Symposium
The Ithaca College Honors Undergraduate Research Journal

Work from
Ithaca College
Honors Seminars

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Letter from the Director

I’m thrilled, and frankly not a little surprised, to find myself writing a letter introducing Symposium, the research journal of the Ithaca College Honors Program. Last January Chloe Wilson, the current editor-in-chief of Symposium, approached me in a state of high enthusiasm and asked if Honors would be willing to sponsor a journal that would publish scholarly essays written by honors students for their honors seminars. Chloe made two compelling points. First, virtually every honors seminar has a focus, and often a central focus, on independent research. Honors students are regularly asked to extend their energy and creativity to producing the very highest quality interdisciplinary work. The spirit of inquiry really is in our DNA. Secondly, Chloe reminded me that the Honors faculty consistently preaches that producing scholarship is not an end in itself, that, in fact, the goal of scholarly research is to reach and affect a public. In light of that, she argued, honors students would be well served both by bringing their seminar papers to a broader audience and having an opportunity to gain editorial experience in creating a scholarly journal. Given arguments like that the answer was a foregone conclusion and four months later we have the first issue of Symposium.

The contents of Symposium tell us a lot about the intellectual life in Honors. Notably, the essays cover a broad array of topics, including Homer’s Iliad, Native American religion, student attitudes towards sustainability, the technology of power supply, and 17th century memoirs. In addition, these subjects are approached through a variety of methods, ranging from literary criticism to ethnography to social scientific survey. The topics and methods are as varied as the seminars for which they were written, indeed, the five essays come from five different seminars. Lastly, a reader will be struck by the fact that Honors fosters high-quality productive independent scholarship in students at the beginning of their collegiate careers. Three of the five essays in this volume were written for Honors Ithaca Seminars in their author’s first semesters at Ithaca College.

It really must be noted that Symposium is a 100% student enterprise from front to back. Students envisioned it, pitched it to Honors, put together an editorial board, issued the call for papers, juried the submissions, worked with the authors to bring their work to the highest level, edited the materials for consistency, designed the volume, and produced the front material. All that the Honors administration did was say, “Okeedoke,” and offer some space on the webpage. Everything else came from the efforts of the authors and editors and for that you should all be very proud.

Honors is excited about sponsoring Symposium. Our hope is that it will become a regular part of the intellectual life of the Ithaca College Honors Program, with annual volumes published every spring. I look forward to working with the editors as they provide the honors community with this important venue for publishing independent undergraduate research.

Robert Sullivan
Honors Program Director

Letter from the Editor

You are currently reading the inaugural issue of Symposium: The Ithaca College Honors Undergraduate Research Journal. This is the only publication of its kind at Ithaca College, and we are honored to be the combination of students and faculty to have brought this project to life.

Within these pages, you will find a collection of undergraduate research papers that were created entirely by Ithaca College Honors students. Not only do these papers reflect the intellectual minds that exist within the Honors Program, but these papers also reflect Ithaca College. The wide range of topics encompasses all schools and mediums, ranging from nuclear energy to theatrical analysis techniques to many others.

As the founder of Symposium, I am indebted to so many people for this publication’s existence. To Michelle Ammirati, Adrienne Cocci, Stephanie Krail, and Kayla Reopelle, my peers who threw themselves into this project with an invaluable fervor, and to Dr. Robert Sullivan for his priceless support. Without these individuals, Symposium would not exist. Thank you. A countless number of thanks for helping this project succeed.

For those unfamiliar with the term, the Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines “symposium” as “a social gathering at which there is free interchange of ideas.” This is what we hope to inspire with this journal, and we hope that you are inspired by the work you read in our Symposium.

With that, readers, please go through Symposium with an open mind. I genuinely hope you enjoy and are proud of the work of Ithaca College Honors Students.

Sincerely,

Chloe Wilson
Editor-in-Chief
The Iliad Revived
The Golden City Honors Seminar

Hali Garber
Class of 2015 Theatre Studies, B.A.

The purpose of this research is to illustrate how one of the greatest and most renowned works of literature of all time, Homer’s Iliad, can be further studied and analyzed through a theatrical technique called the Formalist Analysis Structure. The technique is normally related to plays which have the potential to be staged both on and off-Broadway, in regards to discovering the most emotionally-relatable and entertaining parts of a story so it can be used as a means of amusement and leisure. The application of this technique greatly benefits the Iliad because the entire work unfolds and becomes a more fascinating story for the readers. It also shows the possibility for this work to be staged into a play since theater is a huge Western value of expressionism. I did this by applying each major conflict, turning point, and emotional event from the Iliad to the formalist structure one by one. I found that there is an underlying theatricality in the story that made the Iliad a more interesting read, essentially fixing the problems of holding interest and identifying with characters from classic works that some may consider outdated or dry. This project intended on and succeeded in opening up the text as an emotional portrait and better presenting the story for those passionate about the Iliad, theater, or simply taking advantage of a technique that will benefit avid readers in the future.

Our modern world puts strict pressure on the entertainment industry to serve its purpose: allow people to escape, at least for a moment, from the crazed and hectic society in which we are all living. People want to be taken away from their problems and transported into a world where they can become part of a new story, identify with characters that experience more pain and problems than their own, and walk away with a feeling of catharsis. This type of entertainment exists in theater. The stage holds a certain honesty and openness that the audience can easily connect with, perhaps because no two performances ever turn out identical. There exists a risk factor that something can go wrong, whether it be a forgotten line or a disconnect to the dialogue. Does the audience simply want to see an actor mess up? Or are they put into a trance from the magic of a story unfolding in front of their eyes? Either way, live theater provides the means to capturing an audience’s attention in some way or form. The most successful shows, however, accomplish this by using a plot structure called the formalist analysis technique.

The principles of the formalist analysis structure have endured in theater because they open up new meaning to a text, even if the work is not intended for a stage. When applying this analysis to Homer’s Iliad, the epic poem completely comes to life. A unique voice is discovered in this poem and if it were to be staged, the audience would walk away with a life-changing message about what humans are capable of. Though solely believed to be a story of violence and death, the work unfolds through formalist analysis to display some of the most basic yet touching examples of how human connection succeeds in repairing a broken soul. This meaningful theme can be discovered in the climactic plot of Book 24 in the Iliad, which can successfully be applied to the formalist structure. The text opens up as an emotional portrait through investigating the current stasis, rising action, climax, falling action, and new stasis in order to better present the story.

The formalist analysis plot structure is a “behind the scenes” secret to an audience that greatly influences the outcome of a play on opening night. It is a secret because the structure is applied to a script during discussion between members of the creative team months to years before the performances even take place. Some writers may call the formalist approach descriptive because it is concerned with describing a play in terms of its own internal artistic context. Or it may be called analytical because it analyzes the elements in a play as parts of an artistic totality. Others might describe this approach as Aristotelian because it is based on the parts of a play originally described by Aristotle. All of these are accurate (Thomas xx). Understanding the internal nature of the play is crucial to understanding its external context. More important in the theatre, plays must eventually exist in the practical realm of live performance and not just in the intellectual realm of scholarship. Thomas describes, “On stage, at least, the play itself is obliged to remain the final controlling factor. Formalist analysis corresponds with this point of view. It offers more than intellectual insights; it supplies practical suggestions that can analyze actors, directors, and designers in their work” (Thomas xxiii).

It may be simpler to look at the formalist analysis structure, which provides a clearer depiction of navigation when trying to tackle a real playwright’s work.

This is a basic illustration of the structure used to outline a script or a written work. Thomas notes, “It provides an outcome of how actors, directors, and designers think about plays, and is based on the assumption that what these artists need to know about plays is what is important to an audience. Although we may not be aware of it, the principles of formalist analysis help to make plays work out in performance.” Without them, play scripts would seem unfinished and probably even unintelligible. Moreover, they are not just empty concepts to learn merely because generations of actors, directors, and designers have done so before. They are keys that that are used by the previously named positions to check their work, to explore its possibilities, and find new directions in it (Thomas xxiii).

The first part of the structure to consider is the “point of attack”, the moment when the play begins in relation to the timeline of the background story at one end and the end of the play at the other (Thomas 142). The point of attack is simply the first line of the text, which falls into the “current stasis” in the world of the play. This means that when the audience begins the journey of the story, there are certain beliefs that they must follow. Without them, they would not be aware of the plot structure and it would be impossible to understand the play. It also shows the possibility for this work to be staged into a play since theater is a huge Western value of expressionism. I did this by applying each major conflict, turning point, and emotional event from the Iliad to the formalist structure one by one. I found that there is an underlying theatricality in the story that made the Iliad a more interesting read, essentially fixing the problems of holding interest and identifying with characters from classic works that some may consider outdated or dry. This project intended on and succeeded in opening up the text as an emotional portrait and better presenting the story for those passionate about the Iliad, theater, or simply taking advantage of a technique that will benefit avid readers in the future.
to entering the new world of the play. Homer says:

The games were over now. The gathered armies scattered, each man to his fast ship, and the fighters turned their minds to thoughts of food and the sweet warm grip of sleep (Il. 24. 1–3).

This point of attack immediately sets the scene for what was going on “in this world” when the action started onstage. When the onstage action begins late in the background story and close to the final climax, it is said to have a late point of attack. Conversely, a story has an early point of attack when there is little background story. Since Book 24 is the final chapter in the Iliad, the point of attack can be considered late so the audience realizes the characters have already been living and breathing in their own world in which the audience is solely watching from above (almost like the Gods in the story).

The next term that can be applied is the “primary event”, also located in the “current stasis”. It can be defined as the most important incident in the background story, one that so energizes the characters that it produces in them the conditions necessary for the play to take place. Since the primary event is before the point of attack, it would usually not be seen on a stage, but noted by specific wording in the text. Homer writes:

Achilles has lost all pity! First he slaughters Hector, he rips away the noble prince’s life then lashes him to his chariot, drags him round his beloved comrade’s tomb (Il. 24. 55).

It is important for the “primary event” to be illustrative of life-changing events. “They are always powerful dramatic situations in themselves, but also provide the drama for the rest of the text to play off of” (Thomas, 144). The audience is now aware that the characters have back-stories; they have been “real people” before we see them onstage. This idea makes the actors come alive before our eyes and gives the audience a way to relate to Achilles through his pain and suffering over the death of Patroclus.

The formalist structure heavily addresses the “current stasis” because it is so important for the audience to realize what has been going on in the story when they first enter the world of the play. Without this in depth knowledge of background information, the audience will be lost and the characters will not be taken as seriously if the story was just read without the means for a stage. Achilles comes alive from the page because his character can be said to have “high stakes”. High stakes is a popular term coined for the characters’ objectives, or what they genuinely want in the work. It becomes clearer to the audience that Achilles has been dealing with his personal pain and sufferings because he cannot get back what he wants: Patroclus. This impossible wish makes Achilles come alive from the page because his character cannot change his mind, for his plan has already been established. If Priam was not to go through with this plan, there would be a major disappointment in the story and the audience would be let down. However, this action provides story with excitement, anticipation, and hope. The audience can unpack Priam’s emotional journey through his fearfulness to approach Achilles, yet his courage for retrieving the body of his son. This trait exhibits what an amazing father Priam is and makes his task seem more interesting to the audience. However, this action provides story with excitement, anticipation, and hope. The audience can unpack Priam’s emotional journey through his fearfulness to approach Achilles, yet his courage for retrieving the body of his son. This trait exhibits what an amazing father Priam is and makes his task seem more interesting to the audience.

The “inciting action” is a huge part of the formalist analysis that when applied to the text can unpack a great deal of emotion for the audience and the characters. It is the single event in the play that sparks the action or main conflict. Thomas notes, “It occurs at the point in the play where something happens to the main character that sets the main conflict in motion. The inciting action then becomes the chief driving force, the “big bang”, for all the succeeding action of the play. The action may take on different forms, but it always appears somewhere near the beginning of the play for the simple reason that it initiates the main conflict. It may be an incident, an idea, a wish, a feeling, or a plan in someone’s mind. In any case, the main conflict can begin only after the inciting action takes place. It forms the transition between the introductory material and the body of the play, and its placement in the overall structure helps to shape the emotional dynamics of the play” (Thom- as, 144). Homer describes this action:

But the old and noble Priam answered firmly, ‘I will go. My mind is made up. Don’t hold me back. And don’t go flying off on your own across the halls, a bird of evil omen – you can’t dissuade me now…Not now, I heard her voice with my own ears. I looked straight at the goddess, face-to-face. So I am going – her message must not come to nothing. And if it is my fate to die by the beaked ships of Achilles armed in bronze, then die I shall. Let Achilles cut me down straightway – once I’ve caught my son in my arms and wept my fill” (Il. 24. 258–272).

This portion is the inciting action because it specifically displays what the remainder of the story will be about and essentially leads up to the climax. Since Priam distinctively says out loud, “I will go. My mind is made up”, his character cannot change his mind, for his plan has already been established. If Priam was not to go through with this plan, there would be a major disappointment in the story and the audience would be let down. However, this action provides story with excitement, anticipation, and hope. The audience can unpack Priam’s emotional journey through his fearfulness to approach Achilles, yet his courage for retrieving the body of his son. This trait exhibits what an amazing father Priam is and makes his task seem more interesting to the audience than it would have been because his character is committed and strong-minded in this decision. Furthermore, this “big bang” of a speech introduces conflict, something every story needs to be successful. If we did not know that Priam would not have trouble retrieving his son, the play would not seem interesting to us, or even worth seeing. However, this inciting action makes the story come alive; it puts the play in full force and makes the audience become a part of the action.

On the stage as well as in real life, all planned human behavior encourages opposition as people try to reach their goals. Ball says, “Characters meet up with those who have contrasting wishes, or they run into obstacles in their way that lead to the major climax. The rising action is usually the majority of the play so that the audience is not expecting a twist or major turn of events in the story. The rising action includes many important terms in the analysis, such as “inciting action”, “conflicts/complications”, and the “crisis”, which can be explained and related to some eye-opening scenes in the Iliad. The “inciting action” is a huge part of the formalist analysis that when applied to the text can unpack a great deal of emotion for the audience and the characters. It is the single event in the play that sparks the action or main conflict. Thomas notes, “It occurs at the point in the play where something happens to the main character that sets the main conflict in motion. The inciting action then becomes the chief driving force, the “big bang”, for all the succeeding action of the play. The action may take on different forms, but it always appears somewhere near the beginning of the play for the simple reason that it initiates the main conflict. It may be an incident, an idea, a wish, a feeling, or a plan in someone’s mind. In any case, the main conflict can begin only after the inciting action takes place. It forms the transition between the introductory material and the body of the play, and its placement in the overall structure helps to shape the emotional dynamics of the play” (Thomas, 144). Homer describes this action:

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On the stage as well as in real life, all planned human behavior encourages opposition as people try to reach their goals. Ball says, “Characters meet up with those who have contrasting wishes, or they run into complications, or they may even question their own goals. The dictionary defines “conflict” as incompatibility or intolerance, as of one idea, desire, event, or activity with another. And in drama, conflicts are the counter-movements in the plot created by those opposing motives and events” (Ball, 30). The conflicts are what produce the increasing levels of tension in the play. The plot thickens and becomes more complex, and the internal tensions begin to surface. Most conflicts arise from the presence of two elements: obstacles and complications. Obstacles hinder the progression of a character’s goal. Complications motivate characters and advance the story, but still present the character from getting what they want. According to Thomas, “Obstacles in turn create complications, which are unexpected changes in existing plans, methods, or attitudes – things that
make a situation more difficult to deal with. Without obstacles and complications there might be a potential for conflict, but there would be no chance for that conflict actually to occur” (Thomas, 144-145). Many are seen throughout the Iliad.

The first obstacle in the text occurs when Priam’s wife tries to prevent him from going to Achilles, which hinders Priam from reaching his goal and makes the event emotionally heavier for the audience to observe. Homer writes, But his wife cried out in answer, ‘No, no – where have your senses gone? That made you famous once, both among outland men and those you rule in Troy! How can you think of going down to the ships, alone, and face the glance of the man who killed your sons, so many fine brave boys? You have a heart of iron! If he gets you in his clutches, sets his eyes on you – that savage, treacherous man – he’ll show no mercy; no respect for your rights!’ (Il. 24, 240-250).

This obstacle sets back Priam’s goals, but makes the audience more anxious to see him visit Achilles, even though his safety is at stake. The scene becomes complicated, yet more attractive to an audiences’ eyes, because there is more tension taking place, and less guarantee for an expected outcome. The fact that Priam still goes to Achilles makes that action a lot more intense and exciting because there are characters who disagree with him, making the story more realistic. In real life, we constantly deal with opposing views from our loved ones, so the audience can better relate emotionally during this scene between Priam and his wife.

The second obstacle comes into the story later, when Priam and his driver are on their way to Achilles, and they are stopped by Hermes. Homer says: A sudden darkness had swept across the earth and Hermes was all but on them when the herald looked up, saw him, shouted at once to Priam, ‘Danger, my king – think fast! I see a man – I’m afraid we’ll both be butchered on the spot – hurry! Run for our lives’ (Il. 24, 416-420). This interaction hinders the goal to reach Achilles, which once again, puts the audience on the edge of their seats and creates a tone of anticipation in the story. The audience is now rooting for Priam and wants him to confront Achilles, but complications get in the way. However, this run-in puts more weight on the actual event and makes the story more successful because it is then more engaging. Ball writes, “It is important not to deprive students (or anyone else) of theater’s greatest pleasure: the delicious, often suspenseful thirst to know that comes next” (Ball 33). Since portions of text can be applied to the formalist analysis structure, the characters are gaining more realistic traits, the audience becomes more involved in the story, and the work has the potential to be staged and presented before a large group of people. Readers also feel more emotionally connected to the characters.

The crisis in the rising action is an extremely important term because it nears the event of the major climax. The crisis can be described as the “point of no return”, where a character has no choice but to carry on with their plan to reach their goal, no matter what is in the way (Thomas, 145). Ball says, “This action of “not turning back” provides intensity to a scene because the crisis is usually an extreme notion of action and impulsive decision-making, so the characters ultimately get what he or she wants without anything coming between the individual and his or her target” (Ball 28). Basically, once the crisis has been admitted into the story, there is nothing to get in the way from the climax to happen, and the play is in full force. Homer writes: The majestic king of Troy slipped past the rest and kneeling down beside Achilles, clasped his knees and kissed his hands, those terrible, man-killing hands that had slaughtered Priam’s many sons in battle (Il. 24, 560-563). This text fits the category of a crisis because Priam simply cannot go back on any of his views once this action has been completed. It is one thing to show up at Achilles’ feet, begging for his son back, but the text epitomizes the pain and anxiety that Priam must be feeling at this moment. Here, his emotions can be unpacked into desperation and pure submission by realizing the extent he takes in his actions. Priam is willing to put his own lips to the hands that murdered his dear son in search of something that will make his pain dissolve. With this first encountering of human connection to Achilles, Priam starts to come back to life from his remoteness, and there is no way he can “turn back” the story before it reaches a major climax.

But Priam prayed his heart out to Achilles: ‘remember your own father, great godlike Achilles – as old as I am, past the threshold of deadly old age! No one there to defend him, beat away disaster, no one – but at least he hears you’re still alive and his old heart rejoices, hope rising, day by day, to see his beloved son come sailing home from Troy and now not a single one is left, I tell you…But one was left to me, to guard my walls, my people – the one you killed the other day, defending his fatherland, my Hector! It’s all for him I’ve come to the ships now, to win him back from you – I bring a priceless ransom. Revere the gods, Achilles! Pity me in my own right, remember your own father! I deserve more pity…I have endured what no one on earth has ever done before – I put to my lips the hands of the man who killed my son (Il. 24, 570-590).

The text can be unpacked even more by applying it to the terms of the formalist analysis structure. If the audience had not known Achilles’ history of grieving from the “point of attack” text, or the misery Priam has been experiencing by outlining the “inciting action”, the story would seem to drag on about the two men. There would not be a lot of emotion behind the text of Priam physically touching and holding Achilles’ hands while asking for Hector back. There would definitely be some sentiment in the speech, but the audience would have missed out on the impact his words really hold. He brings up Achilles’ father, taking a huge risk yet knowing that Hector is worth the fear, to try to get his body back. This portrait successfully illustrates a real-life situation because memories of a loved parent can tug the strings to anyone’s heart. The characters have been humanized for the first time because the audience can now see themselves in Priam as he alludes to Achilles’ father, hoping for to connect as humans. The audience can also feel for Achilles as he accepts Priam’s words with dignity. This text brings the story closer to the climax, where the characters can truly open up and show the audience a great lesson hidden within the work.

The “climax” is a prominent peak of emotional intensity that produces a significant change in the characters. As a rule, the highest peak of emotional intensity in the play is considered the most important or “main climax.” It is surrounded on either side by connecting scenes containing “minor climaxes” and governs all the other climax es in the play. The main climax can appear at an assortment of distances from the end of the play, but always somewhere near the end because within this climax are the “recognition” and “reversal” moments in the story. Thomas writes that, “Recognition”, according to Aristotle, is a change from ignorance to knowledge on the part of a character. The most effective kind of recognition is accompanied by a “reversal”, or drastic change of fortune (Thomas, 148-149). When these terms are applied to Priam and Achilles, the story becomes an emotional portrait of literature. Those words stirred within Achilles a deep desire to grieve for his own father. Taking the old man’s hand he gently moved him back. And overpowered by memory both men gave way to grief. Priam wept freely for Patroclus once again, and their sobbing rose and fell throughout the house. Then, when brilliant Achill...
This passionate selection of text is the climax because it definitely includes a prominent peak of emotion that changes the characters, a moment of recognition, and a reversal. Mere spoken word becomes the human interaction that slowly changes Achilles from the mad killing-machine he was in the beginning of the story back into an emotional human. For the first time, Achilles cries instead of kills; he thinks instead of murders. His character’s portrait can unravel to reveal the “human” that Achilles has been hiding up until these lines in Book 24. The language between these two men ignites their healing processes, and the need of human connection is greatly expressed. It is obvious that these two characters are drastically changed, both physically and mentally, as they actually hold onto each other’s arms and bond over the pain of lost ones. There is a “recognition” because Achilles is no longer ignorant to the amount of pain he has caused Priam—he acknowledges him as a fellow man. There is also a “reversal” because Priam is rewarded with the acceptance from Achilles that makes him feel wealthy in safety, gratefulness, and the hope that he will retrieve his son. He is also rich in power; he defeated his fears and did the task he was set out to do. This climax is definitely a “tear-jerker”, literally for Priam and Achilles, but also for the audience who can understand the realistic elements to this scene. People do not just change randomly; they are sparked with gentle words and simple human interactions. This section unpacks a world of humanism between Priam and Achilles because they have both made great strides to see each other as respected men, rather than monsters.

The last important term within formalist structure is the “obligatory scene” located in the “falling action” of the play. Obligatory scenes provide the audience with the relief of viewing/reading interactions that they have been longing for throughout the entire story. It is compulsory that the audience reads, or examines this scene in order to feel satisfied by the end of the play. The obligatory usually takes place around the main climax because it is a dramatic portion of the play that is very specific to an audience’s needs. If a playwright is successful, he knows where the highest peak of emotional response will be from the audience and subtly places the obligatory scene in order to feel satisfied by the end of the play. Homer says: “Mere spoken word becomes the human interaction because it is a dramatic portion of the play that is very specific to an audience’s needs. If a playwright is successful, he knows where the highest peak of emotional response will be from the audience and subtly places the obligatory scene in order to feel satisfied by the end of the play.”

This dialogue is not only gentle and honest, but it is refreshing to the audience’s palate. Throughout the entire story, both the main characters and the audience members were taken on a journey. The moment that Achilles actually tells Priam that his son’s body is free should perpetuate a long sigh of emotional release. The obligatory scene is ironic because the audience knows it will come, yet it still rings surprising and beautiful to read or watch. The viewers feel fulfilled in this interaction because the text opens up the social companionship shared between Priam and Achilles and the large impact on the revival of their souls. New layers of empathy and understanding for other humans can be painted on the mental portrait of Achilles as he gives Priam the gift of his Hector.

The play nears its end as it reaches the “new stasis”, or “resolution”. The resolution comprises all the events following the main climax. Sometimes this feature is variously referred to as denouement, out-come, fall, or unraveling. This resolution is characterized by a gradual quieting of the tension and the emergence of a new relationship between opposing forces (which is why the obligatory scene is between the climax and the resolution). Thomas says, “A resolution is only an apparent re-balancing of the conflicting forces in a play. It is a useful object lesson to speculate what will happen to the characters after their play is finished” (Thomas 150). For Priam, his journey of retrieving Hector may be over, but the resolution shows that there is more to come in his life, whether that may be happiness, sadness, or the realistic feeling of just getting by.
Learning from Peyotism

Tribes and Scribes Honors Seminar

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There exists a huge problem of cultural intolerance in the modern world. Across all ways of life, hatred, sexism, racism, and other forms of prejudice that permeate and cause conflict among people of different backgrounds. One such example of intolerance regards drug use across indigenous cultures, and how that is perceived by Western culture. Some Native American cultures use the cactus peyote as part of religious ceremonies they hold central to their beliefs. Peyote causes hallucinations and significant intensification in the user due to the active chemical, mescaline. Until recently, peyote was illegal for its impairing effects and potential for recreational abuse. The change in legality came about because the judicial courts, including the U.S. Supreme Court, realized the negative stigma of drug users and drugs had clouded rational judgment around a plant which science suggests actually does little to no harm to its users when taken, and could possibly have mental health benefits. Cultural bias was overcome in this situation through looking at the cultural differences in spiritual traditions and drug use practices, then being able to reconcile them. Ultimately, understanding and cultivating tolerance between cultures will help create peace and social harmony among the many peoples of the world.

In the deserts of Northwestern Mexico, the Huichol Indians practice their native religion. Unlike mainstream religions of today, the Huichol believe in the use of what are essentially drugs for spiritual purposes. While shocking to some, the Huichol connect their entire lives with the cactus plant, also known as peyote (Fikes). Peyote contains a primary hallucinogenic compound called mescaline, responsible for causing vivid hallucinations, as well as alterations in the brain’s perceptions (Schultes). To the Indians, the plant is of profound religious and spiritual importance, used in ceremonies to communicate with spirits and their creator. The Native Americans believe this wisdom and knowledge is shared through this practice. The tradition may seem abysmal and wrong to many in modern Western Culture, after all, people are taught from a very young age to stay away from drugs. Almost all substances used recreationally are illegal except for alcohol. Western society condemns the use of the drugs for anything except health and medical reasons. This has caused a stigma and has created a separation between Westerners and the Huichol, as well as many other cultures. Not just the topic of drug use: religion, tradition, education, music, food, and more all play a role in how a culture’s identity is formed. The problem is when this cultural identity causes conflict between differing cultures and ways of life, and the stigma between Westerners and the Huichol’s drug use is just one example of this. One should be able to look at other cultures and appreciate what they have to offer, and thus learning about other cultures and traditions has value because it teaches tolerance and open-mindedness. One of the many cultures of the world that should be viewed without the lens of this drug stigma is the Huichol and Peyotism.

The Huichol Indians of Northwestern Mexico are one of the few groups that still use peyote religiously (Fikes). They use it as an entheogen, a substance used in connection with spiritual practices. Literally translated “enthogen” means “generating the divine within”, implying the drug’s effects and allowing the user to experience a religious or divine vision (Dictionary.reference.com). The use of peyote dates back 10,000 years. In Huichol belief, peyote is the physical reincarnation of “Deer-Person”, whom they believe is their creator. Peyote is used in their tradition for a number of reasons, including spiritual and medicinal purposes. The Huichol go on a pilgrimage from their homes to a location where peyote grows. Once they arrive, sometimes after very far distances, they will harvest and collect peyote. They consume the plant in ceremonies, which they believe allows them to communicate with Deer-Person through a “peyote spirit,” and it is here where their creator shares wisdom and knowledge with them. The peyote cactus resembles and is believed to be the physical reincarnation of Deer-Person’s heart, which is consumed by the Indians to communicate with the spirit. In fact, the roots of the words “peyote, peyotl, and peyutl” (different forms of “peyote”) all share the same root as the medical term “pericardium,” which refers to the envelope around the heart. This etymological connection shows the immense influence the Huichol belief had on naming the cactus (Fikes).

The plant peyote—or its scientific name, Lophophora Williamsii—is a cactus native to regions of northeastern Mexico and the southwestern United States. The plant is relatively small in size, and is a mixture of grey and green in color. It often comes in a variety of shapes, due to certain climates and the fragility of the plant. Some of these altered shapes resemble something akin to a deer’s hoof. This is thought to be specially related to the Huichol’s belief that their creator “Deer-Person” is reincarnated through peyote; as such, the physical plant resembling a deer hoof would be an important connection for the Huichol. In ceremony, the crown of the plant is cut and dried. These parts of the plant are prepared into “mescal buttons,” which is consumed during the religious ceremonies of the Huichol. This not the only way that peyote is prepared; it can be soaked in hot water to form a type of tea, or ground up to create a thicker liquid that is consumed. Peyote can also be ground or prepared into a liquid that is mixed with alcoholic beverages to mix the effects of mescaline with that of ethanol. The term “mescal” comes from the primary psychoactive chemical in peyote known as mescaline.

There are several other alkalkoids and chemicals found in peyote, but mescaline has been found to be the most potent hallucinogenic in the plant. The effects of mescaline come in two primary steps. First, an overall feeling of relaxation and content mood is felt and then comes the phase of the drug where sluggishness, visual, and auditory hallucinations set in. Sometimes, these hallucinations give the Indians that the “vision” that they believe allows them to see and communicate with spirits (Schultes).

Another group that still uses peyote in ceremonies today is the Native American Church, whose founding dates back just under a century. An American anthropologist named James Mooney was influential in starting the church, though he himself was not Native American. He studied the use of peyote in the 1890’s. Later he advised peyotists and Native Americans in Oklahoma to create a group in order to protect their right to use peyote for religious ceremonies; since the first amendment forbids the government from interfering with the rights of people to practice religion, whatever that religion may be. This group became the Native American Church, which was formed in 1918. The church still exists today and has roughly 250,000 members across North America. The church is thought of as being rather to Christianity. Their beliefs about monotheism and values of faithfulness and compassion are similar to that of the Christian doctrine (Fikes).

There is no doubt that a huge stigma and negative view towards drug use exists in Western culture today. From a very young age children are taught about the “horrible” effects that drugs have on people. In school, there was never any implication that illicit drugs could have any positive benefit whatsoever. In school, teachers do not say “cocaine destroys a person’s body, but is taken because it temporarily makes a person feel great.” There has been a blind ignorance towards condemning all types of drugs and labeling them as “bad”, without examining the possibility that there could be therapeutic effects from them. Many, if not most, illicit drugs end up causing more damage than they do good, but there is still so much that is misunderstood about drugs, peyote in particular.
There are a multitude of cultures in the world. Whether they be categorized by race, religion, creed, or any other criteria, everyone deserves certain rights that everyone else has. One example is the case of the Native Americans and their use of peyote. The reasoning for this lies with Native American's first amendment rights. Under religious freedom, the Native Americans have just as much a right as anyone else to practice their beliefs. Congress agreed that the use of peyote was important to the Native American religion and as such must be legal for use in their religious ceremonies, saying “for many Indian people, the traditional ceremonial use of the peyote cactus as a religious sacrament has for centuries been integral to a way of life, and significant in perpetuating Indian tribes and cultures” (Code).

The intolerance and ignorance towards drug use would at least improve if people were educated more about drugs and were not just taught one side of the story. Education and inquiry is crucial to learning the truth about anything. In the topic of peyote use, tolerance was acted upon in 1994, when amendments were added to the American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978. One of these amendments legalized peyote for religious use under U.S. law:

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the use, possession, or transportation of peyote by an Indian for bona fide traditional ceremonial purposes in connection with the practice of a traditional Indian religion is lawful, and shall not be prohibited by the United States or any State. No Indian shall be penalized or discriminated against on the basis of such use, possession or transportation, including, but not limited to, denial of otherwise applicable benefits under public assistance programs (Code).

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There are a multitude of cultures in the world. Whether they be categorized by race, religion, creed, and location. They all deserve the same right to at least be given some thought before people dismiss them. Ignorance and intolerance are generated from disregarding a culture and not appreciating at least some of it and what it may have to offer. The disrespect for Native Americans and drug use in their cultures is just one of the many examples of a case similar to this, and if people took the time to learn about why other people do what they do, it may not seem so wrong. Access to education and an increasingly more global environment is developing through technology and commerce. People will have more of an opportunity to experience other cultures because of and people can learn to appreciate the differences and similarities between cultures. Other cultures should be looked at and seen through an open-minded perspective, to develop a more tolerant world.

Works Cited


Creating a Sustainable Mindset on College Campuses

Why Are We Here? Youth Culture and the Problem of College

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While global temperatures are continuing to rise, it seems that most people are continuing to live unsustainable lifestyles that cause further harm to the earth. As the future of the planet is at risk of an immense crisis, it is absolutely urgent that college students, who will soon step out into the real world, make changes to their daily routines. Even by taking small steps like joining “green” organizations, concerned students can have an enormous impact on the way their school conducts its business in terms of environmental strategies. While Ithaca College does have many policies that are aimed at helping the environment, more could be done in terms of recycling, electricity, and food policies to reduce waste, as seen at many university campuses all over North America and Europe. This research finds that students have both the physical capability and willpower to make positive modifications to their behavior, but must also make the effort to get faculty members, school policies, and other universities to follow their lead. College students can revolutionize campus habits to create a healthier world for future generations.

In a society that is burdened with huge rates of pollution and overconsumption, people worldwide are generating enormous amounts of waste. These overconsumption tendencies lead to huge emissions of greenhouse gas, which is heating up the planet and ruining the environment. In the United States, most lifestyles are unsustainable, meaning that important resources are being used up faster than they can be replenished. Being a part of the campus community, students, faculty, and staff members all contribute extensively to this problem. Feeling as though school work and activities are of the utmost concern, many people on campuses do not realize the enormous impact their lifestyles have on the world. While steps have been taken to become more environmentally friendly at Ithaca College, individuals need to consciously limit their waste generation and protect the environment. It is extremely important that the college sets an example for other educational institutions around the world, so students will take on a sense of responsibility for their actions. Research must be done to investigate students’ awareness of sustainability issues and willingness to transform their habits, while concrete sustainable habits must form to solve these issues. If college students do not begin to do so, they will continue to live unsustainably and perpetuate this severely unhealthy lifestyle. It is entirely possible to revolutionize the “typical campus lifestyle” in a manner that will benefit the institution, its students, and the greater global community, in economic, social, and environmental terms.

It’s Not Easy Being Green, but We Must Do It

The world’s resources have been depleting at an alarming rate, beginning with the Industrial Revolution. As years went on, incredible amounts of resources were used for new technologies, and huge amounts of industrial waste were created. Humans could only think of their actions in terms of humans; biotic influences such as the land, animals, and plants were not taken into consideration (Sustainability Principles and Practices). As production increased, anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions skyrocketed, which permanently and drastically changed our environment. Global temperatures began to increase, and now cause bizarre weather patterns that create major problems for all organisms. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, if greenhouse gas production continues at the current rate, there will be “abrupt and irreversible” impacts. Extremes in climate, such as intense heat waves, as well as stronger and more frequent tropical storms and precipitation, will occur. It is also probable that many species will become endangered, while others will become completely extinct (IPCC Synthesis Report). If people worldwide do not take action to change their habits, as well as the habits of others, the world is heading toward a horrifying scenario. Fortunately, scientists and global citizens are recognizing the problem and are beginning to take steps to make these changes.

In light of these concerns, Ithaca College took an important first step toward sustainable living when a group of qualified faculty, staff, and students created the Ithaca College Climate Action Plan. The plan was made in 2009, with the hope of lowering the college’s overall environmental impact. The goal is to be climate neutral by 2050, meaning that the school will completely stop or offset its greenhouse gas emissions. The plan aims to use cleaner energy and reduce waste production (Climate Action Plan 5). However, this goal cannot be effectively achieved without the active participation of willing individuals, including those of the Ithaca community.

Students can easily limit their waste production, which is one major issue described in the Climate Action. Although Ithaca College prides itself on being a “green institution,” the campus produces an enormous, unnecessary amount of waste that needs to be reduced. A typical American produces 4.6 pounds of waste per day (Sustainability Principles and Practices). By that logic, the 6,400 students on campus alone therefore produce an approximate total of 29,400 pounds per day. When waste is created, the demand for fossil fuels that emit greenhouse gases is increased (Top 10 Things You Can Do to Reduce Global Warming). Much of this change-inducing waste is produced in dormitories. For example, in Rowland Hall, an excessive amount of paper towels is used every week in the bathrooms. A janitor based in Rowland states that every two weeks, he must order a total of three cases of paper towels for the building. There are multiple rolls of paper towels in each case, and each roll is 700 feet long (Westgate). This could be easily remedied by students using their own hand or face towels in the bathrooms. According to research done in 2009, Ithaca College spends more than $14,000 annually to refill the paper towel dispensers only in the quad (Paper Towel Use Reduction). If many individuals choose to decrease the amount of paper towels used routinely, they would simultaneously do their part to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and save the college money, which in turn could go toward Ithaca’s budget for its Climate Action Plan.

Although many college policies need to be instated to limit waste, this is also the responsibility of students. A conflict occurs when students leave their appliances plugged into outlets all day, wasting electricity. Even if they are turned off, plugged-in appliances will continue to draw energy, creating an unnecessary demand for fossil fuels that the college has to pay for. While the school can promote this concept, students need to take the initiative to unplug their appliances on their own (Sustainability Principles and Practices). Students also produce food waste that is not currently being disposed of properly in their residence halls. The waste system for these halls is inefficient and confusing for residents. They often end up throwing out food scraps that were actually compostable. If students have food scraps that they want to compost, they need to take them to a dining hall. Since many students are too lazy to take their waste all the way to a dining hall, it would be easier if Ithaca College could put smaller compost bins around campus and near dormitories (Sustainability Principles and Practices). This would benefit the college, which already sells its composting, so that again, more money could be put into the institution’s budget. Taking measures to reduce waste around dormitories would have a
After years of humans manipulating and destroying the environment, it has finally become clear that now is the time to change these habits. College students today are becoming interested in living more sustainably, but awareness of environmental problems still needs to increase. These more sustainable college students have the power to remedy the failures of previous generations in terms of preserving the earth. As more students have become interested in sustainability, a new website, Greenreportcard.org, has been created to rank colleges and universities in terms of their commitment to it (The College Sustainability Report Card). These institutions, including many based abroad, are working on transforming the wasteful lifestyle. For example, on many campuses, a student-run campaign to ban bottled water is helping the environment by reducing unnecessary waste. Furthermore, results from a recent, self-created survey indicate that students are willing to make dramatic changes to live more sustainably. Although there may be some resistance to changing habits, there is a demand for sustainability on campuses. Students have the power to work through any obstacles preventing them from achieving this goal, and the capability to convince others of its importance to the world.

The College Sustainability Report Card, which can be found on Greenreportcard.org, is a relatively new system dedicated to evaluating the sustainability performance of 300 colleges in the United States. According to the site, their information comes from surveys sent to students and faculty at schools, as well as public documentation. The organization’s goal is to recognize academic institutions leading the way in terms of sustainability, give schools a tool to compare their own sustainability practices to others, and aid students in picking an environmentally friendly school (The College Sustainability Report Card). The website gives Brown University, Dickinson College, Luther College, University of Minnesota, Oberlin College, Pomona College, University of Wisconsin-Madison, and Yale University the highest overall grades for their commitment to sustainability. While Ithaca College does not rank as highly; it earns a B+ from the system (Report Card 2011). Clearly, greener learning communities are in high demand, as colleges realize that sustainable living can be used as a tool to attract some prospective students. The idea of a greener college or university has been catching on not only in the United States, but also throughout Europe. These universities have arguably achieved much more in the field of sustainability than many in the United States. The country of Wales mentions sustainability in its constitution, and this concept carries over into its universities. The University of Wales is made up of three schools that each promote sustainability, in terms of academics and practice (Haslett). Other European universities have restructured the buildings on campus to increase efficiency and environmental awareness. For instance, Newman University College in Birmingham, UK has won many awards for its environmentally-friendly campus, which was recently updated to be even more sustainable. Eco-Campus, an organization that recognizes learning institutions that are dedicated to the environment, gave the college a silver medal in 2011 and a bronze medal in 2010 for its environmental work (Baldwyn). It also has received a grant from Revolving Green Fund which was used to increase lighting and boiler efficiency, and aims to be even more sustainable in the future ("Sustainable Campus"). Learning institutions all over the world are beginning to realize the value of sustainability in preparation for their students’ futures.

One specific trend in sustainability that can be found across many college campuses is a ban on the sale of plastic water bottles. This practice reduces the amount of plastic waste students create, while saving them money. As many as fourteen universities and colleges in North America have begun completely enforcing this ban, while many more colleges have done so in certain areas of campuses. In most of these cases, students were the driving force behind the ban, actively trying to make a difference in their areas. Instead of using plastic water bottles, students are using reusable bottles, which can be filled up at drinking fountains located around campus (Marohn). At Ithaca College, a student organization called Take Back the Tap has also begun to take a stand on the matter, its goal being to eventually ban the sale of disposable water bottles ("Take Back the Tap"). Once

Researching Our Habits

After years of humans manipulating and destroying the environment, it has finally become clear that now is the time to change these habits. College students today are becoming interested in living more sustainably, but awareness of environmental problems still needs to increase. These more sustainable college students have the power to remedy the failures of previous generations in terms of preserving the earth. As more students have become interested in sustainability, a new website, Greenreportcard.org, has been created to rank colleges and universities in terms of their commitment to it (The College Sustainability Report Card). These institutions, including many based abroad, are working on transforming the wasteful lifestyle. For example, on many campuses, a student-run campaign to ban bottled water is helping the environment by reducing unnecessary waste. Furthermore, results from a recent, self-created survey indicate that students are willing to make dramatic changes to live more sustainably. Although there may be some resistance to changing habits, there is a demand for sustainability on campuses. Students have the power to work through any obstacles preventing them from achieving this goal, and the capability to convince others of its importance to the world.

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educated on the subject, young adults at college do care about living sustainably, and are taking action to make necessary changes to their lifestyles.

Personal, independent research was needed in order to take a closer look at the sustainability mindset of college students. Using surveymonkey.com, a survey was created for aimed at freshman students. 63 students responded to the survey online, which was sent out through emails and Facebook. There was a wide variety of majors represented in the responses to the survey, as students from all schools at Ithaca College participated, including 14 students who reported attending other colleges. However, about a third of students stated that most of their classes took place in the Roy H. Park School of Communications. 41.3 percent of responders announced that they were very concerned about protecting the environment, and 54 percent claimed to be somewhat concerned. Only three students, about 4.8 percent of the survey takers, said they felt indifferent about the environment.

When asked to report their interest in living more sustainably, 41.3 percent claimed to be very interested, 52.4 percent said they were somewhat interested, and a small 6.3 percent answered they were not interested (Abrams, “Sustainability”).

Overall, the results reiterated that students were indeed favorably inclined toward a sustainable lifestyle. Responses to the survey demonstrated a willingness to cut back on certain wasteful activities, such as using paper towel and container, keeping appliances plugged in while not in use, driving gas-guzzling cars long distances, and eating Grab and Go stations on campus. People were less enthusiastic about shortening shower times and avoiding packaged or animal-based foods, although some did report they would consider these options. Incredibly, 95.1 percent of students said they would definitely or most likely use compost bins stationed in residence halls if instructed on how to use them (Abrams, “Sustainability”). If this policy was instituted, colleges could decrease their annual waste and possibly sell the composting to a private company.

Interesting results came from a question asking what kept college students from living sustainably: a question gave the survey takers an opportunity to choose from one or more answers. The most popular answer was that living sustainably took too much effort, but other high ranked answers included not having access to enough money or resources, not having enough time, or having other commitments that were more important. Thirteen students answered that they believed they were already living sustainably. Half of responders said they would be motivated to live more sustainably if some sort of monetary rewards were involved; yet in reality, this is an extremely impractical solution. Others said that leadership positions, class projects, a higher awareness of the topic, or more opportunities to make changes would be better motivators of sustainable behavior (Abrams, “Sustainability”).

With this research, the goal was to discover if a relationship existed between a person’s major and willingness to make sustainable choices. In order to achieve this goal, a question asking students to identify themselves by their major was included. People with the most obvious tendencies to care about sustainability were seen in environmental science and environmental studies majors, who generally categorized themselves as very interested in their environment and sustainable living. However, a strong inclination toward protecting the environment could also be found in music majors, film majors, and some undeclared students. Students with majors in communication fields had very similar answers, often listing themselves as somewhat interested in the environment and living sustainably. No major showed more indifference to the environmental cause than another (Abrams, “Sustainability”). After reviewing the survey’s results, there is not enough evidence to support the existence of a strong relationship between majors and willingness to make habits sustainable.

An open-ended question that concluded the survey showed eagerness in terms of saving the environment. The question asked students, “After taking this survey, what are your views on sustainable living? Are you motivated to make a change in your lifestyle? Do you think students on your campus need to live greener?” Most of the feedback was positive, with students generally reporting feeling driven to live sustainably. Answers typical of the 39 responses given included, “I am somewhat motivated,” “I am motivated and willing to live a greener lifestyle,” and “My campus is definitely making an effort to be green. However, there are many improvements that could be made.” Other answers indicated a desire for more knowledge. One responder said, “I need to be informed of a way to live more sustainably and then I would [do so].” Nevertheless, one response in particular made it clear that awareness of sustainability needs to increase on campus. A student declared, “I am [motivated] but what the [insert] does eating animal products have anything to do with sustaining the environment?” (Abrams, “Sustainability”). Apparently, this student was frustrated by a lack of knowledge on the topic. It is very possible that many students located at colleges throughout North America feel this way. Academic learning institutions need to consider actively providing their students with a solid education in sustainability, as ignorance was portrayed on the part of students.

Although the survey results indicated that students were interested in, but unaware of many sustainability issues, it is possible that these answers may not have been typical of all college students. Only a very small group of people took the survey. Its title, “Sustainability,” may have appealed to more environmentally-minded students, as compared to students with less interest who may have seen the title and decided against taking it. In addition, most questions were posed in a multiple choice format, where students could answer with multiple responses, so some answers may have been less genuine than they seem. As the creator of this survey, I still believe the majority of its results are valid. However, larger-scale research needs to be done on the topic, in order to fully investigate and promote sustainability.

As more and more people become passionate about protecting the environment, college students specifically gain more power to make a difference. The College Sustainability Report Card gives universities a tool to evaluate their own performance in terms of sustainability, while giving prospective and current students an opportunity to objectively look into the eco-friendliness of certain schools. Universities around the world are beginning to restructure their campuses in a greener manner and spark student enthusiasm for the cause, and students are responding to this by making life on campus more sustainable. Recent polls suggest that students’ interest in sustainability is growing, but many need more information before they can fully commit to changing their ways. Once colleges educate students on methods to improve the sustainability of their daily routines, students will be more empowered to make more significant changes that will have a positive impact on the future.

Practicing What We Preach

Research indicates that although progress is being made in terms of sustainability, students and faculty still see a need for environmental action on college campuses. At Ithaca College, environmental studies professor Paula Turkon acknowledges this progress but believes that there are feasible steps that the college and its students could take to dramatically improve the college’s sustainability. Many students actively play a part in this progress, especially those residing in the Sustainably Conscious Living community on campus. Being a student participating in a sustainability activity at a sporting event for the professor mentioned above, I simultaneously noticed positive, supportive attitudes toward sustainability. In order for students to accomplish sustainable living, information needs to be portrayed in a more accessible, user-friendly format. The concept of sustainability may seem intimidatingly out of reach, but in practice, sustainable living will gradually become a realistic possibility.

In recent years, as interest in sustainability has increased, most colleges have reported a remarkable surge in students enrolled in a major or minor in the field of environmental science or environmental studies. According to William Crompton, an Environmental Science and Studies chair at Iowa State University, this may be due to the fact that “environmental issues got a lot more press, or more effective press, in the past four to five years.”
The program also has a faculty advisor that promotes discussions about sustainability and social awareness, and practices sustainable living techniques such as using hand towels and limiting drier utilization (Jacobson). The Sustainably Conscious Living Community requires its residents to make a strong commitment to learning about sustainability issues and taking action to change them. Many issues the dormitory addresses are very complex sustainability matters of which most college students otherwise would not be aware. According to Jacobson, a recent activity comprised of residents writing letters to the government asking for a ban on hydraulic fracturing, a highly dangerous method of accessing natural gas, in the New York area because “it is harmful to the people, the land, and the community” (Jacobson). Sometimes, this commitment to sustainability may be too much for students to handle. 36.5 percent of students polled claimed to be unsure of whether they were interested in living in a sustainable dormitory (Abrams, “Sustainability”).

Turkon, who is familiar with the program, states that “this year, there were many fewer applicants than [there were] a few years ago, when there was a huge spike.” Turkon thinks that people used to have to go out of their way to live sustainably, but now people “make those choices wherever they’re living” (Turkon, personal interview). Likewise, Jacobson, who will not be living in the dormitory next year, thinks there could be improvements, like limiting the number of required outreach hours to free up people’s schedules and making activities more group-oriented (Jacobson). Even though the Sustainably Conscious Living Community is making great gains for the college, there needs to be some sort of medium for students that are environmentally conscious but do not have the time to be involved in environmental activism. Alternatively, residual halls could be more run more sustainably. For example, encouraging hand towel utilization instead of paper towels could be a practical solution to many of the sustainability awareness problems on campus.

In order to raise both consciousness of sustainability and actual sustainability levels, Turkon’s Sustainability Principles and Practices class participated by acting as the “Green Team” at the Cortaca Jughandle football game for the Game Day Challenge. Members of this class spent over four hours encouraging tailgaters to dispose of their waste correctly and later, cleaning up leftover waste after the game. Arriving several hours before the game, the Green Team distributed trash and recycle bags to spectators, while educating them on what items were recyclable. Most people gratefully accepted the bags and even applauded students for their efforts. Two alumni tailgaters told members of the Green Team that they “love Earth and hate Cortland,” so they were happy to recycle. The majority of spectators seemed enthusiastic and willing to do their part to recycle at the game. One day after the game, the Green Team returned to clean up the stadium and parking lots, finding disposable water bottles, beverage cans, alcohol bottles, food remains and wrappers, and tobacco containers. It only took the Green Team, which consisted of approximately 20 people and Turkon herself, a little over two hours to pick up items and sort them into recyclables and non-recyclables. A total of 1.14 tons or 2,280 pounds of waste from the game were collected and later disposed of. 1,640 pounds, or 72.93 percent, of this waste was recycled. A total of 955 pounds, or 44.1 percent, were recyclable. Most people gratefully accepted the bags and even applauded students for their efforts. Two alumni tailgaters told members of the Green Team that they “love Earth and hate Cortland,” so they were happy to recycle.

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The risky option to invest in more environmentally friendly methods could also motivate students to live more sustainably. As research has shown, students are more likely to become involved with sustainable activities if they are more aware of the reasons behind their actions. Turkon agrees with this assertion, saying that they need to “feel [the urgency] somehow, by getting out into the community, hearing people speak. Until you feel it... you’re distanced from it, which is not a good motivator” (Turkon, personal interview). She suggests that pathos, or emotionally appealing stories, influence students the most to make a difference. As a part of her class, Sustainability Practices and Principles, students are required to attend at least two outside events, to expose them to a broader perspective that applies to environmental, social, or economic aspects of sustainability (Turkon, “Sustainability Practices and Principles”). This allows students to understand how sustainability applies to real life, not just their schoolwork. Education, personal experience, and empathy with the experiences of others seem to be legitimate, successful motivators for students toward sustainable action.

Many students on Ithaca’s campus have been effectively motivated by these factors, and some have even chosen to take part in the Sustainably Conscious Living Community, housed on the first floor of Terrace 2. Rani Jacobson, a sophomore, is required to live in the Sustainability dormitory for scholarship reasons, but is thankful for the chance to “be aware and more involved with environmentalism and sustainability.” Jacobson says her fellow dormitory residents live often live there for similar reasons, but also to surround themselves with similarly-minded people and to dedicate themselves to environmental action. Living in this community entails “outreach,” which means students are obligated to complete a certain amount of community service hours. Jacobson lists a few examples, like “taking out invasive species on South Hill or making organic and sustainable food that encourages buying local produce,” as activities that are done regularly by members of her floor.
need to be taken to make sustainability a reality for students all over the world. Although actions are obviously being taken to make life on college campuses more sustainable, there is a basic need for college and student effort to create a universally sustainable lifestyle. Professor Turkon is proud of Ithaca College’s accomplishments in the sustainability field, but recognizes many improvements that could aid our efforts in being energy efficient and overall more environmentally aware. Students that want to be a part of the solution have pledged to change their ways by residing in the Sustainably Conscious Living Community; nevertheless, residents are interested in enhancing the program to become more practical. On a more positive note, opportunities outside of this program, like being a part of the Green Team, exist to make important campus events more sustainable, and most spectators seemed eager to help out. In order to spread this environmental camaraderie, education needs to be presented to students in an appealing form, like a blog. When sustainable routines are expansively put into practice by college students, this will pave the way for future generations to live in a much healthier, considerate, and less wasteful manner.

“Impossible” Things are Happening Everyday

For years, humans have been inflicting destruction on the environment and refusing to acknowledge or even deal with the consequences. Recently, people’s mindsets have begun to change, realizing that they cannot realistically continue to pollute and devastate their surroundings without truly harming, or even killing, themselves. This new mindset has spread to the millenarian generation, but recognition of the problem needs to increase within this group before significant changes can be made. It is true that global climate change is threatening the Earth, as temperature and precipitation irregularities are endangering numerous species, but although these environmental changes are irreversible, humans—and college students in particular—have the power to stop them from getting any worse. By setting an example to change destructive lifestyles, students can become activists for the cause and teach future generations how to make these positive changes. In light of the dire circumstances people face, this may seem like an impossible and over-idealistic view. However, people are capable of incredible things when forced to tackle incredible challenges, especially when working together in great numbers. It will take an enormous amount of education, research, and lifestyle modification, which urgently needs to happen soon. Living sustainably will be difficult, but schools like Ithaca College and their students have the resources, ability, and willpower to be the leaders of this movement.

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Selected Graphs from Sustainability Survey
Creating a Sustainable Mindset on College Campuses

Are you more likely to recycle at home or at college?

What keeps you from living completely sustainably now?

Would you be willing to cut back on any of these activities in the interest of sustainability and the environment? Choose all that apply.

What would motivate you to make sustainable changes to your lifestyle on campus?
Solutions Hidden Beneath Controversy and the Pressure of Depleting Resources
Oil, Energy, and the Future of Society

Steph Krail
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Jared Diamond, author of Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed, has devoted a major part of his career to examining and analyzing past societal collapses in relation to our current environmental problems. He states, “the conclusion that the public has the ultimate responsibility for the behavior of even the biggest businesses is empowering and hopeful, rather than disappointing. My conclusion is not a moralistic one about who is right or wrong, admirable or selfish, a good guy or a bad guy. My conclusion is instead a prediction, based on what I have seen happening in the past. Businesses have changed when the public came to expect and require different behavior, to reward businesses for behavior that the public wanted, and to make things difficult for businesses practicing behaviors that the public didn’t want. I predict that in the future, just as in the past, changes in public attitudes will be essential for changes in businesses’ environmental practices” (Diamond). Diamond uses the phrase “changes in public attitudes” very loosely in this statement in the hopes that it will be interpreted in many different ways, such as with regards to our energy situation and imminent dilemma. Current society and the people of our civilization rely so heavily on finite resources to fuel our current way of life, and this is very quickly setting us up for disaster. As a somewhat comical response to this thought, Diamond points out “in contrast [to trees and fish], oil, metals, and coal are not renewable; they don’t reproduce, sprout, or have sex to produce baby oil droplets or coal nuggets,” which is entirely true (Diamond). To combat the inevitable depletion of resources, we need to focus on further developing alternative sources of energy.

Individually, no renewable source of energy has the capability to support the mass amounts of power required to fuel our current lifestyle. By combining many sources, each will compensate for another’s flaws, such as not being able to produce energy at maximum capacity due to the weather on certain days, and be able to supply us with as adequate amount of clean and renewable energy.

Renewable energy options are various forms of technologies that utilize natural resources indefinitely. This usually comes across as the manipulation or concentration of a resource into a more usable form of energy, which can be applied to biomass, water, sunrays, wind, and geothermal heat. Solar energy has been around since the mid 1800s, and it has yet to be developed further and implemented more into society. Inventor Thomas Edison once proclaimed, “I’d put my money on the sun and solar energy. What a source of power! I hope we don’t have to wait until oil and coal run out before we tackle that” (Gore 57). Since Edison’s time, multiple approaches have been developed to utilize sunlight, such as capturing heat to power an electricity generator to converting the sun’s rays to electricity through the use of photovoltaic cells. In addition to solar energy, other viable sources of energy are outlined in Al Gore’s Our Choice: A Plan to Solve the Climate Crisis, where he discusses renewable energy sources and states, “One month’s worth of the energy that could be captured from wind and from the geothermal energy emitted from the earth itself could each supply civilization’s entire energy use for a year” (Gore 57). With statistics like this, the fact that we are not attempting to include renewable resources more thoroughly into society is baffling.

There has to be a solution capable of supplying power to the entire world under any conditions. In general, we must focus on an ultimate source of power to substitute our dependency on crude oil and in our current day and age, the only truly viable possibility is nuclear energy. Before we begin to rely more heavily on it, however, we must make necessary advancements to ensure health and safety by transcending our current sub-par nuclear waste disposal through the development and advancement of alternative, more environmentally friendly solutions.

A nuclear power plant should produce virtually no waste, but this proves to be quite difficult, especially if most people are unwilling to spend extra money to save revenue in the future. Through a technology called transmutation, scientists are attempting to convert nuclear waste into another, safer form, but that requires more modern procedures. A few different models and technologies have been designed to date, each one possessing different advantages and disadvantages. One possibility is a Fast Neutron Reactor, which operates using neutrons that move at the same speed as those produced by the fission reaction (Hore–Lacy). The higher kinetic energy within the neutrons changes the waste by reducing its toxicity while also lessening its half-life (Fast Neutron Reactors). There are approximately twenty of these reactors in operation around the world today (Hore–Lacy). Despite the seemingly low number of reactors, this technology is a step in the right direction.

In the 1980s, scientists took it one step further with the Integral Fast Reactor, which is a Fast Neutron Reactor with a reprocessing plant at the same site. This type of nuclear power plant repeatedly reuses its waste until the end result is essentially non-radioactive and as safe as possible. The energy produced through recycling the waste is a significant fuel source in operating the reactor (Lang). Despite the progress, further advancements of this technology were halted in 1994 due to widespread opposition, possible accidents within the site, and money needed to fund the Integral Fast Reactor (Hardy). Taking this into account, the next best thing to recycling the waste was to completely destroy the waste on site. Researchers at The University of Texas at Austin proposed a system where the elemental components of the waste would be fused together immediately after the fission reactions occur. Power plants—referred to as nuclear fusion–fusion hybrids—would eliminate the majority of their radioactive waste. Mike Kotschenreuther, a senior researcher at this university, described this technology as “a way to use fusion to relatively inexpensively destroy the waste from nuclear fission” (Clippard). Just over 75 percent of the waste is destroyed with the original reactors and the remaining waste is put through the fusion–fusion hybrid, which destroys it almost completely. Through the two consecutive steps, 99 percent of the waste is destroyed so that only the 1 percent remains to be dealt with or stored, which makes the system incredibly efficient (Sandru). These alternative methods of dealing with the nuclear waste, most still in the beginning stages, need to be researched further in order to obtain optimal and safe results from nuclear power as a major energy source.

As fossil fuel becomes increasingly scarce, we must explore the possibilities currently at our fingertips. Whether we continue advancing the Integral Fast Reactor or take another look at the fusion–fusion hybrid reactor, our focus must shift towards nuclear power. While major prospects includes alternative energy sources, these ideas come with many differing opinions. Donald J. Dudziak, a professor at North Carolina State University, responded to the controversy over nuclear power by stating “spent fuel is not a waste, but rather a valuable energy resource for the future” (Editorial: Reduce, reuse, recycle — nuclear waste!). As Dudziak states, we need to work towards the future. We need to move beyond our current machines and technology to reach a point where we can produce energy without potentially compromising people’s health and the wellbeing of the environment.
We can learn from other nations’ actions by using reprocessing methods in conjunction with our fundamental nuclear power plants, which would, according to the Progressive Policy Institute, “make nuclear power a viable clean-energy option” (Dealing With Nuclear Waste). Because nuclear energy is an excellent alternative to fossil fuels, the technology must be advanced further through the support of the public. Making small changes, such as a slight increase in spending and furthering research on nuclear energy, has the potential to move us away from our dependencies on oil and ensure that future generations will have a reliable energy source.

Utilizing the resources at our fingertips should be one of our main priorities during this struggle to preserve the current level of energy consumption. The controversy centered on the use of renewable energy compared to alternative energy options has been an ever-present issue throughout the current age. If we neglect the options currently at our fingertips, we would be doing a disservice to the people and environment by exposing them to potentially harmful and inefficient alternatives. A nuclear power plant built along a fault line has the potential to create horrific consequences, but building a field of solar energy panels in the cloudy state of Washington would also be a bad decision due to lack of effectiveness. However, by combining existing forms of renewable energy sources, we will help alleviate the need for oil while other sources, such as nuclear power, are developed further. Taking advantage of multiple sources will be especially effective for the energy options that are better suited in specific areas. Fully utilizing the energy options at our disposal will supply the world with its necessary amount of energy.

Solutions Hidden Beneath Controversy and the Pressure of Depleting Resources

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The Almost Truth in Almost Its Own Light: Motivations and Strategies of Publication in Marie Mancini’s 1677 Memoirs

Microhistories

Addie Davis
Class of 2012 English, B.A.

The publication of The Truth in its Own Light: The Genuine Memoirs of M. Mancini, Constabless Colonna in 1677 marked a tremendous event in the history of publishing and an even more tremendous event in the history of women’s rights: it was the second memoir to be published by a woman, and the first to have been definitively written by one exclusively. The memoirs, which were written and released to the public only after a false account of the Constableless’ life was published a year earlier, were meant to serve as a purifier of her character; it was a bold move, and her goal was no easy feat. Her life had been scandalous for a long time: she won—if only temporarily—the heart of a king, married a Prince, and then, perhaps most shockingly, fled her husband and family to live the life of a marital refugee.

The oxymoronic decision to use publication as a way to prove chastity inherently created a series of obstacles for Mancini; in a world where chastity and femininity were associated with passivity and silence, using the act of speech to assert a socially acceptable character was a risky maneuver indeed. In my microhistory of this little-known historical figure, I explore the implications of her decision to implement a masculine art form—that of published and public writing—in order to save her reputation. I prove her femininity in the public sphere, Mancini needed to engage in dialogue with both her family to live the life of a marital refugee.

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wherever she could find some form of political protection, including at one point living in the same house—but different apartments—as her husband and his family.11

Scandal, of course, was inevitable; both her and Hortense’s names became essentially synonymous with infidelity. After the publication of a fake memoir that did little but confirm the more scandalous allegations against Marie’s character, she took matters into her own hands: in 1677, Marie published her own self-written memoirs under her own name. She was, however, not the first.

In 1675, Hortense Mancini, Marie’s younger sister by seven years, published her memoirs, marking the first time that a French woman published her life story under her own name and during her lifetime.12 Hortense, the favorite of the late Cardinal, published her memoirs while feeling from her husband. Though they marked a daring venture on the part of a woman, their assertion of female independence was diluted by three major factors: the dedication to Charles-Emmanuel II, her novel-like writing style, and the rumors that circulated concerning a potential male writer contributor who may have played the role of chief writer and editor. All three may well have been intentional; her memoirs, after all, were less meant to assert her right to an independent life as they were intended to prove in court that she had chosen that life not out of choice but out of desperation.

In the opening phrases of her memoirs, Hortense Mancini directly addresses Charles-Emmanuel II, sovereign duke of Savoy and one of her suitors before she married Armand-Charles de La Porte de La Meilleraye:

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Since the obligations I have toward you are such that I must spare no effort to show you my gratitude, I am quite willing to tell the story of my life as you request... you [are not] unaware of my natural reluctance to talk about my own affairs...13

The document, initially intended to help Hortense’s public image and so help her in her legal case against her husband, was a double-edged sword; it would eventually be used by the prosecution for the Duc de Mazarin as evidence of his right to seize and keep her against her will.14 Her emphasis, then, on submitting to her patron’s wishes—rather than acting under her own agency—is key; without her actions being dictated by a male figure, any hope of redeeming her own character is lost because the act of publication alone is enough to condemn her.

For both Hortense and Marie, endeavoring to use writing as both legal argument and public vindicator posed a series of incredible challenges. Women writers did exist before them, yes, but the motivations of their creative peaces were devotional or morally didactic; to assert oneself in the public sphere for personal reasons was a daring venture on the part of a woman, their assertion of female independence was diluted by three major fac-
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The document, initially intended to help Hortense’s public image and so help her in her legal case against her husband, was a double-edged sword; it would eventually be used by the prosecution for the Duc de Mazarin as evidence of his right to seize and keep her against her will.14 Her emphasis, then, on submitting to her patron’s wishes—rather than acting under her own agency—is key; without her actions being dictated by a male figure, any hope of redeeming her own character is lost because the act of publication alone is enough to condemn her.

For both Hortense and Marie, endeavoring to use writing as both legal argument and public vindicator posed a series of incredible challenges. Women writers did exist before them, yes, but the motivations of their creative peaces were devotional or morally didactic; to assert oneself in the public sphere for personal reasons was a daring venture on the part of a woman, their assertion of female independence was diluted by three major fac-
tors: the dedication to Charles-Emmanuel II, her novel-like writing style, and the rumors that circulated concerning a potential male writer contributor who may have played the role of chief writer and editor. All three may well have been intentional; her memoirs, after all, were less meant to assert her right to an independent life as they were intended to prove in court that she had chosen that life not out of choice but out of desperation.

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her husband depended on the approval of the king; displaying their private life for the public would be a rash move. Rather, she evoked just enough of their past to remind him without shaming him. (Of course, we know well enough now that even that maneuver was not enough to sway the king into giving her all the protection she wanted, but the intent is still there.) So though “every account of the love between Marie and Louis includes the famous scene of their parting on June 22, 1659,” Marie chooses to let the gossip work on its own; after all, why bother to do what has already been done?

Perhaps most confusing of all, though, are the omissions that Marie makes of facts that would seem to a modern audience to be extremely beneficial in her case against her husband. After her demand for a separazione di letto, newspapers wrote openly and often of a dramatic episode where her husband may have poisoned her; Marie makes no mention of this in her memoirs. Rather, she spends a large portion of her memoirs elaborating on how good a husband Colonna was before she refused him future sexual relations. As Patricia Francis Cholakian argues in her book, Women and the Politics of Self-Representation in Seventeenth-Century France, this may have well been another political maneuver; Marie was still in contact with her husband, and may have thought that by pacifying his aggressive actions within her narrative (and highlighting his more positive attributes) she could earn his trust and end his persecution. Yet again, she underestimated the obstacle before her; her husband was not to be placated so easily. Of course, discussing her husband’s behavior in such a way may have also been aimed at attracting a better level of sympathy from her audience as a whole, as well; vindictiveness—no matter how valid the cause—would hardly help her prove her femininity and chastity. By remaining mum selectively—or “politic,” as some scholars have termed it—Mancini attempted to navigate the intricate demands of both personal and public ties.

Marie’s memoirs were not only in dialogue with her contemporaries, both individual and collective; she was also engaged in a literary discussion with a literary history that had come before her. As Margaret L. King and Albert Rabil Janier argue in their introduction to the 2008 translation of Marie’s text, the Memoirs, which asserted—however passively—the right of a woman to the life she chooses—consciously or unconsciously entered her life story into a debate that had gone on for centuries: le Querelle, or “The Woman Question,” which aims to address three essential problems with the male-defined female ideal: “the problem of chastity, the problem of speech, and the problem of knowledge.” Chastity, the essential feminine virtue, has served as the primary barrier towards women’s rights for centuries; if it’s unchaste for a woman to speak for herself or to arm herself with knowledge, her lifelines are nonexistent, cut before she has a chance to need them.

As Rosalind Brown-Grant points out in her introduction to Christine de Pizan’s The Book of the City of Ladies, the essential first specimen of le Querelle, the male-dominated literary world has always tended to treat men as individual humans, but female characters as “representative of their sex” though their works were neither fiction nor traditional essay, this rule certainly seemed to apply for the Mancini sisters, as well. In the Due de Mazarin’s case against Hortense, for example, his lawyers claimed that her story would influence the morals of the French; the success of that argument depended on the court to realize that allowing her an independent existence would entitle all women to an independent existence, something they implied the morals of the French public could never survive. Conceivably, they could trust that a male jury would uphold a decision in favor of conservative understandings of the female role.

This ability to change social status quo was a double-edged sword, however, in that it allowed for a potential huge leap in feminist historical and political development. And, as Elizabeth C. Goldsmith points out in her essay on the two sisters’ publications, “women could convince their readers that their lives were not to be read as transgressions, nor were their memoirs to be viewed simply as confessions.” Were their behavior validated by legal convictions in their favor, their story could serve as a turning point in that it could define their stories not as socially deviant but as the behavior of martyrs and victims of social—or, more specifically, marital—oppression. As we’ve already seen, the final verdict of public opinion for both women was neither simple nor immediately decided; whether they liked it or not, the Mancini sisters had entered into debate not only with their husbands’ legal representatives, but with the institution of marriage itself, and in a time wherein the stability of that institution’s definition was far from definite. Both Marie and her sister were constantly maneuvering the system because different levels of power within the French system had varied levels of sympathy and understanding; though one court may have barred Marie from a province in France, appealing to a higher court or even the king himself was occasionally, though not always, a successful strategy. Not only marital law was in question here; even the changing collective understanding of courtly love was demonstrative of “social and sexual tensions besetting the knightly class at a specific historical juncture.” Many novelists of the 1670s—female and male alike—seemed hugely preoccupied with the newly relevant issue of marital law; it could be said that Marie’s and Hortense’s memoirs, which both incorporated elements of the novel, were reinterpretations, exaggerations, and modernizations of works of literature being written about women breaking out of their social parameters. The French legal system was, in short, itself undergoing a form of modernization; not all of its parts were transitioning with every other at the same speed or effectiveness. And though this did not necessarily mean a revolutionizing of the feminine role, it certainly signified the potential for future change that would be catalyzed by the social debates of the time.

It is, however, easy to get carried away with generalizations of the far-reaching political implications of Marie’s life and writings. On one hand, yes, it cannot be denied that Marie’s choices to assert herself as an independent woman in both love and life have altered the course of history—especially French history—to some extent. But on the other, despite the radicalism of her life and assertion of independence, it is crucial to recognize that she constantly described her choices in ways that attempted to conform to male expectations. The extent of her feminist behavior, then, is inherently limited; by appealing to the French courts in terms of chastity—by retelling her experiences so as to frame them within an appropriate and socially approved context—she confirms the suppressive cultural expectations of women during her lifetime even as she lives beyond them. The implications of her memoirs are hugely complex and even a tad contradictory when viewed from varying perspectives. Her life was in itself a radical thing; her decision to venture out on her own, to pursue her own love and life, certainly challenged typical social expectations, no matter how sexually progressive the French court was for its day. And, as previously mentioned, the act of publication itself was boldly masculine. But because her intentions were to mask her radical behavior as aligned with social policy, because both she and her sister attempted to manipulate through narrative their own life plots, her writings were simultaneously and irrevocably progressive and conservative.
End Notes


2: “When both sisters fled from Rome to France, the scandal was tremendous, and observers like Madame de Sevigne eventually began using their names as generic terms for women who ran away from their husbands.” Marie Mancini, The Truth in Its Own Light: The Genuine Memoirs of M. Mancini, Constabless of Colonna (1677), in Memoirs: Hortense Mancini and Marie Mancini, ed. and trans. Sarah Nelson, The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 37.


