

# ***By the Byzantines:***

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## Introduction

Byzantines (the best)

April 15, 2009

To this day, I cannot wrap my right-sided brain around why I am looked upon with disgust and a lack of self respect. My goal in life, according to most students is encompassed around making pupils pull their hair out, and most math and science majors deny my significance. If it is still unclear I will go ahead and formally introduce myself as English—a subject either loved or loathed by students. Unfortunately I am everywhere (insert an evil laugh here), and unless one moves to another country where English is not the spoken language, one must learn to live and deal with me for a lifetime. In college, aside from teaching the mechanical nuts and bolts of the English language focus shifts towards how English can be looked at across the disciplines such as in subjects like history, science, math etc. It is to my better judgment that if a student finds a personal interest in an assignment that pupil will become involved with it and enjoy the assignment to some degree. For example, it is very hard to convince a math or science engrossed student that critically reading classic novels like Shakespeare's *Hamlet* or Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations* and looking for rhetorical devices is fun. Like the old phrase "you can lead a horse to water but you can't make him drink", the same applies to bad approaches to leading non-English savvy students to reading. To the members of the jury, my role in the lives of college students may seem mundane and irreverent in teaching the basic mechanics and maneuvers of writing, but the utter opposite is true in which I show the significance of various writing styles across the disciplines, opening the eyes of unwary students to the disciplinary approach which directly relates to the students on a very personal level.

Well, that was a very interesting conversation with...English. Using literary devices such as getting the opinion from "English" in a narrative format is one way to teach the dynamics of the English in a somewhat personal way to get the reader engrossed and involved, almost like having a one-on-one light conversation. (Fogg)

The main goal of this text is to gain the attention of the student and encourage reader involvement. The greatest obstacle of the instructor is to coax students into paying attention to what they have to say. A professor can stand in front of a class full of students and give excellent lectures until he is blue in the face, and no one will learn anything unless their minds are open and they are interested and willing to learn. English as a discipline is difficult to teach because it often seems separated from the interests of those attempting to grasp it. This book will attempt to change that.

The interests of the student are many and varied. A typical textbook assumes that its content is the most important and greatest subject one will ever have the pleasure to learn. It assumes that the reader will, or must learn by the end of the text, believe the same thing. This assumption is wrong. The interests of the student are not something to be overcome, because they are just as important as what is being taught. Using the two in tandem is not only useful to help the student understand the material, but important to show them that everything is interconnected. The world is not split into neat compartments, but mixed all together in a big mixing pot.

English and language are everywhere in the mixing pot. Sometimes they are not easy to see, but they pervade every facet of our lives. If a student has an interest, English is there somewhere. In order to gain the student's attention, this text will connect other topics to English.

Hopefully the reader will be able to connect with the discipline being used enough to become more interested in the language side of it. (Vaughan)

The use of a disciplinary approach in this text is not simply to engage the students' interests, however. The overall goal is to help the student achieve a more comprehensive understanding of the English language and its various uses. By exposing students to written works of science, history, art, sociology, and even literature, we aim to create a well-roundedness among our readers. The types of writing that students encounter outside the English classroom, both at school and at work, can be vastly different from what they were exposed to in their freshmen level composition classes. To be sure, even the English savvy student can gain something from a cross discipline approach. For while the English savvy student may love writing argumentative prose analysis, oftentimes the very same student may find himself/herself dreading a history research paper. The old adage "one man's meat is another man's poison" certainly rings true with regards to English. Undoubtedly, there will be students who want nothing more than to become writers themselves. This text will certainly attempt to encourage these particular students' love of literature and the written word. Yet to all those who sit impatiently in their required composition courses, waiting for the day when they can focus all their attention on their particular field of interest and expertise, this text shall try to accommodate them as well.

Having discussed the philosophy behind this text, let us now turn our attention toward the form, function, and design of this text. In order to more fully drive home the idea of unity between language and life, the book has been arranged into thematic chapters. Each chapter coincides with the necessary chapters of life itself – birth, adolescence, relationships, mid-life,

and death. The five basic disciplines of literature, science, history, art, and sociology/psychology are represented throughout each chapter. (Hechler)

The first chapter will deal directly with birth. The birth of a child is obviously a beautiful time for the parents and everyone around. We will explore some of the works people have done about this stage of life. Many writers have captured this time of life with poems and books of all sorts, scientists study newborn children every day. The history of birth changes constantly with the way babies are delivered and how certain cultures handle newborn children. Many artists have captured birth in paintings and other various ways. The sociology/psychology part of birth can be seen as the effects on the mother, and effects the immediate environment the child is put in has on the rest of its life. Birth is only the start of a life we will explore the next stage in chapter two.

After birth comes the stage of life called adolescence, which is the topic for chapter two. Adolescence brings a period of life where a kid starts to form his own ideas about who he or she wants to be. These new and great ideas children have, often become the focal point of many pieces of literature and artwork. The way the mind and body matures during this part of life is studied by scientists and psychologists in many different ways. Adolescence as a period of children's lives has changed drastically over the years from back when children began working in factories at age four to now when children are supposed to strictly focus on school until their teen years. (Chandler)

The third chapter will focus entirely on relationships. There is no shortage of references dealing with relationships. Trying to find a song about relationships is like trying to find a book in a library, there are plenty to choose from. There are also thousands of books, movies and scientific articles dealing with the subject. The studies about the psychology of relationships and

love will never end because love is such a deep emotion and relationships are vital part of life. I guess that is why it is no surprise that this chapter falls right in the middle of the text book. I feel that this chapter is one that everyone will be able to relate to in one way or another.

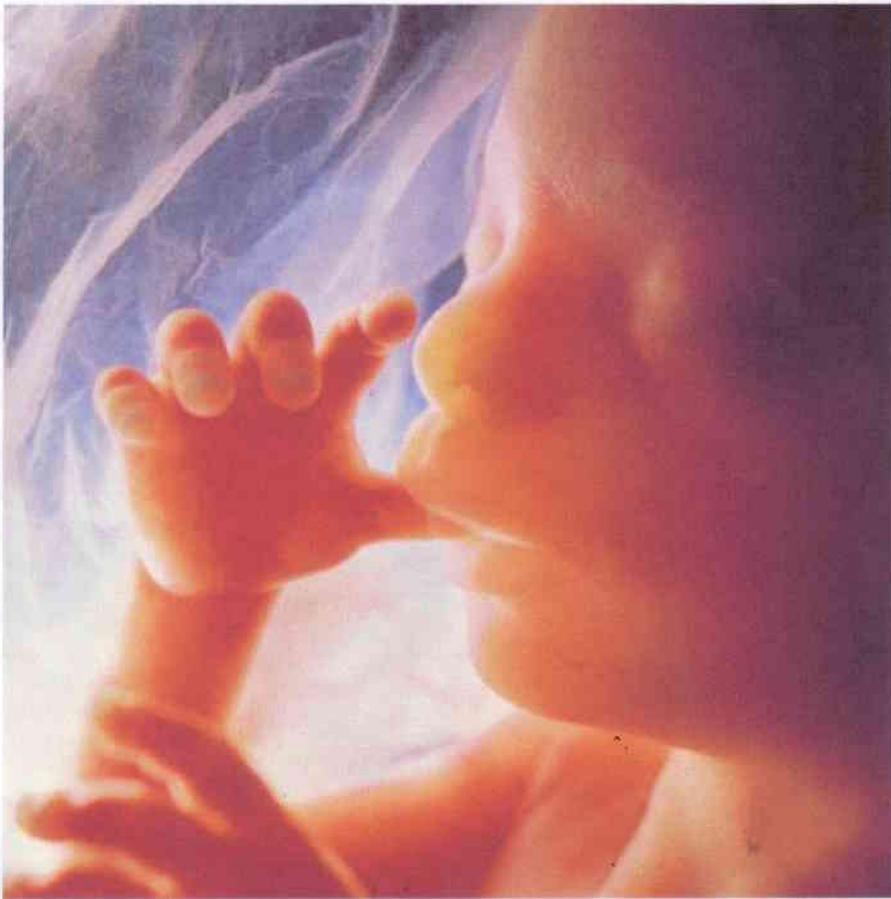
Mid-life is a tough thing for me to understand because, well, I have not experienced it yet. But luckily other people have. There are plenty of books, songs, and movies about that mysterious time known as mid-life. I see it as a time when people start to feel old; once you have crossed that half way point. At this time in life people begin to ask questions like, "what have I accomplished?" and "how will people remember me once I am gone?" It is also when people begin to slow down and realize what is really important in life. Whether one decides to start traveling and seeing the world, or just relax and enjoy life and spending time with loved ones, this can be one of the most enjoyable times in life.

This final chapter will be devoted to death. It is amazing that there is so much out there regarding death when no one really knows anything about it. "To fear death, my friends, is only to think ourselves wise, without being wise: for it is to think that we know what we do not know. For anything that men can tell, death may be the greatest good that can happen to them: but they fear it as if they knew quite well that it was the greatest of evils. And what is this but that shameful ignorance of thinking that we know what we do not know?" (Socrates)

This chapter will discuss the mysterious beauty of death. Everyone will experience it eventually but once you have you cannot share your experience with anyone. That's why it is a mystery. We fear what we do not know, but is death necessarily a bad thing? What is life without death? We will let you decide these things for yourself while showing you the conclusion that others have come to. (Mullis)

**Chapter 1**

**BIRTH**



**“The hour which gives us life begins to take it away.”**

**Seneca**