

REVISIONS

Best Student Essays of The University of North Carolina at Pembroke

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ReVisions: Best Student Essays is a publication designed to celebrate the finest nonfiction work composed by undergraduate students at The University of North Carolina at Pembroke. This issue was designed and produced by the students in PRE 3450: Computer-Assisted Editing and Publication Design.

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Essays may cover any topic within any field of study at UNCP. We encourage submissions from all fields and majors, but we do not publish fiction or poetry. All submissions must be nominated by a UNCP faculty member. Students who believe that they have a strong essay for submission are encouraged to ask a faculty member to sponsor that essay. Nomination forms are available at <http://www.uncp.edu/et/revisions>.

Manuscript requirements: no more than 3,000 words in length and double-spaced. Do not include any names or identifying information on the essay itself; use the nomination form as a cover sheet, making sure to fill out all parts of the form. Please submit electronically the nomination form and the nominated essay in one Word or RTF file to teagan.decker@uncp.edu.

All essays will be read and judged in a blind selection process. If a submission is chosen for publication, the author will be notified and asked to submit a brief biography, and a photograph of the author will be taken to be included in the publication.


Nominations to be considered for publication in the Spring 2014 issue will be accepted until December 2013. For further information, contact Dr. Teagan Decker, Lowry Bldg. 313, (910) 521-6437, teagan.decker@uncp.edu.

The cover photo shows the image embedded in the terrazzo floor at the entrance to the new Health Sciences Building, which was dedicated in August 2012. The medicine wheel carried on the back of a turtle, designed by Durham artist Joe Liles, represents the University's connection to its founding by American Indians. It is also an ancient symbol of health and well-being. The photo was taken by Alex White, a senior business major and member of the *Indianhead* yearbook photography staff.

REVISIONS: BEST STUDENT ESSAYS

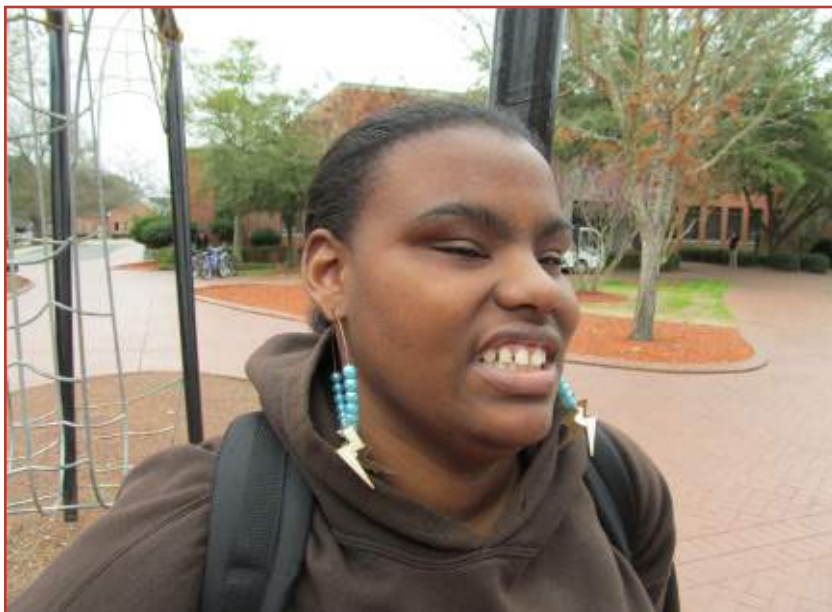
Vol. 13

DON'T TURN OUT THE LIGHT IN MY MIND.....	4
Daria Bannerman	
ENG 3590: Creative Nonfiction	
OPERATIC TOLKIEN	9
M. Gordon Byrd	
ENGS 2160: Tolkien and the Middle Ages	
THE DEVIL'S IN THE DETAILS	12
Matthew Cowper	
ENG 2060: World Literature	
LOSS OF ILLUSION; SEED OF INSURGENCY	16
Carol Anne Fry	
ENG 3040: Principles of Literary Study	
A NEW GENERATION OF GRADUATES.....	21
Jesenia Morales	
ENG 1060: Composition II	

Click on any title in the Table of Contents above to go to the start of that essay. Click on the  at the end of any essay to return to the Table of Contents page.

DON'T TURN OUT THE LIGHT IN MY MIND

By Daria Bannerman



Daria Bannerman is a senior at UNCP. She is majoring in English, and she has a minor in creative writing.

My essay “Don’t Turn Out the Light in My Mind” is about the memories I have of my hometown; the memories try to capture the good my town has to offer, as well as the experiences I have had in my life, such as my house flooding. I felt the need to write this essay because I wanted to remind myself of the good times I have had in my hometown. Before I wrote this essay, I often focused on how isolated I felt while being there. Also, I felt that memory was important, and I wanted to capture what it was like to have to go back in my mind and remember which house I was in, which party I attended, etc. The memories I share come from my childhood, teenage, and adult years—in that order. When events take place, most people use sight to keep track of what happens to them, but I use my ears. However, what I and most people have in common is that we use memory to recall what has happened.

My House

My house is a strong one. In Maple Hill, my parents purchased it in 1994. It has two bathrooms and three bedrooms. When I open the front door, I walk straight until I have to turn right to get to my room. There are pictures on the wall, and before the flood, all the doors would shut all the way. I was an only child; I used to have the room that was farthest from the small bathroom. We had two TVs. It was perfect until water invaded its insides. It has been through four floods. The two strongest floods have been caused by hurricanes Bonnie and Floyd. Hurricane Bonnie hit my (my parents’) home in 1996. Anyways, I remember coming home from The Gov-

ernor Morehead School for the Blind on a Thursday night in September. The charter bus I was riding was really cold, and I was bored. I mostly sat there, listening to the bus monitors talk on Walkie Talkies, informing our parents that we would be returning home because of the storm. It rained all of that day. When I got off of the bus, my mom came and walked me to the car. I was so happy to be home. I was with my family. Now, I do remember that night because I wanted to sleep with my parents. Before then, my mom was working on weaning me from sleeping in her bed, but that night, I don’t think she really cared. We all slept good, until we woke up the next day.

“Oh shit!” my father exclaimed. My mom just gasped. A few seconds later, I would discover that there was water in our home.

“Wow!” I screamed.

I didn’t think anything of it because I was seven at the time. My dad walked me to a chair. I wanted to drink some water from my water bottle, but my dad didn’t think it was a good idea. I sat down, until my parents decided to leave the home. I was short back then, so I had to get on my father’s back. I think the water would have been up to my chest; I’m not sure. I probably would have drowned, if my dad did not carry me on his back. I loved water, but I was very afraid of drowning. I’ve always feared the possibility of never returning to the surface of the water. Well, we made it out of our yard safely. There was water in the middle of the road, and I remember wanting to play in it, but my mom kept telling me that there might be snakes in there.

“Get outa that wata!” she said.

I kept trying to get to that water, until I was taken to my grandmother’s house.

Though I spent half my time in Maple Hill and half my time in Raleigh, Maple Hill is where my roots are. My family lives there. When my house experienced its first flood, it marked a specific change. When my family and I could move back into the house, the first thing I noticed was the way the carpet sounded under my feet. It was clear that most of the water had gone, but some of it was still in the carpet. The second thing I noticed was the way it smelled. It smelled like old water. Before the house was flooded, it still had that new house smell, kind of. Looking back on this ordeal, I wish I had taken my house’s first flood seriously.

Maple Hill

“Don’t forget where you’ve come from.” This aphorism has been thrown around ever since... well,

I don't know. Everyone and her mother says it. Where a person comes from is very important. It's her place of origin, whether she likes it or not. I like my place of origin just fine; however, I know that someday, I will have to depart from it. Life demands that I do this.

Maple Hill is a small community in North Carolina; it is equidistant from cities Jacksonville and Burgaw, and from a small town called Chiquapin. Almost every house in this small community has a yard where people can take time to relax, and most every house has a porch. However, it takes me twenty minutes to get to any stores. In places where the stores are located—especially in Jacksonville and Wilmington—the entertainment and action are pre-made for me. However, in my small community, I have to create my own entertainment and action. For example, my mom and I will sit on the porch and talk, or we'll have cookouts for no reason. Since most people who live in Maple Hill know this—including me—I have wondered why it is categorized as a stub on the Wikipedia page. According to Wikipedia, a stub is a small amount of information. I was curious about whether or not my small community would be written about. That, and I was totally bored. When I read that the information that was provided was a stub, I was kind of upset. I say kind of because I expected it. The only people who talk about Maple Hill are the people who live there. No one knows who wrote the little blurb about this community. Reading Wikipedia articles is like looking at a virtual commune. Everyone who is not afraid of getting intimate with a working computer is writing and editing information. However, there was no commune-like structure with this little stub about my community. Oh my word! There is lots of other evidence about that town/community/whatever it is. Man! There are photos of the small community on Facebook, there is a Facebook group named after them, and there is even a program for the youth. Perhaps I should join the virtual commune and add that little tid-bit to the “stub.” I've read the article, and it has the population, and the amount of square feet it has. It even has the coordinates on a map. I'll bet it's placed in one little grid. I don't know how many houses are in Maple Hill; most of them are probably buried in the woods.

Let Go, Please!

Teenage years are some of the most trying years of one's life. Before they arrive, one isn't in a hurry to temporarily get away from her parents. Now that she is right in the midst of those teenage years, she is sort of anxious. This happened to me. I tried to stay with a friend named Yessie when I was thirteen, but my

mom wouldn't let me.

“Ma, I wanna stay with Yessie next weekend,” I say.

“You can't.” “Why?” “Because I don't know her parents. This world is a crazy place.” “Ma, nothing will happen to me; Yessie is my friend.” “I said no. Don't ask me again.”

Mothers have the tendency to be overly protective over their children; my mother was no different. Though I knew she was trying to protect me, this ruined most of my weekend. She wouldn't let me because she didn't know my friend's parents. But I knew my friend, so why couldn't I spend the weekend with her? She was nice—well, she is nice. But, I was angry with my mother because I felt isolated when I returned home from school. I didn't have many friends at home. And, I didn't want to be home bored. OK. Scratch that. I didn't want to be bored alone. I wanted to be bored with other people who were my age. Plus, it didn't really help that some of my friends were already spending weekends together. That made me feel even more isolated.

Franquette's Birthday Party

I remember the first party I went to; I was sixteen at the time. It was my cousin Franquette's seventeenth birthday. It was held at some building with two rooms. Or was it three? I don't know. All I know was that my mom was making a huge deal out of it. “Here, Daria. Put this outfit on,” she insisted. I never understood why a change of clothes is required when going to a party. I looked fine in the clothes I was wearing. Perhaps the outfit I had to wear looked a little cuter. My mom did something to my hair. She flat-ironed it, and then she made me up. Though I knew I was lookin' fresh to death, I knew that the only people I would be impressing were my cousins.

When I was completely dolled up, I headed for the door. “You can sit back down,” Mom said. “It ain't time to go yet.”

I sat back down, watching Lord knows what on TV. When it was finally time to leave, Mom and I went to the car. “You make sure you have a good time,” she says. “I'll try.” When we arrived at the building, music was already playing at a loud volume. I was placed in a chair next to a table. Only half the people showed up, but the longer I sat there, the more people arrived. Most everyone was dancing except me. Two of my cousins were coaxing me to get up and dance, but I wouldn't. Sure, I like dancing in my room, in a place where rarely anyone visits, but I wasn't too thrilled about dancing in front of people. Eventually, I gave in. At first I felt awkward because I wasn't sure of what to do. When I had finally settled

Daria's essay documents small-town life in Maple Hill, North Carolina. Creative-nonfiction narratives often place readers into pockets of visualization, but Daria's essay demands readers not to see life lived in a small town, but rather to feel colors, textures, language—as they relate to how life is lived in Maple Hill.

~Dr. David Marquard

DON'T TURN OUT THE LIGHT IN MY MIND

on just moving my shoulders, the girl I was dancing with encouraged me to move my feet. In fact, she taught me how to two-step. At this point, I was feeling good. “That’s right, girl! You got it!” she cheered. “Put some oomph into it.”

When the first song ended, I was dancing with another person. It was a much faster one and a little bit harder to dance to. Fortunately, another familiar person helped me. “Just do the two-step,” she instructed. I happily two-stepped to PYT, by Michael Jackson. In fact, I felt so happy that I dropped it like it was hot! “There you go! That’s right!” someone shouted. I do believe I surprised myself, for I had never attempted to do such a dance move.

I ended up dancing almost the entire time. I didn’t arrive home until 1:00 that morning.

The next day, most everybody knew I had gone to a party the night before. When I visited my grandma, she questioned me about it. “So, I heard you went to a party,” she stated. “Yeah,” I smiled. “Did you enjoy yourself?” “I guess,” I said, trying to conceal my excitement. “You know you did.”

The next thing I knew, Aunt Shawn and Uncle Junior were questioning me about it, too. “I didn’t know you were the partying type,” Uncle Junior said. “Did you have fun?” “Yes.” “There’s nothing wrong with that.” It was almost as if they were congratulating me. Perhaps, I had done what seemed impossible. I stayed up until 1:00 a.m., jamming to some awesome hip-hop. That night, I was really jamming. There was no chair-dancing involved, no fiercely mouthing words to a song I knew, and most importantly, there was no head bobbing. I bravely got up and danced with the rest of the crowd.

Daniel’s and Mom’s Responses

Man, I sure do miss Raleigh, and I sometimes get upset when Daniel, one of my friends—who happens to live in Raleigh—tells me something like “Girl, we need to get you up to Raleigh soon.” Daniel is the type of friend who loves hanging out with people; he also loves to eat and play *Mortal Kombat*. Like me, he is visually impaired, and most of his friends are scattered across NC. I don’t have much transportation, and, I know that my mom will take me to Raleigh, but, when I ask her to, she’s like, “How are you going to get there?” What she really means to ask is if I’ve thought of who will take me. And, I always respond by saying “I don’t know.” Somehow, my mom finds a way to get me there, even if she has to request the help of one of my cousins. My mom is an awesome person, inside and out. She will not hesitate to do anything I ask, within reason, of course. She is the type of person who will get off of work just to visit

me. However, she doesn’t directly mouth the words “I’ll do anything for you.” She is a woman of action.

The Schoolhouse

The schoolhouse is over the creek, and it doesn’t take us long to drive there. We hardly go there, unless we go to the annual parade. (I can’t wait until the next one. I want my funnel cake!) Plus, I get to spend some time with a few friends. Hopefully, it won’t rain.

Lately, though, it seems as if the amount of people at the parade fluctuates. Back in the nineties, it used to be on and poppin’! There used to be a lot more vendors. My favorite vendors were the toy vendors, even though people sold toy motorcycles. Of course, I didn’t eat much food back then. Now, when I go to the parade, I just eat and walk around. I listen to the cacophony of sounds that come from all of the booths. Church music plays on stage, while hip-hop and R&B plays in the individual booths and floats. One can get her praise on while attending the auction (which was held in front of the stage), and get crunked at the booth that sells chicken and fish plates. Hey, I figure, if I’m going to be chilling at the parade from 10:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m., I may as well enjoy myself.

Fall Break

In October of 2011, I went home for fall break. I was so excited about going home because the annual parade would be held on that upcoming Saturday. Since I arrived home on a Wednesday evening, I had to wait. I spent most of my time reading Brailled magazines that had come through the mail, and reading various blogs that my friends had updated. I sat on the front porch a lot during that break because the weather allowed it. Since my grandmother’s birthday was that Friday, Mom and I celebrated it at her house. Grandma’s house is bigger than mine; it has three bedrooms and two bathrooms, but the rooms are a little bigger. Her house has two living rooms—I think, and there are a few pictures on the walls. Though there are two living rooms, most of us sit in the one that has the TV in it. When we arrived, she had a full house. My cousins, aunts, uncles, and brother were already there. Mom had cooked most of the food. We were watching Jamie Foxx reruns while waiting for the food to finish cooking. When everything was ready, we were waiting for Aunt Shawn to come to the table, so we could say grace and eat. “Come on, Shawn,” Deon urged. “We’re hungry. You done seen the wedding episode of Jamie Foxx God knows how many times.” “So, I still wanna see it,” she said. “I love this episode. It looks so pretty.” When the show was over, Shawn came to the table, and we said grace and

ate some fried chicken, string beans, spaghetti salad, meatballs, macaroni and cheese, and cake. “Happy birthday, Grandma,” I said. “Thank you,” she said. When I finished eating, we watched the hip-hop awards. I didn’t get to watch the entire show because my mom, brother, and I went home.

When Saturday came, I awoke at 7:00 a.m. because Loletha and her children—my cousins—would be participating in the parade. I think they would be performing some kind of dance. My mom had to drive to Bernice’s house (Loletha was over there). I had to sit at Bernice’s house for a while because they weren’t ready to go. Her house is a little larger than mine. When I walked in, I walked straight until I found the couch. The couch was a comfortable one, with various items on it. I found mostly clothes, but I pushed them over so that I could make room for me. If I had turned left after walking through the front door, I would find myself in Bernice’s small kitchen. While I was relaxing on her couch, her puppy was in the kitchen. Her name was Sexy. I am not lying. I knew her name was Sexy because her owner was yelling at her for pooping on the kitchen floor. She was a small, cuddly puppy with longish fur. She never barked and I never got bitten. I have never heard of a puppy with that name. So, I asked her if I could pet Sexy. “Yeah. Here,” Loletha responded. She loved me to death. I petted her and loved on her, and she acted like she didn’t want to leave me. I didn’t want to leave her, either, but we had to go.

The Parade

We listened to rap music all the way to the schoolhouse, which wasn’t a long way from Bernice’s house. When we got there, they practiced their dance routine a lot! Man! I don’t understand Loletha’s logic because all of the music on her CD was not edited. Teenagers were not the only ones dancing to “They Know” by Drake, and “Booty Work” by T-Payne; little kids would also dance to those songs. I stood on the side of the road for at least an hour until I was tired of standing. “You wanna get in the van?” Loletha asked. “Yeah.”

I sat in the van. There were things on the floor and some things on the chair. I can’t stand to get in a vehicle with floors full of trash. Ugh! We rode up and down the road. It was awesome, too! Teresa—another one of my cousins—had some CDs of her own. She has some really awesome songs. One of the songs I liked was “Baby Makin’ Hips.” I loved that it made me want to dance, and if I wasn’t afraid of chair-dancing in front of people, I would have thrown down, for real.

When it was time to get out of the van, I want-

ed something to eat. The smell of food was everywhere. I smelled French fries, barbecue, grilled ribs, fried chicken... I was wishing all of it was free. Now, I usually eat savory food before I eat sweets, but on this particular day, the reverse happened. “I want a funnel cake,” I told Loletha. “You sure? “You don’t want no chicken or nothing like that?” “No.” We went to the funnel cake booth. I got my funnel cake the usual way, with powdered sugar. (I don’t like all that cinnamon and strawberries on funnel cakes. That’s too over the top for me). It was scorching outside, so I decided to take off my UNCP hoodie. I handed it to Loletha. We were standing in front of the schoolhouse then. Various people were making announcements of the future speakers and singers. I started to get bored, so we walked back to the booth Loletha was working at. I drank some water, listened to interesting conversation, and I fell asleep. Falling asleep is fairly easy to do when one is sitting in a lawn chair. When I awoke, I wanted a doughnut. Sharell, my godmother, had bought some from another booth. A man whose name I could not recall handed me one. “It’s good, ain’t it?” he wondered. “Yeah,” I said, with a bit of doughnut in my mouth. Eventually, I would return home.


Memories

Although I spent over half my life in Raleigh, I have had some good times in Maple Hill. I’ve had fun at the parades and at home. I didn’t always have pleasant experiences (my house flooded four times), but, like a person who has been weighed down by the effects of life’s trials, my house is still standing. I’ve experienced twenty-three years on this Earth, and these are the memories that are near and dear to my heart. We all have those moments we think about from time to time, especially the moments that deal with family. Memory is a wonderful thing, and everyone has (or has had) the ability to remember. Some memories are vivid, other memories are not. We have a selective memory. If we are participating in an event and we believe it’s important, we will keep it. We will choose to remember the details. However, when we have unpleasant experiences, we choose to bury them in the back of our minds. Details are very important because no one likes vagueness. For most people, remembering exactly how certain objects look is not that difficult to do. Some people know the outfit they wore on the night they went to the movies... or something. If they can’t they have photos. “My sister tagged me on Facebook,” one might say. I can remember what my house looks like, in terms of where various objects are placed, but I do not know what color anything is. For instance, when I was de-

DON'T TURN OUT THE LIGHT IN MY MIND

scribing the inside of my house, I couldn't tell you what color the furniture or the carpet was. I couldn't even tell you what color the walls were. All I could tell you was that there were rooms, and that one room was smaller than the next. I'm blind, and the need to provide descriptions is imperative. These descriptions are not just for me; sighted people are not the only ones who need to describe to me. I need to describe things to them. Though I can provide most descriptions, this is really tricky.

"No, I wasn't wearing a red shirt yesterday; it was a green one. Or maybe it was blue." When describing those events, I could remember most of the dialog. Actually, the dialogue was just about all I could remember. I could tell you what was said, and I tried to describe other people's reactions, but when it came to describing the insides of houses, I struggled a bit. I know how much people love details. The weird thing is people tell me that I have a phenomenal memory. "Girl, you remember more things than I do," my mom would say. "You're a genius," an uncle would praise. I am not a genius by any means; I just have to pay attention more than anyone else. The difference between the way I remember things

and the way others remember things is that I have to use my imagination. I tried my best to be accurate, but there were times when I knew I couldn't be completely accurate. For example, I could have said that the color of my house was white and brown, but I could have been wrong. Of course, I could have asked my parents, but I didn't get around to it. I was skeptical of trying to guess the colors of various buildings because I couldn't be precise. The events that have been written above are the ones that stick out in my mind. They have stayed with me forever. Some of the memories were firsts. By that, I mean these experiences were experienced for the first time. For example: Bonnie was the first hurricane I remembered experiencing, and Franquette's birthday was the first party I had attended. Actually, it was the first party that lasted more than two hours. I have attended the rest of the events multiple times. The point is, I may not remember the exact amount of times I attended the Maple Hill parade or even the amount of parties I've gone to. I remembered what it was like to be there with people I know and don't know. That is how everyone remembers; everyone cannot be exact about what they remember, sighted or not. 

OPERATIC TOLKIEN: THE ONE RING TO INFLUENCE THEM ALL

By M. Gordon Byrd

“The whole of beautiful art and of great art belongs here; their common essence is gratitude.” —Friedrich Nietzsche

Tolkien owes much to those who wrote his stories before him. The *Beowulf* poet, the chroniclers of Norse mythology, and those who remembered “The Battle of Maldon” in verse would hardly believe their stories had been adapted to fit into a fantasy world existing in the mind of a philologist professor at Oxford. Even the Norse architecture and Anglo-Saxon artifacts seem to take shape in the imaginary world of Tolkien’s Middle Earth. Is it any wonder then that others, who were as affected by Tolkien’s work as he was by the ancient world he studied, would come along and interpret Tolkien’s world through their respective artistic abilities? Other writers and novelists draw from Tolkien to construct their own parallel universes involving the lives of men, elves, and dwarf-kinds. Visual artists have put Tolkien’s words to graphics on canvas, television screens, and computer games. Tolkien’s influence was not limited to only these artistic forms, but Tolkien has also found his way into the world of music. Musicians, composers, and song-writers have been attracted to Tolkien ever since *The Hobbit* was published. Besides the composition of the soundtracks for the numerous Tolkien adaptations to film, Tolkien’s influence has stretched broad and wide throughout the musical world, encompassing nearly every genre of musical form from heavy-metal to symphonies.

Many of the musical references to Tolkien are seen in the lyrics, which are copied verbatim from Tolkien or are referring to Tolkien’s work either overtly or with more subtle clues. Rush, the Canadian rock group, has long announced their Tolkienian influence. Their song “Rivendell” is obviously a reference to Tolkien. In an interview Rush’s bassist, Geddy Lee, said, “The song ‘Rivendell’ became Rush’s personal tribute to Tolkien, being written at a period when the most influential of rockers used Tolkien references in their most classic songs.” The song is peaceful and expresses the joy of returning to a place that is relaxing, pleasant, and familiar. This song is much the opposite of the Tolkienian influence found in Australia’s black metal band: Summoning.

Summoning’s second album, *Minas Morgul*, relishes in the darkness of Middle Earth. Complete with screams from their vocalist and machine-gun drums and thunder sound effects, the band demonstrates how Tolkien’s world has many dark hues. Even when the band focuses on the heroes of Tolkien’s stories, it is dark. In their song “Khazad-Dûm,”



they scream words from Tolkien’s eulogies of Gandalf, Durin, and Balin strung together with Galadriel’s dismal prophecy to Legolas. The overall effect of Summoning’s style contrasts sharply with the pastoral music of Rush. However, all of these themes are present in *The Lord of the Rings* and to effectively capture the mood and voice of Tolkien’s masterpiece, both the light and the dark elements need to be present. To do this it takes the mind of a composer.

Paul C. Godfrey, an early admirer of Tolkien’s work, began composing an opera adaptation of *The Lord of the Rings* in 1974 (Personal Interview). Godfrey says, “My own interest in the works of Tolkien goes back now for over fifty years” (“The Silmarillion”). Composing such an opera for such a large, high-density story is complex, but Godfrey has endeavored to introduce each character or motif with unique instruments and flavors that are found in the text. Godfrey says, “My personal use of the motifs is far more instinctive and much more of a purely emotional reaction to the text” (“The Silmarillion”). Godfrey uses musical motifs, like Richard Wagner uses them, to represent characters in the opera.

Indeed, there are many references to Wagner’s work in fantasy literature put to music. The relationship between Godfrey’s music and Wagner’s music is much the same as the relationship between Tolkien’s Ring and Wagner’s. Scholars have argued for decades that the two men used the same ring as a character in their respective works. Jamie McGregor does a study comparing the two texts and the important plot elements involving the Ring. Comparing the two works

In December, 2012, M. Gordon Byrd completed his B.A. in English with two minors at UNCP. Now he is pursuing a graduate degree in English education and hopes to teach English in China. Gordon’s admiration of Tolkien’s work and career grew during a literature class on Tolkien instructed by Dr. Roger Ladd.

is a touchy subject since, as McGregor says, “Tolkien had an intense dislike for people noticing superficial resemblances between his works and others, especially when this tended to obscure what really mattered about them” (133). McGregor argues for the position that Tolkien did not “use” Wagner’s Ring, but he “corrected” Wagner’s rendering of Norse material and properly represented the Ring in *The Lord of the Rings* (McGregor 148). In McGregor’s study, he points out nine plot points involving the Ring, which line up identically with Wagner’s Ring. The similarities are unmistakable, but Tolkien was adamant about his Ring’s uniqueness, especially compared to the German composer’s, who was not a favorite of Tolkien because of Wagner’s anti-Semitism. But, because the two Englishmen, Tolkien and Godfrey, are both compared to their predecessor, Wagner, it is necessary to focus on this connection to establish any influence either on Tolkien or on Godfrey.

McGregor establishes a strong degree of similarity between Wagner and Tolkien’s Ring, despite the opposition. The opposition comes from Tolkien and many Tolkien fans. Tolkien says of the connection, “both rings were round, and there the resemblance ceases” (Tolkien, Carpenter, and Tolkien 306). Alex Ross of *The New Yorker* says that “Tolkien’s fans have long maintained a certain conspiracy of silence concerning Wagner.” Likewise, Wagner scholars and fans (Wagner, whose life preceded Tolkien’s, cannot have a say in the matter) reject the connection, because Tolkien is a low-bred imitation (McGregor 135). Nevertheless, the connections are undeniable and they continue to influence the interpretations of *The Lord of the Rings*.

Ross shows the influence of Wagner on Peter Jackson’s recent film adaptations and specifically points to Wagner’s influence on Howard Shore’s composition. Howard Shore’s score for the Jackson films is noticeably Wagnerian. When composing a symphony to complement a story about a ring that causes epic battles, it is difficult not to rely on previous composers who produced such a similar and unique piece. Ross points out the chord mergers and parallel themes used in both Shore and Wagner’s scores, but demonstrates how Shore remains aloof enough from Wagner so as not to upset fans and to create a new musical experience for the ground-breaking films. Ross says, “Shore manages the admirable feat of summoning up a Wagnerian atmosphere without copying the original. He knows the science of harmonic dread.” Ross’s technical knowledge of musical composition allows for a more in-depth analysis: he points out that “Conventional musical grammar says that these chords should keep their distance, but

they make an eerie couple.” The same “eerie couple” appears in Wagner’s *Der Ring des Nibelungen* (Ross). But, if the composer for Jackson’s films score is influenced by Wagner, a source Tolkien himself claims had no influence on him, then that is no evidence to suggest the existence of any direct connection between Tolkien and Wagner. However, if the connection between the two Rings is useful enough for Shore to carry over some themes, then musically the two Rings could be said to be contrapuntal.

The influence of Wagner on Tolkien-related material does not stop with Shore. Godfrey, the composer with the Tolkien estate behind him, also claims Wagnerian motifs in his own work (Godfrey). Godfrey makes it clear that he differs from Wagner’s style as much as Tolkien’s Ring differs from Wagner’s, but he also admits, “I use an adaptation of Wagner’s system of leitmotifs in the dramatic construction of my music, and the same themes occur in all my Tolkien work with the same significance.” The length of Godfrey’s opera is also similar to Wagner’s, spanning over multiple evenings (Godfrey). The main point here is that when composers put Tolkien to music, it sounds like Wagner.


Admittedly this could be due to the fact that Wagner is one of, if not the most, influential composers since the 19th century. Wagner used a similar story with the same Norse saga sources as Tolkien employed. Both had a small golden artifact as the central element, shifting the balance of power and moving the plot along. If there is a comparable case, such as a novel that features a woman locked into the body of a swan (i.e., *Swan Lake*), then the movie adaptation will most likely have a Tchaikovskian sound. Godfrey and Shore have realized the similarity between the two Rings, and whether they believe Wagner’s themes should be grafted into Tolkien’s story or that Tolkien himself wrote them knowingly is unclear, but the similarity between the two is evident. But what is strange is Tolkien’s denial of the connection, and what is more relevant to this topic is Godfrey’s denial of the connection between Godfrey’s Tolkien work and Wagner’s opera.

One possibility is that the loveliness of Tolkien’s words, which evoke a musical theme, are a sharp contrast to Wagner’s base words set to an emotionally charged musical backdrop. Tolkien opens up Middle Earth’s history with a literary symphony. The whole story unfolds by the changing and overlapping of the original song performed for Eru Ilúvatar (*Silmarillion* 429). To compose this verbose melody a composer must utilize dramatic melodies that contain such boisterous themes as the battles and the joys of many nations, and also the affecting tones of mournful ex-

Gordon did an excellent job of analyzing the nature of J. R. R. Tolkien’s cultural influence in the opera world, with special attention to the work of composer Paul C. Godfrey. He provides a succinct, clear overview of the larger cultural context of musical references to Tolkien’s work, and he effectively uses research to put this set of references into a larger context of interaction between literature and music. He displays a deep knowledge of both Tolkien and the musical comparisons here, and makes a solid case for his argument.

~Dr. Roger Ladd

periences and the stillness of nature. The composers who are drawn to this type of challenge are ones that have been influenced by Wagner. Even though his opera focused on the power of love rather than the power of heroism, Wagner's epic melody lends itself nicely to Tolkienian works. But that is the critical point. The direction the media and adapters of literature to film have been going does not put Wagner on center-stage, but rather as a looming presence in the darkness, called upon only to lend support to the lead actor, Tolkien. No film adaptations of Wagner are coming to the silver screen, but Tolkien's latest will appear before Christmas 2012. *The Hobbit* is just the most recent installment of the Tolkien film legacy which began with an animated-film adaptation of *The Hobbit* (1977) followed closely by an adaptation of *The Lord of the Rings* (1979). It is good foresight on Tolkien's part to distance himself from Wagner's Ring, since Tolkien would surpass his German predecessor in popularity, variety of medium, and gross sales. Godfrey and Shore have not done any work on Wagner, but the audiences to whom these composers wrote their music certainly appreciate the motifs and "eerie chords" they borrow and attach to Tolkien. Howard Shore was awarded two Oscars for Best Original Score from *The Lord of the Rings* movies. Godfrey has not received any Academy recognition for his scores, but his fan base is growing.

This study has looked into the different musical compositions Tolkien has affected with his Middle Earth literature. Musicians from various different genres have overtly included Tolkien in their music because of his fantastic stories (pun intended). As the epigraph states, great art is gratitude. Gratitude to those who influenced the artist, either to create something in imitation or adaption, or in Tolkien's case, to "correct" what came before. 

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THE DEVIL'S IN THE DETAILS

By Matthew Cowper



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In Part I of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's play *Faust*, the Devil we encounter isn't the all-powerful Lord of the Underworld that one would expect. Mephistopheles, for all his cunning, corruption, and boastfulness, is at times thwarted by various otherworldly rules and regulations. It makes him look laughably pathetic when he runs up against a limitation – surely *that* can't stop the Devil himself? How can we respect such a clown? But is Mephistopheles really as restricted as he appears? Is he really a bumbling oaf, or is he actually wary and efficient, using what power he *does* have to perfect effect?

A close reading of *Faust* supports the latter viewpoint. While Mephistopheles is certainly an unorthodox Devil, he's still enormously effective. He lulls Faust – and the reader – into complacency in the beginning of Part I; Faust, scholar and pseudo-mystic that he is, seems more than capable of handling *this* fool. But as the drama progresses, the sins – and the dead bodies – accumulate. Mephistopheles, according to Joakim Reinhard, proves to be both “a most entertaining scamp, and yet the most dangerous devil ever created by the imagination of man” (83).

We first encounter Mephistopheles in the play's prologue, when he visits God in Heaven. The Lord mentions Faust, an esteemed mortal he has hopes for: “Though now he serves me but confusedly,/ I shall soon lead him where the vapor clears./The gardener knows, however small the tree,/ That bloom and fruit adorn its later years” (682). Mephistopheles disagrees, claiming he can easily corrupt the restless Faust. It's a foregone conclusion to the cocksure Devil: “About

my bet I have no hesitation,/ and when I win, concede your stake/And let me triumph with a swelling breast” (683). Many critics, however, aren't taken in by this boasting. Jane Brown, who believes that Mephistopheles is ultimately “neither evil nor destructive,” argues that this scene “denies Mephistopheles's independent existence as an evil principle equivalent to God” (476). Similarly, the introduction to *Faust* in *the Norton Anthology of World Literature* states that Mephistopheles presents himself here as a jester-type figure, “apparently more playful than malign” (Lawall and Mack 679). These efforts to downplay Mephistopheles's power focus on what he *can't* do rather than on what he *can*. No, Mephistopheles can't annihilate the world like he wishes, but to say he's a failure is like saying someone who's aiming for genocide is a failure because they've “only” killed a thousand people. It's a given that Mephistopheles has severe limitations; it's also a given that he can still tally accomplishments in his infernal ledger.

When Mephistopheles next appears, he's a poodle. A *poodle*? Yes, the Devil takes the form of man's best friend to get near Faust. He follows Faust home, but is soon unnerved by all the talk of religion and by Faust's incantations; he begins to transform as a perplexed Faust watches: “This is no longer the shape of a dog!/Oh, what a specter I brought home!” (703). A humbled Mephistopheles, now in human form, admits that he was discomfited: “Profound respects to you and to your lore:/You made me sweat with all your chaff” (704). Right off the bat, the Devil's image takes a hit, and we wonder if all his talk about damning Faust is just bluster. The two then discuss Mephistopheles's “job,” and Mephistopheles makes it plain that being a destroyer is a frustrating occupation. Everything he eradicates grows back, everything he upsets returns to a state of calm: “I could rage in despair. . . . If I had not reserved myself the fire,/I should have nothing of my own” (706). Poor Devil! Life (or Death, more aptly) is no picnic. To make himself seem even more impotent, Mephistopheles claims he can't leave Faust's study because a pentagram on the threshold blocks him: “The poodle never noticed, when he first jumped in here,/But now it is a different case:/The Devil cannot leave this place” (706). When Faust suggests he leave via some other exit, Mephistopheles explains that this is impossible: “The devils and the demons have a law:/Where they slipped in, they always must withdraw” (706). Faust is amazed and delighted, and why not? He's snared the Devil! Not for long, however. Mephistopheles summons spirits to lull Faust to sleep, then orders a

rat to nibble the impeding pentagram. Once the design is broken, he's off, leaving Faust irritated because yet another spirit has escaped him. Still, not a very auspicious start for the seducer of souls, is it?

In the next scene, Mephistopheles returns to Faust's study, revealing even more limitations. The two hash out their famous (and infamous) agreement. Mephistopheles will act as both a servant and a guide, providing Faust with endless experiences, "more than any man has seen before" (712). But if Mephistopheles ever satiates Faust, the latter forfeits his life and soul. It's a dramatic moment – but then Mephistopheles deflates it. He lamely asks, "Could you give me a line or two?" meaning he wants Faust to write up a contract for the wager (713). A baffled and frustrated Faust asks: "Is not my spoken word sufficient warrant/When it commits my life eternally?" (713). Not for the Devil, it isn't. It has to be done "properly," which means Faust has to put the agreement on paper *and* sign his name in blood. Does Mephistopheles require the document to be notarized as well? No, he doesn't, but it wouldn't have been surprising if he did. After all this back-and-forth, the meticulous Devil finally gets his malevolent contract, and the duo's adventures begin.

After showing off his booze-creating powers in the "Auerbach's Keller" scene, Mephistopheles then transports Faust to a witch's kitchen to procure a youth potion for the mortal. Faust rightfully asks, "Why just the hag with all her grime!/Could you not brew it – with *your* head?" (727). No, the Devil replies, because such a thing requires time and patience: "The Devil taught them, true enough/But he himself can't make the stuff" (727). When the witch appears, she doesn't recognize Mephistopheles, which leads to harsh words on both sides. After correcting the hag, Mephistopheles then explains how, like a fussy and paranoid diva, he's changed his name and appearance. Even the most pernicious forces have to update their image to stay relevant, it appears, though this obviously leads to confusion amongst the supernatural community. But this supposedly comedic scene has depth and historical relevance. Reinhard, in a passage discussing iterations of Satan throughout the centuries, claims that the medieval Devil was "nothing but a gigantic boogie-man," a shallow proponent of sin that was more childish than serious (83). This changed with the addition of John Milton's Lucifer in *Paradise Lost* to the Satanic canon, but Milton's rebel still had an "awful grandeur," a trait that would be repeated by successive writers (84). But Goethe's Satan is a new brand: new name, new image, with twice the guile and "deprived . . . of every trace of majesty" (84). Mephistopheles has changed with the

times, and that adaptability makes him even more dangerous.

In the succeeding scenes, Mephistopheles finally reveals how corrupting he can be. Faust sees a young woman named Margaret, and is instantly smitten: "By heaven, this young girl is fair!/Her like I don't know anywhere" (733). But Margaret snubs him, so he turns to Mephistopheles: "Get me that girl, and don't ask why!" (733). At first, Mephistopheles balks, claiming that Margaret is too pure for him to deal with: "Over her I don't have any power" (733). But the lust-blinded Faust will have none of it, and "coerces" Mephistopheles into helping him. Mephistopheles "capitulates," saying he can take Faust to Margaret's room that very day. Faust demands that his devilish comrade find a present as well for Margaret, a task which Mephistopheles has no scruples carrying out.

But in the next scene, in Margaret's room, Faust's lust dissipates. Alone, he looks around the innocent young woman's room, becoming confused and remorseful: "Immediate pleasure was my bent./But now—in dreams of love I'm all but spent" (736). When Mephistopheles enters, Faust yells, "Away! I'll never come again" (736). But Mephistopheles has found a present for Margaret: a case full of jewels. Surely Faust isn't going to waste both time and Mephistopheles's powers? Faust doesn't forcefully object, so Mephistopheles puts the jewel-filled case in Margaret's chest, and the two exit. When Margaret finds the jewels, she's conflicted: they astonish her with their opulence, but they also highlight just how low she is in life's hierarchy. Her heretofore pleasant, care-free life is already being undermined.

The jewels don't stay long in Margaret's possession, however. Her mother finds them, and, suspecting that they're tainted, gives the mysterious largess to the church. Margaret is depressed at the loss, according to Mephistopheles: "She, of course, feels blue,/She sits and doesn't know what to do" (739). Faust demands more action from Mephistopheles, demands that he deliver him Margaret, somehow, someday: "Just fix it all to suit my will . . . Don't, Devil, act like sluggish paste!" (739). And so Mephistopheles goes to work again.

After putting more jewels in Margaret's possession, Mephistopheles comes up with a new plan: he'll access Margaret through her neighbor, Martha. He visits the two at Martha's house, and tells Martha that her husband has perished. To rub salt into the wound, he mocks their martial relationship, claims that Martha's husband had acquired treasure that's now lost, and encourages Martha to either remarry or to take a lover. When Martha wants additional proof

Mephistopheles, the devil with whom the scholar Faust makes a wager in Goethe's *Faust*, is an enigmatic figure. Matthew Cowper, responding to critical opinions, presents his original insights about the nature and scope of Mephistopheles's power. Matthew's well-argued academic essay is written in an entertaining personal style that suits the comic side of Goethe's devil.

~Dr. Monika Brown

of her husband's demise, Mephistopheles says he has someone who can corroborate the story: namely, Faust. When Faust hears he needs to lie to validate Mephistopheles's base, manipulative tale, he initially refuses, but is eventually forced to give in: "For you are right because I have no choice" (744). Margaret will be there, waiting in the garden along with Martha, and that's all that matters. Lying is just minor annoyance, a mere stepping stone – albeit a slippery one – on the path to Margaret.

Faust's meeting with Margaret is rapturous. They flirt, frolick, and kiss – but in the next scene, Faust again tries to distance himself from his volatile emotions. Taking a "sojourn in the wilderness," he believes he's "renewing" himself (749). But Mephistopheles appears, shattering Faust's solitude. He mocks Faust, claiming Faust is falling back into his old way of living, a way of living that he can't sustain: "[It] can't last indefinitely./Already you are spent again,/And soon you will be rent again,/By madness and anxiety" (749). Faust resists: "Let not the lust for [Margaret's] sweet limbs invade/And ravish once again my frenzied sense!" (750). But Mephistopheles keeps chipping away at Faust's resolve. Faust feels the inescapable pull of fate: he feels he's going to be the cause of Margaret's downfall, and he knows he can't stop himself from corrupting her. Finally, he accepts the inevitable: "Help, Devil, shorten this time of dread./What must be done, come let it be./Let then [Margaret's] fate come shattering down on my head./And let her perish now with me" (751). He returns to Margaret and convinces her to use a sleeping potion on her mother; once she's in a deep sleep, Faust can enter the home undetected. He will finally claim her sexually, much to Mephistopheles's delight: "I have my pleasure in it, too" (755). Faust protests against Mephistopheles's jeers, but his words glance off the Devil's granite-hard cynicism, doing no damage and proving no point. The sleeping potion, as it turns out, is actually toxic – it kills Margaret's mother. The tradeoff is horrible: to get one night alone with her lover, Margaret has inadvertently killed the woman who gave birth to her. The situation has reversed: now it's the Devil controlling events, hurling insults, and leaving corpses in his wake; all of his earlier handicaps seem trifling.

With both Faust and his beloved Margaret spiraling down into despair, Mephistopheles puts the icing on his insidious cake. Margaret's brother Valentine, enraged because his once-pure sister has been corrupted, attacks Faust. But Faust has help: Mephistopheles parries Valentine's strikes and then weakens his sword-hand. With Valentine now helpless, he tells Faust to "Thrust home!" (759). Faust does, and Valen-


tine is wounded fatally. Who's to blame for this murder? Mephistopheles didn't drive the point home – he just handled the parries. Would an incinerating blast of hellfire from Mephistopheles have worked better here? No, it wouldn't, and neither would teleportation or a choir of sleep-inducing spirits, both tricks in the Devil's arsenal. Mephistopheles simply dodges a few strikes and then lets Faust do the slaying. He then claims that they must "disappear" immediately: "[W]hile the police does not trouble me,/The blood ban is a thing I fear" (759). And so Faust again abandons his "lover." Even worse, Valentine curses Margaret as he dies, bluntly calling her a whore, which shocks her and damages her guilt-ridden mind further. This is the ultimate example of the *true* power of Mephistopheles: his abilities lie not in godly powers but in lies, innuendo, and misdirection. As he proves, a blackguard can accomplish much without actually *doing* much.

The now-pregnant Margaret is left alone to deal with the fallout. Once her baby is born, she kills it and ends up in prison for the crime, where her mind disintegrates into madness. Mephistopheles hides this knowledge from Faust, distracting him with phantasmagorical imagery in the "Walpurgis Night" scene. Faust is furious when he discovers Margaret's state: "Imprisoned! In irreparable misery! . . . And meanwhile you soothe me with insipid diversions; hide her growing grief from me, and let her perish helplessly!" (774). Mephistopheles's nonchalant reply: "She's not the first one" (Goethe 774). Reinhard notes the horrible brevity of this statement: "Simple it sounds, and yet ponder what it suggests, or conceals, as if behind a veil" (86). When Faust continues to rant, Mephistopheles attacks him mercilessly: "Why do you seek fellowship with us if you can't go through with it? . . . Who was it that plunged her into ruin? I or you?" (775) Faust insists that Mephistopheles help him save Margaret, but Mephistopheles can only do so much: he "cannot loosen the avenger's bonds, nor open his bolts" but he will "make the jailer's senses foggy" and prepare "magic horses" for the escape (775). Here are more limitations on the Devil, and Brown cites Mephistopheles's inability to free Margaret – as well as his inability to "deliver" her to Faust earlier in the play – as proving that he "possesses remarkably little power in the social realm" (479).

This "social realm" of Brown's is hard to pinpoint, for Mephistopheles has masterfully controlled social relations in the latter scenes of Part I. Brown's definition of "power" here would probably be for Mephistopheles to simply teleport Margaret out of the prison and into Faust's waiting arms. But what would that accomplish? Nothing for Mephistopheles

– it would be too easy, completely devoid of anguish. Like Valentine’s death, he makes Faust accept a heavy burden. The two travel to the dungeon, where Faust sees his so-called beloved in misery. She regains her lucidity, but still rejects her “beloved,” and Faust, with Mephistopheles’s prodding, flees the prison, abandoning her – for the final time – to either tormenting confinement or execution. Even though in the last lines of Part I she’s “saved” by Heaven, it’s little consolation – a mother, a brother, and a child have died, and two people have been crippled with guilt and grief. And thus ends Part I of *Faust*, with Mephistopheles’s work consummated.

The “pathetic” Devil of the first part of *Faust* gives way to a master human manipulator, a being easily capable of ruining lives. Mephistopheles doesn’t need to raze towns or torture innocents to get what he wants – it’s simply a matter of adding a little grease to the wheels and letting the players annihilate themselves. When Faust says, “Too weak for great destruction, you attempt it on a minor scale” he probably means it as slight, but as he learns, “minor” destruction is just as terrible, and much more personal, than “great” destruction (705). Perhaps, by admitting his faults and putting himself in ridiculous situations,

Mephistopheles disarms his prey, all the better to drop the guillotine when the right time comes. Although *The Norton Anthology* states that “Faust’s suffering has enlarged him [and] his capacity for sympathy marks his potential superiority to the Devil,” these things are irrelevant, at least regarding Mephistopheles (Lawall and Mack 680). The Devil isn’t trying to be a better being or increase his “capacity for sympathy” – he’s trying to *destroy*. And judging from Part I of *Faust*, he’s been *very* successful in his endeavors. 

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LOSS OF ILLUSION; SEED OF INSURGENCY: DISSECTING THE BIRTH OF REBELLION WITHIN *THE HUNGER GAMES*

By Carol Anne Fry



Carol Anne grew up just a few miles down the road from UNCP in Red Springs, NC. She is married with two extraordinary children, Matthew and Cassidy. She's always had a love for literature and is returning to school to pursue a new career path.

In *The Hunger Games*, Suzanne Collins creates a post-apocalyptic world called Panem in which the government exercises a form of totalitarian power that is centrally located in the Capitol and brutally applied to the twelve outlying districts. The ruling regime attempts to control every aspect of the citizens' lives, but some weakening of its power is evidenced by the districts' growing ability to manipulate certain aspects of the Capitol's control mechanisms. It is within the state-mandated annual Hunger Games that the Capitol displays its most barbaric method of control as it requires each district to sacrifice two children in a televised fight-to-the death event for the entertainment of the Capitol audiences. During the Games, the Capitol's all-seeing gaze is present, but because of the cameras, the separation between the districts that has proven to be so vital to their control has broken down and no longer exists; and it is the Capitol's own media coverage that opens up the districts to a sense of community that allows them to bond together, making the possibility of rebellion a reality.

The Capitol's need for absolute control can be found deeply rooted in the history of Panem, but this control, when applied to the extreme, backfires as those residing in the districts are forced to find ways to thwart the government's rules in order to survive. The country of Panem, located in North America, "rose up out of the ashes" following countless disasters and war. It emerged as a "shining Capitol ringed by thirteen districts, which brought peace and prosperity to its citizens." Over time, the districts rebelled against

the ruling Capitol, bringing about "Dark Days," a time that ended with the obliteration of District 13 by the Capitol and the implementation of a new set of laws called "The Treaty of Treason." The new laws were established to ensure peace and to quell further rebellions, and they also outlined an annual requirement that each district offer up two children for participation in the Hunger Games (18). Enforcement of the new treaty was established in a variety of ways to include constant camera surveillance, as well as the insertion of armed Peacekeepers within each district. In an interview with James Blasingame, Suzanne Collins discusses another method of control used by the Capitol, "the use of hunger as a weapon to control populations . . ." (726). This method, while very effective in keeping the population undernourished and physically incapable of fighting back, also opens the door for some means of subversion within the districts as they find ways to obtain the necessary foods to survive. This is clearly demonstrated by Katniss and Gale as they illegally hunt despite official restrictions on this practice imposed by the Capitol. And the holes in the absolute control exhibited by the Capitol are literal as Katniss slips under a "two-foot stretch" of fence and remarks on the other "weak spots" that allow entry into areas beyond District 12 (4-5). Also problematic for the Capitol is the fact that Peacekeepers assigned to the District 12 are aware of the illegal activities, but choose to ignore the infractions. Katniss remarks on this when she says, "Most of the Peacekeepers turn a blind eye to the few of us who hunt because they're as hungry for fresh meat as anybody is. In fact, they're among our best customers" (6). The Capitol's own law enforcement has been made vulnerable to the effects of near starvation and in response they, too, must work outside the established rules in order to survive. Ultimately, it is the Capitol's miscalculation in their use of hunger as a weapon that leads to this initial breakdown of their ability to control absolutely.

In addition to the use of limited food allocation as a mode of control, the Capitol has also employed other methods via surveillance with some degree of success. To more fully understand the application of this method, it is helpful to examine the novel through the lens of Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon, an architectural vision created by the social theorist for the purpose of controlling a population through surveillance. His plans describe a circular structure in which a central authority resides in the center, a location that enables the monitoring of a population positioned on the perimeter within di-

vided cells (Bentham). According to the French philosopher Michel Foucault, this surveillance functions on two levels, one in which those in power monitor the prisoners, or in the case of Panem, the inhabitants of the outlying districts, but also the subsequent self-surveillance that occurs when the subjects, aware of the monitoring, begin to self-regulate their actions (Foucault 201-202). Katniss remarks on the panoptic configuration of Panem when she notes, “Even here, even in the middle of nowhere, you worry someone might overhear you . . . So I learned to hold my tongue and to turn my features into an indifferent mask so that no one could ever read my thoughts” (Collins 6). In this reference, you can clearly see the effect of the Panopticon. Katniss has learned to modify her behavior, even when there are no visible signs of surveillance; her fear of being overheard silences her. The beauty of Bentham’s Panopticon lies within the ability to control a large population with minimal effort, and it is this element of self-surveillance that has contributed to the Capitol’s ability to control the districts from afar.

Another key element of Bentham’s architectural design of the Panopticon is found within the structure itself, and it is the breakdown of this element that will begin to erode the Capitol’s ability to control the district population. Michel Foucault describes this element as the “analytical arrangement of space” (Foucault 203). In *Discipline and Punish*, he is very precise in his description of the purpose of this spatial separation:

Each individual, in his place, is securely confined to a cell from which he is seen from the front by the supervisor; but the side walls prevent him from coming into contact with his companions. . . . If the inmates are convicts, there is no danger of a plot, an attempt at collective escape, the planning of new crimes for the future, bad reciprocal influences; . . . The crowd, a compact mass, a locus of multiple exchanges, individualities merging together, a collective effect, is abolished and replaced by a collection of separated individualities. (200-201)

In other words, it is through isolation that those in charge are better able to control the population. By shutting down the inmates’ ability to come together in any way, the panoptic structure eliminates any type of collective rebellion. And in many ways, the Capitol has applied Bentham’s conceptual vision to its handling of the districts. Kelly Wezner explores how the physical structure of Panem gives rise to this in her essay “Perhaps I Am Watching You Now?: Panem’s Panopticons” when she writes, “The

Capitol is located in the Rockies . . . [its] location elevates it over the districts that it controls, mirroring the warden’s raised watchtower that allows him to survey, unseen, all the prison’s inhabitants” (149). The separation of the districts is strengthened with barbed-wire fencing and the imposed restriction of travel between the districts (Collins 41). This division effectively isolates the district populations, making the exchange of information and sharing of grievances impossible. During the Hunger Games events, the Capitol’s control seems to be even more heightened within an arena that is filled with both cameras and microphones designed to capture all the nuances of the game play. And although this panoptic arena is smaller and even more tightly controlled than what is found in the outlying districts, it is the subsequent broadcast of images to the entire country that crumbles the walls of separation. The districts are no longer a “collection of separated individualities,” but a communally linked group that is forced to watch their children murdered, one after another.

Not only does the broadcast of the Hunger Games cause trouble for the Capitol, but it is also the element of carnival that exists in the Bakhtinian sense that feeds into the resentment building within the districts. In an essay that explores the carnival theory, Shanti Elliot writes, “Carnival reversal implies a change from principles of stability and closure to constant possibility” (130). Carnival offers a new vision, one that is completely different from normal everyday realities—a vision in which anything is possible. This change in reality is readily evident in the days leading up to the Hunger Games. Plucked from obscurity and abject poverty, the contestants from District 12 are placed on “tribute trains” and “given [their] own chambers that have a bedroom, a dressing area, and a private bathroom with hot and cold running water” (Collins 42). And in the days leading up to the Games, the tributes continue to be treated like celebrities as they feast on elaborate meals and are given stylists and advisors who are utilized to present each contestant as favorably as possible. Cameras follow their every move as they are interviewed on carefully constructed stages in the City Circle (Collins 124). This is clearly a departure from the hand-to-mouth existence Katniss and other tributes from outlying districts have experienced growing up in Panem. And to further illustrate the power of carnival, the tributes themselves become swept up in the excitement of the spectacle. This is evidenced as Katniss responds to the crowds in the stands during the opening ceremonies with “blow[ing] a few kisses to the crowd,” and remarks on the experience with, “The pounding music, the cheers, the admiration work their way into

In her paper on *The Hunger Games*, Carol Anne deftly explores the ways in which a government’s attempts to control its citizens ironically creates the means for the citizens to resist that control. Carol Anne uses Foucault’s idea of the panopticon and Bakhtin’s carnival as lenses to explore the dynamics of power, surveillance, and resistance in the novel. Her ideas are clear, organized, and insightful, which make for a well-written and engaging essay.

~Dr. Susan Cannata

my blood, and I can't suppress my excitement" (Collins 70). On one level, Katniss is fully aware of her circumstances and realizes that soon she will be put in the event arena with other children to murder or be murdered. But in this moment of spectacle and revelry created by the Capitol, she succumbs to this remarkable change. Bakhtin highlights this aspect of carnival when he asserts, "All the symbols of the carnival idiom are filled with this pathos of change and renewal . . ." (11). The Capitol has successfully created new versions of the children by grooming them and making them whole again with proper nourishment and training. This change and renewal of the children is broadcast to the districts and it has the power to haunt those residing there because this is a vision that they know will not last.

But without the full application of carnival, one in which the participants garner some feeling of empowerment during this time of suspended reality, the willingness to return to the status quo is less likely as collective resentment builds within the audiences residing in the districts. In her essay, "The Harry Potter Novels as a Test Case for Adolescent Literature," Roberta Seelinger Trites discusses the purpose of carnival as she explains, "The carnival exists as a steam-letting measure that allows the masses to feel temporarily empowered so that they will willingly retain their disempowered social status" (Trites 475). Certainly on this stage and even in moments while in the arena, the tributes feel an empowerment they've never experienced before. But the Hunger Games suspend reality only up to a point. There are no stage props in the form of trick knives sprinkled throughout the Cornucopia —no plastic blades that retreat harmlessly within a handle that leave the actors unscathed. Yes, the tributes are empowered with deadly weapons, but the steam-letting element that Trites writes about is notably absent, both within the arena and the audiences located within the districts. The vision of the newly created child has been quickly erased with images of these same children brutally murdered, and the collective resentment only grows as they return to a status quo that ends in death for all but one of the district tributes.

Also absent from this narrative is the aspect of universal participation that should be present within a true carnival experience. In his essay, "When the Carnival Turns Bitter: Preliminary Reflections upon the Abject Hero," Michael Bernstein points to what he considers carnival's most defining feature: the "abolition of all distinctions between participant and viewer." In other words, in order for the masses to truly experience carnival, everyone must share in the experience. Bakhtin makes this very clear in *Rabelais*

and *His World* when he writes:

Carnival does not know footlights, in the sense that it does not acknowledge any distinction between actors and spectators. Footlights would destroy carnival, as the absence of footlights would destroy a theatrical performance. Carnival is not a spectacle seen by the people, they live in it, and everyone participates because its very idea embraces all the people. While carnival lasts, there is no other life outside it. . . . It has a universal spirit; it is a special condition of the entire world, of the world's revival and renewal, in which all take part (7).

In terms of the annual Hunger Games, footlights exist in a very real sense, dividing the district tributes in the arena from the television audiences. And further destroying the carnival effect is the very real division of the audience itself. The Capitol citizenship has no real connection with the children within the arena, but the districts are directly linked to the participants and this creates the division between those two audiences. These distinct divisions are what further feed into the development of communal links of the districts represented within the arena. And as the Seventy-Fourth Hunger Games unfold, this unique set of tributes comes together on a stage, one with glaring footlights put in place by the Capitol, and they will begin to align with one another in interesting ways that suggest community more than competition.


The first instance of a collective communal action against the Capitol comes during the reaping of District 12 for the Hunger Games. Knowing that Prim's selection is a death sentence, Katniss responds by volunteering to take her sister's place as the district's tribute. When implored by Effie Trinket, the Capitol's representative, to "give a big round of applause to our newest tribute!" the people of District 12 do not respond. Katniss remarks on their unique reaction, "I stand there unmoving while they take part in the boldest form of dissent they can manage. Silence. Which says we do not agree. We do not condone. All of this is wrong" (24). Their silence is followed by an unexpected salute to Katniss in the form a gesture: "At first one, then another, then almost every member of the crowd touches the three middle fingers of their left hand to their lips and holds it out to me. It is an old and rarely used gesture of our district, occasionally seen at funerals. It means thanks, it means admiration, it means good-bye to someone you love" (24). And with the cameras rolling, as the residents of District 12 stand shoulder-to-shoulder, facing the Capitol representative, they are silent but also decidedly defiant in the face of yet another edi-

tion of the Hunger Games.

The second, more subtle shift towards a communal link between the districts is evident in Katniss's alliance with a young girl from District 11, who is described as "wispy," hardly the best pick in terms of strength. The choice is one that is driven by emotions rather than sheer logic, and Katniss acknowledges this when she mentally pictures her mentor, Haymitch, "groaning" at her selection (201). Instead of strictly seeing this member of District 11 as an adversary, she likens the girl to her own sister, Prim. And after the District 11 girl is injured by another player, Katniss sings a lullaby as the girl slowly dies, then carefully constructs a floral tribute for her. The mourning of the girl, which takes time and ultimately puts Katniss at risk of exposure to the other players, mimics one that would occur in a community. It shows honor and respect—and as the entire country of Panem watches, it links the districts together in their collective grief. And in an unprecedented move, District 11 acknowledges Katniss's tribute to their own with a costly gift of bread that would have been sent to their tribute had she not died. Instead of withdrawing the gift or redirecting it to their remaining male tribute, the people of District 11 make the decision to give this to their neighboring district's tribute, Katniss. She understands their sacrifice and very deliberately "step[s] into the last falling rays of sunlight" and offers up a thanks for her gift (239). This gift of bread can be likened to an early act of diplomacy as District 11 offers it as a sign of goodwill toward their neighbor, strengthening their communal ties. The space between the districts continues to dissipate as the loaf of bread is handed from District 11 to District 12; and the cameras capture and broadcast this throughout Panem.

Another communal link develops between Katniss and the male tribute from District 11 that points to a shared understanding between the adversaries. In an unexpected move in terms of gameplay, the male tribute from District 11 gives Katniss the ultimate gift within the arena—her life. In this sacrificial move, he gives nod to this growing sense of community when he spares Katniss's life. The Capitol's rules in the arena are simple—kill or be killed. But when Thresh realizes what Katniss has done for his teammate, he allows her to escape when he says, "Just this one time I let you go. For the little girl" (288). Nothing in Thresh's action can be considered as self-serving, nor can his decision to let her go be seen as aligned to the Capitol's rules within the arena. This represents yet another act of diplomacy between the districts and as the relationships within the arena continue to develop, the cameras are there to catch the action.

Finally, the last power play orchestrated by Katniss and Peeta in the final minutes of the Games proves to be the most damaging to the Capitol, as the tributes from District 12 protest yet another change in the rules with the threat of suicide and ultimately challenge the Gamemakers in a bid to control their own destinies. The Gamemakers' rule changes are yet another display of Capitol's power and control over the districts. Throughout the Games, the tributes are subjected to artificially induced climate changes as well as other disasters such as fire and flood meant to torture the contestants and thrill the Capitol viewing audiences (173). They manipulate the environment and torture the children simply because it entertains those in the Capitol's television audience. Katniss and Peeta are able to turn the tables on the Gamemakers with the threat of suicide—a ploy that works because an ending with no winner would have been anticlimactic and totally unsatisfactory to the viewers. The Gamemakers respond to the threat when they enact a quick reversal of rules yet again, allowing two winners rather than just one. This final, unprecedented move by the members of District 12 emphatically implies that they are not willing to play by the Capitol's rules any longer. Katniss and Peeta are successful in throwing off their adversarial roles, and instead come together against a common enemy: the Capitol. And, unfortunately for the Capitol, this rebellious display is captured and broadcast throughout the entire country of Panem.

The old adage that a chain is only as strong as its weakest link seems to be applicable to the Capitol and their control over the districts of Panem. Their misapplication of control over the districts has created opportunities for subversive behavior. The growing resentment within the outlying districts increases with the media coverage of the Games as the cameras follow this unique set of personalities, who come together in ways that showcase an ability to thwart the Capitol and also to control their own destinies. Their success leads to hope, and the transforming power of this hope coupled with the desire to create a better existence for themselves and their children will ultimately be the final spark needed to ignite the coming rebellion. 

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A NEW GENERATION OF GRADUATES

By Jesenia Morales

Like any high school graduate I came to college with high hopes, great ambitions, and empty pockets. Now, tuition and loan rates are rising while employment rates continue to plummet, and I find myself second guessing a decision that seemed expected of me: attending college. Unfortunately, I'm not alone. From a young age many of us are told to go to college because education is the key to success, but with success stories like those of Walt Disney, Bill Gates, and J.K. Rowling becoming more popular it is increasingly hard to see any truth in this statement that has brainwashed us since our grade school days. My conclusion? College isn't worth the risk of investment.

I know to some that may sound absolutely ridiculous, but let's take a closer look at the cost of a college education compared to the value of it. I attend The University of North Carolina at Pembroke, UNCP for short. I pay approximately \$14,000 per year. Now multiply that by four years and it quickly totals \$56,000. Additionally, I must obtain a master's level degree in order to even be eligible for the possible career path of a counselor; I have estimated the total cost of my college education to equal nearly \$80,000. That would be my entire first year's wages as a counselor. So is it worth it? Well at this point one would say, "Yes, of course." But since the rise of college tuition has forced 94% of students to take out government loans, a rate that has more than doubled in the last twenty years, from 45% in 1993, the education that would typically cost \$80,000 will actually cost more like \$120,000 (Bentley).

This rise in tuition is due to many factors, but mostly a result of state budget cuts. State governments have reduced their aid to college education by an estimated 25% this year alone, and from the looks of it that number will continue to increase and place more of the financial burden on the students and parents (Bentley). Countless numbers of young adults have had to trade in their acceptance letter for a construction hat, or other basic full-time jobs, because they can't afford college, or are not willing to be enslaved to the government by massive student loan debts. The most recent evidence of this can be seen in the controversy of the student loan bill and its failure to be passed. It became known as the "Stop the Student Loan Interest Rate Hike Act of 2012," a bill that was designed to maintain low interest rates on all subsidized student loans offered by the federal government for another year (Madison). In a CBS News interview, a representative from the White House said, "It is extremely disappointing that Republicans



in the Senate today voted to ask millions of students to pay an average of \$1,000 each in order to protect a loophole that allows millionaires to dodge payroll taxes" (Madison). Communications major Andrew Giordano said in his CBS News interview, "College tuition here [College of Mount St. Vincent] was about \$18,000 to \$20,000. Now, every year tuition has gone up! Now we're hitting, \$30,000, \$32,000!" Andrew will graduate with \$45,000 in debt, and worst of all jobless (Bentley).

College students are facing tougher times now than ever before. Student loans have become the nation's number one source of debt, and according to a study released from Rutgers University, "Only 51% of young college grads have full-time employment and many are working at jobs that don't require a college degree" (O'Shaughnessy). These bleak and dismal circumstances have turned myself and many others away from college, or persuaded numerous college graduates to continue into graduate school in hopes of landing a job by out doing the competition. As a matter of fact, in the same study, Rutgers University claims, "only 23% of grads believe they can have a successful career with just a bachelor's degree" (O'Shaughnessy). Out of that 23%, two-thirds have or plan to pursue a master's degree or higher (O'Shaughnessy).

I have seen many of my peers resort to enlisting in the military simply to obtain the financial help and job security that the military provides. Since the creation of the GI Bill after World War II, many eligible young men and women have served in the United

Jesenia Morales has a tender heart for people, and because of this her goal in life is to be a family and marriage counselor. She loves doing volunteer work with youth and the homeless because there is a special place in her heart for them. She is currently an undeclared major, but intends to declare a double major in psychology and sociology.

States military simply to attend college debt free. Because of this, many colleges award military students college credit and hours based on their military training and coursework. Some students have even enlisted after attending college because they are unable to find a job elsewhere, and by serving in the military not only will their debt be paid off, but in the meantime they also have a job to support themselves.

Then there are stories like mine where neither of my parents are willing, or able, to help me pay for college. I have no substantial credit established, and am therefore forced to rely on government loans to cover what my scholarships do not. My biggest fear is that when I graduate I will not be able to find work and default on my loans like so many others, which will then destroy what little credit I have built up. I have gone into debt to avoid future debt, and this is the same situation many college graduates are in today.


I can't help but think sometimes that maybe, just maybe, the cure for cancer is locked inside the mind of someone who is unable to afford an education. Perhaps it is a long stretch to envision a world where anyone can receive higher education affordably, but something has to change before we end up with a generation of graduates whose hard work and dedication mean nothing in the world of capitalistic business. We are already living in a society where most people are afraid to pursue what they love in fear of not being able to support themselves, and paying \$30,000 for an education that doesn't even guarantee them a job.

I remember as a child I wanted to be a professional ballerina, but I was discouraged by many because the career of a dancer only lasts about ten years. I then decided to be a novelist, but again I was persuaded otherwise. Now as a college sophomore, I am still undecided when it comes to a career path. Additionally, as I watch the news, my options continue to dwindle. I feel as though at some point in our educational career we must decide whether to follow our dreams regardless of circumstances, or play it safe and choose a career that will provide financial stability.

When I think about the debt that is accumulated in pursuit of a college degree, and the risks taken to obtain it, it reminds me of similar debt that my mother, who is a non-graduate, and I faced. I grew up in poverty and I know what a hardship it is. I remember going to bed still hungry on nights because groceries had to be stretched, and walking to the store because we couldn't afford the gas it would take to drive down the street to Food Lion. This kind of debt doesn't just affect one person, but becomes a domino effect affecting those around us. It is not only my fu-

ture that will be affected by my college debt, but also the future of my soon-to-be husband, and our future children. I don't want any of them to suffer through what I had to. I'm sure many of us share the same thoughts when it comes to family, wanting what is best for not only ourselves, but our loved ones as well.

An article in US News states, "The effects of student debt aren't limited to today, or to today's students. Effects span generations and will be a factor for years to come. All of us should take notice, because we all could be affected" (Equal Justice Works). Higher tuition leads to higher rates of student debt which in turn affects the economy as a whole. As of 2011 this nation had one trillion dollars in student loan debt alone. That is roughly one-sixteenth of the entire national debt considering it just hit sixteen trillion earlier this year, and that may not seem like a lot in comparison, but do we really understand just how much a trillion is? One trillion seconds ago equals roughly thirty-six thousand years ago, and one trillion pennies equals ten billion dollars.

It's a shame that education has become such a source of debt. It breaks my heart to see such bright young minds become limited because of the inability to afford the costs of an education in the long run. When I wake up each morning I have to remind myself exactly why I am here, and I have to motivate myself to pursue the education I know I am capable of obtaining. Like any young adult, I overlook the price I'm paying now and the struggle I will undoubtedly encounter in hopes of one day being able to comfortably raise and support a family, but if we don't put an end to this cycle of debt things will only grow worse, and that will certainly lead to each of us experiencing the effects of the issue (Equal Justice Works). If we continue in this pattern surely student debt will consume us all. 

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With her impassioned argumentative essay, Jesenia has hit upon what should be a concern for all of us in academia: the high cost of higher education. A balance of data and personal experience, "A New Generation of Graduates" proves topical, well-researched, and provocative. I'm not surprised that Jesenia produced such a powerful essay for her final assignment in my course—throughout the semester, she was a standout student who engaged in class discussion and embraced the drafting process. She is exactly the kind of individual who should be pursuing a college degree. Jesenia's maturity and thoughtfulness will serve her well, in college and career.

~Dr. Jessica Pitchford



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