

Rania Mohamed

ENG1121 English Composition 2, FA2020 OL70

English

Final Reflection

I have learned a lot about myself as a writer over the course of this semester. I have really been able to broaden my essay structure and ways of thinking with this English class. This was my second college writing course and when writing, it gave me much more independence because I felt constrained in high school and it was not very necessary to write what we were writing.

I would write essays in high school just to meet the prescribed word or page count and I still feel like this to a degree, but I was really able to articulate my ideas in this course and really explore the limits of my writing skills for the first time.

For me the most noticeable change in this course was my grammar. Before, I wasn't aware of the comma laws. It was surprising to see where to put commas and the positions that I normally overlook. The Cyber lessons we did on commas in and out of class have significantly improved my grammar. Able to look back at all of my evaluated essays, how many commas I have actually skipped is insane.

I believe my work from the beginning on this class has definitely improved throughout the class.

I am not saying my writing is perfect but it is a lot better.

My least favorite assignment was unit 2 Annotated Bibliography because it was my lowest grade and i didn't have as much of a good time writing it as I did on my unit 1 assignment.

In this course the most important concept I learned was how to perform a needs assessment and know which form of evaluation to use and why. The difference between a present outcome and a desired outcome is found in a needs assessment.

Throughout the changes through the genres, I was able to focus on the topic more and learned to pick up details from each genre. As well as learning more about the topic.

My decisions towards my assignment in unit 3 actually took me some time to make. There were a lot of ways I could've designed my unit 3 assignment.

Before, in my writing, I used a lot of run-on sentences and had grammar mistakes. But now I believe I am able to control run on sentences and my grammar issues have improved drastically.

In the past, when I reviewed my assignment I had a lot of issues that I wish I was able to fix. But now, reviewing my assignments I see there were minor issues than before. So, I am glad to see that I have improved.

Yes, there was, one of my classmates stated I should elaborate more on details in my assignment.

Research indicates that online learning has been shown to improve data retention and take less time, suggesting the changes caused by coronavirus could be here to stay. In my opinion, I believe that it started off hard but after, I got used to it so it wasn't a struggle the whole time.

The most challenging aspect of this course this semester was being able to get comfortable with the open lab website. In the beginning I failed in using this website, for example I was submitting my work in another class instead of OL70. But as soon as I got on a zoom session with the professor, everything was clear.

Final Portfolio

In this semester I never expected to learn more than what my classes had to offer. Though I embrace and concentrate more on homework, there are still only so many hours a day I can do. Although this semester I wanted to make more money, it was worth it to stop working so hard so that I could really concentrate on this semester. I was never ever one to use a calendar, ever. I always relied on a syllabus, which caused me to miss deadlines, forget homework, and once I even got a surprise test because it was not listed by the professor in class. I wanted to use a planner this semester to write down all my homework due dates as well as dates or exams.

Rania Mohamed
Professor Penner
English 1121 OL70 25 September 2020
Discourse Community

Rania:

I would like to begin by giving thanks to all those who made this possible for me. Thank you to the House of Representatives and the individuals who allowed me to come and speak here today. Recently, I witnessed an act of discrimination that reminded me of an event from my childhood years. I was reminded of the time I was walking hand-in-hand with my mother, with her beautiful silk hijab wrapped so neatly on her head. We were minding our business, until a man started walking after us screaming at my mother. Various slurs left his mouth and he angrily repeated to my mother that, "This is America" and that she "couldn't wear that here." My mother barely paid him mind and the two of us kept walking, but that moment is one I don't think I'll ever forget.

Islamophobia and xenophobia is now common in America. Since the Al-Qaeda attack on the Twin Towers on September 11, this country has turned its back on its Muslim and minority communities. Many people felt unsafe due to the rampant rise in racist, islamophobic and xenophobic sentiments. Hate crimes especially have been at a high. In 2018, the FBI reported an increase in these types of crimes for the third year in a row. Hate crimes rose by 17% in the year 2017. Most of these crimes are motivated by personal biases against an individual's race, religion or ancestry. Inaccurate and negative media portrayal feeds into this because the public is led to believe that Muslims are violent extremists. Many individuals feed into this negativity, one such individual being our own president. President Trump has exacerbated the anti-Muslim sentiment since entering the White House upon multiple occasions. From calling Muslims "sick people" to saying that, "Islam hates us. There's something there that — there's a tremendous hatred there. There's tremendous hatred," Trump has definitely not been helping the false narrative being played out in the media.

I'd like to make it clear that while President's Trump and other hateful words are not particularly hurtful to me despite being a young Muslim woman here in America, they do become tiresome. It gets tiring having to listen to the same "fake news" or information as our president would say himself. I have been a part of the Muslim community here and in my motherland of Egypt, for the entirety of my life. In no place have I ever seen a "sick person" nor have I seen the hate that is so adamantly associated with my religion. Instead, I see kind-hearted folk who go out of their way for their people and communities. I see individuals who greet each other with the phrase, "Peace and blessings be upon you." The Muslims that live amongst us are not the extremists that all of America both fears and hates.

As I have touched upon so briefly earlier, hate towards the Muslim community is not a new problem. It has been ongoing since 2001, maybe even earlier. Anti-immigrant sentiment has always plagued this country and we can see this throughout history. This problem, this issue can be attributed to a cultural problem here in the United States. There is a culture that excuses violence and hostility towards immigrants and people who are not white Christian males. Why is this? Because there is an entire structure of power that supports this behavior and sentiment. Muslim individuals are the target of 18.7% of religiously motivated hate crimes. While this

percentage may seem low, keep in mind that there are currently 3.45 million Muslims living in the United States. Nothing is being done to help these individuals. I am here today to bring attention to these events and advocate for those who are not in positions of privilege to speak for themselves.

One unfortunate example of a crime against Muslims and humanity was the 2015 Chapel Hill shooting which resulted in the deaths of Deah Shaddy Barakat, Yusor Mohammad Abu-Salha, and Razan Mohammad Abu-Salha. These young Muslim individuals were killed execution style in their own home. While some may have forgotten of this event, I have not. After the Chapel Hill shootings, many non-profit organizations advocated for their cause and spoke up against the injustices that occurred. One such organization is CAIR, the Council on American-Islamic Relations. CAIR volunteers include lawyers, businesspeople, professors, doctors, teachers, engineers, and entrepreneurs. These individuals vow to protect and represent Muslims in America and “regularly participate in interfaith dialogue and are part of civic advocacy and human rights coalitions.” At the time of the Chapel Hill shootings, CAIR pushed for the law enforcement to seek motive in the taking of these innocent lives. Overall, the organization, along with many others, tries its best to combat the stereotypes about Muslims and shed a positive light.

I strive to do the same. Once again, thank you for your time.

Rania Mohamed
Professor Penner
English 1121 OL70 21 October 2020
Annotated Bibliography

How does the collective presence of different etiological factors manifest into the presentation of both conduct and oppositional defiant antisocial disorders in the behavior of youth?

Ironically, there is something so fascinating about criminals and psychopaths. Their crimes and mannerism can differ so greatly from normal societal behavior. At other times, however, these criminals seem completely normal. To the outside world, they are just as average as the next person. The question posed above is of interest to me because criminals are prone to having antisocial behavior disorders, the most common being conduct disorder and oppositional defiant disorder. These behaviors can appear in youth or adolescence. I do not believe that any individual is inherently bad or evil; for this reason, it is important to examine different factors that contribute to youth displaying antisocial behavior. I expect the research to show a variety of risk factors that contribute to the onset of criminal behavior. Amongst these factors I would say are genetics and the surrounding environment. Genetic predispositions to violence can prompt individuals to act in certain ways. Additionally, a harsh parenting style or impoverished low-income surrounding can aggravate conditions like conduct disorder (CD) or oppositional defiant disorder (ODD). Symptoms of each disorder are as follow:

- Conduct Disorder (CD): aggressive behavior, cruelty to both humans and animals, destructive and deceitful behaviors, difficulty following rules and respecting others.

- Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD): anger, irritability, active defiance, issues with authority.

Barnes, J. C., & Jacobs, B. A. (2013). Genetic risk for violent behavior and environmental exposure to disadvantage and violent crime: The case for gene–environment interaction. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 28(1), 92-120.

- This study examined the ways in which one’s surrounding environment affects their behavior later on in life. The paper touches upon the plasticity theory, which states that individuals with risk alleles are easily influenced by their environment, whether it is for better or for worse. Someone, especially a teenager or adolescent, with genetic risk for violence will be more likely to engage in antisocial behavior when placed in a violent environment. Thus, using this research it is clear that youth in low-income or impoverished areas will partake in violence when coming into direct contact with such. Professor J. C. Barnes is an American criminologist who studies the biosocial aspects of criminology. I believe this source to be credible and useful in explaining and showing that violent surroundings can breed violence. Such a factor can present itself as CD or ODD. These antisocial disorders are characterized by aggressiveness and cruelty.

- “Genetic risk had a greater influence on violent behavior when the individual was also exposed to neighborhood disadvantage or when the individual was exposed to higher violent crime rates.”

Gardener, A. M., Waller, R., Shaw, D. S., Forbes, E. E., Hariri, A. R., & Hyde, L. W. (2017).

The long reach of early adversity: Parenting, stress, and neural pathways to antisocial behavior in adulthood. *Biological Psychiatry: Cognitive Neuroscience and Neuroimaging*, 2(7), 582-590.

- This study examines the effects of parenting on the development of the brain in youths. Parents who are harsh and abusive in their approach with their children will cause the underdevelopment of the amygdala, the part of the brain that is responsible for emotion. The amygdala is sensitive to stress, and stress from cold parental responses will lead it to not maturing fully. This leads to antisocial behaviors because the youth will not respond to fear. This lack of response to fear will make it unlikely for the adolescent or child to stop their aggressiveness. This source accounts for the biological aspect of the cause of antisocial disorders.

- “Harsher parenting and greater neighborhood deprivation in toddlerhood predicted clinically-significant symptoms of AB via less amygdala reactivity to fearful facial expressions and this pathway was moderated by genetic variation in CRHR1.”

Glass, Ira, host. “Bad Baby.” *This American Life*, WBEZ Chicago, 28 March. 2014.
<https://www.thisamericanlife.org/521/bad-baby>

- This podcast episode, hosted by American radio personality Ira Glass, interviews a mother whose children exhibit onset antisocial behavior. These children seem to have psychopathic tendencies and do not feel remorseful for their actions. The episode of this podcast details experiences that these mothers have with the kids. One mother, named Cheryl, discusses her son’s actions and the ways in which he is aggressive and unremorseful to both her and his siblings. This boy tries to drown his younger brother and he purposely breaks his mother’s nose. While the podcast is not rich in qualitative data, like the studies, it exemplifies both disorders that my question examines.

- “One fifth of highly psychopathic teenagers continued to be highly psychopathic once they grew into adulthood.”

- “There's a relatively new classification for children who don't have remorse and don't feel empathy for others. It's CU, short for callous unemotional traits.”

The research above shows that etiological factors can explain antisocial disorders in youths. These disorders then develop as the individuals grow older. It is clear that people and external environments can make individuals act on aggressive tendencies they are already predisposed to. The sources were especially helpful, but slightly difficult to read. The medical jargon used made it so that I had to review the material multiple times to be sure of the conclusions the studies had come to. I agree with these texts because I think that people are born as clean slates. They are not born “bad.” Instead, life, genetics, and just surroundings in general.

Rania Mohamed
Professor Penner
English 1121 OL70
18 November 2020

Multimodel Repurposing Assignment - Good or Inherently Evil?

Rania: I would be lying if I stated that I am the first person to pose the question, are humans born good or evil? The question has been raised since the 15th century, with people like philosopher John Locke arguing that people are born a tabula rasa or clean slate. While I do agree with this, there are so many examples of bad children that do have an individual questioning this.

In this first episode of “Good or Inherently Evil?” I kick off my podcast with an interview conducted with a family friend of mine. In order to preserve her anonymity, we will be calling her “Jane.” Jane’s oldest son, who is now almost 6 years old, began acting different once his younger sister was born. What was initially thought to be jealousy, might actually be something else.

Rania: Jane began by recounting that her son was normal for the first four years of his life. Both she and her husband doted on him, and he was the most adorable little child. When his sister was born at the age of four, however, everyone started to notice slight changes in him.

Jane: He became slightly more hostile. In the beginning, he just wouldn’t want to interact with his sister. When we brought him into the hospital room after my delivery, he got upset and refused to kiss her or even come close to her. My husband and I, along with the people in my family, laughed this off thinking that this would be very short-lived.

Rania: Jane soon realizes that she was wrong and her son’s behavior was not short-lived after all.

Jane: One of the most terrifying moments for me as a mother was when he threw his sister at me. We live in a one bed-room apartment in Flatbush, Brooklyn, and since the apartment is so small, our kitchen and living room are connected. I left both my children in the living room to watch TV as I washed the dishes. Before I finish my chore, I hear my newborn start to cry a little. I thought to myself, “I’ll wash these last dishes quickly and go to her.”

Jane: My son didn’t give me the chance to do this. Before I could go over to both my children, I heard him come up behind me and tell me, “Tell her to shut up.” Glancing over my shoulder, my heart drops completely because I see him carrying his sister like a rag doll and then he kind of thrusts her in my direction for me to hold.

Rania: Did you think he would hurt her?

Jane: I’m not really sure what I was thinking. It took me a while to process what had happened. For months, my husband and I just brushed off his actions and said that it was jealousy, but then his aggressiveness began to worry me.

Rania: As Jane’s children grew older, her son’s behavior simply worsened. The slight escalation became worrying and there were points where she seemed scared of her own child.

Jane: There was another instance where he pushed his sister off her scooter at the park. I know that doesn’t seem like anything, but it was the way in which he did it. He pushed her off aggressively and then took the scooter and rode away from her. She ended up busting her lip, but it’s almost like he didn’t care. Even when my husband yelled at him and gave him a time-out, nothing seemed to make a difference. He sat in the time-out corner so relaxed.

Jane: Another concerning moment was when he threatened a family friend who we left to babysit. He told her that “he had weapons and knives to kill her with.” Once she told me this, I couldn’t help but feel slightly off. I don’t know what made me do this, but I checked our kitchen drawer and found a couple of knives missing.

Rania: Where did you find them?

Jane: I found them in our room underneath his bed. This was kind of a turning point for me because I felt like I wasn’t raising a regular human being. I don’t know -- I felt like my child was possessed or something. Despite yelling and questioning him, he didn’t say a word. He just sat expressionless as my husband and I tried to reprimand him for what he was doing.

Rania: While it may seem like Jane is raising a demonic child, I think now is a good time to consider that her son might actually have antisocial behavioral disorders, conduct and oppositional defiant disorder in particular. Let’s revisit the symptoms of both.

Rania: Conduct Disorder or CD is characterized by aggressive behavior, cruelty to both humans and animals, destructive and deceitful, and difficulty following rules and respecting others. Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) is similar in that it presents itself as anger, irritability, and active defiance.

Rania: From the symptoms alone, it is clear that Jane’s son exhibits many of these behaviors -- his anger and violence towards his sister, his violent threats towards his babysitter and even his callous unemotional behavior towards his family in general. While yes, it is easy to simply write off his behavior to him being an evil child, it seems to me that this child has onset symptoms of these behavioral disorders. Even though some children and adolescents are genetically predisposed to certain antisocial disorders, it is important to keep in mind that the collectiveness of some risk factors can aggravate the presence of such disorders.

Rania: What can you tell me about the environment that your family lives in?

Jane: As in home environment or as in surrounding geographical environment?

Rania: Both.

Jane: Well, I think we do have a good home environment. Like I said before, we doted on our son a lot before his sister was born especially since he was our only child. We live in a small basement apartment in Flatbush, Brooklyn. I don’t think we live in a bad area, but other people might disagree. What I can tell you in terms of stats and demographic is that there is a minority populated area, with big African Americans and Latino communities. The schools in our area and zip code, however, do not perform at grade level, which I don’t think is necessarily the fault of the school and faculty. Schools try their best to work with the funds and resources that are allocated to them, which is not much.

Rania: Two etiological factors that can aggravate antisocial behavior are environment and human interactions, specifically parental interactions. The plasticity theory states that individuals with risk alleles are easily influenced by their environment, whether it is for better or for worse. Someone, especially a child or adolescent, with genetic risk for violence will be more likely to engage in antisocial behavior when placed in a bad environment (Barnes et al). Direct contact with violence, whether it is crime or maybe even aggressive behavior from other students in the

classroom, could trigger such behavior in the child as well. Considering the neighborhood that Jane and her family live in, this is a possible risk factor for her son. Harsh parenting is also something that could be aggravating his behaviors. Although both Jane and her husband love their son, there is no denying that their behavior towards him has changed since his outbursts and aggressive tendencies. The manner in which the two reprimand this child, i.e. yelling, can be a further cause of aggravation in the child. A study has shown that parents who are harsh in their approach with their children can cause the underdevelopment of the amygdala, the part of the brain that is responsible for emotion. The amygdala is sensitive to stress, and stress from cold parental responses will lead it to not maturing fully. This leads to antisocial behaviors because the youth will not respond to fear (Gardener et al). In the case of Jane's son, we see that the possible harshness in their responses to his behavior could further be exasperating his callousness. It seems that he is already not responding to punishment and fear, seeing as time-outs do not faze him in the slightest.

Rania: I know some people might be hearing this and thinking, who cares? I, for one, think that it's important to learn and consider things like this. Some people might not be aware that such disorders exist and can affect children in the way that they do. In recognizing this and acknowledging this as a possibility, there might still be hope for the child. Jane's son might seem bad, but consider that for the first four years of his life he was fine. He was a good child. I'm going to end off with reiterating John Locke's theory of tabula rasa. We are all born as clean moral slates. Some of us might just be predisposed to things that others aren't. On that note, thank you for listening in on the first episode of "Good or Inherently Evil?" Until next time.