

## English 1102M

Student: Stephanie Tan

Teacher: Laura Weaver

*Stephanie Tan's ePortfolio is full of surprises. Stephanie uses music as an overarching theme to structure the portfolio. She is not afraid to shift metaphors when necessary, however, so that the reader is guided through a lively, yet thoughtful discussion*

*of her thought process as Stephanie moves from a discussion of music as a governing force in her life and illuminating metaphor for her experiences as a writer to the idea of revision as dieting and peer review as a friendly correspondence with "Julius Caesar." Visually appealing and infused with a strong authorial voice, Stephanie's portfolio establishes a strong relationship with her readers. She also presents a vivid and logical view of her review process.*

Stephanie Tan's Portfolio		+ - X
 Quoting Time: Biography	Biography	Download
 Prelude: IRE	Introductory Reflective Essay	
 The Diet: Revision Process	Exhibit of Revision Process	Download
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 Never Fear, Your Peer Review Bud is Here!: Peer Editing	Exhibit of Peer Review Process	
 Moonlight: Wild Card	Wild Card	Download



# Stephanie Tan

Hi! For my biography, I thought the best way to express myself was through quotes. Below is a timeline that signifies the most important events in my life. They include observations of the way I thought, my ability to form different opinions, and lessons that I've learned. Even though life isn't easy, I've learned to take its lemons and turn it into some sweet lemonade.

## 2011-Present

*My life has a superb cast but I can't figure out the plot.*

~Ashleigh Brilliant

## 2010-2011

*Friendship... is not something you learn in school. But if you haven't learned the meaning of friendship, you really haven't learned anything.*

~Muhammad Ali

## 2009-2010

*Music is mediator between spiritual and sensual life.*

~Ludwig van Beethoven

## 2007-2008

*When life gives you a hundred reasons to cry, show life that you have a thousand reasons to smile*

~Anon

## 1995-1996

*I was born with music inside me. Music was one of my parts. Like my ribs, my kidneys, my liver, my heart. Like my blood. It was a force already within me when I arrived on the scene. It was a necessity for me-like food or water.*

~Roy Charles

## 1996-1998

*The fundamental job of a toddler is to rule the universe.*

~Lawrence Kutner

## 1999-2000

*A child can ask questions that a wise man cannot answer.*

~Author Unknown

## 2000-2002

*I've never let my school interfere with my education.*

~Mark Twain



## 2005-2007

*We keep moving forward, opening new doors, and doing new things, because we're curious and curiosity keeps leading us down new paths.*

~Walt Disney

## 2002-2005

*I think, therefore, I am.*

~Descartes

## Prelude

by Stephanie Tan

**Moderato**  = 90

 Music has always been an undercurrent in my life. After taking English 1102M, I find that writing and playing the piano have a lot in common. Both take practice to perfect and have more than one right answer. However, in music a performer is able to have a composition that is already written, but he or she is able to perform it in several different ways. In English, every word that makes up a work is a new combination. As a connection, I see the essay as the composition, and performing as the presentation. But I'm not able to present this portfolio in person—only through my written voice. Therefore, my composing skill, in the form of my essay writing, continues to grow in order to harness how I want the audience to read.

With my previous experience in English, my AP teachers expected us to have a “natural” instinct to write; this instinct was the reason why we were placed in AP in the first place. Much of the text that I read included poetry and plays. We were to analyze the author's intention of the text by evaluating characters, literary terms, and overall meaning. Most of the time, even though we were able to share how we felt about the work, my teacher would listen, but not accept the multiple interpretations of the text. As for writing, we were not taught how to write effectively on paper, but how to express ideas in class, verbally. So for me, analyzing the text was like looking at a score for the first time; I could make out notes to play, but I wasn't sure what the symbols were to play the notes correctly. Symbols added spice to the music; they could be interpreted in a straightforward way, but they are put there for a reason and finding that reason was part of understanding how in depth I wanted the music to be. Although my AP classes had expanded my way of thinking, I was not taught how to use my own ideas to connect and write effectively.

After being in a somewhat confined high school AP class, my English 1102M course was a new world for me. This course allowed me to practice open-mindedness and the ability to relate—to not only interpret everything I read with multiple perspectives, but also to hold my own opinion. Like the adage, “beauty is in the eye of the beholder,” analysis depends on the “eye of the beholder” to determine how beautiful something is. Since everyone has their own opinion of what the meaning of the text is, I related myself to the characters in each of my essays in order to come up with main claims that could be supported by the text. When I turned in my first paper, I was as nervous as Mud Woman when the gallery owner started criticizing her work from the poem, “Mud Woman's First Encounter with the World of Money and Business”—college English papers were not graded as easily as high school papers. After multiple drafts, the perseverance that I had writing these papers reminded me of the repetitiveness of practicing a section of a musical piece over and over again and then having the teacher telling me that it had not improved at all. I know my teacher has high expectations for me, but the worst feeling in the world is coming out of a lesson and feeling disappointed at myself. Next, I was easily frustrated as a child and would frequently not accept what my teacher had to say about my playing. Even though I was not as rebellious, Sylvia's attitude in “The Lesson” towards Miss Moore reminded me of my own when I was younger.

***P***

After relating to texts and beginning to understand them, the practicing begins. Key factors that I work on are improving clarity and organization in each new sentence and then transforming them to a paragraph level. With clarity, I find that after doing a looping exercise—where we would brainstorm by typing about any idea that came to mind—I would need to look for my main verb and find an idea to pair two subjects together. During the looping exercise, I would type bullets of my ideas in no particular order or style, but just specific things from the text that I wanted to point out and expand on later. When choosing the right verb, I didn't realize how much of a difference a single verb made even if two verbs were synonyms. One verb could be more

powerful than the other or the connotations would be different. It was all part of an intuitive feeling; when I do it several times, the sound of the sentence or paragraph improves drastically.

Organizing the order of my ideas has always been difficult for me. Many times, I would need to focus on what my final point was to emphasize the more important idea; instead of including all of my ideas in each paragraph, I learned to separate them based on the level of importance. Without clarity and organization, my papers would be alphabet soup—delicious from the diction that I've used, but unfulfilling because my ideas were not coming across how I want them to. When I brainstorm and revise further, I ask myself questions to clarify my ideas: How could I put what I want to say in my own words? What am I trying to say? How can I

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value instead of the grade I receive.



My wild card is similar to the grace notes in a musical composition—ornamentation that makes me unique as a person. Since I have talked so much about my love for music, I thought I would include a video of me performing “Clair de Lune” to link performing a piece of music to writing an essay. Both are a form of art, but need passion to endure. But once the final outcome is produced, there is always the challenge of improvement that never ceases. 

Before this semester, I never had a teacher who really guided me through the writing process. Thankfully, my professor was wonderful at teaching us the writing process, step-by-step. With her guidance, I feel more confident about my papers even though college writing was a big leap from high school. Even though I’m not here to present my essays, hopefully I can make this portfolio a type of ePresentation, making a truly excellent performance.

## Music Dictionary

Prelude: an introduction to the more important work

Moderato: moderately

 : cut time (2/2 meter, double speed)

 : fermata (hold the note longer than usual)

***f*** : forte (loud)

 : accent (emphasis)

*Bra.....* : an octave higher

***p***: piano (soft)

 : pedal marking

 : trill marking (repeat both notes as indicated)

 : grace note (ornamentation)

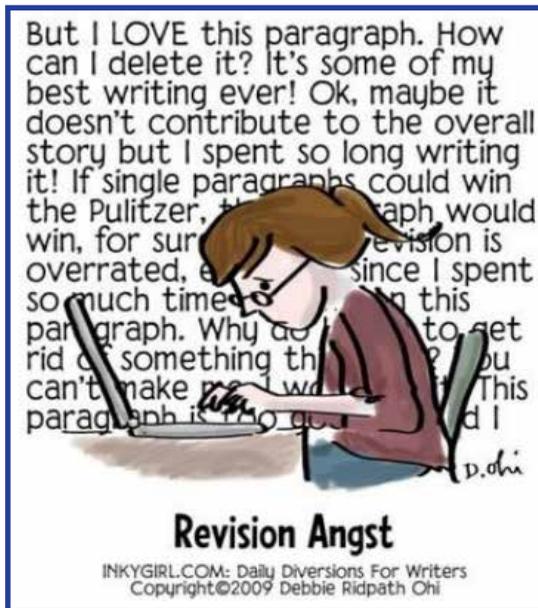
 : repeat sign

## The Diet

*After my gift analogy in the peer review process, often times I would think that I would use the same process to review my own papers, until I sat down and realized that I have “revision angst.” Since I aim myself to be a perfectionist, I’m always my own worst enemy when it comes to activities I do individually whether it be performing on the piano or revising my own paper. I could have fifty conferences with my professor, have Shakespeare and Faulkner be my peer reviewers, and still not be satisfied with my own paper.*

*My professor would compliment me on participating in class discussions when we would interpret literary works; my ideas were coherent in class, but on paper, what I wanted to say just wasn’t clear enough. Despite the frustration of writing multiple drafts and thinking of several different ways to improve, my growth in my own revision spurred*

*when I started “The Theory of Adaptation.” Below are steps on how my thesis evolved from draft to draft. Completely different from the gift analogy, I use another analogy to revise my own papers on a one week time line.*



### Day 1: Journal = Splurging

*When you splurge, you eat whatever you want to since it's the cause of wanting to losing weight. I loved doing journals in class because my language wasn't censored or judged. Everything I said were my ideas and our class would have discussions on texts after we all submitted our journals. It was brainstorming without organization—just merely jotting down how I felt about the texts and what ideas I got after reading them on a surface level.*

The main idea that connects the two readings together is that both antagonists, Mud Woman, and the young girl in “The Lesson” are proud of their cultural background, but when society finds out what it is, they're disappointed and expect something more of them. Or it's the fact that they want to fit in society (white people), but it's so hard for them because they can't match their standards from their own culture. It also makes the minority cultures wake up from a snooze and realize that the public is still insusceptible to the evolution of differences from stereotypical belief.

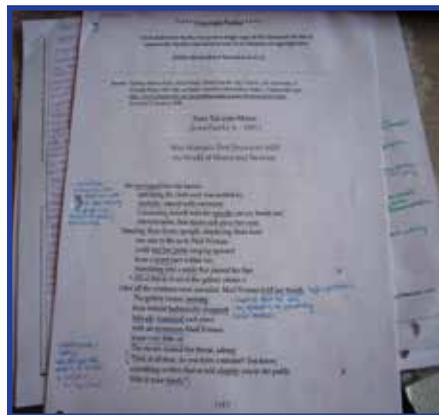
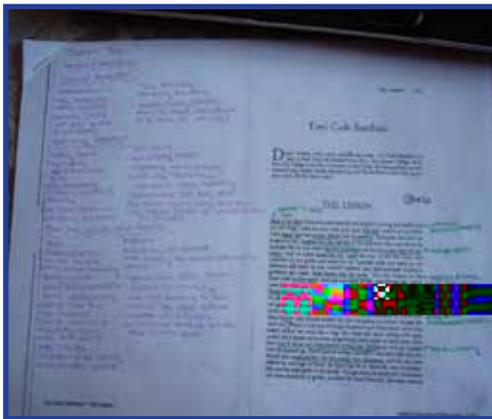
For example, in Mud Woman's story, the clay figures that she worked so hard on get pretty much rejected from the business world. The only reason why the pieces were bought by the store owner in the first place was so that the store owner could “discover her first” since her “work was different.” However, it was unfortunate when Clay Mother asked her about the business and work since Mud Woman's clay figures had lots of work that was put behind it and the store owner didn't recognize it; she “exchanged her work for the unexpectedly smaller sum that wholesale prices dictated.”

The antagonist in “The Lesson” bothered me since she had no respect for Miss Moore when she was trying to teach the children a lesson on how reality really is financially by comparing the area that they lived in to the

upper class on Fifth Avenue. I'm guessing she was a teenage character or a little younger from the bratty remarks that she had about almost everything. But her rebelliousness proves that many African Americans felt that they had their own pride to keep even though they couldn't afford all the ridiculous things that the white people had, such as the fur coat (on a hot day), the paper weight, and the toy sailboat: "What kind of work do they do and how they live and how come we ain't in on it?" All the money that the antagonist considers is the fact that all those expensive trinkets could feed and do much more things than be wasted on those items—finally getting Miss Moore's point across for the next generation of the African American community.

## Day 2 Pre-Writing Exercise = Keeping a Food Chart

*By keeping a food chart, I'm able to choose what I eat to keep track of calories and compare them side by side. Similarly, for our pre-writing exercise our professor had us do a table to compare and contrast the two literary works that we wanted to write on in a table. This process helped me because it was organized and I could make a connection between the texts that I quoted side by side. I went even further to annotate both texts for a better understanding. It significantly paid off from all the ideas I gathered; my next problem would be coming up with an overall claim.*



*Left: Annotations of “The Lesson”*

*Right: Annotations of “Mud Woman’s First Encounter with the World of Money and Business”*

“The Lesson” (short story)	“Mud Woman’s Encounter” (lyrical narrative)	Connections
<p>“And the starch in my pinafore scratching the shit outta me and I’m really hating this nappy-head bitch and her god-damn college degree.”</p>	<p>“like a foreigner trying to comprehend the innuendos of a new language, unexpected and somewhat intimidating.”</p>	<p>They’re both trying to understand their “mentors” to the point that they show different feelings for them. The teenage girl shows hatred and anger (maybe to a point where she seems like she doesn’t care), while Mud Woman is in such a shock that it “intimidates” her.</p>
<p>“Then she hustles half <del>the</del> and hands me a five-dollar bill and tells me to calculate 10 percent tip for the driver.”</p>	<p>“Handling each piece, the merchant quickly judged whether or not Mud Woman’s work would be a profitable venture.”</p>	<p>These texts are only the beginning to the lesson – almost edging up to the climatic point of veracity. In “The Lesson,” the lesson is starting, while for Mud Woman, as the gallery owner “handled each piece” quickly, she displays what he really cares about – a difference in the perspective of Mud Woman. Meaning of money versus meaning of artwork – different lessons are taught</p>

<p>“Don’t you have a calendar and a pencil case and a blotter and a letter-opener on your desk at home where you do your homework?” “And she know damn well what our homes look like cause she nosys around in them every chance she gets.”</p> <p>AN</p> <p>“You sound angry, Sylvia. Are you mad about something?”</p>	<p>(Large Chunk from lines 42-53) “Well,” she began, “your work is strangely different, certainly not traditional . . .”</p>	<p>Both the gallery owner and Miss Moore push the protagonists to the limit to make them understand what they’re looking for. For example, there are many times where Miss Moore “is steady watchin us like she waitin for a sign” – the only difference is Miss Moore is hurting the children directly, teaching them in a harsh way, while the gallery owner is more subtle – doing it in an indirect way – not necessarily rejecting the artwork, but wanting to take credit “if” it ever became something famous.</p>
<p>“She can run if she want to and even run faster. But ain’t nobody gonna beat me at nuthin.”</p>	<p>“Nan chu Kweejo’s question, clouded Mud Woman’s vision with a mist of lost innocence as she left the city and the world of money and business behind.”</p>	<p>I think the biggest idea that goes on in both texts is the fact that their lessons are similar, but it’s how they take it in the end that makes a difference. Their feelings of <del>haha</del> er it’s because of a drastic change or a rejection. Their “mentors” impact the way they think and their background, which makes their reactions different (upset/rebellious). Their teachers’ personalities of how they handle letting them down (directly/indirectly) shows that there’s a lesson that’s similar/different being taught, which I’d like to emphasize in my <del>5</del></p>

### Day 3: First Draft = Choosing What to Eat

*During a diet, it's important to choose what you eat carefully after you figure out a schedule. In my first draft, I used my previous days' accomplishments to start my thesis paragraph. My ideas are all there, but the most important objective is figuring out a main claim. Therefore, in this draft I ask myself questions to clarify and interpret both texts, providing my first body paragraph. Because this is my first draft, all my thoughts are too general and broad. The highlighted portions are the areas I need to focus on.*

Lessons can be perceived through different ways, even though they may be taught similarly. In Bambara's short story, "The Lesson," and Naranjo-Morse's lyrical narrative, "Mud Woman's First Encounter with the World of Money and Business," the lessons that are being taught are acquired, but depending on how the lesson is communicated depends on the student and teacher. When the gallery owner appraises Mud Woman's work, she absentmindedly teaches Mud Woman how the business world cares more about market value rather than the intrinsic aesthetics Mud Woman cares about. On the other hand, Miss Moore pushes Sylvia's buttons in the intentional way by asking obvious questions and giving lectures—hoping her realization would show her a new perception of society.

### Day 4: Second Draft = Trimming the Fat

*By trimming the fat, I mean losing the unnecessary wording that I don't need in a paragraph or re-wording sentences. My professor told me that there are places where I'm not sure what I'm saying at the beginning of the sentence, but I suddenly get to a very good point at the end. I learned that the most important way to change that is to choose the verb carefully because it connects my sentence to what I'm wanting to say. In this process, I still continue to question myself for better clarification. Re-wording using the right words is also a huge factor in this draft. Places that are crossed out are*

*replaced with better wording, and the yellow portion is what I worked on the most.*

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### Day 5: Final Draft = Weighing In

*It's an exciting moment to "weigh in" after a week of dieting because you look forward to how much weight you've lost. However, it's a continuous cycle like a final draft – it's not really "final" because there's always room for improvement, but you have to turn it in because of the due date. Combined with countless times of figuring out my main claim, re-organizing, rewording, thinking, and clarifying, I give you my final draft with the main claim highlighted.*

In Bambara's short story, "The Lesson," and Naranjo-Morse's narrative poem, "Mud Woman's First Encounter with the World of Money and Business," each protagonist encounters a lesson that is learned in the end.

Both characters are taken by surprise by the harsh truth they encounter, but regardless of their final response towards their lesson, they have learned a new way to perceive society. However, the hierarchical relationship between student and teacher makes a difference on each student's final response to the lesson. Despite Miss Moore's perseverance, Sylvia doesn't quite accept that the African American community in which she lives in is indigent. On the other hand, because selling artwork is her job and passion, Mud Woman is forced to face the reality that the business world is based solely on market value to be successful.

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102 M

3 December 2012

### The Theory of Adaptation

In Toni Cade Bambara's short story, "The Lesson" and Naranjo-Morse's narrative poem, "Mud Woman's First Encounter with the World of Money and Business," each protagonist encounters a lesson that is learned in the end. Both characters are taken by surprise by the harsh truth they encounter, but regardless of their final response towards their lesson, they have learned a new way of perceiving society. However, the hierarchical relationship between student and teacher makes a difference to each student's final response to the lesson. Despite Miss Moore's perseverance, Sylvia does not quite accept that the African American community in which she lives is indigent. On the other hand, because selling artwork is her job and passion, Mud Woman is forced to face the reality that success in the business world is based solely on market value.

Since Mud Woman is used to caring about the aesthetics of her own work and Sylvia is accustomed to living in her African American community, both of them are familiar with their own environment. Yet because they are too comfortable, it is difficult for them to adapt to the changing environment that their mentors show them. This comfort that they're used to shows their naivete, which keeps them from appreciating another perspective. While the ways of the business world are revealed to Mud Woman, an upper class

society is revealed to Sylvia.

Mud Woman could feel her pride surging upward  
from a secret part within her,  
translating into a smile that passed her lips.

All of this in front of the gallery owner. (lines 7-11)

Mud Woman's "pride" arises from her confidence in her artwork. "[T]aken for granted at home, / where the clay, moist and smooth, / waited to be rounded and coiled," Mud Woman's work experience has meant everything to her (lines 31-33). Her passion is voiced in her artwork as she "concern[s] herself with the specific curves, bends and / idiosyncrasies, that made each piece her own," resembling a type of innocent art that has never been exposed (lines 4-5).

Compared to Mud Woman's pride in her artwork, Sylvia defends her environment by disagreeing with all of Miss Moore's comments, showing how much she also protects her own ideology: "So we heading down the street and she's boring us silly about what things cost and what our parents make and how much goes for rent and how money ain't divided up right in this country. And then she gets to the part about we all poor and live in slums, which I don't feature" (Bambara 724). She's annoyed with Miss Moore for taking Sylvia outside of her comfort zone. Her parents "would yank our heads into some kinda shape and crisp up our clothes so we'd be presentable for travel with Miss Moore, who always looked like she was going to church, though she never did" (Bambara 723). The irritation that Sylvia shows toward Miss Moore makes it difficult for her to accept and adapt to the new society

that Miss Moore shows her.

Next, a tension between Mud Woman and the gallery owner and between Sylvia and Miss Moore is already established. The gallery owner has expectations for Mud Woman's work, while Sylvia has expectations of Miss Moore. Since Mud Woman's artwork is being presented to the gallery owner, she has no expectations of the gallery owner; however, she has a high expectation for herself and her own capabilities:

The gallery owner, peering  
from behind fashionably designed  
bifocals, examined each piece  
with an awareness Mud Woman  
knew very little of. (lines 13-17)

By "peering / from behind fashionably designed / bifocals . . . with an awareness Mud Woman / knew very little of," the gallery owner is at first skeptical of Mud Woman's work. Her observation is as meticulous as Mud Woman's, but for a completely different reason; she's looking to identify a more profitable brand. In contrast, Miss Moore knows the naivete of the African American children and tries to help educate them. But Sylvia's narration shows her judgmental attitude toward Miss Moore. Purposefully, Miss Moore "is steady watchin us like she waitin for a sign," and unlike the gallery owner, expects a reaction from the children. While Mud Woman has no initial feeling towards the gallery owner, Sylvia automatically shows hatred for Miss Moore since "she was always planning these boring-ass things for us to do" (Bambara 723). Because of the unexpected tension in

each student-teacher relationship, Mud Woman and Sylvia have a difficult time embracing the adjustments in their own environments.

Even though the gallery owner's and Miss Moore's ways of teaching are condescending and harsh, the gallery owner hurts Mud Woman unintentionally, while Miss Moore pushes the children intentionally. Based on her overbearing questions seeking to identify Mud Woman, the gallery owner is so intent on market value that she unintentionally disregards Mud Woman's feelings:

“First of all dear, do you have a resume? You know,  
something written that would identify you to the public.  
Who is your family?  
Are any of them well known in the Indian art world?” (lines  
19-23)

During this exchange, Mud Woman's disregarded feelings throw her into a frenzy as she tries “desperately to connect / this business woman's voice with her questions, / like a foreigner trying to comprehend / the innuendos of a new language, unexpected / and somewhat intimidating” (lines 24-28). Miss Moore does the same, but she is aware of what she is doing to the children: “She'd been to college and said it was only right that she should take responsibility for the young ones' education” (Bambara 723). Miss Moore had a purpose to come back to the slums; she wanted to inform Sylvia's community about the change that was occurring outside their neighborhood by opening the children's eyes to a market-based society. Although Miss Moore has good intentions, this causes the African American

community some discomfort from the change: “the grown-ups talked . . . behind her back like a dog” (Bambara 723). Regardless of whether they liked it or not, the neighborhood parents let their children be taught by Miss Moore, anyway. This shows that they want their children to be aware of changes in society, even if they may not be accepted right away.

The gallery owner’s lack of sensitivity and Miss Moore’s harshness force Mud Woman and Sylvia to prepare for something that they are not ready for: the real world. Taken out of her accustomed environment, “like a foreigner trying to comprehend / the innuendos of a new language, unexpected / and somewhat intimidating,” Mud Woman is shocked and confused by the gallery owner’s judgment of her work (lines 25-27). Her surprise leads her to accept passively the gallery owner’s final judgment: “Hesitantly, Mud Woman exchanged her work for the unexpectedly smaller sum that wholesale prices dictated” (lines 54-55). Mud Woman knows that her artwork is worth more than what the gallery owner thinks it is because of her past experiences in the company of her husband (line 35). The gallery owner’s evaluation of her work forces Mud Woman to express “a few polite, but obviously strained pleasantries” (line 56). In comparison, when Miss Moore takes the children out to see the real world, she asks questions to which she already knows the answer. For example, she rhetorically asks them, “Don’t you have a calendar and a pencil case and a blotter and a letter-opener on your desk at home where you do your homework?” (Bambara 726). Sylvia then boldly observes that “she know damn well what our homes look like cause she nosys around in them every chance she gets”

(Bambara 726). The obviousness of Miss Moore's questions implies that she's looking for a reaction from the children to make her point clear—purposely making them think about why she's being the way she is.

When they experience these new environments, Sylvia and Mud Woman feel shame about their naivete. Mud Woman feels embarrassed after she finds out about how the business world judges according to market value, while Sylvia feels shame during the process of realizing that the rich can afford things that she cannot. When Nana chu Kweejo asks Mud Woman the question, "My daughter, is this the way it goes, / this pottery business?" Mud Woman "lowered her head, / walking against the crowd of workers / returning from lunch" (lines 64-68). The pride that she had felt before in her artwork has evaporated, leaving her with shards of hurt when addressing Clay Mother. Likewise, at the toy store Sylvia describes her feelings: "Not that I'm scared, what's there to be afraid of, just a toy store. But I feel funny, shame. But what I got to be shamed about? Got as much right to go in as anybody" (Bambara 727). The "games and puzzles" that she "hardly touches" are like a thorn in her side, giving her discomfort because she cannot afford toys that upper class society children play with everyday. The drastic change of environment swallows both characters up—something that they've never experienced before because they were so absorbed in their comfort zones.

Although Mud Woman's and Sylvia's innocence is tainted when they become more knowledgeable, Mud Woman accepts the gallery owner's assessment of her artwork, while Sylvia resists Miss Moore's lectures on the concept of money. In Mud Woman's case, she accepts the gallery owner's

opinion, confusion and sadness “cloud[ing her] vision with a mist / of lost innocence, / as she left the city / and the world of / money and business behind” (lines 70-74). Mud Woman is discouraged when she realizes that the business world is harsh and completely different from what her expectations were; instead of aesthetics, her work was judged by market value. As a teenager, Sylvia understands her situation, but rebels and takes her anger out on Miss Moore: “I’m mad, but I won’t give her that satisfaction. So I slouch around the store bein very bored and say, ‘Let’s go’” (Bambara 728). The last sentence of the short story reveals Sylvia’s act of rebellion: “She [Sugar] can run if she want to and even run faster. But ain’t nobody gonna beat me at nuthin” (Bambara 729). “She” refers to Sugar running to go get ice cream, but also to Miss Moore. Even though Miss Moore shows Sylvia that society is changing, Sylvia’s stubborn attitude makes her refuse to believe that Miss Moore will get the best of her.

Between the gallery owner’s and Miss Moore’s power as teachers, Mud Woman’s discouraged reaction shows her dependency on the gallery owner’s judgment, while Sylvia does not depend on Miss Moore’s opinions. Though neither character takes action based on what she has learned, Mud Woman’s grief and discouragement are based upon the gallery owner’s power to sell her artwork in order to make money. However, in Sylvia’s case, Miss Moore is not a formal teacher who gives her a grade. Thus, the lack of importance that Miss Moore’s judgment carries gives Sylvia the right to ignore and resist the situation by avoiding it even when she understands the concept.

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3 December 2012

### Uncovering Reality

In the mystery genre, Auden describes the “symptoms” of a detective story that entice readers by observing its conventions (Auden 15). These symptoms are “the intensity of the craving,” “its specificity,” and “its immediacy” (Auden 15). According to Auden, “the story must conform to a certain formula” for “specificity.” In terms of “immediacy,” the story is forgotten once it is finished being read because there is a “peaceful state after arrest” (Auden 16). Yet, Charles Fuller’s play, *A Soldier’s Play*, does not observe Auden’s “symptoms” and is far from being forgotten. Instead, the racial tension that is created in *A Soldier’s Play* results in an aura of discomfort even after the murderer is caught.

Auden describes two of the five elements in a detective’s story that *A Soldier’s Play* does not exhibit; these include the detective and victim’s roles. Even though Auden requires that there be only one victim, Fuller identifies two victims who are involved with one another: Waters and C. J. However, “the subsequent victims” are not “more innocent than the initial victim,” as Auden suggests (Auden 19). In actuality, both characters have weaknesses created by the hierarchical perspective that whites have over blacks. Waters is damaged psychologically, while due to his naivete C. J. holds to his African American roots. Waters’s self-hatred is reflected onto C. J. in

his psychological effort to advance the black race from a white perspective (Storhoff 22). Fuller's use of these two characters shows the psychological complexity that is in the play; their differences emphasize how white society views black society.

Next, Auden states that "the job of the detective is to restore the state of grace in which the aesthetic and the ethical are as one" (Auden 21). Despite Davenport's good intention to arrest the murderer who killed Waters, the hierarchical difference between blacks and whites makes it difficult for Davenport to do his job. Both Davenport and Captain Taylor understand that if it were a white officer who committed the crime, there would be "no way" for Davenport to arrest him, since the white officers on the base control the power (Fuller Act I, 48). As a black officer investigating the crime, Davenport resembles the black society continuously seeking justice.

Because of white criticism, Waters is continuously pressured about how his race "should" be. Even though it seems that Waters is the initial victim, C. J. is actually revealed to be the "hidden" victim upon whom Waters takes out his criticism. Not only is he juxtaposed to C. J., who is innocent and proud of his background while Waters is ignorant and passive, but Waters also shows underlying weaknesses in his own identity through multiple flashbacks. For example, when C. J. tries to tell his reason for the baseball team's victory through his belief in African American superstition, Taylor cuts him off abruptly. After the incident, Waters is ashamed for C. J. and questions, "How long a story was you gonna tell the man, C. J.? My

God!” (Fuller Act I, 43). Waters’s reason for his behavior and utter contempt for himself are then revealed when he was beaten by Wilcox and Byrd: “Followin’ behind y’all? Look what it’s done to me! I hate myself!” (Fuller Act I, 52). The flashbacks help Waters understand that what he was doing wasn’t enough to make him be thought of as “white.” Although we can see that C. J. is the victim of Waters, Waters is also the victim of himself. His insecurity about the prospects of his own race makes him paranoid about how whites see him. Because of the bitter past experiences that Waters has encountered, he isolates himself “without truly seeing what he really wants” (Storhoff 23). When Taylor gives the soldiers the day off after the baseball game, his order overrides Waters’s own orders, making him feel inferior. With whites who make him feel depreciated about his race, Waters drowns himself in self-pity and hate.

Overall, what sets apart Fuller’s work from a traditional detective story is his message: because of racial tension, a peaceful ending is not possible even when the murderer is caught (Auden 16). The social and psychological tension in the play brings an ending that has complete injustice. Contradicting Auden’s assertion that “The law becomes a reality and for a time all must live in its shadow, till the fallen one is identified. With his arrest, innocence is restored and the law retires forever,” Fuller’s play is resolved only through an unsettling monologue by Davenport (Fuller Act II, 99). Even though Peterson is arrested, all the soldiers were “wiped out in the Ruhr Valley during a German advance” (Fuller Act II, 100). Not only does the regiment pass away, but their participation in the war resembles

another emulation of being white, so that they can prove that “colored boys can fight” (Rich 2). From that emulation, there seems to be a continuous haunting of Waters’s expectations for his race always longing to be “white.”

While Fuller’s ending is different from Auden’s description of a “peaceful state after arrest,” he still follows similar characteristics that Auden includes, but surprises his readers throughout the mystery. In Auden’s explanation of why a murder occurs, a traditional detective story “begins with a death that appears to be a suicide and is later discovered to have been a murder” (Auden 17). Similarly, in the play, Waters’s death occurs at the beginning of the story. However, Fuller allows the reader to know that someone has killed Waters, replacing the assumption of a suicide (Fuller 8). Next, Auden describes that a detective story requires “a closed society so that the possibility of an outside murder is excluded.” Since Fuller’s play focuses closely on the military base as its setting, the soldiers are seen as a closed society. Yet, at the beginning of the story Fuller lets the audience think that the KKK, who are outside of the closed society, are the murderers. For example, after the soldiers were searched for weapons as a result of Waters’s murder, Cobb states: “May I speak sir? Why do this, Captain? They got M.P.’s surrounding us, and hell, the Colonel must know nobody colored killed the man!” (Fuller Act I, 9). Once Taylor leaves, Henson also pipes up: “Taylor knows the Klan did it I hope y’all know that” (Fuller Act I, 12). Finally, Davenport’s updates about his report on Waters’s death were stated in his monologue, adding more evidence that the KKK was involved: “One morning . . . Vernon C. Waters . . . was brutally shot to death . . . Naturally, the

unofficial consensus was the local Ku Klux Klan” (Fuller Act I, 16).

Auden’s description of the traditional detective story is only directly specified for a certain kind of society a society that follows a formula in which justice is achieved after the murderer is caught. Fuller breaks the formula and creates another equation by factoring in unresolved social tension. This social tension includes the relationship between blacks and whites and how blacks see themselves based on the hierarchical order. Thus, Auden’s description of a restorative state is not valid for Fuller’s play. Though there may be some justice in a mystery from the criminal getting caught, after Peterson is behind bars there is still a brooding dissatisfaction.

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### Never Fear, Your Peer Review Bud is Here!

*Peer reviewing is fun! Since my past teachers never let us critique each other's papers very often, peer reviewing was extremely helpful to learn how to revise and build new friendships. I am given the opportunity to form my own opinion and take advantage of my first amendment rights for peer revision. This was probably my favorite part of the process in writing an essay since I was able to be Mr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde—forming helpful critiques (with no evil intent, of course) and encouraging comments to aid my peers.*

*When I revised Caesar's paper, Brutus wasn't very happy, but I see revising as wrapping a present. The present is the essay that I'm revising. The measurements of the wrapping paper are the comments that form the foundation of the essay: grammatical errors, sentence structure, and word choice. Next, the wrapping paper is the ideas that I double check to make sure that the main claim is consistent throughout the essay. The tape serves to connect the flow of the essay and I want to make sure that the thesis in each paragraph connects back to the main claim (wrapping paper). To me, the bow is the hardest part on a gift because I really want it to look nice, but most importantly, clarify my intent in giving the gift because I care about the person. Thus, the bow serves as clarity, which I find is the weakness in everyone's writing since everyone knows **what** they want to say—the problem is **how** to say it. When the present is all wrapped and ready, the final process is the admiration. The admiration is the reflection of my own critique in my peer's paper combined with what he already had. This feeling is what improves my way of thinking when writing my own essays when analyzing someone else's work.*



**Julius Caesar** My professor teaches some of the most amazing people!

Mrs. Weaver

102M

7 November, 2012

“They’ll still hate you! They still hate you . . . They still hate you!”

I’m not sure this is the best way to start off the paper since your readers may be confused if you dropped a quote without explaining it. (8) begins Charles Fuller’s play *Do you mean “play”?* “A Soldier’s Play.” Fuller analyzes interracial relationships I would automatically add in CJ and Waters somewhere in that sentence to be more specific, through the use of character relationships in this play. Use “play” instead of “playwright” since playwright means a person who writes plays, not the work. CJ both respond to white supremacy differently. Instead of using this word, maybe say by . . . and continue the sentence. Think about this since maybe this is what you’re trying to say: Because they respond to white supremacy, they have the same type of background on the stereotype, but they have different perspectives. Waters chooses to turn his back on African American behavior that he did not approve of in the hopes of creating a “whiter” society. Contrarily, CJ ignored “CJ ignores” since your sentence needs to parallel what you said about Waters the pressures of white society embracing the African American stereotype that Waters hated. Though both respond differently to white supremacy, they both end up as victims of it’s No apostrophe since it’s not a contraction pressure.

Waters makes his hatred of the cliched African American “Uncle Tom” persona clear in his attitude toward CJ. From Water’s point of view, CJ embodies everything he hates about his race. CJ is a naive black man who is that is? with doesn’t make sense low ranking and uneducated. Waters believes that “the black rave can’t afford [CJ] no more” (Fuller 72). C

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bringing down African American society and is an embarrassment to all that associate themselves with him. More evidence about this would be good. You kind of just comment on it and move on. Consequently Don't forget- after an adverb, there's a comma since Waters and CJ are of the same race, CJ poorly reflects of Water's himself. Rewording. "Waters of himself" How? Give some examples from the text itself or evidence from the articles that we've read. Water's only priorities are to live life for power and control of others. He wishes to be white. As Amiri Baraka describes the situation as "the consciousness of the black people . . . have been been so washed out mentally by white supremacy that they think other blacks are the problem" (52). Waters has been "washed out mentally" (Baraka 52). His thoughts are dominated by white ideals. Thus, CJ is his scapegoat for these thoughts.

How?

From CJ's perspective, Waters is a bully that can not identify with his own race. Water's tries to be a white officer for power. CJ feels comfortable with his own identity and tries to live life to the fullest. He is not concerned with power. Okay, let's do something about the sentence structure here. I completely understand why they're all simple sentences-you're trying to put down all your ideas as quickly as possible. Connect your sentences, so they aren't little splurges and make me believe why CJ sees him like that As the... star of the baseball team, CJ is well liked by his fellow squad members. Describe how CJ is like the "typical black man" that white people expect him to be-this is a connection to why he's much closer to the squad because he doesn't care about anyone else that has an outside view predicate about his

background When CJ hangs himself comma after the whole team purposely “purposely” looses “loses” their baseball game in his honor to show that CJ’s life made a difference (Fuller 74). Baraka chooses to describe CJ as a “a young blood from the deep South who represents the oldest, blackest folk ties of the African American” (52). Give some commentary from that text—it’ll make your argument fuller This character description is exactly how Water’s views CJ and because of this, CJ’s “Southern blackness” is what connects

🗑️/ CJ directly back to Africa by way of slavery I understand where you’re coming from, but instead of that phrase, I would probably say “black identity” or “history”—again, give more evidence (Baraka 52).

In reality, neither character fully understands the other. Water’s abrasive nature reflects his inner turmoil. He is having an identity crisis and can not find a community in which he belongs. Physically, he should be a part of the black community on base. Yet, emotionally, he wishes to be a white superior officer. How so? You can give evidence where Captain Taylor tells the squad that they don’t have to paint even when Waters wants them to If he can not have power and fit into the white community, then Waters is lost and misplaced. Explain more of this to connect your ideas 🗑️/

“self-alienated” himself and can no longer decipher for himself what he truly wants (Storhoff 4). Waters says to CJ in one of his monologues, “The day of the geechy is gone, boy - the only thing that can move the race is power. It’s all the white respects – and people like you just make us seem like fools. And we can’t let nobody go on believin’ we all like you” (Fuller 72-73). Waters has managed to psychologically take all of his anger and place it on CJ’s shoulders.

Once CJ committed suicide, it was one less disgrace on the race hanging around breathing Water's air. I really like this sentence!

Furthermore, CJ is not entirely how Water's sees him. I'd actually combine this paragraph with the one before it because your thesis includes the transition about how both characters feel about each other. Even though Waters sees CJ as the scum of society, CJ actually pities Waters. "Any man that ain't sure where he belongs must be in a whole lotta pain" (Fuller 45) states CJ. Despite Water's cruel behavior, CJ still pities the man. Furthermore, CJ tells Peterson that "'Long as his han's ain't on me – he ain't done me no harm, Pete. Callin' names ain't nothin' I know what I is. Sarge ain't so bad – been good to me" (Fuller 45). Even after all abuse CJ has taken from Waters, he refuses to let that effect his cheery view of life. The CJ that is more than just acting foolish or being the star baseball player. Waters does not get to see CJ singing songs and making others laugh. Waters does not get to see this side of CJ nor does he choose to see it. Very good points!

What part of CJ's personality does Waters connect to? Remember his final monologue before he dies-are you sure he doesn't get to see it? I think it's his psychological belief that prevents him from seeing it since he does admit "seeing" it CJ can only be "an ignorant, low-class geechy... [who] isn't worth paying attention to" (Fuller 39-40) as Waters says in his own words.

Even though both characters see themselves as winners how does CJ see himself as a winner? , and the other as a loser "loser" , both end up losing "losing" while fighting the battle of living with white supremacy. Waters ends up losing "losing" his identity and personally attacking CJ to

the point of CJ's suicide. Waters hatred stems from white supremacy. Explain how that attitude makes him "lose" CJ's "Uncle Tom" type personality in combination with Water's hatred of his race leads to CJ's death. Furthermore, both CJ and Waters die as victims of white supremacy. CJ is a victim of Water's battle with whites. Whereas Water's dies by Peterson in revenge for CJ's death as well as because of his actions against his own race. Water's pro-white attitude and behavior with others is what triggers Peterson to murder. Work on the thesis of this paragraph. I don't think it's about what you said in the first sentence. I'm guessing you're trying to get at the fact that it's both a lose-lose situation because of white supremacy, so they're actually not winning, are they? The thesis would probably be that no matter what the outcomes are, both CJ and Water's can't ever actually "win."

Water's is obsessed with white ideals. He tries to do everything he can to turn his back on black society that he does not approve of in favor of a white society. Combine these two sentences and rewrite this for a

**b** Power is his ultimate goal. Are you sure it's power or is he only trying to progress his own ethnicity? In his quest for power, he isolated himself from other characters in the play. His abrasive attitude and temper are unleashed on CJ because he embodies everything Waters hates about his race. Punishing CJ becomes Water's obsession. Justice is not a factor when Waters finally has the opportunity to finally put CJ behind bars. Waters cruel behavior leads to CJ's suicide while still in jail for a crime he did not commit. Why put an innocent man behind bars? Water's reasoning is to simply better the race as a whole. To me, this is your thesis for the paragraph, so

reorganize with the first couple of sentences in this paragraph Waters lives in a “society based on white supremacy and black national oppression” (52) Baraka explains as a justification of Water’s actions. Waters is simply a product of his society. With blood on his hands, Peterson I’m not sure about this; it’s only an idea, but maybe have a paragraph talking about how Peterson impacts Waters and CJ both that makes them who they are. You’re not necessarily talking specifically about Peterson, but because your main claim are the character dynamics of CJ and Waters, Peterson is an ideal character to put in each of their relationships to explain who they kills Waters as revenge to his white supremacy attitudes and behavior. The final words Waters hears before Peterson shoots him are justice “For CJ! Everybody!” (Fuller 97). Even though both CJ and Waters took different approaches to the pressures of white society they both still ended up as victims. Both characters lost their battle with ~~by~~ What are CJ’s “white ideals?”. Both lives ended with no result. This sentence would contradict the paragraph before when you said that they were “winners”

Dear Caesar,

Your ideas are very strong especially in the first couple of paragraphs. But then, I start getting lost towards the end from your ideas, so I made some comments about reorganizing and revising some sentences. Your biggest thing you need to work on is incorporating more evidence from the text rather than stating comments on the text-meaning that you’re commenting more than you’re having evidence-try balancing that out. As for grammar, remember to put commas after a dependent clause and

after an adverbial phrase (a lot of them I just added in for you). With more elaboration and evidence, you'll be able to have a longer paper and have more clarifications on your argument about Waters and CJ. Finally, try incorporating different sentence structures into some of your paragraphs to make your paper flow better. Again, I totally understand where the splurges are coming from since we all write down the first ideas we think of; that's why we have revision haha! I remember you mentioning that you might rewrite the whole essay again-I feel like you don't need to because you are on the right track! You will eventually come, see, and conquer, so feel free to ask me any questions if you need to!

Your humble servant,  
Stephanie

## Moonlight

*The melancholy moonlight, sweet and lone,  
That makes to dream the birds upon the tree,  
And in their polished basins of white stone  
The fountains tall to sob with ecstasy.  
~Paul Verlaine*

Music has influenced more than half of my life. When I was selected as a piano major in 2010 for the Governor's Honors Program, a piece that greatly influenced me to have the patience necessary to continue practicing and performing was "Clair de Lune" by Debussy. In French, the title means "moonlight." Even before playing this piece, as a hobby I'd peer at the night sky with a full moon and think that there was much blessing and hope in the world even during times of darkness. It gave me hope.

When I perform, I always create a story from my imagination to feel a connection between a piece and me. Just like English, music is a free form. Every musician has a different interpretation when he or she plays. This is in

Once upon a time, there was a little girl who was kind and caring. Her grandfather would take her to the beach at night because he wanted to tell her a story. But, he couldn't, for he was mute. So, he showed her instead. One night, her grandfather pointed to the water and the moon with both hands and touched both of his index fingers together. The scenic image of the moon and water at night was beautiful, but mysterious. When the moonlight appeared, it would reflect upon itself on the surface of the water. But the reflection was delicate. The grandfather took his granddaughter's hand and gently dipped it in the water. One ripple caused the light to spread and spread. As it spread, different parts of the

water became illuminated. When her grandfather passed away, the little girl cried for she didn't understand her grandfather's message. But at his funeral, there was a letter addressed for her: "be the ripple—spread your kindness to others around you and I'll be the moon—always here giving you the light."

When I first played "Clair de Lune," I was extremely self-conscious, but I realized that it was because my true feelings were being expressed in the beauty of the melody. Therefore, I'd like to dedicate this Wild Card entry to my friend, Micah David, who took this YouTube video of me playing even when I told him not to:



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Th8kYWHQbQs>