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**USING LITERATURE TO EXPLORE SUSTAINABILITY:
Human Values and Dispositions**

Matthew E Kaslow
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Reviewed and approved* by the following:

Xiaoye You
Associate Professor, Department of English
Thesis Supervisor

Robert Burkholder
Associate Professor, Department of English
Second Reader

Lisa Sternlieb
Associate Professor, Department of English
Honors Adviser

* Signatures are on file in the Schreyer Honors College.

ABSTRACT

Sustainability is, broadly the collective idea of living and acting in a manner that is healthy, efficient, and practicable in the long term. It is quickly becoming an essential concept to many areas of society, relevant to both a singular person and a global corporation.

Recent studies of the attitudes and behaviors, held by individuals within society, towards sustainability indicates that standard teaching methods—that is, those focused on cognitive learning of facts and applications—do not effectively impact change. Instead, teaching strategies based on affective learning, the acquisition of values and beliefs, are most effective at influencing a person’s attitudes and behaviors.

Along these lines, to ascertain the specific values that act as building blocks towards a favorable disposition regarding sustainability, I conducted an ethnographic study of an Adventure Literature course, ENGL 181A, at Penn State, led by Dr. Robert Burkholder and graduate student Mark Sturges. The philosophy of the course was based on experiential learning, a teaching style designed around affecting a person’s attitudes by engaging them in relevant literature about a “place” followed by informative and fun field visits to those places. The place of interest for the Fall Semester, 2011, in which this study was conducted, was the Chesapeake Bay Watershed.

Throughout the study I focused on the reactions and discussions of the students in the class, as well as the effective elements of the literature, such as themes, motifs, language, and plot. Selected literature covered a wide range of styles, including fiction, historical fiction, and non-fiction.

The conclusion of the study found that appeals to a value of hometown loyalty and disposition towards nostalgia produced mixed responses, but had potential to positively affect the attitudes and behaviors of the students reading them.

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Sustainability Lessons in a Swamp

As our class trudged through a swamp at the Echo Hill Outdoor School on the Eastern Shore of the Chesapeake Bay, many of us were out of our comfort zone. With only the light from the moon, thickly filtered by the enveloping canopy of trees above us, to guide our eyes, each of us were one slippery or misplaced step away from being waist deep in the recently flooded forest.

The guide told us to be attentive to the sounds of wildlife, to take advantage of the incredible natural diversity surrounding us. There were the expected crickets and occasional croak of a frog to complement the creaking boards we walked along. Every few steps someone would mutter “Oh my god,” or some similarly desperate declaration. The recent flooding had raised the water level in the Bay by almost ten inches, or more, and consequently each of us was ankle deep no matter how carefully we walked. Maddy, one of the tougher girls in Dr. Burkholder’s class devoted to exploring the Chesapeake Bay Watershed through literature and field experience, was forced to accept having one soggy foot after the duct-tape closing a recently torn hole in her boot proved insufficient to shield her from the swamp waters. It was this ability for the class to unite over stretching their comfort zone that bonded them throughout the whole trip and, in fact, the entire course. They appreciated the new experiences that opened their eyes to the realities of life in the Chesapeake Bay. Having already explored two tributaries to the Bay, the class was cultivating a complete perspective on the factors affecting the health, productivity, and sustainability of the Bay.

We walked in a single file line—for that was all the space we had on a bridge composed of a series of side-by-side two-by-fours—and trekked forward, clutching at the handrail that, aside from the helping hands of another classmate, offered our only safety should we stumble. We knew a few people had already fallen in, from the cries we heard either before or behind us, but not who, as the darkness kept us disconnected from our classmates. They would make for good stories when we got back to the cabins; that is, after the victims had a chance to shower, of course.

Eventually, we made it to the clearing in the dense woods with only a couple casualties. We took the time to stand and listen. For many of us, this would be our best chance to experience a setting such as this for a while. Hundreds of miles removed from Penn State, we were at the heart of an entirely new place and ecosystem; yet, our lives in State College affect the Bay in many ways, such as how the runoff from the local farms travel downstream to pollute the Bay water we were now surrounded by. It was a moment for reflection, and the platform swayed with the water under our weight. It was calm.

Navigating the march back proved more difficult than the first part of our trip. Our class, separated into two groups, had poorly staggered the timing of our trips into the forest. Consequently, an ensuing encounter of the two groups, on the very narrow bridge, heading in opposite directions, saw more than one person take a step in the swamp. After we crossed the length of the bridge and finally reunited for s'mores in a cabin by the shore, there was plenty of laughter over the experience, one that would certainly be unique for many of the students. Having read multiple

accounts of the Bay, the most well known of which was James Michener's *Chesapeake*, and many reports, interviews, and studies on the ecological and cultural state of the Bay, this trip represented a symbolic culmination of our immersion into the Chesapeake.

A Field of Research on Learning in the Field

Sustainability is a widely interpreted term that means different things to different people. Stephen Sterling provides an accommodatingly broad definition of sustainability as “human rights, peace, active citizenship, participatory democracy, conservation, and ecological, social, and economic justice” (qtd. in Podger, Mustakova-Possardt, and Reid 340). While it is difficult to find a specific or unifying definition, it is possible to make conclusions based on observations of how people learn sustainability. Such conclusions present great value to an academic community hoping to improve sustainable education, as argued by Fritjof Capra in *Ecological Literacy: Educating Our Children for a Sustainable World*: “Education for sustainable living fosters both an intellectual understanding of ecology and emotional bonds with nature that make it more likely that our children will grow into responsible citizens who truly care about sustaining life” (XV). The moral imperative offered here compels us to re-evaluate our educational strategies and optimize them so that we may better impart an appreciation for the world that provides for our existence.

To reach such a goal, to understand how we learn sustainability, we must dissect how people approach sustainability not just from a technical and factual side, but also

from an emotional and personal side. The latter view espouses affective learning—the acquisition and affect of the values and beliefs that emotionally invest a learner—a pedagogy that, according to Kerry Shephard’s essay, “Higher Education for Sustainability: Seeking Affective Learning Outcomes,” agents of higher education have been “reluctant” to study or search for in their work, compared to cognitive learning (87).

Affective learning is a crucial element in the construction of a person’s attitudes regarding sustainability. The discussion of sustainability in Podger, Mustakova-Possardt, and Reid’s paper “A Whole-Person Approach to Educating for Sustainability” described sustainability as a “disposition” towards the principles put forth by Sterling (340). When viewing sustainability itself as a stance or temperament, the emotional arguments that embody affective learning become the crux of sustainable learning over cognitive learning, which Shephard points out relates more to “knowledge and its application”. Mary Miller argues that even when affective learning outcomes are not emphasized in an education, their affect is still pervasive (qtd. in Shephard 89). Unfortunately, these outcomes often develop too slowly to be observed over the lifespan of any educational program. This delayed acquisition makes it difficult to properly analyze the impact of affective learning in a traditional academic setting.

However, I am fortunate enough to have come into contact with Dr. Robert Burkholder, Associate Professor of English in the Liberal Arts College at Penn State. He advocates a teaching strategy around experiential learning, which he wrote about it in an essay entitled “‘To See Things in Their Wholeness’: Consilience, Natural History, and Teaching Literature Outdoors,” published in an edited collection of essays, *Teaching in*

the Field: Working with Students in the Outdoor Classroom, (Crimmel). His essay represented the first entry in the collection and serves to set the tone for the rest of the work. Experiential learning is based on partnering readings, be they fictional or non-fictional accounts directly or indirectly related to a place or concept, with practical trips to and experiences with that subject. Regarding this strategy, he asserts “there are few pedagogical methodologies that are more effective than immersing a student in an experience that engages all the senses in a manner that helps him or her to understand the abstraction of the text in a much more immediate and profound way than one can hope for in a classroom” (22). Indeed, experiential learning offers an educational platform that mitigates the delayed acquisition involved in affective learning outcomes that make them an effective lens through which to observe students and draw conclusions on the actual attitudes and values behind sustainable learning. These are the foundations upon which the development of a sustainable disposition are based, and the vehicle through which change may be affected in our classrooms (Podger, Mustakova-Possardt, and Reid 341).

Certainly, because of its affective learning applications, Dr. Burkholder’s method of experiential learning represents a great opportunity to observe students’ values and dispositions towards sustainability through their interaction with the literatures and the places offered in his unique course in the Liberal Arts College at Penn State, ENGL 181A. The range of learning necessary to achieve an effective education in sustainability also makes Dr. Burkholder’s class an appropriate subject for researching sustainability. According to Katja Brundiers and Arnim Wiek, in their essay "Educating Students in Real-world Sustainability Research: Vision and Implementation", sustainability is "a

global phenomenon with specific regional and local causes and impacts (across spatial scales)" (108). Their emphasis on analyzing sustainability by region fits well with Dr. Burkholder's curriculum. They believe "students need to learn how these problems matter to people 'on the ground,'" (109) a goal that would help them learn about specific causes and places facing sustainability challenges by taking them outside the classroom. Brundiers and Wiek challenge the traditional approach that typically is characterized by curriculum composed of secondary literature or research. By these principles, the experiential learning used in Burkholder's class offer an ideal atmosphere in which to observe the way students interact with the selected relevant literatures.

A Global Exploration of Pro-Sustainability Values

There have been various attempts to identify the elements that embody positive values and dispositions towards sustainability. In his 2011 study regarding Swedish students' attitudes towards sustainable development, focusing on the creation of an environmentally viable infrastructure for humanity, Tomas Torbjornsson compared male and female students to discover prevailing patterns in their belief systems. The foundation of his research lies in the idea that "change in human values is often expressed as a prerequisite for sustainable development" (317). This conclusion is difficult to refute and represents a motivating factor for this study, as well as many others on the subject of sustainability. Torbjornsson describes the exigency of his study as what essentially amounts to the absence of a consensus among researchers over what those values are that need to be changed, while explicitly departing from the standard position in the field that

accepts the principles put forth in the United Nations Millennium Declaration: freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, respect for nature, shared responsibility. He argues there is, generally, an inadequate extrapolation and understanding of these values; rather, the UN Millennium Declaration merely posited that the universal ideals it put forth were the ones key to any real progress towards global sustainable development, and did not explore or explain them.

Indeed, the relevance of the values identified in the Millennium Declaration was stated to be to “international relations in the twenty-first century” with the general goal of sustainable development. This limiting purpose, combined with an inadequate exploration of the definition and application of these “values” suggests they fall into a category of attitudes that Katherine Arbuthnott, in her 2009 paper “Education for Sustainable Development Beyond Attitude Change”, believes only scratch the surface of a person’s position towards sustainability, and that a more thorough exploration of personal values and dispositions is necessary (153). Her research describes the contexts and strategies by which various programs to change people’s behaviors may be most effective, but does not identify specific values and dispositions inherent in a person that affect their beliefs about sustainability.

Likewise, Leiserowitz, Kates, and Parris breached this subject in 2006, exploring the prevalence of and progress towards the ideals identified in the Millennium Declaration (414). They effectively expanded the understanding of those ideals, but mainly described and did “not explain, global trends in values, attitudes, and behaviors” (441).

Adventure Literature: Exploring the Chesapeake Bay

Dr. Burkholder's class, ENGL 181A, was entitled "Adventure Literature: Exploring the Chesapeake Bay" and was the only section of that focus being offered. It met once a week, on Wednesdays from 6:00 to 7:30 in the evening, in the Fall Semester 2011 of Penn State's academic year. Dr. Robert Burkholder was leading two Adventure Literature classes that semester, the other one focused on Cape Cod. A Teaching Assistant, a graduate student named Mark Sturges, led the class. In the course syllabus, written by Mark, he included an eloquent introduction, or preamble, that frames the purpose and character of the course quite well:

In 1612, after exploring the Chesapeake Bay in a thirty-foot shallop and mapping the region with remarkable accuracy, John Smith published a report promoting settlement in the New World. "Heaven and earth," he wrote, "never agreed better to frame a place for man's habitation." Four hundred years later, Smith's declaration has proven prophetic and the Chesapeake continues to attract settlers to its shores. Whether they "come here" or they're "from here," people just seem to fall in love with the Bay. Maybe they seek an escape from the rat race, or they work the water like their fathers did. Maybe they crave that perfect balance between land and water, country and city. Or maybe, during the 1960s, they drank too many bottles of National Bohemian Beer, the official beverage of Baltimore,

brewed on the banks of the Chesapeake—“From the Land of Pleasant Living.” This course aims to explore that beer slogan.

The tone of the course was dedicated to the Bay, and though it was a class founded on experiential learning, it was not a course about experiential learning. Though I approached it with a lens to observe the effect of the material and construction of the course on the attitudes and behaviors of the students—so as to identify the values and dispositions at the core of those changes—the course itself accomplished its goal of educating its students in the culture and history of the Chesapeake Bay, and its importance to the physical land of North America, as well as to the history of the United States.

Mark had worked with Dr. Burkholder in these classes previously, and this was the first semester he was taking the lead. I came into contact with Dr. Burkholder through my thesis supervisor, Professor Xiaoye You, while looking for a class to study for this thesis. Dr. Burkholder is an interesting person, and highly regarded by the class and in his field. He appears slightly older than middle aged, with short grey hair covering his head. He is sturdy and lean, appearing accustomed to work outdoors, while at the same time maintaining an academic appearance. Many of the students, whose names I changed in this paper to preserve their privacy, regard him as a “badass,” which is understandable once you notice his inconspicuous tattoo and see him casually paddle against the river current on one of our canoe trips to the Susquehanna (though he was in a kayak). Despite

the steadiness and strength of the current, he maintained his position in the water, waiting for the class to catch up to him, and thoroughly impressing them in the process.

Dr. Burkholder, as I previously mentioned, is an advocate of experiential learning, a concept around which he constructs his classes. The basic concept follows the idea that an essential part of learning revolves around the sense of place, the identity and culture of an area. For students, the optimum class experience, the best learning takes place when that connection with the real focus of their study is facilitated. Therefore, the readings he selects in his courses detail a place, its culture, its conflicts, its history, and its reality. He plans field trips to these places for students to supplement and complement their reading with first hand experience of the subject of their course work. It is fair to say these trips are often the defining moments for the students, not just of the class, but also of their entire semester, or even undergraduate education. In fact, the group of students I had the privilege of studying with are still tight friends, and maintain contact with each other and organize regular social events with the facilitation of an actively used Facebook group.

That these classes hold such significant stock in the minds of the students is a regularly observed occurrence by Dr. Burkholder. The first class he conducted on experiential learning was a simple 36-hour hike along an Appalachian trail, which he wrote about in his essay. Due to complications along their journey, Dr. Burkholder did not have high hopes for the results of the trip. He was astonished afterwards, reading the students' reactions, expressing surprise at how well they received it. One student proclaimed in his writing, "I'm just glad I took so many pictures with my mind's camera and not with a Kodak. Paper and film are no ways to relive the experience!" (Crimmel

21). His experience is a ringing justification for the teaching method employed by Dr. Burkholder—one that was echoed many times over in this particular class. The reason for the great success achieved in these classes, he explains by saying, “There are few pedagogical methodologies that are more effective than immersing a student in an experience that engages all the senses in a manner that helps him or her to understand the abstraction of the text in a much more immediate and profound way than one can hope for in a classroom” (Crimmel 22). Indeed, this appeared to be the case throughout the course, as students approached what to many college-aged youth a boring tour of old America in a much more profound way, taking the time to appreciate the town of Saint Michaels, Maryland, on our trip to the Eastern Shore.

The course’s value to my studies, aside from possessing a literary focus on more natural elements, was its ability to impart real environmental messages, as described by Dr. Burkholder, that the “language, ideas, and even behavior that points one beyond the assumptions of the dominant culture toward a world where healthier human/nature relationships are possible,” was a real mission of the course (Crimmel 24). Discovering the origins of this exact kind of learning was my mission, and the opportunity to join was too good to pass up.

It is a shame that the majority of the class was not explicitly exposed to Dr. Burkholder’s perspective and guidance throughout the class, since Mark was taking the lead this time. That is only an endorsement of the value Dr. Burkholder presents to the class, and not a comment on Mark. In fact, Mark, was the perfect person to manage this group and did a great job teaching the course. His personality fit very well with the

students, and, had he been their age, one could imagine him as a student in the class rather than the man in front of the class. Because the class was so tight-knit, there was a decent amount of chatting and joking around before, during, and after each session, so it took no small amount of patience to corral their attention occasionally, a task Mark was ready. In one particularly memorable moment, he built into the middle of a PowerPoint presentation he made a slide requesting the class to quiet down, thus showing remarkable foresight by correctly guessing the moment they would be lacking attention. This tactic did, however, provoke more laughter before it produced the desired focus.

Mark was in his mid-twenties with short, brown hair and a slight build (though, like Dr. Burkholder, sturdy). He appeared to be more of an outdoorsman than the typical English graduate student, as he often walked around campus with one of the large hiking backpacks one normally finds with people engaged in a serious trek or expedition. He would wear strong hiking shoes and cargo pants that seemed suited for camping. While students thought Dr. Burkholder was plainly impressive, they found Mark to be more of a quiet, secret “badass.” One moment in which this was clearly demonstrated was on the trip to the Eastern Shore during the previously described swamp-walk. Mark accidentally took a single step off the walkway, resulting in him going waste-deep in the swamp. Where most students would shudder at such a thought and moan in exasperation, Mark did not say a word and strode straight through the incident as though it never happened. Steely moments like this created lasting impressions amongst the class.

The class was informally divided into two groups: students taking the class as ENGL 181A, and students seeking to expand upon the experience, many with the

purpose of obtaining honors credits towards their educational requirements as part of Penn State's Schreyer Honors College, who were taking the course as ENGL 496H. Though this divination was for the most part implicit and rarely noticed, it was a practical separation during the Echo Hill trip, when we were split into groups based on this designation. Otherwise, it mostly affected the final paper being written for the class. There was no way to tell, outwardly, who was part of which group. The 496H group did not appear in any stereotypical fashion some may find typical of an honors college student—in fact, many obtaining this honors designation were doing so only to expand their education and were not necessarily in the honors college—to be nerdy or otherwise different. In this regard, the class was, as a whole, rather homogenous.

Among the students there were 11 different majors, and though the greatest number of them were English majors, the list was very broad and ranged from Energy Business and Finance to Toxicology, Immunology & Infectious Disease. The second most populated major was Secondary Education. Including myself, there were about 20 students (depending on the one or two that dropped the course at the early stages of the semester), one of which was married, in her late twenties, and was a non-degree student with a degree in biology from the College of William & Mary. As is always the case in these classes (due to their unique construction and the lack of a departmental requirement funneling students into the sections), the majority of students were taking the course because they previously had Dr. Burkholder for a different, more generic class, and he convinced them to try this one (none were disappointed). Another common origin story was a recommendation from an academic advisor or friend; only very few simply saw the

course in the online list and self-selected. Many students cited appreciation for the course's value at 4.5 credits.

Overall, it was a very diverse class in terms of educational and demographical background, with a relatively even split between male and female students. Students represented a range of semester standings, from freshmen to seniors.

Dynamic Literature and Field Trips

The class curriculum represented a very broad range of readings and trips to bestow upon us, at the conclusion of the semester, a sufficient knowledge of the overall “place” of the Chesapeake Bay. The required texts included Gilbert Byron's *The Lord's Oysters*, Susan Stranahan's *Susquehanna, River of Dreams*, James Michener's *Chesapeake*, and the *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*. This collection represented a broad range of literature. *The Lord's Oysters*, a fictional account with traces of inspiration from the author's life was a true novel; *Susquehanna* was a detailed non-fiction account of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed; *Chesapeake*, a large work of historical fiction, balanced the pure fiction and non-fiction pieces; *Frederick Douglass* was an autobiography that gave a very important historical perspective on the area and its culture. Throughout the course of my studies, I found that these works, as well as the various accompanying readings selected and provided by Mark and Dr. Burkholder to encompass a fantastic representation of the range of literature I sought to examine. Because my subject covers a broad spectrum of literary formats, the diversity of styles these works

offered was ideal to obtain a proper understanding of people's reactions and interactions with the literature.

Parallel to the assigned readings, students were required to write three papers and turn in a scrapbook of their experiences throughout the semester. The papers included a "Bay Paper," a "River Paper," and a "Watershed Paper." Students were expected to combine their reflections from the field trips, analyses of the readings, and original arguments in their papers. They were assigned at pivotal moments throughout the semester in accordance with the schedule of their trips, so each paper would have a unique focus.

The four trips scheduled for the semester were a canoe trip on the West Branch of the Susquehanna River on Saturday, September 17th; a weekend long trip to Echo Hill Outdoor School on the Eastern Shore, Thursday through Sunday, September 22nd – 25th; a paddle with the Chesapeake Bay Foundation on the main stem of the Susquehanna through Harrisburg, Saturday, October 1st; and an exploration of the Safe Harbor Dam and Native American Petroglyphs, Saturday, October 22nd. Unfortunately, the final trip to view the Petroglyphs, of which we had read and discussed in the class leading up to the trip, was changed to a river expedition through Pine Creek, a section downstream of Slate Run, PA. The cancellation of the original plans was a consequence of high overall water levels from Hurricane Irene. These conditions plagued the entire trip, but provided the unique opportunity to see, first hand, how fine a balance ecological optimization of the Bay requires. Irene stirred up a ton of silt and pollution in the river that threatened the bio-diversity of the river, a feature we studied on our first trip. During a break on the

river, a few students used a large net to filter through the water and capture micro-invertebrates, and by analyzing which species were present, we could infer the condition of the water based on the presence or absence of kinds that tolerated different levels of pollution in the water. Additionally, the overall condition of the Eastern Shore was “muddy,” to say the least, and the water was much murkier than normal.

Through my observations of the students’ interactions throughout the semester, I found that two of the most important elements underlying a person’s sustainable values and dispositions were feelings of hometown loyalty and an appreciation for the nostalgia attached to places. The undercurrent tying these factors together is an identification with the place in question, which requires an understanding of said place. Both of these senses are addressed in Dr. Burkholder’s class and fulfill the expected affective learning outcomes.

Hometown Pride

On August 31st, our class met for the second time. While in the first class we mostly went over what could be expected from the class, the kind of work the students would be doing, and a brief round of icebreakers, this was the first class during which we really got into the work. For this class the students were assigned number of passages from various readings: William Warner’s “The Bay,” Tom Horton’s “Thoreau Times Forty,” Robert Day’s “The Statue Man,” and Andrew McCown’s “Of Crabs and Chicken-neckers.” At the conclusion of the class we watched a short video entitled “Out Town—Chestertown.”

Robert Day's piece seemed to drive much of the discussion and provided an early glimpse of a theme in many of the works we'd read throughout the semester. The main plot of the passage was the story of a man who had moved to the Eastern Shore and over the course of his time there learned what it meant to be a "local," though he did not necessarily become a local. He commissions a boat to be built by one of the most significant local heroes of the region, a man whose story the class would revisit upon taking a visit to the region, Stanley Vansant. Day entitled the piece "Statue Man" partly because there is a statue of Stanley Vansant on the shore. By the end of the work, the narrator has not come up with a name for the boat, despite having been there for 20 years. Mark Sturges, a graduate student leading much of the discussion poses a question to the class – why has the narrator failed to name his boat after having been on the shore so long? The answer is readily available if you read the passage, and Polly was ready with the reply. "He doesn't name the boat because he wants to be like a local, and here Stanley is the local, there's a statue of him." Mark responded to Polly's answer by saying that the outsider to the region is a very common cultural motif to the Chesapeake, "people coming from the outside and wanting to become a local."

This conversation represented the beginning of an overarching theme in many of the works we would read that goes a long way toward creating a connection between the reader and literature. Almost every person can understand the concept of a hometown and being an outsider. There are often positive feelings associated with a place one can call their own, and negative feelings associated with being strange or unwelcome in a new place. Polly, specifically, might have felt the need to be a "local", or to fit in, as she was

one of the quieter students in the class and admitted to not often being invited out. In general, however, these feelings are very relevant to college students like those in this class, all whom have recently experienced the transition from being an outsider, or a first year student at Penn State, to becoming part of the town, a member of “Happy Valley.” The bond to the area, a very small college town seemingly in the middle of nowhere, makes students extremely defensive of the physical land and the ideas and images associated with it.

For an example of this tendency to feel protective of one’s “hometown,” one need look no further than the recent scandal involving the football team’s former defensive coordinator Jerry Sandusky, who was accused of molesting more than ten young boys over the past decade. The fallout from his recent arrest saw the firing of the long time president of 17 years, Graham Spanier, and the even longer time head coach of the football team, Joe Paterno.

Joe Paterno had been the head coach of Penn State football from 1966 until 2011. He was the longest tenured college football head coach in history and holds NCAA records for wins, is a member of the NCAA football hall of fame, and has a bronze statue of himself outside of the football stadium. In other words, he may be considered the Stanley Vansant of State College, the ultimate local. He was, for as long as many people can remember, the face of the school and the town, so, amid his eventual release, there were many strong, protective emotions from the residents around Penn State whom feel the “hometown” pull. However, as the scandal proved, these feelings are not uniform, as there was a large fraction of the population who wanted to preserve Paterno’s legacy and

reputation as much as possible (mainly the students) and a large fraction of the population who wanted him removed immediately in defense of the victims of Sandusky (mainly the staff/faculty) on the basis that he had not done enough to stop Sandusky—as far as I personally observed. Despite differing opinions, both sides were motivated by similarly defensive feelings, which turned to solidarity and reverence upon Paterno’s death in January.

In class that day on August 31st, when discussing Stanley Vansant, there was another side of the argument that represents the potential pitfall of making the “local” appeal in a work of literature. This very fact is emphasized in the “Statue Man” in the following passage (page 83) as it was read aloud in class:

The land where they live is simply known as the shore, and those people aren’t called shore folk or shore people, but more often just locals, always pronounced with a certain matter-of-factness, as if to suggest by the lack of inflection that no other place could have locals, and therefore the rest of America is probably not much more than roving bands of nomads driving U-Hauls from the suburbs of Washington to the suburbs of Philadelphia.

The tone of this passage is almost one of elitism, placing the shore on a pedestal above the rest of the America. It was not, however representative of the overall passage and only serves to show the general “in-crowd, out-crowd” dynamic that is very prevalent in our readings. The cynicism associated with outsiders in this passage, though, does

represent the opposite side of making a “local” or “hometown” appeal. Reducing the population of America not included in one’s hometown to “roving bands of nomads” is very dehumanizing and is indicative of a lack of respect and distance. Therefore, the inherent risk in a “local” argument is the reader turning against that hometown, as was demonstrated later in the discussion when, Rebecca presented the following opinion:

I felt like the character actually developed throughout the story like he usually would, but, when I first started reading it, I felt like he was this very sheltered, very simple kind of man and, you know, maybe he deserved the statue for something local. Then you find out he did go to New York and Europe, too, and he doesn’t say anything like, ‘it’s not like home, its not as good’ or anything like that, so you find out he’s actually kind of, not necessarily cultured, but he’s open to these other experiences so he’s cool in that sense.

The feelings vocalized by Rebecca represent the lack of respect for a situation such as Stanley’s prestige around the Eastern Shore, when one is unable to connect with that particular area. There are various issues that may cause this kind of rift, such as the piece of literature not adequately developing the person or place in the mind of the reader to establish that connection, or previous ill-will in the reader towards that person or place. Regardless, a failure to make that connection puts the work at risk of, rather than evoking the protective hometown feelings, evoking the negative feelings associated with being an

outsider to the region. These are the kinds of feelings Rebecca may have been experiencing when sharing her initial reserves about the worthiness or credibility of Vansant. Calling him “sheltered” and “simple” reveal these derogatory feelings, even if he was very worthy for local actions. It was only when Rebecca learned of Stanley’s more worldly endeavors that she thought he was “cool.”

Stephanie explored the potential rationale behind that kind of argument in a follow up to Rebecca’s remarks:

It’s a stubbornness. I think wherever you grow up you think it’s the best place. My dad and my grandpa both hate traveling and I asked my dad ‘if you could live anywhere in the world where would you live,’ and he replied ‘Philadelphia, I’ve lived there my whole life why would I want to leave.’

It is human nature to develop roots. Having a community and familiarity with a specific area provides stability and comfort in one’s life; shifting this paradigm in a person’s life can elicit confusion and the associated anger. So, since Stephanie’s father and grandfather had spent the great majority of their lives living in one place, the prospect of another home was displeasing.

There is another dynamic at play that is more in line with Rebecca’s remarks as observed by Mark during the discussion. “It seems part of this sense of place is a ‘local pride.’” That pride is embodied in Rebecca’s first reaction to Stanley Vansant as being

“sheltered” and “simple,” and was apparent in the work itself describing the pronunciation of “locals” as having, “a certain matter-of-factness, as if to suggest by the lack of inflection that no other place could have locals,” as mentioned in the passage previously read aloud in class (Day 83). To bruise this pride would be similar to placing one outside of his hometown comfort zone.

Gabe made the closing statements of this particular vein of the conversation. He related a story of when he faced hometown aggression from people living only on the other side of a highway dividing his town. He was on the side opposite his home speaking with a couple of teenagers and was asked about his area code. When Gabe replied that he had the same area code as the other teens, they quickly retorted “Yeah, but you live on the other side of the highway, don’t you?” Despite Gabe living only a couple miles away, the hometown pride, or apprehension, was already present in the two teens.

What is being developed in this discussion is that to be forcibly made to deal with a new home, even in literature, could potentially be harmful to one’s overall stance to that piece, unless the literature substantially enough develops that place in one’s mind so as to alleviate the “outsider” dynamic. Despite this pitfall, it still can be a strong tool to win the credibility and faith of the reader if adequately developed.

Nostalgia

This sense of hometown pride was further explored in later classes, but, the discussion then shifted onto one of the other readings, “Of Crabs and Chicken-neckers,” an interview by the Washington College Press of another local figure in the Eastern

Shore, Andrew McCown, or, Captain Andy. The interview gave the class a taste of the current state of the Bay. Much of the class was designed with that point in mind, as Dr. Burkholder is a strong proponent of experiential learning, which requires students understand the culture and history of an area. As explained, Dr. Burkholder has his students first read about a place to develop that connection and then visit the place to build and enhance that experience and understanding.

In the interview with Captain Andy, another theme that was shared by other readings was introduced. In the piece, when asked about the current state of the fishermen and ship industry, as compared to earlier in the 20th century, when the Bay was in its heyday, Captain Andy replied, “Nobody works there anymore, there’s just no point to it, the river had a lot more productivity then than it does now... it’s a really sad thing” (29). This reverence for the past was indicative of a tone that, as Mark pointed out, plays in a number of our readings, and is very often used in picaresque literature: “A big theme in a lot of the readings is this nostalgia, an interesting history, the good old days. A lot of us have that feeling about the past. The Bay had such golden days, the glory years in the early part of the 20th century.”

This theme was evident particularly in many of the earlier readings, such as Gilbert Byron’s *The Lord’s Oysters* and James Michener’s *The Chesapeake*. In the fourth class of the semester, upon finishing reading *The Lord’s Oysters*, Mark separated the class by gender, and had the boys choose a male character from the novel to analyze and present, while the girls did the same for the female characters. The gender distinction in this activity was found to be a revealing practice by the class, as part way through the

discussion, Rebecca, who would often be observed hanging out with fellow classmates Daniel and Paul, rather than other female classmates, pointed out, “I see that, like, the men are kind of different characters, [but] the women are all just very stereotypical, they’re either really mean or nice but they’re usually mean.” What she was pointing out was that the female characters in *The Lord’s Oysters* tended to lack depth or development, while the male characters seemed to be crafted more carefully and carried more meaning. Mark agreed, adding that, “the nice [women] are just foils to the mean ones.”

Due to this perceived disparity in significance amongst the characters, the class’ analysis of the male characters took on extra meaning. Consider Gabe’s analysis of the main character’s grandfather, who had multiple appearances in the book to provide a link to the history of the novel’s setting:

I did Grandpappy of Noah, ex-waterman, hangs out in this arc drinks coffee and tells people what’s best for them, and after his cataract operation he’s able to read some Thoreau. He has strong beliefs in independence and defiance and standing up for himself. And the quote I chose was on page 99 after George he’d love if he could come visit, and he says, ‘Who asked you to come? Who asked to go home with you? I just hate seeing a son of mine let a woman boss him around.’

Gabe's analysis accurately portrays "Grandpappy" as a kind of curmudgeon that is stuck in the glory and nostalgia of his past, and many elements observed by Gabe touch on just that: the cataracts that for a while crippled him acted as shackles on his life, limiting his independence and preventing him from clearly seeing the present; he lived in a time when women were more subservient to men, as evinced by his disappointment in his son's obedience to his wife; and his life on the water is a physical embodiment of time passing him by, as his arc stays anchored in the river as it flows past him.

Mark presented another main character, Noah's father, George. Though Mark did not comment as broadly upon George as Gabe did upon Grandpappy, he did reveal one of the novel's main motifs:

I had George, Noah's dad. So basically, he's relaxed, he's really down to Earth, he kind of is okay with anybody, he'll drink with anybody and play poker and what not, especially horseshoes, and definitely the one thing he represents is the river, he is a free, flowing river, and a perfect quote that I found to top it off is on 314, 'Boys, that George really knows the Chester river,' Captain Pete said, 'He can see better at night than an old hoot owl.' Basically he is the river.

George's hobbies demonstrate the slightly sloth-like tendencies of his character. He prefers relaxing with his friends to more serious work. At one point in the novel he worked to get a job with steady pay as a government employee, responsible for raising

and lowering the local bridge when ships would come through the river, but, due to his lack of dedication to the job, he eventually lost it, and returned to his job aboard his bateau digging up oysters. The conflict between men and women surfaced over this point multiple times throughout *The Lord's Oyster's*, as Noah's mother frequently chastised George regarding his refusal to acquire a steady job. The general deference given to the male characters by Byron suggests that characters such as Grandpappy and George are the heroes of the story, promoting the lifelong dedication to the river that is inherent in past and present watermen's lives. Mark recognized this when he remarked that George basically "is the river."

The reader easily recognizes an appeal towards nostalgia such as this, and in previous class periods, there were multiple appeals and comparisons brought up by the class to demonstrate this point. As Daniel observed, "With the descriptions of the really peaceful and beautiful land, and the way people refer to themselves as shore folk, and really worry about their own little thing, I can't help be reminded of Shire from Lord of the Rings." In one discussion, Chase related his feelings about the tendency of writers to embody the nature described in their work as almost independent characters. "To me it seems like they're writing the Bay as some kind of spirit like something's a live about it, when I was reading it I pictured the Bay as shining, as alive." At one point, there was even a comparison to *The Land Before Time*, a children's dinosaur movie many of the students grew up with and for which they could experience their own feelings of nostalgia.

Ultimately, the appeal to nostalgia can be a double-edged sword. As demonstrated, it provides the reader an opportunity to share in the sentiments expressed by the writer for his or her subject matter—which is, in many of these cases, a reverence for the environment and place—but can also alienate the reader in much the same manner as the previously discussed appeal towards hometown loyalty may. This was particularly evident subsequent to the class’ second fieldtrip, an extended stay at the Echo Hill Outdoor School, from Thursday, September 22nd, to Sunday, September 25, at the Eastern Shore. Consider Eddie’s comments after reading Christopher Tilghman’s “On the Rivershore,” a short story told from the point of view of a man as he recounts seeing his father and other river men handle a murder when he was a child. “I liked seeing the river man react to something other than, ‘ah look at all these great oysters,’ or ‘there are not enough oysters here.’ It was putting them in a different situation and I liked trying to figure out what was going to happen.” Eddie’s initial words provoked a chuckle from his classmates, and shows that some of the most important things in one culture, namely Bay oysters, will not perfectly translate to the world the reader inhabits.

Prior to the trip to the Eastern Shore, the class had read a great deal of pieces about the Bay, which in some situations is epitomized by Eastern Shore. Included in this list are works such as William Warner’s “The Bay,” Day’s “The Statue Man,” McCown’s “Of Crabs and Chicken-neckers,” and of course Michener’s *Chesapeake*. While these works each gave the class a unique sense of the place they were reading, it may not have been enough to really establish the link to the place their authors were intending to

convey, a point Arnold explored during a discussion debating the value of the facts versus the emotion written into what we were reading:

It's interesting that we're reading all of these other people's experiences of the Bay and how that is going to color our experience of the Bay, and you would almost think the best way to experience the Bay would be to not read anything about it before you go and then experience it so it's just all your own experience, so there's no cultural mediation between you and the actual Bay.

Thus, even before we left for the Echo Hill School, there were already signs that the nostalgia of these readings was not strong enough to completely, or lastingly, change the attitudes and beliefs of their readers. The extent of this effect was difficult to determine, however, as in the same discussion Jessie and Mark led credence to the power of emotion. While comparing several maps brought to class by Dr. Burkholder, several that emphasized the topography of the land and several that represented the cities and human populations in more detail, Jessie declared that, "I think the maps are the facts and you can look at it as something tangible but the stories are the emotional side." In agreement, Mark added "A map can tell a story, but it's also sort of abstract, but one dimensional whereas stories are different... Representing a place in word, you can tell narratives which give it depth."

Therefore, the ultimately, the impact of the readings' appeal to nostalgia was mixed, and could certainly be stronger, as demonstrated after the trip to the Echo Hill School when many students vocalized either strongly enhanced feelings that began in the readings, or even complete paradigm shifts that the readings were unable to manifest in the reader.

Michener's *Chesapeake*

Michener's novel represented a lot of reading for the class. The novel is a piece of historical fiction, not about any one tale, but about the lifetime of the Bay over the past 500 years. In this endeavor, it did cover some more scientific discussions, for instance, the pollution of the Bay over the years that has led to its degradation and fall from its former "glory days." Mark had this critique of one of the first passages we read, before we had left for Echo Hill. But, if you listened to the reaction of the class to this first piece about industrialization, you get a completely different impression:

I think it's cool how he like, a cool sympathetic device, how he got us to sympathize with the crab and then he in turn got us to see his illustrated point about like how industrialization hurts the river. We got so attached to the crab, I was like rooting for him, and like he boned that other crab and he was like left to just die and we were like, 'yeah crab,' and then I like cried.

Michener used the story of a crab (named Jimmy) migrating away from oncoming rush of pollution and silt that was stirred up by a hurricane while also dealing with molting, a process that puts him in a very vulnerable position, and mating, which puts him in a similarly vulnerable position. In the end, Jimmy was accomplished in all of those pursuits, but one: surviving. The epic of Jimmy the Crab was less a silly story about a crab, and more an exposition in serious issues facing the Bay—just approached from a different perspective that attracted the interest of readers in a very different way than science and numbers. Most of, if not all of the class, could understand the destruction described by pH level changes of the Bay, the inches of silt on the bottom that suffocate the oysters, et cetera; but not many of us could feel, emotionally, the impact these changes had until they were delivered in a story we could relate to. The challenges and difficulties faced by the Bay were essentially foreign to us, the numbers might as well have been written in a different language; but the story of Jimmy translated it into something we could all understand, the idea of a struggle. It helped impress upon us the changes facing the Bay, and, when we were sailing the Bay, we were at first hesitant to jump into the water lest we be exposed to unhealthy pollutants.

At another date and another passage of Michener's novel, the tone of the conversation had a slightly different feel, beyond the sympathy we had felt for Jimmy previously. When discussing the implications of what amounts to a turf war between locals of the Bay Jake Turloch and Tim Covehny, and outsiders with larger, more powerful ships trying to push them out despite the laws against it, the class reacted in defense of the locals. Mark observed, regarding the dispute between the groups of

watermen, “This is territorialism. This is their sense of place, we can look at them in this glamorous light and say they’re protecting their home ground.” Mark was alluding to our tendency to excuse one side despite their even claim to responsibility to the party we found to be offending. He was then contradicted by Maddy, “But somehow it’s not fair that they run over with their engine boats and the other guys are sailing and paddling along, you know, that’s not an even playing field.” The main point of Maddy’s argument was that they were both wrong, but the other guys were more wrong. In the end though, both parties were actually guilty of murder, yet Maddy was staunch in her defense of one side. Why? Because Michener had successfully placed her in shoes of Jake Turloch and Tim Covehny, and she felt the hometown loyalty that would potentially inspire her to defend a place as they did. An interesting endeavor is to discover how Michener accomplished this.

The initial comments regarding the story of Turloch and Covehny were negative, which makes Maddy’s defense even more surprising. Paul’s comments speak to this point:

“I hated the way he characterized them. In the beginning I was cheering for Tim and I was like, ‘Yeah you got this long relationship with your dog and he’s this awesome dog and you’re a kind, caring soul.’ At the same time, Jake Turloch is this complete jerk and you really don’t like him, but then suddenly Michener’s just like, ‘Oh just kidding they’re really good friends though,’ and then they go on this boat, they’re doing this stuff, and

Tim is still the guy who saves Jake when the skipjack gets blown away by the big guns. And then, once they're on the skipjack, I start liking Tim less and less, and Jake more and more because Tim was a complete asshole, and just don't think he was nice to anybody, ever, while Jake turned out to be the guy who's like 'You know this is what I've always heard about black people my whole life, but that's not really true, it has to be but it's not,' and he's more the character I identified with."

This represents a complex relationship between the characters and the reader. There was no clear "winner" in the heart of the reader because both characters were flawed and developed, and the moral of the story was not spoon-fed to the reader. In trying to deconstruct this dilemma, Mark posed the question to the class, "Can we think about their particular biases and where they might come from? What do we know about Tim Covehny's background?" The class responded in a general murmur that he was Irish. Mark continued, "What do you guys know about 19th century Irish people?" There was, again, a general murmur that they did not enjoy the most favorable situation in America, but Polly elaborated on this. "Didn't the Irish compete for a lot of those jobs with black people? So I think that stems a lot of those feelings." Mark responded, "It very much did and a lot of the result was to find a place in the American Pack, if you will, Irish immigrants were stereotypically some of the most vicious racists."

This dialogue amongst the class shows their ability to discern the reality behind a situation, and its effective appeal to their general sentiment regarding a work. In fact, a

large portion of Michener's novel was rooted in at least some kind of historical fact. For example, another passage we read at the beginning of the novel included a story about a Native-American named Pentaquod. Pentaquod was a member of the Susquehannock tribe, a more violent tribe living in the northern Chesapeake Bay Watershed. Seeking a life with less conflict, he fled his tribe after a dispute with the senior leadership (since his questioning of their decision to go to war with another tribe was an egregious offense), and encountered the pacifistic Choptanks, a faction of the Nanticoke tribe. His bravery and strength quickly transformed him into a leader in their tribe, especially as they were constantly retreating from their aggressive neighbor tribes, a different faction of the Nanticokes and, ironically, Pentaquod's Susquehannocks. He taught them to defend themselves, peacefully. This portion of the novel ended with Pentaquod living to become their werowance, which was their chief, and making his home just outside the village. Its conclusion transitioned into the next portion of the novel by introducing the English settlers. The tribes featured were real tribes and it was geographically accurate. The novel was written following historical record, giving the work an air of realism the students appreciated; it was as though the reality made it more important and worthy of their consideration. Indeed, it was a piece of historical fiction, the genre of many books promoting environmental awareness or a sense of place, as Dr. Burkholder was teaching, however, it was not received well by critics, for whatever reason.

However, the story of Pentaquod was appealing to the students because of the again recurring themes of hometown loyalty and nostalgia. The inherent conflict of Pentaquod fleeing his tribe of birth to find a new land and new home, then having to

defend it from his previous family immediately forces the reader to take sides, and Pentaquod was an easy choice. The class felt a distinct motivation to root for the defense of the new land, as the Susquehannocks and neighboring brother Nanticokes ravaged the village and land in their aggression. This passage was rife with appeals to hometown loyalty.

Furthermore, it also included nostalgia in the end to further entice the reader and attach him or her to the story. Having known of the coming of the English settlers for some time, and the devastating affect they would have on the peaceful balance his home and tribe and family cherished, he felt sorrow in this final stage of his life.

But as the canoe left the small stream to enter the river which would take him to his new responsibilities, he looked back with sorrow and longing at the peninsula which he had transformed. He would not see it again, and he knew this, for with the arrival of the Great Canoe not only would his paradise be lost, but that of all the Choptanks (43).

This sad conclusion, in defense of a seemingly dying land and tradition, forced the reader into Pentaquod's shoes, and evoked a loyalty against the coming English settlers. It is a great example of the power of appealing to the reader's hometown pride and nostalgia, and the success an author can achieve with those tools.

Echo Hill Trip

The trip to the Eastern Shore, though chronologically slightly before the middle of the semester, represented the real climax of the class and the highlight of the experience of most students. As the longest trip and the expedition that would provide us with the most detailed and up-close view of the culture of the Bay, nothing either before or after it could match it in anticipation or actual content. Though there were two more field trips subsequent to trip to the Eastern Shore that were very interesting and engaging, they lacked the grandeur of a weekend long trip to a destination over four hours away. It is therefore a fitting end to my discussion of the students' journey through the literature.

The trip began as a car ride that lasted into the night and saw most of us arrive at the outdoor school, which felt like a camp, rather tired. One of the staff members guided us to the beach at the Bay as a treat and one fun activity to reward us after our long drive down. Most of us were awed by the serene night. Our side of the shore—quiet and overflowing with the kind of wilderness most of us rarely experienced—sharply contrasted the cityscape observed on the far side of the Bay.

The next morning, after waking up begrudgingly, we enjoyed breakfast with the school's other students, groups of elementary school age kids, and split into two groups for the day's activities. The first day activities included "Bay Studies" and a "Mystery Tour." My group tackled the Bay studies first. After a short drive in pouring rain, Captain Andy took us out over the Bay on his boat, a small, motorized ship that left many of us disappointed to not be on one of the bateaus or skipjacks we had been reading about. As most of us were unacquainted with simply tolerating the elements, and many of us

lacking weather resistant clothing, we huddled underneath the small roofed portion of the boat as Captain Andy steered us out to a deeper portion of the Bay to observe its natural features. He cast out a line with a cage attached to it and captured a crab, and also another device that was able to trap a great deal of small fish and other, much smaller, organisms. The group reacted to the fish with wide eyes and as Captain Andy poured the fish over a table we all crowded around. He explained the different species of each fish and their value to the biodiversity of the Bay and the fishing industry of the region, two concepts we were familiar with from our readings. A catfish in particular garnered a great deal of attention.

The mystery tour was next, and the first destination we visited was a local crab business that purchased hauls from local fishermen to finish into the hard and soft-shell crabs many of us had only seen previously on a plate. The process to prepare them surprised a few students: first, they sorted through the crabs, to ensure they were up to standard, and separated them by sex. The soft-shell crabs were so exhausted from backing out of their shells that they put up little fight. After this they were dumped into a vat and electrocuted, then, finally, steamed.

Next, we had the opportunity to walk around a dock that was populated by many ships that fulfilled our visions of seafaring grandeur as created by the readings we had studied. But, first, we listened to Mark and Dr. Burkholder as they recited some history of the area, including the Stanley Vansant statue mentioned earlier. After walking around the dock, we were guided through a tour of a three-room museum devoted to the history

of fishermen on the Bay. This was the first point at which it seemed like the class was ready to move on because of exhaustion or disinterest.

After dinner, we went on a night tour of the woods around the school grounds and experienced every naturally occurring ecosystem the Bay had to offer, including the now infamous swamp. We were again separated into two groups, and each had a slightly different experience, depending on the familiarity of their guide with the area. My group was mostly fine, but the other got lost. Overall, the experience was positive, though the short foray into the swamp wore on the nerves of many of the students, as it was a little more “nature” than some were hoping to experience (particularly after falling in or just getting their feet soaked). The woods tour ended with s’mores in a cabin and, upon returning to our cabins, many students ventured back to the beach we visited the previous night.

The next morning we had a quick breakfast and boarded two boats out on the Chesapeake. These boats were more along the lines of those we had read about and made for a very relaxing morning and afternoon. We enjoyed some local tastes, including the crabs we picked up the day before and some freshly caught oysters. I took the time to interview the class and get their opinions on the class and the trip up to that point. One student whose opinion epitomized the feeling of the class was Mark.

Looking at the Bay, being at the Bay, experiencing it, kind of gives me a calming feeling, in a way, just looking at the water, the calm water. It’s been raining here so the weather hasn’t been the greatest, but regardless

it's been nice to walk around and look at the Bay and get a good understanding of the culture of the Bay... Also, at Echo Hill, the whole thing's been really interesting, really eye opening, doing our night walks, going through the woods, trying to experience our senses, and it's been very eye opening.

For him, as for most people, the actual experience of nature made the greatest impact. A key point in his answer was getting an understanding of the culture of the Bay. For him, what was missing from the literature he had read up to this point was the connection that comes with familiarity. Such a connection is a strong driving force behind the two major themes discovered at this point: hometown loyalty, and nostalgia. Gabe also cited the opportunity to learn about the Bay, noting, "We just got to enjoy the nature and be out on the river and learn a little about how the boats work and about the fishermen, and I just thought it was a great time."

One of the Echo Hill staff members, Caitlin Pope, was once a student of Dr. Burkholder's and had taken one of the experiential learning classes he instructed. As a staff member with Echo Hill, she had experienced teaching students to appreciate and understand the natural aspects of the world both scientifically and personally. From these experiences she developed a perspective that affirmed the importance of making a connection with the content of a piece of literature towards making an attitudinal and behavioral change:

I've been on one of Dr. B's classes before and so I appreciate how his classes study an important area, especially the Chesapeake, because where we live actually affect this area, which a lot of people don't actually realize yet. I lived in Pennsylvania my whole life and didn't always realize how closely connected we were to the Chesapeake, so I think it's really great that Dr. B has gotten a program like this together where he gets to bring students here for a first hand experience, and see what you guys have been reading about, because sometimes I'm more of a hands on learner. You can read something, but it's another thing to come here and experience and see the fishermen, and go crabbing, and see the culture; and it's another thing to read it. You know the class brings it to another level to make these kinds of field trips and spend this kind of time up close and personal with the people. I love his class I think it's immensely important, and that a lot of experiences are a lot more meaningful and carry on further in life when you have those connections.

The significance of connecting with the culture of the literature is vital, and was a recurring theme in many of the conversations I had with people on the trip. It was becoming apparent that, despite the positive reviews and reactions from students in class, the real impact was made when they were able to establish the personal connection with the literature on the trip. That is not to say that their comments in class were simply

pandering to what they knew the instructors wanted to hear, but, perhaps, they themselves were unaware of the deficiencies of the impact the literature had thus far had on them.

These concepts were, of course, familiar to Dr. Burkholder, from designing many of these classes. Much of his teaching philosophy is based on the knowledge that any intrinsic change in belief comes from an understanding of the associated culture. While on the boat that afternoon, he took the time to assess how he thought the trip had progressed:

We're now underway on the Chester River on Saturday and the sun has broke through and we're going to have a great day of eating and sailing on the river. This class is intended in lots of ways to sort of introduce people and immerse them in Chesapeake culture and being on a boat like we are right now is part of that immersion. So, I think it's going as I'd hope it would go and I hope it continues to go well.

As a great deal of the readings we had studied to this point were about watermen and their boats, the experience of sailing on the Bay would make it much easier to understand the emotions and memories that lie beneath the writing. Arnold even directly echoed these sentiments. "I think what's most important about this class is being able to read the books but also being able to experience what you're reading about, I think that's one of the best ways to learn about something, to experience it." Arnold took an almost universally positive attitude into everything he did with the class.

I spoke with Chase next. His first reaction to my question about the class and the trip was to praise the trip and the greater understanding it brought to him, but he was the first to mention the books and readings, which he enjoyed. When I asked him to elaborate, he responded, “The books were really good, they were really interesting, compared to a lot of other stuff we had to read that were really dry, they had personality.” Though this is by no means a rule about environmental writing, and Eddie actually specifically mentioned appreciating learning about the scientific background behind what they were reading, it is important to note that some readers, like Chase, just cannot connect with more scientific writing. There were portions of writing like that in *Chesapeake* that elicited that reaction from the majority of the class, as did a reading by Susan Stranahan.

Another student’s reaction, Jack, demonstrated the difficulty of connecting with an audience of readers through another route. “This trip has been a completely new experience for me, I’m from New Mexico, I’ve never been to a place like this before,” he said. Jack was unlike most of the group because he lived so far away, and in a climate so different from the Chesapeake. Even the other members of the class that were out of state mostly lived nearby, for instance in New York, and therefore had previous exposure to environments like the Bay, an important factor in their quick immersion. For, by the end of the trip, Jack was more than ready to return to State College, citing the need to complete work that had been piling up, and was growing irritated each time the trip was prolonged. Nevertheless, at this juncture in the trip he was still in a positive mood and was in the same wide-eyed state most of the class shared. “I never tried blue crabs or

oysters, it was pretty awesome, we had a little feast on the boat. I thought a herring was a goose once, it happened but I learned it wasn't." His confusion regarding a herring and a goose was a small mistake, but is representative of the greater difficulty he faces when reading literature like we did at the beginning of the semester, when there were passages of great lengths simply describing the wildlife of the Bay, including descriptions that even I, someone who grew up in the area, sometimes failed to accurately picture in my head.

After interviewing the students, I closed by speaking with Captain Andy. As he has been on the Bay for many years, he had probably the best perspective of the area of anyone on the trip. He had worked with Dr. Burkholder previously and agreed with the importance of literature in communicating information through society.

I think the impact of literature, the passing of knowledge through academia, I think it's critically important. If we can't do that, how can we figure out what to do, and do this better, if we can't trade all of our information and pass it on so we can figure out how to be more balanced with nature and still have living resources like the Bay?

Captain Andy was almost a hero to some of us, as we had already read and heard so much about him. Meeting someone who was placed in such a position of prestige in your mind has a way of cementing associated feelings and beliefs, which affected some of the students. This is a strategy employed by many of the readings to really affect the readers,

as most are either historical fiction, or at the very least do describe the Bay as it really is, or once was, giving the reader something tangible to anchor to as they approach a work.

After returning to land, the class got another taste of the local culture when we were lucky enough to see Captain Andy's band perform at a local theater. It was a small audience, but enough to fill the auditorium, and was comprised of what seemed to be local figures and friends of the band members. As a class, we were mostly exhausted from going to sleep late and waking up early, especially considering all the activities we engaged in over the past couple days, so we were ready to leave before it began. Many students were already skeptical of the band, as it had all the appearances of a standard bluegrass type band they probably would not like under normal circumstances. The performers were dressed plainly, were all middle aged or above, and spoke with a certain accent unique to the Bay. It sounded very slightly like a southern drawl with a "twang". As college students, most of us had preconceived notions about what kind of music was considered "good," and this was not predicted to fit those standards.

The first few chords, the same that seem to begin every country or bluegrass song, did not inspire much faith. But Captain Andy's band quickly overcame our prejudices and most of the class greatly enjoyed the performance. It was rich with local culture and references to the Bay's history or memories of the musicians, all of which we were able to identify with by then. The great pleasure many of us took in the performance is a testament to the power of a cultural connection in shaping one's opinions.

The final day was marked by a trip into Saint Michaels, where most of us relaxed at one of a few restaurants, and some went gift shopping. We also saw the Frederick

Douglass house and the Gilbert Byron house, both of which, though interesting, were primarily just one more thing to do until we finally got back home.

In the first discussion the class engaged in after the trip, the opinions voiced were almost entirely in a positive light. Eddie gave one of the first comments. In his words, “It felt like summer camp, to be honest, it was really awesome.” So, right off the bat, the trip proved to have evoked a feeling of nostalgia unique to Eddie. His experiences in at the Eastern Shore were akin to the “really awesome” memories he had of the summer camps of his childhood. This personal feeling is the kind that will have the most effect on a person, in comparison to the adopted nostalgia present in the aforementioned writings. Chase felt nostalgia as well, but the latter kind that was present in the readings. “I felt like when I was going through the readings, I felt a lot of nostalgia and strong community, and that’s exactly what I felt when I was there. I felt a lot of nostalgia and we became a community.” The upwelling of nostalgia that Chase felt was in part inspired by experiencing the reality behind the writings we had read; from sailing on a skipjack to seeing the statue of Stanley Vansant himself, it was an impressive experience.

Others had a more eye-opening experience that suggested they did not gain everything from the readings that they could have. This was particularly true of Toni, who entered the trip with a closed mind, but left with an open one:

The things that we did I wasn’t exactly thrilled to do prior to knowing what they would actually entail. Like, a 7:30 swamp hike was not

something I was completely psyched for, but then actually after we did it I didn't think it was that bad, and I may have actually enjoyed it.

While Toni was speaking there was a good deal of laughter from her classmates, not out of disrespect or derision, but because they all knew it already. As she was one of the more candid, but sarcastic members of the class, it was evident to most of the students that this small transformation had taken place. It was one that would probably be characteristic of much of the nation's population should they partake in a class such as this. The readings, as effective as they were, were not enough.

Polly had a similar experience. "It showed me... I didn't have reception at all, all weekend, I didn't have TV, it really showed me I could live very simple and still be fine with it. I didn't miss it." The trip represented an opportunity to divorce from the standard technology filled lives that has become standard to the members of class. The contrast between the lifestyles had a great effect on the many students not prepared for it, and was almost enlightening. Stephanie agreed with Polly.

I agree with that, I felt like when I came back to Penn State, like, all of a sudden I thought I have homework, I have this, and, like, I was really not worrying about anything, and it was really easy to lose ourselves, it felt like, because we were always busy and always having a good time. That surprised me, how I was never bored, I never felt like I should be doing something else.

For Stephanie, the chance to live in the Bay for a few days, to experience the appeal that had the characters she was reading about so in love with the area, was what affected her the most. This tangible experience, not rooted in an emotional attachment that comprised a good deal of what she had read, changed her perceptions and attitudes towards nature more than anything else, making Stephanie another example of someone who was less affected by the emotional arguments of nostalgia and hometown loyalty. So, it seemed the trip to Echo Hill, though proving the value of appeals to hometown loyalty and nostalgia in changing minds, also shows they have weaknesses too.

Conclusion

The application of affective learning methods to sustainability education shows the potential for emotional and personal gains essential to effective behavior change. These changes are important because the standard techniques that merely target a person's specific attitudes and beliefs on a subject are insufficient to create real change; rather, they only scratch the surface. The United Nations Millennium Declaration is a prime example of this shortcoming.

Through observing the students' interactions with the literature presented in Dr. Burkholder's adventure literature class, predicated on experiential learning, two universal themes arose, vital to attitude and belief changes in a reader and student. They are appeals to one's values and dispositions on hometown loyalty and nostalgia. These common elements are key components in shaping a person's stance towards

sustainability, providing the connection and motivation to protect a place—in this case, the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. Inadequate appeals to these senses can easily result in a disconnection from the identity of an area and, ultimately, have a strong impact on a person's overall interaction with that place.

By reaching this conclusion, the proper course of general sustainability education becomes clearer. Cognitive learning alone is not enough; instead, a personal connection and stake must be cultivated in the student. Many varieties of literature have the capacity to establish and these bonds by helping a reader realize the emotional attachment to a place necessary for effective sustainability learning. Dr. Burkholder's classes utilize these possibilities with an overall cultural immersion through experiences with the relevant place. There are, in fact, many educational designs that can take advantage of this potential for partnership, such as the traditional practice of cognitive learning and targeted attitude and belief change programs, which should be explored to maximize the effectiveness of sustainability education in the future.

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ACADEMIC VITA of Matthew E Kaslow

Matthew E Kaslow
500 E College Avenue, Apt G5
State College, Pa 16801
Kaslow@psu.edu

Education:

Bachelor of Science Degree in Accounting, Penn State University, Spring 2012
Minors in English, Law & Liberal Arts, Legal Environment of Business
Honors in English
Thesis Title: Using Literature to Explore Sustainability: Human Attitudes and Values
Thesis Supervisor: Xiaoye You

Related Experience:

Internship with the Penn State Campus Sustainability Office
Supervisor: Lydia Vandenberg
Summer 2011 – Spring 2012

Awards:

2011 Schreyer Honors College Scholar Involvement Award
International Honor Society Beta Gamma Sigma, Epsilon Chapter
The National Society of Collegiate Scholars

Activities:

Association of Residence Hall Students, Sustainability Chair
Springfield, a Special Interests Organization Benefitting THON, Executive Board
Schreyer Honors College Literary Committee, Chairman
SHO Time, Schreyer Honors Orientation, Academic Committee Leader