down the snow-covered hill. Christiaan Goebel, my great grandfather, seized this distraction as an opportunity and ran for his life from captivity of the Nazis and their hostages. The Nazi soldiers had been gathering Dutchmen for days in Zaandam, Holland. They lined the men along the road after blocking the corner on the road to Amsterdam, and threatened to shoot anybody that passed without stopping. They were waiting for a truck that would take the men to work as slaves in the weapon factory for Germany. After escaping and then hiding, Christiaan returned home in the middle of the night and explained what had transpired to his wife and children—one of which was my Grandma Francisca. The men of Zaandam had been conditioned to a lifestyle of hiding from the Nazis in farm fields and under house floorboards to avoid being kidnapped and placed in work camps or factories. After nearly escaping from the Nazis' grasp, Christiaan contemplated the lifealtering decision to leave his family's home in order to give his children better economic opportunities than they would have in tiny Holland. In November of 1951, my grandma, Christiaan and the rest of the family emigrated from Holland. Although they abandoned their home and family business to come to the United States, they carried their cultural traditions overseas. Knitting is a cultural tradition and an important part of their lifestyle that they brought with them. I'm sure that my grandma found relief in her knitting skills when she arrived at Ellis Island, New York, then took a bus directly to Salt Lake City, Utah and began elementary school in a foreign country. From the blog post, "Celebrating Knit in Public Week with 10 Knitting Facts You Might Not Know", creator Megan Mitzel claims that knitting prevents illness by decreasing blood pressure and lowering heart rate (par. 4). This may be the secret to my grandmother's excellent health and well-being. Knitting needles represent my family's cultural heritage and tradition because knitting is a rite of passage in order to respect your culture, become more sophisticated and gain social acceptance from Dutch family members.

Knitting needles have benefited humanity for millennia because it's a tool with which people can create clothing and blankets to survive, as my family did when they immigrated. In *Creative Knitting: A New Art Form*, Mary Walker Phillips explains that the earliest evidence of knitting needles has been found in Syria and dates back to 256 A.D. (14). Knitting needles can be made from many substances like bone, tortoise shell, wood, silver, plastic, aluminum, and steel, and can be pointed on only one end to make most anything, pointed on both ends to make socks, or connected together at one end to make hats or other clothing (Phillips, 31). Knitting needles haven't only been a means of survival and cultural tradition for millennia in one area of the world, but all throughout the world in most countries. Each country has their own preference of knitting needles, stitches, and holding positions. There are two major styles of hand knitting: Continental and English. The Continental style involves holding the yarn in the left-hand while knitting, and the English style involves holding the yarn in the right-hand while knitting (Phillips, 43). Elizabeth Zimmerman, author of *Knitting Without Tears: Basic Techniques and Easy-to-Follow Directions for Garments to Fit All Sizes*, who also is accredited for reintroducing Continental knitting to Northern America, acknowledges that the USA, England, Canada and Switzerland typically practice both the Continental and English styles of knitting (15-16). From my own experience I've observed that most knitters from Japan, Germany, and most other European countries solely practice Continental knitting, and The People's Republic of China is a country that solely practices English knitting. I personally prefer the English style of knitting because my grandmother taught me this style, as she was taught by

generations before her. I feel that the Colonial style makes the knit work extremely tight, which creates muscle tension in the fingers and shoulders. Knitting is a stress reliever for me, so to be most comfortable and avoid extra tension I prefer to knit English style.

Ever since I've learned to knit, I've used my skill as an outlet when I have too much homework or a crazy, busy day. My favorite thing to do is to multitask by watching a movie while I knit. I like to find difficult knitting patterns online, and then tailor them to be better pieces. Then I write my own new pattern and create it. I often design Fair Isle patterns. Drawing from, "Enjoy a Fair Isle Tutorial", writer and editor Sarah Johnson describes Fair Isle as multicolor strand knitting that originated from an island off the coast of Scotland where the style was born (par. 1).

My grandma teaches her grandkids to knit when they turn eight years old; an age that she has deemed acceptable to learn this skill. Of all the grandchildren that have been taught to knit, only one of my cousins and myself haven't lost the ability. I always felt that knitting was my grandmother's rite of passage to a higher social circle. My cousins and I know that if grandma teaches you how to knit, and you continue to knit by yourself, she is going to engage with you in conversation more often and give you an expensive knitting-type present on your birthday and Christmas because she's really proud of you. It's important to her to pass the tradition to the younger generation so that we know where our heritage is from, and don't stray too far from it.

I plan to teach my future children how to knit in the way that my grandma taught me, although I'm going to teach them when they ask to learn. I wanted to learn at age five or six, and I know that I was competent enough that I could have grasped the skill. I feel that waiting until a future age makes knitting feel frustrating and like work for the first few days of learning. I enjoy teaching people how to knit. I've taught my favorite great-aunt on my mom's side of the family how to knit, and I've directed several class courses for neighbors, classmates and friends on this skill. When I teach others to knit, I'm sharing a piece of my family tradition with them.

I still have many cousins, aunts and uncles specifically in Amsterdam and Holland that are living there today. I really want to meet them and see what they're like. I want to see the area where my Great Opa Christiaan escaped from the Nazis, where my grandma grew up in Zaandam, the family's old bakery and store in Amsterdam, and the massive fields of tulips. I want to experience the Kroketten, Stroopwafels, and salty licorice that I've grown up eating at the very place where it's from. When I knit, I feel closer to my grandma and all the stories that she's told me about living in the Netherlands. When I use my knitting needles, I am carrying on my family's cultural heritage and staying true to my family's traditions.

## Argumentative- English 2010

1<sup>st</sup> Place Winner: Julia Redman, "Fairy Tales: Fictional Children's Stories or Depictions of Real Life Evil?"

For Professor Chelsea Campbell

Is there a link between fairy tales and serial killers? In recent history, names like Ted Bundy and Jeffrey Dahmer have come to be associated with serial murder, thanks to media and mass communications. However, such evil has been a dark part of humanity all along. Throughout history there are records of other kinds of evil; tyrants, genocide, and mass conquest are all accepted pieces of humanities past. On the other hand, where are the records of the evils that walk among the innocent? The ones who strike in the dark and leave only a trail of death. Where were they and how did the world interpret them before modern psychology and neurology? Now, so much is known about the brain and its functions, yet even experts cannot say exactly why serial killers exist. How much more difficult must it have been to understand these beings and their unfathomable acts before contemporary science. Before modern communication and psychology, fairy tales were society's way of portraying and processing what is now considered to be the work of serial killers. Many fairy tales depict several of the same characteristics we associate with murderous sociopaths and psychopaths, including cannibalism, an unthreatening appearance, and necrophilia.

After years of psychological study, some common characteristics can be found among serial murders. A few of the many recurring traits are a high IQ, a charming, average, or unthreatening appearance, a deep desire for power or control, psychopathy or sociopathy, an inability to sympathize or empathize with anyone but themselves, an obsession with death, and having some traumatic experience during childhood, such as abuse or a head injury (Federal Bureau of Investigation). While each of these features are noteworthy, three stand out among the rest: anthropophagy, a charming or average countenance, and necrophilia. Anthropophagy, or cannibalism, is the consumption of human flesh, often in a ritualistic manner. A charming or average countenance refers to a serial killers ability to blend in with the rest of society; their exterior looks and behavior do not reflect the aggressive, dangerous being within. Lastly, necrophilia is an unhealthy or extreme infatuation with death, often manifesting in a sexual attraction to the dead. Each of these elements can be found in popular fairy tales as well as in the most notorious murderers.

The FBI defines a serial killer as someone who has killed 3 or more people, with some amount of "cooling off" time in between each attack (Federal Bureau of Investigation). However, a serial killer is also defined as someone who enjoys luring in, torturing, and killing a victim in a form of ritual (Schechter and Everitt 53). Not surprisingly, many fairytale villains also share these qualities. It is common knowledge that fairytales often have a darker or more gruesome origin. Many stories that present generations have come to know and love have been changed from their original story lines to make them more family friendly. For example, in the Disney version of the popular fairy tale "Cinderella," Cinderella's evil step sisters try to squeeze their feet into her tiny glass slipper, succeeding for only a second before the slipper rejects them. In the original Grimm's Fairy Tales version, which was put into writing by Jakob and Wilhelm Grimm, one of Cinderella's step sisters cuts off her big toe and the other her heel, in order to make the slipper fit (205). This bloodier version would not have become every little

girl's fantasy as the Disney version has. Fairy tales tell the stories of societies hundreds of years ago, where gore and blood were a more common phenomenon; a time when poverty and war seemed to have no end. Many know the more gruesome details of our popular tales, but do they know the inspirations for those darker elements?

There are those who believe, because fairy tales include obviously fictional elements like talking animals, magic, and prince charmings, they are completely imaginary. While it is true that fairy tales and folklore are fantasy based, they are ultimately a reflection of the society that they were written in. According to Maria Nikolajeva, the author of several books that analyze children's literature and a professor at Stockholm University, "Fairy tales have their roots in archaic society and archaic thought," (138). It is also said in the world of psychology that stories can be used therapeutically. Psychologist, Richard Brockman finds that stories can be used as a form of therapy that helps ". . . answer the unknown, minimize fear, and alleviate doubt." In other words, stories help people process the things they cannot understand, like vicious killers. Fairy tales were a way of making the world black and white. There is good and evil, and good almost always prevails. This idea certainly must have been comforting to the peasants trying to understand the viscous and unfair world they lived in.

Murderous psychopaths, homicidal sociopaths, and fairy tale villains all share a taste for the meat of human beings. Many a convicted serial killer has been known to partake in cannibalism. According to popular true crime authors Harold Schechter and David Everitt, in the 1920's, Albert Fish, a particularly vile killer of children, was convicted of the murder of a twelve year old girl, who, after killing, he made into a stew (42). Around the same time, the German, Fritz Haarmann killed and ate approximately 50 boys, selling any leftover meat on the black market (42). Similarly, the notorious Russian Andrei Chikatilo, known as the "Mad Beast," slaughtered a confirmed 52 victims and consumed several of their genitals (43). These are just a few examples of the many anthropophagus killers that have surfaced in modern society. Although cannibalism is not a new phenomenon, it has always been a loathed deed, reserved for only the most primal and animalistic being. There have also been cases of cannibalism as a means of survival or a war ritual (41-42). However, serial killers do not eat their victims because they are starving. Their mentality is closer to that of the tribal people who reveled in their victory by eating their conquered enemies (42). To our modern murderers, their kill is their victory and their joy. They eat their victims as a way to derive every last pleasure and steal all dignity from those they have slain. For serial killers, cannibalism is just another taboo within which to thrive.

Several fairytale characters have also been known to enjoy making a meal of humans, for example, "Hansel and Grethel," from the Grimm's Fairy Tales collection. In this fairy tale, Hansel and Grethel are abandon in the woods by their parents who cannot afford to feed them anymore. The children, knowing that they will starve if lost in the woods, leave a trail of breadcrumbs in an attempt to find their way home. Unfortunately, the crumbs are eaten by birds. This leaves the children lost and very hungry in the woods, until they happen upon a house made of bread, cake, and sugar. Little do they know, that in the house lives an evil witch. The Witch, who is blind, but has an exceptional sense of smell, was said to have lured many children in with her candy house, only to ". . . kill them, cook them, and eat them. . ." (97). Hansel and Grethel are very hungry and easily enticed by the Witch's kindness. Captured by the Witch, Grethel becomes her slave and Hansel is locked in a stable to fatten up. In the end, the children manage to escape by pushing the witch into the hot oven, and soon make their way back home (89 – 100). Before the Witch's demise, she is a considerably dark character for a children's tale. She regularly feasts on hungry peasant children, fattening them up and cooking them like one would a pig. However,

the witch does not need to eat children to survive. To the contrary, her house is made of cake and sugar. She is not starving, instead she spends considerable time luring in and fattening up her meal. Eating children is a treat for her; a pleasurable dining experience worth much time and effort. This behavior is strikingly similar to that of our modern killers who chose without reason or necessity, to butcher and prepare their victims as they would any other kind of meat.

Another man-eater found within fairytales is the Giant in the story "Jack and the Beanstalk" from English Fairy Tales, Collected by J. Jacobs. In this story, a peasant boy named Jack, sells his widow mother's cow for five magic beans. Upon returning home, his mother is very upset and throws the beans out the window. The next morning the beans have sprouted and grown into a very tall beanstalk. Jack decides to climb the beanstalk and follows it all the way into the sky. Once in the sky, Jack starts along a road until he sees a large woman and asks her for some food. The woman tells Jack to run, for her husband likes nothing better than "... boys broiled on toast. . ." (62). However, Jack doesn't listen and the woman finally agrees to give him some food. As he is enjoying his bread and cheese, the Giant comes home and his wife hides Jack in the oven. Upon entering his house, the giant says "Fee-Fi-Fo-Fum, I smell the blood of an Englishman, be he alive or be he dead, I'll have his bones to grind my bread," (63). His wife assures him that it is only his imagination and he soon falls asleep. While the Giant snores, Jack grabs a bag of the Giant's gold and escapes. Later, Jack returns to the Giant's house three times, eventually chopping down the beanstalk and killing the Giant, (59-68). Although Jack steals from the Giant, the Giant and his literal thirst for blood are clearly seen as the greater of the two evils. Once again, the Giant does not need to eat men to survive. The Giant is well off, thanks to the golden eggs, and it would seem there is plenty of food to go around, as the Giant's wife feeds Jack bread and cheese. For the Giant, eating men is completely unnecessary, but perhaps that is why he chooses to do it. Perhaps it is a way for him to demonstrate his power, just as current killers long to feel the power of degrading another human being. The Giant not only eats Englishmen, but can smell them like the Witch from "Hansel and Gretel." In this way, both villains sniff out their prey and consume them in the most nonchalant way. The Giant eats boys on toast and the Witch roasts children in the oven, just as Albert Fish cooked his victims into a stew and Fritz Haarmann sold his at the market like poultry.

Many modern day serial killers harbor an animalistic ferocity, though it is well concealed under their countenance. One of the reasons that serial killers are so hard to catch and convict is that they are often very intelligent and surprisingly average. They are able to blend in with the rest of society as unthreatening and even charming. For instance, Ted Bundy, one of the most notorious killers in America, was also a charismatic law student and future politician. He easily coaxed young women into his car with his good looks and outgoing personality. He even sported a cast or sling to appear as pathetic and innocent as possible to his soon to be victims (Schechter and Everitt 36-38). Bundy was comparable to Robert Louis Stevenson's character's Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde in the drastic contrast between his outward persona and the monster hiding within. Many people knew Bundy and were shocked to find out that he was not the captivating young Republican they thought he was. Instead he was a blood thirsty murderer who slowly grew more and more mad, eventually giving in completely to his animalistic desires.

Homicidal maniacs' ability to conceal the darkness within was once actually considered to make them monsters. Before psychology and knowledge of mental illness, the most vicious and lustful of murders were thought to have been lycanthropes, or wolf men (Schechter and Everitt 172-73). Just like werewolves, these men supposedly transformed into giant canines and terrorized peasant villages.

Known murders of the 1600's killed with such ferocity, ripping people apart with their bare hands, that it was no wonder people thought it was the work of a monster. These men were "wolves in sheep's clothing" so to speak. Seemingly average, often wealthy, men using a wolf as an alter ego to explain their blood lust. Four hundred years ago, Ted Bundy would certainly be considered one of these wolf men. He would change his personality, sometimes being shy or crippled, and sometimes being outgoing and alluring. Both personas made him seem harmless, but each appealed to a different victim.

Although it is not the only fairy tale to feature a menacing wolf, "Little Red Cap," better known as "Little Red Riding Hood," certainly portrays the deception and savagery associated with the carnivorous creature (Grimm's Fairy Tales 149-55). In the story, a sweet, young girl sets out to bring cake and wine to her sick grandmother. On her way, a wolf appears and asks her questions about her destination. Little Red Cap ". . . did not feel frightened," and told the wolf about her grandmother and her grandmother's house in the woods (150). The Wolf made his way to her house. Once there, the wolf pretends to be Little Red Cap and eats Grandma, eventually putting on her clothes. When Little Red Cap arrives she is wary of her grandmother's strange appearance, but alas, it is too late and the wolf eats her (149-55). In the original version, the story ends here, however the revised version has a huntsman and a happy ending. This strange and twisted story not only demonstrates cannibalism, as the wolf is more akin to a man in his talking and premeditation, but also the deception and manipulation by a seemingly unthreatening murderer. Little Red Cap is not afraid of the wolf, as she does not know what a monstrous creature he is. Later in the story, the wolf pretends to be Little Red Cap in order to devour the Grandmother, and pretends to be the Grandmother in order to consume the girl. In the same way, serial killers can change their countenance in order to maximize their possible victims. "Little Red Cap" is one of the darker fairy tales, yet it sheds a considerable amount of light on the society within which it was written.

The last characteristic shared by slaughtering sociopaths and folklore characters is an affinity for death. Necrophilia, from the Greek word meaning "love of the dead" is deeper than just the raping of a corpse (Schechter and Everitt 194). True necrophiliacs have a deep obsession with death; going beyond the desire to degrade their victim, they are truly aroused by and in love with death. One of the most famous examples of a modern necrophiliac is Jeffrey Dahmer whose love affair started as a child. Growing up, Dahmer would frequently collect and dissect road kill. As the years went on, his obsession had grown more perverse, manifesting itself in his killing rituals. Dahmer claimed to have sliced open the stomachs of his victim's bodies to ejaculate inside of them, as well as anally raping them (Schechter and Everitt 195). Another known necrophilic killer, Ed Gein, started out digging up women's corpses to have sex with. He eventually progressed to actual murder when the number of dead bodies in the cemeteries ran low (Schechter and Everitt 195). Both killers were not only fascinated by death, they were in love with it. They were not at all attracted to living women, which drove them to find the kind of women they did like: dead ones.

A love for the dead can also be seen in the Grimm's Fairy Tales' "Snow-White." In this tale, Snow-white's father, the king, dies and she is left with only her step mother. Although the queen is very beautiful, she is also very vain and each day she asks her magic mirror who is the most beautiful in the land. The answer is always "the Queen," until one day when the magic mirror tells the queen that Snow-white is the most beautiful. The Queen will not allow this and sends her huntsman to kill Snow-white. Nevertheless, the Huntsman takes pity on Snow-white and lets her go. Instead, he kills a pig and brings its heart back to the Queen. The Queen quickly figures out that Snow-white is not dead, meanwhile,



Snow-white has discovered the Seven Dwarfs and gone to live with them. The Queen decides to do her own dirty work and dresses up as an old lady with a poisoned apple. She finds Snow-white and tricks her into eating the apple. After one bite Snow-white falls dead and the Dwarfs find her body. They lay her in a glass coffin because she is too beautiful to bury. After quite some time a prince happens upon Snow-white's coffin and falls in love with her. He asks the Dwarfs if he can have her body and after some bargaining, they finally say yes. As the Prince's men carry the coffin back to the castle they stumble, knocking the piece of poisoned apple out of Snow-white's throat. Snow-white comes back to life and lives happily with the Prince (Grimm's Fairy Tales 219-31). Compared to the stories previously discussed "Snow-white" seems innocent enough. Yet a darker theme is still woven into the seemingly happy tale. The Prince, having never met Snow-white, falls in love with her dead body. He is so in love, in fact, that he says ". . . I cannot live without looking upon Snow-white," (230). Likewise, Jeffrey Dahmer, Ed Gein, and other modern necrophiliacs cannot control their desire for the dead. They too, are literally in love with their dead victims and feel that no living man or woman could compare to the beauty of a corpse. However, necrophilia without murder, although questionable, is not nearly as vile. The Prince in "Snow-White" is not a villain and the tale is not warning us to avoid prince charmings. Rather, this tale may be trying to justify the act of loving the dead by portraying it romantically.

Some may believe that serial killers are a relatively recent phenomenon, caused by modern ills. While it is true, many a murderous psychopath has come to light in the last one hundred years or so, similar killers can be found in the past, and even in human's animal ancestors. One of the darkest Grimm's Fairy Tales, can be traced back to the acts of an actual serial killer. "The Legend of Bluebeard" is widely considered to be about the "Bestial Baron" Gilles De Rais of the fifteenth century. Gilles De Rais was a rich French man who killed wife after wife. The story of Bluebeard follows a similar pattern, as Bluebeard's newest wife finds a room in his castle filled with his former wives' dead bodies (Schechter and Everitt 30). The fact that this fairy tale was inspired by real events, not only validates the idea that fairy tales draw inspiration from the real world, but that serial killers did exist during their time. Additionally, a study by Michael Wilson and several of his colleagues, found that some chimpanzees display the same unnecessarily viscous tendencies to kill and torture. These Chimpanzees attacked other chimpanzees without any clear reason or benefit received (445). This study shows that homicidal psychopaths are not a recent evolution, but a part of the human species. Although certain events surely bring out the evil in people, such as poverty, war, and abuse, the desire to kill and maim is one that has always existed and needs little provoking.

In the twenty-first century, Americans like to think that they've got it all figured out. However, when it comes to murder and other inexplicable horrors, society is still in the dark trying to make sense of it all. Current generations no longer tell fairy tales as a way of understanding the truly gruesome as they have evolved to serve another purpose. Instead, the modern horror movie is used as a means of processing the unknown. According to Stephen King, the popular horror author and screen writer, horror movies function as morality tales, "...which take away the shades of grey," in life (505). King says "[Horror] urges us to put away our more civilized and adult penchant for analysis and to become children again, seeing things in pure blacks and whites," (505). Although society has cleaned up fairy tales and no longer uses them to portray the evils they once did, a modern version of folklore has been created in the horror genre. Humans continue to attempt to make the world black and white to help them face the real evils of the world, such as serial killers.

Today, serial killers are known to be a frightening fragment of humanity. Hundreds of years ago, how much more terrifying must they have been? With little known about them, and no way to explain their needless brutality, cultures turned to the black and white world of fairy tales to understand serial killers. As serial killers partake in cannibalism and necrophilia, and hide in an unthreatening appearance, so do the characters of popular fairy tales. Perhaps the tales are there to warn of these psychopaths, or perhaps they are just a reflection of humanity's deepest fears. As modern society struggles to understand the inner workings of serial killers, in an attempt to find what makes them tick and how to stop it, the world is not much better off than it was in the time of fairy tales. The dark part of humanity still lingers and we process it through storytelling in the form of horror. These killers may never go extinct, as it would seem that they are a part of the human species, however, generations will continue to try to simplify them, whether it be through folklore or horror.

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2<sup>nd</sup> Place Winner: Grace Schulz, “the Only Person Who Saves Me is Me’: How *Once Upon a Time* is Challenging Traditional Gender Roles”

For Professor Charla Strosser

Fairy tales have been around for hundreds of years. They have been changed and adapted into many different versions, but one thing that has been consistent throughout is the gender roles that they display. During most of these stories lifetimes, they have consistently shown women as the weaker, less capable sex. In a critical analysis of gender equality in fairy tales, literature expert Pierre Ruterana contends that “...in fairy tales males characters have been portrayed as...strong, potent, and powerful, with mastery themes such as cleverness and adventure, whereas female characters were portrayed as impotent, weak, passive, naïve, even sweet, with second sex themes such as beauty, gentility, domesticity, marriage, emotions, motherhood, and so on” (89). One doesn’t have to look far to see that Ruterana is right. Dating back to their earliest versions, most fairy tales feature female protagonists who sit like a bump, albeit a beautiful one, on a log while a dashing prince comes to their rescue. In more modern interpretations, however, that trend seems to be changing. More and more fairy tales are beginning to challenge traditional gender roles, and the ABC TV show *Once Upon A Time* is at the forefront of that movement. The show has been on the air since 2012. *Once* follows protagonist Emma Swan as she discovers that her parents are Snow White and Prince Charming. The show explores the backstories of most every fairy tale character, though it may not be the story that people are familiar with from the Disney movies. Specifically, the female characters differ drastically from their predecessors. They are strong-willed, empowered, and smart women who defy expectations at every turn. Analyzing the classic and *Once Upon A Time* versions of Belle from *Beauty and The Beast*, and Red from “Little Red Riding Hood” will display how the show has challenged or reversed traditional gender roles and the importance of the change.

Effectively analyzing what makes *Once Upon A Time*’s characters so interesting starts with looking at the tradition of gender roles in fairy tales. Since people have been adapting fairy tales for generations, they have permeated our society and the gender roles of any given time period are reflected in their pages. The literary tradition of fairy tales started in the 1600s with Charles Perrault, who wrote stories where the women belonged exclusively in the home. Over the next two hundred years, the Brothers Grimm and other classic authors carried on this trend. For almost three hundred years, women experienced very little change in their station in society, which can be seen in the literature written at the time. It wasn’t until much later that the role of women changed at all. Even so, the change was not drastic or impressive.

In their analysis of feminist fairy tale structure authors Leslee Kuykendal and Brian Sturm, two experts in the field of library science, discuss the later evolution of women in fairy tales. Andrea Dworkin shows that in the 1950s and 60s there were two types of women in fairy tales, “There [were] the good women...There [were] the bad women...The good women must be possessed. The bad women must be killed, or punished... [the ending of these tales] tell us that happiness for a woman is to be passive, victimized, or asleep” (QTD in Kuykendal 39). In this time period, as men returned from war, women who had gone to work in the war effort were encouraged to go back to domestic life. The stories reflect society because the young women in the stories who were domestic, genteel, and motherly are revered and saved. Meanwhile, the strong, independent women are the evil characters who must be destroyed.

Later on, in the 1970s and 80s, the feminist movement changed and so did the literature. Kuykendal and Sturm explain that the attitude became “women were naturally separate from men and rightly superior” (39). The literature at the time displayed that. *The Paper Bag Princess*, published in 1980, was one of the first where the girl saved the boy and skipped into the sunset, still single and independent. While this definitely represents a huge step toward dismantling stereotypical gender roles, Kuykendal and Sturm argue that fairy tales need more than role reversal to really impact gender norms. They cite a study done right after *The Paper Bag Princess* was published that showed that children did not view the main character, Elizabeth, as a genuine hero. It showed that “while children admired strong female protagonists, these were not the characters they wished to emulate” (QTD in Kuykendal 40). They emphasize that for fairy tales to really impact society, they need to be less about role reversal and more about female agency. This is where *Once Upon A Time* enters the world of feminist fairy tales. While the characters may have the same names as their classic counterparts, that is about where the similarity ends. The women of *Once Upon A Time* are not just reversed versions of their male equivalents, but independent entities entirely. This makes them exponentially more effective than their predecessors as feminist fairy tales.

Analyzing the evolution of characters from useless to useful starts with looking at the past of one of the most popular fairy tales ever written. *Beauty and the Beast* has a universal appeal. The story of kind, gentle Belle taming the fierce beast into a marriageable prince is one that all young girls love to read. Despite its popularity, *Beauty and the Beast* is not exactly revolutionary in terms of breaking gender stereotypes, especially not in its original form. The traditional version of *Beauty and the Beast* was written by Jeanne-Marie Leprince De Beaumont in 1756. In this story, Beauty is a beautiful and properly behaved lady. It is evident from the beginning that her beauty will be paramount to almost everything else in the story because it is literally her name. Where her sisters are vain, pretentious, and arrogant, Beauty is humble, kind, and loving. She is better than her sisters in every possible way. Instead of being defined simply as “beautiful,” Beauty has many more redeeming qualities. In fact, she has only redeeming qualities. The character that de Beaumont writes is completely perfect. She is unrealistic and utterly lacking in faults of any kind. Beauty never has a moment of jealousy, insecurity, or internal struggle. She is almost inhuman in her ability to remain good and kind. To add to her list of virtues, Beauty is more than willing to sacrifice herself to save her father when he gets in trouble with the beast. While this is an act of bravery and sacrifice not often displayed by women in fairy tales, it is just another standard of perfection that Beauty meets. She is the ideal daughter, giving herself up for her father. De Beaumont’s Beauty is incredibly passive and apathetic. When the father asks his daughters if he can bring them anything, Beauty asks for a rose; she does not want a rose, but “she did not want to set an example that would make her sisters look bad” (34). Beauty is incapable of saying no. Before she leaves for the Beast’s castle, she tells her father that he should allow her sisters to marry and that she “forgave them the evil they had done her” (De Beaumont 36). Her sisters were abusive, but Beauty never once stood up for herself. There is strength in forgiveness, but there is also strength in being more than an emotional punching bag for people. Beauty is not able to defend herself because it would be a break from the unfailingly kind and patient character she is. These qualities are magnified when Beauty goes to live with the Beast. She treats him with the utmost respect and patience, and the Beast treats her similarly. Because the Beast provides for Beauty’s basic needs, it is easy to forget that Beauty was essentially kidnapped. She owes him nothing but acts as if she owes him everything. When Beauty stays away from the castle longer than planned, she is wracked by guilt. She says, “If I made him unhappy, my lack of appreciation would make me feel guilty for the rest of my life” (De Beaumont 40). Beauty feels

bad for leaving the monster who held her captive. This shows that she is not so much a character as a doormat. The action of the story is done to Beauty, not by Beauty. Beauty takes initiative only when the Beast asks her to marry him, and she refuses. Yet, in the end, she rushes back to him and promises she will never leave. He then turns into a beautiful prince and everything ends happily, but the fact remains that Beauty is a pretty face with no substance. She is never assertive or independent. She has many admirable qualities, but she isn't an excellent role model for girls today. Given the time that this story was written, it is understandable that Beauty is so perfect but so spineless.

Despite being produced over 200 years later, Walt Disney's Beauty and the Beast didn't produce a more empowered character. Disney's Belle is almost identical to her predecessor. She has the same loving heart, the same infatuation with reading, and the same lack of character development. She takes more action, but is completely stagnant in terms of personality and growth. This evolution, or lack thereof, is worth mentioning as it is one of the most popular versions of the story. There is little to analyze in terms of content because Beauty and Belle are essentially the same character, written 200 years apart.

Conversely, Once Upon A Time's Belle is altogether different from her previous versions. She is introduced in the fairy tale world during the twelfth episode of the first season. Belle does have certain characteristics in common with her classic counterparts. She is beautiful and just as loving, humble, and patient. When we first meet her, she is also making a large sacrifice. Her father's kingdom is stuck in a war and they are asking for the help of Rumpelstiltskin. He agrees to help them win the war if Belle comes to live with him as his servant. Her father tells Belle that he won't let her go to which she replies, "No one decides my fate but me" ("Skin Deep"). This starts a long saga of Belle being exactly the opposite of passive and quiet. She takes action whenever she can. She goes to live with Rumpel, and soon learns that he was not always a monster. Not long after she starts living there, a thief breaks into the castle. Rumpel captures and tortures him. Belle won't stand for that, so she lets the thief go. When the thief asks her why, she says "I couldn't let this happen. I will stand up to the beast that he can be" ("Lacey"). This sentence sums up so much of Belle's character. She says "can be" meaning that she knows this isn't the only side of Rumpel. She is a kind person, much like her earlier versions, but this Belle will stand up for what she thinks is right. She is determined to make Rumpel a better man. Instead of just sitting and hoping for it to happen, she takes initiative. Of course, when Rumpel discovers that Belle let the thief go, he is enraged. They go after the thief, but Belle spends the whole time telling him that she truly sees the good in him and that "[he] is not as dark as [he] wants people to believe" ("Lacey"). Instead of feeling guilty or bad about her actions, she makes Rumpel see the fault in his actions. She doesn't let him off the hook for his behavior even though she sees the kind side of him. This makes her a strong character who stands up for what she believes in. In the end, Rumpel doesn't kill the thief, and Belle realizes she is getting through to him. She refuses to compromise on what she believes to be right and she gets results. This is a huge difference because the classic story emphasized complacency as a way to win someone over; Once Upon A Time's version, however, shows that being assertive is just as, if not more, effective. This change in Belle's character shows that a woman doesn't have to be quiet or passive to find happiness.

This difference makes Belle a stronger character, but it does not make her the perfect character. Unlike the classic Beauty, Belle has many faults. This is important because it shows character development that classic Beauty was severely lacking. Since she was already perfect, classic Beauty couldn't develop at all. On the other hand, Once's Belle is constantly evolving as a character. For instance, she is terrified of going to live with Rumpel and cries upon her arrival. This shows that crying isn't a weakness for a

character. Not being completely okay in the face of scary situation is perfectly rational, and Belle is under no obligation to always be a resolute, strong character. Then, when he asks her why she came in the first place, she says “To be a hero. I always wanted to be brave. I figured, do the brave thing and bravery will follow” (“The Outsider”). Belle knows that she isn’t a brave or courageous person usually, but she really tries to be. By making this change in her character, by showing that people evolve, Belle becomes far more realistic than Beauty ever was. In addition, Belle is not always cool-headed and perfect. When Rumple kicks her out of his house for breaking the rules, she gets angry. She yells at him, refusing to be the calm, dainty princess that she usually is. Anger is a completely rational, normal emotion and Belle displays that. She proves that being a princess isn’t always about being perfect, and that taking action is not a fault.

Belle continues to prove this point as the series develops. After getting kicked out of Rumple’s house, instead of going home, she goes to hunt a dangerous creature with a group of men. She feels like she failed in fixing Rumple, which is not an emotion that most princesses feel. Fear and uncertainty are rare in classic stories, but Belle again proves that not only are they real emotions, but that they are normal and conquerable. The men on the trek treat her poorly, which results in Belle doing something that most other princesses never do; she takes her fate into her own hands. She tricks the men into going the wrong way and goes after the creature herself, which, while admirable, is a terrible idea. For all her good qualities, Belle has no idea how to fight such a terrifying creature. When she arrives at its cave, she realizes that she has made a mistake. Unlike Beauty from the original story, she is capable of making mistakes. She finds herself in a situation that no amount of kind words can get her out of. Fortunately, she is saved by a woman who teaches her how to hunt. She ends up defeating the beast with her intelligence rather than a sword. Belle takes a chance on herself, makes a mistake, and fixes it. She does this without the help of a man, and indeed is aided by another smart, capable woman. Her journey to empowerment is realistic and leads Belle to go back and fight for Rumple. In *Once Upon A Time*, Belle is the exact opposite of Beauty. Instead of just letting things happen to her, she is all about taking action, even if it might not be the right action. Despite her imperfections, Belle is a strong woman. She is more capable and almost better because of the mistakes she makes and the faults she has.

Given the complex nature of her character, it is no surprise that Belle challenges two separate gender roles. The first is the idea that women must be perfect in every single way. The societal standard for women in the past was that they had to display every single trait that classic Beauty has, and never show a moment of weakness, or slip from perfection. One crack in the facade will be disastrous to their chances of finding a husband and living happily ever after. This is an incredibly harmful standard to hold women to. Women do not all fit into one singular mold, nor are they perfect in every way. As Kuykendall and Sturm explain, “real women are not the stuff of fairy tales....they are complicated” (40). Perfect fairy tale characters, like Beauty, set unrealistic expectations for girls. Girls feel that they must be as perfect as she is, and struggle to attain a level of perfection that is impossible. *Once Upon A Time*’s Belle is a far more realistic role model for young girls. She is a strong, kind woman, but she has moments of weakness and moments of anger. She is not always perfect, but that doesn’t mean she is a bad character. In fact, she is stronger because of it.

In addition to having faults that make her relatable, Belle also challenges the stereotype that women should be “seen and not heard” to please men. In order to achieve the level of perfection that society demanded, women were told that they must be passive. They couldn’t stand up for themselves because assertive and independent do not make the list of patriarchy approved traits for women. Despite that,

Once Upon A Time's Belle refuses to sit back and let life wash over her. She is not the perfect princess, but she refuses to be a doormat. This is important because Belle shows that perfection isn't required to stand up for herself, make good decisions, or fight for what she loves. Her character is flawed, but still incredibly talented and strong.

The same cannot be said for the original version of the next fairy tale character, Little Red Riding Hood. There were previous versions of Red Riding Hood, but it wasn't until Charles Perrault wrote "Little Red Riding Hood" in 1697 that she truly became a defined character. Perrault's Red is "the prettiest you could imagine", who makes up for in beauty what she lacks in intelligence (11). That is her first, and almost only characteristic. The classic Little Red Riding Hood is not a smart girl. When the wolf first approaches her, Perrault writes, "the poor child, who did not know that it was dangerous to stop and listen to wolves." (12). Red is so unintelligent, she doesn't realize that talking to a wolf is a bad idea. While there is frequently an unrealistic element in fairy tales, a girl of seven or eight who doesn't realize that talking to wolves is a bad idea goes a bit beyond the stretch of the imagination. The other attributes that Perrault gives Red are not any better. She is naïve enough to believe that the wolf laying in her grandmother's bed is really her grandmother, despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary. It is assumed because her grandmother gave her the red hood she is so famous for that Red would know what her grandmother looks like. However, all the wolf has to say is "the better to hear/smell/see you with", and Red falls right into his trap (13). Perrault's Little Red Riding Hood fits the mold of fairy tale girl perfectly. She is "pretty, well-bred, and genteel" to a fault (Perrault 13). She represents an outdated ideal of women who were supposed to be seen and not heard. In terms of characteristics, this makes Red exactly like every other fairy tale women, especially those written in the same era. However, Perrault's story is unique in that Red Riding Hood doesn't get saved. Almost all other princesses have a dashing prince to rescue them, but the wolf gobbles Red up, and she is never heard from again. Even in most other Red Riding Hood adaptations, Red at least survives her encounter with the wolf. In Perrault's, though, he seems to be saying that her death is punishment for being so ridiculously stupid and naive.

The next adaptation of Red Riding Hood doesn't make Red out to be any smarter either. The Brothers Grimm wrote their story entitled, "Little Red Cap" in 1857. In this version, Red Riding Hood is just as beautiful and unintelligent. However, she gains one attribute that makes her even more typical of a fairy tale girl: obedience. Much of the Grimm's story is focused on how Red being better-behaved and listening to her mother would have prevented her from ending up as the wolf's second course. At the end of the tale, she says "Never again will you stray from the path and into the woods, when your mother has forbidden it" (16). Red must learn to be more obedient, and all her problems will be solved. Of course, perhaps it is because of this that she does get saved, which is another difference between the Grimm's and Perrault's versions. In the Grimm's story, a kind huntsman comes to the rescue of Red and her grandmother. He cuts them out of the wolf's stomach and kills it. As is standard for fairy tales, it is the man who does all the saving. He is the one who has to fix the mess made by poor, stupid Red. This is a characteristic that reflects gender roles at the time. Women were meant to stay in the house and do as they were told. Otherwise, men would constantly have to be coming to their rescue. Both Grimm and Perrault's Little Red Riding Hood represent the perfect woman for the time period they were written in. Now, though, they seem outdated, inaccurate, and even ridiculous in their perfection.

Once Upon A Time's Red Riding Hood is the opposite of the idyllic women that Grimm and Perrault wrote. She has just about one thing in common with her classic counterparts. She is every bit as beautiful as them, but that is where the similarities end. The first time Red appears in Once's fairy tale

form, she is begging her grandmother to let her go hunt the wolf with a hunting party. The wolf has been ravaging the village, killing sheep and chickens, and Red wants to help kill it. So right off the bat, it is understood that she will not be the hapless girl from previous versions. Of course, her grandmother tells her that she can't go because it's dangerous. At first, Red seems to take her grandmother's advice. The next morning she finds Snow White hiding in her hen house. Instead of kicking her out, Red takes Snow under her wing. She explains to Snow all about the wolf and how her Grandmother uses the wolf to keep her from seeing her boyfriend Peter. Snow tells Red that it isn't fair of her Grandmother to do that, and suddenly Red realizes that if she kills the wolf, she will be free to go with Peter. She tells Snow, "I'm going with or without you" and goes out to hunt the wolf ("Red-Handed"). Red doesn't need much of a push to take her destiny into her own hands. Instead of being the familiar obedient girl, this Red is all about being independent and getting what she wants. Of course, if that were the only thing that changed about Red, she would have died anyway because her lack of intelligence would have gotten her killed by the wolf. This is not the case. Once Red and Snow go out to hunt the wolf, it is discovered that Red is not as stupid as the classic stories made her out to be. She teaches Snow White how to track animals using prints and marks in the snow. Instead of wandering aimlessly through the woods, Red is prepared and has her wits about her. When Snow asks her how she learned all of her skills Red simply replies, "When there is something I want, I'm good at tracking it down" ("Red-Handed"). This shows that Red is not one to sit back and wait to be rescued. She prefers to do the saving because it is her life that has to be saved. All of the weaker, less realistic parts of Red's character that are in the classic stories are replaced in Once Upon A Time with stronger, more interesting characteristics. Red goes from being a flat, one-dimensional character to a dynamic heroine, who takes her own destiny into her hands.

This metamorphosis includes the part of the story where Red has to be saved from the wolf. The interesting twist that Once Upon A Time puts on Little Red Riding Hood's story is that she is the wolf. The only thing that keeps her from turning is the red cloak she is so famous for. Of course, when Red discovers this, she has a pivotal moment of character development. She could choose to run from the people who care about her, and turn her back on everything. However, that is not the choice she makes. Instead, Red stays with her family, but starts to wear her cloak more often and always puts their safety before her own. Red is scared and confused, but she chooses every day to keep living and doesn't let her strange, new condition stop her. Then, one day, she finds a clan of people like her. They teach her how to control the wolf inside of her. The people who teach her say "The only way you can defeat the wolf is by accepting it as a part of you" ("Children of the Moon"). Once Red realizes that she doesn't need to be afraid of the animal inside her, she gains control of it. With the help of the clan, she defeats the wolf inside herself, no huntsman needed. Even though she makes mistakes and is often afraid, the only person that Red truly needs is herself. In fact, Red is one of the only fairy tale characters who never has a rescuing prince. Even in Once Upon A Time, Red doesn't need a man in her life. Her friends and family are the most important thing to Red. So, when the clan later turns their back on her and tries to kill Snow White, Red comes to her rescue. The clan is angry because they believe that all humans cause destruction and they insist that Red can't be part of both worlds. However, Red knows that she can be, so when the leader of the clan tells Red, "You chose [Snow]," Red responds, "No, I chose me" ("Children of the Moon"). By protecting Snow, Red is saying that she refuses to accept the black and white world presented to her by the wolves. She knows she can have both, and she will. When it comes to the being saved aspect of Red Riding Hood's story, Once Upon A Time produces a character who doesn't need to be saved by anyone and in fact saves others in addition to herself.



Those qualities are also a large part of the gender role that *Once Upon A Time's* Little Red Riding Hood is challenging. Red defies the traditional stereotype that women cannot save themselves. In fairy tales and the real world, women are often told that it is better to sit back and let the man do the work. They are told men will save them. However, Red is not about to passively sit back and wait for someone else to save her. She is the model of a self-rescuing princess who can stand on her own two feet. This is a huge reversal from what is usually seen in fairy tales. Red uses her own intelligence to save herself. In a traditional fairy tale, the smart, independent, and strong willed women are not the princesses. As Leslee Kuykendal and Brian Sturm explain in their critical analysis of feminist literature, "powerful women in fairy tales are generally ugly if not also evil" (Kuykendal 39). If a woman is portrayed as assertive she will end up being the villain of the story. Furthermore, the intelligent woman's character is undermined by the fact that she is often incapable of being caring, loving, kind or anything else positive. Women who save themselves don't usually get happy endings; Red Riding Hood breaks the mold. She is a female character who is beautiful, smart, independent, capable, loving and caring. She is a realistic woman who isn't defined by one or two arbitrary characteristics, but instead has real human depth. Little Red Riding Hood in *Once Upon A Time* stands for self-saving and female empowerment.

While *Once Upon A Time* is challenging the gender stereotypes in new and interesting ways, the question arises: is it necessary? Are girls really affected by the gender roles in fairy tales? Study after study has proven that they are. One of the most reliable studies on this subject was conducted by fairy tale analyst Kristin Wardetzky in Germany in 1990. In the study, Wardetzky asked 2,470 children between the ages of eight and ten (grades two and four) to write a fairy tale based on a predetermined opening line. The results speak for themselves. Wardetzky found that if the opening line indicated "repression and/or becoming overcome by anxiety" the majority of children would write the story with a female protagonist (164). Meanwhile, if the character was one that suggested "sovereignty, autonomy, or personal initiative" the students would choose a male protagonist (Wardetzky 164). Furthermore, when it came time for the children to write a scene where the protagonist was tried or tested, girls only wrote a battle scene if the protagonist was male. There was not a single story where "girls...produced a sword swinging heroine who kills a monster" (169). So to say that girls are effected by the gender roles of typical fairy tales would perhaps be an understatement. The gender roles are so ingrained in their heads that even when they write their own story, the girl can't or doesn't save herself. So, at least on a subliminal level, girls are being effected by the gender roles that fairy tales teach.

Since it is obvious that girls are being influenced by what they read in fairy tales, it is easier to understand the importance of what *Once Upon A Time* is doing. By reversing and challenging stereotypical gender roles *Once Upon A Time* is teaching girls that they can be more than the standard that society has traditionally set for them. In a world where women are constantly under a barrage of expectations to be perfect, pretty, obedient, and nothing more *Once Upon A Time* is trying to change that. The show is teaching girls that they have power, that they can save themselves, that they are smart, and that they do not always have to be perfect. In addition to that, the show is working to show girls that gender roles are not as black and white as fairy tales make them seem. Fairy tales have always shown men and women as cookie cutter opposites of each other that must meet the exact expectations set for them. This is obviously inaccurate, and teaching young children that it is true causes them to have unrealistic expectations about their own roles in society. As Kuykendall and Sturm explain "Real men and women play roles beyond the traditional gender-defined positions depicted in canonical fairy tales" (40). It is important for young children to understand that men and women in real life will not

always fit the mold that fairy tales say they should. *Once Upon A Time* tries to show that phenomenon by making their characters more realistic and relatable. The show features people that make mistakes, princesses that are completely self-rescuing, and men that aren't always strong. These characters are more accurate depictions of real people, and *Once Upon A Time* manages to show them while still keeping the magic and excitement of a traditional fairy tale. That is what makes the show so important in society today. Children deserve to see the magic and wonder of fairy tales, but they also deserve to see realistic expectations of themselves and others. That is exactly what *Once Upon A Time* is doing.

In the constantly evolving world of fairy tales, female empowerment is one of the newest trends. The sword-swinging heroine is unfamiliar in a world where there are hundreds upon hundreds of fairy tale adaptations. However, *Once Upon A Time* is at the forefront of the movement to make female characters with real human depth. The show's version of Belle and Little Red Riding Hood are just the tip of the iceberg. They represent a small portion of the strong, powerful, smart women that the show features. The show is challenging stereotypical gender roles with every opportunity, and has been rewarded for it. *Once* has been on air since 2012, and remains one of the most popular shows on mainstream television. This means that society and women appreciate shows like *Once*. Princesses who are capable in their own right are appreciated in today's society. Hopefully, that will inspire other shows, movies, and books to follow in their footsteps. For now, however, women looking for empowered females need not look any further than Emma Swan and her fairy tale friends, a collection of characters who prove that being a self-rescuing princess is not only possible, it's the best way to find a happy ending.

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## Expressive- English 2010

1<sup>st</sup> Place Winner: Katie Meyer, "An Impressionable Mind"

For Professor Chelsea Campbell

There is something despicable about the height of library counters. I swear they're all seven feet tall, catering only to the sick-minded Harlem Globetrotters who built them. Imagine a tiny girl – spoiler alert, it's me - sporting thick-lensed glasses and uneven ponytails, standing off in the corner trying to gather the courage to storm the Walls of Jericho. Mix this with the fact that my mother trusted me too much. This meant that I, at the tender age of six, was allowed to go to the library by myself and stay as long as I wanted. Some of the library regulars probably thought I was a homeless orphan, seeking refuge in an expansive collection of books. A man that looked like Santa even gave me a dollar once while I was hiding in the nonfiction section.

I needed a lot of courage - and a ladder - to approach the check-out desk. I hadn't checked anything out in months. The last time I had tried, I was given one of those sickly-sweet smiles by a lady who tried too hard to look seventeen, and was told that I was "too young" to understand the subject matter before me. Her word choice baffled me. I had read the description on the back of the book – how could Harry Potter do anything that I was too young to understand? He seemed like an ordinary kid trying to get through the school year. I stood at the counter, my face turning red from both embarrassment and the effort of standing on my tip-toes like a ballerina, and eventually just had to give in and leave. I felt betrayed by this J.K Rowling person, and put the book back on the shelf in a huff of misguided anger. This firm insistence that I was too young to pursue my interests kept me away from that dreaded check-out desk. I feared the judgmental look of the head librarian, and found myself reaching for impossibly thin books with lots of pictures to appease her.

I can't say much for my limited talents, but I can say that I have always been a gifted reader. As soon as I learned the alphabet, I could read any word. I absolutely loathed first through third grade, when we were forced to visit with a "grammar specialist" each month in order to assess our learning. She would give us flashcards with words printed on them, ask us to sound out each syllable, and then turn over the card and have us rewrite the word on paper. I'm not saying there's anything wrong with this system, but I was so far beyond words like 'boat' and 'puppy' that I felt nauseated. Once, when given the word 'cat', I wrote 'George Washington' in very aggressive letters on the paper, tearing the paper in half in the process. It was the most rebellious thing I have done to this day. Needless to say, the staff found my advanced reading rather inconvenient. I would finish reading and writing assignments too early, so to take up time I would write five times as much as I was supposed to. The teachers thought I was making more work for them on purpose. The students thought I was a show-off. I was just bored.

Essentially, the two main things I was interested in at the time, reading and writing, were being denied of me in a significant way. I would go to the library and read big books, then I would go to school and be scolded for my ambition. I felt like I was doing something wrong. I felt guilty. I was reading Harry Potter like it was a crime, for Heaven's sake. So, I did what any other self-conscious young'un might do – I dumbed down. I slowed down on assignments, and stopped daydreaming about going to the midnight release of the new Harry Potter book. For so long, I forced myself to believe that I was just like everybody else, and if this is done for long enough, it becomes a reality. I wasn't the show-off anymore. I

wasn't the overachiever who complained about the lack of chapters in the reading material. I was just the quiet kid who got good grades and nothing more. Still, I missed intellectual stimulation, and would sometimes slip away and read *David Copperfield* in a quiet recess of the library. I was held back for so long that I forgot what it was like to be extraordinary.

High school marked my transition from being the big fish in a little pond to being the little fish in a big pond. It was where I realized the mistake I had made in 'dumbing down' so many years ago. I went to a high school full of snobby rich kids, and most of my friends graduated with a 4.3 GPA or higher. They had gone to private schools with access to more specialized classes, meaning they had a better idea of what they wanted to do with their lives, and were exceptionally motivated. Last year, while I was applying for various colleges, I couldn't help but feel horrendously inadequate. I would obsessively browse university websites, looking up the average GPAs of their incoming students and scowling at my own GPA with displeasure. It didn't matter how many books I read because my peers would always read more. It didn't matter how much I revised my essays because they would always revise better and more thoroughly. Due to my unhealthy need to compare myself to everyone else, my love for writing slowly shriveled and died, and unfortunately, it has yet to be revived. I found solace – and still do – in books; I could read faster than anyone I knew. I couldn't help but blame my academic shortcomings on my grade school teachers who refused to see my potential. Of course, by that time in my life it was no longer their fault, but mine. I had played the victim for too long.

One doesn't have to be a Shakespeare scholar to distinguish this series of events as a tragedy. Was I the next Rain Man, an underappreciated Van Gogh, a savant tortured by my own brilliance? Definitely not. I was just an above-average reader who liked to consider book characters my friends. Since starting college, I feel a lot more confident in my reading and writing capabilities, but I have to wonder where I would be right now if I had had access to a private school, or a program for advanced readers at an early age. Maybe I'd be the most motivated and ambitious girl on this side of the Mississippi. I might have found the cure for cancer. Or I might be feeling slightly better about myself as I sit in my poorly lit room writing this essay. It's impossible to say, but I am now a very strong advocate for advanced programs for kids like me who were made to feel ashamed of their intelligence. The young mind is an impressionable one, and should hear 'no' as little as possible. Sometimes seeds are denied sun and water for too long, and thus never become plants.