Summerville Union High School

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**Ms. Diehl**

“***Live*** as if you were to die tomorrow.

***Learn*** as if you were to live forever.” Mahatma Gandhi

**Assignment**—Today we are going to review three stylistic analysis essays in class – one with me, and two on your own. We will look at one together under the document camera, and you will have a chance to annotate, edit, and grade on your own. Tonight, I would like you to print out your own essay and annotate, edit, and grade it using this format and attached rubric. Please think of the following:

1. Does the **topic sentence** answer the prompt? Think of the following formula:

Device Appeal Main Idea

\*A powerful way to write the topic sentence is to avoid the following type of statement:

*In order to let the audience know how he feels about the world, he uses asyndeton to show his tone.*

**Main idea**

***Instead, think of the following:***

*Hoping to convince people that being too prideful can have a negative effect on one’s loved ones, Hurst strategically uses detailed pictures of specific scenes, making his frustration towards the subject clear.*

**Device: Imagery**

**Element: Tone**

2. Then, look at the first CXT (Context). Does it let the reader know what is being discussed in this

particular part of the story before the textual evidence is presented? Is CXT present at all?

3. Analyze the first concrete detail (CD). Is there a lead-in? Is punctuation proper? How about

the MLA parenthetical citation? Does it follow the following format: **He writes, “It was in the clove of seasons” (Hurst 1).**

The Focus: CD#1

4. Analysis (CM)—the most critical part of the paragraph. Are the questions posed on the

handout answered? Think of the following: What is the device? Where in the piece is it used?

What does this mean? How does it reveal his attitude (tone)? How does it evoke an

emotional response (mood)? How does all this work together to help the reader

understand his main idea/thesis? What is his main idea/thesis?

5. Transition into the next Concrete Detail (CX #2). Use phrases like: Later on in the piece; As

he concludes his thoughts; Near the middle of the text; Further on in the story. Also, be

The Focus: CD#2

sure to let the reader know what he is talking about in this particular part of the text (brief

synopsis).

6. Introduce the second concrete detail (CD #2)

7. Analysis (CM #2)

8. Concluding Sentence: Tie all of this together—full circle.

**\*Important things to remember:**

* Avoid first or second person (I, me, us, we, you, our, etc.)
* Comma rules must be followed
* Is the syntax complex?
* MLA format must be followed
* Avoid contractions
* Punctuation is key
* Spelling

**\*Now, using the following rubric, assign this essay a grade and explain your rationale (no less than five sentences). Provide positive feedback and constructive feedback.**

Ideas/Thesis: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_/30 Feedback:

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_/20

Voice: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_/15

Word Choice: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_/15

Sentences: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_/10

Conventions: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_/10

TOTAL POINTS: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_/100

Essay 1:

“The Scarlet Ibis”: A Tale of Pride and Death

*Pride is an independent, me­oriented spirit. It makes people arrogant, rude and hard to get along with. When our heart is prideful, we mistreat people, looking down on them and* *thinking we deserve what we have.*

­Joyce Meyer

As Meyer relays her experiences and thoughts in this quote, she portrays her intensity to prove that pride is its own entity, much like James Hurst does in the “Scarlet Ibis.” Hurst shows that the narrator’s pride leads to the downfall of the main character, Doodle, by telling the reader how the first­person narrator lets his pride envelope him and push his brother ,Doodle, to the point of death. **To develop this complex tale of suspense and surprise, Hurst gives other beings human like affirmation, alludes to future events, and compares unlike objects to one another while he introduces the narrators internal fight with himself to ultimately teach the audience that pride can overwhelm people and drive them to do unimaginable things.**

During the several times that Hurst uses his creative way of giving nonliving objects a light of life, he brings forth the idea that pride is the culprit of human vulnerability to cruelty. In doing so, Hurst tells the audience how these objects can interfere with the characters decisions in their life. When Hurst tells the reader, “[One] should of already admitted defeat, but [his] pride wouldn’t let [him]” (4) it helps them understand how the essence of pride is forcing the narrator to push his little brother further. By putting this into the story, Hurst helps the reader understand that the first­person narrator is conflicted by the pride that drives him to train his brother. It conflicts him in such a way that, even though he knows that training his brother to be a normal boy can kill him, he proceeds with the task anyhow. When the narrator disregards the consequences of his actions, he immediately puts forth the chance for brother to be hurt or even killed in the process of his “program.” In doing so, there are several parts in the story (such as the quote stated) that allows the narrator possibilities of giving up the program and letting his brother be himself, but instead of doing this, he continues on telling the reader that pride will not allow him to stop pushing his brother to the limit, thus showing the reader the fight that he is having with his pride. While Hurst creates this melancholic scene, he paints a picture of an inanimate object forcing a human being to trap himself in such a state of mind that only allows him to push his brother to the fullest extent.

Along with this, Hurst also throws in twists of suspense that tells the reader more about the narrator’s hideous veil of pride that consumes him. When Hurst does this, he leaves the audience with an ominous presence and a sensation that a climax or disheartening event in the story is going to take place later in the story. The author proclaims, “[They] never spoke (What are the words that can solder cracked pride?), but [one] knew [Doodle] was watching [him], watching for a sign of mercy” (6). Hurst states that Doodle was searching the narrator’s body language for a sign of mercy because he tries to emphasize the strength that pride has over the narrator and how it affects his fight to want to have a “normal” brother. When the author tells the audience that “[They] never spoke” it leads to the readers suspicion that they never will speak, immediately making the reader assume that either Doodle or the narrator will die. This reaction from the reader is exactly what Hurst wanted when he portrays his skill of alluding to future events, thereby setting up the scenario for the reader. While the author tells more of how pride is the suspect of evil inside the narrator, he hints to the climax of the story before it is revealed.

Last but not least, Hurst’s comparison of object to object sets the story up for the reader to fully comprehend and grasp the author’s full intent. While the quote fully illustrates the idea of the whole story, the author puts a spin on it by comparing his message to the audience to another object. Hurst states, “[One] did not know then that pride is a wonderful, terrible thing, a seed that bears two vines, life and death” (3). Within the excerpt, the narrator is finally realizing how his pride led to the consequences of his brothers death and the guilt that came with those consequences. Again, Hurst identifies the narrator’s battle with himself and his brother. Hurst tells of the narrator’s view on pride as a seed that can grow into two things, either life or death, and in the narrator’s case, death. All in all, the author is telling the reader that pride can take you on two paths, depending on how you use it, it can either be wondrous or horrible. The author uses concepts such as comparing objects to each other to get his ultimate lesson across to the reader.

In conclusion, to develop this serene, graceful story, James Hurst has: compared opposite objects to one another, alluded to future events, and given inanimate objects living attributes to help the reader fully understand the narrator’s internal war, and Hurst’s goal to tell people that pride is a dangerous thing that can consume people. As Joyce Meyer tells to the world, pride has its own mind and plans, do not fall victim to pride for it can be a blessing and/or a curse. So, how are you going to control the pride in your life?

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Ideas/Thesis: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_/30 Feedback:

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_/20

Voice: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_/15

Word Choice: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_/15

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Essay 2:

Prideful Sins

*It was pride that changed angels into devils; it is humility that makes men as angels.*

­Saint Augustine

Saint Augustine put this Quote into words to elaborate on the fact that pride can be a terrible thing and will overcome the strongest of men. In the story “The Scarlet Ibis” by James Hurst, pride overpowers a young boy and leads to the death of his poor cripple younger brother “Doodle”. The narrator of the story does not realize the error in his ways until his brother is truly gone. **Hurst uses many different devices throughout the story, but he uses irony, motif, and syntax to shape the overall element of conflict; he uses this element to show the idea that pride can take control and drive anyone to anything.**

All throughout the entire story Hurst uses quick, unnoticed ideas of irony, and readers do not really catch them until they analyze the story to the bone. These statements are only seen as writing in the story but no one notices that they are much more than that. In the story the narrator claims, “Doodle and [one] prodding each other and giggling, went back to the house, knowing everything would be alright”(4) and does not realize that everything is not going to be alright. The boys in the story are going through their day not knowing what the reader is going to find out as they read further into the story. in the story there are quotes such as the one mentioned all over the story and they add so much more to the story; they make the reader anxious and full of suspense. These statements create conflict, not only in the story, but in the minds of the readers as well. The story really would not be as worrisome and tragic without these short statements. The story would be missing the feeling and it would not allude to the thought of conflict.

Hurst also uses motif to help shape the overall main ideas of pride and conflict throughout the events of the story. All over the story, Hurst refers back to this wonderful creature, the scarlet ibis, and puts the character in the position of the bird. The concluding sentence of the text wraps up the entire story with the motif, “[one] lays there crying, sheltering [one’s] scarlet ibis from the heresy rain”. The fact that Hurst comes out and states that Doodle is being referred to as the scarlet ibis is truly sad yet worrisome because the reader comes to the epiphany that Doodle is now dead and it is because of the overwhelming pride of the narrator. The motif throughout the story is adding to the idea of conflict by putting the narrator in a situation that saddens him and questions him as a person. The narrator is not content with his brother until he realizes that his idea of his brother is far from reality. Motifs are not just used to get an idea across; they are used for shaping elements and ideas as well.

The last thing used to help create this element of conflict is syntax; syntax can make a story great or it can ruin it, and in Hurst’s case, it is used to truly intensify the story. This entire story is chocked full of greatly detailed sentences that go into beautiful elaboration, but every once in a while hurst will just write a short and choppy sentence that creates a deep thought in a reader’s head. Surrounded by wonderful, long sentences, the sentence, “For the first time he became one of us” is used to get a short point of progressing across. Sentences like these are not usually used to elaborate on something like conflict but sometimes this sort of syntax is stronger than a long complicated point. The family of the story is making statements like this one and they do not realize that the closer they got to Doodle, the harder the hit of his death will be. Conflict that is concerning situations such as this one are tough on those in the story and the readers that are also getting attached to those in the story. Syntax is vital in this story because the short sentences that put a point across are putting thoughts and comments into the statements and ideas that could totally change the mind of a reader.

In all stories are lines of ideas and the one in “The Scarlet Ibis” are three devices­ irony, motif and syntax­ and these all shape the one idea of conflict in the story; but finally these things all paint the overall picture of the main idea that pride can overcome any one. Conflict puts pride into its place by creating this mood of pride overcoming the narrator and creating this conflict throughout the story. Just to think, pride overcomes and overpowers without warning and it takes someone strong to put it to shame.

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ESSAY 3:

Consequences of “Lethal Weapons”

A double­edged sword is something that has both positive results as well as negative ones. Pride is a prime example of a double­edged sword. People typically understand pride as the emotion one feels when satisfied with one’s own doing and they forget that it can also be a selfish feeling that drives oneself to do specific things in order to achieve a “better” self­image. It is often something people experience and act on when ashamed, or even jealous. In James Hurst’s short story, “The Scarlet Ibis”, the beautiful and the ugly brought forth from pride is revealed in a new light. The story, in short, is about an unnamed narrator who has a disabled little brother who goes by the name of Doodle. The narrator is ashamed of Doodle, since he is incapable of completing tasks an “average” boy would be able to carry out, and demonstrates his terrible pride as they go about a program to enlighten and strengthen Doodle with strenuous activities. **Hurst phrases ideas eloquently, applies living qualities to non­living things, and utilizes the literal meanings of words in order to create the main argument of the story, which ultimately helps teach the reader that pride is a double­edged sword, there can can be both positive and negative consequences**.

Hurst boldly uses his arrangement of words within his sentences to draw emphasis on a specific detail. In the beginning of the story, the narrator is just starting to experience feelings of shame and want, which trigger pride. Considering, “[Nameless narrator] wanted a brother” (1), the reader can tell that, because of the short and straight­forward statement, the narrator is already experiencing a sense of shame due to his disabled sibling, and simply wants nothing more than a typical boy as his brother. The shame causes the narrator to act in order to, for lack of a better word, “fix” Doodle. The action the narrator takesis designed to help Doodle become as normal as possible. Now, one may think that this is a rather thoughtful thing to do for his helpless brother, but since it is driven by shame, it is an incredibly selfish thing to do. The narrator is only going to help Doodle out in order to receive recognition for his “selfless” acts of compassion. As the program begins to work, the narrator is armed with his very own double­edged sword, metaphorically of course, and is ready to cause unexpected destruction, pain, and sorrow. All of these components help develop the main argument of the story by allowing the reader into the mind of the narrator as he pinpoints the problem and finds a resolution with sword in hand.

The application of human qualities to inanimate objects or words is executed by Hurst flawlessly in order to establish the antagonism further. For example, “[The narrator’s parents] did not know that [one] did it for [oneself], that pride, whose slave [one] was, spoke to [oneself] louder than all voices, and that Doodle walked only because [one] was ashamed of having a crippled brother” (3). The fact that Hurst gave human qualities to pride demonstrates how influential and devastating it can become. Pride is one the biggest downfalls in a person’s life, for it prevents one from achieving contentment while it instead leads to a great deal of regret. This is one of the negative connotations of pride. On the other hand, Hurst conveys to the reader that even though the story is built on indoctrinating one about the negative connotations of pride and consequences that come along with it, that there is also the other edge of the double­edged sword, or the positive connotations and results. The narrator does indeed have a selfish goal in mind, but it results in Doodle gaining the ability to walk, which gives the family a sense of hope, a positive outcome.

In literature, words with more meaningful literal definitions are often overlooked. For instance, “For a long time, it seemed forever, [one] lay there crying, sheltering [one’s] fallen scarlet ibis from the heresy of rain” (6). Heresy has the dictionary definition of mockery. Hurst purposefully uses mockery to describe the rain because it is pouring down on the narrator and the dead body of Doodle in a mocking fashion, which conveys to the reader that finally, the ultimate demise of him is the negative result of the narrator’s pride. This final component of the story also helps to conclude the argument in that the goal was not met, but failure has occurred, thus resulting in an abrupt, dissatisfying ending. Pride is the culprit in all of the pandemonium, of course. The double­edged sword that the narrator took wield of overpowered his feeble mind and caused great destruction. In this case, the destruction is of Doodle, the victim of his older brother’s pride. Once again, this demonstrates the negative connotations of pride and what it can result in when all is said and done.

Hurst uses phrases cleverly, gives human­like qualities to basic words, and utilizes the actual meaning of words in order to develop the dispute of the story, which enlightens the reader about how the double­edged sword of pride will have its negative and positive results. Once again, a double­edged sword is something that has both positive and negative consequences, which pride is a prime example of. This example fits “The Scarlet Ibis” perfectly in that there are indeed both good and bad and that come out of the entire situation, even though a majority of what the reader gathers is negative. In the long run, Hurst wants the reader to take that lesson from the story and apply it to everyday life. Take pride in what one does, but allow it to be for morally right reasons. Don’t allow oneself to only take action only to be recognized for it, for there is no true beauty in selfish actions, but merit in humility.

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Voice: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_/15

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**Assignment**—Now, please print out a hard copy of your own essay and go through the same process. Annotate it, pointing out every specific element necessary to writing a cohesive, strong essay. Look specifically at the analysis. Did you answer the necessary questions to write rich, thought-provoking ideas? Then, once you annotate it, please assign it a grade. Attach this page to the FRONT of your essay please and be sure to write at least 10 sentences of feedback for this particular assignment. In order to become a great writer, you have to know what you do well and what you need to focus on for the next composition.

**GRADING RUBRIC: FEEDBACK:**

Ideas/Thesis: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_/30

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_/20

Voice: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_/15

Word Choice: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_/15

Sentences: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_/10

Conventions: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_/10

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