

The Engaged Citizen

A Selection of Student Writing for the University of
Kentucky's Department of Writing, Rhetoric, and
Digital Studies

2015–2016
University of Kentucky

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Warring with Evil: How the Romanticism of War Others the Opposing Side

Melville Hall

Mel's essay is an astute and sophisticated analysis of the rhetoric used to describe "the enemy" in times of war. Beginning with the premise that 20th and 21st century *mainstream* American culture, not just government propaganda, has romanticized the concept and experience of war, Mel critically examines texts that demonize the enemy and texts that attempt to remedy the proliferation of "strawmen and racist stereotypes." She comes to the conclusion that no single perspective can fully represent either side, "us" or "them."

Her work provides a wonderful example for students of a thoughtful, sensitive, and beautifully written rhetorical analysis.

—Ashleigh Hardin, WRD Instructor

In times of war, it is advantageous to boost morale by vilifying "the enemy," presenting an oft-shadowy and blurry illustration of a group of people far culturally, socioeconomically, and sometimes intellectually displaced from the culture of the media portraying them. War protests utilize the suffering of soldiers sent abroad and the laments of their families at home, frightened for the uncertain fates of their military family members overseas, to paint a picture of war tensions as destructive and problematic; trendy war movies might examine the "grittiness" of war by emphasizing the PTSD of returning

soldiers and debunking the myth of glory in combat. However, filmmakers and writers are seldom interested in commenting on the demonizing and othering of the opposing side of a conflict, a group of people who more often than not take the form of strawmen and racist stereotypes in propaganda and even entertainment. This othering affects multiple groups of people, from innocent bystanders on the "us" side who are lumped in with "the enemy" to (more obviously) "the enemy" itself. In the former case, it can cause the violation of citizens' rights and hate crimes against innocents to go overlooked; in both, it fans the flames of wars that might benefit from being examined with a more critical lens, and incites disturbing instances of generalization and racism. While the PBS documentary's bias may render it far from the most reliable source, Dr. Sam Keen's *Faces of the Enemy*, when supplemented with more informative sources, employs examples of paranoia and racism to represent the effects of us-and-them wartime propaganda on this "enemy," a more complex and innocent group of people than the media tends to demonstrate.

One of the factors that makes "them" a stakeholder, describes the documentary, is the need for ideological heroism that seems to grip people in times of war. Dr. Sam Keen illustrates the risky behavior caused by this mentality with a visceral example: *Faces of the Enemy* presents the viewer with David Rice, a man sentenced to death for murdering the Goldmark family in 1985 on the suspicion, in this case mistaken, that they were communists. While this is alarming enough in itself, he later states that he has no remorse for the act; he is convinced that such sacrifices are necessary in the war against communism (Jersey). Keen's example, while jarring, is not uncommon in the context of Cold War tensions, especially given the sententious responses of media figures and politicians to the events themselves. Roots of this can be seen even in the early 20th century, following numerous Anarchist bombings, as is illuminated and discussed in Thomas Eddlem's article "The Red Scare"

for *The New American* (35–36). However, as Eddlem is wont to suggest, the paranoia and subsequent violation of personal freedom in America following these events carries on to the modern day; in fact, he submits that conditions in the present day are even worse, citing (among many other violations) the authorization of torture and widespread wiretapping (39). In his article "Us' and 'Them,'" Andrew Norris calls the second Bush administration's responses to the 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center "moralistic and deeply unhelpful," citing his call for "a 'war' to 'rid the world of evil'" (251). President George W. Bush further inflames the situation by stating, "Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists," echoing the us-and-them point of view of David Rice during the Cold War (Norris 249). *Faces of the Enemy* primarily uses David Rice to convey the brutality of the us-and-them mindset; attention to Red Scare paranoia takes up a great deal of screen time, and is obviously pivotal to Keen's documentary's structure. However, it has been documented many other times in history and can be explored in far greater detail.

It is important here to recognize the bias of *Faces of the Enemy*. In his 1987 review of the documentary, a critic makes the point that in advising against generalization, Dr. Keen himself generalizes: With the aforementioned use of David Rice, Keen seeks to give a face to the xenophobia and paranoia of an entire culture, neglectful of the fact that Rice's murder was one instigated by a man's unique neuroses and cult involvement as much as it was by propaganda (Goodman). Ironically, Keen makes it extremely clear in his documentary that Rice's act was inspired by the extremist Committee of Christian Patriots, but seems not wont to acknowledge that the actions of an unstable religious group do not represent the anti-Semitism or

xenophobia of the general American public (Jersey). This is problematic and fallacious, because Keen seeks numerous times—through his dialogues with psychologists—to establish an *ethos*, and seems at times more invested in influencing and persuading his audience than shedding light on the issues he discusses; *pathos*, too, is ever-present, from his inflammatory and vivid wording to the music and imagery used throughout the documentary (Jersey). In effect, Dr. Keen represents the stakeholders of “them,” but incorrectly represents the stakeholders of “us”: Very little time is devoted to discussing level-headed arguments for the demonizing or othering of an enemy culture, and whether or not the boost in morale is worth it in the context of any greater good. However, the events that Dr. Keen utilizes hold up in history. There is no doubt about Cold War tensions’ influence on David Rice, even if they might not have found as sturdy a foothold in a more stable man; the example is extreme and supports Keen’s use of *pathos*, intentionally invoking disgust and fear in the viewer, but nevertheless serves as a true example of the issues Keen is interested in.

Race plays an immense part in this dehumanization of a nation’s foes, and *Faces of the Enemy* is deeply invested in exposing it. Dr. Keen supplies the viewer with numerous examples of racist World War II cartoons, portraying the exaggeration of racial features used to distance White Americans from people of places like Japan (Jersey). This continues, as Dr. Keen examines and explains, through the Vietnam War: He provides the viewer with the story of William Broyles, a writer and returning veteran who, shortly before the production of *Faces of the Enemy*, wrote a book exploring the aftermath of the war on both sides, including the rampant racism of the clash (Jersey). Dr. Keen’s documentary is steeped in its time period, having been released in the 1980s, when the Vietnam War was vivid in the public mind. However, racism is still used to create tension between warring cultures. The documentary *Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies a People*, based on a book by Jack Shaheen, intensely analyzes the use of stereotyping in film to create an opinion of the Middle East in the American eye which fuels racism in times of conflict (Jhally). While Keen’s analysis of his own

sources is apt to his subject matter, the widespread psychological creation of an enemy of one culture, *Reel Bad Arabs* explores the subject through the voices of the oppressed rather than the dialogues of sensitive oppressors; Shaheen’s documentary has little of Keen’s lofty psychological moralizing and generalization, preferring to rely on in-depth analysis. While *Reel Bad Arabs* is possessed of its own bias, one does not see in it the same reliance on *pathos* which *Faces of the Enemy* depends upon to create its tone of foreboding warning.

An interesting phenomenon to note, however, is that many sources fail to accurately represent “them” in any way that is not firmly rooted in the mindset of a person on the side of the conflict that is employing the propaganda. *Reel Bad Arabs* is perhaps the source in which these elusive stakeholders—the “Arabs,” people from anywhere in the Middle East who are stereotyped, feared, and disrespected; a subcategory of the people whom Dr. Sam Keen advises against senselessly hating—are most accurately represented; their voices, at least, are not swallowed by the voices of psychologists and extremists. Eddlem is interested more in the impact of the demonization of “the other” on the common people, and the ways in which post-9/11 paranoia causes breaches in civil liberty; he does not, however, seem particularly invested in exploring the effects of authorized torture on those “terrorists” who are subject to the torture, or starting dialogues with the group of people whose civil liberties are being most often violated (35–39). Dr. Keen fleshes out this stakeholder more fully with his inclusion of the work of William Broyles, and indeed seems more concerned with the effects of racism on the peoples in question, but Mr. Broyles’ commentary is nonetheless still the commentary of a White veteran on the harm of Vietnam War to the people his home nation was fighting. Many of these sources cannot be said to accurately represent the stakeholder of the people being othered because they do not fully utilize and listen to the voices of those people.

What can be construed from the examination of these four sources—particularly Dr. Sam Keen’s documentary, *Faces of the Enemy*, which was only helpful in conjunction with the others—is that when examining the romanticism of war, the demonizing of “the enemy,” or the effects of

propaganda on anyone whom it is written against, that sources must be compared and questioned in order to be useful. Dr. Keen is interested in painting a portrait of a group of stakeholders, but stops there: His argument is not Rogerian, but he does not deeply explore or correctly represent his subject matter. While Eddlem and Norris both discuss the consequences of a black-and-white, us-and-them point of view, only *Reel Bad Arabs* adequately represents the stakeholders arguably most harmed by these violations of civil liberties. Therefore, it is important, when examining the effect of the romanticism of war on those whom the war is against, to use multiple sources. On a whole, the intention of *Faces of Evil* is good: The documentary contains an emotionally-charged discussion on the nature of wartime mentality, using examples of paranoia and racism to convey its point, but must be supplemented with other media to further flesh out the points of view it describes.

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The Force

Megan Marcum

For WRD 111 my students were required to choose an advertisement and perform an analysis through a social/cultural lens, either race, gender, or class. In their major essay, students were asked to analyze the ad through their chosen lens and make a connection to a related social issue. Megan Marcum chose to analyze a popular Volkswagen ad through a gender lens. Her analysis was sharp; her insight about the gender of the child and her discussion of traditional gender roles in the family were impressive. Megan then drew a connection between gender and science fiction hobbies. She researched and discussed the "GamerGate" issue that had been flooding social media and news sites. Her writing is clear, and the research and analysis she performs is exceptional. Her essay is a good example of how to employ critical thinking in order to explore the deeper implications of a text.

—Katie Waddell, WRD Instructor

"The Force," an advertisement by Volkswagen for their 2012 Passat, is a highly effective advertisement that portrays gender stereotypes in a unique light. The commercial, through its use of a young girl as its protagonist, shows that young girls do not have to be either ultra-feminine or ultra-tomboyish. It also shows that assigning genders to hobbies, pastimes, and interests is pointless because children are drawn in to the things that they enjoy not because of their gender, but because of a complex mix of personality, social atmosphere, and upbringing.

The advertisement opens on a young child of ambiguous gender dressed as Darth Vader, the ultimate antagonist of the popular *Star Wars* franchise. The child attempts to move several household objects by utilizing “The Force”—through which characters can move objects with their minds—and, of course, fails. The child attempts to move an elliptical machine, the family dog, the washer and dryer, a doll, their lunch, and, finally, their father’s Volkswagen car. The father sees his child through the window, and starts the car using his remote key. The child staggers back in shock and amazement, convinced that he or she had successfully used the force and was, thus, a Jedi.

The family portrayed is stereotypical, and hardly a memorable one. They are heterosexual, upper-middle-class Caucasians who live in a well-to-do American suburb with one child and one dog. The father works a white-collar job, evidenced by his well-tailored, crisp, office-appropriate suit and briefcase. The mother appears to stay at home while the father is at the office, taking care of their child. She is shown preparing the child a sandwich for lunch before the father comes home, and her clothing choices—a simple and casual green top, a nondescript ponytail, and minimal makeup—do not suggest that she has just returned from a busy day at the office herself. The house is nicely furnished and decorated, with modern appliances in the kitchen and laundry room. Every room is tidy, even the child’s, and it all appears to be professionally decorated. It seems to be very spacious.

Upon first watching this advertisement, it is easy to assume that the protagonist and young child is a male. How often, after all, do we see young girls in commercials running about pretending to be a villain and criminal mastermind as opposed to, say, a princess? Upon watching the commercial a second time, one might notice it odd, however, that the child is seen in a room that is very stereotypically feminine: the walls are a light pink, the carpet is hot pink, the comforter is pink and orange polka dotted, there are pink and purple ribbons and a plethora of fuzzy stuffed animals scattered about the desk, and a baby doll sits on the bed, unmoved by the child’s attempts to use The Force. It could, perhaps, be a boy sneaking into his sister’s room, but there

is no evidence of a second child to be found anywhere in the commercial. The room is that of a young girl’s: one who wouldn’t necessarily be in school. The father, a stereotypical white-collar worker, likely gets off work at five, and so even if the sister were in school she would be home long before then. Additionally, the car that is being advertised itself is suitable for a family of three, but those with two young children might want to consider a larger option: children do, after all, come with a surprising amount of baggage. It is a safe assumption to make, then, to say that the child has no siblings, and that the pink room belongs to them. While the room *could* belong to a boy, simple balance of probability states that a very femininely styled room more likely than not belongs to a female.

Using the process of elimination, we can then safely deduce that the tiny protagonist of this advertisement is a young girl. What implications does this fact hold? *Star Wars*, an epic science fiction saga, falls well under the category of things that modern society deems traditionally male territory. Little girls play with the dolls and princesses shown in the pink bedroom, and they are demure and sweet. Little boys are allowed to run about the house dressed as a villain, and if their games of make believe turn rowdy or loud, it is perfectly acceptable, because boys will be boys. Girls who delve into science fiction so early in their little lives are bizarre, strange things. Surely they must have an older brother or a puppy-love elementary school “boyfriend” that got them interested; it would be just downright unheard of for a young girl to take interest in science fiction of her own accord. At least, that is what those who uphold strict traditional gender roles would have you believe.

This little girl clearly does not care about that, however, and neither do many young children. As she ages, if she continues to enjoy and participate in the science fiction genres of movies, books, and television shows, she will more likely than not be deemed a “fake fan” by others who share her interests and feel that she is trespassing on a territory that is stereotypically masculine, and thus theirs. She will likely be interrogated about her hobbies to many

men she reveals them to—"Oh, you like *Doctor Who*? Name three actors who played classic Doctors"—as if she needs to justify liking things that she just genuinely happens to enjoy. Could a woman truly care that much about such a hobby, or is she just feigning interest to be "one of the guys," or, even worse, to catch the attention of a man that she is interested in?

These stereotypical views of traditional gender roles, however, are not even necessarily true. According to Geek Girl Con:

According to the National Science Foundation (NSF), nearly equal percentages of men (31 percent) and women (28 percent) report they read science fiction books or magazines. NSF also reports that women make up almost half (45 percent) of SyFy Channel viewership. In a survey of Star Trek fans, 57 percent of respondents identified as female. According to a Facebook scan done by Brett Schenker, women make up about 40 percent of the self-identified comic-reading population in the United States. (Geek Girl Con)

The "fake gamer girl" or "fake geek girl" is an incredibly popular stereotype in modern society. There's even an internet meme devoted to the ridiculous craze, with captions reading, "Has really high Gamerscore / Achievements earned by little brother" (Amirkhani 1), and "What's my favorite game? / Probably Super Mario Bros" (Amirkhani 1).

Kelly Lambert summarizes the ridiculous stereotypes that girls and women interested in anything deemed traditionally male territory face in the following quote:

It has turned into a gender issue, being a "gamer girl" isn't just being a female who plays games, it's a girl who likes to pretend she plays games to get all the boys to pay attention to her—or something ridiculous like that ... Search "fake gamer girl" on Google images and you will see all kinds of generalized, hate-filled assumptions that put these girls in the photos (as well as all girls who do these things) down. (Lambert 1)

These stereotypes about young girls and their involvement in the science fiction and gaming industries are incredibly harmful to many growing generations of young girls. By systematically discouraging young girls from pursuing interests in traditionally "male" territory, we could be denying those girls from finding a lifelong hobby, or perhaps career. A young girl who might once have grown up to author and illustrate a comic book series that inspired children across the world is herded away from her true interests, and encouraged to only pursue hobbies that are acceptably feminine, and so she never grows up to create those books. It's impossible to fully comprehend what we've already lost, and will continue to lose, by ostracizing women from these industries.

Why, then, do we insist upon forcing these outdated and untrue gender stereotypes upon young science fiction fans, such as the girl in this advertisement? What is the point in assigning genders to arbitrary hobbies, pastimes, and interests?

The parents of the young girl are supportive of her interest in science fiction, as evidenced by the facts that they bought her a full Darth Vader costume, that they allow her to run about the house all day while wearing this aforementioned costume, and that the father humors the daughter's game of make-believe by starting the car via his remote control key. It is interesting to contrast this active acceptance with their décor choices made when decorating their daughter's room. Small children rarely have a say in what their room looks like, and the room is, as previously discussed, hyper-feminine when viewed through the lens of traditional gender stereotypes. Perhaps they never gave this a second thought—it was a room for a girl, not a social statement nor an attempt to force her to be as feminine as possible. Their daughter, then, is surrounded by an environment encouraging her to be stereotypically feminine, and yet she balances out her interests with both things traditionally masculine and traditionally feminine: dolls versus Star Wars. The parents both adhere to very traditional gender roles, then, in their careers and roles in the household, but they are open and accepting of their daughter's varied interests.

It is also interesting to note that the daughter chose to identify with Darth Vader, of all characters in the Star Wars saga. She did not choose the beautiful Princess Leia, who is easily the most feminine character in the saga and a literal princess, or the heroic Jedi Luke Skywalker, but instead she chose the main antagonist who represents all things corrupt and evil in the Star Wars universe. Female villains are much more rare than their male counterparts in modern cinema, and their motivation is often revenge against someone—often a man—who wronged them in some way or another. Perhaps the girl was attracted to the idea of near-unlimited power via the Force—or, perhaps, she just thought the costume was fun to wear.

This advertisement was incredibly effective, and resonated with many viewers. It was shown during the Super Bowl XLV, and thus reached an incredibly wide audience in an incredibly short amount of time (Star Wars Wikia). The commercial is witty, cute, and unites many fans of a widely popular science fiction series. It is the most shared viral advertisement video of all-time (Star Wars Wikia). Hundreds of thousands of people have seen the advertisement, but upon searching through comments and articles about it, I have not found a single person proclaiming that the girl is unfeminine and a horrible example to young girls everywhere. This is likely because one only realizes that the young girl is, in fact, a girl, if they watch the advertisement with the lens of gender in mind.

Clearly this little girl, then, has something to teach the average American family. The wide acceptance of this advertisement indicates that gender representation in science fiction works was addressed with grace and humor, and without controversy and needless use of the shock factor. Perhaps Volkswagen created this commercial to allow us to glimpse into this young girl's world, where she shows us that assigning genders to hobbies, pastimes, and interests is pointless because children are drawn in to the things that they enjoy not because of their gender, but because of a complex mix of personality, social atmosphere, and upbringing. In the end, people are attracted to a variety of objects and hobbies, and we should be in no position to question how "masculine" or "feminine" they are for it.

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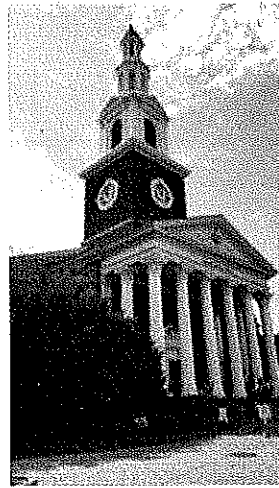
The True Purpose of Memorials

Kassandra Satterly

This essay was the first in a series of assignments in which students explored a local space. Students could choose to write about any place in Lexington or on campus that they deemed was of cultural significance. Kassie demonstrated a curiosity about the role and message of memorials early in the semester, asking questions that sometimes challenged me: in a class discussion about analyzing monuments her hand shot up and she asked why the United States had memorials to events like the Holocaust but not to the history of slavery or internment camps. Headstrong and ambitious, Kassie reflects her passion for social justice in her academic work. Whether she decides to go to law school, become a museum coordinator, or take a yet-undecided path, Kassie's compassion for others and passion for change will guide her work.

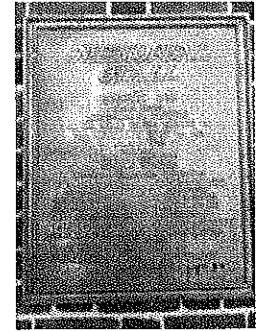
—Rachel Carr, WRD Instructor

Memorial Hall, built in 1929, stands on the University of Kentucky's campus as one of its most distinguished buildings. The image of Memorial Hall functions as a symbol for the University of Kentucky; its clock tower is displayed between the "U" and the "K" of the university's logo. The dome of the clock tower is visible at various locations throughout campus and helps guide students. Today, Memorial Hall functions as one of the largest lecture halls on the University of Kentucky's campus, holding up to 600 students. While its presence on campus is very much known, Memorial Hall's actual purpose, to honor Kentucky's fallen World War I soldiers, unfortunately remains to be known. In addition to the memorialization of our soldiers, this building is characterized by unique features such as an outdoor amphitheater and a fresco by Ann Rice O'Hanlon depicting the early cultural development of Lexington, Kentucky. Instead of remembering this building's historical significance, we students shuffle through the hall oblivious of our surroundings. Memorial Hall should be redesigned to better emphasize its original purpose of honoring Kentucky's World War I fallen soldiers.



Memorial Hall's iconic clocktower.

The outward appearance of Memorial Hall conflicts with its current function as a lecture hall. My first day as a student at UK, I attended Freshman Biology for non-majors. Walking up to the building, I could not believe that was where I would be attending class. All of the surrounding sidewalks and pathways seemed to lead directly to Memorial Hall, suggesting that this building was the main event. As I contemplated which door to enter, I noticed old-fashioned lanterns hanging on either side of the side entrances, causing the hall to look more like an inviting home than a lecture hall. Following a trail of single-filed students, I ventured up to the main entrance and I was, again, astonished by the grand and opulent appearance. Hesitant to reach for the old fashioned, golden door handles, I observed a steady flow of students who seemed unmoved by the magnificence of the building and entered apathetically. I looked to a plaque that read "Memorial Hall: Erected 1928. Subscribed by citizens of the state to the memory of the Kentucky dead in The World War." With this insight, I felt as though I had to be careful on the ground I was walking. As I finally stepped over the threshold of the oversized white French doors, my attention was drawn past the lobby, directly to the auditorium, and I was completely overwhelmed by its size. I looked up and saw rows of twinkling chandeliers, which confirmed my suspicion that we were in a special place.

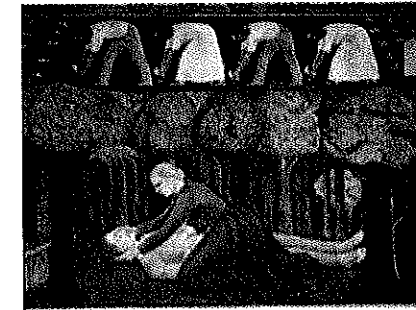


Plaque identifying the memorialization of Kentucky's fallen World War I soldiers.

On my recurring visits to Memorial Hall, I noticed various characteristics that have sparked my interest. The outdoor theater located at the rear of the building appeared peculiar at first glance, but its quirkiness pulled me back. Layers upon layers lined with stone form crest surrounding a small stone stage. For students, this outdoor space provides a tranquil environment to engage in their studies. Upon examining the architecture of Memorial Hall, I noticed the intricacy of craftsmanship. The pillars lining the facade of the hall mirror those found in ancient Rome, adding to the prestige of the building. Trimming along both the interior and exterior suggest a great deal of time went into constructing Memorial Hall. The attention to detail and beauty of the building suggest that the designers desired Memorial Hall to honor the fallen soldiers with the respect they deserve.

While the supposed purpose of Memorial Hall is to honor Kentucky's fallen World War I soldiers, attention in the lobby is instead drawn to a controversial and large piece of art. This fresco, a wall mural painted on moist plaster, was painted by Ann Rice O'Hanlon in 1934 for the Public Works of Art Project, part of FDR's New Deal that hired artists to create artwork around the country. O'Hanlon characterized her employment as busy work during the Great Depression and said, "The government wanted some art work done and I just happened to be the only person, apparently, in Lexington who was available to do a major work on a wall. And so I was chosen" (Smithsonian Institution). O'Hanlon's work illustrates historical events in Lexington and includes Kentucky's famous horses, scenes of courthouses, and the labor of farmers. O'Hanlon described the fresco as "almost like a funny paper, in a sense, because there are little incidents and, what would you say, groupings of events that are to me very full of double meanings, both visually and otherwise meaningful" (Smithsonian Institution). In reality, some aspects of Hanlon's interpretation of Lexington have been subject to criticism as they may promote racist ideals. However, O'Hanlon asserted she had high respect for African Americans after growing up around black house servants of her extended family and defended her inclusion of slave labor by arguing, "I couldn't possibly have left them out of the thing and this was long, long before any of this racism had crept up"

(Smithsonian Institution). Regardless of O'Hanlon's intentions, the fresco contains offensive images, and Memorial Hall is an inappropriate place to display such controversial and offensive artwork, as it is dishonoring to the soldiers; the fresco should be relocated to a separate location.



Detail of fresco depicting African Americans working in the fields as slaves.

Kenneth Inglis' "War Memorials: Ten Questions for Historians" explores the nature of memorials and their impact upon society today. Inglis poses fruitful questions regarding multiple aspects of war memorials such as why they have been neglected and what kind of insight can be gained by acknowledging their presence. The author compares the memorials across the world and of World War I to World War II, noting that those after the Second World War were more somber accounting for a second multitude of loss. Inglis specifically raises the question, "Why do we say monuments to the dead (monuments aux morts) in French, and war memorials in English?" (Inglis 10). Inglis identifies a cultural difference between the French and British: while to the French a monument's primary function was to honor fallen soldiers, British countries had a broader interpretation and also honored returning soldiers. English speaking countries also desired memorials to have a dual function of utility, rather than merely a physical object; common compromises led to memorials doubling as a clock tower or fountain.

Inglis' writing provides a background history of memorials worldwide. In order to understand the purpose of Memorial Hall, it is crucial to understand the purpose of memorials from a larger perspective. While individual cultures hold unique opinions regarding the physical structure of a monument, the consistent purpose is to recognize and honor the sacrifice made. One of the troublesome aspects of Memorial Hall is its informal use as an everyday lecture hall. Honoring the lives of Kentucky's World War I fallen soldiers is an extremely serious matter, but does its current use honor and respect these men and women as intended? Inglis' explanation of memorials commonly having a multi-purpose relieved some of the original tension detected. This also explains why Memorial Hall's design includes a clock tower as its distinguishing feature.

Memorial hall has a two-fold purpose as both a memorial to fallen World War I soldiers and a lecture hall on the University of Kentucky's campus. In "War Memorials as Political Memory," James Mayo of the American Geographical Society suggests, "memorials that perform public service emphasize both sacredness and utility and reinforce the values and aims represented by the sentiment of commemoration through their public purpose" (Mayo 64). Today, Memorial Hall functions well for the University as a lecture hall, but what aspects emphasize the sacredness of the sacrifices made by Kentucky's soldiers? In order to truly function as a memorial, honor must be given to those who have fallen. Instead of drawing attention to a misplaced, shocking piece of art, the central focus should be directed towards the lives lost. The lists of the names of soldiers who laid down their lives to protect America should be the main focus. Patriotism should be a distinguished characteristic of Memorial Hall; perhaps the addition of a flagpole outside could create a stronger sense of the larger picture of individuals' sacrifices.

Memorial Hall is an iconic image on the campus of the University of Kentucky and around the country, yet its original purpose is almost unknown. In order to pay proper respect to Kentucky's fallen soldiers, the purpose of Memorial Hall must be more transparent by clearly recognizing the lost lives. The strong emphasis on memorials having a utility can be dangerous if the true intent is buried beneath the surface. Steps must be taken to shift focus towards the memorial, not merely the everyday use of a building. In order to prosper in the future, we should remember our past and learn from it; war memorials serve as great reminders of the events that have influenced today's way of life. Honor must be more clearly given to Kentucky's fallen World War I soldiers through Memorial Hall.

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Tell Me If This Makes Sense

Elizabeth Southard

Lizzy, a junior majoring in International Studies, is a two-time winner of the Kelly Jo Feinberg Memorial Essay Contest. This annual contest for personal writing is open to all undergraduates at the University of Kentucky. It was established by the Department of Writing, Rhetoric, and Digital Studies not only to honor the memory of one of its most beloved and inspiring writing instructors, but also to acknowledge the essential contributions of non-tenure track faculty to the University's educational mission. In selecting a winning entry, contest judges look for work that exemplifies the qualities that Kelly embodied as a writer and teacher: work that speaks with a compelling, authentic voice; that exhibits both passion and compassion; that moves readers to react in powerful ways; that balances a lightness of approach with a seriousness of purpose. Lizzy's entry this year was one of the most creative that we have received thus far. A multimedia project, it combines an original written prose poem with a video recording of an effective (and affecting) oral recitation. Her poise and nearly flawless performance, while directly addressing a camera, is truly impressive.

—Deborah Kirkman, WRD Associate Director

I don't have to know a person long
before I get, "If we were ever in a fight,
I could *totally* beat you up."
It could be the wardrobe of flowy skirts
or that the word "assertive" hasn't quite



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made its way into my vocabulary yet,
 or that my default expression is that of a
 sleep deprived deer in headlights.
 But that is the first of the free shots
 I allow to hit my jaw before I want
 to pop a hip like serrated steel
 cock a fist like a revolver
 and say, "Honey,
 I hail from the land of Muhammad Ali
 If you don't think I can float like a butterfly
 and sting like a bee you are sadly
 mistaken."
 But there's a hundred letter pileup behind my
 lips; as instead I shrug,
 make sure the tempest is still neatly tucked
 in, and say
 "You probably could."

If I had a peanut for every time someone
 told me to smile
 when I thought I already
 was—I could send the entirety of America's
 allergy sufferers into anaphylactic shock
 and that, frankly, is far too much power.
 I wasn't born with my father's Cherokee skin
 or immaculate "Tom Selleck" mustache
 my mother was voted "Most Bashful" in
 high school, and that is a torch that I am still
 tripping with
 I have her hair, and her face
 and the cracked knuckles that look back
 with crooked smiles. This makes me believe
 that history does repeat itself
 and scared that it's not always done better

but she taught me that my voice shouldn't be
 labeled "concealed carry"
 to deal out my dispositions like a deck of red
 topped cards
 because no matter how I shuffle I will
 always have a full house
 And that the only person allowed to tell me
 when to "stop" and "go" is me
 and the crossing guard.

I see hurricanes in the froth of my tea
 and maybe that's why I have such a heavy
 hand with the honey.
 I have embarrassingly good conversations
 with my dog.
 I've found that there are times to stick it out
 and memorize which fork is for the salad,
 and which is for the entree, and which is
 there *purely* to confuse you
 and there are times to flip tables and run.
 That realization came less like a light bulb
 and more like a heimlich
 I still have the bruises.
 Once, I was so tired I ran 8,500 miles away
 just so I could finally catch my breath.
 I met my best friend in Thailand,
 her name meant "Rain" but it should have
 meant "Thunder"
 I liked to call her Sarah 'cause she laughed at
 impossible things.
 Her English was better than mine and she
 said our alphabet was like art.
 I want to love the way that I travel
 to let you know that I am not here for your

Eiffel tower, your Coliseum,
your Great Wall of Whatever.
I want your crooked streets cobblestoned
with the truest words you've never said
and all the jokes that only you seem to find
funny. To know the unnamed artists of your
renaissance, to study the wars you try to
forget. I want to recite your definition of
home over and over again
until it fits like a chair at my kitchen table.
To be in awe of the way you take your
coffee.

When I was in high school I saw His
Holiness the Dalai Lama
in Downtown Louisville
Riding shotgun in a black SUV
holding a thirty-two ounce Polar Pop like
the secret to enlightenment
life is weird.
And life is hard.
Some days, I feel like I am choking on my
heart and I hate that it goes running at night.
But I love that I can get to my sister's room
by crawling out my window
and that half the time she's already on her
way to mine.
I love being able to say *my sister*
being a blank piece in this 3D jigsaw puzzle
can leave me feeling like I'm floating out in
space; but when you click with someone it's
like a checkmate by God.
I have recurring nightmares about panicked
planes with missing engines

or being chased by the undead as my legs
fill with cement, but I always wake before
that cockpit finds earth
before the gnashing of teeth is in anything
more than my ears because even in my
wildest dreams I cannot see myself being
anything but okay at the end of all of this. I got this
fortune the other day that said
"The true way to soften one's troubles is to
solace those of others"
So when the earth tries to tell you
that you can't take a punch,
you ask his father how many fights he's lied
about winning.
When grief calls dibs on the inside of your
chest, you call "BS"
When someone tells you that "want" and
"should want" are the same thing
you Usain Bolt out of there.

I've heard the universe is infinitely
expanding. Constantly writing mysteries
into nothing with the tip of a ball point
comet
and maybe I didn't retain much from 10th
grade chemistry, but I know
that matter is neither created nor destroyed.
And I'd pay to stick around and watch the
universe ask itself,
what it is going to do
with all
of you.

The Second Coming

Natalie Watkins

Natalie's essays for the course showed her intellectual curiosity and ambition. In the lovely essay—"The Second Coming" (an allusion to W.B. Yeats's poem of that title)—Natalie examines the big questions through the lens of her own life. She wonders about her family's annual preparations for flooding that will surely come, but never does; about the simplistic way schools teach students to believe they can solve problems like malaria in far-off places; about the predictably and unaccountably utopic attitude humans sometimes have about the future. The essay ends with Yeats's poem, but just before that, Natalie leaves us with these ruminations:

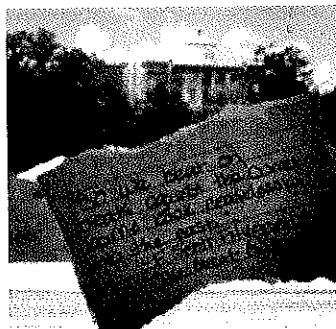
There is, I believe, a harsh difference between happiness and truth. Suffering is cyclical, but so too is hope and warmth. Each day the sun rises, and I am once more blinded by a childlike fascination at the questions that have withstood ten thousand lifetimes and learned to live and love again. Soon I will return to Chicago. The land will be flooded once more.

Luckily for me, I got to see Natalie's fascination at work in her essays. It's fascination that, while full of wonder, isn't childlike. It's youthful, but also mature, incisive, hopeful, and ultimately humanistic.

—Beth Connors-Manke, WRD Professor

The following is not a narrative about myself; but rather, a compilation of the saddest things I have ever known to be true.

I am an Illinoisan, Chicago-born: not from the actual city, of course; my town was about thirty miles northwest and painfully rural. My family had no cows or horses (although the latter was not uncommon in our area), which was strange, because we lived on what I believe was once a farm, with a big red barn and an apple orchard and an abandoned corral that never seemed in place. Such was one of many anomalies of my childhood: of course I questioned the unusual location and seemingly useless features of my family's estate, although I do not recall receiving any answers.



The land was flat, but dipped down into a basin that never really mattered until the early months of spring. The Midwestern winter's snow would melt and the water would pool into a sort of lake that always seemed to cause chaos. Mom would rush to the basement and move all the valuables to higher ground for fear that a flood was inevitable; Dad was certain that it would be The Year the Sump Pump Quit. Every year there was worry. Yet every year—without exception—we were fine. From time to time, I asked questions about this strange cycle. Once again, I received no answers.

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When I was in third grade at St. Anne Catholic School, my class had a fundraiser to buy mosquito nets for kids in Bosnia (or Bolivia or Bulgaria or wherever), to prevent them from contracting malaria and dying in their sleep. My class was excited—we were going to save the world! We were going to do the work of God! Surely some revelation was at hand: because of us, everyone would live.

Everyone would live forever.

No one asked questions.

Except for me, of course. The whole idea bothered me, and I couldn't help but notice that I was the only one bothered. I wondered: if a couple hundred people had previously died every day from mosquito bites, and the nets stopped these people from dying, what would happen to all these extra people living in those war-torn, broke-ass areas? Wouldn't the regions become overpopulated? Wouldn't they run out of food? I tried, repeatedly, to explain this to my fellow third-graders, but to them, the idea of letting all these people die seemed outrageously cruel. The more I tried to explain reality, the more frustrated I became. The mosquito nets were a fantasy! Misfortune couldn't be prevented! We would not be solving the problem. We would be simply creating a new one.

Kids were dying of malaria in Bosnia/Bolivia/Bulgaria. They probably will be forever. Suffering, I reasoned, must simply exist. Suffering can be shifted; it cannot be obliterated. I couldn't—I can't—bring myself to believe in mosquito nets.

~~~~~

The human condition is the most pitiful sort of chaos: I am, through and through, simultaneously intrigued and repulsed by the very nature of it. A person can't live forever. Everyone tries to, though—we seem to be endlessly waiting on immortality. I can't understand this, but I realize that this seems, to some people, entirely plausible. It's all very confused and naive.

Are we really still waiting to see the end of suffering in Bosnia/Bolivia/Bulgaria? I'm convinced that no such thing could happen, and if it did, it wouldn't matter anyhow. We would just start waiting for something else. Thus, our anticipation for change is cyclical: it has no capacity to end, unless—of course—the Second Coming arrives on Earth. That is our Great Hope. Perhaps it would put an end to all of this madness.

Then again, perhaps it would not.

~~~~~

Ryan is the name of a boy I once knew. He reminded me of a character from a fine F. Scott Fitzgerald novel: incredibly dynamic and perpetually full of surprises. The summer after my seventeenth birthday, I really did believe that he was the smartest person in the world. I can recall, with vivid detail, asking him questions and listening to his answers. It was my favorite thing to do: every night, I would sit beside him on the rocky shore of Lake Michigan and dream up questions to ask him. He would answer every one.

One night, he asked, "Got any questions?"

"Okay, I have one," I said.

"Let's hear it."

"What's your favorite childhood memory?"

He paused to think for a moment. I sat down on the big boulder and motioned for him to join me.

He sat down before answering.

"When I was a kid, my parents would go out a lot at night and leave me and my sister at home with a sitter. Not too often, but just enough for me to make somewhat of a routine of it."

Ryan lay down on his back and looked up at the night sky, the summer moon illuminating his face.

"Anyway, after I was supposed to have gone to sleep, I would get up and go to my parents' room. They had an old radio—like one with a dial and an antenna and all, not one of those digital things that everyone has now." He turned to look at me. It was dark, but I could see him smiling. "I turned the volume way down, not wanting to wake anyone else up, and tuned into whatever station I could get. Sometimes classic rock, sometimes country, or jazz, or bluegrass, or who knows what. But whenever I found my perfect station, I would just sit there and listen. Soak it up; the music and the magic. And when I saw my parents pulling into the driveway, I'd shut it off and run back to my bed."

A bustle of wind swooped past us and I shivered. There was a stillness in the air that night—cold, but not bitterly so—and the sky had an energy of its own. Neither of us spoke for a few moments, staring at the stars and reveling in the peaceful silence.

"I don't think my parents ever found out about that."

I looked back at Ryan. He was still on his back, his expression unreadable. A part of me felt as if I was violating him for knowing his childhood secret, and a part of me—a bigger part—felt a ridiculous urge to ask him more questions.

"I like that story."

He sighed. "It was nice."

"Nice? Seems like an understatement."

"Yeah?" Ryan smiled. "What would you call it?"

I sat up and began taking off my shoes. The wind caught my hair. "I don't know. I can't think of a word."

"Aren't you supposed to be a writer?"

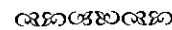
"I suppose that's why."

And this, I believe, is how we deal with it all: one story at a time, one song at a time, one hope at a time. We stick to who we trust and who we admire. We go on dates, talk at night, write in journals. We buy mosquito nets for Bosnian youth and don't think twice about why; we say yes, I agree that your memory is nice—the music and the magic and the innocence—but it's really just a memory, just the Past. Even when they mean everything, and say everything, and become everything, they are just memories, and we turn to the next story, the next song, the next hope.

This is how we deal with it all.

I stayed with him for a while longer that night, trying to figure things out, trying to find the words that had previously eluded me. I asked him if he believed in God. He said that he didn't know. I told him that if a god did exist, and that god was good, then surely he would put an end to the ridiculous cycle of pain and suffering, and what did he think about that?

He smiled at me. "Looks like the falcon has finally heard the falconer."



There are big questions out there and a whole lot of people looking for answers. I have come to the conclusion that there are two choices and no solutions: to believe in something, or to accept that there is nothing at all. There is a Present and there is a Future. Such is cyclical: the Present becomes the Past while the Future becomes the Present and the Bigger Future becomes the Great Hope. There will be no malaria, no suffering there!

The human condition is the most pitiful sort of chaos.

We will not be saved. We cannot be saved. This, I reason, is a good thing: there is a sort of comfort in accepting the Present and nothing else. After all, what reason do we have to believe that the Great Hope would bring happiness and immortality and long-awaited answers? It would bring nothing but a basin of mud and a sump pump that has once again survived the winter.

This is not a personal narrative; this is a compilation of the saddest things I have ever known to be true.

There is, I believe, a harsh difference between happiness and truth. Suffering is cyclical, but so too is hope and warmth. Each day the sun rises, and I am once more blinded by a childlike fascination at the questions that have withstood ten thousand lifetimes and learned to live and love again.

Soon I will return to Chicago. The land will be flooded once more.

*Surely some revelation is at hand;*

*Surely the Second Coming is at hand.*

*The Second Coming! Hardly are those words out*

*When a vast image out of Spiritus Mundi*

*Troubles my sight: somewhere in sands of the desert*

*A shape with lion body and the head of a man,*

*A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,*

*Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it*

*Reel shadows of the indignant desert birds.*

*The darkness drops again; but now I know*

*That twenty centuries of stony sleep*

*Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle,*

*And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,*

*Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?*

—W.B. Yeats, 1919

## *Feminism at UK*

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Madeline Hill

Madeline is every instructor's dream student: thoughtful, creative, and genuinely engaged with a question of personal and public importance. In her quest to answer her own question—What is a feminist?—she left no rock unturned. She answers this question with grace, humor, meticulous research, curiosity, and, most importantly, empathy. The result is a beautiful and powerful video that speaks for itself.

—Anna Bedsole Stone, WRD Instructor



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## *Music and Anxiety*

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Jillian Marks

Jillian does an excellent job tracing anxiety through music and her personal experience. In this way, she combines an object of interest with her own life, a difficult and challenging mode of writing. In the end, her work is powerful and emotional, asking us to consider broad issues of anxiety.

—Jeff Rice, WRD Professor



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## *The "Fight for \$15" Escalates*

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Connor Robbs

Connor Robbs' writing project explores the fight for a higher minimum wage for fast food workers across the nation. Connor is a biology major and also a hockey player at UK. He is originally from Naperville, Illinois, a suburb of Chicago. His research stems from a group project that explored how economic inequalities led to social movements and labor organizing among service workers across the United States. As Robbs notes in "The 'Fight for \$15' Escalates," the Fight for 15 movement is not only about higher wages, but also about fast food workers attempting to organize unions. He offers a survey of media portrayals of protests, reading how ideologies and biases frame arguments about the working poor. His compelling analysis offers an example of including and engaging with multiple sources from different stakeholders on a social justice issue.

—Steven Alvarez, WRD Professor



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## *Dr. Paul and the Deeper Meaning in Life*

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Kendra Sanders

I've had the pleasure of working with Kendra twice—once as a student in my Intro to Documentary class (WRD 312) and once as a Gaines Fellow in the Humanities. I served as the chair for her Honors thesis committee, and even at such a prestigious level, the committee was just knocked out by the professional quality and focus of the work. She produced a thirty minute documentary on the thesis itself, a meta critique of sorts, and something you will all learn if you work on documentary is how much time, energy, and compression are required to produce even a minute. She knows how to make every instant count, and her sense of pacing is one of the things I like most about “Dr. Paul.”

This piece is impressive to look at—the camera work and editing are really top notch. But it is also genuinely quirky, very amusing, and a fascinating character study.

—Thomas Marksbury, WRD Instructor



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## *Genshi Bakudan*

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Zachary Smith

Zach has done amazing work in both WRD 110 and my WRD 312 Introduction to Documentary class. It's worth noting that this isn't just a one-off, "hail fellow well met" assignment satisfactorily completed for him. He wants to be a filmmaker, and I am proud of this recognition, which validates the fact that he already is one—and an accomplished filmmaker with an individual vision and style, at that.

This is the very moving story of Zach's grandmother's experiences of the atomic bomb America dropped on Hiroshima. His spare but eloquent combination of her testimony and careful use of archival footage and photography is at once personal and universal, and the minimalist approach he has taken proves, once again, that less can so often be more.

—Thomas Marksbury, WRD Instructor



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## *Prison's Purpose*

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John Tompkins, Elizabeth Dade, Emily Holland,  
Nathan Sheehan, and Andrew Wylie

Students in this class were asked to create a documentary that chronicled the evolution of a debate over the last 100 years. This is a serious undertaking—from the hours of research to the mentally demanding activities of analyzing and organizing that research, and then the painstaking work of shooting and editing the film. This group took on a ponderous topic, prisons, and identified a far-reaching debate: their purpose. The result is a short documentary that covers a lot of ground smoothly and intelligently. The seamless editing and confident voiceover almost obscure the tremendous amount of research, storyboarding, and revising that went into the project.

—Ashleigh Hardin, WRD Instructor



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## *The Administration Building*

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Ben Wood, Nitalia Harris,  
Anjana Mandal, and Mitch Jaben

When this group decided to do a project on the Administration Building (or the Main Building) I honestly wasn't sure how it would turn out. While I had full faith in their ability to successfully complete the documentary assignment, I was skeptical—to say the least—of how interesting it could actually be. Over the course of the semester, the group shifted from focusing on the building itself to instead focusing on what the building represented. They continued digging up tons of great research and information for their blogs about the University's budget, tuition rates, administration pay, and so on. While they fully had my attention and interest, I was still cynical. I periodically reminded them not to be surprised if they repeatedly got turned down for interview requests; it'll probably be too hard to get a high-level administrator to agree to this. After a couple group members got a door literally shut in their faces, I was worried that my cynicism was right. But thankfully, the group proved me wrong with their persistence. They managed to score pretty big interviews, all while staying true to their group motto, "Follow the Money." This group also managed to replace my cynicism with hope. In some ways their documentary is a call to action, in some ways it is activism, and at the very least it raises awareness about the incredible financial discrepancies between college tuition rates, administrator salaries, and the education our students pay so much for. For me, "The Administration Building" documentary illustrates that students can still be passionate about social issues that directly affect them.

And that's why the final product of Ben, Nitalia, Anjana, and Mitch's work is so important. I'm incredibly proud of them and the hard work they dedicated to their project.



—Cate Gooch, WRD Instructor

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## *The Road to Religious Acceptance: The Story of My Father*

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Anna Woosley

Our class was based on the idea of community and difference, and the final project was a personal documentary that told the story of a person, or a community, that each student felt demonstrated that idea.

Anna's documentary had a huge impact. From an academic standpoint, it has all the ingredients of a successful documentary—it's well researched, nicely filmed, and well edited. Anna's use of rhetorical strategies is smart and balanced. But the success of this documentary does not only lie in its academic qualities. Anna's documentary is understated, but candid. She tells the story of her father, Kirk, and his exclusion from his church because of his sexuality. It's a tricky story to tell. All too often, narratives of this kind fall into the trap of being overly-emotional. From a rhetorical standpoint, we might say that they rely too much on pathos—and indeed it is tempting to do so when the narrative is inherently emotional. Anna's narrative avoids being over-emotional, yet still manages—very successfully—to both engage the audience and leave them with the sense that something must change. It is a call for action without being explicitly so. And, at the same time, Anna's love for her father and her commitment to equality is obvious.

—Catherine Brereton, WRD Instructor



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## *Unity beyond Colored Lines: Race Relations and Parallelism in America*

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Darianne Young

Darianne Young is originally from Washington, DC. Her major is English with a minor in sociology and African American studies. In a few years, Darianne sees herself graduating law school and working for a law firm that works with criminal cases. She aspires to be a criminal defense attorney who provides adequate representation for those who cannot afford it. Darianne sees herself as a human rights activist who addresses equality issues through races and genders. Her writing project “Unity Beyond Colored Lines: Race Relations and Parallelism in America” explores the intersections for social justice among Black students during the civil rights era and undocumented student activists today. Darianne’s writing demonstrates the importance of research that brings to light shared injustices among communities and strategized responses that learn from history.

—Steven Alvarez, WRD Professor



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