Now in its twenty-first year, *Spectrum* honors a group of Saint Mary's College students who take writing seriously; who, in response to course assignments, write essays that are thoughtful, original, and persuasive. This year’s submissions were of very high quality; we were not able to publish every worthwhile essay, and we thank all the students who submitted essays, and whose excellent work made the task of selection very difficult.

We owe thanks to others as well. To all the faculty members who have inspired their students to write well, and especially to those faculty who encouraged their students to submit essays to the *Spectrum* contest. To the faculty readers – Glenna Breslin, Wesley Gibson, Emily Hause, Jeannine King, Carol Lashof, Douglas Long, and Anne Smith – for their time and judgment. Special thanks to Steve Tillis, for expert and gracious editorial assistance, and to Gail Drexler for her most generous behind-the-scenes work to coordinate the contest.

This year the judges have chosen five wonderful essays on topics ranging from literature to film to social policy. Please note that the each essay employs the documentation form appropriate to the discipline it represents.

We hope this collection will inspire more excellent writing from its readers. Please place 2007-2008 submissions in the zebra-striped box on the third floor of Dante Hall, or send them by campus mail or as email attachments to Sandra Grayson in the English Department (sgrayson@stmarys-ca.edu). All submissions should include a cover sheet with the author’s name, phone number, and email address, and the name of the faculty member and course for which the essay was written.

The cover photograph, by Marcia Ong, was taken in New Orleans during January 2006, when a group of Saint Mary's students, guided by Dean Shawny Anderson, donated their time, dedication, and labor to the enormous task of helping to rebuild the Ninth Ward. Marcia, a Singaporean filmmaker, graduated from Saint Mary's in 2002, and now is pursuing her Masters of Fine Arts in Cinema at San Francisco State University. Many thanks to Shawny and to Emily Robbins for their help in locating the photograph.

Sandra A. Grayson
Faculty Moderator, *Spectrum 2007*
SPECTRUM 2007

First Prize
Beth Bergum, "The Long-Lost Benegeli Papers"
Collegiate Seminar 122: Renaissance, 17th- and 18th-Century Thought
Instructors: Cathy Davalos and Margaret Pagaduan

Second Prize
Allison Yamanashi Leib, "Women in Poverty and College Education"
Religious Studies 117: Wealth and Poverty in the Bible
Instructor: Michael Barram
Sociology 134: Wealth and Poverty in the United States
Instructor: Robert Bulman

Third Prize
Mary Ellen Boswell, "The School for Scandal"
English 143: Restoration Drama
Instructor: Carol Lashof

Honorable Mention
Tiffany Gabrielson, "The Repercussions of Incest in 'The Maiden Without Hands"
January Term: Exploring Fairy Tales
Instructor: Steve Tillis

Christian Snead, "Pi"
January Term: Math Goes to Hollywood
Instructor: Ben Davis
The Long-Lost Benegeli Papers

By Beth Bergum

19 January 1615

I have just been privy to a Most Extraordinary Conversation, the Nature of which, I think I may be so bold as to claim, will prove to be of definite Interest to Posterity, worthy of at least a Chapter in the History I propose to write when my Travels are concluded. Before proceeding, however, it seems necessary that I enlighten my Honored Reader as to the peculiar Circumstance which enabled me to obtain this valuable Information.

As the Reader no doubt recollects, I have been traveling a great while through the obscure Regions of Germany, in Pursuit of a greater Knowledge of Mankind, and Yesternight I found myself in a little Mountain Village, the likes of which tends to escape the Notice of Travelers in general. It being the dead of Winter, I was only too happy to take Refuge from the bitter Cold in a Tavern when said Establishment presented itself to my Notice. Entering, I was shown to a Booth, and I had not been seated long ere three Men of singular Aspect were also ushered into the Room. To the average Observer, these Men might have appeared quite commonplace, as their Garments were nothing to boast of, and their Countenances, razed as they were by the chill Blasts they had just passed through, did not display themselves to much Advantage. As they passed by my Booth, however, I became sensible of a certain Aura about them which I can only describe as the Aura of Genius. The sympathetic Reader will remember that I have of late been sadly deprived of the Learned Company that an Historian of my Caliber naturally craves. For this Reason, I was seized with an overwhelming Desire to know more of these my Fellow Travelers. My Interest was piqued further upon hearing one of them, the youngest, judging By his Appearance, request that the Servant bring them Parchment, confirming my Suspicion that these were indeed Men of Letters. My Joy at this Discovery can well be imagined. To my great Misfortune, however, the three Men retired into a secluded Chamber adjacent to the main Room, and I would have been entirely shut out from the workings of their Great Minds, had not a happy Idea come to me just then. Draining my Tumbler of its Contents as quick as conveniently possible, I stole my way across the Room with the utmost Nonchalance, and took my Seat by the outside Wall of the Chamber into which the Men had withdrawn. I then placed the Rim of the Tumbler against the Wall, and pressed my Ear to the Bottom of the Tumbler, through which Expedient I was able to hear all that was said within.

As I listened, it soon became apparent that the two older Men did not speak the same Language, and that the Younger served as an Interpreter for
everyone. However, in order not to try your Patience, Esteemed Reader, I will record their Discourse as though it had all been conducted in the same Tongue.

"My Hero is sublimely tragic," the first Man was saying, "all the more so because he can make us laugh. He undertakes a futile Mission: to right all the Wrongs of this World and to realize the Dreams of his Heart, unaware that these Dreams are little more than nonsensical Hogwash. For this, he is constantly the Object of Scorn and Derision, yet he cannot let go of his Fantasies: that would surely kill him."

The second Man chuckled. "My Hero is not laboring under any such Delusion; yet his Troubles are of his own Making. He sees the World as it truly is, but interprets it as his own selfish Whim dictates. Headless of the true Good, he throws himself into the Mercy of those who insult and betray him, and in the end cruel Circumstance, not gradual Self-Deceit, drives him to Madness."

Here the third Man, or more accurately, the Youth, could not forbear interrupting. "Your Heroes have more in common than you guess!" he exclaimed. "One way or the other, both of them fall Victim to an overly impressionable Fancy. In the Instance you describe, Señor (turning to the first Man), the Hero finds his Madness irresistibly sweet, and so cannot be persuaded to part with it. But you, Sir (turning to the other now); you too depict a Man who flatters himself into believing 'Untrue Things, do you not?"

The second Man thought for a Moment. "Not exactly; rather, he is at a Loss to discover the true Meaning of the Events and Intentions that surround him. He misinterprets Reality; he does not endeavor to change Reality."

"But both suffer for being out of Tune, as it were, with the true Nature of the World," the Youth persisted. "Both take what is within them to be of greater Moment, at least as far as the Regulation of their Actions is concerned, than any outside Force." He paused. "Perhaps in this they are wise."

"Wise!" exclaimed the second Man. "How can they be called wise who act rashly, examining not the Consequences of their Decisions until their Case is beyond Remedy?"

Here the Man who had first spoken at last interceded. "They are wise for a time; unable or unwilling to live within the Bounds of another’s so-called Reality, they make the World what they wish it to be with the aid of Imagination, dogged Perseverance, and sheer Audacity. Their Lives are enviably free of Constraint and Regret, until the Everyday World begins to encroach on their dearly cherished Illusions, as must inevitably happen soon. When it does, they are sorely to be pitied."

"But why should they be pitied more than any of us?" asked the third Man. "Were they not given the same Faculties as we were? Indeed, we believe
in all manner of unseen things without the aid of Madness; whether they are foolish or not, now, that's another question. Perhaps some things are taken for granted which should not be. In my opinion, there is only one thing that we can be entirely sure of..."

"Yes; what is that?" asked the other two men, leaning forward eagerly--
trust that this treatise will put an end to such slanderous falsehoods, as well as draw attention to a work that will doubtless assume a place of great importance within the scholarly community.

What better way to prove the authenticity of Benegeli's document than to compare the works of Cervantes, Shakespeare, and Descartes to the views expressed in the conversation overheard by Benegeli? Take the first man's description, for example: a hero who sets out "to right all the wrongs of this world and to realize the dreams of his heart." This fits Don Quixote perfectly, as does the first man's later explanation of those who "make the world what they wish it to be with the aid of Imagination, dogged Perseverance, and sheer Audacity." Don Quixote creates his own rules to live by, or thinks he can; when the Holy Brotherhood tries to subdue him, he disdainfully says, "Who was the dolt who did not know that knights errant are exempt from all jurisdictional authority, or was unaware that their law is their sword, their edicts their courage, their statutes their will?" (Cervantes 397). This indeed makes him "enviably free of constraint and regret," as long as he is able to overlook the fact that he is viewed as a laughingstock by most of the sane world. Don Quixote has an all-purpose device to circumvent most of the rules to which everyday life is glued, and his delusion will be safe until this device begins to wear thin. This is revealed when he harangues Sancho:

Is it possible that in all the time you have traveled with me you have not yet noticed that all things having to do with knights errant appear to be chimerical, foolish, senseless, and turned inside out? And not because they really are, but because hordes of enchanters always walk among us and alter and change
everything and turn things into whatever they please, according to whether they wish to favor or destroy us. (Cervantes 195)

The hard part is for a man to honestly persuade himself that this cant about enchanters is true; once that is accomplished, it opens up a whole realm of possibilities that are not available to the average person. After all, it would be hard to think of an impediment to Don Quixote’s fantasies that could not quickly be dispelled by this convenient explanation. That is why the first man says, “They are wise for a time.” People like Don Quixote have found a way to get their heart’s desire, but at great cost; it is a lonely road to take, frequently making them “the object of scorn and derision.” An additional danger comes from the fact that these dreamers have built their foundation on sand, and not on solid ground; as the first man says, “these dreams are little more than nonsensical hogwash.” This coincides with Cervantes’ opinion of books of chivalry, which is made very clear; he writes that Don Quixote’s reading has filled him with “impossible foolishness, and he became so convinced in his imagination of all the countless grandiloquent and false inventions he read that for him no history was truer” (Cervantes 21).

We now move on to the second man, whom we are supposing to be Shakespeare. Shakespeare is more unrelenting towards his hero’s character flaws. As the Fool says to King Lear, “Thou shouldst not have been old till thou hadst / been wise” (Shakespeare I.5.41-42). This is mirrored in the second man’s exclamation: “How can they be called wise who act rashly, examining not the consequences of their decisions until their case is beyond remedy?” King Lear is tragic because he has to pay dearly for his lapses in wisdom. Early on in the play he acts as though he lived in a vacuum, where nothing can
come back to affect him later; as the second man says, “Heedless of the true good, he
throws himself into the mercy of those who insult and betray him.” This false sense of
invulnerability is akin to Don Quixote’s self-deception, though it does not qualify as
madness in Lear; that comes afterwards.

When King Lear does go mad, the Gentleman observes that he “strives in his little
world of man to outscom / The to-and-fro conflicting wind and rain” (Shakespeare
III.1.10-11). Even in madness, King Lear follows his old pattern. His belief that the
external storm is responding to his own inner turmoil shows how, in the second man’s
words, “He sees the world as it truly is, but interprets it as his own selfish whim dictates.”
In light of that statement, Edmund’s cynical observation would seem to be accurate:

This is the excellent foppery of the world, that when we are sick in fortune, often
the surfeits of our own behavior, we make guilty of our disasters the sun, the
moon, and stars; as if we were villains on necessity; fools by heavenly
compulsion (Shakespeare I.2.119-123).

We (not only King Lear) like to say that the world, or Fate, or some other external force,
is to blame, instead of looking within ourselves and considering cause and effect. Don
Quixote uses the enchanters as an excuse when the myth of his omnipotence starts to fail
him; the excuse found in King Lear seems much more familiar and plausible to us, but it
amounts to practically the same thing, making us consider just how slender the gap might
be between the mad and the sane.

And what of the Youth, who does not seem to have authored any novels or plays,
and yet comes up with daring interpretations of the others’ works? He says of the heroes,
“Both take what is within them to be of greater moment, at least as far as the regulation
of their actions is concerned, than any outside force.” He adds, “Perhaps in this they are wise.” His identification with a quixotic quest, far from signifying that he himself is straying into the realm of madness, is a result of his having begun to sort out the difficulties of existence, and he is realizing that only he can find satisfactory answers to his questions. As Descartes will later write (for at the date Benegeli records, he would not even have been nineteen years old), “I resolved one day to study within myself [...] and to spend all the power of my mind in choosing the paths that I should follow. In this I had much more success, it seems to me, than if I had never left my country or my books” (Descartes 6). Descartes (both as a youth and in maturity) recognizes the need to feed on inner sources in order to gain a unique perspective, and therefore cannot look on the strivings of Don Quixote and King Lear with contempt, misguided though they are. Their flaw, according to the Youth, is merely “an overly impressionable fancy” which makes them “out of tune with the true nature of the world.”

The mature Descartes would not have gone so far as to call Don Quixote and King Lear “wise,” but would easily recognize that their error arises “solely from the fact that we lead our thoughts along different paths and do not take the same things into consideration. For it is not enough to have a good mind; the main thing is to apply it well” (Descartes 1). In Benegeli’s document, the Youth almost touches on this; he allows that Don Quixote “finds his madness irresistibly sweet, and so cannot be persuaded to part with it,” while King Lear “flatters himself into believing untrue things.” Both of these heroes are unwilling or unable to strip themselves of their long-held beliefs in order to pursue the path of reason. We can see the Youth grappling with this difficult problem, which, we know, he will tackle years later. “Indeed, we believe in all manner of unseen
things without the aid of madness; whether they are foolish or not, now, that’s another question,” he says. This anticipates the question Descartes poses: “How does one know that the thoughts that come to us in dreams are any more false than the others, given that they are often no less vivid and explicit?” (Descartes 21). The same goes for Don Quixote’s waking dreams. Young Descartes recognizes this dilemma: that we can very well be deceived along with the madmen if we are too willing to take things for granted. At the same time, he honors the ability to conceive of the intangible; the mature Descartes laments that some people “never lift their minds above sensible things and [...] are so accustomed to consider nothing except by imagining it (which is a way of thinking appropriate to material things) that everything unimaginable seems to them unintelligible” (Descartes 21).

Tragically, we have only this small segment of the manuscript on which to base our conjectures; the remaining pages, if still in existence, must be scattered far and wide. Nevertheless, I hope that this analysis will open people’s minds as to the authenticity of this document, since it contains such valuable insight into the methods and intentions of three intellectual giants. The reliability of Cide Hamete Benegeli, at least, cannot be called into question, as Miguel de Cervantes himself cited Benegeli as a source for his Don Quixote.

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_Beth Bergum is about to enter her junior year at St. Mary's College. She is a Spanish major, and recently studied abroad for a semester in Cuernavaca, Mexico._
Works Cited


Women in Poverty and College Education

By Allison Yamanashi Leib

Sociological research demonstrates that many impoverished women and their children successfully use higher education to escape from the trenches of severe poverty. Impoverished women who pursue a college education are earning higher salaries than their non-educated counterparts, enjoying increased living standards, and staying off public assistance programs. Despite the documented benefits of higher education, recent welfare reform initiatives prevent impoverished women from attaining a higher education. In addition to public policy barriers, many institutions of higher education foster elitist educational environments that discourage impoverished women from participating in academic circles. Finally, many private non-profit organizations designed to help single mothers neglect the issue of education altogether. In order to best address the feminization of poverty, society must eliminate public policies that hinder college education, must foster more inclusive college environments, and must encourage private funding of specialty college programs.

Women who attend college for even one year experience remarkable financial improvement. The Census Bureau Population Survey reports that one year of post-secondary education results in a nine percent decline in poverty levels among Caucasian female-headed households, and one year of post-secondary education results in a thirty percent decline in poverty levels among African American female-headed households (Adair & Dahlberg, 2003). Other studies show a two-year college education can substantially elevate a single mother's salary level (Adair & Dahlberg, 2003). Sociologist Anthony Carnevale reported that an average non-educated female with two
children will earn $13,000 per year working at a full-time menial job. After ten years of steady employment, this menial job has the potential to pay only $17,000 per year. In contrast, this same female with a two-year college education will earn $28,000-$32,000 the first year after graduation (1999). These studies demonstrate that single mothers who devote even minimal time to a college education reap substantial financial rewards (Adair & Dahlberg, 2003).

There is one significant exception to this rule: women trained in non-traditional vocations earn comparable salaries to college-educated women. Data released by the U.S. Department of Labor reveal that women in non-traditional vocations earn significantly high wages (2007). Wider Opportunities for Women (WOW) confirms this optimistic statistic. Studies sponsored by WOW reveal that women in non-traditional occupations earn as much as 30% more than counterparts in traditional occupations.

Several non-traditional training programs were instituted between 1980-2000 including: Ohio’s Orientation to Nontraditional Occupations for Women, New York’s New Ventures Program, and WOW’s Non-traditional Educational Training Program. These programs produced positive results (Relick, 1996). However, despite the success of these programs, non-traditional vocational opportunities remain severely underutilized (Neyger, qtd. in WOW NTO report, 2003). The lack of women in non-traditional occupations can be traced to several causes: 1. Family promotion of stereotyped gender roles (Olson, 1999, qtd. in WOW NTO report, 2003); 2. Lack of training for vocational counselors (Jones, 2005); 3. Concern regarding sexual harassment on job sites (Mansfield, Coach et al., 1991); and 4. Lack of restroom facilities and child care on jobsites (Eisenbuerg, 1998, qtd. in WOW NTO report, 2003). Non-traditional training is
a viable alternative for women who cannot afford to pursue a college education, and it is imperative that women are extended more opportunities to pursue lucrative technical vocations. However, because non-traditional vocation training has mixed success rates, for the remainder of this paper, I will focus on traditional college education as the primary avenue to upward mobility for single mothers.

A college education can significantly improve the standard of living for single mothers and their families. Single mothers without college educations report that their children frequently go without proper meals, medical attention, heating, electricity, and school supplies (Adair & Dahlberg, 2003). In contrast, single mothers with college educations are able to provide their families with the basic necessities of life (Adair, 2003). Moreover, a college education allows female-headed households to escape low-income neighborhoods plagued by violence. Sociologist Vonnie McLoyd reported that a high percentage of single mothers without college educations are forced to reside in crime-ridden inner city neighborhoods (2002). In contrast, McLoyd found that fewer than 2% of single mothers with college educations were living in crime-ridden inner city neighborhoods.

Not only do college educations improve the living standards of single mothers, college educations decrease the chance that impoverished women will return to public assistance programs. Karrier researched the outcomes of 253 former welfare recipients who graduated from a local college. Out of these recipients, 95% of 1995 graduates and 85% of 1996 graduates were not receiving any form of public assistance (Karrier, qtd. in Adair & Dahlberg, 2003). A study conducted by the Howard Samuels State Management and Policy Center finds similar results. In their study, nearly 100% of women who
attained bachelors' degrees remained permanently independent of public assistance programs, and 88% of women with associate's degrees remained permanently independent of public assistance programs (Price, 1999).

Society also profits by investing in women's education because college graduates produce higher tax revenues. Jillian Stevens, a one-time recipient of welfare, states,

My three years on AFDC cost the state and federal government around $15,800 in monthly checks and food stamps. To date the government has realized through payment of federal and state income taxes at minimum a $42,000 profit from investing in me while I pursued my education – a 266 percent return rate. If I maintain my current income over twenty years, I will pay a minimum of $200,000 in additional federal and state taxes. The bottom line is that society stands to earn a net gain of at least 1533 percent on its investment in my education (qtd. in Adair & Dahlberg, 2003).

Clearly, restructuring the welfare reform system would produce economic benefits for society as a whole.

Prior to the Welfare Reform Act (WRA), single mothers relied on public assistance to support their families while they pursued a college education (Smith, 2003). However, the Welfare Reform Act demanded that single mothers work 20-40 hours each week (CFITE, 2002). Many single mothers find it impossible to balance a fulltime job, the responsibilities of childrearing, and the demands of a college education. In a survey of 75 welfare recipients enrolled in college, 45 students left college to work full time because of WRA guidelines (Thomas, qtd. in Adair & Dahlberg, 2003). These students expressed frustration at their predicament. A single mother who works full time at a rate of $6.10 per hour states,

Things are so much harder now. We can barely pay our rent. My son is alone all the time when I work. I just don’t see a future anymore. With school there was hope. I was on my way to making a decent living for us. Now it is just impossible to survive day to day. Usually, I can't pay my rent. They are bounding me to repay school loans and I don’t have enough for food. Did you
know you can't even bankrupt student loans? I don't have a cent saved for emergencies. I don't know what I'm gonna do. (Adair & Dahlberg, 2003)

Other studies corroborate the damaging effects of the Welfare Reform Act. A 1997 survey of seven Michigan educational institutions found enrollment of poor females at all universities was negatively affected by the Welfare Reform Act (CFITE, 2002). Specifically, Mott Community College cited a 60 percent decrease in impoverished students and Lansing Community College cited a 50 percent decrease in impoverished students (CFITE, 2002).

Given these findings, society should consider restructuring the Welfare Reform Act. Specifically, the Welfare Reform Act should be restructured so that full time college attendance is comparable to full time employment. For instance, Wyoming restructured laws allowing welfare clients enrolled in twelve credit hours per semester with a C average to receive the same benefits as clients employed full time. Similarly, Indiana passed an initiative that allows welfare recipients to fulfill employment requirements by attending college full time and maintaining a 2.5 grade point average (NCSL, 2000). Programs like those in Wyoming and Illinois clearly benefit single mothers by allowing them to attain a college education. In addition, these progressive programs benefit society as a whole by reducing dependence on public assistance programs.

The state of Maine recognized the societal benefits of higher education, and implemented an innovative program to support single women called Parents as Scholars. Through this groundbreaking program, while the mother attends school the government pays for childcare and provides funding for gasoline, car repairs, auto insurance, school books, eye care, dental care, clothing, calculators, computer equipment, and lab supplies (Adair & Dahlberg, 2003). Sociologist Sandra Butler conducted a study on the
effectiveness of Parents as Scholars and found the program is an overwhelming success. Out of 192 surveyed, 2/3 had received their college degrees. Graduates from the program were more likely to be working jobs with good benefits, and were working in jobs paying 40% more than jobs prior to college (Smith, 2005). One student states, "[prior] to PAS I never thought I was smart enough to go to college. . . . Now I am working for the Bureau of Health, working side by side with intelligent people, working together to help the people of Maine lead more healthy productive lives" (Smith, 2005).

Not only should society provide means to financially sustain female-headed households during college education, but society should also create supportive university environments for single mothers and their families. As described above, when given adequate financial support, many single mothers adjust easily to the university environment; however, some impoverished women find it difficult to make the transition. Many professors consciously or unconsciously view single parents through the lens of negative stereotypes. Single mothers can internalize this negative stereotype, and feel so humiliated by their social status that they fail to show up to class and fail to complete homework assignments (Steele, qtd. in Adair & Dahlberg, 2003). Sociologist Joanne Thompson surveyed 253 single mother students who dropped out of college, and confirmed that sixty percent of them dropped out because they felt misunderstood and undervalued by professors and classmates (Thompson, qtd. in Adair & Dahlberg, 2003). Adair surveyed impoverished female college students, and these students expressed feelings of marginalization: "I actually felt sick to my stomach when I entered the ... classroom. I was made to feel as though I had nothing of value to say ... as though I was a worthless student who was doomed to failure. I don't think I will ever be able to
return.” (Anonymous, qtd. in Adair & Dahlberg, 2003). The experiences of these students illustrate how negative stereotypes can have a detrimental affect on retention rates.

Claude Steele suggests that universities should institute three policies to minimize the harmful effects of negative stereotypes. First of all, the college should set high standards for impoverished students. High standards will communicate confidence in the students’ abilities. Secondly, it is imperative that the president, provost, board members, and professors actively promote a campus-wide emphasis on diversity. This strong emphasis on cultural diversity communicates the value of multifaceted perspectives, and encourages minority students to express their unique perspectives in academic discussions. Finally, Steele suggests that university classrooms can be safe havens from the discrimination impoverished women experience in the broader culture. Steele encourages professors to cultivate an atmosphere of tolerance. The classroom conversations should be free of insensitive terminology and classroom discussions should equally emphasize the positive/negative contributions of all people groups (Steele, qtd. in Adair & Dahlberg, 2003).

The ACCESS (Academic Coalition for Full Citizenship through Education and Social Support) program at Hamilton University in Clinton, New York has effectively created a supportive academic environment for impoverished female students. The director, staff members, and the majority of professors originated from impoverished circumstances and now hold doctoral degrees. These professors recognize the academic potential of impoverished students, and set high standards for their student body.

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1 A note of caution: this policy should only be implemented when adequate support systems are in place to ensure impoverished student’s academic success. Setting high standards without adequate support systems will only create an atmosphere of frustration.
Moreover, these professors recognize the important intellectual contributions impoverished students can make to academic discussions (Adair, 2003). Professor Carol Drogus describes ACCESS students as sophisticated:

> The ACCESS students brought quite a different set of opinions and life experiences to the classroom . . . [that] offset their weaker methodological preparation . . . They had a level of instinctive insight about the state and its nature . . . When we discussed Locke’s second treatise the students leaped quite quickly to the insight the social context greatly affects how individuals and society interpret natural rights. This is an insight many very bright 18 year olds struggle with even after it has been explained (Drogus, qtd. in Adair, 2003).

Because ACCESS professors evaluate their students from a positive perspective, ACCESS students have flourished in the university environment. Welfare students in regular university programs have a retention rate of less than 60% with a grade point average of 60.5 (Adair, 2003). However, ACCESS students have a 95% retention rate and a grade point average of 82.5 (Adair, 2003). Clearly, a tolerant university environment enables students to perform at their academic best.

These secular solutions have been extremely successful; at the same time, some religious organizations provide similar support for impoverished single women, and meet with equal success. Saint Paul’s University, a private Catholic university in Lawrenceville, Virginia, instituted a unique pilot program, called the Single Parent Support System, which provides a supportive learning environment for single mothers. One observer describes Saint Paul’s diverse, inclusive atmosphere: “Saint Paul’s is like any other university – except at 7:30 a.m. in the cafeteria you see toddlers running around with their apple juice and you see students pushing baby strollers across campus” (Brown, 1987). To initiate the program, Saint Paul’s selected two single mothers and provided them with comfortable adjacent housing, cafeteria privileges for their children,
and pick up and delivery service for school/daycare activities. The women were also
assigned to an educational support team. This comprehensive team consists of a
chaplain, provost, dean of women, and head of department (in their major). The women
regularly meet with their team to access academic progress and to address academic
concerns. Although Saint Paul's program is currently small, director Dr. Marvin B. Scott
hopes to significantly expand the program in coming years. The University is currently
evaluating plans for an on-campus daycare and a large dormitory that will house 150
parents and 300 children (Brown, 1987).

Saint Paul's program is drawing on the resource of religious faith to achieve
social justice for impoverished mothers. The Catholic bishops teach that all human beings
possess human dignity — apart from ethnic/religious ties and apart from natural abilities
(The Bishops' Letter, 1986). Catholic social programs are designed to reiterate, support,
and further this foundational concept of human dignity. Although secular society may
condemn single mothers for poor decision-making abilities, Catholics perceive single
mothers as inherently valuable individuals worthy of societal respect and support. Scott
states, "People have confused values associated with these young women. Society casts a
disparaging view on them and that is very hard to overcome. Certainly in the
environment of a religious institution, we should be able to shelter these women from the
stormy blast and give them support they need..." (Brown, 1987). Most importantly,
Catholics believe human dignity is not realized by isolationism, but rather is "realized
within a community with others" (The Bishops' Letter, 1986). In the case of Saint Paul's
University, human dignity is achieved by including single mothers within the active
college community.
Catholic Social Teaching also emphasizes that all humans have the right to participate in the economic life of a society (Bishops’ Letter, 1986). This line of teaching is inspired by the Old Testament practice of Jubilee (Lev 25: NIV). In the Jubilee system, persons impoverished by unfortunate circumstances did not become permanently dependent on charitable donations. Rather, disadvantaged persons were provided with resources to independently gain financial stability. The Jubilee emphasized redistribution of capital, and also emphasized that disadvantaged individuals can make valuable contributions to society. Saint Paul’s program operates on similar principles. Rather than encouraging single mothers to become dependent on charitable donations, Saint Paul’s provides single mothers with the resources to independently earn a stable income. University educations are usually only available to women without children. Saint Paul’s follows Jubilee principles by “redistributing” the educational resources so that women can earn a sufficient income.

Theologian Ronald Sider urges Christians to evaluate organizations based on several criteria. One criterion is: “Are …minority people and women represented on the board and top staff?” (Sider, 2005) Saint Paul’s is staffed by African American men and women who are attuned to the needs of the African American community. Galatians 3: 28 states, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, neither slave nor free man, neither male nor female, for you are all one in Jesus Christ.” In this verse, Paul is suggesting all humans are equal, and by extension, all humans can make relevant contributions to society. Saint Paul’s University embraces this principle, and utilizes the specific talents of minority leaders to formulate culturally sensitive strategies. By adopting this egalitarian approach,
Saint Paul's created a powerful, effective program that makes a difference in the lives of single mothers.

Sider proposes a holistic approach as the most effective way to eliminate poverty. He believes God created humans as complex beings with multifaceted needs – spiritual, emotional, and physical (Sider, 2005). First Thessalonians 5:23 confirms man is a triune entity composed of spirit, body, and soul. Paul states, “I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless until the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

My community service learning project interfaced nicely with this study of the feminization of poverty. I worked at Saint Anthony's Dining Room, which shares warm meals with impoverished single women and men, and serves their impoverished guests with utmost courtesy. Luke 14: 13 states, “When you have an elaborate banquet, invite the poor, the maimed the blind, the crippled.” The staff at Saint Anthony’s emphasizes that volunteers should treat homeless people as valued “guests.” As a volunteer, I learned to smile at each guest, to make an extra effort to accommodate their food preferences, and to refer guests as “ma'am” or “sir”. These actions are commonplace for middle class citizens; however, the majority of homeless people are not treated with ordinary dignity. Showing proper respect to homeless women conveys the Christian value of impartiality, and helps women gain dignity and self esteem.

Additionally, my sociology class complemented my religion class and the service learning project. My sociology texts emphasized how many Americans believe women impoverished by poor life decisions do not deserve societal support, and my experiences at Saint Anthony’s confirmed societal rejection of those considered the undeserving poor. A large percentage of single women at Saint Anthony’s are substance abusers, and these
women are abandoned by society at large. In contrast to society at large, Saint Anthony’s volunteers warmly extend support to these women, and my religion class explained the theological impetus that drives Saint Anthony’s volunteers. The Scriptures teach that God cares equally for the deserving and undeserving. For instance, in the parable of the prodigal son, God warmly welcomes the disobedient son, even though he foolishly squandered financial resources. Christians are called to emulate God’s unconditional love by treating all persons – deserving and undeserving – with equal compassion (Luke 15:11-3). Thus, my sociology class helped me to comprehend a pervasive societal problem – the fact that not all impoverished persons are given equal assistance – while my religion class offered one possible solution – to extend compassion to all persons regardless of merit.

My sociology class introduced me to the text The Power of Good Deeds by Diana Kendell. (2002) This book demonstrates that charitable actions, in the absence of structural reform, perpetuate the social dominance of the upper class (Kendell, 2002). The charitable donations of wealthy individuals fail to elevate the economic status of impoverished recipients, but instead cause recipients to become perpetually dependent upon the generosity of the upper class (Kendell, 2002). My religion class also confirmed that charitable actions, in the absence of structural reform, result in hallow self-gratification. Matthew 6:1-4 condemns the charitable actions of the Pharisees because they give in order to elevate their social status.

My sociology class suggested that a more effective way to permanently elevate the economic status of impoverished citizens is through structural reform (Marger, 2005). Similarly, my religion class suggested that Christian non-profit organizations should
combine charitable actions with structural reform initiatives (Sider, 2005). My experience at Saint Anthony’s allowed me to observe both charitable actions and structural reform initiatives. Saint Anthony’s provides temporary charity by serving meals to homeless citizens; however, Saint Anthony’s also recognizes the problem of structural injustice, and promotes structural change through the Advocacy Program, in which Saint Anthony’s educates citizens on public policies that oppress the poor, and encourages citizens to write their state representatives to effect changes in national legislation. Most importantly, Saint Anthony’s includes the homeless in the advocacy process. Head coordinator Marie O’Connor states, “We value the contribution of our homeless guests. They experience poverty firsthand, and they know best what the homeless population needs.” The collective effort of volunteers and the homeless demonstrate the spirit of social justice. Unlike charity, social justice does not cause the powerless to become dependent on the generosity of the powerful. Instead, social justice seeks to “empower the powerless” by giving citizens the resources they need to attain economic prosperity independently.

Unfortunately, there are not enough organizations like Saint Paul’s and Saint Anthony’s within the Christian community. Many Christian organizations offer prayer and friendship to single mothers. However, organizations that offer financial support to single mothers are in the minority. It is important for Christian organizations to provide spiritual and social support for single mothers. Single mothers are burdened by demanding schedules, and prayer offers mental relaxation as well as spiritual renewal for single mothers. Single mothers also benefit emotionally and financially by forming meaningful friendships. Friendships provide networking opportunities for future
employment and provide much needed emotional support during adverse circumstances.

However, it is also necessary for Christian organizations to offer more substantial financial resources to single mothers. The most effective Christian organizations minister to both the spiritual and physical needs of suffering people. As more Christian organizations form to address the needs of single mothers, it is important for Christians to recall the words of James: "Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, 'Go I wish you well; keep warm and well fed', but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it?" (James 2:15).

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The School for Scandal

“Do you take me for Shylock in the play, that you would raise money of me on your own flesh and blood?” (Sheridan 421)

By Mary Ellen Boswell

Richard Brinsley Sheridan’s *The School for Scandal* is meant to be a lighthearted “comedy of manners,” a play that satirizes the pretenses, superficial affectations and hypocrisy of the upper classes. The main characters consider it entertaining to occupy their time slandering others, destroying reputations, and cynically setting up romantic intrigues. The witty epigrammatic dialogue creates an atmosphere of blithe frivolity, but beneath the surface of this seemingly insouciant play, lie much darker issues – jealousy, projection of “otherness,” and greed. The malicious gossip and scapegoating amongst the elite group may have parallels in the religious division of the larger world, where Jews are projected onto, scapegoated and used to serve Christian needs. In the play, this is highlighted through the character of the Jewish moneylender, Moses.

Another author wrote the epilogue of the play; intriguingly, it has a few lines that allude to two Shakespearean plays, and the lines seem to resonate with the darker themes beneath the surface of *The School for Scandal*: “The transient hour of fashion too soon spent, / Farewell the tranquil mind, farewell content!” (Epilogue 454). According to the footnote, the second line of that quote is meant to parody *Othello* (*Othello* 3.3.353). The first line of the quote, “The transient hour of fashion too soon spent,” taken together with the last line of the epilogue: “Or play the fool at large on life’s great stage,” echo Macbeth, as he gives voice to some of the most powerful, nihilistic and haunting words in all of Shakespeare; Macbeth’s ominous warning reminds us that we are all fools, none of
us more than “a poor player / That struts and frets his hour upon the stage” (Epilogue, 454; Macbeth 5.5.23-24).

Although the line “Farewell the tranquil mind, farewell content” seems to parody Othello, it may strike a deeper note, one that is not simple parody. Othello is consumed by “the green eyed monster;” successfully indoctrinated by white Venetian society; at a subconscious level Othello is alienated from himself. Once his tranquil mind is gone, Othello is run by jealousy that probably stems from insecurity and anger; rage boils beneath the surface of his calm demeanor, created by years of feeling “other” in Venetian society. The Venetians need Othello as a warrior, but he can never really be one of them. Thus, at some deep-seated level, he can’t trust Desdemona because – how could she love him? There must be something wrong with her. Like Othello, human beings often “project” because of jealousy, and no one can be completely divided from their wounds.

Certainly The School for Scandal is not a play explicitly about religion; however the character of the moneylender is specifically addressed as a Jew, and therefore, “other,” and thus the issue of religious division lies just beneath the surface of the play. In the play, one minute a character may be one with the group, and the next minute he or she may be at the other side of the divide, ousted, with his or her reputation destroyed. In a larger and more insidious way, the scapegoating of the Jews, possibly stemming from jealous Christian projection, divides them from Christian society.

In The School for Scandal, high society amuses itself with gossip, slander and scapegoating that may stem from petty jealousies. One of the functions of gossip is to keep people adhering to the predominant socially accepted norms. Manipulating information via gossip or stereotyping is an attempt to control. At the play’s opening,
Lady Sneerwell admits to Snake that her malicious behavior and need to control stems from a deep wound: "Wounded myself, in the early part of my life, by the envenomed tongue of slander, I confess I have since known no pleasure equal to the reducing others to the level of my own injured reputation" (Sheridan 387). More frightening still is Snake's reply, "Nothing can be more natural" (Sheridan 387). His words are humorous and ironic only because we laugh at what we fear to be all too true.

At the play’s close, Lady Sneerwell reveals another truth. Joseph, having failed to marry Maria, claims that he is the greater sufferer, but Lady Sneerwell knows that she is far more hurt than Joseph, because she actually has feelings for Charles, who has won Maria, whereas Joseph’s main interest was in securing Maria’s wealth. When Joseph says that he is “[bearing] the accident with calmness,” Lady Sneerwell replies, “because the disappointment doesn’t reach your heart; your interest only attached you to Maria. Had you felt for her what I have for that ungrateful libertine, neither your temper nor hypocrisy could prevent your showing the sharpness of your vexation” (Sheridan 447).

Lady Sneerwell is a hateful and hurtful person. She is not a noble character like Othello; nevertheless, like Othello, and most of us for that matter, she cannot be divided from her wounds. Given the aforementioned quotes, however, Lady Sneerwell, in some strange way, is self-aware, but she has no desire to change her vicious character. She felt targeted and out of control in her youth, and now she manufactures fabrications and spreads them in an attempt to inflict hurt and to control the fate of others.

Fortunately, most human beings are not as spiteful as Lady Sneerwell, but most human beings are not so self-aware either. People do awful things and they don’t know why. People have unconscious jealousy that affects their actions, but they are unaware of
what is driving their behavior. When gossiping, the characters in the play seem little concerned with their motivation in traducing others, or with "truth." As the audience witnesses the escalation of hyperbole in act five, scene two, where the invention of Sir Peter's duel and his wounds are created and expanded upon, it is clearly evident that lies are entertainment for these people, and far more interesting than reality.

In the play we find a few references to the Bible that could be seen as reflecting the division between Jew and Christian; one refers to the New Testament, while the other examples refer to the Hebrew Bible. After encountering Charles' servant Trip, Sir Oliver says, "If the man be a shadow of his master, this is the temple of dissipation indeed!" (Sheridan 416). This seems to be an allusion to Christ's cleansing of the Temple, when he cast out those that bought and sold in the house of God and he overthrew the tables of the moneychangers. Jesus exclaims, "Is it not written: 'My house shall be called a house of / prayer for all the nations'? / But you have made it a den / of robbers.' And when the chief priests and the scribes heard it, they kept looking for a way to kill him; for they were afraid of him, because the whole crowd was spellbound by his teaching" (Mark 11:15-18).

Despite this New Testament story about Jews wanting to destroy the first Christian (of course, we must remember that Christ was also a Jew), throughout history, the problem has not been Jews killing Christians, but rather, from pogroms to the Inquisition to the Holocaust, the problem has been Christians destroying Jews. Usury, in fact, along with heresy and witchcraft, was one of the offenses in search of which the Spanish Inquisition used torture in order to extract confessions.
This history is important to *The School for Scandal* because the character of Moses can be seen as a reflection of the darkness in the collective Christian psyche, a projection of the collective Christian psyche in England. And, not just England of 1777. The darkness that permeates this lighthearted play where people gossip at tea is witnessed again in the Holocaust, by the six million Jews who died, and the countless others who suffered, while the Christian people of Germany sipped tea and gossiped and projected and rationalized and scapegoated and turned a blind eye and murdered.

This gets quite complicated if we look back to the Othello reference in the prologue to the play, because the Jew, like Othello the black Moor, has the sense of being projected on as “other” by the dominant Christian population. Othello’s insecurities cause him to act out with jealous projection, but in general, the Jew does not; rather it is the Christian who practices jealous projection. This is strange because the Christian is part of the dominant group and therefore, has not been projected on as “other.” Since history has demonstrated that it is largely the Christian who acts out against the Jew, one must wonder, are we Christians engaged in jealous projection, and if so, why?

There are two references in the play to the Hebrew Bible; one is the “honest Jew” Moses, a much-venerated figure who led his people out of bondage to the Promised Land. The other is a reference to the biblical Joseph, who refused the seductions of Potiphar’s wife (Sheridan 432). These references to the Hebrew Bible in a play that on the surface has nothing to do with religion, demonstrate just how steeped Christian culture is in the Hebrew Bible. And, since Christians have appropriated the Hebrew Bible and renamed it the Old Testament, it is venerated by Christians too. Given this, could it be that we Christians, at a subconscious level, secretly fear that the Jews are, in fact, “chosen,” as
the Hebrew Bible clearly says? Is that why throughout history Christians have endlessly projected onto and persecuted the Jew?

In *The School for Scandal*, the Jewish moneylender is characterized as excessively greedy and preying on the misfortune of others, but the reality is that wealth is a controlling issue for the Christians of the play. First and foremost, the working class, including the moneylender, are too busy hustling a living to engage in idle and vicious amusements like “strong tea and scandal” (Prologue 385). Second, Sir Oliver plans his disguise because he wants to judge his nephews’ “worth,” since he is going to leave them wealth. Although Sir Oliver has been generous with his nephews, perhaps Joseph is partially right when he lies to his fictitious relative, Mr. Stanley, saying, “avarice, Mr. Stanley, is the vice of age” (Sheridan 439).

Thirdly, in terms of the theme of wealth, one nephew, Charles, is profligate, squandering wealth, while Joseph, his brother, holds “fortune” as his primary criterion for marriage. And lastly, we have the marital squabbles of Sir Peter and Lady Teazle over finances. Given all of the issues around the theme of wealth in this play, the character of the moneylender, Moses, may highlight the Christians’ “split off” projections onto Jews as greedy and preying on the misery of others. Sir Oliver is told that in order to be believable as a moneylender, he must “be exorbitant enough in [his] demands” (Sheridan 410). In other words, he must be excessively greedy and unfeeling. Because the Christians don’t want to admit or face their own obsession with money, it is projected onto the Jew.

It is clear that Jews were persecuted, demonized and murdered in England up until the expulsion of all Jews in 1290; possibly as many as 16,000 people were forced to leave
the country. The first Jews in England came from Normandy after the Norman Conquest in the eleventh century. They were primarily moneylenders because they could neither own land nor participate in trades. But in 1275 King Edward I forbade the practice of usury because he had developed a new system of banking using Italian cash advances (BBC History).

No longer having a need to protect the Jews, Edward had them expelled from England in 1290 (BBC History). By and large, Jews were not allowed in England for 365 years (Jewish Virtual Library 4). Therefore, when *The School for Scandal* was first performed in 1777, Jews had only been officially back in England for around 100 years. So Christians' perception of Jews was probably based more on stereotypes than on actually knowing any Jews.

The Church forbade money lending because it was seen as contradicting Christ’s teachings of “Christian charity,” but there was a great need for credit in an expanding economy. Interest on loans was high because of the risks involved and the lack of capital available. There were some Christian moneylenders, but because usury was considered to be a mortal sin, they had to act surreptitiously, whereas the Jew could be upfront about his business.

Rowley tells Sir Oliver that Moses “is a friendly Jew, who, to do him justice, has done everything in his power to bring your nephew to a proper sense of his extravagance” (Sheridan 409). In fact, Moses is referred to repeatedly as an “honest Jew;” but because his honesty is over-emphasized, perhaps sarcastically, and delivered alongside discussion of exorbitant usury rates and moneylenders’ extreme techniques, the audience is given a negative general picture of moneylenders. This negative depiction and the stereotype it
embraces reflect the dominant view held by Christian society of moneylenders and probably of Jews in general.

But because issues around wealth are the driving force that controls this play, the greed of the Christians may be the real issue, and therefore, it appears that the Christians' avarice is projected onto the Jewish moneylenders. The Christian stereotype of the Jewish moneylender can be seen as only a mask, or a mirror that reflects the Christians' issues around money.

As mentioned earlier, Christians are not allowed to lend money for interest because of Christ's exhortations to help the poor. The idea of "Christian charity" is a powerful issue in the play. Rowley tells Sir Oliver that Charles "commissioned [him] to redeliver you part of the purchase money—I mean, through, in your necessitous character of old Stanley" (Sheridan 426). To which Moses says, "Ah! There is the pity of all: he is so damned charitable" (Sheridan 426). In the end, the charitable brother is deemed "good" and the uncharitable brother is considered "bad."

This judgment could be connected to the idea of usury as uncharitable and "unchristian;" in fact, usury was believed to be a mortal sin. But the Jew as usurer served a necessary function to Christian society. He was only allowed to continue at his business for this very reason. Yet at the same time, he was divided from the rest of society and scapegoated as a kind of pariah. A modern critique of a 1607 essay titled "The Profit That May Be Raised to Your Majesty out of the Jews," reads: "His naked desire to exploit the Jews coexists unpleasantly with his reluctance to offer religious freedom; this attitude bears a striking resemblance to that of medieval English kings who both vilified and profited from the Jews residing in their realm" (Kaplan 223).
In *The School for Scandal* Sir Oliver does not think he can pass as a Jewish moneylender, he cries, “How the plague shall I be able to pass for a Jew?” (Sheridan 410). The insinuation is clear: Jews are “other,” not only religiously different, but also substantially physically different from Christians. It is decided that Sir Oliver can pass, but only because this particular moneylender is also a broker, and therefore, a Christian. And more interesting still, in this little exchange an issue of wealth ironically crops up. The Christians keep harping on the greed of the moneylender, but it turns out that the typical Jewish moneylender is not even wealthy enough to afford a decent suit of clothes. Sir Oliver says, “An’t I rather too smartly dressed to look like a money-lender?” (Sheridan 410).

The prologue to *The School for Scandal* argues that we don’t need to be taught to promote scandal: “Needs there a school this modish art to teach you? / No need of lessons now, the knowing think — / We might as well be taught to eat and drink” (Sheridan 385). Later in the play Sir Peter says that “many a wretch has rid on a hurdle who has done less mischief than those utterers of forged tales, coiners of scandal, – and clippers of reputation” (Sheridan 400). And, like the hydra alluded to in the prologue, scandal can’t be killed, it will always grow a new head. Most of this is said in an insouciant tone, tongue in cheek, but the words and thoughts allude to deeper insidious and more dangerous hidden “truths” about human nature. Othello was consumed by the “green-eyed monster”; it destroyed him and the woman he loved. The rest of us would be wise to watch out for that monster as well.

In a critique of Shakespeare’s *The Merchant of Venice*, Harold Bloom writes: “Freudian ambivalence is simultaneous love and hatred directed toward the same person;
Shakespearean ambivalence, subtler and more frightening, diverts self-hatred into hatred of the other, and associates the other with lost possibilities of the self” (Bloom 190). We certainly see this with Othello. But here, Bloom is referring to the antipathy between Antonio and Shylock, and specifically to Antonio. Antonio’s “ambivalence, like Shylock’s, is murderous, and unlike Shylock’s, it is successful, for Antonio does end Shylock the Jew, and gives us Shylock the New Christian” (Bloom 190).

My assertion, that Christian appropriation of the Hebrew Bible could mean Christians harbor unconscious envy of Jews as God’s chosen people, may seem a stretch. But any attempt to uncover unconscious motivation, by definition, has to be a stretch because we are dealing with what is not conscious to us. Christian envy and ambivalence plays out in Sheridan’s *The School for Scandal* with the Christians’ projection of avarice onto Jewish moneylenders. Furthermore, in the play, the vicious controlling gossip and banishment of people from the select group of high society has some parallels in the projection, scapegoating and murderous behavior of Christians toward Jews throughout history.

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Critical Analysis of AT 706:
The Repercussions of Incest in "The Maiden Without Hands"

By Tiffany Gabrielson

Some issues are too sensitive to talk about forthrightly and yet too important to overlook. Fairy Tales are the harbingers of these sensitive and necessary messages, clouding and yet overtly dealing with harsh subjects through symbolism. "The Symbolic elements of fairy tales convey emotional impressions of beings, phenomena and events in the real world, organized in the form of fictional narrative sequences which allow the narrator to speak of the problems, hopes and ideals of the community" (Holbek, 409). Perhaps the most uncomfortable and yet most imperative of these issues is that of incest and molestation. Because of the extremely personal nature of this offense it is difficult to talk about incest and therefore such abuse has become an epidemic without a face — but interestingly enough not without a story. The symbolism of Tale type AT 706, "The Maiden Without Hands," is a clear representation of the physical and emotional journey of a heroine struggling to feel safe in the world at large due to pains of her past. "The Maiden Without Hands" is a striking portrait of a heroine who feels both shattered and powerless, an individual struggling to heal her wounds and to overcome the memory of sexual abuse.

Analysis of "The Maiden Without Hands" tale type is especially difficult because the incest of the story is often obscured due to its sensitive nature. Upon finding a version of "The Maiden Without Hands" which explicitly talks about the incest even the Grimm Brothers decided not to include such a troublesome premise. Traditionally "the heroine refuses to marry her own father. Often it is she who cuts her own hands off in
response to the advances made by her father" (Dundes, 132). Instead the Grimms begin
their tale with the maiden being wooed by the devil, and while this is a less overt
premise, its symbolism serves to further enforce the incestuous undertones. The
symbolism used in this story as well as the symbolism used in other versions of the tale
type, namely the Japanese version entitled "The Handless Maiden" and the Russian
version entitled "The Armless Maiden," do enough to tell of the incest, and the rest of the
story itself tells of the psychological effects of this abuse. Though they overtly excluded
incest from the tale, the Grimms could not exclude the ramifications of this incest which
serve to drive the story of "The Maiden Without Hands."

In The Psychoanalytic Study of the Grimms' Tales: 'The Maiden Without Hands'
Alan Dundes puts forth a theory that the incestuous relationship underlying the maiden's
flight from home is a result of Freudian projection by the female character. Even Holbek,
who I will be citing throughout this paper, uses this tale type as an example of projection.
Dundes asserts that the female character cannot deal with her incestuous desire for her
father and therefore projects her feelings onto him, so that even though the story tells of a
father with incestuous feelings the daughter is actually the one with the desire. Dundes
comes to this conclusion because of two unexplained themes in the story: the punishment
of the female character and the type of punishment, specifically the cutting of the hands
and, in some versions, the breasts. Dundes asserts that, in a Fairy Tale, for the child to be
punished for the father's desire is nonsensical and that in particular the cutting of the
hands and breast is overtly sexual, relating to the masturbatory activities associated with
the heroine's suppressed desire for her father. Dundes' interpretation ends here as the
incest is only a motif serving to drive the heroine from her home. However, I intend to prove it is a motif which drives the entire story.

I propose we look at this story in a more direct way. What if the female is not the one who desires but, as the text overtly suggests, the object of desire? In this we are not dealing with a Freudian projection of feelings onto the father but rather simply a damaged child unable to understand her father’s actions. If this is true the heroine is obviously unable to reconcile the provider and loving father with the monstrous and demonic offender who abuses her and creates a character split in order to justify the father’s actions. “Conflicting aspects of a character are distributed upon different figures in the tale” (Holbek, 435). In each version we are presented with dichotomies: in the German version it is Father/Devil, in the Japanese version Father/Stepmother and in the Russian version Brother/Sister-in-law. Each pairing presents a personification of the young heroine’s hurt and confusion. Though each story presents different individual characters, they serve interchangeable roles in the motif and all symbolize the same things.

The split can be most easily seen in the Grimms’ version as these characters most closely align with Holbek’s definition of a character split. Both of these figures serve in the same character role as the high adult male and serve to act as two sides of the same coin. Through this split the daughter can still love the part of her father that is her provider without loving his actions, personified in the Devil. In this version the father overtly makes a pact with the devil for riches and happiness without truly knowing the damage he is causing to his daughter. He is unable to undo the damage after the pact has been made. The loving father has given in to his desire for happiness at all costs, without thought for the damage it would cause his daughter, and now cannot undo its destruction.
He has unleashed the devil on his child in the form of sexual abuse in order to please himself.

The replacement of the devil figure with an evil woman, such as a stepmother or sister-in-law, also makes sense upon close examination. Holbek would hold that this split should be male to male, with both characters holding the same character position, but before disregarding the woman figure entirely let us examine this split more closely. Though it seems a male figure would be more suitable let us remember, as Holbek states, “symbols should not be interpreted as expressions of a single, unalterable meaning. The meaning depends on the context in which the symbols appear.” (446). The symbolic perpetrator of sexual abuse need not be male, especially when the mind wants to put the perpetrator in opposition to the father figure. In order to disconnect the loving father from his horrible actions the mind must create another figure which serves as an extension of the father or brother figure and yet is nothing like them. The stepmother or sister-in-law are a societal unit with the brother or father figure and in this way they are both connected to and yet opposite from the father. The father is male, loving, and providing, whereas the woman figure is female, harsh, and conniving. In this way the mind can love the father and yet hate the actions, which are personified in the female or devil figure. But there is one more problem. Holbek states that in an ideal split the characters will not come into contact with one another, yet the two characters obviously do. If the split continued to be present in the heroine’s mind throughout the story this interaction would nullify my claim of the split, but the most important part of the story occurs when the heroine realizes the Devil and father are one and the same and therefore truly act as a unit.
The eventual recognition of the father figure and stepmother/devil as one unit is culminated in the cutting of the hands and the heroine's subsequent leaving of home.

Until now the heroine has been able to separate the father and his actions through the split of the father/brother and the devil/woman, but the cutting of the hands makes this split impossible. This cutting of the hands and breasts is highly symbolic. No longer is the devil or woman figure solely associated with the father's actions, the father is overtly responsible. When the daughter recognizes the father has cut off her hands it can no longer be denied that the father is behind these evil deeds. In the Grimm brothers' version the child tells her father, before her hands are cut, "dear father, do with me what you will, I am your child" ("Girl Without Hands," 161). There is a feeling of trust between the two and an expectation that this trust will not be violated. In the child's mind surely the devil or stepmother would hurt her, but never this loving father figure. After the cutting of her hands this trust has been broken and reality has set in. The heroine abruptly leaves home and proclaims she is "an unhappy mortal deserted by all but God." ("Girl Without Hands," 163).

Why would she at one moment let her father cut her hands off and at the next abandon him and claim herself deserted? This moment represents the association of the father with his brutal actions. When he cuts off her hands she realizes he, and none other, has inflicted pain upon her. She has been betrayed and abandoned by the loving figure he once was. In the Japanese version upon her hands being cut off the heroine cries out "Why would my own father do this terrible thing to hurt me?" Like her German counterpart, she cries out she is "abandoned by her father" ("Handless Maiden," 219), but in this version as well as the Russian version this symbolic abandonment is further
represented by the father figure physically leaving the girl behind. His actions have caused such a wedge between them they are no longer close, either emotionally or in physical proximity.

The cutting of the hands which Dundes takes note of is very important, but for very different reasons than Dundes puts forth. The cutting of the hands is not a punishment for villainy as Dundes states, but rather a trial. This can be seen easily as the hands grow back later in the story, showing they are a test which the heroine must overcome. The cutting of the hands is a manifestation of the physical and emotional damage the heroine has been through. The girl is now a broken spirit, left to weep and wander. The mutilation the girl undergoes is a sign of the emotional mutilation and self blame which all victims of sexual abuse, most notably incest, experience. Because the father cannot see the monstrosity of his own deeds, he further punishes the daughter, in a form of projection, because he cannot control or punish himself. The cutting of the hands and breast is symbolically significant because it both represents powerlessness against his sexual advances and also serves to desexualize the heroine. The girl has lost not only her innocence; she has also lost her femininity.

After leaving, the heroine experiences much soul searching and reflection. The cutting of the hands represents a shift; the struggle is no longer external but internal. This internal journey is externalized in all the versions as a sort of wandering. In the Japanese version the beginning of this internal struggle is referred to as a time of homelessness and survival, in the German version as a journey into paradise-like garden of the King, and in the Russian version as a wandering through the woods where “she was all scratched, but could not find a path leading out.... Finally, after several years, she found a path”
(“Armless Maiden, 295). Though each of these motifs is different they represent the same journey of hurt and self discovery. The time of homelessness and survival represents a time of self reliance and reflection. The Paradise of the King’s garden represents a quest for what was lost, and because of the overtly Christian overtones of the Grimms’ story it might be a reference to the lost innocence of the Garden of Eden which directly parallels the heroine’s lost innocence. The reference to the woods is possibly the most direct reference to a quest for self discovery as it has been a symbol used by many authors from Dante to Shakespeare to show the individual’s struggle to find him or her self despite the darkness of life. Which ever motif is used, this period of time is clearly one of reflection and self reliance where the heroine seeks to overcome the pains of her past. Despite the healing power of this reflective state it cannot be a permanent one. It is necessary for the heroine to venture outside of the woods, outside of the garden, outside of the self in order to live life once more.

When the heroine ventures out she is immediately put into another family structure in which her old scars reappear. In each of the stories the husband leaves the heroine just as she is about to give birth, suggesting that the pregnancy has caused old fears in the heroine to resurface. Though in each version we are told she will soon give birth to a child after the husband leaves, it is clear that she will give birth soon and thus that she had been pregnant long before his departure. The husband’s departure is a symbol for the heroine’s own emotional distance from her husband during her pregnancy. This sequence of events suggests that her pregnancy and her imagining of her own husband as a father has caused an array of fears to resurface. This pregnancy leads the heroine to see her husband in the same high adult male role which her father and the devil
once filled, and just as his status of high young male brought her comfort, this shift brings her fear. The memories that her time of reflection had quieted are now reappearing. Though her husband, who in each version is either a King or a wealthy man, represents the best of all men, her pregnancy brings out her fear of her husband's potential to become the worst of all men, as her father was. This fear, which is natural because of her abuse, has caused her to retreat once again into herself.

The rest of the story is an even more symbolic reflection of the heroine's quest to escape the abuse of her past. Upon her giving birth to her child the scene of the interception of the letters, which occurs in all three versions of this tale, represents the past's control over her. She fears her child will be a monster, either because he could have been a result of incest or because he now has the potential to become a perpetrator of incest. Though she is relieved to find her child is a perfectly natural (and in the Japanese version even a wonderful) child, the past and the actions of her father still interfere with her communication with both her husband and the outside world. The actions of her father, represented by the devil/stepmother/sister-in-law, continue to threaten her new family and new life. This fear leads to an emotional retreat symbolized by her being expelled from her new home. Feelings of brokenness and unworthiness still exist inside of her as she is daily reminded of the mutilation of her past because of the mutilation of her body.

This new family has caused the heroine to deal with the emotional scars of her old life. In each of the versions the heroine must reexamine her view of males in order to free herself from these scars. In the Japanese version her son slips off her back into a river and in an act of love she reaches for him, causing her hands to grow. This is
significant for two stylistic reasons. First of all it represents a hyperbole: her fear of losing her son is expressed by dropping him in the water, and physically being faced with his loss she is able to overcome the fear. Here her love for her son causes her to overcome her pain from her father, and her son brings healing to the wounds her father inflicted. The presence of water is also important as it represents Particularization. As Holbek writes, “water is the female principle... birth is often associated with water” (438), and it is through this association with water that her hands grow back. Similarly in the Russian version her son falls into a well and she is instructed by a strange man to reach in and her hands will grow back. Here we see the importance of water and also the physical shift of her attitude toward the high adult male. The heroine trusts this strange man and her hands are returned in time to save her son. In the Grimms’ version the girl’s hands are saved by her piety, which at first seems not to fit the symbols of the other tales but upon closer inspection makes perfect sense. We see an association with water earlier in the story when she crosses a river to go into her garden paradise; this builds a relationship with God, who sends an angel to help her enter the paradise. In this version the heroine is able to look upon God, who also fills the character role of the high adult male, as a healthy father figure and she teaches her son to do the same. The heroine has re-grown her hands because she has reexamined her view of men and in doing so has freed herself from the mutilating influence of her father’s actions.

Because of her new perspective on the high adult male, the wife no longer must be distant and can now be reunited with her husband. In two of the versions the husband must now quest for the heroine to show his worthiness. In the Grimms’ version this quest lasts “for seven long years... [and] during the whole time he neither ate nor drank, but
God supported him" ("Girl Without Hands," 165). Just as the heroine’s view of all men is changing, her husband, the King, is proving he is worthy to be trusted. In his commitment he is proving the wife’s transformation will not be in vain and is showing he will not hurt her as her father once did. There is no talk of punishment for her father or the devil, but only of the heroine’s living a joyous life, free from the devil’s influence, that is free from the torment of her past.

In "The Handless Maiden" the husband also journeys for his wife. Though this journey lasts nowhere near as long and does not have the same symbolic self-denial as in the Grimms’ version, the husband exhibits his worthiness by recognizing her at her worst, in her beggar apparel. This trust is exhibited when they “both were so happy they sat hand-in-hand and wept. Mysteriously where their tears fell, beautiful flowers bloomed” ("Handless Maiden," 222). Though she has been newly healed, the heroine is willing to be totally vulnerable to her husband by offering that which had been previously destroyed. Their pain has turned into a completely healthy emotional and even sexual relationship which is symbolized by the flowers which are transformed from their tears. It is also stated that the father and stepmother were justly punished for their crimes, perhaps meaning that while the heroine never forgave them for their actions, the past no longer had power over her.

In the Russian tale the wife further quests for her husband and in doing so is the only heroine who confronts her past head on. By telling her story to the household where her brother, sister-in-law and husband are assembled, the Russian heroine faces the two male figures in her life, and the devastating actions she has been subject to. She at once is able to face both her loving brother and his inhumane actions and her husband,
realizing that her husband is not a monster and that there are even redeeming aspects to
the brother who hurt her. It seems the Russian heroine is able to separate her brother
from his actions in a healthier way than she did before and is able to hate those actions
without hating her brother entirely. This is shown in the punishment of the sister-in-law
without the punishment of the brother, which represents the hatred of his past actions
without the hatred of her brother. Interestingly enough it is the brother who punishes his
wife, showing that perhaps he has been able to change and overcome his baseness. Most
importantly the heroine is able to reconcile with her husband and live a life free of the
scars which had before restrained her. These different endings are important in that their
differences serve to remind us that stories are as much projects of their times and places
as they are of the universal problems which make them necessary.

Though I read this story with the eyes of a modern day female, and therefore
confess I am interpreting the story as such, it is clear that the center of this story is a
lesson in the torments of the past and overcoming these pains. As Holbek states, the
marvelous elements of Fairy Tales “are only retained because they are still meaningful to
their users – and it is that meaning, not any putative original meaning, which is the goal
of our quest” (406). The symbols of the story clearly detail the heroine’s movement from
self-blame to emancipation from these feelings and from the past events themselves; and
though the specific symbols change with the different societies in which the stories arise,
the message itself remains consistent, yet shrouded. “Symbols… seem to convey feelings
rather than thoughts” (Holbek, 409). The stories must be covert as they existed in
societies where women were often second-class citizens and where speaking of such
things as incest and sexual abuse overtly was all but unheard of. Such cases did occur
however, and such stories as this should be treasured for their admittedly uncomfortable message that such pains can be overcome.

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**Works Cited**

**Fairy Tales:**


**Criticism & Theory:**


By Christian Snead

Darren Aronofsky and Sean Gullette's 1998 thriller π differs greatly from other films in the genre. The movie, starring Gullette as the tortured mathematician Maximillian "Max" Cohen, many times transcends the traditional limitations of the thriller and takes a step deeper, venturing into the psyche of the unstable genius. The aural cues and camera techniques in π make viewers realize that Max’s psychosis makes him more machine than man.

The focus of π lies on Max’s subconscious, a point made excruciatingly clear when stock broker Marcy Dawson (Pamela Hart), screams “I don't give a shit about you. I only care about what's in your fucking head!” Throughout the film, the music serves to highlight the nonhuman aspects of Max. All the sounds we hear when we are treated to views of his psyche are electronic, digital. Not the sounds of the biological processes of life, but instead audible ones and zeroes.

Indeed, one of the outstanding elements in the film is the soundtrack. It is provided by Clint Mansell, Orbital, Autechre, and Aphex Twin, all famous for making minimalist electronic music. Autechre and Aphex Twin are most noted for their highly sampled and digitized compositions. This reliance on electronics to create sound serves a great purpose in this movie. Because the sounds created by these artists are so far removed from humanity in terms of instrumentation, they are almost otherworldly. The
only biological contact these sounds have had in their existence is the shaping of their sine waves by arbitrary numerical values. Because of this, there is no mistaking the sounds of the soundtrack for anything remotely human. This is precisely the effect the filmmakers were seeking.

The decision to shoot in black-and-white was another wise decision on the part of the directors. This medium makes all the scenes in the movie darker and grittier. In some respects it makes the scenes easier to comprehend visually. There is less information present on the screen at any given time. It also serves as a representation of how a computer might “see” the world. Computers at their simplest level operate on a system of ones and zeroes, on or off, white or black. Of course, an entire movie that is rasterized would be nearly impossible to watch, so black-and-white stock is the next best alternative. In this way, every second of film hails back to the idea of Max being digital rather than biological.

Multiple times in the movie, Max will enter into a hallucinogenic state (he will have an “attack”). These attacks all follow the same formula, so for the sake of brevity I will analyze Max’s first attack in the movie. It occurs in a diner and is prompted by Max’s confrontation with Lenny Meyer (Ben Shenkman). The primary image in these sequences is a closeup of Max’s left thumb shaking violently and uncontrollably. At this time, we hear Lenny’s voice become more and more hollow and become overpowered by the crescendo of static and a slowly pulsing synthetic beep. What follows next is a rapid series of cuts, beginning with Max’s hand opening a pill bottle, dumping three pills into his hand, popping the pills into his mouth, and closing the lid. During this short sequence, the pulsating beep has grown quite audible above the static. The next shot
brings us back to Max's apartment, with no indication of how much time has passed or how he got home. We see Max reflected in his bathroom mirror assembling assorted apparatuses, pharmaceutical vials, isopropanol, and cotton balls. The volume of the static and pulsing decreases enough for Max (via voiceover) to narrate his auto-administration of medicine. The static and beep waste no time in returning to their original volume after the end of this voice over.

We next see Max seated in a chair in his living room. Slowly, the camera starts to zoom in on Max's face as the static and pulsing beep give way to a high-pitched synthetic screech. His face begins to shake violently, and he grabs his head. He grimaces and grits his teeth through what can only be intense pain. During this, the screeching only becomes louder and more grating. Then, as suddenly as it started, it stops, and Max's face becomes relaxed. There is a low rumble, quiet at first, but it begins to grow. The camera cuts to the door of the apartment, and a closeup of the doorknob which begins to turn and vibrate. Then the entire door begins to shake, slightly at first but then more and more violently. The camera returns to Max, who begins to shake a bit. The camera turns back to the door, focusing on Max's three chain locks and deadbolt. The deadbolt then begins to unlock, with no visible entity responsible. Max, with a glazed look, watches the scene unfolding before him. At this point, the rumbling has become deafening. The door suddenly and powerfully swings open, shattering all its chain locks, and where a stairwell would normally be is only white light. The camera suddenly cuts back to Max and zooms in on him very rapidly. He is engulfed in white light, the screen is soon overexposed, the earthshaking rumbling suddenly stops, and all is silent.
This hallucination and the ones that follow all use the general formula of Max taking his pills, the pulsing beep and static while Max makes sense of his surroundings, an electronic screech coupled with Max grasping his head in intense pain, and a sudden washing out by brightness, followed by silence. These hallucinations are analogous to the description by Sol (Mark Margolis) of his computer crashes and Euclid’s crash. This is made evident when Max confronts Sol on the nature of the 216 digit number:

Sol: My guess is certain problems cause computers to get stuck in a particular loop. The loop leads to melt down, but just before they crash, they become aware of their own structure. The computer has a sense of its own silicon nature and it prints out its ingredients.
Max: Studying the pattern made Euclid conscious of itself. Right? Then before it died it spit out the number, that consciousness is the number. ... It’s a door, Sol!

The pulsating and static inside Max’s head are the calculations of the computer, the screech and pain are the computer’s jump into self-awareness, and the blinding white void that overtakes Max is the death of the computer.

We are now presented with this elaborate extended metaphor that blurs the line between man and machine. What is the significance of this? Perhaps Max serves as a warning to us. Humanity has become obsessed with attempting to understand the unfathomable. We have created complex machines with which to do this, and in creating them, have transformed ourselves into some sort of chimera. Max personifies this obsession with finding the perfection inherent in the universe. He crashes many times during his search, and his quest leads to his eventual self-trepanation. Max is to us what Icarus was to the Greeks.

π offers us a unique opportunity of self-examination. It presents the life, illumination, and end of Maximillian Cohen using shocking visual and auditory style. The entire movie creates a metaphor which forces viewers to consider their relationship
with technology. In this way, it is a feature which does not just make you scratch your head (or cover your ears or eyes), it makes the point of emphasizing the danger or benefit of the ever-lessening gap between the carbon of life, and the silicon used to understand that life.

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