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A Novel Experience; The Creation of a Short Work of Fiction

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A Novel Experience
The Creation of a Short Work of Fiction

By

Shawn A. Hess

An Abstract of a Project
In
Creative Studies

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements
For the Degree of

Master of Science

December 2008

Buffalo State College
State University of New York
Department of Creative Studies

ABSTRACT OF PROJECT

The Creation of a Short Work of Fiction

This is a project about developing a short fictional work or novel. The purpose of the project is to facilitate more effective writing through practice and also, to develop the skill of storytelling or narration. The project describes, in detail, the processes I utilized in order to create the content of the novel as well as the steps I took in assembling the finished product that is the novel. This document contains suggestions, tips and recommendations on how the project could be replicated however; the project is based on developing a skill so each person's interpretations of the items will be unique.

Date

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State University of New York
Department of Creative Studies

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Dates of Approval:

Cynthia Burnett
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Master of Science Candidate

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SECTION I

Background to the Project

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this project is to craft a short work of fiction while also allowing myself an opportunity to increase my skill and proficiency as an author. Part of what has motivated me to dedicate myself to a project of this variety is my ongoing commitment to becoming a more effective writer in a very general sense. Since I began my graduate studies, I have been paying a great deal of attention to the methods others have employed in their writing and trying to adapt some of those practices for my own purposes.

Another aspect that has motivated my decision to undertake this type of project is the challenge of telling a story. I have always had aspirations for creating a collection of stories which, in a variety of ways, reflect some of my past experiences and the valuable lessons I have taken away from those experiences. Though my intention is to compose a work of fiction, I feel that the best fictional works find their roots in reality; though that reality may be totally obscured from the readers.

Description of the Project

The project entails regularly scheduled opportunities for me to compose, edit, and revise fictional material which I will create. To create this material I will draw heavily on past experience but, also blend those experiences with elements of fantasy and fiction. Because creativity of

this nature is not always so easily accessible, I will make use of many of the tools of creativity and more specifically, the Creative Problem Solving (CPS) process itself.

The project will allow me to dig deeper into my creative potentials as a writer, storyteller, and narrator. I have composed a schedule which allows for considerable time and effort to be spent on developing, arranging, and crafting a collection of writings. I believe that good writing is something which evolves over time, and comes with practice. For this reason, I have allowed for a learning curve to be in effect for the project. To be more specific, I am figuring in time for exploration in the form of trial and learn. Beyond just simply using practice to make perfect, I plan to use the writing sessions to refine and develop my own variety or brand of writing. For this reason, I have intentionally left the direction I wish to take with the project, somewhat ambiguous in nature. My hope is that I will find my own voice in the work, a voice that will ultimately guide the direction of my work.

To aid me in constructing the finished products, I have prepared several mental maps on topics and events which I plan to utilize for crafting and tailoring my work. An accumulation of papers and journal entries I have collected over the years should also be a valuable asset for drawing insight. Beyond those resources, I also plan to investigate some of the more fundamental components of storytelling through the existing literature on the topic.

Rationale for Selection of the Project

In my case, the project is about developing a skill; storytelling and composition is something I have always had a desire to explore. By taking on this challenge, I hope to discover something about myself but, also stimulate the creativity of others through what I create. This is a very lofty goal but, I am setting my expectations high and drawing from all the resources I have available to get the job done. I am putting forward a great amount of effort in hopes that the frequency and duration of these efforts will facilitate a creative leap in both, my skill as a storyteller and, as a writer in a more general sense.

An additional motivation that influenced my decision to pursue a project in writing was my desire to capture some of my past experiences in a more dynamic written format. For years I have kept a journal of my more interesting experiences and adventures and I would like to capture the essence of some of those experiences in this fictional work I intend to create. Often, when I have looked back at the journal entries I have made, I am disappointed. I am disappointed because I don't feel that those entries capture anything about the experiences as I still see them in my head. My imagination is much more vivid, and what I hope to achieve with this project is an alignment of my writing with the visions I still hold in my memory.

Much of what I have learned in the past is still fresh with me today. Many of the feelings and images I remember just seem to grow

richer and hold more intrinsic value as I build on them with more experience. I have listed many different resources from which I hope to draw insight and guidance for the project. It is my hope that this will somehow be reflected in the work and that the finished product will be a result of both personal experience and hard work.

What this Project Represents Creatively for the Improved Quality of My Life or the Lives of Others

Because I believe that writing is going to be a predominant aspect of my life and career, it directly benefits me to undertake efforts, such as this project to facilitate improvements in my skills in that domain. The ability to articulate myself effectively through written word is part of the self-actualizing process, and achieving goals associated with that end gives me great personal satisfaction and reward for my efforts. While these benefits are very tangible and seem easy to evaluate, the real value of my efforts lie in the possibilities.

By becoming a more effective communicator through writing, I increase my chances of reaching other people through what I write. The project has the potential to reveal, and allow me to share, valuable insights and theories I have developed about life and more specifically, living a fulfilling life. The project also allows me the opportunity to explore my abilities and inclinations as a leader through the management of this creative project.

As I have already mentioned, a major component of the project is that of capturing past experiences and insights. To formulate a clear vision for the future, one should have a firm understanding of where they are currently, and also, perhaps most importantly, where they have already been. By collecting and organizing some of my past experiences and combining them with certain aspirations for the future, I could also develop a more coherent vision for my future.

SECTION II

Pertinent Literature

Introduction

When I first decided to make writing the focus of my Master's Project, I immediately went to the Buffalo State Library and began to examine the available literature on becoming a better writer. The instructional materials I found went in many different directions and delineated many different strategies and philosophies on the elements or components of effective writing. I was overwhelmed and I did not know where I would even begin; much of the advice was contradictory or oversimplified in nature.

Studying the components of highly effective writing can be a lifelong task and there are countless references and examples to guide us. In the end, I had to relate back to my objectives for the project and decide on my course of action from there. Because I chose to follow my intuition on the planning of the project, I chose one text which truly resonated with me and decided to utilize that single text for the technical aspects of my work. I came to this decision because I wanted to spend the duration of the project actually writing, not reading.

I chose Munson's (1952) self help guide for writer's titled, "Best advice on how to write". I did not study the book in great detail, but I did glean some foundation theories of writing, which are essential to pay attention to in any writing situation. The most predominant of those

insights or theories is the three rules of writing as Munson described them: your audience, your purpose, and your structure (p. 200). These elements are crucial in constructing any work of literature.

An author's audience and purpose for writing anything can be greatly subjective and infinitely varied, but it is the structure which will require constant attention and a great deal of ingenuity. To help illustrate the concept of structure in writing, Munson (1952) used the analogy of a train traveling over all varieties of terrain to get riders to their desired destinations. The trip could include many stops, layovers, delays, and changes in scenery before the end objectives are achieved, and riders reach their destinations. This is an important analogy to keep in mind when writing anything.

Selected Bibliography

Munson, G. (1952). *Best advice on how to write*. New York: Hermitage House.

SECTION III

Process Plan

Introduction

The process for writing this book and all of the details and decisions that go along with the project are similar to any class or project I have undertaken. The most crucial elements revolve around the planning and scheduling of the activities. In my concept paper (see appendix A), I presented a tentative schedule which involved all of the aspects of the projects I could project with my limited experience with such work.

I have incorporated specific days and times for researching, writing, and problem solving around the book itself. I have also scheduled specific days and times for secondary challenges, like writing up the various project sections and built in additional chunks of time for revising and editing what work I have already completed. To maintain flexibility in my work schedule, I have also blocked off extra time for unforeseen tasks and overflow from other areas of the project.

I have scheduled more hours on the project than is required under the project guidelines. However, I feel this is necessary in order to meet the lofty objectives I hold for the work. For the most part, I have adhered to this tentative schedule, deviating only when I needed a break from the demands of the project or outside forces have intervened.

Because good writing is many times facilitated by inspiration, there are many additional times that I have spent incubating and taking quick notes on directions or insights I have had on the project. I do not include these and I suspect they will be unique for each person and each different project. Below is the schedule I originally developed and have been loosely following.

Project Timeline

Weekly Schedule for Completion of Project

Tasks:	Writing the Novel	Writing- up Project sections	Research	Editing and Proof Reading	Brainstorming/ Troubleshooting Project ideas	Misc.
Sunday	*4-6 p.m. (back-up day)	*3 – 4 p.m. (back-up day)		12 a.m. – 3 p.m.		*open 10 – 12 a.m.
Monday						
Tuesday	12 a.m. - 2 p.m.	2 – 3 p.m.			3 – 5 p.m.	
Wednesday	12 a.m. - 2 p.m.	2 – 3 p.m.		3 – 4 p.m.		
Thursday						

Friday	12 a.m. – 2 p.m.	2 - 3 p.m.	3 – 4 p.m.		*4– 6 p.m.	
Saturday						

*signifies an additional planned fall-back day in case progress on the project is not made on regularly scheduled times/ days.

Actual Project Hours

- 1). Writing the novel: 150 Hours
- 2). Writing-up the project sections and concept paper: 12 Hours
- 3). Editing and proofreading the novel: 26 Hours
- 4). Research on writing: 3 Hours
- 5). Brainstorming/ Problem Solving for project: 5 Hours

Total Project: 196 Hours

SECTION IV

Outcomes

Introduction

When I began writing for the project, I did not have a specific direction I wished to pursue so I explored many different avenues and generated a variety of products in various forms. For several weeks, I worked on writing a mystery narrative based on a character who is a Creative Problem Solving agent (or detective of some sort). I really enjoyed writing this document but, it soon became apparent to me that I didn't have a clear direction for the work and also, I didn't really have any great passion for telling the story. Eventually I abandoned the CPS mystery concept and searched for another direction to take with the writing.

The next plot I spent time developing was based on the misadventures of a misguided antihero. In this tale, I develop the character's personality by utilizing a variety of compromising situations to reveal the unique thought processes that are sometimes a precursor to his outrageous behaviors. I am really proud of the sections I created for this piece but, ultimately I felt that this was not the direction I wanted to take with my finished product. I have aspirations for revisiting this piece and developing it further when it is a more relevant subject matter for me.

The next concept I worked on developing took me in the direction of general psychology and self-help. I spent a great deal of effort crafting several documents that could be fine contributions for a men's self-help guidebook. This is a valid direction for me to pursue because I have a diverse background in the study of psychology but also, a great deal of real world experience and insight that I am very passionate about passing on. Unfortunately, this topic still wasn't inspiring enough for me to make a commitment. I was really beginning to like what I saw myself creating but, I was holding out for an epiphany.

So, as the project progressed, I continued to explore various directions with my writing, but I still hadn't been struck with the grand idea or vision I was hoping for. With the product deadline approaching, I did the exact opposite that most would do. I decided to take a break. I took a break for two weeks, which was a gamble because my deadline was three weeks away. Perhaps this would make some people nervous, but I am a procrastinator by nature and I have learned that my creativity is often fueled by challenge; my greatest accomplishments have been facilitated by either, strict deadlines or some other variety of direst. This being the case, I am happy to report that I got my epiphany.

With only one week to go, I cleared my schedule and prepared for one last creative push to get the novel written and the project completed. My epiphany was something that came to me in a dream, ironically enough. Whatever the content of the dream was, I do not remember but,

it caused me to recall and consider another story that I made up when I was still in high school. It was a tale that I created and told spontaneously during a road trip to Letchworth State Park with some friends. It was a dark tale that reflected the scenery of our midnight back road voyage. It is this tale that has become the backbone or basis for *5000 years of brotherhood*, the novel I crafted for the project.

What are the Products that have resulted from the Project?

The products that have resulted from my intensive labors on the project include the finished novel, *5000 years of brotherhood* and also, several smaller collected works that may serve as foundations for future literary works. The following are samples from *5000 years of brotherhood*:

One particular day the Fledglings noticed that the sun was partially dim and seemed to be obscured by another object in the sky. The object was dark and round like the sun but, it emitted no light or heat like the Sun. The water that fell from the sky became frozen and the Sun, which had always kept them warm, never shone.

Many Fledglings died from the cold but, even more wasted away from undernourishment. The clans which had always dwelled on the plains retreated to the foot of the mountain where a series of caves provided sanctuary from the elements. There, the last of the Fledglings struggled to hang onto life. Many of the Fledgling remained hopeful that the Sun would one day return and bring

prosperity back to the lands but, the lands remained in darkness (Hess, 2008, p.5).

The preceding passages come from the first chapter of the novel and are the set-up for the introduction of my two main characters. The story begins on another planet, far from Earth but, the setting quickly changes and the story brings us to the Egyptian desert during the reign of the pharos and the building of the great pyramids.

The lands were very desolate and their journey took them over sand dune after sand dune with no sign of life other than their own. Suddenly, their bodies were blasted by great gusts of wind and sand. The sands ripped and tore at their bodies but, there was nothing that could be done, the storm had taken them by surprise; they had no choice but to lie down and be buried by the blowing sands.

The storm lasted for hours and when it was over the boys could hear shouting in the distance. After they unburied themselves and cleaned the sand from their ears and eyes, they started toward the voices. They reached the crest of the sand dune and could see many people on horseback moving up the other side of the dune. Before the boys could even react they were surrounded by the riders and facing the sharp end of several long spears. Neither, Achim or Abimelech spoke a word but, stood ready to defend themselves (Hess, 2008, p.10-11).

The story is based on a conflict between two brothers who are in love with the same woman. One brother, Abimelech is having an affair with the king's wife and the other, Achim, wants to dissolve the relationship and send his brother away so that he may have the opportunity to make advances on her.

Over time, Achim grew more and more envious of the relationship between Abimelech and Hatshepsut. During the evenings Abimelech would sneak from his tent after the others were asleep to go meet Hatshepsut. Achim would pretend he was asleep until Abimelech was gone, then he would follow the couple. On most nights they would stroll beneath the beauty of the starlit skies but, occasionally they would build a fire on the dunes and sit huddled close to each other staring off into the night. It was these nights that upset Achim the most, he could not hear what they spoke of but, it was clear to him that Abimelech and Hatshepsut were in love.

On many occasions Achim scolded Abimelech for his relationship with the queen and threatened to inform Ramses of what was going on. Abimelech paid no attention to the threats and continued to sneak off to meet the queen. What Achim did not tell his brother is that he himself was in love with Hatshepsut and was beginning to formulate a plan to drive a wedge between the lovers. The brothers had come to this planet nearly a decade before looking for

a safe place to call home but, things were about to take a dramatic turn for the worse (Hess, 2008, p.12).

The plot has many twists and turns and also features some historical references that help give the storyline substance while simultaneously bringing richness to the character's personalities. This particular passage makes reference to Captain Ahab of Moby Dick fame.

Ahab was a lost soul who had adopted the sea as his home and he would neither succumb to her nor be separated from her. He sailed for years on the Tut and never took leave of any kind except for a few brief layovers and only when necessity prevailed. One particular day when the Tut had been out to seas for many months a terrible storm blew in and the ship began to take on water. The tremendous force of the winds blew the ship violently against the waves smashing the hull and tossing its passengers to and fro. Before the storm was over, the Tut had lost half of its crew including the captain.

The remaining members were stranded and they did not know what would become of them. Ahab was their savior; after several hours of drifting on the seas, Ahab appeared, he had swum through the black stormy waters to once again be united with the ship. He repaired the ship and navigated the crew to safety.

Because the captain had been lost at sea and because Ahab had saved the vessel almost single handedly, the ship passed to him

and he became the new captain. With some slight modifications to the craft and a new crew assembled, the Tut once again became a ship for hire (Hess, 2008, p.19).

Additionally, the story incorporates references to Sigmund Freud and Psychoanalysis as is made apparent in the following section of text:

In the drug trade, he was well known; he supported his own habit by becoming one of the most successful and most powerful drug smugglers the world has ever known. It started with the Opium wars, where he smuggled Opium through China for the British. From there he found himself getting involved with cocaine, in fact he met a young aspiring physician who helped him position cocaine as, a sort of cure all, for the common man. The physician became a close friend of Achim's; he would visit him several times a week to participate in, what the doctor referred to as, psychotherapeutic sessions (Hess, 2008, p.22).

In the next paragraph I illustrate how a relationship forms between one of my main characters and the infamous Adolf Hitler. I chose Hitler as the connection because, I think it helps readers understand the disturbed nature of the character I was attempting to create; read what follows:

During this same period, Adam saw an opportunity to leave the drug trade, at least temporarily, to pursue a job with the German forces. He was contacted by a man named Adolf Hitler, who wanted

Adam to build an army for him. Hitler had studied much of the worlds documented history on warfare and one name always seemed to appear in the literature: Achim. It took Hitler many years but, he somehow managed to track down Adam through the trail that Achim left behind. When the two men finally met, they got along notoriously well and in a short time, became like brothers themselves (Hess, 2008, p.22).

SECTION V

Key Learning's

Introduction

The most predominant lesson I learned is that writing can be hard work. I had no difficulty coming up with things to write about, but sustaining the energy and ambition to focus on a single topic requires strict discipline. I explored many different avenues in my efforts toward this project, but I had great difficulty moving forward on anything until I was struck with a concept that I really had a passion for pursuing.

Another key learning I took away from the work I did involves persistence. Many times I felt frustrated and struggled to keep my momentum during the project, but developing the content was always on my mind. It is important to push yourself to stay on top of the project because, the time passes very quickly. Even though I struggled to find a direction for my work, I was always writing and always creating even if at the end of the day, it didn't add up to much.

A third key learning which I believe is significant revolves around the power of incubation. I have mentioned that the novel was always on my mind throughout the project. I believe this was an essential component of my creative process and is part of what eventually led to the epiphany I experienced that allowed me to move forward and finish the novel. Real life is where the best fantasies come from and if I were not

actively engaged in efforts to glean inspiration from my daily routine, I would have no inspiration at all.

Content

Through the project I was able to become a more effective storyteller and increase my technical writing abilities. Because it was not a research based project, I didn't spend my time studying how to be a more effective writer; I already knew how to write, I just needed to get better at it. Instead, I dedicated a lot of time to developing plots and creating characters. The specific content I developed for the novel was the result of an evolutionary process that stems from my initial work developing various plots and characters.

To develop the characters I had to employ a great deal of imagination and while I have a pretty wild imagination, it takes a certain degree of planning to evoke the right kind of creativity at the right time. To put it more simply, I had to find ways to facilitate my own inspiration; this is not an easy thing to do. To begin with, I started paying a great deal of attention to other people's personality traits and the ways they interact others. Observational research of this variety spawned a variety of directions to pursue. I kept a journal of different interactions and personality traits that I thought were notable.

Additionally, I started paying more attention to movies and television shows. What I was looking for was settings and plotlines. I tried to ignore the specific content and to pay more attention to the key

ingredients that made the story work. I would ask myself, what are the character's motivations? What is it about the setting that's adding to the richness to the plot? Is there a theme operating throughout? How are the characters getting developed within the storyline? Are there things the audience has to infer? What about the characters helps add to the richness of the plot? These are just a sample of the probing questions I would ask myself to help gain a richer understanding of the storytelling that can be seen going on everywhere in our society.

Conceptualizing my characters and plotlines through these methods gave me a solid basis for exploring potentials and developing my own brand of storytelling. Incubation also played a crucial role in allowing the characters and plots to evolve. On many occasions I imagined myself going through my daily routines as if I was the character I had on my mind. I would try to act how they might act or imagine how they might feel in the specific situations I would find myself in throughout the day.

A specific example I will recall where I utilized these processes, comes from my development of a character named Hal, who was supposed to be a Creative Problem Solving detective. I had just watched Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* and I had been focused on studying the detective in the film. I don't smoke cigarettes, but I went out and bought a pack and wore my suite coat around for the whole weekend. Everywhere I went that weekend I smoked cigarette's (which taste

horrible) and tried to think the way a CPS detective might think. When the experiment was over, I had a really clear vision of how and what to write about this particular character.

Each person's creative process is going to be different on a project such as this. However I think these are great ways to get the creative juices flowing. One thing I would do differently has to do with the method I chose for capturing my thoughts and ideas surrounding the project. I kept a journal, but as many of us know, inspiration can strike at strange moments. Using a voice recorder would have been a more effective and efficient way to capture these insights.

Process (what worked? What could be changed? What skills were used?)

One of the most effective tactics I employed for the creation of the novel involved breaking my ideas down into smaller segments, much like this Master's project write-up is broken down into sections. When I finally conceived of the story I wanted to tell, I sat down and drafted out about a dozen tentative chapter titles that corresponded with the general content and progression I wanted to take with the narrative. This technique allowed me to view the impending work as incremental in nature rather than having it present itself as a colossal insurmountable quantity of work.

Beyond simply breaking the work down into sections, I also spent a great deal of time trying to find a voice that worked for delivering the story convincingly. This has more to do with trial and error than

anything else. I would write a section several different ways and then choose the inflection that I thought worked best for conveying the message. Particular things to keep in mind during this process would be, the way the characters themselves might speak, the time frame the story exists in, and the overall tonality you wish to preserve throughout the work.

If there is a guaranteed recipe for success with writing, I don't know what it is. There was a lot of Creative Problem Solving (CPS) involved in the work I did. I explored the challenge by generating many different characters and plotlines. I collected data through real world observations and by the examination of existing storytelling works (film and television programs). Finally, I developed a plan of action based on the ideas I generated and the various methods I could employ for delivering the story.

An overarching theme from both the project and the CPS model is the need for a balance between divergent and convergent thought processes. I could have gone on developing character and plotlines, but in the end, I had to adhere to my schedule and be deliberate about selecting and strengthening the ideas I had the most passion for. To be a successful storyteller you must have a passion for what you're writing; you must possess an intrinsic motivation for the project.

SECTION VI

Conclusion

Introduction

What I now have a fuller understanding of is how much preparation can be involved with planning a novel or any narrative for that matter. Each person's creative process will be different, but there will always have to be a method for developing the characters and the plotlines and also, a process of selecting a format to tell the story with. My creative process is centered on incubation and observation; uncovering the underlying dynamics of a situation or a personality type is where I like to focus my attention. Once I have an understanding of these elements, moving forward is a natural process.

I found it very easy to generate a lot of options and directions to take with the novel, but I had considerably more difficulty converging on a final direction for the work. In the end, I performed the best under the constraint of the deadlines. This isn't really a surprise for me, because I consider myself a procrastinator by nature. What works best for me, and what has been verified by this project, is that I like to work things out conceptually in my mind before I actually do the physical work to take them from theory to reality.

Despite the fact that I spent more time incubating on the ideas than I did actually writing them out, I believe I made very good use of my time. The amount of work I generated throughout the project is

impressive to me and I would change very little about the way I managed the overall project. I really enjoyed the various methods I employed for generating my options and for collecting the data. In the end, I was left with a product that is consistent with the original aspirations I held for the novel; it's unique, well thought out, and open enough to evoke creativity in the minds of those who read it.

Future Steps or Actions

The story I created, *5000 years of brotherhood*, could be expanded and elaborated on in many different ways. At some point I might wish to revisit the work and make some refinements. Also, there are a number of other documents that I created throughout the process and those could also serve as valuable starting points for future works. I plan to continue developing my prowess as a storyteller, but I have not yet formulated any specific plans. The work I did throughout the project has facilitated a great creative lead in itself. I will approach future undertakings with the same ambitious spirit.

My hope is that others will find the details of how I constructed my finished product useful, whether that means replicating the methods I chose, or developing their own recipe for success. Writing is all about finding your own voice and brand of storytelling and that is something which takes time. There is a lot of frustration and trial and error involved, but the key thing to focus on is finding ways to overcome and persist.

References

Hess, S.A. (2008). *Unpublished concept paper*. Buffalo State College.

Munson, G. (1952). *Best advice on how to write*. New York: Hermitage House.

SECTION VII

Appendices

APENDIX A
CONCEPT PAPER

Title of Concept Paper: Novel

Name: Shawn A. Hess

Submitted: September 12, 2008

Project Type: Develop a Skill

What Is This Project About?

The focus of this project will be to develop a short fictional work which captures key insight from my own past present and possibly even future in the world as I know it. I intend to design and deliver my words in an innovative and memorable fashion which will ideally have an impact on those who are receptive to its message(s). The concept and story line(s) for the novel will be taken directly from my life and various adventures but also will be infused with entertaining tidbits from the realms of fantasy and fiction. Some core themes I hope to explore within the work include selflessness, true love, persistence, and the struggle for self actualization. To achieve these ends I will have to utilize all my skill in creative writing, creative problem solving, and most importantly self discipline.

Rationale for Choice:

The decision to take on this very ambitious project and set out to create a novel which bears my name as the author has been in the making for many years. I have always harbored a secret desire for writing and I am taking this opportunity to dig deeper into my creative potential to see what pearls of wisdom I may yet stumble upon. The true value of the project lies in the possibilities. If I can articulate my key concepts to myself and potential readers in a unique and memorable fashion then there is always the hope that people will want to hear more from me. At its best, this project may become a door to many new opportunities in the future.

What Will Be The Tangible Product(s) or Outcomes?

The tangible product I create will be the literary work itself; a collection of knowledge and tales assembled as a coherent collection. I aspire to have a completed work which is thought provoking, innovative, and well written.

What Criteria Will You Use To Measure The Effectiveness Of Your Achievement?

The first criteria I aspire to meet involves the quality and effectiveness of the writing. The work must express something unique and memorable about the situations and characters

presented in the work. Ideally readers should be able to come away with a vivid sense for what the work is attempting to express. Additionally, to that end, I will know if my writing is working effectively within the project when I feel like it is conveying what I mean to convey. Consumption of literature of this type can be highly subject in nature and I believe the only true measure can be the authors own feelings about the work. My best experience with writing has occurred when it is serving as a form of catharsis. If I am not enjoying my creative writing sessions than I am not gleaning its therapeutic value and I should rethink my topics and motivations. These criteria I have mentioned so far all point in the direction of flow for the entire project which is my highest criteria. If I cannot experience the characteristic focus and engagement of flow for the project, at least in some consistent capacity, I would consider the work involved in the project to be a waste of time and resources. I believe meeting these criteria will first and foremost involve a regimented and routine schedule that will create and further facilitate the opportunity for these kinds of experiences with flow and other states of heightened performance.

Who Will Be Involved or Influenced; What Will Your Role Be?

A majority of the work involved in this project will be carried out on my own. I will be responsible for the core writing and arranging of the text and ideas. Additionally I will critique and edit my own work to the best degree possible. I have also secured a close friend (Michael J. Kriegbaum) as my editor for the project and together we will work to see the project through to completion.

When Will This Project Take Place?

I began work on the project in early August 2008. The plan is to complete the novel and all of the projects documentation by the time the calendar reaches December 2008. As of right now I do not have future plans for the project but that could be open for reevaluation as the project progresses.

Where Will This Project Occur?

I will be working on this project at my home office in Cheektowaga, New York and also on the Buffalo State College campus in Buffalo, New York.

Why Is It Important To Do This?

For many years I have had aspirations of producing a literary work which could capture the essence of various lessons I have learned and also synthesis those ideas into some incarnation of a fictional narrative. The synthesis of fact and fiction is a wonderful way to help me refine my own visions of the future and also simultaneously capture events of the past in a very organized and appealing way (similar to a time capsule). In the past I have lacked the organizational skills and also discipline to carry out a project of this nature.

Through my education in the creative studies discipline I feel I have developed both the thinking skill and the self efficacy to fulfill this long held aspiration. Part of my ambition for graduate school has been to refine my skill as a writer and I believe I have made substantial progress toward the challenge. My hope is the completion of this project will help cement and refine some of the skills I have already acquired and also provide me with opportunities to stretch my potentials even further.

Personal Learning Goals:

The first goal I have is to be well organized and maintain the discipline to complete the work involved in a timely and consistent manner. A second objective I wish to strive for is to push the boundaries of my own creative potential specifically, in regard to my storytelling skill. I wish to not only stretch my own imagination but that of the reader as well. The third and possibly largest learning objective I have for the project is to discover my own brand of writing. While I do realize this could take many years to discover I hope this first effort reveals some key insights about how I process and subsequently express events from my own life and imagination into a coherent vision or tale as would be the case in this project. Beyond what I have already mentioned I think an important overarching lesson can be learned simply by undertaking and completing the project itself. By acting as the talent, the process manager, and also the project coordinator I will be afforded a very critical look at my own leadership style. My ideal outcome in this situation would be to come away from this project with an increased confidence in my ability to identify valuable contributions but also to facilitate and manage creative projects. The final learning objective I hold for the project involves managing the anxiety that can arise from making private thoughts and feeling public. Finding a way to express myself through writing in a way that will resonate with others and make me feel at ease doing so will be a matter which demands my most scrutinizing eye for detail.

How Do You Plan To Achieve Your Goals And Outcomes?

I will begin my project by determining a structure for the novel. I have several key events in mind but I will use Creative Problem Solving to help me decide on the characters and timelines. Once these elements have been decided upon I will use a visual map to assemble the events and times into a coherent vision. Bearing in mind the divergent and convergent CPS guidelines during the process I hope to craft a unique template (the visual story map) from which I can find strategic areas to highlight my creative writing ability. Currently I have put aside six hours each week simply for the writing aspects of the project. I have also set aside Tuesday evenings (two hours) for problem solving sessions around the novel and other aspects of the project as need should arise. Currently I am striving for a minimum of fifty (50) pages of quality text to complete the short novel. I will also be working to establish a set schedule for my editor (Michael J. Kriegbaum) to review and edit my work. My plan is to adhere to a strict schedule for this project. I have made arrangements to take ten weeks on its completion and by my current

estimates I should be able to complete the work to my satisfaction and also exceed the minimum academic requirements imposed on the project.

Evaluation:

Evaluation will take place on many different levels for this project. The first will be personal in nature and involve my feeling for how engaged and energized I am about what I have written, however I feel this dynamic will be revealed in the writing itself and will become obvious to others who read the work as well. Evaluating my time management can be achieved by examining how closely I adhere to my writing schedule and impending deadlines for the project and its various sections. I aspire to have consistent progress on the project and hope to minimize any creative or conceptual hang-ups. While great creative leaps can be an asset my, main push will be for consistency and predictability in my progress. A majority of my success will be measured through my own subjective experiences and also through the unique feedback from my editor and others who will read the finished text.

Prepare project Timeline:

Weekly Schedule for Completion of Project

Tasks:	Writing the Novel	Writing-up Project sections	Research	Editing and Proof Reading	Brainstorming/ Troubleshooting Project ideas	Misc.
Sunday	*4-6 p.m. (back-up day)	*3 – 4 p.m. (back-up day)		12 a.m. – 3 p.m.		*open 10 – 12 a.m.
Monday						
Tuesday	12 a.m. - 2 p.m.	2 – 3 p.m.			3 – 5 p.m.	
Wednesday	12 a.m. - 2 p.m.	2 – 3 p.m.		3 – 4 p.m.		
Thursday						
Friday	12 a.m. – 2 p.m.	2 - 3 p.m.	3 – 4 p.m.		*4– 6 p.m.	
Saturday						

*signifies an additional planned fall-back day in case progress on the project is not made on regularly scheduled times/ days.

Identify Pertinent Literature or Resources:

Munson, G. (1952). *Best Advice on How to Write*. New York: Hermitage House.

APENDIX B

5000 years of brotherhood

Chapter IV

A new beginning

5000 years of brotherhood

CHAPTER IV

A new beginning

Realizing that the boys would never truly be safe from their mother unless they were hidden from her, The King carried his children far across the galaxy to an unknown planet which he created for the single purpose of becoming a home for his sons. The boys would have to raise themselves and find their own purpose in the universe. "I leave you, my two sons, on this planet, to fend for yourselves and to discover your greatest strength and purpose through the work that you do and the lives that you lead. What you do with your time is your decision but, one day I will return to see what you have become", the King kissed each of the boys on their forehead, then turned and disappeared briskly into the distance.

The boys stood with their feet half buried in sand, staring into the Sun. The planet was much colder than what they were used to but, still very hospitable. The boys turned to each other, "Will we remain nameless as our mother has left us"? "No", said the other son, "I will be Achim and you will Abimelech; these names mean that this is our world to create and that our father is King". Achim was tall and broad like his father and Abimelech was dark and slender like his mother, the Queen. From that day forward, the boys agreed to forget about their past and to move forward not expecting their mother or father to ever return for them.

For many days the two boys, Achim and Abimelech, traveled the sands of the desert. Despite the fact that the boys found very little water to drink, the desert was very hospitable for them; they were used to much warmer climates and could go for many days without a drink. The major obstacle they faced was the cold desert nights; sometimes the temperature dropped as much as thirty degrees after the Sun left the sky. Fortunately, the boys were very resourceful and drew from all their strengths to survive on the strange planet.

The lands were very desolate and their journey took them over sand dune after sand dune with no sign of life other than their own. One particular morning, when the sun was just beginning to rise in the sky, there was a great shuddering all across the lands and the boys could hear a fierce whistling that pierced their ears as it traveled through the air. Suddenly, their bodies were blasted by great gusts of wind and sand.

The sands ripped and tore at their bodies but, there was nothing that could be done, the storm had taken them by surprise; they had no choice but to lie down and be buried by the blowing sands.

The storm lasted for hours and when it was over the boys could hear shouting in the distance. After they unburied themselves and cleaned the sand from their ears and eyes, they started toward the voices. They reached the crest of the sand dune and could see many people on horseback moving up the other side of the dune. Before the boys could even react they were surrounded by the riders and facing the sharp end of several long spears. Neither, Achim or Abimelech spoke a word but, stood ready to defend themselves.

One rider nudged forward from the group and lowered her hood, “what is your business here, why do you not obey the law of the great pharaoh Ramses”? Achim recognized the beautiful women’s words and responded, “We are visitors in this land and we no longer know our direction”. “Where are you headed and for what purposes”, she replied? Abimelech spoke up, “we have lost our people and no longer know our purpose”. She signaled back to a rider from outside the circle, “I am Hatshepsut and you will ride with us back to the king’s temple as our guests”. Just as she finished speaking both, Abimelech and Achim were brought horses of their own to ride.

The journey was not long and they soon arrived at the king’s temple. The boys dismounted from their horses and were immediately seized by the temple’s guardians; they did not resist. Abimelech and Achim were brought before Ramses. “What is your purpose in my lands young masters”, spoke Ramses? “We have lost our people and do not yet have a purpose in your lands great Ramses”, said Abimelech. “For the crime of trespassing on my lands I sentence you to labor in the production of my new temple. In return for your services I will keep you safe and provide for your well-being until the completion of the project or until we can discover a more suitable purpose for nomads such as yourselves”.

For the next several years the boys slaved away on the construction of a grand pyramid, which would serve as the final resting place for Ramses when it was time for great leader to lay down his rule over the lands of Egypt. As descendents of greatness themselves, Achim and Abimelech inspired greatness in others through their application and vast knowledge of mathematics, physics, and other natural sciences in the construction of the monument. Very rapidly, the two boys earned a position of great respect with both the king and his followers.

The king's first wife, Hatshepsut, took particular interest in the boys; she had kept a keen eye on them ever since they appeared after that vicious storm several years beforehand. Hatshepsut was particularly enamored with Abimelech, who spent many meals telling her stories of mythical creatures and about the dealings of imaginary lords from far away galaxies. This always angered Achim, who knew that the stories were actually true. "You should not share those tales, they have no place in these lands and we agreed long ago to never again speak of those times", he would often say, usually with a troubled tone in his voice.

Over time, Achim grew more and more envious of the relationship between Abimelech and Hatshepsut. During the evenings Abimelech would sneak from his tent after the others were asleep to go meet Hatshepsut. Achim would pretend he was asleep until Abimelech was gone, then he would follow the couple. On most nights they would stroll beneath the beauty of the starlit skies but, occasionally they would build a fire on the dunes and sit huddled close to each other staring off into the night. It was these nights that upset Achim the most, he could not hear what they spoke of but, it was clear to him that Abimelech and Hatshepsut were in love.

On many occasions, Achim scolded Abimelech for his relationship with the queen and threatened to inform Ramses of what was going on. Abimelech paid no attention to the threats and continued to sneak off to meet the queen. What Achim did not tell his brother is that he himself was in love with Hatshepsut and was beginning to formulate a plan to drive a wedge between the lovers. The brothers had come to this planet nearly a decade before looking for a safe place to call home but, things were about to take a dramatic turn for the worse.

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Name

Date