T. Coraghessan Boyle uses many different forms of symbolism in his short story “Carnal Knowledge” most of which are derived from nature. When the story begins the protagonist of the story, Jim, is floating through life without a sense of direction. He is somewhat bored with his personal and professional life. This begins to drastically change when Jim meets Alena Jorgensen. After they meet Jim is quickly thrown into Alena’s fast paced and chaotic lifestyle. One drastic event leads to another and the story continues this way to the end. As T.C. Boyle leads the reader to the dramatic ending of the story, he uses fog to symbolize fear, death, and Jim’s clouded judgement.

The use of fog is not used until the last part of the story when Jim is driving to San Joaquin Valley with Alena. Before Jim travels to the San Juaquin valley his life is easier and less complicated. Even though there were several extraordinary events that took place with Jim’s new love interest Alena, is was nothing that Jim could not handle. Instead, Jim sees these new experiences as opportunities to get closer to Alena. For example, Jim stops eating meat and begins to adopt the vegan diet which goes against his usual beliefs. In another instance, Alena takes Jim to a fur protest in Beverly Hills where he gets into a fight and is injured. Each of these new realities are events that Jim is able to easily overcome due of his new found love for Elena. After meeting Alena, Jim feels a sense of purpose and direction in his life as he says “I could feel my
consciousness expanding like a balloon” (Boyle 470). Because of this, Jim has a new exciting outlook on life. He feels that he can handle anything because his sense of confidence is elevated.

This sense of purpose changes once arriving in the San Joaquin Valley when trouble, fear and confusion engulf Jim. This is the first time Jim has felt this way since the story began. It is also no coincidence that this is the first time the fog appears in the story. The author wanted the reader to understand just how bad the fog was when Jim was driving to the San Joaquin Valley. He does this by painting a vivid picture for the reader when he writes, “we drove for three hours through a fog so dense the windows might as well have been packed with cotton” (Boyle 473). In fact, Jim almost crashes into another car because the fog is so thick, “there was a truck stalled in front of the sign for our exit at Calpurnia Springs, and I had to brake hard and jerk the wheel around twice to keep the tires on the pavement” (Boyle 473). As the reader, this depiction of fog forced me to feel confusion and blindness to what was going to happen next in the story. This feeling had me thinking to myself, “this does not sound like a safe place to be going” and it seemed to me that Jim was feeling the same way.

Once Jim and Alena made it safely through town and arrive at Rolfe’s house, the fog appears again. As Rolfe finished telling Jim about the plan to free the turkey’s, Jim describes the fog again saying, “the fog pressed at the windows” (Boyle 475) which is symbolizing Jim’s uneasiness towards what lies ahead at the turkey ranch. As Jim, Alena, and Rolfe set off to commit the crime of freeing the turkeys, the fog appears again. This is the moment in the story when the fog begins to pick up momentum.
“If the fog had been thick in daylight, it was impenetrable now, the sky collapsed upon the earth. It took hold of the headlights and threw them back at me till my eyes began to water from the effort of keeping the car on the road. But for the ruts and bumps we might have been floating in space” (Boyle 475).

Just like the fog, this is the point in the story when Jim’s confusion and anxiety level begin to build momentum. The momentum of the fog, and Jim’s anxiety keep building until it reaches its peak, which occurs when he gets out of the turkey barn and is searching frantically for the direction of his car. It is at this very moment that the fog actually takes on a religious and evil personality. Jim describes the color of the fog as glowing “blood-red and hellish” (Boyle 477) in the night sky after Rolfe sets a blaze with gasoline. The fog is now used to symbolize death and an evil presence in the story. The color red is often used in many different societies to symbolize fear, blood, and danger. A 2009 Chicago Tribune article about the affects of color on human beings specifies that “red means danger” (Color Choice). It is as if the author wanted the fog to be terrifying to Jim at the same time painting an almost horrific picture for the reader.

As things in the story begin to die off, beginning with Jim’s relationship with Alena, the fog begins to lose momentum and changes to a less threatening mist. Alena drives away leaving an unhappy Jim behind as she goes to free the grizzly bears as he “watched till their brake lights dissolved in the drifting gray mist” (Boyle 479). After Jim watches Alena and Rolfe drive away in the mist, he begins to drive home towards Los Angeles. Immediately following Jim’s entrance to the freeway he sees an accident in the road, and the mist is still lingering in the air. Jim sees the “nightmare materialized out of
the gloom” (Boyle 479) which turns out to be the death of the hundreds of turkey’s he just freed from the farm.

At this point on the highway, Jim is feeling a great deal of sadness and confusion for what he had done with Alena in the San Juaquin Valley. This feeling is short lived because after he cleans the death (turkey guts and feathers) off of the windshield, he begins to feel a sense of clarity and “miraculously, a vision began to emerge from behind the smeared glass and the gray belly of the fog” (Boyle 479). This is when Jim reaches a pivotal point in the story. His confidence level rises once again, just as it had when he first met Alena. He decides to pull into the comforts of the fast food restaurant and eat meat as he had always done. The fog came into the story creating confusion and chaos in Jim’s life and it ultimately destroyed what he thought was important, which was being with Alena and saving turkeys.

T.C. Boyle uses several forms of symbolism throughout the short story “Carnal Knowledge”. He creates the character, Jim, who is lost in the beginning of the story. Then, Jim is found after falling in love with Alena, at the same time having a false sense of direction. At the end of the story Jim is thrown into chaos and confusion when a fog rolls into his life and becomes the catalyst for his poor decision making and clouded judgement. The fog then grows into an uncontrollable demonic beast when the fire turns it “blood-red and hellish” (Boyle 477). The final paragraphs of the story describe Jim seeing through the diminishing fog and thinking clearly once again. The fog is the antagonist Jim never saw coming, but in the end, was able to defeat it.


Norming Notes:
Thesis = P
Evidence/Support = P
Organization/Logic = P
MLA Style = P
Grammar and Style = P
Overall Assessment = P

Comments:
While the thesis is a bit awkward, it does present a clear position, and it is easy for a reader to identify. Some sections of the essay are better than others at supporting the thesis, but the essay follows a chronological organizational pattern and generally supports claims made with textual evidence. There are minor errors on the Works Cited page (capitalization, underlining), but the essay overall demonstrates competent use of MLA style.
Conflict through Setting

Heroin, cocaine, alcohol, and sex, are all the primary sources of conflict in any given Irvine Welsh novel—but there is another, more subtle source in these novels, the Scottish/British underground, where druggies roam freely, bars house the seediest of characters, and third story apartments are havens for intravenous drug use. Welsh, however, recognizes the importance of setting. “Though it might be loosely considered a sequel to the frightening, hilarious "Filth," Welsh's 1998 novel about a corrupt Edinburgh polisman, ‘Crime’ is set in Miami - a place as far removed as possible from the sordid, infernal city that Welsh's fiction has mapped in such loving detail,” notes New York Times writer Nathaniel Rich. The transition from Edinburg, Scotland all the way to Miami Florida may not seem like much to the untrained eye, but this plot shift feeds the fire for the oh so unexpected conflicts that arise in Welsh’s “Crime.”

Much like Welsh, author Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni also recognizes the critical element of setting in regards to the present and subsequent conflicts in a story. In Divakaruni’s “Clothes,” the integration of various settings directly contributes to the unfolding conflicts within the story.

Arranged marriages are an age old tradition in Muslim countries, and are still practiced today by the masses. The initial context of the story gives the reader insight that the setting is none other than Divakaruni’s homeland of India, which is why none of us are surprised that the main character, Sumita, is partaking in a marriage arranged by her parents. “It is hard for me to think of myself as a married women,” Sumita imagines, “I whisper my new name to myself…the syllables rustle uneasily in my mouth like a stiff satin that’s never been worn” (534). Now that
she is married—to a stranger—the idea unravels, and she is left with a feeling of discomfort. Her name has changed from what she has known since birth. She has lost her name, her individuality. Now, she is simply her husband Somesh’s wife. Now, she is Mrs. Sen. If this setting of India poses as the initial instigator of the arranged marriage conflict, then it is an indubitable contribution to the new, pressing conflict of Sumita and Somesh’s first night in bed together. “It hurt so much that I cried out. I couldn’t help it although I was ashamed,” Sumita admits (535). The stress and awkwardness of their first night in bed not only made Sumita feel ashamed, but it was also sure to have an effect, both physically and mentally, on Somesh as well. “Often in arranged marriages, when the woman takes time to open up to her husband. The sense of disillusionment impacts his sex drive negatively,” according to The Times of India. The setting of India is clearly the primary fuel for the conflict surrounding this strange new marriage.

Along with the arranged marriage, a further conflict arises; Somesh resides in America. Not knowing anything culturally but her homeland of America, Sumita will now be a stranger in an unfamiliar land. “I’d be going halfway around the world to live with a man I haven’t even met. Would I ever see my parents again? Don’t send me so far away,” She agonizes (533). Would she ever see her home of India again? Would she ever see her family again? Why have her parents sent her away? Was she not good enough for them? The emotional stress this could cause a human—to be in familiar place one day, then sent away by her family the next, to a new country with a new language—would be unimaginable. Although the thought of moving overseas causes much stress and internal conflict, she does, however, see a light at the end of the tunnel. “We will kiss in front of everyone, not caring, like Americans,” foresees Sumita (536). Unbeknownst to her, however, the customs of America vs. India are worlds apart. These two
geographical cultures differ far beyond the general acceptance of public displays of affection. In America, these conflicts await.

Upon arrival in America, Sumita’s cultural exposure is not completely new—she and Somesh live with Somesh’s parents. Nonetheless, being surrounded by a family with a similar cultural background as her will not make her new life any easier. In fact, it will make it noticeably more difficult. The living scenario is a two bedroom apartment in California; one bedroom belonging to Father and Mother Sen, and the other belonging to Sumita and Somesh. Sumita confesses, “Even in our beds we kiss guiltily, uneasily, listening for the giveaway creak of springs” (537). Having her behavior being constantly monitored in this two bedroom apartment by her new husband’s parents, she must be wary of her own every move. She would like to love him freely, but consequently, his parents may view her to be a tramp if they love openly at home. Resulting from this, she is a prisoner in her own home, where she cannot be affectionate towards her husband whenever she feels out of fear of her image, as well as their respect. An additional conflict brought on by living in the two bedroom apartment with Somesh’s parents takes the form of jealousy. Somesh is financially supporting his parents. His love for them is clear to Sumita, but she can’t quite handle it. “For a moment I feel rage. You’re constantly thinking of them, I want to scream. But what about me?” (537). Even though she recognizes that Somesh is, after all, his parents’ child, she cannot help but being overwhelmed with a sense of jealousy. How come he is always thinking about them? Why doesn’t he think about his wife instead?? This internal struggle Sumita must battle with is the direct result of the cohabitation with her new in-laws.

Although it is clear that the sharing of the two-bedroom apartment with Father and Mother Sen instigates several conflicts, it is not the end. Somesh’s workplace—a 7eleven
convenience store—reveals itself to be yet another setting that results in unforeseen conflicts. When business at the 7eleven slows down, Somesh is forced to take over the late night graveyard shifts. “Often Somesh leaves as soon as soon as he has had dinner and doesn’t get back until after I’ve made morning tea for Father and Mother Sen” (538). While Somesh is off working long, late hours, Sumita remains at home, in the awkward company of her husband’s parents. Although her husband is trying to save enough money for them to move out, and the long hours are helping reach that goal, at night, she can only lay in bed awake, alone. The lonely feeling of not having her husband’s warmth against her body is yet another conflict Sumita must face.

Another resulting conflict of the 7eleven occurs one dark, lonely night—a robber enters the store. He steals the money. Before he left, “he emptied the bullets from his gun into my husband’s chest,” says Sumita (539). Lost. Stranded. Alone. Sumita is thousands and thousands of miles and ocean away from her home, her family, and her friends. Her husband was murdered. The 7 eleven is what took her husband’s life, now, the final conflict Sumita must struggle with is where to go, what to do. She is now alone.

Like any great author, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni recognizes how crucial the setting is to the conflicts of any given story. “Clothes” is her way of letting us know her true literary talent. By integrating a foreign country into the setting, she proves to us what types of conflicts can arise from arranged marriage. By integrating the move from one hemisphere, one country, to another, she proves the onslaught of conflicts that pour in from separation of loved ones. By integrating a murderous liquor store into the setting, she proves a conflict that can emanate from total isolation. The setting in “Clothes” is the conflict.
Works Cited


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**Essay 2**

Thesis = P
Evidence/Support = P
Organization/Logic = P
MLA Style = P
Grammar and Style = P
Overall Assessment = P

**Comments:**
The relevance of the introductory paragraph is at times unclear, but, once the thesis is introduced in the middle of page 1, the essay creates a focused, organized, well-supported argument.
Starving for Revenge

In Andre Dubus’ short story “Killings,” he presents some extreme examples of what seeking and yearning for revenge can often times lead people to do even if it completely out of character for them. In other words, the urge and longing to get revenge on someone can sometimes lead people to near insanity in both their thoughts and actions. Afterall, the desire for revenge is a very powerful human emotion which in many cases, cannot be suppressed or just ignored. And even though revenge may many times be highly tempting, it can also be followed by significant consequences. There are two acts of revenge that exist in the story. But one is much more outlandish than the other because in the first instance of revenge, a man named Richard Stout kills another man named Frank Fowler, only because he had discovered that Frank was fooling around with his wife, Mary Ann. Although Richard Stout and Mary Ann were in the process of a divorce at the time, it still angered and hurt Richard to see his wife with another man because they were still married technically and also had two children together.

The very first time Richard had learned that Frank was involved in a relationship with his but soon to be ex wife, Mary Ann, he beat Frank up pretty badly. When Frank returned home to his parents “Matt gently held Frank’s jaw and turned his face to the light, looked at the stitches, the blood under the white of the eye, the bruised flesh.” (105). He was left bloody and bruised. This was Richard’s first attempt at getting back at, or rather getting some form of revenge on Frank.
The situation where Richard had just discovered that Frank was with his wife Mary Ann made him extremely aggravated and caused him to develop strong feelings of rage toward Frank Fowler. Richard was obviously furious as well as hurt that Frank and Mary Ann had something going on for quite some time, without his knowing. And then one night, while Frank was hanging out with Mary Ann at her home and with her two kids, Richard came in and shot Frank right before everyone’s eyes. He shot him three times, killing him. And this was all a result of Richard getting revenge on Frank. He obviously still loved Mary Ann because he later confesses to Matt “I wanted to get back together with her again, I couldn’t even talk to her, he (Frank) was always with her. I’m going to jail for it, if I ever get out I’ll be an old man, isn’t that enough?” (111). This was Richard’s way of justifying why he killed Frank. And the gruesome fact that Richard even made an attempt at trying to justify to Matt why he killed his son, of course only angered, pained, and motivated Matt further to want to get his revenge on Richard. It is obvious that Matt is not naturally or normally a violent man, but given the circumstances, where he finally had his sons killer held at gunpoint by his very own hand, he was definately flirting with the possibility of murder.

The story starts out with the Fowler family at the grave of their family member Frank who had just been murdered. And right away there is a bit of foreshadowing of what may come later on in regard to revenge, when Frank’s older brother Steve says “I should kill him,”(Dubus 103) while referring to his brothers murderer, Richard Stout. And when the parents Matt and Ruth Fowler hear him say these words you just know that even they want Richard dead or at least severely punished in some fashion. Ruth was disgusted at the fact that she had to see her own son’s killer out and about town whenever she went out to run errands. Richard was out on bail and a free man walking the very streets that the Fowlers walked. Matt expresses
frustration about this when he says “I didn’t think about bail, I thought I would not have to worry about him for years, she sees him all the time, it makes her cry,” (104). Ruth could not even comprehend how Richard could possibly be allowed to go on and live life after he had just recently and intentionally ended her youngest child’s life. “He walks the Goddamn streets.”(103) Matt said. Nothing was more disturbing than this to Matt and it only enraged and encouraged him even more to want to inflict some sort of suffering upon Richard.

Once Matt’s inner rage had finally took total control of him he composed a plan that he hoped would get Richard out of his life forever. Initially the plan was to get Richard out of town and out of his family’s and his own sight and mind. He literally grew sick of knowing and seeing Richard as a free man. Matt’s plan was to set Richard up by making it appear that he was trying to escape from doing any jail time and basically running from the law.

So one night Matt put his well thought out and precise plan into action. He waited outside of Richard’s workplace and when he got off from work Matt captured him and put a gun to his head and commanded him to do things that would make him look like he’s escaping the law. First, he makes Richard drive to his own house and says to him “Pack clothes for warm weather, you are jumping bail.” (111). Matt’s initial intentions were never to kill Richard but to simply get him as far away from him as possible so he would never be forced to witness him as being alive and free. But things change drastically when Richard suddenly and quickly attempts to escape from Matt, and then Matt ends up shooting and killing him. “Then Matt went to him (Stout) and shot him once in the back of the head.” (113). This clearly demonstrates the idea that “Many aspects of revenge resemble the concept of justice but they also lead to a more injurious focus opposed to a restorative focus.” (Wikipedia).
Even though Ruth and Matt Fowler never directly spoke about killing Richard, they both knew that it was something they badly wanted. After experiencing the death of their child which was caused by another man, it was only human of them to feel and think that “The goal of revenge usually consists of forcing the perceived wrongdoer to suffer the same or greater pain than that which was originally inflicted.” (Wikipedia). The way that most humans rationalize the concept of revenge is that if we are harmed by another person and therefore become hurt or angry with that person, then getting back at them somehow will provide us with a profound feeling of satisfaction. It is a very normal human response to want to inflict harm upon someone who has already inflicted harm upon us. But the question that still lingers is, is this revenge really going to solve anything or it only going to make matters worse? Of course the answer to that question is going to depend on the particular situation and how extreme the act of revenge actually was. But weighing the consequences before putting revenge into action, is really the smartest thing that a person can do prior to retaliating.

After Matt shot and killed Richard, he returned home to his wife Ruth and without him even speaking a word to her about it, she knew what he had done and it brought to her to a state of pure joy and satisfaction for knowing about the great revenge that her husband had gotten for their family. Then, Matt proceeded to tell Ruth all about it and when he finished giving her the details of that night and his killing Richard, both Ruth and Matt had finally, for the first time since the death of their son, felt some type of closure. People tend to perceive revenge as an opportunity to retaliate, and that is exactly what Matt Fowler had accomplished by the story’s end.
Works Cited


Essay 3
Thesis = NP
Evidence/Support = NP
Organization/Logic = P
MLA Style = NP
Grammar and Style = P
Overall Assessment = NP

Comments:
The thesis is not at the passing level because it summarizes the story rather than taking a position on an interpretation of the story. Much of the evidence provided is a retelling of the story (plot summary) rather than evidence for an argument. In addition, the outside source selected for this essay (the Wikipedia entry on revenge) shows the writer’s inability to evaluate sources for reliability and appropriateness. The essay contains multiple errors in MLA Style, including document format (page numbering, date), parenthetical citations (extra period), and the Works Cited page (spacing, hanging indent, entry formation).
Essay #1 Short Fiction

Out of Time

In a short story, the author's main objective is to send a clear and universal message to the readers. The Masque of The Red Death is no exception to this rule. The author, Edgar Allen Poe, wrote this short story to convey one simple idea; death comes to us all. In his short story, "The Masque of The Red Death," a vile plague is sweeping across a nation killing thousands of people in a torturous manner. The ruling prince of this nation decides to evade death by barricading himself along with quite a few others in his castle. It is human nature to seek survival; at the same time it is our moral obligation as human beings to give aid to those in need. The prince and his friends selfishly seek refuge by separating themselves from a dying society, and, due to their conceited behavior, they will pay the ultimate price. In the short story, "The Masque of The Red Death," Edgar Allen Poe uses symbolism, foreshadowing, and irony to show that death is inevitable.

One element of fiction that Edgar Allen Poe uses frequently is symbolism. Poe uses symbolism in the "Red Death" to demonstrate the inevitability of death. For example, Poe does not formally acknowledge the power that Prince Prospero possesses. Instead, Poe describes the castle in which Prince Prospero resides, in great detail. "This was an extensive and magnificent structure, the creation of the prince's own eccentric yet august taste. A strong lofty wall girdled it in. This wall had gates of iron. The courtiers, having entered, brought furnaces and massy hammers and welded the bolts" (234). Poe's description of the castle that Prince Prospero is hiding in contains specific details about the characteristics of the castle. The castle is an illustration of Prince Prospero's power. It is a massive structure that is able to house all one thousand of Prince Prospero's guests comfortably. The prince incorporated all the luxuries that
are reserved for royalty while protecting everyone inside the castle walls from the surrounding chaos. Prince Prospero displays his strength and power by building a great wall made with iron and then welding the bolts to increase the impenetrability of his fortress. Only someone with great power would have the ability to build such a formidable structure. With this structure, the prince is almost taunting the Red Death. He seems to be issuing a challenge to the plague to break through the elaborate walls. This castle is not only symbolic of the Prince's power but also of the Prince's attitude regarding human life. The Red Death is destroying the country. People are dying at an alarming rate, and no one is helping the infected. Prince Prospero has the power to quarantine the plague and save countless lives. Instead, he decides to turn his back on the people and only save himself and his friends. The Prince fails to control the situation because he feels that his life is much more valuable than the lives of his countrymen.

Poe also uses the symbolism of a gigantic clock located in the eeriest room in the castle. As a reflection of life, this great clock is situated in a massive room that is decorated with large black tapestries and scarlet window panes which emit a deep red color that looks shockingly similar to blood. "It was in this apartment, also, that there stood against the western wall, a gigantic clock of ebony. Its pendulum swung to and fro with a dull, heavy, monotonous clang; and when the minute hand made the circuit of the face, and the hour was to be stricken, there came from the brazen lungs of the clock a sound."(235). This exquisite clock represents the lives of the people in the castle, while the red window panes and black tapestries represent the Red Death that is surrounding them. The clock is the perfect metaphor for human life. It is not made of some low grade, average wood, rather, it is made of a very precious and rare ebony. Ebony was not only very difficult to find during this time period, it was also very expensive. As the clock is rare and precious, so is human life. A clock such as the one described in the story, has a
precise internal mechanical system that enables it to function. The gears inside the clock must be synchronized to accurately mark the passing of time. Similarly, a human body has a complex network of internal organs, delicate and fragile, that are interdependent. If just one of these organs fails to function properly and efficiently, the entire system breaks down. The same rule applies to a clock. If one gear fails to operate properly, the rest of the system will deteriorate. As a pendulum beats out the rhythm of a clock, so too does the heart beat out the rhythm of the body. The clock will eventually break down, and as for humans and other living organisms, their time will run out no matter what they do.

Another literary device that Edgar Allen Poe uses throughout the story is foreshadowing. A great example of this is when Poe describes the interior of the castle. Poe begins his short story with an explanation of the Red Death and the effect that it has on people. Poe then transitions to a description of the castle the elite hide in as well as the party they are about to have. Poe briefly describes the party, then he deliberately goes into great detail describing the rooms in which the party is being held. There are seven rooms in this massive hall, and each room has a specific color scheme. Every room has a gothic window with specific pane patterns. The color of the window dictates the color of the furnishings in that particular room. Blue windows equate to blue tapestries and blue furniture. Every room in the castle has this same design with various colors except for one. "The seventh apartment was closely shrouded with black velvet tapestries that hung all over the ceiling and down the walls, falling in heavy folds upon a carpet of the same material and hue. But in this chamber only, the color of the windows failed to correspond with the decorations. The panes here were scarlet—a deep blood color". (234). The fact that the seventh room is the only room with two different colors, especially one which is blood red, suggests that somehow the Red Death is going to make an appearance at the
party. It is obvious that these two colors are representative of current events. Many people view the color black as being the color of death and mourning. At this time, the country is suffering from a plague whose universal symbol is blood. People infected with the "Red Death" experience profuse bleeding from the pores. With the combination of black decorations and scarlet window panes, the guests attending this grand ball exercise appropriate behavior in avoiding the room. It seems that the Red Death is in their future.

Another example of foreshadowing that is used in the story is the sound of the ebony clock. Aside from its extravagant design, the clock, just like any other clock, rings at the end of every hour. As a result of its enormous construction, this clock gives a deep, loud, thunderous ring; a ring so mesmerizing that everyone in attendance pauses and listens to it as it echoes throughout the castle. "At each lapse of an hour, the musicians of the orchestra were constrained to pause, momentarily, in their performance, to hearken to the sound; and thus the waltzers perforce ceased their evolutions; and there was a brief disconcert of the whole gay company. But when the echoes had fully ceased, a light laughter at once pervaded the assembly." (235). The people at this party fear this clock due to its location and ominous sound. They are silent when the clock rings and they laugh when it stops. It is almost as if these guests are relieved that they have survived another hour. This is not the typical reaction that most people have toward a ringing clock. Poe vividly describes the guests' reaction to show that the Red Death is always on their minds. The guests laugh, a nervous laugh of relief, because they feel that they have cheated death. Everyone outside the castle walls is dying a horrible death, while the guests inside are living a life of luxury, free from pain and suffering. The tension that the guests experience during the sounding of the clock is a sign of things to come.
The last element of fiction that Poe uses to convey the inevitability of death is irony. There are many aspects of this story that are ironic, but the most obvious is the false sense of security of the people within the castle. This type of irony is classified as an ironic situation. The guests expect to survive the disaster due to their social status and their placement inside the castle. The guests are fully enclosed behind well constructed walls, and they believe that nothing can hurt them. These walls are thought to be impenetrable and the gates have been welded shut. "The abbey was amply provisioned. With such precautions the courtiers might bid defiance to contagion. The external world could take care of itself." (234). This quote reveals that the guests are overly confident in their man-made castle. They neither fear death nor the plague that has killed so many of their countrymen. Much like the Titanic, this great fortress is doomed. It is ironic that even behind their castle walls, the people still end up dying from the Red Death.

Another ironic event in this short story comes during the ball. For this ball, guests were required to dress formally and wear decorative masks. At midnight the clock continues its ringing cycle, and at this time all the guests take notice of a particularly disturbing costume. This individual is dressed entirely in red. Once the prince sees the man, he becomes infuriated and taunts him. "Who dares insult us with this blasphemous mockery? Seize him and unmask him- that we may know whom to hang." (236). Prince Prospero knows nothing about this peculiar figure, and everyone else in the room is fearful of the red figure. Even when the prince orders his guards to restrain the man, no one in attendance moves. Whether it is bravery or foolishness, the prince does not fear this figure. In fact, the prince believes that he is superior to this man because he is royalty. It is ironic that the prince draws a knife and attacks the man in red, yet it is the prince who ends up dead. Through his arrogance, the prince underestimates the man in red and that costs the prince his life.
Poe's short story, "The Masque of the Red Death" portrays the finality of life in a compelling way. Though the characters do everything in their power to avoid the Red Death by seeking refuge behind the massive walls of Prince Prospero's castle, their fate is the same as the people outside the castle. They can neither run nor hide from the plague. The walls that were thought to be impenetrable, proved to be no match for death. Death is unbiased and unforgiving. Not even the great and powerful Prince Prospero is able to prevent his own death. Through his masterful use of symbolism, foreshadowing, and irony, Edgar Allen Poe shows that death is inevitable.

Works Cited


Essay 4
Thesis = P
Evidence/Support = NP
Organization/Logic = NP
MLA Style = P
Grammar and Style = P
Overall Assessment = NP
Comments:
The essay presents a clear thesis at the end of the introduction, but the essay fails to consistently relate the use of literary elements to the theme focused on in the thesis (that death is inevitable), especially as it relates to foreshadowing and irony, resulting in flawed logic and support. There are several dropped quotes in the essay as well as a lack of connections between the ideas in each paragraph, leading to a disjointed impression.
Lieutenant Cross is a soldier and a leader for a platoon of soldiers in the war on Vietnam. Although he's supposed to carry out the task of taking care of his soldiers and leading them to victory his mind is always elsewhere. The author, Tim O'Brien describes everything in such details that you would think you where there yourself, immerged in the heat of the battle and all the tragedies that took place. Despite the tragedies that took place, for others who have been in war it's easy to relate to some of the things that where described in the story “The Things They Carried” as humor and jokes. The author is trying to express to us through 3rd person limited point of view using lieutenant Cross, that things other people take for granted on a everyday basis can bring peace, love and humor to the most troubled souls. Ever heard of the expression “Home away from home”, well in the short story “The Things They Carried” the characters show us that sometimes, insignificant little things matters the most.

We can see that in lieutenant Crosses rucksack the things that mean the most to him other than his weapon and C rations. Letters from a girl called Martha along
with a few smaller items meant the world to him. “He kept them folded in plastic”(99), that’s how much the letters meant to him. Even though he knew that they were not love letters and that no matter how many times he kept telling himself that they were not love letters, just the thought of it made the constant rain and hazardous life he was living in was enough to keep him sane and moving forward.

Despite his efforts to try lead his soldiers the constant thought and daydreams of Martha kept him distracted from the real task at hand, the safety of his soldiers and proper mission planning. “His mind wandered. He had difficulty keeping his attention on the war”(102). For lieutenant Cross the letters and the pebble given to him by Martha was his home away from home.

When lieutenant Cross’s mind was constantly elsewhere he was just dead weight for his platoon, in some sense Lieutenant Cross was something the soldiers had to carry. His soldiers where pretty much humping their lieutenant around the battle zone because he was too busy humping the love for Martha. The author explains to us that humping is “a kind of inertia, a kind of emptiness, a dullness of desire”(106) way of walking, they just take one step after another emotionless, which ultimately lead to the death of one of his soldiers, Ted Lavender.

While we don’t really get into any of the other characters thoughts and emotions we still learn that Ted Lavender was a scared and nervous wreck, he was the only one in the platoon to carry extra tranquilizers because popping one once in a while is what made him feel secure and the fear of getting hurt and was hoping
that the extra tranquilizers would help ease the pain if he ever got shot, so its kind of funny and ironic that the way he was taken out in was fast and painless. For Ted Lavender the extra tranquilizers were his home away from home and made him feel safer and more secure despite the horrible dangers he faced everyday. Even though it's a tragedy another soldier would try to find some humor in the situation and carrying the extra tranquilizers is something they would use to make fun of to soften up the blow of the death of one of their comrades.

As the author doesn't really go into too much detail about the other character you can still see that the soldiers enjoy other things that make them feel at home, instead of just telling us that Henry Dobbins ate a bar he goes into great detail about the bar and lets us know it's a “tropical chocolate bar”(108), so for Henry Dobbins it was not just a regular bar but a super awesome tropical chocolate bar. For soldiers who are deployed and get the bare minimum in life if they're lucky. So getting a chocolate bar is like having a gourmet meal at the most expensive restaurant in town. So even though some one can eat and enjoy anything and everything on a daily basis, a soldier having water, a muffin or that tropical chocolate bar is all it takes to bring a smile and uplift someone's spirit.

Despite the soldiers attempt to make life better with the little things in life from the things they carried they where still having trouble trying to keeps their head above water because the man they relied on was lieutenant Cross that was too busy being in love rather than do his job. Towards the end of the story he realizes that the things he's been carrying are too much of a burden for him, not only can he not do
his job, but also the life of one of his soldiers was taken from him. So instead of just carrying the love for Martha he was carrying the burden, shame and guilt of Ted Lavender's death. After finally realizing that the things he carried were too dangerous he burns the letters and lets go of the thought of Martha and for the first time in the story “half smiling, Lieutenant Jimmy Cross took out his maps” (110) from his rucksack instead of love letters and eventually comes home with the rest of his platoon.

In conclusion everyone has things they carry with them at all times and no matter what these things are they have meaning to someone and helps people in some sort of way.
Works Cited


Thesis = NP
Evidence/Support = NP
Organization/Logic = NP
MLA Style = NP
Grammar and Style = NP
Overall Assessment = NP

Comments:
There are several potential thesis statements in the introduction, but it is unclear which one is to be the focus of the essay. Many of the body paragraphs are unusually short and lack sufficient evidence for the claims presented. There are also few transitions between paragraphs, leading to little connection between ideas. The Works Cited page has many errors (hanging indent, punctuation, capitalization), and there are dropped quotes as well as many significant grammatical errors (word usage, run-on sentences, capitalizations, spelling and apostrophe errors, comma errors) as well as a conversational tone (“well”).
Our World: Our Responsibility and Our Legacy

The earth and its resources are important to the continuation of human life. Is it our responsibility as humans to protect and preserve our environment in order that future residents of earth can enjoy it as well? The answer to this is a resounding yes. The changes in our environment, both positive and negative, are due to human interaction with our earth. Therefore our choices today directly impact the world of tomorrow. We ought to make changes in the way we view the earth and its resources. It is our duty to protect the earth's resources in order that our children and their children will have a good environment to live in as we do today.

One very important reason that we need to protect our environment for future generations is if we don’t take action our children and future generations will greatly suffer. The way we take care of our planet and its resources directly affects the livelihood of future generations. In the book *The Environment: Opposing Viewpoints* environmental expert Alan Durning describes the urgent need for changing the way we behave in regards to our environment. “If our grandchildren are to inherit a planet as bounteous and beautiful as we have enjoyed, we in the consumer class must... eat, travel, and use energy and materials more like those on the middle rung of the world’s economic ladder. If we can learn to do so, we might find ourselves happier as well” (Durning 84). If we do not act now the constant use of energy, supplies and wasting of such things will directly negatively affect future residents of earth. Making better environmental
choices can not only help preserve our future but also can benefit us in the short term. Why not make choices that can improve your life now as well as help preserve resources for the future?

One might ask themselves the question, “Why would anyone not want to protect our environment?” While some may suspect the answer to be laziness or apathy, which may indeed play a role, a larger reason of ignorance is to blame. Senator Al Gore, who is well known for his environmental advocacy, states this reason: that “we have misunderstood who we are, how we relate to our place within creation, and why our very existence assigns us a duty of moral alertness to the consequences of what we do” (Gore 258). Senator Gore believes that if people could take a minute to examine the consequences of their everyday choices on our environment, then they would change the way they respond to it. One of the most important steps in changing the way we approach the environment is recognizing the consequences of our lifestyle. Instead of looking at our world through just our limited perspective we should also consider how our choices will affect future generations. This changing of perspective is what Senator Gore believes will get the citizens of earth to act in a more positive manner.

Another reason that we should protect and preserve our environment for future generations is that it we can make a difference! Each of us can surely do something each day, no matter how small it may seem, to help out. Often the excuse is given that no one person can change the world, so why try? On the contrary, we can make a difference in our world by our daily choices. Senator Al Gore addresses this concern by stating that “when considering a problem as large as the degradation of the global environment, it is easy to feel overwhelmed, utterly helpless to effect any change whatsoever. But we must resist that response, because this crisis will be resolved only if individuals take some responsibility for is. By educating ourselves and others, by doing our part to minimize our use and waste of resources, by becoming more
active politically and demanding change— in these ways and many others, each one of us can make a difference” (Gore 366).

There are many practical ways to accomplish the task of preserving and protecting the environment. According to environmentalist and author Diane MacEachern, “we’re responsible, too. This is our world, and it’s the only one we’ve got. By making small but substantial decisions about the things we do, the goods we buy and the laws we support, we can make a better life for ourselves while helping to ensure a world that’s fit for the future” (MacEachern vii). MacEachern’s book lists 750 things that an individual can do to clean up the environment. The tasks listed in the book are all simple tasks such as: turning off extra lights, buying in bulk to reduce waste and fixing leaks, to name a few. The book categorizes them by areas such as the home, the office, the garden, the community, etc. Each task is simple, practical and easy to accomplish. If each person did one small task like these suggested in the book, our world would be a much cleaner place.

Another reason we have a responsibility to protect and preserve our environment for future generations is that we have a moral obligation to do so. It is important to be good stewards of what we have been given. This includes the air we breathe, the land we live on and our environment as a whole. It is important that we make choices that we can be proud of and that satisfy our own conscience. As I stated before, this can be accomplished once we are no longer ignorant of the impact of our daily choices. With this new knowledge comes a new responsibility to protect and preserve the earth. Senator Al Gore sums it up with this statement: “This point is crucial: the choice to do nothing in response to the mounting evidence is actually a choice to continue and even accelerate the reckless environmental destruction that is creating the catastrophe at hand” (Gore 37).
Another reason that we should protect the earth's resources for our future is simply that it is what we would want others in the past to have done for us. If we live by the golden rule: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you, then we have no other alternative but to protect and preserve. If we were born 100 years from now, instead of during this time, wouldn't we want our predecessors to be more concerned with environmental issues? Once we come to the realization that life is about more than just us (as we may have previously, selfishly thought) we must come to the conclusion that we should preserve the environment for others because it is the right thing to do.

In conclusion, we must accept the responsibility for preserving and protecting our environment for the future inhabitants of earth. There are many reasons for this including: a moral obligation, dire consequences if we do not, the fact that we would want others to do the same for us, and finally, the simplicity of the task at hand. Each of us should at least try to do our part to preserve and protect the earth because if we do not, who will? Environmentalist Alan Durning puts it in these terms “If we continue to consume...until there’s no more to consume, then there’s going to come a day, sure as hell, when our children or their children or their children’s children are going to look back on us- on you and me- and say to themselves, ‘My God, what kind of monsters were these people?’” (Durning 81).
Works Cited


Thesis = P
Evidence/Support = P
Organization/Logic = P
MLA Style = P
Grammar and Style = P
Overall Assessment = P

Comments:
The essay has an easy-to-identify thesis that takes a clear position. Body paragraphs follow a logical train of thought and are connected with smooth transitions. Specific, reliable evidence is presented in each paragraph and is sufficient to support the claims in the thesis and topic sentences. There is a font inconsistency in the Works Cited page but there is overall competence with MLA style shown throughout the essay.
Are Low Wage Workers Treated Fairly?

America is the land of opportunity. Whatever you can dare to dream you can achieve. While achieving these dreams we are grouped into categories: upper class, middle class or lower class. These classes measure our financial status and social power. The average American would classify him or herself as middle class. Yet, many Americans do not have a clear definition of who middle class America is. Middle class America is people who have a measure of financial independence, but not a great deal of social power. Statistically, these three wage classifications make up the American workforce too. First there is the upper class wageworker, this class generally consists of married, hard working individuals, well educated, and have two household incomes. They have saved and invested throughout their careers. The second class is the middle class wageworkers, they are usually one-income families that own small businesses, or hold lower-level entry management jobs. The third and final class is the lower class wageworkers; they usually consist of young part time workers, people just starting jobs, immigrants, and uneducated people. No matter the station a person falls into the opportunities for advancement can be endless. In this land of opportunity is everyone treated the same, are low wageworkers treated fairly? Despite the fact that many Americans believe that low wageworkers are treated unfairly, the evidence shows that low wageworkers are unskilled, have little education, or lack the required communication skills necessary to find advancement opportunities in their careers.
There are a lot of low waged workers that can be found, and companies, looking to increase their bottom line, are willing to take the chance to hire unskilled and uneducated people. Many workers just starting into the work force are inexperienced, and lack the basic skills necessary for most skilled jobs. For example, many high school boys are eager to enter the construction field but lack the technical skills necessary to do the job independently. Subsequently they get paid less than the skilled journeyman. Likewise, a person that lacks a high school education generally can only find employment that pays minimum wage. Unfortunately, the inexperience, the lack of education and the low wage can make them feel trapped in their job. The pressure of trying to pay the mortgage, and working long hours can leave little room for low wage earners to make the time to look for better opportunities. It is unfortunate that workers with low wages tend to feel locked into these low wage jobs and put forward this idea. There are many opportunities for advancement when the drive and determination is there. Some people may disagree with this idea but people choose whether to experience the early motivation to live a happier, healthier and wealthier life. Finding a means of escaping this unfortunate whirlpool of unfairness should be in the hands of each individual worker. I, for instance, am lucky enough to be working for the city as a lifeguard that provides us with a good salary and retirement. This is only a part time job, but because of the required skills and training we have to have we are compensated accordingly. Our skill and annual training proved how very important it was last year. An elderly gentleman was swimming in a swim meet and had a heart attack. I believe without the skill and training the city requires us to have, with out the salary the city offers to attract trained part time individuals, there would have been a lot of confusion.
Instead all the lifeguards on duty reacted as a well-organized team to try and save this gentleman.

Immigrants who do not speak English work long treacherous hours for minimum wage. On a hot summer day in California there are many immigrants working in the fields to provide a living for themselves or their family. During these long working hours they are usually bent over picking fruit and vegetables. Driving past a home improvement store during the early morning hours there are many immigrants waiting to be picked up for a construction job. In both these cases, the lack of communication and education hinders them from knowing the employment laws of the United States that protect them. Unfortunately, through intimidation from some employers, through isolation from their families, and through their fear of not having a job or deportation, these immigrants put up with the grueling temperature, long hours, and minimal breaks.

Opponents maintain that people, who migrate to America in order to improve their live style, should be able to earn a living wage without overcoming the communication barrier. However, if they lack the communication skills necessary, is it unfair for these uneducated, low skilled workers to start at entry-level jobs? Companies should have the right to pay accordingly for skilled labor. The relentless drive companies have in hiring an unskilled, inexperienced, and uneducated worker is understandable. They want to make a profit and competition is more competitive than ever. Does migrating to the United States automatically mean people deserve all the riches that America has to offer? People who enter America to improve their livelihood work hard, and educate themselves for the opportunities to advance.
There are many opportunities for advancement in a low wage earning jobs. Growing up I had a friend who came from a single parent environment. His mother was living from paycheck to paycheck. It was hard for her to afford the living expenses, yet she was determined to better her lifestyle, get back in school and finish her education. She worked during the day and went to school at night and online. Her determination paid off. She was able to finish her education, advance within her company and now provides a comfortable life for her and her son. They do not have everything a person could ask for, but because of her determination to complete her education and her desire to improved her skills she has more opportunities for advancement. In Richard Nadler's essay ("We're Number One (Percent): What's Right About the Rich ... and Always With Us: ... and Wrong About the Poor") he believes that one of the main reasons for continued poverty is laziness. This laziness also prevents many people from having the ability to move forward. Those who disagree put forward the idea that the shift in corporate ideological has eliminated the social contract with workers. They put more emphasis on the shareholder value, and contribute to the worsening of disparities in income for the low wageworkers, giving them little power to change their condition. To a certain extent they are right. However, we cannot help others if they don’t help themselves.

Mistakenly, if a job pays poorly it automatically falls under the category as a low wage job. Young people wanting to work part time hold most of the part time jobs. Of course, there will always be misfortunate circumstances that are out of someone’s control. Situations such as the single working parent who struggles their entire life to pay the bills or immigrants who have communication barriers. Yet, there are many outreach
programs to assist anyone looking to improve their abilities. Schools and churches offer
English Language Study groups. Unions are offering support for worker eager to
improve their skills and income. Opportunities for people willing to act upon them are
endless. America is not giving away its freedom unconditionally, but offering
opportunity for the people willing to work for it. In short, the drive to achieve a higher
education, a better paying job, and a healthier and happier life starts from a young age
and ultimately controls a person’s success in life. Is it unfair to have the opportunity to
advance but to never act upon it or to be offered a job if the qualifications are not met?
Bringing the necessary qualifications to the table for employment is as easy as doing your
homework before taking a test. I do not feel that treatment for low waged workers is
unfair.
Work Cited


Thesis = NP
Evidence/Support = NP
Organization/Logic = NP
MLA Style = NP
Grammar and Style = P
Overall Assessment = NP

Comments:
The position the writer takes in the thesis is difficult to identify because the second half of the thesis does not connect these claims with the idea of fairness. In many places within the essay, the writer contradicts claims made earlier in the essay, contributing to confusion about the focus/thesis as well as making the logic of the argument difficult to follow. Little specific evidence is provided as support for claims made in the essay. The one instance of source use in the essay contains serious errors in MLA in-text citation format. While there are a few grammatical errors in the essay, they are not severe enough to be distracting.