SHELVED IN BOUND PERIODICALS
This issue of *hoi polloi* is dedicated to Dr. A.J. Kline, Chairman of the Humanities Division. We thank him for his support of *hoi polloi* and the English Club.

The haiku on the cover translates:

In my loneliness
I forgot my cane somewhere
An autumn evening

--anonymous

*hoi polloi*

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Cover Design
Paul Hudo

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*HOY-po-LOY: noun. 1. The common masses; the man in the street; the average person; the herd. 2. A literary publication of Gainesville College, comprised of nonfiction essays.

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**Table of Contents**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Essay Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hamlet's Preempted Manhood</td>
<td>By Jonathan Lester</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't Touch My Morals</td>
<td>By James Ivie</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Question of Authority: A Reading of &quot;Barn Burning&quot;</td>
<td>By Yhana Crunkleton</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence on Children's Television: Are Programs Hurting</td>
<td>By Nancy Stokes</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our Children?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Artist's Journey in &quot;Sailing to Byzantium&quot;</td>
<td>By Andrea Cooper</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Failures of Lyndon Johnson's Vietnam War Policy</td>
<td>By Scott Grant</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tapestries of Light in the <em>Heart of Darkness</em> and the Reader</td>
<td>By Chris Lambert</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Neglectful Hero: A Theme in the <em>Odyssey</em></td>
<td>By Kate Toney</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notes on Contributors</td>
<td></td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Editor's Note**

The theme of this year's *hoi polloi* is "journey." Though three of the eight essays contained here are not directly "journey" essays, I believe there is a common link between them all. The second, fourth, and sixth are informal pieces, focusing on topics ranging from morality to L.B.J.'s war policy. The link that connects these essays with the more journey oriented contributions is that, in the final analysis, it is all about the pilgrimage. Whether we speak of the political history of America or Yeats' trip to Byzantium, we are speaking of journey. When the writer puts the pen to paper, he travels. In the same sense, as the reader reads, he trades places with the author. I hope the essays in this year's edition allow for some travel.

I would like to thank Professor Richard F. Patterson and Professor William B. McClung for judging this year's essay entries to the Gainesville College Writing Contest.

Enjoy the reading.

--Chris Lambert
Mr. Lester examines Hamlet's transformation from reckless adolescent to decisive adult and comments on the nature of the tragic hero.

**Hamlet's Preempted Manhood**  
Jonathan Lester

In the course of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, we see the hero experience a profound transformation of thoughts and feelings coupled with his tragically accelerated maturity. Hamlet, torn by his father's death and his mother's hasty remarriage to his uncle, has his adolescent energies siphoned by temptations of vengeance and self-righteousness—demons which manipulate his actions faster than he can control or reason. For him, the wisdom of his manhood comes only in the wake of his destructive mistakes which rob him of an adulthood he can live out and enjoy.

Hamlet sulks in deep depression and despair in the play's beginning. He knows no joy regarding recent events; he is pessimistic, skeptical of the existence of any good in the world:

> How weary, stale, flat and unprofitable  
> Seem to me all the uses of this world!  
> Fie on't! Fie! 'tis an unweeded garden,  
> That grows to seed; things rank and gross in nature  
> Possess it merely. (I, ii, 132-137)

Hamlet now is open to suggestion, yearning for anything that might restore in him a sense of purpose and an opportunity to bring justice to Elsinore. Enter the ghost of Hamlet's father, bearing news that his death came at the hand of Claudius and commanding Hamlet to take revenge. It is here where Hamlet knows his calling and commits himself to take action;

> Yea, from the table of my memory  
> I'll wipe away all trivial fond records,  
> All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past,

Thus does Hamlet adopt a new single-mindedness, a reason to live, a goal to work toward.

However, Hamlet's initiative is complicated by the covert directives of Claudius, who seeks to further secure his reign by deceiving Hamlet and thereby thwarting Hamlet's suspicion. He has no idea that Hamlet already knows the truth. In conspiracy with Polonius, the king seeks to nullify Hamlet's dangerous behavior with a manipulated rejection by Ophelia. This plan backfires: Hamlet's rage is but escalated by Ophelia's dishonesty, and with this new fuel added to the corruptive fire of his fury, Hamlet newly becomes the manipulator of those around him. Consumed by dark passions, he struggles to bring events under his control. Thus is the concept of the "play-within-a-play" manifested.

And within that "play-within-a-play" exists a third play: this one literally. This is how Hamlet utilizes his creative abilities to transmit a clear message to Claudius. As the actors dramatize the murder of the late king, the secret is revealed to Claudius. The conflict has now come to a head.

However, Hamlet is slow to realize that events have grown beyond his control. After his accidentally killing Polonius, he awakens to the grave consequences of his actions, and the responsibility he bears for bringing them about. The deaths that ensue afterwards have been made inevitable, for only by eliminating Guildenstern and Rosencrantz can he proceed with his vengeance. And just as Ophelia's suicide is the result of Polonius's death, so also is the mortal duel between Hamlet and Laertes consecrated. This is Hamlet's only avenue to his objective, and is, therefore, the result of Hamlet's attempting to do too much with too little—too grave a deed to perform with too little tenure in manhood and manhood's necessary complements of patience, tact, and solidity of disposition.

Consumed with rage, blinded by vengeance, and misled by his own impatience, Hamlet finds himself short of honoring his father's command to "taint not thy mind (I,V, 86)", as the

That youth and observation copied there;  
And thy commandment all alone shall live  
Within the book and volume of my brain,  
Unmixed with baser matter: yes, by heaven! (I,V, 99-105)
poison of vengeance envenomed his thinking like Laertes's fatal sword. Fortune strikes Elsinore despite the appeals of Hamlet's moral offering, and when all is done, manhood finds the boy dead on arrival.

The judge of this year's Informal Essay category has this to say about the 3rd place winner: "This essay makes a forceful statement about, and against, the ominously increasing government interference in private life. This is one essay that everyone should read and think about."

Don't Touch My Morals
James Ivie

Every adult person has the right to indulge in whatever activity he or she wishes as long as the said activity does not interfere with the rights of another person. The preceding statement represents the ultimate form of freedom. Americans call the United States free, but this country is not nearly as free as it could or should be. The most unacceptable restriction of personal liberty in the United States is governmental attempts to regulate morals. Morality is an individual affair and can only be judged by the person concerned. No one has the right to decide for another person what is obscene or immoral. Anything a person does that does not violate the rights or existence of another being, destroy public or private property, or endanger the public welfare, is a concern for only the person or persons involved. Government interference with individuals' morality is most prominent in dealings with obscenity and sexual relations.

Censorship of obscene materials was not an intent of the original framers of the constitution. In fact, Benjamin Franklin wrote books dealing with materials that some people may consider obscene. Among the most prominent of these works is Letter of Advice to Young men on the Proper Choosing of a Mistress. Furthermore, according to Nat Hentoff in The First Freedom:

James Madison was known for his "Rabelaisian anecdotes"; and as Judge Jerome Frank has pointed out, the libraries of many founding fathers included flavosomes tales abounding in explicit sex. Thomas Jefferson, moreover, wrote in an 1814 letter: "I am really mortified that... the sale of a book can become a subject of inquiry, and of criminal inquiry too.... Are we to have a censor whose imprimatur shall
say what books may be sold and what books we may buy?... Whose foot is to be the measure to which ours are all to be cut or stretched?” (283-284)

Clearly, our forefathers did not intend for our personal morals to be controlled by the government. Yet, today, government agencies throughout the nation have banned books, movies, and recordings that they consider obscene. The public has not been forced to read, watch, or listen to these materials, yet the government wants to ensure that no one gets a chance to partake of the works in question. True, government officials are elected by the voting public either directly or indirectly. However, as John Stuart Mill has stated,

If all mankind minus one were of one opinion, and only one person were of the contrary opinion, mankind would be no more justified in silencing that one person, than he, if he had the power, would be justified in silencing mankind. (Douglas 24)

Likewise, election does not give government officials the right to meddle in an individual's moral decisions or to regulate an individual's moral intake. A simple majority can not make morality decisions for the individual, or a dictatorship will have been created.

Moreover, the definition of obscenity changes with every human being. No one person, or group of persons, can or should create a universal definition of obscenity that everyone has to follow. The individual has to decide, for him or her own self, what is obscene or immoral. As former Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas has stated:

Whatever obscenity is, it is immeasurable as a crime and delineable only as a sin. As sin, it is present only in the minds of some and not in the minds of others. It is entirely too subjective for legal sanction. There are as many different definitions of obscenity as there are men; and they are as unique to the individual as his dreams.

Government invades morality in another, perhaps more personal aspect: sexuality. Most state and/or local governments have laws describing what can and can not be performed between consenting adults. Many states allow only one legal position for sex. These laws include acts performed in the privacy of one's own home (Taylor). Sexuality is a question of morals, and must be decided by the individual. Government has no right to interfere with sexual acts performed by consenting adults in the privacy of their own homes.

Many people consider certain sexual acts obscene. However, since obscenity is a matter of personal opinion, these people should not try to regulate private sexual acts (between consenting adults) that they are not forced to see. This type of regulation is not only an invasion of moral individuality but also an invasion of privacy, a fundamental right desired by individuals since the beginning of modern civilization.

Government interference in moral decisions must be stopped. No one has the right to regulate an individual's morals, for morality is as sacred to the individual as thought and emotion are. Perhaps this concept is best stated by former Justice William O. Douglas:

There is a growing tendency of an increasingly powerful government to make the citizen walk submissively to the rightist philosophies now in the ascendancy. It may be that those pressures and the invasion of privacy will combine to end an era that brought us close to the Jeffersonian idea. (Douglas and Vandehaig)

Government blatantly forces its concepts of obscenity and proper sex upon the individual, and the majority of Americans accept this intrusion. We, the people of the United States, must be the ones to correct this fallacy in our government.
A Question of Authority: A Reading of "Barn Burning"

Yhana Crunkleton

In William Faulkner's short story "Barn Burning," Colonel Sartoris Snopes develops from a child to an adult. Faulkner shows how Sarty develops from a child who believes in his father to an intermediate stage where Sarty begins to question his father's values and finally to the adult realization of his own values and morals. In "Barn Burning" Sarty's maturation is painfully followed from his childhood to adulthood.

Sarty begins this story as a ten-year-old child. He is beginning to emerge from a child who totally believes his father is a man who achieves his own justice and that an enemy of his father's is an enemy of his. "Our enemy he thought in that despair; Ourn! mine and his both! He's my father!" (67). Sarty, as a child, wants and needs to believe in his father. When Sarty is faced with lying or telling the truth to his father's enemies, he struggles with which response he should give. He is a child who feels as if his father has done something wrong. Sarty has a sense of fear but mostly one "of despair and grief, the old fierce pull of blood..." (67). He acts as any child will act. He stands by his authority figure, his father. He supports his father in his efforts to vindicate himself. Sarty sees his father through the eyes of a child.

As the story "Barn Burning" opens, Sarty is unsure of his father's actions. This uncertainty is the beginning of Sarty's journey into adulthood. Sarty realizes that "He aims for me to lie...And I will have to do hit" (67). He hopes that his father is through with his barn burning when he thinks "Maybe he's done satisfied now, now that he has..."(68). His father, Abner, confronts him about the court room scene. Abner strikes Sarty but then explains that "'You got to learn to stick to your own blood..." (69). Sarty is faced with the question of whether to do the right thing and support truth and justice or to stick by blood. As any

Ms. Crunkleton explores the perilous journey of Sarty Snopes from child to adult in this year's 2nd place winner of the Gainesville College Writing Contest Formal Essay category.
child matures, he must learn to question his parents' actions. As Sarty begins to question his father’s motives for burning barns, he begins to show that he has passed from his childhood and is approaching maturity.

The final stage in Sarty’s development is his step into adulthood. In this final stage in his development, Sarty realizes he must stand up for his beliefs, even if those beliefs are different from his father’s. Sarty wants to believe that the DeSpains are impervious to his father’s actions. He believes "they are safe from him...beyond his touch..."(70). Sarty begins to notice that his father does not care whom or what he soils as "...the boy remarked the absolutely undeviating course which his father held and saw the stiff foot come squarely down in a pile of fresh droppings where a horse had stood..."(71). Sarty begins to differentiate between what is right and what is wrong. Sarty really steps over into adulthood when he decides to reason with his father over burning DeSpain’s barn. He actually questions his father’s actions. "Ain’t you going to even send a nigger?"(79).

Sarty takes an irreversible step when he warns DeSpain of his father’s intent to burn the barn. Sarty’s final step is to leave home for good. "He does not look back"(79). He can only look forward as he has now entered into his adulthood.

Sarty was a child who was named after Colonel Sartoris. Colonel Sartoris, the Confederate war hero, was an honored person. Sarty wants to become an honest person, one who believes in truth, honesty, and honor. As Sarty develops from a child to an adult, he begins to question his father’s authority. Sarty goes from an all trusting child, to a questioning intermediate stage, and finally to an adult.

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Work Cited


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Must government regulate television to protect children from its evils, or should the parents take greater responsibility in managing their children’s viewing? This essay plunges into its topic and comes to some refreshing conclusions. This essay won 2nd place in this year’s Informal Essay category.

### Violence on Children’s Television Programs Is Harming Our Children

*Nancy Stokes*

Ask any two people how television violence affects youngsters, and you will probably hear contrasting opinions. Many people argue that violent super-heroes have always been portrayed on children’s television programs, with little or no undesirable consequences. However, others seem just as convinced that harmful effects are often produced when youngsters identify with the latest fist-swinging "good guy." Nonetheless, most experts do agree that there appears to be some connection between viewing violence and later acts of aggression, especially in very young children. Due to the direct relationship between television violence and aggressive acts in children, it is essential that parents and networks cooperate to monitor children’s viewing time and provide quality programming for youngsters.

There have been numerous studies done which link violence on popular children’s shows with increased acts of aggression in young people. Ken Lanterman states, "One of these studies, done over a period of twenty-two years by University of Illinois researchers, Leonard Eron and Rowell Husemann, demonstrated that a child’s diet of TV violence was the best indicator of that child’s juvenile delinquency in later years" (F3). The National Coalition on Television Violence has gathered numerous international studies which conclude that the violence depicted on many children’s programs is directly linked to increased acts of hostility in children (Woodman 40). Many parents have expressed concern about their children’s mimicry of the leaping, kicking attacks so typical of the characters on shows such as the
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. Bill Cosby, television actor and director, noted for his effectiveness with children, believes that it is a very common occurrence for children to imitate what television characters do. He also says that by showing violent scenes without any judgment offered about them, the use of violence is supported (Carthane 17). Child psychologist Dr. Lee Salk also notes a direct relationship between acts of aggression in cartoons and children's violence (50).

Desiree Ford, principal of a New York City school, feels so strongly about the supposed connection between television and aggression that she has banned all super-hero play and trappings from her school. She believes that children's total preoccupation with imitating their favorite super-heroes often stems from lack of power and control in their own lives. Therefore, Ford suggests parents evaluate how much input the child has in issues such as "toilet training, meals, and bedtime" (Woodman 89).

Some experts, however, disagree with the validity of such studies. They argue that there are too many other factors involved in a child's hostile behavior to conclusively link television violence with aggression. Brian Sutton-Smith, Ph.D., retired professor of education at University of Pennsylvania, says that children need "myth and fantasy in their lives." He maintains that these characters are a harmless source of pleasure and enable children to imitate good conquering evil (Woodman 40). Some psychologists, such as John Candry, Ph.D., a professor of human development and family studies at Cornell University, agree that there is nothing unusual nor harmful about the current super-hero mania (40).

Nonetheless, many authorities do believe there is a definite connection between violence on the tube and increased acts of hostility, especially among the very young. Many experts think those less than six years old may be particularly vulnerable to messages of violence as a way to resolve problems (Woodman 40). One serious aspect of many of these shows is that the stars are immune to real-life dangers, including flying bullets and speeding cars. Considering that studies by Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget indicate that preschoolers have difficulty distinguishing reality from fantasy, it is reasonable to presume that some children may lose touch with what is harmful and what is not (Woodman 49). Another familiar theme of these super-hero series seems to be that the most powerful character wins, power being invariably equated with force. Woodman says, "according to the National Coalition on Television Violence, 107 of the 194 violent acts in the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles movie are committed by the heroes" (49).

What are the danger signals concerning children and super-heroes? Although experts may disagree about television's role in encouraging children's aggressive behavior, most do agree that total preoccupation with imitating those heroes, especially their violent or negative behaviors, probably indicates a need for parental action (Woodman 82).

Parents may find it helpful to limit the amount of viewing time of acceptable programs as well as redirect kids' attention to other types of shows. This restriction enables youths to make their viewing decisions based on each show's relative value. Carthane points out that the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends only one to two hours daily viewing time—with parents sharing this time with their offspring (17). Although the Academy states that both violence and weight problems have been associated with excessive television viewing, a recent A.C. Nielsen survey concluded that preschoolers spend around twenty-five hours per week watching the tube with five- to eleven-year olds viewing television more than twenty-two hours weekly (Woodman 16). Dr. Albert Black, a Mississippi pediatrician, agrees that there is a direct connection between the number of aggressive acts watched on television and kids' own aggressive tendencies (Carthane 17). Often children can watch daily episodes of their favorite series, each episode portraying their hero committing many violent acts. In fact, Paul Carton, a political analyst who has extensively studied the effects of media on youngsters, states that by the age of sixteen the average American youngster will have watched an "estimated 200,000 acts of media violence, including 33,000 murders" (Campbell 4A).

While expressing a reserved attitude toward studies linking violence on television with increased aggression in
children, David A. England, a Louisiana State University instructor, points out that parents always have the option of simply turning the set off (18). England, who is also a consultant to numerous groups involved in television education, makes many good suggestions for parents who are concerned about television violence. He suggests that parents allow children to watch television only if the child has a good, specific reason for watching; parents decide and enforce what shows and how much viewing time is acceptable; and parents set a good example in their viewing habits (34). Dr. Salk also urges parents to map out basic family rules, for he maintains the family exerts the most influence on children’s "values and tastes" (50).

Along with rules, youngsters need their parents’ time and attention. Spending time together allows adults to encourage their offspring to develop a wide range of interests and skills as alternatives to the tube. Youngsters often find biographies of real-life people fascinating, especially if they are read by a special someone. Daily outside play tends to prevent the buildup of aggression; organized sports and games as well as times of unstructured play can provide a healthy outlet for excess energy. When parents are able to share these activities with their children, they can take time to demonstrate peaceful ways of resolving conflicts. Sadly, this regard for human life is in stark contrast to the complete disregard for human life shown on many children’s programs.

On the other hand, our children also need reassurance that having aggressive tendencies is not bad. This is, after all, a normal part of being human. Indeed, people’s aggressive tendencies have often served as an impetus toward success in many endeavors. However, young people need guidance in learning how to channel these overwhelming tendencies into constructive outlets. Unfortunately, television super-heroes have almost invariably failed to demonstrate that ability to model constructive channeling of aggressive feelings.

Accordingly, there is an urgent need for networks to accept their responsibility to provide quality programming for youngsters. One encouraging note is the recent passage of the “Children’s Television Act,” which is designed to regulate children’s programming. This legislation will hopefully motivate stations to provide variety as well as excellence in children’s television programs (Waters 52). Waters states that the bill’s second provision “requires the Federal Communication Commission to determine how well every TV station has served the educational needs of the young as a condition of renewal” (50). However, the bulk of the responsibility for children’s welfare must be assumed by parents who are willing to monitor and require the enforcement of these laws. It is frightening to think of the future leaders of this country spending more time before a television set which depicts violence as a means of power than with their families. Perhaps our children would benefit from more time spent actively participating in life rather than passively watching their favorite television characters. Regardless, it is up to us as parents to fulfill our responsibilities to monitor both the amount and the content of the television shows our children are viewing.

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any simple, mortal man to long for anchorage and spiritual solace.

Yeats describes the transient states of the soul in the second stanza:

An aged man is but a paltry thing,
A tattered coat upon a stick, unless
Soul clap its hands and sing, and louder sing
For every tatter in its mortal dress....

Perhaps Yeats is implying that a body is nothing but a shell in which the soul is encased. One must "sing," or rather, his soul must "sing" and "clap" for the tatters its "mortal dress" (body) has collected. I believe Yeats is trying to tell every mortal that without the pain and sorrow the mind and body have encountered and without bad experiences, the average human being would not have lived a full sensual life. Without living this full life, the soul has nowhere to go, nothing to encounter. Yeats' soul, however, has gone through the transient state, for he has "sailed the seas and come / to the holy city of Byzantium" (15, 16).

The third stanza details Byzantine mosaics. Yeats' soul extends itself, reaching the mosaics of saints on the church wall. Yeats asks the saints to become "singing masters" of his soul; he asks the saints to accept his soul, to allow him to transcend into their world of timeless art. He pleads for the saints to "consume his heart away; sick with desire" (21). Yeats refers to himself as a "dying animal" to which his soul is attached. He has the most powerful desire to have his soul anchored in the artifice of eternity.

Finally, in the last stanza, Yeats calms his desire: "Once out of nature I shall never take / My bodily form from any natural thing...." (25, 26). Then he refers to the Grecian birds made of gold, which sing like real birds. He could have been thinking about Hans Christian Anderson's "The Emperor's Nightingale," where the emperor exchanges his little mortal nightingale for a mechanical one which will last for centuries, according to goldsmiths. Little mechanical birds such as these sing "To lords and ladies of Byzantium / Of what is past, or passing, or to come" (26).

Yeats' poem is a literal statement of feelings true artists have when inspired spiritually. I, too, am mystified and awed by the ageless magnificence of Byzantium. The Byzantine empire founded upon the Orthodox religion brings to my mind holy men draped in royal violet, their stern faces carved with wisdom and age, and humble worshippers, whose souls were secured not in artistic journey, but in the simplicity of religion. How I wish I could take the same journey as Yeats, either to Byzantium or to the Sistine Chapel, as I mentioned before. Yeats put into words what the true spiritual journey is to the artist.
The 1st place winner in the Informal Essay category is a substantive and carefully documented essay. The judge writes, "The author is adept at bringing together material from various sources and presenting it in a lucid, very well-organized argument."

The Failures of Lyndon Johnson’s Vietnam War Policy
Scott Grant

American policy concerning Vietnam and all other threatened democracies was initially established by President John F. Kennedy in his 1961 inaugural address. "The United States will pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe, to assure the survival and the success of liberty," said Kennedy (Mabie 14). Those words inspired a notion that America would be the defender of freedom and the opposition to Communism worldwide. As Kennedy took office, Vietnam was only a distant dot on the horizon. His pledge, however, assured that it would loom much larger in America’s future. In fact, Vietnam would prove to be the first real test of the American people’s will to carry out the ideal set forth by Kennedy.

U.S. involvement in Vietnam actually began in the 1950s when the Truman administration sent the first U.S. advisors to Indochina. Their purpose was to train native soldiers in how to properly choose their weapons. The advisors were sent in response to an idea that motivated most political leaders throughout the period of the war. It was known as the "domino theory," the idea that if a country such as Vietnam fell to Communism, it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to prevent the rest of Southeast Asia from falling like dominoes (Karnow 252). It was also felt that the loss of Vietnam would shatter the faith of other Asian countries that the United States had the will and capacity to deal with a Communist offensive in that area.

In the summer of 1954, the United States, Great Britain, France, the U.S.S.R., China, Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam participated in the signing of three separate agreements known as the Geneva Accords. These agreements provided that Vietnam be divided approximately along the seventeenth parallel. The Communists would control the North and a democracy would be established in the South. They also ordered free elections to be held in two years to reunify the country. In that time, neither side was to escalate its military or make any foreign military alliances. After the final French withdrawal in February 1955, the U.S. advisors completely took over the job of training the South Vietnamese Army (SVA).

On October 23, 1955, South Vietnam’s Premier Ngo Dinh Diem was elected chief of state in a general referendum. Before his overthrow by coup eight years later, the Diem regime became as hated by the South Vietnamese people as the Vietnamese Communists or Vietcong (VC), because of Diem’s corruption. Kennedy was forced to support Diem despite that fact because he was the only strong leader in South Vietnam. At that time, Kennedy was also not ready to address the issue of sending U.S. troops, so he continued to fill Diem’s repeated requests for aid. This led to Diem’s thinking of himself as indispensable to the United States in handling the war effort, his regime becoming even more corrupt, and the people of South Vietnam becoming further alienated (Sobel 31).

In 1962, the dissidence to Diem’s regime grew to the boiling point as illustrated by the bombing of his palace by two SVA pilots. In the middle of 1963, South Vietnam’s Buddhists began to demonstrate against Diem’s policies. Some even went so far as to douse themselves in gasoline and commit suicide by fire. By late 1963, U.S. leadership was forced to examine Diem’s corruption. They responded by instituting trade restrictions to try and force reforms. It was too late, however, as the military, fed up with Diem’s failing prosecution of the war effort, initiated a violent coup d’etat which overthrew him. They then set up a joint civilian-military government that the United States recognized immediately by lifting all restrictions on the new government.

Back home, Kennedy’s rousing inaugural pledge seemed to haunt his administration. As the situation grew worse, Kennedy deferred any proposals for sending U.S. combat troops.
in favor of sending Diem more aid and advisors. He certainly had the support of the American people and of Congress to send troops, but he believed South Vietnam's ultimate fate should and would lie with its own government and people. However, by the end of 1961, some two thousand U.S. advisors had been sent to Vietnam and were operating with South Vietnamese units under orders to return fire if fired upon (Sobel 51). By the close of 1962, U.S. helicopters were ferrying and supporting SVA troops in their major battles with orders to fire first against the VC. That same year also brought the first fifty-one U.S. casualties, twenty-one of which were from direct enemy combat (Sobel 51).

The stepped-up program in Vietnam and the fifty-one casualties caused the Senate to question the high level of U.S. involvement in February of 1963. Their report foresaw the U.S. heading down a path that would eventually lead to the U.S. becoming more involved in the war effort than South Vietnam itself. They recommended instead that the United States gradually reduce the amount of aid sent to South Vietnam. In October 1963, the White House issued a statement saying that aid to South Vietnam would continue as planned and that the war against the VC should be over by 1965. It also said that one thousand troops could be withdrawn by year's end (Sobel 71). Kennedy would not get the chance to fulfill that promise, because on November 22, 1963, he was assassinated in Dallas, Texas. Those close to Kennedy say that although he did not want to withdraw U.S. support from South Vietnam, he would never have allowed U.S. troops to be plunged into war. They further claim that he had privately confided that following his re-election in 1964, he would withdraw all forces no matter what the political cost (Karnow 269).

Lyndon Johnson held a press conference two days after the assassination and announced that he would pursue the policies of flexible response and counter-insurgency already established by Kennedy in Vietnam. Johnson could not rest long on these, because in 1964, the situation deteriorated further. All reports from the field saw the SVA being defeated by the better-supplied VC. They also indicated that the North Vietnamese Army's (NVA) infiltration was steadily increasing from their sanctuaries across the border in North Vietnam and Laos. The United States had strictly warned the SVA against invading those sanctuaries for fear of expanding the war. South Vietnamese leadership under general Nguyen Khanh also continued to be unstable as casualties mounted. Furthermore the VC appeared to control from two-thirds to three-fourths of the country. They had thus begun to carry out more intensified assaults and longer-sustained, coordinated battles. These events culminated in a reevaluation of U.S. policy by Johnson in 1964. However, Johnson had barely begun the process of reviewing U.S. policy when he was faced with his first real opportunity for flexible response. This opportunity was an unprovoked attack upon the U.S.S. Maddox by three North Vietnamese PT boats during the first week of August. Johnson ordered the bombing of a one-hundred mile area along North Vietnam's coast with targets ranging from coastal bases to oil installations (Sobel 116).

Johnson made his first major policy mistake on August 5, 1964. Despite having the public support needed for a declaration of war which would have legitimatized U.S. efforts in Vietnam and would have focused national attention on the enemy and U.S. objectives in the regions, Johnson presented the Congress with what came to be known as the "Gulf Of Tonkin Resolution." This resolution permitted the President to take all necessary measures to repel any armed attack on U.S. forces as well as to prevent any further aggression. Johnson would later realize, following the Tet offensive, that he indeed needed a formal declaration of war, but by then, he could not get one because public opinion had changed (Summers 21).

Public support must be an essential part of strategy in any war. General Fred Weyland, the last U.S. commander in Vietnam, summed up just how important it is to American war efforts when he said, "The American army is really a people's army in the sense that it belongs to the American people, who take a jealous and proprietary interest in its involvement. When the army is committed, the American people are committed; when the American people lose their commitment, it is futile to try and keep the army committed" (Karnow 16).

Johnson not only missed the support of the public, but he went to great lengths to keep it uninvolved. He pursued a policy of minimum candor—a tactic to disclose only the bare essentials of what was going on without blatantly lying. He hoped to keep the war a minor issue focusing the nation's eyes on domestic issues like the "Great Society" social reform program which was

24 hoi polloi

25 Gainesville College
his real priority. Johnson soon understood that if he lost the war, he would also lose the support of the people and Congress for his domestic programs.

Johnson's next mistake came in response to his realization that the undisciplined and troubled South Vietnamese army possessed neither the will nor the capacity to stop an almost inevitable Communist victory. In 1965, he made the decision to commit American power wherever it was necessary. He still believed that the United States could fight a limited conflict that would deny victory to the North and also force them to abandon their insurgency in the South (Sobel, 132). This policy translated onto the battlefield as the strategy of counter-insurgency, a guerilla style offensive against the VC units which allowed U.S. units to go out into South Vietnam and attempt to search out and destroy the enemy.

Counter-insurgency ignored the root of the problem, North Vietnamese aggression, and concentrated instead on the symptom, the VC. The effect was the opposite of what was intended. Instead of wearing down and destroying the VC, the policy exhausted American troops in a costly and often futile effort to find and eradicate their elusive enemy. This situation existed because the United States was actually fighting the type of war the VC were best suited for. Counter-insurgency also did not establish any clear fronts that both the army and public back home normally used to gauge American progress. Therefore, U.S. officials had to offer the meaningless "enemy body count" as a measure of army success. Still another factor complicating this policy was the fact American troops could not always distinguish the VC from friendly South Vietnamese people (Summers 17).

Johnson's final policy mistake was his decision to proceed with the policy of gradualism. Gradualism was a plan that was supposed to achieve maximum results with minimum risks. It would do this by slowly and cautiously increasing the pressure against North Vietnam, thereby preventing U.S. troops from being committed prematurely. The policy was based on the false principle that there existed a threshold to North Vietnamese endurance. Ho Chi Minh, leader of North Vietnam, showed any perceived threshold to be nonexistent when he announced, "Communists would rather risk annihilation than capitulate" (Lawson 18).

Gradualism had many effects on U.S. policy in Vietnam, but the greatest effect was the restriction of the U.S. military, especially American air power. Admiral U.S.G. Sharp, commander of American Pacific forces, stated, "Once the decision was made to participate in this war and engage Americans in the military conflict, I believe we should have taken steps necessary to end the war successfully in the shortest possible time," (Sharp 13).

Other military figures agreed that Johnson's failure to properly employ the tremendously superior U.S. air power resulted in thousands of unnecessary casualties, indefinitely prolonging the fighting, and ultimately ending in the loss of the war.

Further, gradualism complicated the counter-insurgency strategy. The wasted air power made it harder for ground troops, who relied heavily on air and naval support in battle, to do their jobs. The slow rate of gradualism also allowed the North Vietnamese to build up their defenses and actually anticipate U.S. moves, resulting in heavier American losses of men and aircraft. Even though the military begged for permission to hit the heartland of North Vietnam, Johnson refused to deviate from gradualism. The military, even today, blames president Johnson for its defeat in Vietnam, because it was not allowed to fight to win.

There were other factors contributing to the U.S. defeat. First was Johnson's draft program which included provisions for student deferments. These deferments caused the military ranks to be filled with a disproportionate number of poor and minority soldiers. As the purpose of the war began to fade, dissension based on race prevented units from functioning cohesively. Furthermore, soldiers were only required to serve on a one-year tour of duty which was barely enough time for them just to be properly trained in effective guerrilla fighting.

Communist propaganda also had a detrimental effect on the war effort. The Communists called their movement "Wars of National Liberation", and they used it to manipulate their media into constantly spewing forth statements aimed at weakening American public opinion for the war. The atrocities committed by U.S. bombing of North Vietnam was an example of their careful manipulation of the truth.

The American media also contributed to the defeat by
distorting the setbacks suffered by U.S. ground troops and exaggerating the occasional atrocities they committed. They brought the war home every night on television and had a great effect on the public's perception of the war. At no time was this perception affected more than following the Tet offensive. The media turned a tactical victory in favor of the United States into a strategic victory for the North Vietnamese by falsely reporting the results of early fighting. From that point on, Johnson could not halt the downward spiral of public opinion no matter how effective his actions because of strategies employed. The American people wanted to end the war and forced American leaders to stop any further escalation. Thus, the Tet offensive became the turning point for failure in the war.

Drugs also took their toll on the war effort. They became the only escape from the war's pain for many soldiers. They were cheap and plentiful in South Vietnam, and it is estimated that by 1971, fifty-eight percent of the men used some form of drugs (Hauptly 122).

All of these reasons left the United States with an army that could not possibly fight a war. The troops were young, inexperienced, and had their minds warped by drugs. They were led by inexperienced officers who could not command for fear of being killed. After Tet, the United States began to look for an honorable way to withdraw from Vietnam. The soldiers realized as public support turned against the war that their only purpose was to put enough pressure on North Vietnam to bring them to peace negotiations.

Suddenly, the desire to survive became the dominant instinct as no one wanted to be the last man to die in Vietnam. Desertions increased as 175 out of every one thousand soldiers went AWOL by 1971. Soldiers began disobeying orders that might be dangerous in some cases, actually murdered their superiors, blaming their deaths on enemy combat. It is understandable that many soldiers came home bitter, confused, and disillusioned (Hauptly 122).

America's defeat in Vietnam had many lasting effects on the nation. The total bill for the war was $120 billion that would normally have gone to modernizing the nation's defenses. Some veterans came home invalids in need of constant care. Those that were not physically injured carried deep emotional scars. Veterans suffered the anger, shame, and blame for the loss felt by Americans at home (Karnaw 27). Distrust grew between Americans and their government. Vietnam also created doubts abroad about American judgment, credibility, and power.

These effects, however, pale in comparison to the 56,000 men and women who were killed in Vietnam. They died in the service of their country and though they questioned the restrictive policies of their leaders, they never gave up the fight. The American people should never give veterans anything less than the respect and honor they deserve for their heroic actions, and future leaders should do all they can to help needy veterans. Finally, before U.S. leaders send troops into combat, the question of what America stands for, what she will fight for and whom she will fight for must be answered to establish a meaningful national policy. Surely, it was the lack of such direction on the part of the Johnson Administration that spelled doom for America's efforts in Vietnam. General Westmoreland best summed up the lesson that should be learned from Vietnam: "...young men should never be sent into battle unless the country is going to support them and the government is going to let them win" (Karnow 16).

Works Cited


The reader's journey is as arduous and meaningful as the narrator's when it comes to fully grasping a literary narrative, especially when that narrative is the *Heart of Darkness*. This 3rd place winner in the Formal Essay Category examines the journey within the journey in Conrad's masterpiece.

**Tapestries of Light in the *Heart of Darkness* and the Reader**

*Chris Lambert*

How does a writer render his artistic vision? A myriad of possibilities exist, depending on his strengths and weaknesses. Once he has discovered the dramatic experience, he is left with the task of developing a technique that will bring his story into the proper light. There is, however, a time when the writer's work ends and the reader must thoroughly digest and experience the vision for himself.

Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* is the tale of a man's journey toward self-knowledge. The story requires much work on the part of the reader, in that he is forced, more so in this particular work than in others, to concentrate on the sensual aspect of the writing. The reader must become the narrator, allowing the words to almost transcend themselves for the sake of experience.

Upon reading *Heart of Darkness* one is left with an uneasiness that seems to pick at the soul. In his essay, "Introduction to the Danse Macabre: Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*," Frederick Karl explains that the story places the reader in situations requiring "difficult moral decisions," pulling him out into the unknown and "disturbing preconceptions" (Karl 123). He goes on to say that it "possibly changes us" (123).

For Conrad's literary spell to take effect, a sensitive reading is needed. This goes beyond a mere topical reading of the text, demanding introspection. Karl draws a comparison between the works of Freud and Conrad, stating that they both dealt with the subconscious; they both delved into the place "entered into when people sleep...when they are free to pursue secret wishes"(124). Given this information and the circumstances of the story, it is easily seen that, as reader, one should prepare for upheaval, change.

Point of view is an important aspect of the story. In *Heart of Darkness* we have a complex narrative structure that involves a story within a story within a story. First off, there is the narrator reporting Marlow's report of Kurtz's original tale. The first narrator brings us the framing tale, which describes the scene on the deck of the Nellie with the Lawyer, the Director of Companies, the Accountant, Marlow, and the narrator himself. Following, we have Marlow's account of the trip into the Congo and his experiences with Kurtz and Kurtz's fiance, the "intended." Finally, we have Kurtz's tale of life in the jungle. Though the actual discourse is small and fragmented, we learn a great deal from the words. In the final moments of Kurtz's life, when Marlow reports to have seen in Kurtz's face an unimaginable terror, Kurtz summarizes his experiences in the jungle with the statement, 'The horror! The Horror!' The complexity of the narrative helps the reader identify with the characters. Conrad's work tells the story of a common man dropped into an absurd world in which he finds bizarre customs, savagery, and a madman that strangely mirrors himself. This is the point to be grasped: Marlow recognizes himself in Kurtz; therefore, the reader should stretch to do the same.

Jung's theory of the "collective unconscious" helps us see the humanity in Kurtz's savage existence. It states that there are certain innate characteristics and drives within all of us (Murfin 116). These drives range from the basic desire for touch and companionship all the way to the wish of ruling the world. Kurtz, having lost civilization, has fallen to the baser drives. The reader must, even though Kurtz has fallen, see his humanity (Murfin 116).

What has been perceived by many as a sloppy style is actually the key to the story (Rosmarin 159). "The work, in part by self-description of its own inconclusiveness and profundity, in part by thickets of allusions to works and myths "outside" of itself, insists throughout that its reader be unsatisfied with a literal surface meaning" (Rosmarin 159). This statement perfectly describes the predicament of the reader. The reader must travel through a jungle of literary devices to receive Conrad's message. He is faced with having to look deeper and find the essence of experience. He is first the narrator, he is Marlow, and he is...
All of this is evidence of the complexity of the work. Within the text, Conrad leaves us a clue as to the method of story-telling.

The yarns of seamen have a direct simplicity, the whole meaning of which lies within the shell of a cracked nut. But Marlow was not typical (if his propensity to spin yarns be excepted) and to him the meaning of an episode was not inside like a kernel but outside, enveloping the tale which brought it out only as a glow brings out a haze, in the likeness of one of these misty halos that sometimes are made visible by the spectral illumination of moonshine. (Conrad 19-20)

We are left here with beautifully ambiguous language, that shows just how multi-layered the story is. To read the *Heart of Darkness* and truly understand, one must role play, trying on the costumes and mind sets of the main characters.

**Works Cited**


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Many heroes have led less than perfect lives. It is this imperfection that makes the drama fascinating. The author examines the faults of Odysseus in Homer's epic poem.

**The Neglectful Hero: A Reading of the *Odyssey*  
Kate Toney**

In the *Odyssey*, Odysseus is the classic hero having all the famed qualities such as bravery, strength, and intelligence. Also, as in the classic heroic narrative, he is faced with a struggle against evil forces. Odysseus's joyful homecoming is delayed time and time again by either human or supernatural forces. Such forces also affect Telemakhos, Menelaus, and Agamemnon. The recurring absent hero theme introduces a new form of evil force or misfortune. The motif may also be connected with an idea that disregard and neglect of one's responsibilities is a folly and even a sin. The majority of the difficulties experienced by the heroes in the *Odyssey* result from their absence, either in mind or body, from those they should be protecting. Every time the hero leaves his followers unattended, the results are disastrous.

In several instances the hero is physically absent and the pattern is the same. The man leaves his wife to go away to war or on business, and in his absence other men invade his home and land. In the case of Menelaus, he leaves the beautiful Helen at home while he is away on business and Paris lures her away to Troy; consequently, a war is waged to win her back. Secondly, Agamemnon returns from fighting in his brother's war and discovers that his wife and cousin have secretly plotted against him in his absence. They succeed in carrying out their plot by killing Agamemnon and his men. Thirdly, the recurring absence theme appears in the story of Odysseus. He has been away from home for twenty years and his wife's suitors have taken over his household. They have ravaged his home and lands.

Not only is Odysseus absent from his wife and home at a time when he is needed but also from his crew at crucial points during his journey. The result is always the same; something
tragic happens. One such example occurs in Book XII when Odysseus and his men are stranded on the island where Helios’s cattle graze. The ship’s food supply has run out, but the men have been warned not to kill Helios’s livestock. Odysseus leaves the men to pray to the gods and falls asleep. The men kill and feast on a heifer and anger the god. This event leads to the death of the crew and leaves Odysseus to face the rest of his journey alone.

An example of absence in mind, but not in body, occurs when Telemakhos seems helpless during the invasion of his home while his father, Odysseus, is away. He is brought to his senses by Athena who instructs him to travel in search of information regarding his father. He then journeys to other kingdoms to gain knowledge. As a result of this information-gathering expedition, Telemakhos is transformed or awakened from boy to man.

As evident by the examples cited, the recurring absent hero theme helps to make the Odyssey the great epic that it is. Some would say that the heroes are neglectful of their responsibilities. Suspense, excitement, and danger result from the heroes’ absence. Had they always made responsible decisions or choices, their stories would be dull reading indeed.

Contributors

Andrea Cooper is a sophomore at Gainesville College with a strong interest in the arts, ranging from writing poetry and prose to painting and sketching.

Yhana Crunkleton is a mother of two who keeps a farm and trains horses. She is originally from Florida and plans to transfer to the Medical College of Georgia and become a nurse.

Scott Grant is a sophomore journalism major and a member of Phi Theta Kappa. Scott plans to transfer to the University of Georgia in the fall.

James Ivie lives in Clarkesville and graduated from Habersham Central High School. He is an Electronic Engineering major who enjoys writing music. He is currently enrolled in the Honors English Program.

Nancy Jones is a gardener with plans to transfer to North Georgia College.

Chris Lambert has won many prizes for his writing since coming to Gainesville College, including a second place award from the Southern Literary Festival Association for a short story, and a scholarship to the Sandhills Writer’s Conference in Augusta, Georgia. Chris plans to major in English.

Jonathan Lester is originally from Winterville, Georgia in Oglethorpe County. He is a freshman majoring in physics and plans to transfer to the University of Georgia.

Kate Toney is a freshman at Gainesville College. She resides in Commerce and attends classes at the college while completing her final year of high school at Banks County High. She is enrolled in the Honors English Program at Gainesville College.
In this Issue:

Andrea Cooper
Yhana Crunkleton
Scott Grant
James Ivie
Nancy Jones
Chris Lambert
Jonathan Lester
Kate Toney

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