



AP[®] English Literature and Composition 2005 Sample Student Responses

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The Chimney Sweeper Pair of poems is part of a series by Blake which present dichotomous descriptions of the same subject matter; i.e. a ~~more cynical~~ cynical perspective versus a more innocent, victimized one. This pair comprise a caustic social criticism of the conditions in 18th century London. The first of the two features the point of view of an ~~innocent~~ ^{vulnerable} chimney sweep, & is consequently ~~not~~ less theoretical in its approach to the chimney sweeper in justice. Poem two is far more direct, & does not hesitate to censure the iniquities of the system, whether they be societal, political, or religious. Thus the pair are similar in their syntactic approach—they both consist of quatrains, mostly with rhyming couplets. They differ in the voice of the speaker & the explicitness of their condemnation.

These two poems are comparable stylistically as they both deal quite directly with chimney sweepers. They both appeal to our sense of justice & sentimentalities, particularly w/ the unabashedly sentimental "weep! weep! weep! weep!" line, which occurs in both within the 1st three lines. ~~at the end of poem 1~~. There is a compact AA BB rhyme scheme throughout all of poem 1.

This persists into stanza 1 of poem 2, which segues into a similar ABAB rhyme pattern for the last two stanzas. There is also an imperfect iambic pentameter, which averages in at around 10 syllables per line. Both poems make use of dialogue, such as in lines 7-8 of poem 1, with "Hush



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Tom! never mind it..." & lines 3-4 of poem 2 with "Where are thy father & mother? say?" There is also an abundant use of the ampersand (&) symbol throughout each poem. This likely serves to diminish the pretense of the medium, & to show readers that he has working class sensibilities, in contrast to the aristocratic tastes of many of his contemporaries. And, significantly, though the voice of the two poems may differ, the fundamental point of view does not.


There are a good deal of differences between these two poems. Most noticeable is the difference in tone. Poem 1 has a single youthful protagonist whose perspective is reflected throughout. This protagonist introduces us to the plight of his fellow chimney sweep Tom Dacre, who objects to having his head shaved. This protagonist introduces us to the figurative language of the "caffins of black" (line 12) & "Angel who had a bright key" (line 13) which metaphorically illustrate the anguish of these underage workers. Of course, the dream ends in a comforting thought - frolicking on a green plain in the sun - & the two could continue w/ their unpleasant tasks. The second poem could be no more direct. Blake does not pull any punches here, & instead tells us the truth as he sees it, w/ very little in the way of ~~artistic~~ poetic conceit. In a short 3 stanzas, Blake criticizes the church, which attempts to hide these conditions, & the political establishment,

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which takes money, & reinvests none of it into the working class. Blake has here constructed a potent, though contrasting, ^{set of} criticisms of the social standards of his day, almost directly encouraging his readers to attempt to change them.

#

Throughout the history of literature, poetry has served as a means of expressing discontent of those facing social injustice and cruelty. Fueled by the poor conditions of eighteenth century chimney sweeps, ~~with~~ usually young children, William Blake was such a poet who wrote about ~~these~~ this ~~tragic~~ social tragedy of his time. In two of his poems, both named "The Chimney Sweeper", he uses several different poetic techniques, including aspects of diction and syntax, as well as opposing ideas about God and religion to show the mistreatment of these young chimney sweeps.

Throughout both poems, diction is used to express the poet's ~~to~~ bewilderment over the circumstance's society has allowed these young chimney sweeps to fall into. In both, an informal tone establishes a connection between the reader and the probably uneducated chimney sweeps. In both poems, moreover, the connotations associated between light and dark and black and white are used extensively. In the first poem, this can be seen in the line, "You know that the soot cannot soil your white hair." This, in itself, is used perhaps to reflect the innocence of the boy's "white hair" and his effort to not allow it to be tarnished by the dark-colored "soot". Further along in the first poem, the phrase "coffins of black" enhances the idea of that these children are being affected and may establish a metaphor to the black chimneys. 

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children must crawl into. Thus, ~~there~~ their everyday job of entering chimneys may be seen as a metaphor for their own death. Even further within the first poem, the phrases "shine in the sun" and "naked & white" help to enforce the concept of their innocence through their color connotation. This is in contrast to the phrase "we rose in the dark" used later in the poem. Similarly, the second poem uses this same idea. The first line, "A little black thing among the snow" also helps to establish the "blackening" or corrupting of the child, brought out by the snow. Altogether, these poems use this diction technique to further the idea of the suffering of the children.

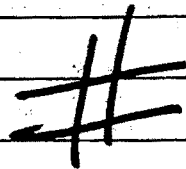
Syntax is also used to enhance Blake's plea for the young chimney sweep. While the first poem uses an "AABB" rhyme scheme throughout the piece, the second poem diverges into an "ABAB" rhyme scheme for the second and third stanzas. This flow and rhyme in both poems helps to move along the reader to understand the lives of these suffering. This difference in syntax helps to also reflect a difference shown by the poet in his ~~interpretation~~ interpretation of religion.

In each poem, God is shown to have



~~Q1~~ a different relationship to the young chimney sweeps. While God can be seen as a protector over the children in the first poem, with the line, "So if all do their duty, they need not fear harm." In contrast, the second poem establishes God as the creator of their suffering and, thus, creates a much different tone. While their parents have "gone up to the church to pray" it is clear that it is "God & his Priest & King" that create "misery" for the children. Overall, these two different view points make each poem unique.

Through diction, syntax, and Godly imagery, William Blake creates a feeling of ~~empathy~~ empathy between the reader and the chimney sweeps. With ~~other~~ poets such as Blake expressing their ~~disapproval~~ disapproval of these conditions, many politicians took note, and different laws were established to help fight child labor. Today, society must see the importance of such ~~an~~ activism in poetry and other forms of art in order to make ~~the~~ twentieth-first century life better and void of the ~~many~~ many problems society faces today.

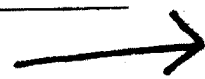


C₁

The two poems by William Blake entitled "The chimney Sweeper," may seem very much alike at first glance, but in truth the tone of the poet is different. Each poem begins in a similar way with the small child, the chimney sweeper, crying "'weep, 'weep." This phrase, while meant to show that the child has a lisp, are clearly strategically placed by the poet to indicate the words that the chimney sweeper really would like to say. The poems are different, finally, because of the hopeful tone at the end of the first, and the hopeless tone at the end of the second.

Both poems' focus is God. In the first poem the chimney sweeper has a dream of going to heaven, and is told that he will be allowed into heaven "... if he'd be a good boy," (19) This then inspires the boy to live the way of God, and he is no longer unhappy in life because he has the promise of a better life if he lives the way of God.

In the second poem, God also plays a central role, but with a much darker context. The poem says that while the chimney sweeper works his parents are off praying at church. The purpose of this poem is to highlight the hypocrisy of the boy's parent's actions. The parents are away at church, living the way of God on the surface, but they have sold their son off to work at a likely fatal job.



Question 1

Write in the box the number of the question you are answering on this page as it is designated in the examination.

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Although God is the common theme of the two poems, the context is very ~~different~~ different for each. In the first poem God gives the boy hope and inspires him to carry on. In the second, the boy's parents worshipping God as their son slaves away at his work is used to show the hypocrisy of those parents who sell their children off to be chimney sweepers. Both poems are written in iambic pentameter, but each has a unique tone, the first is the hope which God provides, the second is the hopelessness that the boy's parents have taken away.

#

~~own~~ "The Birthday Party" by Katherine
Brush gives a brief insightful description of one
nameless couple's celebratory dinner date. Though
on the surface the story may seem ordinary and typical,
through Brush's use of good diction, imagery, abrupt
syntax, and third-person objectivity, she achieves a
very ~~or~~ dismal atmosphere and ~~more somber~~ somber mood.

As the story begins, the mood is not very
obvious, because the speaker is simply straight-forward
and dryly assertive in her observations. Brush achieves
objectivity by employing pronouns, "he" and "she," in
the place of names, for the man and the woman. In effect,
this prohibits the reader from feeling any further
attachment to either person than the speaker, herself.
Brush is somewhat deceptive in her opening
paragraph, for she uses delightful imagery to
symbolize the outwardly happy and content appearance
of the couple. The man is described as "round, [having]
a self-satisfied face" and the woman is "fairly
pretty, in a big hat." The big hat is of course decidedly
symbolic of gaiety amongst the couple. Additionally, the
big hat is in contrast to the rest of Brush's description.
"There was nothing conspicuous about them, nothing
particularly noticeable." The ostentatious hat symbolizes
the woman's attempt to appear fabulous, or at the least
more than just ordinary. Brush closes the first
paragraph by introducing the purpose behind her
speaker's story; that is, the speaker's concern with
a certain event which Brush capitalized as an "Occasion"



Write in the box the number of the question you are answering on this page as it is designated in the examination.

A₂

2

This tactic of capitalization makes the shift in mood as well as atmosphere, and additionally stimulates evokes curiosity in the reader.

In the second paragraph, Brush utilizes good syntax when she says, "It arrived, in the form of a small but glossy birthday cake." "It" clearly refers to the woman's "little surprise" for her husband's birthday, but by the nature of its syntax, the reader gets the implication that what is to be displayed is something more than a birthday surprise. Brush gives a good illustration of the cake and its symbolic nature through her imagery: "... [a] glossy, birthday cake, with one pink candle burning in the center." The simplicity of the cake symbolizes and reaffirms the "simplicity" of the couple. Brush uses descriptive diction of the wife's "shy" pride over her "little surprise" to emphasize the inconspicuity of this every day couple. Oral imagery is utilized as the speaker describes the "pattering" of applause, implying that even at this point in time, the speaker seems to be the only interested observer of these two nameless people.

Interestingly, in the third and final paragraph, Brush employs the word "you" ^{repeatedly} instead of "I", in order to call attention to the reader that this couple has in fact caught one's attention. This repeated use of the word "you" accelerates the shift in mood by placing the reader in a state of increasing ~~gloom~~ dismay and deepening curiosity to hear the outcome of the story, which had at first



seemed so boring and usual. Brush quickens the pace of the story ~~from~~ by using the word "and" after every phrase. Again, Brush is consistent with her simplistic diction of the "little" cake, implying that although the couple has now struck the interest of both the speaker and the reader, the couple still remains inconspicuous and plain to everyone in the restaurant. Brush uses alliteration of harsh sounds, "quick and curt and unkind" to emphasize the harsh nature of the man's chastisement towards the woman. Brush's best example of good syntax is when she states, ~~starting~~ after one long sentence about waiting to look up at the hurt woman, "Not long enough, though." This abrupt, syntactical strategy emphasizes the sad air of the story and evokes a sense of pity and compassion from the reader. Finally, Brush ends the story by describing the woman as crying "quietly and heartbreakingly and hopelessly, all to herself, under the gay big brim of her hat."

The description of the hat as being "gay" and "big" contrasts with the emotions that the woman is inwardly feeling, and while the image of the hat seemed deceptive or ostentatiousness before, in actuality, the hat represents the secrecy of the couple's trouble that is presenting itself in the guise of inconspicuity and plainness. Through these writing strategies, Brush fulfills the purpose of giving the reader insight into one "ordinary, every-day" couple's lives and pointing out the depressing nature of Man's lack of interest in every-day, ordinary people.

~~Passage titled~~

Sometimes surprises are unwanted, for example one would normally like to ~~do~~ without the surprise that the hot water has run out while in the middle of a shower. However, other surprises can be good and eventually welcomed, as birthday surprises normally are. However, in "Birthday Party" by Katharine Brush, a scene is depicted in which a man is less than happy about a surprise birthday event created by his wife. The author uses many and informal diction to give the reader a feel for the relationship between the man and the woman and rejected kindness.

Irony is present throughout the passage when ~~it is~~ ^{ever} anything regarding the birthday is mentioned. When the author first notices what the wife has in store for her husband, she calls it a "little surprise." The irony that is present here is in the fact that it is just a little thing that the wife is doing for her husband, yet it is still too big for the husband's liking. The "little" thing is actually much larger than is given credit for, possibly due to the relationship that the man and woman share. This emphasizes the author's purpose of the passage by showing how even the little things she tries to do for him are rejected, leaving her feeling heartbroken and hopeless by the end of the event. He ~~got~~ ^{became} angry at his wife for "embarrassing him" (13) by her "little surprise" (15). The irony continues when the author describes the hat worn by the woman as being "gay big" (21). The irony present here is in that her happy ~~hat~~ oversized hat is still not enough to



hide her from the grim reality of her ~~unhappy~~ ^{unhappy} ~~hateful~~ relationship with her husband. The author's point is purpose is fulfilled here because the reader has a feeling ~~that~~ through this oversized hat that the couple's relationship is a hurtful one to the wife because she is trying to hide under this oversized, good-natured hat from the unkind feelings her husband gives her at even the smallest of surprises. The reader truly gets a feel for the ^{hurtful} relationship the two share.

In the second paragraph of the passage, informal diction is used to have the reader feel the ~~yearn~~ of the relationship between the married couple on a more personal level. Because of the author's sudden use of "you," ⁽¹⁴⁾ ~~and~~ ^{"I" throughout the passage} ~~and~~ ~~the~~ ~~hat~~ ~~the~~, the reader feels the same pain the speaker does for the woman at her rejected love toward her husband. The simple switch in diction from a more formal diction to a more informal diction makes the reader feel present at the event and makes the reader ~~feel~~ ~~similarly~~ go through the event as a spectator just as the speaker did. This gives the reader a good feel for the relationship, and helps the author achieve her purpose.

Because of the author's use of ~~irony~~ and informal diction, the reader feels the pain of the woman in the relationship between ~~shared~~ by the married couple. The simplicity of the surprise is ironic because of the extreme reaction by the husband, and the ~~improper~~ informal syntax makes the reader feel emotions similar to the speaker and more like a spectator at the event.

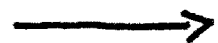
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In ~~the first paragraph~~ this section of Katherine Brusck's short story, it is author's purpose to create sympathy for the woman. Brusck² uses a sympathetic outside narrator and touching details to evoke this sympathy from the reader.

The narrator of the passage is someone else at the restaurant, ~~observing~~ observing the couple, and his or her thoughts and actions influence ~~the readers'~~ the readers' because it is the only view he or she is offered.

~~The~~ The narrator describes the woman with ~~At the beginning~~, sympathetic terms, such as "fadingly pretty" & "shy pride" ~~being the most important details~~. These descriptions ~~put~~ cast a positive light on the woman, as just trying to surprise her husband in a loving manner. Many readers will be able to sympathize with such attempts to surprise a loved one, and feel sympathy for the woman.

Other details the sympathetic narrator includes to evoke sympathy for the woman are in ~~the first paragraph~~ ~~the narrator says~~ ~~the~~ the portrayal of the woman's husband. The narrator says he is "indignant at his wife



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2

for embarrassing him (13)"; and ~~also~~ also, "you looked at him... and you thought "Oh now, don't be like that!" (14) ~~Such~~ Such details about the man seem to indicate that the man is acting horribly to this poor, shy woman who is only trying to please him. There may be another reason why the man is displeased, but the reader only has ~~the~~ ^{one} point of view ~~of~~ ~~the narrator~~ to judge from, and so will feel the same sympathy ~~as~~ that the narrator feels for the woman.

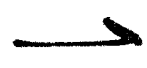
Thus, Brusch's sympathetic narrator and use of details achieves her purpose ~~to~~ to make the readers feel sorry for the woman in her attempt to surprise her husband.

#

~~Society~~

The individual's conflict with society is a central theme to Nathaniel Hawthorne's The Scarlet Letter. While the theology of the puritanical society demands righteousness and propriety, various characters, however, encounter great conflict over the question of conformity. The character of Arthur Dimmesdale, ~~the~~ ~~protagonist~~ ~~is~~ ~~viewed~~ ~~as~~ ~~conforming~~ ~~initially~~ ~~by~~ ~~society~~, is forced to grapple with the question of his own sin imminently. Dimmesdale's tension between outward conformity and inward questioning lead to the ~~novel's~~ ~~message~~ that although one might appear guiltless, ~~however~~ ~~with~~ all of humanity must confront its inevitable sins or be driven insane by them.

In the beginning scaffold scene, Dimmesdale fails to stand out as a sinner. He plays the role of a ~~revered~~ ~~member~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~community~~ member, and the focus is truly on Hester's shame. However, while the community's piercing glances of blame are directed towards Hester, Dimmesdale is obviously struggling with his own share in the sin. The central inward conflict ~~of~~ ~~Dimmesdale~~ is thus: although he is hailed as the paragon of righteousness and faith since he is ~~the~~ a minister ~~and~~ ~~the~~ admission of sin would shatter the dogmatic ~~views~~ ~~of~~ ~~God~~ and Dimmesdale if the town should



suspect that their mouthpiece from God has sinned. Initially, Arthur chooses to conform, ~~but~~ ~~he~~ ~~does~~. Although he is perfectly aware of his inner shame, he ~~he~~ ^{openly} asks the true sinner to identify himself within the crowd. He therefore ~~is~~ is unwilling to accept the community's scorn and blame where ~~the~~ blame is due.

Inside, though, Dimmesdale writhes with pain over his dilemma. Since he cannot bottle up his shame any longer, Dimmesdale decides upon self-mutilation as an external manifestation of his inner turmoil. However, ~~the~~ the 'A' upon his chest remains hidden from the public, and Dimmesdale continues to ~~be~~ conform with society to his role as religious exemplar. When Chillingworth discovers the marking, though, Hawthorne establishes that inner guilt cannot remain secret, and shame cannot be bottled up inside without societal cognizance. ~~that the sinner of~~

Under the cover of both night and the forest, though, Dimmesdale is able to accept his label as sinner. ~~Arthur meets Hester and Pearl in~~ when Hester and Pearl encounter Dimmesdale upon the scaffold at night, Dimmesdale is demonstrated lamenting his own morality, yet accepting his position as ~~an~~ ^{moral} outcast. ~~Dimmesdale~~ Dimmesdale has chosen ~~to~~ to ostracize himself from the community through the symbol of the scaffold, but only during the night since he is still unwilling to announce his guilt. The scaffold represents non-conformity and sin,

so it is significant that this night meeting of the shamed trio should occur at this setting. The meteor that appears as an 'A' across the sky further foreshadows Dimmesdale's public announcement of his own sin. ~~The scene~~ The scene closes with the three creating an 'electric chain'. This image signifies that strength comes from unity and in shoring one's burdens. ~~The~~ The forest, another symbol of non-conformity and social ostracism, Dimmesdale ~~overcomes~~ seems to resolve his sin. He desires to flee his shame and ~~avoid~~ by escaping with Hester, thereby freeing his inevitable ~~scorn~~ scorn. He recognizes his darker side by descending into the forest, representative of sin and lust. However, when ~~Dimmesdale~~ Dimmesdale states that he will not recognize Pearl as his illegitimate child in public, he shrinks from self-acceptance and chooses ~~the~~ the safety of conformity ~~over~~ over the harshness of reality.

Dimmesdale, viewed as an angel upon the earth, eventually cannot contain his shame. ~~At the~~ In the second scaffold scene, ~~the~~ the minister recognizes ~~his~~ his own conformity due to his overpowering sin. This time in full daylight, the once 'electric trio' is now subjected to public scrutiny. The intense and painful struggle which Dimmesdale has encountered conveys the message that humanity's ultimately flawed nature causes its members strife, ~~but~~ but our undeniable desires and humanity can be ~~confronted~~ confronted. Dimmesdale, in collapsing on the scaffold, ~~and~~

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A4

resolves his inner conflict. ~~He~~ He exposes his true name, shares the blame with Hester, and ~~ceases~~ ceases his struggling. Only after ~~he~~ recognizing publicly his sexual transgression ~~to his~~ Dimmesdale is able to die peacefully, and he dies appropriately in Hester's arms.

Dimmesdale's tragic story relates The Scarlet Letter's ~~meaning~~ meaning that conformity is secondary to self-justification. Hawthorne comments that ~~even~~ even the most virtuous are flawed by nature, and it is useless to attempt to deny this fact. Dimmesdale's tension ~~is~~ subsides with his ~~death~~ death, and the minister ~~answers~~ answers the question of his own nature that he cannot escape the past. ~~and~~

##

Question 3

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B.

'A Doll's House' by Ibsen shows the developing tension within Nora between her conformity to cultural expectations and her own inward questioning about the need for an individual identity. On the one hand, Nora wants to be the perfect wife, submissive to the authority of her husband. On the other, she wants independent thought and action, self-actualization and awareness, and an identity separate from her husband. She is torn between the security of conformity & the freedom of individuality.

Nora acts the role of her husband's little doll as her actions show conformity. She is entirely submissive as she accepts the degrading pet names and insinuations of childlike stupidity. She dresses up for him and dances his dance that he would find her pretty. She acts reliant. She is happy to depend on him that way. She recognizes the dangers and implications toward the family of the forgery on the loan, but she wants and expects Torvald to take responsibility for it and to protect her. She willingly conforms because she feels safe and protected.

However, internally, Nora wants more independence. She eats her macaroons even though Torvald forbids it. When her husband is sick, she takes out a loan so that they can take a trip, and he can regain his health. She is proud of this even though the actions are socially unacceptable.



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Question 3

B2

She continually asserts that she had a right to act to protect those she loved. The climax of the story, occurs as Nora's inward struggle between her right to be her own person and her obligation to be what her husband and society expect of her culminates in the decision to leave ^{thereby forcing conformity to individualism.}

Ibsen's purpose was to show candidly the position of women of his era. The outward conformity is criticized in the name, 'A Doll's House.' He criticizes the falseness of society by creating a character who realizes she must be true to herself. The tension between outward conformity and inward questioning contrasts the cultural norm, the status quo, with a higher ideal. It showed the need for change within society. He criticized the current society by pointing out the flaws in her system of conformity. Ibsen was successful in helping to bring about women's rights movements and suffragette voices because he showed the internal questioning that many women were feeling and pointed to another path, than conformity. Nora's vacillation between outward total submission and inward desire to be her own person allowed Ibsen to show that that same tension existed in the minds of many women, and that conformity was not the only option.

#

In Kate Chopin's *The Awakening*, protagonist Edna Pontellier is said to possess "that outward existence which conforms, the inward life which questions." This is also true of the protagonist in the novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. Although she was a strong woman, ~~she~~^{Jane} was forced to conform to the ideals of her society. During the time of the novel, women had very few rights and were thought to be homemakers and very little else. Even worse, being a black woman in that time period allowed for even fewer rights. ~~She found herself~~ ~~in an unfortunate predicament.~~ Although she was an intelligent and independent woman, ~~her~~ entire life ~~was~~ was tortured by having to conform with society.

As a young girl, ~~she~~^{Jane} resided with her grandmother. As soon as she was old enough, her grandmother arranged a marriage with a somewhat successful young man. ~~She~~ Jane did not love the man and desperately wanted to find true love, but her grandmother forced her to marry for security. Jane complied and lived on ~~the~~^a farm with her new husband. However, not after long, he began treating her more like a slave than a wife.

He forced her to work on the fields all day and showed no affection. Jane knew that she could do better. Soon enough, her opportunity was found. ~~After~~ one day while working, a handsome man walked by and began to pursue her. He offered her everything she desired; love, happiness, and a better life.

Jane decided to change her destiny and run away with her savior. ~~She~~ However, although her new husband was successful and showed her a much more comfortable way of life, she ~~was~~ again ~~and~~

3

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_____ began questioning her decision. Her new husband stifled her from having my independent ideas and voicing them. She was not allowed to socialize or even to let her beautiful hair out of a constricting bun. She obeyed these outlandish rules but never agreed with them. She always knew that she would not be happy until she could become her own person. Thankfully, after several years, her husband became sick and died, leaving her with a great fortune.

Now, Janie was free from the constraints of her former husbands and could become independent. However, even still, she found herself unhappy once again. She still was desperate to find true love. She finally found her real love in the form of a young man known as Tea Cake. The two fell in love at first sight and remained happy until his unfortunate demise many years later.

Janie Starks in the novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God* is an excellent example of a character who is constantly questioning her identity. Like Edna Pontellier in *The Awakening*, Janie possesses "that outward existence which conforms, the inward life which questions." Janie was forever questioning her role in the world until she was finally allowed to both live and think independently.

#