

The Gold Star Journal

2010



*Dedication to
Jonathan Taylor*



Marine Corps Lance Corporal Jonathan Andrew Taylor was killed in Iraq on Tuesday, December 1, 2009 patrolling as an infantryman by an improvised explosive device. It was his second deployment to the Middle East. He attended the Citadel from August 2005 to May 2006, after which he enlisted in the Marine Corps.

He was assigned to 2nd Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment, II Expeditionary Force at Camp Lejeune, NC.

Born in Jacksonville, Florida, he began his military career in the Naval Sea Cadets Corps when he was just 13. When he went to high school, he was a member of the Army junior ROTC program. After graduating from Wolfson Senior High School in 2005, he was accepted to the Citadel. In his time here at the Citadel, he was a member of Mike Company and was a History major.

The Editors of the 2010 Gold Star Journal would like to dedicate this year's journal to Jonathan Taylor, in honor of the ultimate sacrifice he gave to protect the country he loved. We dedicate this journal not only to his memory, but also the memory of all those who have given their lives for our freedom during the course of this war on terror. From the bottom of our hearts we thank you.

Sincerely,

The Editors of The Gold Star Journal

About the Staff



Trey Williams

Trey is a senior biology major from Charleston, SC. He plans on attending Medical School after he graduates this year from the Citadel. He has received Dean's List seven times and Gold Stars six times. He is President of BioCid, Secretary of the Pre-Health Society and is a 2010 Summerall Guard. Trey is going to stay in Charleston and go to MUSC after he gets married this December.



Thomas Sullivan

Thomas is a senior biology major from Anderson, SC. He is the Alpha Company Commander. He is a Citadel Scholar and recipient of the Palmetto Fellow's Scholarship. He spent a semester studying abroad at the University of Otago in New Zealand. Thomas is the 2010 Summerall Guard Front Guide and serves as a 2010 Honor Representative for Bravo Company. Following graduation, Thomas hopes to pursue a Combat Rescue Officer slot in the USAF.



Taylor Gilliam

Taylor is a junior business major from West Columbia, South Carolina. A cadet in Palmetto Battery, he is also earning a minor in Criminal Justice. Taylor has a full academic scholarship, and he is a member of the Citadel Honor's Program. He has received Dean's List every semester as a cadet, recently earning Gold Stars as well. Last semester he completed an internship with the Medal of Honor Foundation.



Mark Shaw

Mark is a Golf Company Sophomore from Allen, Texas. He is a Civil Engineering major at The Citadel and has obtained Presidents List, Commandants List, Gold Stars, and Deans List. He is an active member of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) and intends to pursue an Engineering Career with the U.S. Navy upon graduation from The Citadel.



Dr. Suzanne T. Mabrouk

Dr. Mabrouk has been teaching at The Citadel since 1993. She earned her A.B. in Chemistry with a minor in Mathematics in 1986 at Wheaton College, Norton, MA and her Ph.D. in Organic Chemistry in 1994 at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA. Her favorite Citadel activities include advising the editors of The Gold Star Journal and teaching organic chemistry. She enjoys working with wood on the lathe and scroll saw, making personal care products, and cooking.

A Letter From the Editors

We, the editors, welcome you to the 2010 edition of The Gold Star Journal. Established by Dr. Suzanne Mabrouk in 1996, this 14th year of The Gold Star Journal will showcase the exceptional nonfiction works of cadets at The Citadel. Our duty is to display The Citadel's unrivaled academia, which is presented within these high quality essays.

In order to represent the diverse academic environment at The Citadel, The Gold Star Journal selects works based on a wide variety of topics stemming from several academic fields of study. We open the journal with a paper recounting the innovation of General George Kenny in Atwood Boyd's A Down and Dirty Air Campaign. We are then presented with a paper describing the effect that morale has on troops in Brice Mann's essay entitled Morale. Next, the concept and importance of globalization is explained in Abraham Raymond's concise paper Benefits of Globalization. Following that, the history of Salvatore Ralph Trippi is presented in Joseph Trippi's My War Hero. After that, Noah Koubenec describes the influence that the poem Pearl had on J.R.R. Tolkien in The Precious And The Pearl. The life of a war hero, Edgar Johnson, is then explored in a personalized essay provided by George Martin entitled The Story of Edgar Johnson. Finally, Marttin Periola provides us with a comparative analysis of living a simple life in Thoreau's Simplicity.

The 2010 edition of The Gold Star Journal would not be possible without the constant support of several individuals and organizations across campus. We thank Dr. Suzanne Mabrouk for her guidance and unwavering dedication to The Gold Star Journal and its editors. We also thank The Citadel Foundation for providing the necessary funds, Cadet Trey Williams for his spectacular photograph that graces our cover, and Mr. Kevin Metzger for his technical support. Finally, we thank the authors of the featured papers, whose hard work and dedication to academics exemplify the true purpose of this publication, to showcase the excellence in academic works generated at this institution.

Mark Gordon Shaw

Taylor Davis Gilliam

Thomas James Sullivan III

Charles Jerry Williams III

Table of Contents

A War of Morale <i>by Brice L. Mann</i>	6
Benefits of Globalization <i>by Abraham J. Raymond</i>	10
My War Hero <i>by Joseph A. Trippi</i>	12
The Precious and the Pearl <i>by Noah J. Koubenec</i>	16
The Story of Edgar Johnson <i>by George H. Martin III</i>	23
Thoreau's Simplicity <i>by Martin E. Periola</i>	28

A WAR OF MORALE

Brice L. Mann



Brice Mann is a senior History major from Navarre, Florida. He is one of the F-Troop Honor Representative and Athletic Officer. After the Citadel he plans to attend the University of South Carolina where he would be

getting his Masters of Art and Teaching in Social Studies and become a high school History teacher. He has received the Dean's List Award twice.

Abstract

The Russo-Japanese War was a David and Goliath story in which the smaller country was able to prevail over the heavily favored bigger one. The Japanese did not win because of a new weapon or an amazing wartime leader, but because of their undying devotion to country and unwavering morale. Those Japanese soldiers lived for their country, and gave their all to grasp honor for themselves and their families. This is something the Russians did not understand, and as a result, they were therefore unable to win a war that they expected to win.

Morale has been a key factor in all major battles since the beginning of time. Whichever side fights the hardest with earnest determination and utter devotion to the cause usually ends up on top. This same principal of linking strong morale and victory applies to the Russo-Japanese War of 1903-1905. Even when outnumbered or outgunned, the Japanese prevailed over the better trained and more "elite" Russian army. One does not have to look any further than the intense, patriotic spirit of the Japanese army to see why they defeated the heavily favored Russians in this war. Morale levels can make an army either extremely effective or exceedingly doomed from the beginning. The reason the Japanese were able to win the Russo-Japanese War was because of their intense sense of patriotism and selflessness while the Russians failed to prevail because of their lack of morale and understanding of what wins wars.

The intense morale of the Japanese is seen in the early chapters of Human Bullets by Tadayoshi Sakurai. The Japanese "impatiently waited to be ordered to the front" so that they could go out and not only bring honor to their family, but also have the honor of fighting for their country when called up¹. The Japanese still harbored old samurai ideals of death before dishonor, and these ideals showed in their battles during this war. Before they headed off to war the future soldiers would join in "mobilization prayers" and talked of "nothing but mobilization" in the hope that soon they would be leaving their country to join in the fight against their enemies, the Russians². The Japanese are a different breed when compared to other soldiers of the time such as the Russians because of their selflessness.

In addition, the Japanese people harbored a "historic love of country," which dated back to early Japanese history³. The soldiers "so fearlessly and cheerfully face death", a concept no other soldiers during this time period considered a good trait to have in war⁴. Normal men worried about doing their time in the war and then getting back as soon as they could to take care of their families. Japanese

soldiers felt that “family trouble had no place in their minds before a national crisis.”⁵ In response to this national crisis, the families and citizens of Japan backed the soldiers up one hundred percent before their departures to Manchuria. Lines of women and children would form next to the railroad tracks and yell “Bonzai at the top of their lungs” showing their support and letting the soldiers know how important their sacrifices were boosted their already high morale⁶.

Some men, though, were turned back from this glorious opportunity to achieve glory due to weakness and poor health. The soldiers and their families were shamed beyond which they could bear at their failure to serve. Some Japanese mothers would commit suicide once they heard that their sons had been rejected⁷. The story of Togo Miyatake illustrates this sense of shame when Togo was not allowed to go fight the Russians in the first wave. Togo took this news as a great dishonor and felt he could not face his family again unless he went to war or returned in a casket. Togo concluded “on suicide as the most honorable way of escape.”⁸ Luckily he was saved by his friends and was allowed to join in the joyous war he almost robbed himself of through suicide. General Kuropatkin of the Russian army said that the whole Japanese Army had “been saturated with patriotism.”⁹ For the Japanese, an “individual’s willingness and pride is serving” their country due to their “nation’s belief in deep respect for the army.”¹⁰ To lose the chance to serve Japan was one of the most demoralizing events a Japanese male can ever face.

The Japanese way of life had always taught them that the country should be the most important thing in their lives as citizens. This is one of the main tenets that the Russians understood but were unable to graft into their plan to increase troop morale. The Japanese were outmanned and gunned, but “victory seemed worth any sacrifice to them.”¹¹ This is why they

were superior to the Russians, and on the opposite end of the spectrum, why the Russians had such a difficult time fighting them. A problem the Russians had was that they came over to fight in Manchuria but had no clue about what they were doing over there while “Japan had long been prepared for war” against them¹². The Russians had no idea that the Japanese still held onto some of the bitterness from losing “the fruits of their victories in China.”¹³ The Japanese had a cause to fight for in Manchuria, while the Russians were told to go fight without any background information by leaders whom they could not trust because they stole their subordinate’s pay placing it “into their private pockets.”¹⁴

General Langlois of the Russian army felt that they lost the Russo-Japanese war because they did not fully evaluate the difference in morale on both sides and that “unity is an essential to success.”¹⁵ The Russians were more in touch with the western world and ideas. The western value of family and life is something that weighs heavily upon all decisions that they had to make when fighting this war. The Japanese were lucky enough not to harbor these ideas which made them more effective warriors. The middle aged Russians were said to have been the worst making statements such as “Why should I have to fight? I have got six children to support.”¹⁶ If any Japanese man had even considered this statement he would be ridiculed by his countrymen. Such a dishonorable statement would be spitting in the face of the country that birthed and raised them.

The Japanese had been drilled their entire lives about “martial spirit and on patriotic lines,” so for them to listen to these Russians talk of their families sounded strange¹⁷. The Japanese mentality differed so much from the Russians that the two cultures found it hard for either

***The Japanese
still harbored old
samurai ideals
of death before
dishonor, and these
ideals showed in
their battles during
this war.***

side to understand how the other side's brain worked. Reservists also met the same problem as the regular Russian soldiers and were continually thinking of "homes and families they had left behind."¹⁸ Sakuari describes one incident with a man who whined and pleaded for his life. Sakuari, like most of the Japanese, felt it was almost too hard to look at these Russian soldiers who were unfit for glory. For the Japanese people who considered "duty heavier than a mountain and death lighter than a feather," they felt the Russians were not only unworthy of battle but also of the distinct chance to obtain honor from such a magnificent event as war¹⁹. The Russians were the lowest of the low to the Japanese.

The Russians had no love of country like the Japanese did; therefore before the battle had even begun they were not as prepared mentally for the battle. With no love of country how can someone go off and fight for her? The Russians were disgusting to the Japanese because of their selfish views and how they did not fully comprehend the glory to be gained from battle. They thought the Russians were "coward(s) unworthy of a true soldier's society."²⁰ While Russians were whining about going off to war, Japanese officers had "funeral rites performed before leaving the front," to show that there was no fear going into battle and that they were prepared to die.²¹ This is why the Russians describe the Japanese performing "feats of heroism almost superhuman."²²

Even though Japanese felt the Russians were unworthy of battle, they also felt that some of the Russians were not at fault for the war because they had been thrown into it by commanders of whose names they did not even know. After questioning Russian prisoners of war, most of them "had been driven to the field without knowing why or wherefore."²³ To the Japanese, prisoners who fought valiantly until their ultimate demise were worthy of honor, and the Japanese paid them respect. But the ones who showed no remorse and were rude to their captors were looked upon

terribly because of their "sheer insolence."²⁴

The Japanese were in the war because their country asked them to fight, but some Russians "did not understand the reason for the war."²⁵ They thought too much of matters that were not at hand. This is not necessarily a bad thing from a human perspective, but when dealing with war it becomes catastrophic. The Japanese were a well oiled killing machine. They had no cares, no worries about the next day, just the battle at hand. Officers led their troops into battle with a fierce determination to make their country proud and even if the cause was unjust, it was fine in their minds because love of country trumped all else. The Russians were too human in their approach going into this battle. This war showed a clash of two very different cultures fighting it out for very different causes.

The Russians had another thing that kept their minds absent from battle while fighting the morally superior Japanese in Manchuria. The Russians, during their time in the war, were easily tempted by looting and other animalistic crimes. General Kuropatkin describes even "the best regiments" when they witnessed any act of looting or violence "were themselves liable to become tainted."²⁶ The Russians were no better than a well armed mob sent over to fight the Japanese. Even their officers could not secure "respect and obedience and faithful service from subordinates," because of the way they treated them²⁷.

The Japanese received massive support from their family and friends back in their country, but there was a very different story happening in Russia. A power struggle over the head of the government led people to question why Russia was fighting in the war anyway. On January 5, 1905 the Russian people gathered for a strike trying to "call for [an] end of the war with Japan."²⁸ This left Russia with not only a major lack of morale on the battle front, but with a loss of support from their people back in Russia. Soldiers were left with nothing to fight for, and no motivation whatsoever to continue fighting a battle

that no one wanted to see won. This was one of the major points of separation between the Japanese and the Russians during the battle over Manchuria.

With no true drive war to succeed nor any willpower to keep their minds and bodies in the war, the Russians lost to a nation not even a quarter of its size. The Russians “very much underestimated—if not entirely overlook[ed]—“Japan’s...morale side.”²⁹ Sakuari mocks the Russians for their nearsightedness when dealing with the Japanese’s pride and moral. The idea that they could not be beaten by a country so much smaller than their massive motherland made most of the Japanese who were fighting wonder when they would “awake from their deluded dreams.”³⁰

A major difference scholars can see in the Japanese and Russian mentalities is their interaction with the Chinese people. Both sides claim that the Chinese were helping the other while leaving the other one to fend for themselves. The Japanese were utterly appalled by this apparent betrayal calling them as “ignorant and greedy survivors of a fallen dynasty,” who only speak to people who could give them money.³¹ The Japanese believed that the Russians were paying the Chinese off to give them signals of how the Japanese army was moving by putting different kinds of animals on hills. Whenever anything shady or sneaky took place against the Japanese their first thought was always dishonor and how they have no sense of real battle. They felt that everyone should fight by their rules and did not understand when people committed such acts of dishonor. They did not grasp the idea that everyone around the world does not live such a life of selflessness. The Japanese believed the battle should be fought head to head until the other side prevails to take all of the glory. This is clearly seen in the way that the Japanese act when they allegedly caught the Chinese selling secrets to the Russians.

The difference between Russian and Japanese morale is easily seen from the conduct and certainly from the outcome of the Russo-Japanese War. The Japanese fought together and stood up to fight

patriotically for their country. The Russians fought an aimless war with low morale, unmotivated soldiers and commanders, and an “absent of a feeling of duty toward and love for the Fatherland.”³² The selfless warriors that took the battlefield for the Japanese were the reason they were able to overcome their deficits manifested in low soldier numbers and technological advancements against the Russians. With such low levels of morale, the Russians became sitting ducks for these “Human Bullets” sent by the country of Japan to take what they felt were rightfully theirs. Morale wins wars and there is no better example of this than the undying devotion seen by the Japanese troops during the Russo-Japanese War.

Bibliography

- ¹ Sakurai, Tadayoshi. *Human Bullets*. Nebraska: University of Nebraska, 1999. p.3
- ² Sakurai p. 4
- ³ Asakawa, K. *The Russo-Japanese Conflict*. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, & Company, 1904. p. 81
- ⁴ Asakawa p. 81
- ⁵ Sakurai p. 5
- ⁶ Sakurai p. 20
- ⁷ Kuropatkin, Aleskey. *The Russian Army and the Japanese War Volume I*. London: John Murray, Allamarle St., 1909. p. 215
- ⁸ Sakurai p. 8-9
- ⁹ Kuropatkin Vol. I p. 228
- ¹⁰ Kuropatkin Vol. I p. 214
- ¹¹ Kuropatkin Vol. I p. 227
- ¹² Kuropatkin, Aleskey. *The Russian Army and the Japanese War Volume II*. London: John Murray, Allamarle St., 1909. p. 79
- ¹³ Kuropatkin Vol. I p. 215
- ¹⁴ Sakuari p. 107
- ¹⁵ Sedgwick, F. R.. *The Russo - Japanese War*. London: Swan Sonnenschein & Company, 1909. p. 192
- ¹⁶ Kuropatkin Vol. I p. 281
- ¹⁷ Kuropatkin Vol. I p. 214
- ¹⁸ Kuropatkin Vol. I p. 280
- ¹⁹ Sakuari p. 106
- ²⁰ Sakuari p. 107
- ²¹ Kuropatkin Vol. I p. 215
- ²² Kuropatkin Vol. I p. 228
- ²³ Sakuari p. 73
- ²⁴ Sakuari p. 74
- ²⁵ Kuropatkin Vol. I p. 281
- ²⁶ Kuropatkin Vol. I p. 295
- ²⁷ Sakurai p. 107-108
- ²⁸ Kochan, Lionel. *Russia in Revolution 1890-1918*. New York: New American Library Incorporated, 1966. p. 75
- ²⁹ Kuropatkin Vol. I p. 214
- ³⁰ Sakuari p. 75
- ³¹ Sakuari p. 105
- ³² Kuropatkin Vol. II p. 78

BENEFITS OF GLOBALIZATION

Abraham J. Raymond



Raymond is a junior Political Science major from Minneapolis, MN. He is President of the Jewish Studies Group and the Vice-President of the Inn-of-Court (The Citadel's Pre-law society). He has been awarded a 3.5 year

Air Force scholarship, recieved Dean's list 5 times and gold stars the last three semesters.

Abstract

The growth of The United States globalized economy is a topic which has many differing opinions, especially during our current economic recession. Some people may be quick to pin the United States recent increase in global trade as a contributing factor to our recession. Throughout this paper, I outline the various benefits that globalization brings to this nation and explain why these benefits are essential to ending the recession. I hope that through this paper I will help people to understand how important globalization is to the stability of the United States and who is truly to blame for the current recession.

The sun beats down on the dry clay of the African Sahara as a group of tribesmen cross a dusty dirt road carrying water for the hot day to come. While, the hundred or so tribesmen reconvene after their trek, a mother is seen frantically scrambling to find her only son. As she looks into a group of children playing soccer she takes in a sigh of relief as she catches the familiar sight of her son's faded Michael Jordan jersey glistening in the morning sun some 100 yards away. Globalization explains why a child who has never seen Michael Jordan, much less a basketball game, possesses what is the most largely distributed jersey of all time.

Globalization can be very vague. For the purposes of this paper, I define globalization as the spread of goods and services about the globe. More commonly, this concept is known as free trade. Many people may be quick to point a finger at the United States' growth of free trade as the main source of our current recession. These people also feel that limiting foreign trade and investment would solve our current economic crisis. While the current recession is a major issue in the United States, the growth of free trade is not to blame. Furthermore reverting to protectionism will only prevent the United States from dusting itself off and resuming its long-term growth.¹

The cause of this current recession stems from both a failure to regulate banks and mortgage lending and a large number of Americans choosing to live beyond their means, purchasing homes which they could not afford.

The spread of free trade is not to blame for the United States current recession because it has been proven that the United States along with many other countries that have recently opened their borders to free trade are less likely to undergo sudden or vicious economic swings, according to Daniel Griswold who is

the director for the Center for Trade Policy Studies at Cato Institute. Griswold notes that,

“trade protectionism does not “shield” countries from the volatility of world markets as proponents might hope. On the contrary...economies that trade less with other countries are more prone to sudden stops and to currency crises”¹

This means that not only is globalization not to blame for the current recession, but also that it is responsible for the moderation of the economic swings that are experienced by every country. Moreover a country that remains hesitant to trade will be far less diversified and less prepared to weather severe economic storms. Globalization also promotes overall global competition and keeps prices consistent, making it less likely for inflation to disrupt economic growth. Another benefit of globalization is that it stimulates for innovation as domestic companies must stay ahead of these from abroad.

However, globalization also causes American employees to lose their competitive advantage to laborers in other countries who offer lower wages. A prime example of this is the town of Chilhowie, Virginia, which through the 1980's and 1990's was rich with factories and known for its abundance of loyal low-cost workers. Despite this reputation, over the past ten years, five of the plants in this town have been shut down.² The main cause of the sudden

decline in work opportunities for the blue collar workers of Chilhowie and many similar cities around the country was the signing of the 1994 North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) between Canada, Mexico and The United States.² Many changes for U.S. workers arise as a result of this agreement, because of Mexico's ability to offer dependable labor at a fraction of the United States minimum wage. Based on this, I feel that the people who suffer most from globalization are the workers who had once provided “low-wage” labor for the U.S. manufactures that could not afford to forgo taking advantage of new cost cutting opportunities. The standard of living in America is so much higher than in countries, such as Mexico and China. Yet in order to compete in the world market, U.S. companies cannot afford to pay ten times more for the same amount of labor they can easily find overseas.

Although it is sad for towns like Chilhowie to be faced with economic turmoil, globalization allows small business to climb out of the shadows of their competitors and promotes price competition between companies. This competition ultimately favors consumers as a whole. In closing, globalization creates winners and losers but in the end the ends justify the means because globalization is responsible for keeping our economic system stable and will be a major tool in helping the U.S. climb back to its former position of economic greatness.

Bibliography

¹Griswold, Daniel. “Worried About a Recession? Don't Blame Free Trade.” Editorial. World Trade Magazine 3 June 2008.

²Vieth, Warren. “A Town out of Work: Globalization Taking Toll on Industries.” Los Angeles Times 11 May 2002.

MY WAR HERO

Joseph A. Trippi



Trippi is a junior History Major from Fountain Inn, South Carolina. From Echo Company, this is his first publication. He is very active in religious activities on campus, including the Navigators and is currently a Chapel Usher. He has a three year Marine Corps ROTC scholarship and plans to commission in May of 2011.

Abstract

My Papa, Sam Trippi, lived a very interesting life. In this essay, I discuss some of the hardships and accomplishments that my grandfather had. My paper contains many interesting stories from his lifetime; some which show his good will, as in when he helped save some missionaries from the Viet Cong, and others that show his harder side when I discuss the more difficult times of his upbringing. Through this biography, I hope to entertain and impart a few life lessons from someone who has been married for over fifty years and who also has served in the military for over thirty years.

Salvatore Ralph Trippi was born December 2, 1929, as the youngest of ten children to Sicilian immigrants. His parents moved through Ellis Island, New York to Jamestown, New York, where Salvatore was born. He later moved to North East Pennsylvania, where he graduated high school. Because Salvatore was such a popular Sicilian name, he was given the nickname "Sam," and the name sticks with him to this day. This man is my father's father, whom I call my Papa.

My Papa was born right after the start of the Great Depression, which influences him to this day. One can tell that he was raised under hard times by the way he pinches pennies and conserves food and energy. The newly established Trippi family did not stay in New York for long, however, and moved to North East, Pennsylvania. As the baby of the family, he was also the one who got the preferential treatment from his father. On the other hand, his mother was not always so lenient and caring. She still retained her Mediterranean temper.

Once, my Papa's brother returned from running some errands in his new Packard V12 and told Sam, who was only eleven, that the keys were still in the car. Sam, thinking it would be safe and that he would not be caught, decided to go on a little trip around town. During this trip, the sheriff who was at first stunned to see the young boy driving stopped him. Trying not to cause a scene, the sheriff, told Sam to go back home, which he promptly did. Upon returning home, he noticed that there were two people on the front porch of his house. One was his brother and the other was his mother, who looked like she had a shotgun in her hand (it ended up being a broom). As soon as he parked the car, his mother rushed the car, grabbed Sam, yanked him out of the car, smacked him with the broom, and chased him inside the house, where she manifested her anger. After his dad came inside, he calmed her down and possibly

saved my grandfather from a premature death.

While in Pennsylvania, my Papa's uncle was one of the great mafia ringleaders of New England. He had one of the biggest fruit gardens and orchids in the area. Much to his mother's disgust, my grandfather would often sneak over to the farm and take some of his uncle's apples. When he returned home from these expeditions, there was often hell to pay.

My Papa was the first in his family to learn English; everyone else spoke Italian. It was for this reason primarily that Sam was sent to an English speaking school instead of an Italian speaking school. He was often stuck with the task of being the interpreter for his entire family. My Papa has many good stories to tell from his years in high school. Although he was the star quarterback for the football team, the basketball coach saw something in Sam that the coach thought would be a valuable asset to the team. So, during the off-season of football, Sam played basketball as the designated hitter. It was his job to "remove" the opponent's best players from the game so his team would win. One time, after a particularly nasty hit with his elbow to the opponent's armpit, the referee automatically threw him out of the game. After playing ignorant for a little while, my Papa's last argument was that he did not do it because he just got back from mass. The referee threw him out. During his junior year, Sam was selected to run for the United States in the Junior World Olympics in Cleveland, Ohio, placing third overall. Although he came in first in one event and second in another, it was not enough for him to take the top spot. The person who finished first went to another round, and the winner of that round went to Olympic games to represent the United States.

Upon graduation from high school in 1948, my Papa turned down a large football scholarship to Edinboro State College to enlist

in the Marine Corps. When he enlisted, he went with his high school graduating class to the Marine Corps recruiter. The recruiter lined them all up and went down the line saying which ones he would allow to sign. Going down the line denying everyone, he got to my Papa and cleared him. He

ended up being the only one getting cleared from his class. When he enlisted, he was actually only seventeen years old; he had lied about his age. His mother again got upset and threatened the recruiter, saying that the recruiter had to undo the enlistment. After she calmed down, she signed the papers clearing him to go to Parris Island.

After his thirteen weeks of hell at Parris Island, he was sent to Cherry Point, North Carolina as an administration person and for training to become a boxer. Because of his high test scores, he was meritoriously promoted to corporal. Because he was sent to Cherry Point, he missed the Korean War and the Inchon Landing. His unit was one of the first units to land at Inchon. While he was a boxer, he never lost a single match, and won many medals for his boxing. He also met many famous people, like George Foreman, although he was in a different weight classes and never fought him.

After his boxing training, Sam was transferred to Camp Lejeune, North Carolina where all of his boxing fights took place. He

As the baby of the family, he was also the one who got the preferential treatment from his father. On the other hand, his mother was not always so lenient and caring. She still retained her Mediterranean temper.

eventually won a gold medal. It was here that he was selected to go to Officer Candidate School at Quantico, Virginia while he was a staff sergeant. While at Quantico, he helped train CIA members on weapons handling techniques. (Everyone in the CIA was trained to handle firearms by low ranking noncommissioned officers.) He completed OCS in 1954, but was not commissioned because the president at the time, Dwight D. Eisenhower, decided to cut the majority of the funding to the program that my grandfather was a participant, the Special Officers Course-Supply (a pre-cursor to the Marine Enlisted Commissioning Education Program). This funding cut possibly saved his life, for he later discovered that some people from his OCS class had been commissioned and most of these new officers were killed in the jungles of Vietnam.

After not receiving a commission with the Marine Corps, Sam then decided to transfer over to the Air Force to gain rank and pay grade. In the Marines, it is easy to get trapped in rank and not be promoted for long periods of time. By the year 1963, he had served in the marines for fifteen years, had married, and had four children. Once in the Air Force, he quickly gained rank and status and was sent to Vietnam in 1969 as a Chief Master Sergeant (E-9) to be in control of all the logistics and supplies in Southeast Asia. Since he had completed Officer Candidates School, he was promoted to a warrant officer in the reserves. He stayed in Vietnam until mid way through 1971. While in Vietnam, Sam directly represented General Westmorland's office and was one of the most powerful men in Southeast Asia because of his position.

One of his interesting stories in Vietnam was his rescue of a missionary family that was in the warpath of the Viet Cong; the Vietnamese

communist militia. Being sent on a rescue mission is nothing to look forward too, but in Vietnam it was even more dreaded than these days. The trip to the missionary's house was uneventful, but once the team got there, they came across some unexpected delays, i.e. the family. At first, the family refused to believe that the Viet Cong were on their way to kill them and burn the missionary's property. Once they were convinced that the Viet Cong were on their way, they decided to survive and flee with the rescuers, but first they had to pack some stuff, including a piano! The family insisted that the family piano come along, but only so much stuff can fit on a one-and-a-half ton truck. The family had to decide between their lives or their piano. Luckily for my grandfather, they chose their lives. Once they had the family, they proceeded to flee the area with reconnaissance planes flying overhead. The planes continually radioed that the communists were all around, but they never fired on the truck and the entire team returned safely. The next day, another team was sent to the missionary's house, and sure enough, the house was pillaged and virtually destroyed, and the piano that had been left on the lawn had been vandalized to the point that it was unable to be repaired.

*... while in
Vietnam my Papa
came in contact
with the chemical
Agent Orange
which was used
to destroy large
portions of the
jungle.*

In addition, while in Vietnam my Papa came in contact with the chemical Agent Orange which was used to destroy large portions of the jungle. It had seeped into the water supply of the base where he was stationed, and the effects of him coming in contact with this lethal chemical can still be evidenced today. This was the primary cause for his development of cancer in his later years.

After serving another sixteen years in the Air Force, my Papa retired in 1978 as a highly decorated war hero. Three of his most cherished

decorations are his silver star, a bronze star, and most importantly, an Eagle, Globe, and Anchor (the Marine Corps emblem). My Papa served a total of thirty-one years for the United States. After the military, my Papa went to work for Michelin Tire Corporation as a purchasing agent and worked for nine years and eight months until he retired again in 1988. Getting tired of the people at Michelin, he obtained a job at Allied Signal as a purchasing agent in 1988. Here he also worked for nine years and ten months until he could retire. In 1991, he had a bout with prostate cancer, and won. His first traces of cancer in 1970 when he was exposed to Agent Orange.

A final interesting story involves a letter he received about four years ago when He received a letter in the mail from the Department of the Navy informing him that he is currently a class three reservist and will be until death. When he first realized what the letter meant, he joked that the saying “once a Marine, always a Marine” was no joke. He now passes the time by hanging out at Fletcher’s Funeral Home with another retired Marine who owns the mortuary. He is still married to his first wife and loves her very much. He is the primary reason I am seeking a military commission and is the reason I chose to come to The Citadel. Some of ways he has influenced my life was his unintentional brainwashing me to be

in the military and specifically the Marine Corps. Also, he has given me a sixty-year marriage to model; even though they have fought and argued, my Papa always respected my Grandma and cared for her no matter the situation. One humorous side effect of growing up with my Papa is that I now share his sense of humor and I use some of his jokes. Apparently, its hereditary as my Dad, my Uncle, myself and one of my cousins uses his corny jokes the more often the older we get. For example, he likes to joke that he used to be a doctor in the Filipino Navy in order to convince people to let him to medical stuff. At first, this sounds very strange, and in fact, it is, but when said at the right time, one can take someone off guard and make another person believe you really were in the Filipino Navy.

Currently, my Papa lives in Fountain Inn, South Carolina making up to his family, his loved ones, and his dog, General George Patton for those years he spent at war. Because I live about two minutes away, I am able to spend quite a bit of time with him and am able learn from him. Although he is now eighty, he still likes to pretend he is forty-five, and if it were not for the hair loss, he could possibly pass as a forty-five year old man! He walks Patton about four miles, three times a day, everyday. Because of his impact on my life, he is my war hero.

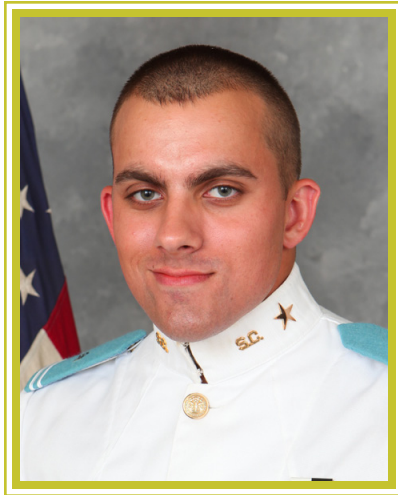
Bibliography

All stories and other facts are the result of me remembering stories from when I was a child. I called my grandfather twice to get specific details and to clarify certain events that he had told me many years ago.

Trippi, Sam. Personal interview. 6 and 8 April 2008.

THE PRECIOUS AND THE PEARL

Noah J. Koubenec



Noah is a Junior Political Science and Spanish major from Pilot Mountain, NC. He is president of the Citadel's chapter of Sigma Delta Pi, the national Spanish honor society, and the founder and president of the Student Association for Inter-American Affairs. He has earned Gold Stars for five semesters and is on the Spring 2010 President's List.

Abstract

It is perhaps the most ironic attribute of J.R.R. Tolkien's created universe that the power of the One Ring, though a critically important idea in the Legendarium, is chronically undefined. Throughout its history, the Ring is a catalyst for conquest, emboldening the wearer and kindling thoughts of greatness. But Tolkien's notion of the Ring's greatest power was markedly different, and it shares some significant similarities with the theme of Pearl. Pearl is a Middle English poem that tells the story of a man, the Jeweler, who is bereaved by the loss of his daughter, referred to in the poem as his "Pearl." Consideration of Pearl in parallel with the writings of Middle-earth reveals an influence that suggests the Middle English poem on which he labored for so long permeated Tolkien's creative process and was instrumental in the creative forging of the Ring.

It is perhaps the most ironic attribute of J.R.R. Tolkien's created universe that the power of the One Ring, though a critically important idea in the Legendarium, is chronically undefined; aside from its ability to make most of its wearers invisible, the distinguishing attributes that make it a ring of power are somewhat vague. The texts of Middle-earth often seem to suggest that the primary ability of Isildur's Bane is the promise of military power and empire. Throughout its history, the Ring is a catalyst for conquest, emboldening the wearer and kindling thoughts of greatness. In *The Lord of the Rings*, for instance, Boromir confirms this attribute at the Council of Elrond when he proposes that it be put to what he considers good use: "Why should we not think that the Great Ring has come into our hands to serve us in the very hour of need? Wielding it the Free Lords of the Free may surely defeat the Enemy" (LotR 267). But Tolkien's notion of the Ring's greatest power was markedly different, and it shares some significant similarities with the theme of Pearl. Pearl is a Middle English poem that tells the story of a man, the Jeweler, who is bereaved by the loss of his daughter, referred to in the poem as his "Pearl." As we shall see, though Tolkien's career-spanning translation of Pearl was primarily related to his interests in philology, the dream vision also affected the author on a conceptual and thematic level, exerting a powerful influence on the nature of the One Ring and the ring-bearers.

Tolkien's letters indicate that his translation of Pearl was an ongoing project, and that it took place in parallel with the composition of his more famous works of Middle-earth. In a September 1944 letter to his son Christopher, the author mentions fleetingly that he "must try and get on with the Pearl," suggesting that even at this early point he had been engrossed in the poem for some time. In another letter, written to Rayner Unwin in 1965, Tolkien states "I want to finish off Gawain and Pearl, and get

on with the Silmarillion.” These two documents alone confirm that he was preoccupied with the poem for more than twenty years, during a period that corresponded with the composition of most of the works of his Legendarium. In “A Far Green Country,” A. Keith Kelly and Michael Livingston call Pearl “the Middle English poem that fascinated Tolkien for much of his life both spiritually and professionally.” (91)

What little scholarship there is concerning the influence of the Pearl-poet focuses overwhelmingly on Sir Gawain rather than Pearl (see Drout, “J.R.R. Tolkien’s Medieval Scholarship and Its Significance”), an emphasis perhaps understandable given the former work’s greater popularity. Scholars have acknowledged Pearl as a general source of inspiration to Tolkien, but the larger avenue of a connection among the poem, the ring-bearer, and the themes of obsession and death has been left unexplored. In J.R.R. Tolkien: Author of the Century, for example, Tom Shippey notes the similarity of elements of Pearl to Tolkien’s ideas, in particular the elven kingdom of Lórien. Shippey explains that Lórien may be seen as Tolkien’s own version of “the strange land, the ‘nameless land’, with its brilliant trees and shining gravel” (197) where the Jeweler stands as he looks to the New Jerusalem. However, Shippey’s discussion of the matter of Pearl and the Legendarium does not venture beyond the borders of Lórien, with the exception of a discourse on the dialogue of Treebeard and its structural similarity to Pearl in Road to Middle-earth. Kelly and Livingston, in their aforementioned article, object to Shippey’s views on Lórien and Pearl while arguing for the poem’s significance to Tolkien’s work in general. In her 2005 dissertation, *Apocalypse and Memory in ‘Pearl’*, Rebekah Long also makes reference to Pearl as an important influence on Tolkien, but her argument deals primarily with its relation to his essay *The Nameless Land* and his theories of medievalism, rather than direct connections to the Legendarium. We have long

understood -- thanks to scholars like Shippey -- Tolkien’s debt to medieval literature such as the Poetic Edda, The Volsunga Saga, and Gawain. It is somewhat bewildering, then, that the likelihood of a much more extensive relationship between Pearl and the Legendarium has not been thoroughly weighed, especially when one considers how closely Tolkien worked with the poem for so long, and how intricately connected he would have felt to its Christian subject matter.

Pearl, this poem so fascinating to Tolkien, addresses the issues of loss and its effects. The Jeweler’s anguish stems from his inability to accept the death of his daughter, and the dream vision that results carries a clear message of the spiritual danger of obsession, as in stanza 23 of Tolkien’s own translation, wherein the woman chides the jeweler for his misguided desire to hold onto her memory even in her passing:

*But, jeweller gentle, if from you goes
Your joy through a gem that you held lief,
Methinks your mind toward madness flows
And frets for a fleeting cause of grief. (23.1)*

From this passage—and from the text of Pearl as a whole—may be drawn the poet’s message of the futility of worldly attachment and its grave consequences.

By Tolkien’s own design, the power of the rings lies in their ability to preserve. In his 1951 letter to Milton Waldman, he explains that “the chief power (of all the rings alike) was the prevention or slowing of decay (i.e., change viewed as a regrettable thing), the preservation of what is deserved or loved, or its semblance” (Letters 152). This power of the ring to preserve is indeed mentioned in the works of Middle-earth, particularly in *The Lord of the Rings*, where the author’s ideas are more fully developed. When Gandalf recounts his interrogation of Gollum in “The Council of Elrond,” he explains that I learned then first that Gollum’s ring came out of

the Great River nigh to the Gladden Fields. And I learned also that he possessed it long. Many lives of his small kind. The power of the ring had lengthened his years far beyond their span; but that power only the Great Rings wield. (LotR 254)

The power of unnatural preservation is repeatedly presented as an abomination of sorts throughout Tolkien's *Legendarium*; it may be seen in the earliest ages of Middle-earth. In the preface to *The Silmarillion*, Tolkien explains that This desire is at once wedded to a passionate love of the real primary world, and hence filled with a sense of mortality, and yet unsatisfied by it. It has various opportunities of 'Fall'. It may become possessive, clinging to the things made as its own, the sub-creator wishes to be the Lord and God of his private creation. He will rebel against the laws of the Creator—especially against mortality. (xvi)

This notion of the inherent danger of persistence in the mortal realm is borne out in Tolkien's stories. The author's work *Akallabêth* tells the history of the Númenóreans, a race of men whose prosperity and long life came to an end of their own doing. Tolkien writes of the Númenóreans: ...but the fear of death grew ever darker upon them, and they delayed it by all means they could; and they began to build great houses for their dead, while their wise men laboured unceasingly to discover if they might the secret of recalling life, or at least the prolonging of men's days...but those that lived turned the more eagerly to pleasure and revelry, desiring ever more goods and more riches; and after that...the offering of the first fruits to Eru was neglected, and men seldom went any more to the Hallow upon the heights of Meneltarma in the midst of the land. (*Silmarillion* 318-19)

Tolkien demonstrates clearly that the growing fear of death of the Númenóreans directly coincided with the decay and downfall of their society. In fact, the very notion of death as the "Gift" of Eru to men as it was first intended, the corruption of its perception among men, and their intense desire to avoid it led them ultimately into the trap of Sauron (*Silmarillion*

329). The demise of the Númenóreans was ultimately rooted in their consuming desire to cling to their worldly existence.

The similarities between the *Akallabêth* and *Pearl* are numerous; in both, the desire of the main character or characters gives rise to a desire to reach heaven—that is, an environment that is not burdened by death. For the Jeweler, this environment is the New Jerusalem, a place where the notion of mortality does not exist, and where all is in a perpetual state of flawless glory, as indicated by the description of the city as free from blemish:

*Neither sun nor moon ever shone so sweet
As the pouring flood from that court that
flowed;
Swiftly it swept through every street,
And no filth nor soil nor slime it showed.
(89.1)*

For the Númenóreans, paradise exists in equally alluring yet inaccessible form. *Akallabêth* describes the longing of the great men for a paradise across the sea: Now this yearning grew ever greater with the years; and the Númenóreans began to hunger for the undying city that they saw from afar, and the desire of everlasting life, to escape from death and the ending of delight, grew strong upon them; and ever as their power and glory grew greater their unquiet increased. (315)

The Numenorean's desire to reach Valinor is remarkably similar to the Jeweler's yearning to reach the New Jerusalem, a place that too is separated by water. The verses of *Pearl* make clear that the New Jerusalem—and the *Pearl*—is inaccessible to all but those who are divinely admitted: Delighted there pierced my eye and ear, In my mortal mind a madness reigned; When I saw her beauty I would be near, Though beyond the stream she was retained. (97.1)

By the same token, Valinor is a forbidden land, making it ever more tempting for the Men

whose hearts are eventually overcome by desire: The Lords of Valinor forbade them to sail so far westward that the coasts of Númenór could no longer be seen...But the design of Manwë was that the Númenóreans should not be tempted to seek for the Blessed Realm, nor desire to overpass the limits set to their bliss, becoming enamoured of the immortality of the Valar and Eldar and the lands where all things endure. These parallels between Pearl and the story of the Númenóreans are useful in verifying the thematic significance of the poem to the nature of the Ring in the Legendarium. With an understanding of this relationship, it is possible to detect the encapsulation of the grand concepts of death, change, and obsession in the One Ring and the ringbearers which occurs later in the history of Tolkien's created universe.

Even prior to thematic connections, there are clear philological similarities that make the prospect of Pearl as a direct creative inspiration for Tolkien's Ring and its bearers nearly undeniable. The most obvious similarity may be found in the use of one word to refer repeatedly to the respective objects of endearment and obsession in Pearl and the Legendarium: precious. It is unlikely that a man of Tolkien's intellectual background would randomly settle on the word repeatedly used by the Jeweler to describe his treasure. The prominent presence of the word in Pearl and the Legendarium indicates that Tolkien's use of the Middle English text carried over into the very language of his Hobbit and LotR.

The natural point to begin this examination would be The Hobbit, wherein Gollum in his encounter with Bilbo Baggins commonly ends his phrases with "my precious." In Pearl, the Jeweler's lamentations repeatedly conclude with a reference to his "precious pearl." This similarity, significant in and of itself, becomes fundamental when it is considered as part of the relationship between Pearl and Tolkien's works. A scholar of Tolkien's field

would have painstakingly selected a word with such prominent featuring and significance to the identity of a character as important as Gollum; his use of the same word employed by the Pearl-poet is thus especially significant. Both works use the word in the same manner; that is, the term may refer either to the value of the Ring or the Pearl to their admirers, or to the actual physical form of either object. In the Oxford English Dictionary—for which Tolkien worked from 1919 to 1922 (Gilliver et al.) -- precious denotes something, "Of great moral, spiritual, or other non-material value; beloved, held in high esteem," which accurately describes either the Pearl or the One Ring. Further, the OED notes that the word precious first appeared in 1300 in reference to "a stone of a kind prized for its beauty, hardness, or rarity and used in ornamentation or jewellery; a gemstone, a jewel" (precious, adj., adv., and n.). Thus, Tolkien's usage evokes the earliest meaning of the term, which suggests that what is signified by precious in his writing is the same as what is signified by precious in Pearl: an object, in both cases an item of jewelry, with significance far beyond its material form and power over its owners in the form of obsession.

A deeper example of that relationship may be found in the sentiment of profound attachment and consequential grief that is exhibited by the Jeweler and by the ring-bearers who are separated from Isildur's Bane—most notably Gollum. Speaking to his Pearl, the Jeweler mourns,

*Now my lost one found again I greet,
Must bereavement new till death be mine?
Why must I at once both part and meet?
My precious pearl doth my pain design! (28.3)*

The Jeweler's language indicates that he is shattered by the disappearance of his Pearl. In like manner, Gollum mourns for the loss of his ring with hopeless, grief-stricken exclamations.

"Losst it is, my precious, lost, lost! Curse us

*and crush us, my precious is lost! (Hobbit
128)”*

Indeed, it is a point of interest that the Ring and the Pearl are alike in the very form they take, as both are pieces of jewelry, beautiful to behold. For both, however, their physical form serves only as a manifestation of a deeper concept—for the Jeweler, his love for his daughter, and for the ring-bearers of Tolkien’s Middle-earth, their obsession with the power and allure of the Ring. The Pearl is the embodiment of the soul of the Jeweler’s daughter while the Ring is the embodiment of the power of Sauron. The Jeweler is burdened by his attachment to the Pearl; Frodo, too, repeatedly finds himself “weighed down” by the Ring.

Both are also struck by the beauty of their respective burdens, with the Jeweler explaining that

*No tongue could in worthy words declare
the beauty that was there displayed,
It was so polished, pure, and fair,
That precious pearl on her arrayed. (19.9)*

And Tolkien reveals on page 127 of *The Hobbit* that Gollum owns “One very beautiful thing, very beautiful, very wonderful. He had a ring, a golden ring, a precious ring.” The consequence of his attraction to the Ring is a powerful possessiveness which eventually grows to consume the ring-bearer. Though Gollum is an obvious example of this effect, he is by no means the only character to suffer from it. Bilbo, when confronted about the Ring and challenged to abandon it by Gandalf in the *Lord of the Rings*, he first becomes defensive, and quickly this gives way to an outburst eerily reminiscent of the language of Gollum: “It is mine, I tell you. My own. My Precious. Yes, my Precious” (33). Still, Gollum may be seen as the most acute specimen of the ring-bearer’s curse. For all its simplicity, the similarity of Gollum’s and the Jeweler’s behavior demands exploration. Though

the Jeweler is certainly less deranged than Sméagol, both suffer from an enslaved mind: the forces at work within the two characters are sufficiently similar to produce the same behavior and even cause them to speak in like manner.

Gollum’s desire for that which has perverted his mind is such that he pursues it even when his actions mean the demise of the Ring and himself. In Mount Doom, after wrestling the ring from Frodo (who is himself under its spell), ‘Precious, precious, precious!’ Gollum cried. ‘My Precious! O my Precious!’ And with that, even as his eyes were lifted up to gloat on his prize, he stepped too far, toppled, wavered for a moment on the brink, and then with a shriek he fell. Out of the depths came his last wail Precious, and he was gone. (946) Ultimately, Gollum’s desire to have that which he could not rightfully possess resulted in his destruction and the disintegration of the Ring, the object of his obsession. In much the same manner, the Jeweler found himself unable to resist the allure of the Pearl and the kingdom across the river, and jumped into the water in a desperate grasp:

*...I leapt o’er
Those marvellous bounds by madness swayed.
Through headlong haste me heedless bore,
Yet swift arrest was on me made,
For right as I rushed then to the shore
That fury made my dream to fade. (98.1)*

Here the Jeweler too succumbs to his desire a final time, and his precious Pearl vanishes along with the kingdom that he so longs after. As it so happens, the events here are also strongly evocative of the fate of the Númenóreans.

A striking similarity between Pearl and the *Legendarium* is the prominence of the word precious, found most often in passages where Gollum plays a part. The word, as part of Tolkien’s carefully selected creation of *The Hobbit*, existed in the earliest drafts. Anderson

points out in *The Annotated Hobbit* that “In the first edition of *The Hobbit* (1937), Gollum uses the phrase ‘my precious’ to refer only to himself. In the second edition (1951), in which Gollum’s role was significantly altered...the phrase might be taken to refer to the ring, as is often the case in *The Lord of the Rings* (120). In a later note, Anderson explains that the increased usage of precious coincided with the development of Gollum into a more obsessed and disturbing character (128). Precious became more common as Gollum became more deranged and Tolkien’s notion of the ring developed—even as he continued his translation of *Pearl*.

Because of its presence through so much of the development of Gollum’s character, it served as a foundation for the structuring of his speech—no small consideration for Tolkien, who was exceptionally wary of the language and diction of his characters. In “The ‘Lost’ Subject of Middle-earth: The Constitution of the Subject in the Figure of Gollum in *The Lord of the Rings*”, Gergely Nagy explains that

The word “precious” acts as a central signifier in Gollum’s language. It comes up functionally integrated into sentences, but also as a sort of interjection, something which does not have any further meaning than being used in certain positions and situations in speech. In fact, “precious” is the addressee of Gollum’s language: it is both himself and something else which at least superficially seems to be the Ring. (60)

In other words, precious becomes an obsession in and of itself, permeating Gollum’s speech. But precious is not simply a compulsion, a by-product of his deranged mind. Instead, it is intricately connected with his personality, and thus his idiolect. The word’s sibilant phonology profoundly influences both his hissing speech patterns – “It’s got to ask us a question, my precious, yes, yess, yesss. Just one more

question to guess, yes, yess” (125) – and his repetitive and occasionally singsong language.

If Gollum is an acute example of a ring of power’s effects on its bearer, his decay is not complete. *The Lord of the Rings* is rife with instances where Gollum demonstrates traces of his old, uncorrupted nature. The furthest depths of despair brought by the Ring and its subordinates are best seen in the characters who have become so enslaved to the Ring that their own wills have been completely destroyed: the Nazgûl. In *Of the Rings of Power and the Third Age*, Tolkien describes the Dark Riders as “kings, sorcerers, and warriors of old” (346). They achieved power, but the most significant consequence of their status as ring-bearers—the one that led to their enslavement—was the extension of their lives, which resulted in their eventual succumbing to darkness:

They had, as it seemed, unending life, yet life became unendurable to them. They could walk, if they would, unseen by all eyes in the world beneath the sun, and they could see things in worlds invisible to mortal men; but too often they beheld only the phantoms and delusions of Sauron. (346)

Here, Tolkien suggests that allowing the rings of power to carry out their purpose in the “prevention of decay” ultimately results in their eternal confinement to an evil realm.

And one by one, sooner or later, according to their native strength and to the good or evil of their wills in the beginning, they fell under the thrall of the ring that they bore and under the domination of the One. And they became forever invisible save to him that wore the Ruling Ring, and they entered into the realm of shadows. (346)

The Nazgûl exemplify the dangers of the very extension of the natural life—of things or of

people—that is at the root of Gollum’s desire, as well as that of every ring-bearer who is subject to the allure of Isildur’s Bane. The Jeweler’s desire is the same, with his daughter being that which he longs for. In the Dark Riders, Tolkien created his projection of the consequences of unchecked obsession, a fate spared from Bilbo and Frodo by Gollum’s intervention, spared from him, in turn, by his accidental death, and spared the Jeweler by his waking from dream-vision.

Tolkien’s genius, in great part, lies in his use of precedent. His objective was not the creation of something entirely different from preexisting myth. Instead, Tolkien sought to connect every detail of his *Legendarium* with some facet of actual legend. In the case of the nature and power of the One Ring, we see a great similarity to Pearl—whether philological, thematic, or otherwise. Simply put, the words and ideas of the Pearl-poet bear more than a passing resemblance to Tolkien’s work. How Isildur’s Bane affects its bearers and the nature of its power is directly connected with the content of the poem. Consideration of Pearl in parallel with the writings of Middle-earth therefore reveals an influence that suggests the Middle English poem on which he labored for so long permeated Tolkien’s creative process and was instrumental in the creative forging of the Ring.

Bibliography

Drout, Michael D. C. *J.R.R. Tolkien Encyclopedia Scholarship and Critical Assessment*. New York: Routledge, 2006.

“J.R.R. Tolkien’s Medieval Scholarship and Its Significance.” *Tolkien Studies* 4 (2007): 143-45.

Flieger, Verilyn. *Splintered Light: Logos and Language in Tolkien’s World*. Kent State University Press, 2002.

Gilliver, Peter, Jeremy Marshall, and Edmund Weiner. *The Ring of Words: Tolkien and the Oxford English Dictionary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Greenwood, Linda. “Love: the ‘Gift of Death’.” *Tolkien Studies* 2 (2005): 171-95.

Kelly, Keith A. and Michael Livingston. “‘A Far Green Country’: Tolkien, Paradise, and the End of All Things in Medieval Literature.” *Mythlore* 27 (2009): 83-102.

Long, Rebekah. “Apocalypse and Memory in ‘Pearl’.” *Dissertation Abstracts International, Section A: The Humanities and Social Sciences*. 66.6 (2005): 2206-07.

Nagy, Gergely. “The ‘Lost’ Subject of Middle-earth: The Constitution of the Subject in the Figure of Gollum in *The Lord of the Rings*.” *Tolkien Studies* 3 (2006): 57-79.

Shippey, T. A. *J.R.R. Tolkien: Author of the Century*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2001.

“Tolkien and the Gawain-Poet.” *Proceedings of the J. R. R. Tolkien Centenary Conference*. ed. Patricia Reynolds and Glen H. GoodKnight. Altadena: Mythopoeic Press, 1995. 213-19.

The Road to Middle-earth. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1983.

Tolkien, J. R. R. *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, Pearl, Sir Orfeo*. New York: Del Rey, 1979.

The Silmarillion. New York: Del Rey, 1985.

Letters of J R R Tolkien. ed. Humphrey Carpenter. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1981.

The Annotated Hobbit: The Hobbit, or, There and Back Again. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2002.

The Lord of the Rings. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2005.

THE STORY OF EDGAR JOHNSON

George H. Martin III



George is a junior history major and Spanish minor from Conway SC. He is the Human Affairs Sergeant for Palmetto Battery and a member of The Citadel Honors Program. His participation in the Citadel Inn of Court and expe-

riences on Capitol Hill as a congressional cadet-intern have inspired him to attend law school following graduation to become a JAG officer in the SC National Guard.

Abstract

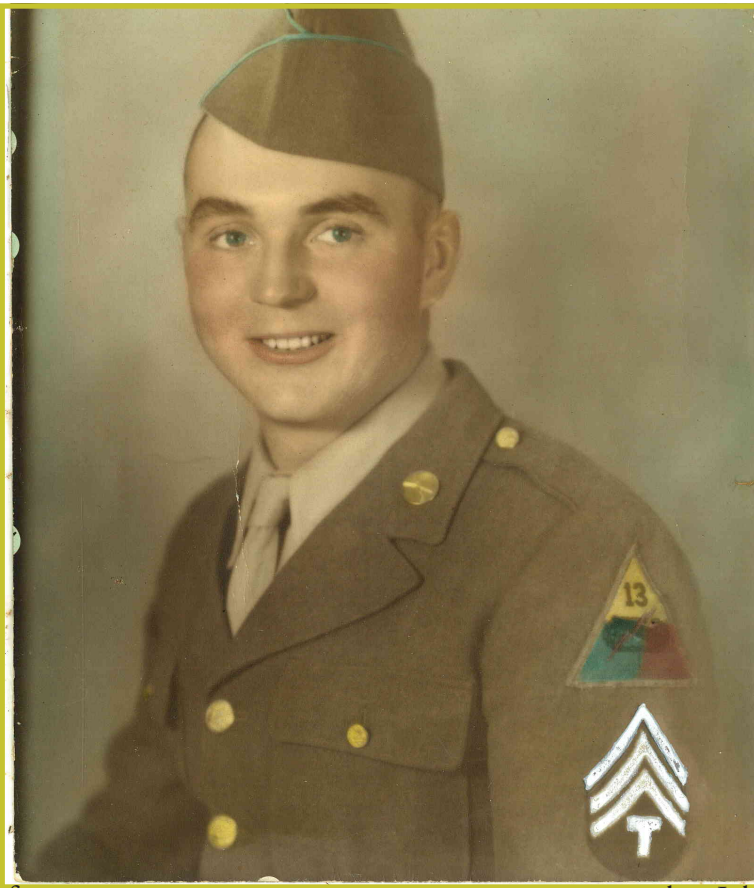
Inquisitiveness is the origin of discovery. Like a problem left unsolved, a story left untold can be a tragic. Too many have failed to learn the entertaining adventures of their ancestors because they chose not to investigate a relative's past. In an attempt to preserve a glimpse of my heritage, I investigated the story of a true military hero, my uncle. A man who rode with honor, rode with courage, and rode with Patton. Laughs, tears, and pride transferred from his lips to my memory. My hope is that you will enjoy this story of my uncle's participation in the Second World War and then take a moment to dig through the sands of time, uncover your special treasure, and experience the same happiness I did before it is too late.

In early 1945, with World War II slowly reaching its end, General George Patton and his Third Army were steadily getting closer to sitting right in the lap of their German adversaries. The famed general, along with thousands of brave young men, was writing his history on the pages of the world. If you ask a veteran where he fought in the Second World War, he may respond saying, "In the heated sands of Tunisia," or "In the flushed countryside of Italy," or "In the humid jungles of the Philippines." However, if you ask a veteran of the Third Army where he served he will likely respond, "With Patton." While the impact he left on his enemies was great, the impact he left on his own men was greater. To the military commander, the legacy left behind from him and his men was extremely important. Patton was quoted as saying, "When you are sitting by the fireplace with your grandson on your knee and he asks you what you did in the great WWII, you won't have to cough, shift him to another knee and say, 'Well, your granddaddy shoveled shit in Louisiana.' No sir, you can look him straight in the eye and say, 'Son, your granddaddy rode with the great...Army and a son-of-a-goddamned-bitch named Georgie Patton.'" Like his many counterparts, Ed Johnson can proudly lay claim to this accomplishment. This is his story.

At age twenty one, Edgar James Johnson was drafted into the United States Army. Shortly after, on Thanksgiving Day, Johnson left his home in Conway, South Carolina and traveled by bus bound for the state's capital city. Remembering the ride, Johnson said, "Four or Five of us left, went to Georgetown, and picked up two or three more." Upon arriving in Columbia, he was transported to Fort Jackson where he began military processing. There he was issued clothing and other necessary items; he remained at Fort Jackson for about a week.

Upon completion of his matriculation process, Johnson, along with his devoted wife Ruby, was sent to Camp Beale, California where he underwent basic training. After a strenuous physical process he soon graduated from basics with an

advanced knowledge and understanding of fighting in armored warfare. Johnson and four or five other men, now members of the 13th Armored Division, were ordered to stay behind and train the new wave of incoming replacements. Military life in California did not always consist of such hard and unpleasant work. With intensions of familiarizing themselves with their equipment and providing amusement, Johnson and his comrades would often drive the army's tanks from town to town. The first tank that he drove was



EDGAR JAMES JOHNSON

a light tank known as the M24. It was powered by two eight-cylinder, liquid cooled Cadillac-built gasoline engines. The particular tanks used in California by Johnson and his companions had rubber tracks so that they could be used on paved roads. The M24 was actually a smaller version of a tank he would later drive, the new M4 tank. The M4 was often called by its official army nickname the "Sherman." Looking back, Johnson commented, "I wish I had me one of them tanks. A man had one and he drove it to work." While he probably could not have succeeded in commandeering a tank, the young soldier was successful in sneaking guest passengers aboard. Johnson remembered one day in which he and his friends drove their tanks in a parade. "There was bad fog," he recalled. As it turned out, the weather conditions allowed Ruby to stealthily maneuver into her husband's tank and drive the iron crate back to the base.

However, as light dims to darkness thus faded

the fun and excitement of California. Duty prevailed and Johnson, with his comrades, was sent to Camp Boyd in Texas. Ruby, of course, followed loyally. Admiring her commitment, Johnson stated, "She was right behind me." The journey from California to Texas, however, was not one of comfort. The soldiers had to secure their tanks to a flat car in order for it to be pulled safely and efficiently by train. Ordered to ride inside their tanks, each man embarked on the wearisome migration. After completing the trip, the Johnsons resided in Texas for about a year. Following his short term in Texas, Johnson, now a staff sergeant in the division, and the 13th were sent to New York and transported to Le Havre, France – the shipping zone for many American soldiers. Much to the dismay of Ruby, however, this was one journey on which she could not accompany her husband.

The division reached France on January 29, 1945 where, according to Johnson, "We picked up all of our tanks and equipment; and it took three or four weeks." On April 5 after carrying out the necessary occupational assignments, the Black Cat Division (the nickname given to the 13th Armored) moved to Homberg, Germany near Kassel to make ready for battle under General Patton's Third Army. Sergeant Johnson climbed into his Sherman tank and prepared to finally enter the war. While Shermans were not renowned for their size, the tanks held five men somewhat comfortably. When describing his iron shelter, he stated, "The inside of it was about as big

as a car.” Regardless of what homey touches the crew may have made, each man remained conscious of his duties. A typical crew consisted of a tank commander, typically a 2nd lieutenant, a driver, an assistant driver, a gunner, and a loader. Sergeant Johnson’s job was to repair and maintain the machine’s mechanical aspects and drive the tank. “They gave me a tool box,” said Johnson. “That was my job; to keep it running.” As far as the area of driving was concerned, he drove the lead tank; being in the front often left his crew vulnerable to attack. While Johnson’s main concern was steering the tank, the rest of the crew dealt with looking out for enemy positions and handled firing the Sherman’s guns, especially its 75-mm main gun. Ironically, it seemed that his assistant driver knew more about loading the guns rather than driving the tank. Johnson explained, “The assistant driver in my tank didn’t even know how to start it up.” Nevertheless, the crew was clearly qualified and capable when it came time to fight. Fortunately, he never lost a crewmember and his tank suffered only minor damages.

When all duties were properly completed, the Black Cats were sent to the front line for about a month, a month that proved to be one of the longest of the young sergeant’s life. The 13th Armored was attached to the XVIII Corps at Altenkirchen and soon began preparations for the Rose Pocket operation. On April 10 at Honnef the assault began. “They shot at us and we shot back.” Johnson recounted. Johnson and his crew reached the Sieg River at Siegburg, crossed it and steadily moved north to Bergisch-Gladbach. The 13th firmly pushed its way across the countryside and into Duisburg. From there they traveled towards Mettmann and arrived by April 18. Throughout the advance fuel and speed were constantly issues of concern. The tanks held around 200 gallons of fuel and would typically get around half a mile to the gallon. According to Johnson, all traveling was done at night with black out lights. Sergeant Johnson had removed the governor from their tank and, as a result, the crew’s maximum speed was greatly increased.

Subsequently, the 13th Armored Division turned its route south toward Eschenau in eastern

Austria. The 13th joined with Patton late in the war on April 21—just in time to smash through the Fatherland. By April 22, the Black Cats had closed in the vicinity of Eschenau where they began to make preparations for Bavarian operations. Beginning in Parsberg, Germany on 26 April 1945 the 13th Armored crossed the Regen River in Bavaria, Germany. Quickly the next day, they also crossed the Danube River at Matting, in the southeast corner of Germany, and secured the region near Dunzling. On the 28th, the Division crossed the Isar River. In driving south toward the river, the 13th had gained up to twenty miles and captured Greibing. The following day, the 13th Armored “made assault crossings of the Isar River at Mamming and also at Platting.” In recollection of his crossings through southern Germany, Johnson explained that despite enduring bloody resistance pontoon bridges had to be constructed in order for the tanks to navigate across the rivers. While he was not aware of his division’s total number of losses, Sergeant Johnson was accustomed to the grim plague of death. “I saw two or three of them go on,” he later added. In one engagement, Johnson remembered that German fire had destroyed an extra water tank on the front of his Sherman. Reminiscing on the occasion, he laughingly commented, “They thought it was gasoline I reckon.” Fortunately for the tank and her crew it was not. However, Sergeant Johnson and his companions were not always on the receiving end of violent aggression. Reminded of another event with enemy armor he mentioned that he and his crew did have some success against the larger and more powerful German tanks. “We knocked out one of them one day.” He said. According to Johnson, the gunner was to be credited for the success. “He’d hit nine out of every ten of them. We were lucky to have him.”

In addition to resisting Nazis, Sergeant Johnson and his friends also discovered other objects that were not exempt from the wrath of their Sherman tank. Obstacles such as rubble, metal waste, and even buildings proved to be no match for

her metal tracks and cast iron shell. While its two to three inch thick covering could be easily penetrated by superior German anti-tank firepower, it was very strong against static objects. If something was in their path, the crew simply bumped it out of the way or ran it over. Johnson admitted that their motto was, "What we can't run over, we'll knock her down."

Nonetheless, death and destruction did not consume every moment. Johnson soon discovered that fighting was not his only priority. Through all of the excitement, soldiers of the 13th had to adjust to Europe's cold climate and unpleasant sleeping accommodations. The men had been introduced to Europe's winter season when they first arrived in France in late January and Johnson vividly remembered the cold weather. On one particular occasion, he and his comrades, with nothing more than their duffle bags, were transported across the chilly terrain. "They put us on a flatbed truck," he said. In the back of that truck, the men were driven about fifteen miles through what was around three feet of snow. To a native of the South Carolina low country, this must have seemed like a blizzard. Nevertheless, facing the elements was often rivaled by sleeping arrangements. One time, according to Johnson, "They put us in cow stables. The next morning I got up and something said 'moo.' I didn't like that. I found something else." Sometimes, Sergeant Johnson and his crew would be forced to sleep within the confines of their tank. Yet most of the time, they would enter a town and move out its civilians. They would take up an entire block, establish a perimeter, and temporarily enjoy their borrowed residence.

Sergeant Johnson and his friends also found entertainment in discovering hidden treasures. For example, one day they found a car that had been hidden in an old shed. The vehicle's owners had desperately tried to disguise the car in a large pile of firewood. The failed attempt in concealing the

four seated automobile resulted in endless hours of recreational amusement for a small band of happy young men. "A bunch of us took the car," Johnson remembered. "We carried it with us and painted it a G.I. color." The army shade of green was a fitting look for the battle-hardened automobile. Not only did it blend well with the division's trucks, jeeps, and tanks, but the car also matched the uniforms of its mischievous passengers.

With the end of the war in Europe now in sight, the division burst into Brannan, Austria on May 2. It established its forward operating base in the very building where Hitler had been born. Across the Inn River at Marktl, fortifications



ED AND RUBY

were built near the Austrian border. However, the river was not crossed; the next day, May 3, orders arrived commanding the men to reassemble north of the Inn. The 13th Armored then underwent preparations to make additional headway and continue its offensive through diminishing territory of the Nazi regime. All scheduled operations ceased on May 7 when the Germans agreed to surrender terms that were to become effective May 9. Yet, May 8, 1945, became recognized as Victory in Europe Day. In some isolated locations bloodshed continued until May 11. The day following the Nazi surrender Sergeant Johnson and others, in celebration of victory, went deer hunting in the woodlands of Berghof, Hitler's vacation home, near Berchtesgaden, Germany. "We killed three or four," Johnson claimed. The men remained in the area for about a week and took a much deserved break.

During that period, many German soldiers surrendered. "We'd get them by the thousands," Johnson recollected. The Black Cats endured German country for a little more than a month until they departed on June 25, never again to return as combatants. Happily following orders, the young sergeant left his

tank residing somewhere along the Austrian border. He revealed that the rest of the crew's equipment was dumped into the ocean. On July 14, 1945, after tolerating nearly six months in Europe the 13th Armored Division left Le Havre, France, and headed for home. "That was a long six months too," Johnson admitted.

During its approximate 180 day excursion overseas, the United States Third Army 13th Armored Division was involved in both the Rhineland and Central Europe Campaigns where it engaged in sixteen grueling days of bloody combat. Sergeant Johnson fought and served his country in three battles of World War II earning himself the United States Army Combat Infantryman Badge. In an effort to honor the men who received this medal, United States Secretary of War Henry Stinson said, "It is high time we recognize in a personal way the skill and heroism of the American infantry." The soldiers of the 13th Armored undoubtedly displayed such character during their service in Europe.

On July 23, after crossing French, German, and Austrian borders Sergeant Johnson and the rest of his division returned to native soil. The army hero was soon reunited with his family and his faithful wife, who had been living with his parents. The young couple returned to California where Johnson was later discharged in San Pedro after a period of about four years with the United States Army. The veteran's commitment to duty and gallant service, however, did not end when he hung up his uniform. Since his celebrated return home more than sixty years ago, the American hero continues his legacy within his hometown community and family. Typical of a member of America's greatest generation, Staff Sergeant Johnson speaks modestly when addressing his role during the Second World War. Remembering the words of Patton, the aging warrior does not cower when questioned about his service. Not forgetting his experiences in Europe, Johnson proudly admits, "I am not sorry that I ever went."

Bibliography

- Americal Division Veterans Association. "Combat Infantryman Badge." Army Awards. <http://www.americal.org/awards/cib.htm> (accessed April 11, 2008).
- Green, Michael and Gladys. Patton: Operation Cobra And Beyond. Osceola, WI: MBI Publishing Company, 1998.
- Green, Michael and Gladys. Weapons Of Patton's Armies. Osceola, WI: MBI Publishing Company, 2000.
- Lande, DA. I Was With Patton. St. Paul, MN: MBI Publishing Company, 2002.
- Province, Charles M. Patton's Third Army. New York: Hippocrene Books, 1992.
- The Army Almanac: A Book of Facts Concerning the Army of the United States. Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1950. Quoted in US Army Center of Military History. "13th Armored Division." Combat Chronicles of US Army Divisions in World War II. <http://www.history.army.mil/html/forcestruc/cbtchron/cc/013ad.htm> (accessed February 15, 2010).
- ¹DA Lande, I Was With Patton (St. Paul MN: MBI Publishing Company, 2002), 9.
- ² Michael Green and Gladys Green, Weapons Of Patton's Armies (Osceola WI: MBI Publishing Company, 2000), 76-79.
- ³ The Army Almanac: A Book of Facts Concerning the Army of the United States (Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1950), 583, quoted in US Army Center of Military History, "13th Armored Division," Combat Chronicles of US Army Divisions in World War II, <http://www.history.army.mil/html/forcestruc/cbtchron/cc/013ad.htm> (accessed February 15, 2010).
- ⁴ Green and Green, Weapons Of Patton's Armies, 80.
- ⁵ Green and Green, Weapons Of Patton's Armies, 79.
- ⁶ The Army Almanac: A Book of Facts Concerning the Army of the United States, 583.
- ⁷ The Army Almanac: A Book of Facts Concerning the Army of the United States, 583.
- ⁸ Lande, 254.
- ⁹ Charles M Province, Patton's Third Army (New York: Hippocrene Books, 1992), 263.
- ¹⁰ The Army Almanac: A Book of Facts Concerning the Army of the United States, 583.
- ¹¹ The Army Almanac: A Book of Facts Concerning the Army of the United States, 583.
- ¹² Province, 270.
- ¹³ Province, 271.
- ¹⁴ The Army Almanac: A Book of Facts Concerning the Army of the United States, 583.
- ¹⁵ Michael Green and Gladys Green, Patton: Operation Cobra And Beyond (Osceola WI: MBI Publishing Company, 1998), 157.
- ¹⁶ The Army Almanac: A Book of Facts Concerning the Army of the United States, 583.
- ¹⁷ The Army Almanac: A Book of Facts Concerning the Army of the United States, 583.
- ¹⁸ Americal Division Veterans Association, "Combat Infantryman Badge," Army Awards, <http://www.americal.org/awards/cib.htm> (accessed April 11, 2008).
- ¹⁹ The Army Almanac: A Book of Facts Concerning the Army of the United States, 583.

THOREAU'S SIMPLICITY

Marttin E. Períola



Marttin is a junior English Major with a Minor in Leadership Studies from Chula Vista, CA. He has been awarded an Army ROTC Scholarship, William W. Hartzog Scholarship, President's List, Commandant's List, Gold Stars

for one semester, and Dean's List for four semesters. He is also one of the poetry editors for The Shako (The Literary Magazine of The Citadel).

Abstract

It is easy for people to be intoxicated by the audio and visual stimuli that bombard their senses everyday and to accept the reality that society has fabricated for them—a reality that advocates materialism and superficiality. The acceptance ushers people to lead lives that are without worth and significance. In my paper, I explore a way to sober the mind drunk from materialism and superficiality by analyzing Henry David Thoreau's experiences at Walden Pond documented in his work, Walden; or Life in the Woods in order to determine what constitutes living a meaningful life. It gives people the opportunity to experience beautiful and inspiring things that are otherwise overlooked in their busy lives.

"A Simple Man" by Lynyrd Skynyrd

*Mama told me when I was young
"Come sit beside me, my only son
And listen closely to what I say
And if you do this it will help you some sunny day
Oh, take your time, don't live too fast
Troubles will come and they will pass..."*

*And be a simple kind of man
Oh, be something you love and understand...*

What is simple? A widely-known and popular understanding is found in one of Lynyrd Skynyrd's most listened to tracks, "A Simple Man". Ronnie Van Sant croons about living in an easy-going way, "take your time, don't live too fast/ Troubles will come and they will pass". He emphasizes that although hardships will be encountered, people can overcome them with patience. The song also indicates being true to oneself, being "something you love and understand". By loving and understanding oneself, a person does not need many things to be satisfied because he or she is content with who they are and what they have. The concepts of being true to oneself and living life in a peaceful manner illustrate Lynyrd Skynyrd's definition of simple in their song. The song also encompasses a general understanding of what it means to be simple as the song is well-known and widespread throughout the listening public. In the Oxford English Dictionary, the word "simple" has multiple definitions. The first definition of the word "simple" that the OED lists is the earliest one used in the English language dating back to the year 1220. It states: "free from duplicity, dissimulation or guile; innocent and harmless; undesigning, honest, open, straightforward". Comparing the earliest definition and a popular definition of the concept of simple, there is ambiguity. Lynyrd Skynyrd emphasizes living a relaxed life and enduring through struggles as they come, while the OED focuses more on the sincere and free nature of simplicity. Thus, simplicity is a complex and rich concept. In Walden; or, Life in the Woods, Henry David Thoreau explores the concept

of simplicity through his experiences at Walden Pond. He emphasizes early in his autobiographical essay that his purpose for going to Walden Pond was

“not to live cheaply nor to live dearly there, but to transact some private business with the fewest obstacles” (12).

Thoreau feels that he could finally take control of his life by living within simple and bare means at Walden Pond. By going away from the high-stress environment of society into the quiet calm of nature, Thoreau intends to live his life in the most meaningful way possible. He further writes that his experience at Walden Pond will allow him

“to oversee all the details [himself] in person; to be at once pilot and captain and owner and underwriter” (12).

This initiative in taking control of his life is important to Thoreau because he realizes that he has lost control by allowing himself to live through routine and going through life numbly. He wants to find meaning in his life underneath the worldly muck of society and his way is by living a simple life. Thoreau’s definition of simple involves going back to the fundamentals of living life focusing on the mind and soul. For Thoreau the most appropriate place to get back to the basics of life is in nature because every activity that takes place in Walden Pond happens due to bare necessity. In society, Thoreau sees that people have become materialistic and live in such lavish excess that they focus exclusively on material things as the most important aspects in their lives. He determines that these distractions that are making people’s lives meaningless. As Thoreau immerses himself in nature, he distinguishes two significant facets that bring meaning to life: the mind and soul. According to Thoreau, the fundamental elements of living life that focus on these two aspects are stripping oneself of superficial materialism, enjoying the small things in life, and pursuing one’s passions.

Throughout his essay, Thoreau strongly encourages people to live a life that is stripped

of superficial materialism. The culture of the New England society that Thoreau lived in prior to Walden Pond is obsessed with championing wealth and he finds this veneration as a hindrance to the human race. He expounds,

“We no longer camp as for a night, but have settled down on earth and forgotten heaven” (24).

People from New England society are fixated on earthly pleasures and they have forgotten the intangible worth of their spiritual selves, they have “forgotten heaven”. They only focus on the value of themselves in accordance to how many belongings they have. People have deviated from being simple, living a life that lacks the rudimentary aspects that concentrate on the mind and soul. Thoreau recognizes that because of New England’s materialistic culture, it has numbed the citizens to be superficial. Rather than valuing themselves and their attributes that they possess, the people appraise their material possessions above their worth as people.

Thoreau is not against people having material things but he is opposed to people obtaining things because of greed. Thoreau writes that

“to be a philosopher is not merely to have subtle thoughts, nor even to found a school, but so to love wisdom as to live according to its dictates, a life of simplicity” (9).

Without an attachment to worldly things valued only by their lavish worth, people in society can have an appreciation for things attributed to the mind and spirit such as wisdom and knowledge. Thoreau elaborates,

“Let us settle ourselves, and work and wedge our feet downward through the mud and slush of opinion, and prejudice, and tradition, and delusion, and appearance...till we come to a hard bottom and rocks in place, which we can call reality” (64).

Armed with wisdom and knowledge, Thoreau says that people can delve through the materialistic

culture of society and get to the very core of living life, a simple life free of “delusion and appearance”. In doing so, people will admire things not for their monetary worth but rather for their intrinsic value.

Thoreau illustrates the importance of stripping oneself of superficial materialism through his chapter “Shelter,” which focuses on shelter and its role in human society. In “Shelter” Thoreau asserts that many people have lost the concept of houses as shelters. They see houses as symbols of wealth and power. People become consumed with the idea of having large and architecturally elaborate houses to show off their wealth. Many of those people fill their houses with expensive furniture only used for display and not for any functional purpose. People in Thoreau’s society have turned houses in to the equivalent of a Christmas tree. They only decorate them to make them look pretty and spectacular. Copious amounts of money have been funneled towards the beautification of houses, which in Thoreau’s eyes is such a wasteful task. Thoreau sees this rabid materialism and superficiality in the people of his society and he voices his discontent by bringing the reader’s attention to the basic purpose of a house. He begins his argument by writing that

“Adam and Eve, according to the fable, wore the bower before other clothes”(17).

It is important to note that Thoreau brings the reader’s attention to the story of Adam and Eve, a story that encompasses the mankind’s beginning. Hence, Thoreau points out that at the introduction of mankind to the world, the simple purpose of the house is practical and functional not material. He elaborates on his point writing that “Man wanted a home, a place of warmth, or comfort, first of physical warmth, then the warmth of the affections” (17). Thus, houses are supposed to be structures that protect human beings from the elements, a protective refuge from the extremes of weather. It is also a place of family which encompasses ideals such as love and community. This is what Thoreau is referring to when he mentions that a house is a place of “warmth of the affections”. Establishing the basic purpose of a house, Thoreau points out that

“houses are such unwieldy property...while civilization has been improving our houses, it has not equally improved the men who are to inhabit them” (21).

He emphasizes the importance of improving oneself rather than on something material such as a house. Thoreau criticizes that due to people’s materialistic greed, people spend so much time and effort on beautifying structures made of wood, iron, and glass that they lose sight of beautifying what Thoreau believes to be the most important aspects of all: their minds and spirits which constitute the heart of fundamental living. By surrounding himself in the ecology of Walden Pond, Thoreau uses nature to get back to the very disposition of things. Thoreau lists the various natural materials used to make a shelter and the significance of them,

“boards and shingles, lime and bricks...caves, or wholelogs...well-tempered clay or flat stones...With a little more wit we might use these materials so as to become richer than the riches now are, and make our civilization a blessing” (26).

He uses natural imagery to emphasize returning to the roots of things. By going back to the basics, to simplicity, the various materials that are essential to homebuilding will have significance and a house will be seen as a protective haven, and not as an architecturally extravagant structure.

Along with the liberation from superficial materialism, Thoreau indicates another aspect in his definition of simplicity—to enjoy the small things in life. The activities could be mundane incidents such as taking a walk out in the woods or listening to various sounds that echo in the wilderness. Usually the minor happenings that occur all around people are often quickly glanced at and are viewed as insignificant. However, Thoreau finds meaning and importance in observing the minutiae. By completely removing himself of superficial materialism, Thoreau sees that the smaller things in life are accentuated because

the focus is not on their tangible lavishness but their intangible subtle implications. Thoreau elaborates,

"To anticipate, not the sunrise and the dawn merely, but if possible, Nature herself! How many mornings, summer and winter...have I been about mine!"(10).

He realizes that his focus on merely the event blinded him from enjoying the beauty of a sunrise. The experience of viewing the sunrise is much more important than the sunrise itself. Thoreau's encounter stimulated his mind and touched his soul with wisdom. The wisdom that the small experience imparted was to enjoy the small things in life for "the swiftest traveler is he that goes afoot" (34).

Thoreau experiences the bliss of the diminutive occurrences in life within the simple wilderness of Walden Pond. He describes the joy of solitude and the peaceful spirit of being one with nature, when he states that

"this is a delicious evening, when the whole body is one sense, and imbibes delight through every pore. I go and come with a strange liberty in Nature, a part of herself"(84).

By refusing to value material wealth and displacing himself from the materialistic culture of the New England society to Walden Pond, Thoreau is taking the initiative to control his life and live it to the fullest extent. It is easy to be carried away in the clockwork routine, going through the motions of life and being mentally detached from oneself. Therefore, it is difficult to be mentally active and make an effort to squeeze meaningful experiences out of the mundane. However once people have learned to let go of their superficial greed, they can enjoy the simple things in life. Thoreau explores the joy of his simple solitude and realizes that the times of his isolation are very inspiring to him.

"Some of my pleasantest hours were during the long rain storms in the spring or fall, which confined me to the house for the afternoon...when an early twilight ushered in a long evening in which

many thoughts had time to take root and unfold themselves"(86).

With no material attachments clouding and preoccupying his mind, Thoreau is extremely attuned to himself, his ideas, and the beauty of the plain moments that happen all around him. He takes note of the various bird songs that he hears while doing housework. Usually housework is perceived as a boring activity but Thoreau counters,

"if we were always indeed getting our living...we should never be troubled with ennui"(73).

He emphasizes that if people were living simply without superficial materialism, even monotony should be cherished. The experience of working is valued, not the activity itself; the mind and soul are the focus not the object. Therefore, housework became a pleasurable pastime to Thoreau because he paid close attention to the small natural incidences that were going on all around him while he was scrubbing his floors "clean and white" (73).

The incidents that affected him the most as he scrubbed his floor and swept his house were listening to the beautiful melodies of the twittering birds. He joyfully relishes in the harmonious chirpings and meditates deeply about his experiences. Thoreau writes,

"I was...serenaded by a hooting owl. Near at hand you could fancy it the most melancholy sound in Nature...her choir the dying moans of a human being"(81).

He first hears the richness of the owl's song with apparent delight in his literary voice because he identifies the hooting of the owl to be a serenade to his ears. From listening to the owl's song, Thoreau then discovers the association of the tune to a vocal expression of sad suffering, a personification of gripping human emotion. He expands his rumination writing,

"it reminded me of ghouls and idiots and insane howlings...they represent the stark twilight and

unsatisfied thoughts which all have" (82).

Thoreau does not only hear the music of the owl's song but also hears the intangibly subtle implication. The hooting reminds him of the dark insane desires he has in his psyche. The identification to the "unsatisfied thoughts" refers back to Thoreau's definition of simplicity where one lives life focusing on the mind and soul.

The last facet of Thoreau's complex definition of simplicity is doing the things that one loves to do. Being free of materialism and enjoying the small things in life allows Thoreau to take initiative in controlling his life and live it in a meaningful way. The culmination and the advent of this initiative are pursuing one's passions. Thoreau writes,

"Every path but your own is the path of fate. Keep on your own track, then" (77).

He stresses that people control their own destiny but because many don't want to take the initiative to change their lives for the better, they do not improve their current state and exist meaninglessly. Thoreau realizes this problem and points out early in *Walden*; or *Life in the Woods* that

"it appears as if men had deliberately chosen the common mode of living because they preferred it to any other. Yet they honestly think there is no choice left. But alert and healthy natures remember that the sun rose clear. It is never too late to give up our prejudices" (4-5).

The prejudices that Thoreau mentions are society's materialistic and superficial influences, the inappropriate reverence that people place to their riches. People have allowed themselves to be drowned in this covetous culture because they believe that it is the only way to live, that "there is no choice left". However, Thoreau gives hope that there is a significant capacity for people to reform themselves and their lives for a better, more vital outlook where the "sun [rises] clear". To tap in to that capacity, according to Thoreau, people will have

to take control of their lives and do what is necessary to live more meaningfully by doing what they love.

Thoreau uses the Woodchopper from the chapter "Visitors" to illustrate another person other than himself who embodies a few features of simplicity. He writes,

"[the Woodchopper] was so genuine and unsophisticated that no introduction would serve to introduce him...he was so simply and naturally humble" (95-96).

The Woodchopper lives his life meaningfully because he has found an endeavor that provides him happiness which is the simple, monotonous task of chopping wood, "looking round the trees he would exclaim,—'By George! I can enjoy myself well enough here chopping; I want no better sport' (95). His elation is prominent in the tone of his statement and in his comparison of the arduous work of splitting timber to a "sport". Thoreau presents to readers a man who is free of greed and artificiality. The Woodchopper is simply who he is and what he loves to do, a man living his life in the most peaceful and meaningful way he deems possible.

Although the Woodchopper could be seen as a probable embodiment of Thoreau's definition of simplicity, Thoreau points out that "the intellectual and what is called spiritual man in him were slumbering as in an infant" (95). The Woodchopper lacks the intelligence to utilize and express the fullest extent of his mind and soul. He is so extremely simple that Thoreau "did not know whether he was as wise as Shakespeare or as simply ignorant as a child, whether to suspect him of a fine poetic consciousness or of stupidity" (96). The Woodchopper takes in everything as it is but cannot intellectually delve into their deeper meanings and musings. Throughout the chapter "Visitors", Thoreau frequently refers to the Woodchopper as a "child". A child normally carries an innocence that makes him blind to the world. Lacking that scope and insight into his mind, the Woodchopper could only be a partial embodiment of Thoreau's definition of simplicity.

Ultimately, Thoreau reserves the epitome of

his definition of simplicity to himself. In the chapter “The Bean-Field”, Thoreau admires his beans and his bean field. The beans and the bean field are simple and plain; anyone passing by his cabin could overlook their importance. However, Thoreau “came to love [his] rows, [his] beans” because he appreciated the effort to grow them (100). The tedious work to hoe, water, and weed the field in order to take care of the beans gave him an experience that inspired his mind and, perhaps, his spirit. He writes, “labor of the hands, even when pursued to the verge of drudgery, is perhaps never the worst form of idleness. It has a constant and imperishable moral and to the scholar it yields a classic result” (102). The “imperishable moral” that Thoreau mentions surrounds the issue of time. In his New England society, time seems to be constrained because of routine. Every minute in every hour is sapped due to the various hustle and bustle activities that pollute a person’s schedule. It is therefore easy to become swallowed in a routine and not value time meaningfully. When Thoreau works in the fields to tend to his beans, time is not a constraint but a liberty. He relishes the time that he spends doing dirty labor to grow the beans because it is his choice. Thoreau exercises control when he is out in the fields and could care less when the sun will set. He elaborates,

“When I paused to lean on my hoe, these sounds and sights I heard and saw any where in the row, a part of the inexhaustible entertainment which the country offers” (103).

Thoreau’s casual and peaceful manner is conveyed in the passage. His happiness is immaterial because of his apparent appreciation for work and nature in addition to the small things such as the “sounds” and “sights” that he witnesses in the rows of beans. Thoreau is doing what he loves, truly living his life to the fullest.

Thoreau’s definition of simplicity is a complicated and vivid concept. He explores his concept of simplicity in *Walden*; or, *Life in the Woods* writing about his experiences while living in the fantastic nature of Walden Pond. From his experiences, Thoreau stipulates that living life in accordance to the

fundamentals that focus on the mind and soul is the most meaningful way to live. Thoreau’s simple life entails unshackling oneself from superficial materialism, enjoying the various natural minutiae, and doing the things that one is passionate about. His idea of living a simple life is exceptionally important in today’s modern society. The world people live in the present era is similar to the New England society that Thoreau lived in where citizens still suffer the same constraints that forced Thoreau to escape to the natural refuge of Walden Pond. Granted that social mannerisms, technology, and fashion styles have changed since the 19th century, the superficial materialistic influences still permeate to the 21st century. The modern world is full of materialism highlighted by billboards showcasing the latest fads, commercials polluting the minds of young children with sexual innuendos, popular television shows advocating the lewd glam of the rich and famous and many other carnal variations. Apart from the materialistic nature of the modern world, time is also seen as a constraint. Countless people seem to be living their lives on mechanical schedules not paying attention to what matters the most like the business men who fly overseas to conduct business with foreign investors instead of throwing baseballs with their sons; or the tired, on-call doctors who spend more time with their patients than with their spouses who sadly eat their Saturday night dinner alone. It seems that people who populate this day and age are living their lives meaninglessly, slaves to their material things and routines. However, Thoreau gives people hope. To inspire change in their lives according to Thoreau, they must first take the initiative to change and live their lives in a simple manner. Only then can people reach the zenith of living their lives to the fullest with vigor and significance. Lynyrd Skynyrd’s Ronnie Van Sant sings Thoreau’s vision in the clearest, most resounding way possible,

“be a simple kind of man/ Oh be something, you love and understand.”

Bibliography

Thoreau, Henry David. *Walden; or, Life in the Woods*. 1854. New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1995.

