Navigating the Landscape: Using Disability Studies to Enhance the Analysis of Sylvia Plath's Bell Jar

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This curriculum unit is recommended for:
AP English Language and Composition, Honors English/Grade 11

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Teaching Standards: See Appendix 1 for teaching standards addressed in this unit.

Synopsis: Students will consider disability as a social construction and examine the intersection between race, culture, gender and identity. Students will deepen their understanding of this thematic approach and explore how disability can be woven into other thematic approaches to analyzing literary texts. Disability is a "bodily category" but "also a social category shaped by changing social factors." Although the definition of disability "theoretically has been based on bodies, the categorization of bodies as disabled has been shaped by factors such as, race, sexuality, education, levels of industrialization or standardization, access to adaptive equipment or privacy, and class." *The Bell Jar* allows us to explore the complex intersection between disability and gender. The text also offers an opportunity to explore the idea of disability as something that must be embraced and incorporated as part of a powerful self, not something that has to be cured, hidden or thought of as a weakness. The study offers students the opportunity to use critical thinking skills and explore new areas of thought.

I plan to teach this unit during the coming year in to (75) students in (AP English/Grade 11).

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Navigating the Landscape: Using Disability Studies to Enhance the Analysis of Sylvia Plath's *Bell Jar*

Marva Hutchinson

Introduction

The curriculum of The Advanced Placement English Language and Composition Course, sponsored by The College Board, focuses on training students to "analyze, synthesize, and evaluate nonfiction texts." [i] The course offers tremendous variety, and I routinely tell my students that we can apply our analytical strategies to any text at any time. We look at political speeches and sermons, biographies and autobiographies, advertisements and personal reflections. We look at essays and passages from politics, history, social sciences, and the arts. We explore readings in the fields of education and economics, readings focused on civil rights and gender issues, and readings that examine issues of language and popular culture.

As I have become more comfortable integrating a variety of subjects and media into the course, I have searched for ways to incorporate fresh and challenging material while maintaining continuity with core texts. The course objectives focus on creating strong analysts who can identify rhetorical choices, connect them to stylistic devices, and explain how the precise language of the text works to achieve the purpose of the author. So while anything I choose regarding course content must be something we can use to practice these skills of language/rhetorical analysis and writing, that really leaves the course wide open in terms of content since, theoretically, we should be able to apply these strategies to the analysis of any text.

An analysis of the trends in the College Board content selection reveals a more thematic approach that is incorporating more modern and complex texts. For example, students fifteen years ago might have been asked to analyze Lincoln's "Second Inaugural Address;" now they might be asked to look at two different passages to see how an author "satirizes the language of two groups that hold opposing attitudes about environmentalism" and construct an essay explaining how "the satire illustrates the unproductive nature of such a discussion."[ii] Textbooks recently published for the course have begun grouping selections by content. The most recent CMS adoption, for example, has chapters on education, community, economy, gender, sports, language, popular culture, environment and politics. The inclusion of disability studies increases the breadth of course content while offering the possibility of deepening the studies in existing content areas. Disability studies is an interdisciplinary field that has relevance across these other thematic approaches.

Content selection is critical. Ultimately content with sophistication and complexity offers students the opportunity to improve critical thinking skills. So while I focus on skills, I also focus on content that allows them to think and stretch. *The Bell Jar* is an example of a text that broadens the scope of the curriculum, offering students an opportunity to explore issues of race and gender and identity and how these concepts feed into privilege and inclusion in society. But students at this level will need guidance in navigating these complex issues. Although I have used *The Bell Jar* for years, I continue to struggle with how to push students outside their initial assumptions that the text is a story of a girl who wants to kill herself. Plath's text forces the reader to contemplate how society defines and treats mental illness, and disability studies will further assist students in navigating the complexities of gender, disability, identity and language.

Current cultural trends also indicate that the time might be right to initiate this inclusion as society seems more open to the discussion of the realities of mental illness and how to remove the stigma society places on the diagnosis. *Silver Linings Playbook*, one of the most critically acclaimed movies of 2012, was also a blockbuster hit at the box office grossing over $236 million.[iii] The film follows the relationships of a man institutionalized for bipolar disorder, a woman diagnosed with clinical depression, and a father with symptoms of obsessive compulsive disorder. Students were drawn to the film, perhaps because of their affection for Jennifer Lawrence, the female lead in this film and *The Hunger Games.* The point is that students and adults embraced the film. In her interview after receiving the Oscar, a reporter asked Lawrence what the film meant to people "who are suffering from brain diseases like bi-polar." Lawrence responded, "I don't think we're going to stop until we get rid of this stigma for mental illness, and I hope that this helps. It's just so bizarre how in this world if you have asthma you take asthma medicine, if you have diabetes you take diabetes medicine, but as soon as you have to take medication for your mind, it's such a stigma behind it."[iv] Just one of the many versions of this clip on the Internet has over 1,668,000 views, perhaps indicating a public receptiveness to the continued conversation. Students themselves are increasingly being diagnosed with social and anxiety disorders; the lack of support structures available to those stigmatized by society is a topic particularly relevant for this age group.

Background

Teaching Advanced Placement Language and Composition in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg school system is challenging. The primary goal of the AP Language course is to create strong analysts with the skills to write effectively. Students must identify rhetorical choices, connect them to stylistic devices, and explain how the precise language of the text works to achieve the purpose of the author. The focus of The College Board examination is nonfiction; however, in Charlotte the task is complicated by the fact that the course also serves as a student's primary English credit for eleventh grade. In other words, we must teach these skills of nonfiction analysis while also incorporating texts from the traditional American literary canon—along with whatever other local

requirements might come along in the ever-evolving implementation of the Graduation Project standards—and suddenly we find ourselves with far less time to focus on the new and challenging curriculum, essentially teaching three classes in one.

The course itself is one of the more difficult sponsored by The College Board. Only twenty-six percent of students who took the test in 2012 scored a four or a five (compared to nearly forty-eight percent of the also popular and accessible AP Psychology course), and only fifty-five percent of the students received a passing score.[v] These numbers have dropped significantly in just one year. Last year, thirty-one percent of students scored a four or a five, and sixty-one percent of the students received a passing score.[vi] Yet while the passing rate remains low, the number of students entering the course and taking the exam has increased significantly. The number of students taking the AP Language Exam has increased from 135,428 in 2001 [vii] to 476,277 in 2013.[viii]

Further complicating the issue is the fact that students are coming increasingly unprepared for the course. I have taught the course for eleven years, and when I began, the jump in curriculum was so enormous that I struggled to keep up with the pace. I was fortunate in that I could essentially throw any idea at my students—and because of their ability level they could turn almost anything into a fantastic learning opportunity. I learned right along with them. One would assume that at this point I could be on some sort of "cruise control," but every year teaching the course becomes more difficult. While my mastery of the material and instructional techniques has increased, their agility in working with the language has decreased significantly. The possible explanations for this trend are myriad. Because of the open-enrollment policy, students are entering the course with a variety of skill sets, many with verbal PSAT scores well below the College Board recommendation. No Child Left Behind (NCLB) requirements focus classroom instruction on standardized test improvement—and most of those tests focus on reading comprehension or other skills for which there is one clear, correct answer—not analysis, writing, or independent thinking. In a recent report on National Public Radio, Leah Hager Cohen pointed out that this year's class of seniors would be the "first generation to have grown up entirely under" NCLB legislation that puts a "premium on knowing the right answer, being able to fill in the correct oval on a test." This focus has had a significant impact on HOW students learn as perhaps we "may not be teaching enough the value of experimentation and failure and risk-taking and the process of inquiry."[ix]

In other words, students spend most of their educational careers focused on content. Young students enthusiastically memorize the alphabet and multiplication tables. Older students might be able to identify the country in South America with the highest annual rainfall totals or label the parts of the digestive system. At the secondary level, state testing programs have continued to reward students for the regurgitation of content knowledge—they answer multiple choice questions about science, civics and history, but they are not asked to use any skills of analysis, synthesis or application. Even on an English EOC, students might identify a simile, but they have no idea why it is significant

to the author's purpose or audience. They might have to identify the appropriate spot for a comma, but they can't explain how punctuation can change the meaning of a text. The focus on content also allows the students to rely on outside information. Increased access to technology means that students are constantly accessing Sparksnotes or other such sources for that "right response," and because of these endeavors they have spent years practicing reading and absorbing what someone else has told them to think—basically reading comprehension –instead of exercising their own powers of analysis and independent thought. It doesn't matter if students are asked about the significance of "The Declaration of Independence" or the American Dream as it is illustrated in *The Great Gatsby*—if they are only graded on content, they can regurgitate someone's answer without thinking or utilizing any skills beyond reading comprehension and memory. They aren't asked to analyze the text and explain how the significance is established. These students arrive unprepared for the AP exam that essentially requires analysis and synthesis from a generation of students who are not accustomed to these tasks.

And students certainly aren't asked to write. Or, if they are asked to write, they receive feedback based on whether the content is right or wrong—which really just makes it a longer form of a multiple-choice or fill-in-the-blank question. Students do not receive relevant feedback based on the construction of their text or the rhetorical and stylistic devices implemented. This lack of focus on literacy has left students without the skills they need for success at the college level. Their writing exhibits problems with clarity, organizational logic, argumentative strategies, development, language—the list goes on. They also have difficulty utilizing sources and entering into a sophisticated dialogue with writers in a given field. Universities are starting to revamp their writing requirements for incoming freshmen. Students at UNC-Chapel Hill, for example, are no longer able to exempt from the introductory writing course. The required course in rhetoric is divided into three sections—social science, science, and humanities—and students will analyze the nuances of language particular to subject areas and implement those skills as they develop sophisticated arguments and integrate sources in a meaningful way.

The issues of analysis and writing are directly related. Students cannot thoughtfully construct a text with a consideration of audience, purpose and strategy if they have not learned how to analyze a text for these issues. AP Language and Composition, focuses on this analysis. We ask ourselves how an author's choices are based on his purpose. We analyze rhetorical appeals, argumentative techniques, syntax, diction and other relevant stylistic devices. Our studies focus on nonfiction prose selections that include personal narratives, political documents and explorations of social issues. The course requirements are daunting to the even the most skilled students because they are so advanced and outside the realm of preparation and prior expectations. I find that the mere mention of the word *rhetoric* can induce utter panic—to say nothing of the introduction to *metonymy* or *epanalepsis*. Students need assistance in learning how to break down a text into manageable pieces so they can see how the language creates meaning. They need

guidance as they move from the familiar land of reading comprehension to the undefined wilderness of analysis.

The AP exam essentially requires analysis and synthesis from a generation of students who are not accustomed to these tasks. This lack of student preparation would seem to necessitate more individualized instruction; however, demographic shifts in our population and economy have compounded the difficulties in facilitating student success in the classroom. I teach at Providence Senior High School in Charlotte, North Carolina. The combination of an explosive growth rate and a dwindling economy has impacted our ability to serve the individualized needs of our students. The Charlotte- Mecklenburg school system (CMS) has grown at a rate of three percent per year; in other words, approximately four thousand students enter the CMS system each year, and a large percentage of them come from our attendance zone. It is anticipated that this growth will continue for ten years.[x] Yet with recent setbacks in our national, state and local economies, the system has cut approximately twenty percent of the qualified teachers from our school. This reduction in force has led to the elimination of many Advanced Placement courses, and increased class sizes in those that remain. My 2013-2014 AP English classes are actually the largest I have had in twenty-two years of teaching in CMS. Students who come to the course with limited skills need individual attention, and with class sizes anticipated to be above thirty-five across the board, that individualized instruction will become more and more difficult. Our job as teachers will be to find strategies that will work effectively with larger groups of students.

The main text of this curriculum unit will focus on *The Bell Jar*, a text that forces a reader to contemplate how society defines and treats mental illness. The text opens with Esther realizing that she is "supposed to be having the time" of her life; instead she feels empty, "the way an eye of a tornado must feel, moving dully along in the middle of the surrounding hullabaloo."[xi] How many of us have felt depressed or out-of-sorts, even when it seems like everything is going our way? And how many of us have had those feelings exacerbated by ways we are made to feel like the "other." Students can think about where they fit on the continuum and what pushes someone outside the boundaries of what we call normal. The inclusion of disability studies will enhance their ability to explore these difficult questions. Disability is a "bodily category" but "also a social category shaped by changing social factors."[xii] Although the definition of disability "theoretically has been based on bodies, the categorization of bodies as disabled has been shaped by factors such as , race, sexuality, education, levels of industrialization or standardization, access to adaptive equipment or privacy, and class."[xiii] *The Bell Jar* allows us to explore the complex intersection between disability and gender.

The text also offers an opportunity to explore the idea of disability as something that must be embraced and incorporated as part of a powerful self, not something that has to be cured, hidden or thought of as a weakness. Prior to her release from the hospital where she has been treated after a suicide attempt, Esther is warned that people will treat her

like something to be avoided, “like a leper with a warning bell,” and her mother wants to forget everything as if it were a bad dream. Yet Esther remembers everything; she realizes that she cannot forget and cover any of her experiences because all of them, including her breakdown and breakthrough, were part of her, part of her landscape. The main character in *Silver Linings Playbook* expresses a similar idea when she says, “There’s always gonna be a part of me that’s sloppy and dirty, but I like that, with all the other parts of myself. Can you say the same about yourself?”[xiv] This idea contrasts with an “ableist attitudes” that “reflect a fear of, an aversion to, or discrimination or prejudice against people with disabilities”[xv] and assumes that people with disability has a “clear ‘cause’ that must be ‘treated’ in an effort to find a ‘cure.’”[xvi] Social structures “based on able-mindedness” assume that people with mental illnesses “can simply ‘snap out’ of their conditions.”[xvii] Complicating the issue is the fact that Esther certainly doesn’t want to stay under the suffocating bell jar, “blank and stopped as a dead baby;”[xviii] she wants to be free without going numb. To what extent is Esther’s disability a product of a society that so narrowly defines of women? And how do we keep the “cultural and social analysis of mental illness”[xix] from undermining “mental illness as a legitimate illness and disability”?[xx] The complexity of the study offers students the opportunity to use critical thinking skills and explore new areas of thought.

Objectives

Students will read a complex text with understanding and for comprehension, interpretation, evaluation and analysis. Students will engage with major texts in the study of American literature, including *The Bell Jar* and *The Scarlet Letter*. Students will identify the author’s purpose and how the author’s choices of rhetorical strategies and stylistic devices contribute to the construction of that purpose and meaning. As part of this analysis, students will consider disability as a social construction and examine the intersection between race, culture, gender and identity. Students will deepen their understanding of this thematic approach and explore how disability can be woven into other thematic approaches to analyzing literary texts. Students will use their study of literature to enhance their study of nonfiction later in the course.

Rationale

The History of Cognitive Disability—The Roots of Stigmatization and Mistreatment

Generally speaking, indigenous North Americans prior to the colonization of the Europeans did not stigmatize disability. If people could “sustain meaningful relationships that involved emotional or labor reciprocity—regardless of cognitive, physical, or emotional capacities—and lived out balance,”[xxi] they were not considered disabled at all. The harsh conditions and physical requirements led to bodies that were “scarred and altered,” but differences in physical ability were considered unremarkable and communities assumed that “gifts might change throughout life stages.” The Indigenous

worldview focused on the "interwoven nature of body, spirit, and mind"[xxii] and individuals sharing different gifts and enjoying the help of others. So while indigenous cultures might have recognized an "unhealthy imbalance," they had "no concept of mental illness prior to European contact"[xxiii] and would simply have sought to restore the harmony of an individual.

The Europeans introduced "Western concepts of wellness and medicine" that conflicted with the indigenous worldview that recognized "body, mind and spirit as one."[xxiv] However, early European colonists also seemed unconcerned with stigmatizing disability and instead focused on whether a person could contribute to the community and perform labor. They paid "relatively little attention to physical disability," but those with cognitive disabilities "attracted substantial policy and legislative attention"[xxv] as they attempted to establish legal structures and social order. Colonial laws protected people with cognitive disabilities from economic, physical and sexual exploitation. Communities took responsibility for the care of the "distracted and the lunatic" when families could not provide the appropriate financial support.[xxvi] The treatment of those with cognitive disabilities was not any different from other dependent groups because it was not considered particularly shameful.[xxvii] Colonists "emphasized economic productivity in a manner appropriate to one's race, class, gender, and religion. If well-to-do families could economically gloss over the laboring inability of their lunatic, idiot, or distracted family member, that individuals disability"[xxviii] was not relevant.

Before the Revolution, "madness itself was not considered a dangerous threat to be isolated and ostracized at all costs."[xxix]Although those with cognitive or mental disabilities were not confined unless they were deemed a danger to themselves or others, the confinement and "evidence of early efforts to provide curative treatment"[xxx] were horrific. Nielsen gives details of institutional treatments that included whipping, chains attached from waist and ankle to wall, confinement in cellars, and madd-shirts, "close-fitting cylindrical garment of ticking, canvas or other strong material without sleeves, which, drawn over the head, reached below the knees, and left the patient an impotent bundle or wrath, deprived of effective motion."[xxxi] Even those "protected by familial resources,"[xxxii]like Thomas Jefferson's sister and Patrick's Henry's wife, could suffer under confinement in their own homes.

Unfortunately the "post-Revolutionary unease with disorder"[xxxiii] brought with it a heightened concern with and stigmatization of disability. The survival of the new country depended on a capable voting public, and "the new nation sought to define and distinguish between good and bad citizens."[xxxiv] Inherent to the establishment of the new nation "was the legal and ideological delineation of those who embodied ableness and thus full citizenship, as apart from those whose bodies and minds were considered deficient and defective." The number of public and private institutions that "categorized and organized those people considered unfit"[xxxv] increased dramatically in the years following the Revolutionary War, as did regulations that "further defined the normal and

the abnormal, ableness and disability."[xxxvi] People with cognitive or mental disabilities were increasingly institutionalized and denied the right to vote. "Perceived intellect, bodily capacity, race, class, gender, ethnicity, and circumstance all intersected to determine one's civic competency."[xxxvii]

By the late 1700s, doctors and other medical experts became increasingly involved in the diagnosis and explanation of physical and intellectual differences. People who would not have been restrained during the colonial period were increasingly institutionalized during this time.[xxxviii] This "medicalization of madness" did not offer improved treatments. Dorothea Dix detailed the abusive conditions those in asylums, and even those treated at home might be subjected to restraints, bleeding, restrictive diets, purging, frights, hard labor, and cold-water immersion.[xxxix] Institutionalization and poor conditions increased as family members, "once admired for their devotion and care, now experienced shame." The census of 1870 actually counted "idiots in the same column as convicts."[xl] Even veterans with "nonapparent disabilities" like PTSD or brain injuries were stigmatized because they "could not sustain masculine ideals . . . undermining their status in society."[xli]

The history of the United States is often told as a story of "independence, rugged individualism, autonomy, and self-made men."[xlii] When *disability* is used as a synonym for *deficient* and *dependent*, "it contrasts sharply with American ideals of independence and autonomy." This definition of disability creates a stigma that functions as a powerful "weapon in contests over power and ideology" and categorizes different groups as "defective citizens incapable of full civic participation."[xliii]

Relevance of Disability Studies

Disability studies questions the socially constructed definitions of a normative self. Ableist attitudes "reflect a fear of, an aversion to, or discrimination or prejudice against people with disabilities," and these practices are "lived out purposefully, accidentally, and unknowingly."[xliv] This figure of the "normative American self" is so deeply ingrained in the "collective cultural consciousness"[xlv] that we hardly realize that the concept of "disability" is a social construction. Blindness would not be a disability in a society that did not rely on the printed word, wheelchairs would not be a disability in a culture that used ramps instead of stairs, and deafness would not be a disability "in a community that communicates by signing as well as speaking." Disability, then, is not an "absolute, inferior state and a personal misfortune" but a "product of cultural rules about what bodies should be or do."[xlvi]These cultural terms create social hierarchies that determine who operates with the power, privilege and status in a culture. Most have never "thought about the oppression committed in the name of upholding the concept of being 'normal.'"[xlvii]

Disability studies encourages a shift from this "ideology of normalcy" to "a vision of the body as change-able, unperfectable, unruly, and untidy."[xlviii] Historically, people with

disabilities have been silenced and "defined by the gaze and the needs of the nondisabled world."[xlix] The social construction of the normate is an "artifact"[l] of a "power structure" that "needs to create an exploited and exploitable minority."[li] Disability aesthetics, however, "refuses to recognize the representation of the healthy body—and its definition of harmony, integrity, and beauty—as the soul determination of the aesthetic," instead embracing beauty judged by traditional standards to be broken or flawed as "not less beautiful, but more so, as a result." Disability is a critical framework that can enlarge "our vision of human variation,"[lii] and challenge traditional thinking.

Disability as a rhetorical device can enhance the analysis of literature, art and culture because those who are considered disabled have different experiences than members of the "cult of the normal," putting them in a "better position to transcend cultural mythologies" because they are not able to do what the "able-bodied feel they must"[liii] to be normal and successful. The myth of the able-bodied self-made-man is a trope[liv] that has long driven men to the "pursuit of the ultimate goal of being considered normal."[lv]These social constructions offer particular pressures for those with cognitive or mental disabilities. The "cultural demand of cheerfulness" and the pressure to be happy all the time forces people to "deny feelings of comfort and pain and so reject their disabilities as true parts of themselves."[lvi] Our culture also does not value manic, or divergent, thinking, so the extraordinariness of some cognitive conditions, which might heighten "fluency of thought" or innovation, "do not cause appreciation or admiration in others but, rather, distress, fear, or anger."[lvii]

Scholars disagree on the role of disability in literature. Davis and Garland-Thomson seem to agree that disability is "confined to the margins of fiction."[lviii] Davis says that bodies are seen "through the lens of normality as either disabled or nondisabled." Protagonists have normal bodies, beautiful people are "morally virtuous," and characters with disabilities "are either worthy of pity or are villains motivated by bitterness or envy."[lix] Garland-Thomson further argues that the disabled characters function as metaphor, "encouraging us to read the material body as a sign invested with transcendent meaning." The meaning of the text actually is enhanced from "the disabled figure remaining as other to the reader."[lx] David Mitchell agrees with the use of the disabled figure as a metaphor but takes a different stance on its effectiveness, arguing that the characters are not defined by the disability but instead are rescued from "the ordinary—a deviation from a widely accepted cultural norm."[lxi] Mitchell argues that there is no story in "the anonymity of normalcy" and that authors must "establish the exceptionality of its subject matter to justify the telling of a story." [lxii]Thus disability serves as a "master metaphor for social ills" and provides the author with a platform for a "social critique while simultaneously sedimenting stigmatizing beliefs about people with disabilities."[lxiii]

Strategies and Activities

Strategy One: Discussion of Mental Illness

Activity: The Bell Jar Discussion

Students will read Sylvia Plath's *Bell Jar*, a text that offers significant opportunity to initiate discussion about cognitive disabilities. The opening chapter provides an entry point for students to start thinking about the complexity of mental health. Esther Greenwood, the main character, is in New York City as a winner of a scholarship contest. She is wined-and-dined and given all the opportunities that a young woman could want. Yet she feels there is something missing.

> I knew something was wrong with me that summer, because all I could think about was the Rosenbergs and how stupid I'd been to buy all those uncomfortable, expensive clothes, hanging limp as fish in my closet, and how all the little successes I'd totted up so happily at college fizzled to nothing outside the slick marble and plate-glass fronts along Madison Avenue.
>
> I was supposed to be having the time of my life.
>
> I was supposed to be the envy of thousands of other college girls just like me all over America who wanted nothing more . . . I guess I should have been excited the way most of the other girls were, but I couldn't get myself to react. I felt very still and very empty, the way the eye of a tornado must feel, moving dully along in the middle of the surrounding hullabaloo.[lxiv]

How many of us have felt depressed or out-of-sorts, even when it seems like everything is going our way? And how many of us have had those feelings exacerbated by ways we are made to feel like the "other." Students can think about where they fit on the continuum and what pushes someone outside the boundaries of what we call normal. This is a great place to begin with high school students who are constantly thinking about where they fit in the social fabric of high school.

The text also has places that offer insight into the way we treat people who seek assistance for mental illness. When Esther comes home from New York City, she has difficulty sleeping, eating, reading and writing. Her mother takes her to see Dr. Gordon, and after two visits he recommends electric shock therapy in his private hospital. The details are horrific.

> Doctor Gordon was fitting two metal plates on either side of my head. He buckled them into place with a strap that dented my forehead, and gave me a wire to bite.
>
> I shut my eyes.
>
> There was a brief silence, like an indrawn breath.
>
> Then something bent down and took hold of me and shook me like the end of the world. Whee-ee-ee-ee-ee, it shrilled, through an air crackling with blue light, and with each flash a great jolt drubbed me till I thought my bones would break

and the sap would fly out of me like a split plant.

I wondered what terrible thing it was that I had done.[lxv]

Imagine seeking medical assistance and leaving with the feeling that you had done something wrong. These treatments actually worsen her condition since they "are administered in a barbaric fashion, akin to electrocution." [lxvi] She cannot express her fear before the shock therapy, and after the "clumsily applied shock treatment" she is virtually helpless.[lxvii]This passage can be compared to the information about the history of confinement and treatment for mental illness in the rationale section.

The text offers significant insight into stigma surrounding mental illness. Esther hates having visitors because she thinks that they are comparing her to what they wanted her to be and left confused. Even her mother was eventually banned from visiting so she could focus on herself and not what other people thought of her. But even as she was released, the doctor warned her that the views of others would continue to be an issue.

Doctor Nolan had said, quite bluntly, that a lot of people would treat me gingerly, or even avoid me, like a leper with a warning bell. My mother's face floated to mind, a pale, reproachful moon, at her last visit and first visit to the asylum since my twentieth birthday. A daughter in an asylum! I had done that to her. Still, she had obviously decided to forgive me.

"We'll take up where we left off, Esther," she had said, with her sweet, martyr's smile. "We'll act as if all this were a bad dream."

A bad dream.

To the person in the bell jar, blank and stopped as a dead baby, the world itself is the bad dream.

I remembered everything.

I remembered the cadavers and Doreen and the story of the fig tree and Marco's diamond and the sailor on the Common and Doctor Gordon's wall-eyed nurse and the broken thermometers and the Negro with his two kinds of beans and the twenty pounds I gained on insulin and the rock that bulged between sky and sea like a gray skull.

Maybe forgetfulness, like a kind of snow, should numb and cover them.

But they were part of me. They were my landscape.[lxviii]

Buddy even asks her who she will marry now that she has been "here." Of course, Esther says she has no idea who she will marry "now that I'd been where I had been."[lxix] Even though Esther recognizes better than others that she cannot forget her past and cannot just cover up that part of her history and pretend it did not happen, she too cannot seem to speak the words.

Alternate Writing or Discussion Activity

Students often cannot get beyond the idea that they are just reading a book about a girl who wants to kill herself. Give them an argumentative activity that requires them to defend the thesis that Esther is a girl who does NOT want to kill herself. They must use specific examples from the text to defend their answers. This activity can facilitate whole-group or small-group discussion. It can also be used as an essay prompt.

Strategy Two: The Connection Between Disability and Gender

Background and Research

As discussed in the section on rationale, disability is a social construction based on changing social factors. This "categorization of bodies as disabled has been shaped by factors such as gender, race, sexuality, education, levels of industrialization or standardization, access to adaptive equipment or privacy, and class."[lxx] Psychiatric disability in particular is "informed by trauma, marginalization, sexist norms, social inequalities, concepts of irrationality and normalcy . . . and mainstream moral values."[lxxi]Nicki argues that the analysis of the relationship between culture and mental illness is important because social "factors contribute to the development and prevalence of much mental illness in members of disadvantaged groups."[lxxii] The argument that mental illness is influenced by cultural factors is made in conjunction with, not in opposition to "the common view of mental illness as a biochemical disorder, analogous to physical illness."[lxxiii]

Although the "social constructionist approach" cannot undermine "mental illness as a legitimate illness and disability,"[lxxiv]there is no denying the fact that throughout history, different groups, including women, have been "defined categorically as defective citizens incapable of full civic participation."[lxxv]In the period following the Revolutionary War, as medicine became more standardized, this "expertise regarding women's biological deficiencies" actually excluded women from "higher education, voting, and property ownership."[lxxvi] "Race and gender paradoxically impaired and privileged" privileged white women who were considered "i*ncapable* of performing labor."[lxxvii] In 1873 Edward H. Clarke, a professor at Harvard Medical School, actually examined brain of a young woman during an autopsy and concluded that no woman could "simultaneously use 'a good brain' and 'a good reproductive system that should serve the race.'"[lxxviii] These arguments against educational opportunities for women paralleled the racist arguments that promoted slavery because "both claimed that deficient bodies rendered women and African Americans unfit for a full civic life."[lxxix]

In looking at the intersection between cognitive disability and feminist studies, Nicki looks at the cultural norms and confining social expectations that contribute to psychological disorders in women. She cites Chesler's classic text *Women and Madness* that argues mental illness in women is "an expression of female powerlessness and an unsuccessful attempt to overcome this state." In other words, women become ill as they

"try to escape constraining traditional female roles" and realize the severity of "feminine norms of dependency, vulnerability and helplessness."[lxxx] These disabled bodies appear in literature as "dynamic entities that resist or refuse the cultural scripts assigned to them."[lxxxi]

The Bell Jar: Discussion of Gender and Disability

The Bell Jar is a text rich with the illustration of the intersection of disability and gender. Chesler argues that Plath was one of several female artists whose "intellectual creativity made them feel intensely alienated in traditional female roles" and that she became "depressed to be released from maternal and domestic duties." While this assertion might be extreme, certainly Plath's simultaneous "protest against barriers" and "willful self-entrapments within these barriers"[lxxxii] are documented in the fictional Esther Greenwood's struggles in *The Bell Jar*. Plath used the text to document the "plight of the young woman artist . . . attempting to overcome the values of domesticity in a uni-polar milieu" that expected women to "stay home, cook meals, clean house, and bear children."[lxxxiii] *The Bell Jar* shows how the "patriarchal system poisoned Esther"[lxxxiv] as she struggles to find herself and "hear her own muse" in a society that seems determined to define her as "other."[lxxxv]

The metaphor of the fig tree is a powerful section of text that can help students visualize the cultural demands on Esther. While sitting in an auditorium at the United Nations, Esther starts worrying about her future and all the things she cannot do. She feels inadequate comparing herself to these accomplished peers and wonders if she has lost her opportunity to show off her skills.

> I saw my life branching out before me like the green fig tree in the story.
>
> From the tip of every branch, like a fat purple fig, a wonderful future beckoned and winked. One fig was a husband and a happy home and children, and another fig was a famous poet and another fig was a brilliant professor, and another fig was Ee Gee, the amazing editor, and another fig was Europe and Africa and South America, and another fig was Constantin and Socrates and Attila and a pack of other lovers with queer names and offbeat professions, and another fig was an Olympic lady crew champion, and beyond and above these figs were many more figs I couldn't quite make out.
>
> I saw myself sitting in the crotch of this fig tree, starving to death, just because I couldn't make up my mind which of the figs I would choose. I wanted each and every one of them, but choosing one meant losing all the rest, and, as I sat there, unable to decide, the figs began to wrinkle and go black, and, one by one, they plopped to the ground at my feet.[lxxxvi]

Students often misread this section as a symptom of her illness; they think she cannot choose because she is ill. Yet this illustrates the cultural influence on her illness—she cannot choose because she does not understand WHY a woman has to choose only one

branch. Why is she so limited in what she can become? Why can't she be a wife and mother and a brilliant professor and a writer and an Olympic athlete? Why is a woman virtuous or promiscuous? What about all the possibilities she can't even see yet, the figs that will fall to the ground because she had to give those up by making her singular choice? The cultural definitions and limitations contribute to her fragmentation and disabled state. In fact, if the self is a bounded entity (as she references when she says she cannot forget the pieces of the landscape that she doesn't like because hey are all part of her), then "if some of these parts or members are removed, then the entity is not whole; neither are the severed parts, from this perspective, wholes."[lxxxvii] The "intolerable psychic conflict produced by trying to meet cultural expectations" while losing touch with other talents and skills leads to Esther become "increasingly disempowered."[lxxxviii]

Alternate Writing or Discussion Activity

Divide students into groups and assign each group a section of the text. The groups can pick a particular passage and look at how Plath uses style and rhetoric to comment on these issues of gender, culture and disability. (I recommend discussing the fig tree chapter separately and eliminating that from the individual discussion.) They can focus on a particular type of imagery (water, dismembered body parts), a motif (mirrors, language) or any variety of ideas within the same passage. This group analysis can lead to an essay in support of their thesis or class presentations.

Strategy Three: Looking at the Fractured Self in Poetry

Plath's poem "In Plaster" offers additional opportunity to explore the concept of the fractured self as the two selves within the same speaker fight for dominance. The poem is not printed here in its entirety due to copyright issues, but here are two links to the full text of the poem that were current at the time of publication. http://www.best-poems.net/sylvia_plath/poem-19056.html and http://www.americanpoems.com/poets/sylviaplath/1401

> I shall never get out of this! There are two of me now:
> This new absolutely white person and the old yellow one,
> And the white person is certainly the superior one.
> She doesn't need food, she is one of the real saints.
> At the beginning I hated her, she had no personality—
> She lay in bed with me like a dead body
> And I was scared, because she was shaped just the way I was
>
> Only much whiter and unbreakable and with no complaints.[lxxxix]

"In Plaster" illustrates the simultaneous rejection of and entrapment by the cultural limitations on femininity. Plath's speaker is "still unconsciously dominated by he

patriarchal images of womanhood that she rejects; otherwise she would not need to also split off those qualities and impulses in her that do not meet patriarchal expectations."[xc] The figure in "In Plaster" "relentlessly pursues perfection until the living body is murderously resented by the 'perfect' figure as something fatally flawed," the speaker eventually feels trapped within "a perfection in which any sign of individual life is unacceptable." The speaker becomes increasingly aware of and reluctant to participate "in her own self murder."[xci]

These selves can even be compared to the way Plath constructs satellite personas of Esther in *The Bell Jar.*[xcii] For example, Esther initially worships Doreen as someone "white and unbreakable as the alter ego"[xciii] of the cast. Doreen allows Esther to pretend that her "dirty," sexual nature "actually happened to someone else—someone she now banishes in exchange for yet another commodified, and therefore safe personality." Joan is another example of a constructed personality in *The Bell Jar*. Doreen defies cultural expectations for femininity because "she indulges in her sexual appetite without apology or restraint," and Joan defies the expectations "because she prefers to b physically intimate with women,"[xciv] a "sexual threat to the patriarchal order."[xcv]

Strategy Four: Disability Misappropriated as a Tool For Social Control and Injustice

Background and Research

One of Andrea Nicki's arguments in for the importance of cultural and social analysis of disability is that in its absence "we risk applying the category of 'mental illness' to people who are simply nonconformist."[xcvi] A determination of mental illness can be use "denounce deviant behavior and to problematize women"[xcvii] who don't meet the cultural standards of femininity. The parameters for mental health are already different for men and women. Women who display "aggression and ambition . . . risk being labeled as 'mentally ill.'"[xcviii]

As discussed in the rationale, disability as a concept was often used to legally justify established inequalities. Racist ideologists created definitions of disability that defined African Americans as "fundamentally inferior specimens with deformed bodies and minds who were best confined to slavery."[xcix] A similar categorization was used against women in the Colonial era when they "threatened religious, political, and gender hierarchies." Nielsen gives the examples of Mary Dyer and Anne Hutchinson, "female theological dissidents" who "challenged the patriarchy and theological power"[c] in Colonial New England. Even though many women gave birth to "children with nonnormative bodies" or stillborn babies, Hutchinson's and Dyer's births were characterized as monstrous and wee said to represent their heresies. Hutchinson was excommunicated, and Dyer was "likely the first female hanged in the colonies."[ci] This "rhetoric of disability" can mask "broader impulses of social control."[cii]

Activity: Analysis of Mistress Hibbins in Hawthorne's Scarlet Letter

This activity shows how an instructor can essentially apply disability studies to any texts previously or currently studied in the classroom, especially those that offer the intersection with gender studies. In this section I am going back to a text studied earlier in the course. *The Scarlet Letter* offers an example of someone being categorized as mentally unstable to preserve the social hierarchy. Mistress Hibbins is a minor character modeled after Anne Hibbins, the actual sister of Governor Bellingham who was executed for witchcraft in 1656. Anne Hibbins was originally excommunicated from the church in 1641 after she complained about a carpenter's bill being too high. The church found her guilty of "transgressing the rule of the Apostle in usurping authority over him whom God hath made her head and husband, and in taking the power and authority which God had given him out of his hands."[ciii] After her husband died, she was tried as a witch and hanged. Since Hawthorne is known as someone critical of the witch trials and the hypocrisy of those in charge, one can presume he is commenting on the treatment of women who stepped outside the expectations of the culture. Students can trace her appearances in the novel and analyze Hawthorne's depiction of her. Possible responses are included here.

Although she is mentioned several times, Mistress Hibbins only makes four appearances in the novel. Her first appearance is after Hester visits the Governor to defend her right to keep custody of Pearl.

> As they descended the steps, it is averred that the lattice of a chamber-window was thrown open, and forth into the sunny day was thrust the face of Mistress Hibbins, Governor Bellingham's bitter-tempered sister, and the same who, a few years later, was executed as a witch.
>
> "Hist, hist!" said she, while her ill-omened physiognomy seemed to cast a shadow over the cheerful newness of the house. "Wilt thou go with us to-night? There will be a merry company in the forest; and I well-nigh promised the Black Man that comely Hester Prynne should make one."[civ]

Mistress Hibbins appears for a second time after Dimmesdale's scream from the scaffold in the middle of the night, the same night he holds hands with Hester and Pearl.

> At another window of the same house, moreover appeared old Mistress Hibbins, the Governor's sister, also with a lamp, which even thus far off revealed the expression of her sour and discontented face. She thrust forth her head from the lattice, and looked anxiously upward Beyond the shadow of a doubt, this venerable witch-lady had heard Mr. Dimmesdale's outcry, and interpreted it, with its multitudinous echoes and reverberations, as the clamour of the fiends and night-hags, with whom she was well known to make excursions in the forest.[cv]

In each of these appearances, Hibbins appears from the "lattice" of a high window thrown open, as if the embodiment of the classic Madwoman in the Attic, the most famous of the madness metaphors used to represent experiences of expression and confinement. The vision of this woman "trapped—even buried—in the architecture of a patriarchal society"[cvi] has become a complicated construction of feminist rebellion, but it is not necessary to go into all this detail with students. One can simply look at her confinement and marginalization within the culture and compare the confinement with the historical evidence presented earlier in this paper.

In her next two appearances, Mistress Hibbins seems to have come down from the attic. She runs into Dimmesdale after he meets Hester and Pearl in the forest, and later she strikes up a conversation with Hester on Election Day.

> She made a very grand appearance, having on a high head-dress, a rich gown of velvet, and a ruff done up with the famous yellow starch . . . Whether the witch had read the minister's thoughts or no, she came to a full stop, looked shrewdly into his face, smiled craftily, and—though little given to converse with clergymen—began a conversation.[cvii]

> It was Mistress Hibbins, who, arrayed in great magnificence, with a triple ruff, a broidered stomacher, a gown of rich velvet, and a gold-headed cane, had come forth to see the procession. . . the crowd gave way before her, and seemed to fear the touch of her garment, as if it carried the plague among its gorgeous folds. Seen in conjunction with Hester Prynne—kindly as so many now felt towards the latter—the dread toward Mistress Hibbins had doubled, and caused a general movement from that part of the marketplace in which the two women stood.[cviii]

In these appearances, Mistress Hibbins appears not only to have been released from the metaphorical attic—she seems to be dressed in alignment with Pearl, the single character in the novel who never lies and has impeccable intuition and character. Hardly a coincidence that the female characters in the novel, marginalized because they don't outwardly conform to the community standards, are those who speak with the truth, absent of all constructions of hypocrisy.

Appendix: Implementing Common Core District Standards

The Common Core standards as follows are not the only ones addressed by the unit but serve as the primary focus for activities presented here. Most of these standards are practiced daily in some form whether it takes place in or out of class. The parenthetical at the end of each standard denotes which section and number of standards I am addressing for those teachers that are familiar with the Common Core.

1. Students will cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of text. (RL 1) Text support is required throughout the activities.
2. Students will determine two or more themes or central ideas and discuss how they are developed throughout the text. (RL1/RI 2) Students will work with themes that explore disability and gender studies.
3. Students will examine and compare texts from various literary time periods and analyze their treatment of similar topics and themes. (RL 9) The texts suggested in the unit range from 1850 to 1963.
4. Students will determine the author's point of view and analyze the rhetoric for its effectiveness, paying close attention to how the style and content contribute to the text's power and beauty. (RI 6) The focus on rhetorical strategies and stylistic choices dominates the second strategy in particular.
5. Students will integrate and evaluate multiple sources to help them address questions and solve problems. (RI 7) Students will explore disability and gender issues through the variety of sources.
6. Students will write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics and texts, using valid reasoning and sufficient and relevant evidence. (W 1) The first and second strategies offer opportunities for students to write argumentative and analytical essays.
7. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas. (W 2) The second strategy requires students to write an essay *explaining* how style and rhetoric impact an author's purpose.
8. Initiate and participate effectively in a broad range of collaborative discussions with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and clearly and persuasively expressing their own. (SL 1) Activities require students to work together on analysis.

Annotated Bibliography for Teachers

"AP Examination Volume Changes (2001-2011)," *The College Board,* Accessed September 24, 2012. *http://media.collegeboard.com/digitalServices/pdf/research/AP-Exam-Volume-Change-2011.pdf.*

This website offers detailed information on the numbers of students taking AP exams and how those numbers have increased each year.

Bonds, Diane S. "The Separative Self in Sylvia Plath's." *Women's Studies* 18, no. 1 (1990): 49-64. doi:10.1080/00497878.1990.9978819.

This article focuses on the imagery of dismemberment in *The Bell Jar* and how it works to convey a particular reading of self.

Boyer, Marilyn. "The Disabled Female Body as a Metaphor for Language in Sylvia Plath's." *Women's Studies* 33, no. 2 (2004): 199-223. doi:10.1080/00497870490272812.

This article focuses on the intersection of feminist and disabilities in a reading of *The Bell Jar*. The author looks specifically at the impact of gender norms and the breakdown of language in the text.

"Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools Demographic Overview." *Charlotte Mecklenburg School System*. Accessed July 10, 2013. http://www.cms.k12.nc.us/cmsdepartments /StudentPlacement/Pages/Charlotte-MecklenburgSchoolsDemographicOverview.aspx.

This website offers information on the specifics of the CMS school system.

Davis, Lennard J. "Crips Strike Back: The Rise of Disability Studies." In *Bending over Backwards: Disability, Dismodernism, and Other Difficult Positions*, 33-46. New York: New York University Press, 2002.

Davis discusses how disability is portrayed in literature and argues that the disabled individual is capable of experiences that "transcend cultural mythologies" because they are not constrained with the obsession of being considered normal.

Garland-Thomson, Rosemarie. ""Disability, Identity, and Representation: An Introduction." In *Extraordinary Bodies: Figuring Physical Disability in American Culture and Literature*, 5-15. New York: Columbia University Press, 1997.

This article focuses on the social construction of disability and explores our understanding of disability as it relates to culture.

Gilbert, Sandra M., and Susan Gubar. *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-century Literary Imagination*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000. *eBook Collection (EBSCOhost)*, EBSCO*host* (accessed November 3, 2013).

One of the classic texts of literary criticism. The beginning of the discussion of the Madwoman in the Attic as a metaphor.

Hall, David D. *Witch-hunting in Seventeenth-century New England: A Documentary History, 1638-1693*. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1999.

This text has detailed information on Anne Hibbins and others who were accused.

Hawthorne, Nathaniel. *The Scarlet Letter*. New York: Vintage Books, 1990.

This classic text is a standard in the eleventh grade English classroom, the penultimate example of the American Romantic Period. Mistress Hibbins is often ignored as a marginal character, but this unit provides insight into how Hawthorne's character illustrates the relationship between gender, disability and culture.

Leonard, Garry M. 1992. "The Woman Is Perfected. Her Dead Body Wears the Smile of Accomplishment: Sylvia Plath and Mademoiselle Magazine." *College Literature* 19, no. 2: 60. *Academic Search Complete,* EBSCO*host* (accessed November 3, 2013).

This article discusses the connections between *The Bell Jar*, "In Plaster" and other poems.

Mitchell, David T. "Narrative Prosthesis and the Materiality of Metaphor." In *Narrative Prosthesis: Disability and the Dependencies of Discourse*, 15-30. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001.

Mitchell looks at the characteristics inherent in literary representations of disability.

Nicki, Andrea. "The Abused Mind: Feminist Theory, Psychiatric Disability, and Trauma." *Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy* 16, no. 4 (2001): 80-104. doi:10.2979/HYP.2001.16.4.80.

This article focuses on the connection between feminist theory and psychiatric disability.

Nielsen, Kim. *Disability History of the United States.* [S.l.]: Beacon, 2013.

This is an extensive account of American history through the lens of disability. At the risk of writing an annotation that sounds like a fan letter, this is one of the most informative and paradigm-shattering texts I have ever read. I am spreading the word to everyone I know.

NPR Staff. "'Don't Know'? Just Admit It." NPR. Accessed November 03, 2013. http://www.npr.org /2013/09/18/223402246/dont-know-just-admit-it.

In this interview, Leah Hager Cohen discusses the impact of No Child Left Behind on a generation of students who are afraid to explore and fail.

Plath, Sylvia. *The Bell Jar*. New York: Quality Paperback Book Club, 1993.

This text forces the reader to contemplate the complexities of mental illness. It follows the story of Esther Greenwood, a young woman who struggles with the demands of mid-century expectations for women. Although students find this text an "easier read" than

The Scarlet Letter, the lexile level is still high enough to warrant its inclusion in higher level courses such as Advanced Placement English.

Plath, Sylvia, and Ted Hughes. *Sylvia Plath: The Collected Poems*. New York: Quality Paperback Book Club, 1993.

This text is one that includes the poem “In Plaster.” Teachers could also use versions of the poem posted on websites. Students can read and analyze the poem together in the classroom setting, especially if they do not have much experience with poetry analysis.

Puhr, Kathleen M. *AP English Language and Composition Teacher's Guide*. New York: College Board, 2007. Accessed October 6, 2012. http://apcentral.collegeboard.com /apc/members/repository/ap07_englang_teachersguide.pdf.

Teachers across the country use this guide to plan their syllabus and activities for AP English Language and Composition.

"Raw: Jennifer Lawrence Backstage after 2013 Oscar Win." YouTube. February 25, 2013. Accessed November 03, 2013. http://www.youtube.com /watch?v= CLKZb1wLmAY.

This is the recording of the interview Jennifer Lawrence gave after receiving her Oscar.

Russell, David O. "The Silver Linings Playbook Official Shooting Draft." Files.meetup.com. Accessed November 3, 2013. http://files.meetup.com /5455672/silver-linings-playbook.pdf.

The original shooting script for the film.

Siebers, Tobin. "Introducing Disability Aesthetics." In *Disability Aesthetics*, 1-20. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010.

This article looks at the disability aesthetic as a critical framework that questions “underlying definition of aesthetic” appreciation and looks at the value in the disability aesthetic.

“Student Grade Distributions.” *The College Board.* Accessed September 24, 2012. http://professionals.collegeboard.com/profdownload/STUDENT_GRADE_ DISTRIBUTIONS _11-3.pdf.

Provides information on student performance on AP exams.

Reading List for Students/Materials for Classroom Use

Hawthorne, Nathaniel. *The Scarlet Letter*. New York: Vintage Books, 1990.

This classic text is a standard in the eleventh grade English classroom, the penultimate example of the American Romantic Period. Mistress Hibbins is often ignored as a marginal character, but this unit provides insight into how Hawthorne's character illustrates the relationship between gender, disability and culture.

Plath, Sylvia. *The Bell Jar*. New York: Quality Paperback Book Club, 1993.

This text forces the reader to contemplate the complexities of mental illness. It follows the story of Esther Greenwood, a young woman who struggles with the demands of mid-century expectations for women. Although students find this text an "easier read" than The Scarlet Letter, the lexile level is still high enough to warrant its inclusion in higher level courses such as Advanced Placement English.

Notes

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[i] Kathleen M. Puhr, *AP English Language and Composition Teacher's Guide* (New York: College Board, 2007), 1, accessed October 6, 2012, http://apcentral.collegeboard.com /apc/members/repository/ap07_englang_teachersguide.pdf.

[ii] "AP English Language 2009 Free Response Questions," AP Central, May 2009, accessed November 25, 2009, http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/apc/public /repository/ap09_frq_english_language.pdf.

[iii] "Silver Linings Playbook," IMDB, accessed November 25, 2013, http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1045658/.

[iv] "Raw: Jennifer Lawrence Backstage after 2013 Oscar Win," YouTube, February 25, 2013, accessed November 03, 2013, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v= CLKZb1wLmAY.

[v] "Student Score Distributions," *The College Board, http://media.collegeboard.com/digitalServices/pdf/research/2013/STUDENT-SCORE-DISTRIBUTIONS -2013.pdf* (accessed September 26, 2013).

[vi] "Student Grade Distributions," *The College Board, http://media.collegeboard.com /digitalServices/pdf/research/AP-Student-Score-Distributions-2011.pdf* (accessed September 24, 2012).

[vii] "AP Examination Volume Changes (2001-2011)," *The College Board, http://media.collegeboard.com/ digitalServices/pdf/research/AP-Exam-Volume-Change-2011.pdf (*accessed September 24, 2012).

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Pages/Charlotte-MecklenburgSchoolsDemographicOverview.aspx (accessed July 10, 2009).
[xi] Sylvia Plath, *The Bell Jar* (New York: Quality Paperback Book Club, 1993), pg. #.
[xii] Kim Nielsen, *Disability History of the United States.* ([S.l.]: Beacon, 2013), xv.
[xiii] Ibid, xiv.
[xiv] David O. Russell, "The Silver Linings Playbook Official Shooting Draft," Files.meetup.com, accessed November 3, 2013, http://files.meetup.com/5455672/silver-linings-playbook.pdf.
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[xvi] Ibid, xiv.
[xvii] Andrea Nicki, "The Abused Mind: Feminist Theory, Psychiatric Disability, and Trauma," *Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy* 16, no. 4 (2001): 81, doi:10.2979/HYP.2001.16.4.80.
[xviii] Plath, *Bell Jar*, 267.
[xix] Nicki, "Abused Mind," 82.
[xx] Nicki, "Abused Mind," 84.
[xxi] Nielsen, *Disability History*, 3.
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[xxiii] Ibid, 5.
[xxiv] Ibid, 11.
[xxv] Ibid, 20.
[xxvi] Ibid, 22-25.
[xxvii] Ibid, 26.
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[xxx] Ibid, 38.
[xxxi] Deutsch, quoted in Nielsen, *Disability History*, 38.
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[xxxiii] Ibid, 51.
[xxxiv] Ibid, 49.
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[xxxix] Ibid 70.
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[xli] Ibid, 84.
[xlii] Ibid, xiii.
[xliii] Ibid, xii.
[xliv] Ibid, xvi.
[xlv] Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, ""Disability, Identity, and Representation: An Introduction," in *Extraordinary Bodies: Figuring Physical Disability in American*

Culture and Literature (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 7.
[xlvi] Ibid, 6.
[xlvii] Lennard J. Davis, "Crips Strike Back: The Rise of Disability Studies," in *Bending over Backwards: Disability, Dismodernism, and Other Difficult Positions* (New York: New York University Press, 2002), 38.
[xlviii] Davis, "Crips Strike Back," 39.
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[lii] Tobin Siebers, "Introducing Disability Aesthetics," in *Disability Aesthetics* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010), 3.
[liii] Davis, "Crips Strike Back," 39.
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[lv] Davis, "Crips Strike Back," 39.
[lvi] Nicki, "The Abused Mind," 94.
[lvii] Ibid, 90.
[lviii] Garland-Thomson, "Disability, Identity, and Representation," 9.
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[lxi] David T. Mitchell, "Narrative Prosthesis and the Materiality of Metaphor," in *Narrative Prosthesis: Disability and the Dependencies of Discourse* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001), 20.
[lxii] Ibid, 21.
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[lxiv] Plath, *Bell Jar*, 3.
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[lxvi] Marilyn Boyer, "The Disabled Female Body as a Metaphor for Language in Sylvia Plath's," *Women's Studies* 33, no. 2 (2004): 214, doi:10.1080/00497870490272812.
[lxvii] Ibid, 215.
[lxviii] Plath, *Bell Jar*, 267.
[lxix] Plath, *Bell Jar*, 272.
[lxx] Nielsen, *Disability History*, xiv.
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[lxxvi] Ibid, 66.
[lxxvii] Ibid, 86.
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[lxxix] Ibid, 96.
[lxxx] Nicki, "The Abused Mind," 83.

[lxxxi] David T. Mitchell, "Narrative Prosthesis and the Materiality of Metaphor," in *Narrative Prosthesis: Disability and the Dependencies of Discourse* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001), 17.
[lxxxii] Nicki, "The Abused Mind," 84.
[lxxxiii] Boyer, "The Disabled Female Body," 200.
[lxxxiv] Ibid, 206.
[lxxxv] Ibid, 200.
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[lxxxix] Sylvia Plath and Ted Hughes, *Sylvia Plath: The Collected Poems* (New York: Quality Paperback Book Club, 1993), pg. #.
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[xci] Garry M. Leonard, "The Woman Is Perfected. Her Dead Body Wears the Smile of Accomplishment: Sylvia Plath and Mademoiselle Magazine," *College Literature* 19, no. 2 (1992): 3, accessed November 3, 2013, Academic Search Complete.
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[xciii] Ibid, 10.
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[xcv] Ibid, 12.
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[xcviii] Ibid, 81.
[xcix] Nielsen, *Disability History*, 50.
[c] Ibid, 30.
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[cii] Ibid, 119.
[ciii] David D. Hall, *Witch-hunting in Seventeenth-century New England: A Documentary History, 1638-1693* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1999), 89.
[civ] Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter* (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), 103.
[cv] Ibid, 132-133
[cvi] Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-century Literary Imagination* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), EBook, 313.
[cvii] Hawthorne, Scarlet Letter, 195.
[cviii] Ibid, 212.