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Academic Writing in an Islamic Context: Strategies and Methods

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Academic Writing in an Islamic Context:
Strategies and Methods

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Master of Arts in TESOL degree
at the SIT Graduate Institute,
Brattleboro, Vermont.

December 22, 2012

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December 22, 2012

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Abstract

What kind of affordances do students from different cultures require? More specifically, how can a Western teacher best help students from an observant Islamic background? These were the questions that began my quest into Islamic society for an answer. This essay offers a method where a teacher uses an essay to teach an essay. This is a flexible and highly effective way to get more advanced students producing higher quality academic essays.

ERIC Descriptors:

Writing skills.

Language teachers.

Writing Instruction.

Teaching methods.

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Introduction

I have been fortunate enough to have had the opportunity to teach academic writing as part of my duties at Al Yamamah University in Saudi Arabia. I was assigned an upper level reading and writing course called 08R for three consecutive semesters. During these classes, it occurred to me that there were some fundamental miss-fires in terms of the students understanding the material and also the writing that they were supposed to produce. The students had difficulty with formulating a solid thesis and then arguing it effectively throughout the rest of the essay. It became apparent to me quite early in the class that the students were perfectly bright and capable people, they were just misunderstanding what composing an academic essay entails and what they were expected to produce. I wondered if there might be a cultural reason behind the difficulty that they were having with the material. The students had very little, if any, actual experience with academic writing. They do not write essays in high school at all. This began a yearlong inquiry for me. I decided to go as deep into their culture as possible and see if the answer to my question might lie therein. I adopted some new strategies for teaching the course and had some remarkable success. This essay will chronicle the path that was undertaken by the students and myself. I hope to illustrate both the journey of discovery that I personally undertook, the class that I taught and the finished product of the 'using essays to teach essays' method that brought me a great deal of satisfaction. I will explain why I chose the essays that were covered in the class, and how I covered them with the students. I will also explain how I tailored the class to meet the needs of the students.

I will conclude this essay with the implications for a language teacher that my method has brought forth. I believe that it is crucial for a teacher to learn as much about their host culture as possible. Doing so allows him or her to better impart knowledge and recognize some of the difficulties that the students were having that would not necessarily occur to them otherwise. As a caveat, it must be remembered that I am describing a method for teaching academic writing and not writing an actual manual for doing so. I chose the essays that I taught to the students because I was personally familiar with them and because they fit into the context where I was teaching. I would suggest that a teacher find their own material based on their own competencies and situations. This would make them more effective and interesting to the students. It would also make them more relevant to the culture and sensitivities of the students.

The Context:

I had a definite advantage setting out on my quest into Islamic culture. I had the great opportunity to study Middle Eastern History at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver. I was fortunate enough to study under some of the greatest names that this discipline has to offer. Professors Bill Cleveland and Thomas Kuhn were the two most noteworthy teachers that I learned from. I was blessed by an opportunity to study in the Middle East itself as a student in a field school under the auspices of the University of Calgary for a semester. This journey instilled in me a deep love and

respect for this part of the world. Studying Middle Eastern History as a discipline before beginning my sojourn into Education has enabled me to see from an interesting perspective. I have had the opportunity to understand how the region works. I am thrilled beyond words to be currently living in, and contributing to, this region. I will give my own personal understanding of the Middle East with the hopes that it explains some of the choices that I made when I designed the writing course.

Saudi Arabia is the center of the Islamic World by nearly any measure. Its prophet Mohammed (P.B.U.H.) was from the holy city of Mecca, which is now in the modern nation of Saudi Arabia. Since its genesis in the fifth century A.D. Islam has spread across most of the world. It is multi-ethnic, and multi-lingual. The Islamic World, where Muslims constitute the majority of people, stretches from Morocco in northwest Africa to the Indonesian archipelago which spans the southernmost area of South East Asia. It has over 1400 years of continuous history.

Islam cannot be viewed as a contiguous and unified code of behavior. It has nearly as many different facets to it as it has believers. Saudi Arabia has its own peculiar brand of Islam. The Saudi Arabian people are predominantly of the Sunni branch of Islam. Sunni Islam is divided further into four schools of jurisprudence*: Hanbali, Maliki, Shafi'i and Hanafi.* Saudi Arabia follows the more conservative *Hanbali* School. There are some more distinctions that bear discussion as well. Saudi Arabia follows an interpretation of Islam that has been called *Wahabbi*. This is a problematic appellative however as it is taken from the name of a man in the

nineteenth century who promoted resurgence in Islam, in essence he was conveying the idea of going back to basics. The preferred nomenclature for this ideology by most Saudi people is *Salafi*, or those who look to the ancestors for inspiration.

Salafi believe that the first generation of Muslims including the prophet (P.B.U.H), his family and his friends were model Muslims and, as such, the most worthy of emulation. There exist two groups of people in the Islamic World: *ahl al rai* or people of discussion and *ahl al hadeeth,* or the people of tradition. The Saudi Arabian people may be firmly considered the latter. Belonging to this category has several ramifications for Saudi Arabian students. First among them is a strong reverence for the past and how things are traditionally done. It might be argued that students are not taught to question the status quo nearly as much as their Western counterparts are. Saudi Arabian students tend to look for an expert opinion that is already formed, rather than first formulating one for themselves. Doing so is of great value to them as citizens of Saudi Arabia and the Islamic world, but it causes some difficulties for them when they try to write an academic essay in a Western university. It can hard for the students to think of a unique topic and then argue it reasonably.

There is a term used in Islam that bears some examination here. *Bida'ah* can be best translated as the English word novelty. It is semantically distinct though in several key ways. Novelty and other such derivations such as innovation and the word new itself can be traced etymologically from the Latin word '*novus*'. It can be

argued that these words more often than not carry positive connotations. Novelty is seen as something worthy of pursuing in the highly entrepreneurial Western societies of Europe and North America. *Bida'ah*, when used in the context of *fiqh,* or religious jurisprudence is often seen as suspicious and to be avoided. *Bida'ah* can be used in other contexts with a more neutral value. A *bida'ah* computer is seen as neither dangerous nor highly suspect for example. When used colloquially however, this word usually takes a qualifying adjective. When used alone and in a religious context, the word is decidedly negative. It became readily apparent to me that the students in my class were not as keen as Western students to approach an essay with the expressed desire of providing their audience with something novel or unique. Whilst researching, the students tended to seek out other expert opinions, and then shore them up with additional research that they had found. They tended to shy away from making a new claim and then go on to back it up empirically if it was possible.

The *Salafi* tradition places a heavy focus upon looking to the first generation of Muslims. *Salafi* Muslims regard the Qur'an as the primary guide towards living life. They also take additional knowledge from collections of sayings and provisions of tacit or implicit approval by Muhammad (P.B.U.H). Islam differs from the Christian West as it has more of an all-encompassing quality. Islam has no provisos like "the rendering of that which is Caesars to Caesar." Religion and government are not seen as two distinct spheres for example. I realized that the students could quite possibly find benefit from reinforcing the idea that university life is distinct from

other facets of existence. Academia has its own sets of rules and traditions that are quite apart from the norms and realities of the countries where the actual universities are located. I spent an entire class explaining this to the students. I then had them write a contrastive essay about how universities and their respective countries differ in how they operate.

Saudi Arabia takes the *Salafi* way of doing things very seriously. The country's actual constitution is the Qur'an. The education system places a high degree of emphasis upon religion. Children from an early age are encouraged to think, act and study according to Islamic principles. Saudi Arabian students spend far more time studying religion than their Western counterparts do.

Salafi Muslims place a high degree of emphasis on memorization and learning by rote. Children spend many hours in front of the Qur'an reciting it and committing it to memory. They are discouraged from ever questioning its words because they come directly from God. Certainly, Saudi students study many other disciplines such as Mathematics and Science, but the high focus on religion instills in them a greater reverence for authority and the status quo than that typically found in Western students.

Knowledge itself is conceived of differently in this system. An interesting piece of vocabulary in Islam is the word *ijtihad*. This word is best translated as the application of reason. A person who practices *ijtihad* is referred to as a *Mujtahid*.

This is prescient to what I was trying to do in the class. A *mujtahid* is a scholar that has gone through intense religious training. Only after a long rigorous training process can a person be regarded as having the necessary qualification to make proclamations. I found that my students were often hesitant to make bold statements in their essays and then sustain them in a well-argued essay. I could see that for them to complete an academic essay, they would require some additional empowerment. I realized that I needed to communicate to them that they had worthwhile things to say, and that the things that they would argue in their essays had real value. Western students do not face this challenge as profoundly. They are largely raised to be individualistic, and tend to be more confident with their assertions. They come of age in a society where church and state are firmly separate, and empiricism and linear logic are instilled in them at an early age. I try to encourage the Saudi Arabian students that mistakes are valuable. It is acceptable to make them when you are writing. Mistakes can be corrected with further contemplation and research. An essay is more of a process than a final finished product.

I realized that I was entering a tricky area here. The Islamic World, which holds Saudi Arabia as its primary vanguard, has existed and thrived for fourteen centuries. I knew that making any sort of value judgment on how knowledge is best legitimized would be futile as well as silly. Muslims are responsible for an overwhelming share of mankind's progress. They were scientists, astronomers and explorers at a time when Europe and much of the rest of the world were largely

rural and backward. I decided to leave out any assigning of value to either academic tradition. I was, however, responsible for teaching a class of students how to prepare a logical and coherent essay. For better or worse, this was my mandate, and to fulfill it properly, I would have to help the students construct a thesis and empower them to argue.

The Class:

The 8R class is held in a medium sized room usually in the morning. The course objectives in the SILC Curriculum Guide are as follows.

1. Write a critical essay using authentic academic analytical texts and/or scholarly sources as the starting point.
2. Read, understand, paraphrase and summarize excerpts from textbooks, academic texts and online scholarly journal articles.
3. Identify, comprehend and follow main arguments and their supporting reasoning from academic sources using higher level reading strategies including SQ3R, predicting and critiquing.
4. Search for, extract and synthesize specific ideas and different types of information (e.g. numerical, textual, graphic, etc.) across academic level sources.
5. Use, understand and increase vocabulary frequently used in reading and writing in level-appropriate authentic texts.

6. Apply self and peer corrections to written work and use process writing techniques from outlining to final draft.

The primary focus for the students is to write a well-researched academic essay. I decided that the essay should not be too long, as I wanted, primarily, to imbue the students with a working knowledge of what an academic essay is and what its function is, and not extract as much argument and research as could possibly be taken from them. Teaching this class would provide some challenges that are quite esoteric to the Saudi Arabian context. I learned early that plagiarism would be a big issue for the class. It would have been easy to pass this off as laziness on the student's part, but it seemed that this difficulty was not to be so easily explained away. The students did not seem to understand that using someone else's ideas was dishonest. In their religious classes they are encouraged to find proclamations and annotations from scholars. I had to explain to them that academic dishonesty is a big problem in the West. People have had their careers ruined and worse for stealing other people's work. I reminded the students that you can use the work of other academics to reinforce your own, but you must provide a proper reference to do this correctly.

"The Geography of Thought" by Richard Nisbett (2003) reminded me that knowledge and how it is prioritized and legitimized is not homogenous in all cultures. The academic essay is very much a product of the Christian and European West. Empiricism and linear logic have long been crucial to Western thought, albeit

in varying degrees at times, so the degree of their existence in fervently Islamic Saudi Arabia is very open to conjecture. It became apparent that the class would have to focus on all of the usual skills involved with academic writing: format, referencing, and idiosyncratic vocabulary, but this class in particular would have to contain a healthier dose of formulating a thesis and building up the student's confidence to properly argue it. More than anything else I hoped for the students to take pride in their work, and for them to be proud that they did the work themselves. I have been seeing more and more success in this regard.

The students are usually young people ranging in age from seventeen to twenty-five. They are Arabic speakers and come mostly from Saudi Arabia and neighboring countries such as Syria, Jordan and Yemen. They are aspiring towards degrees in Finance, IT, and Business.

The students have many reasons to study English. Extrinsically speaking, the students will go on to jobs where they will be required to have English competency. Many of the graduates of Al Yamamah work at careers in banking, marketing firms, the civil service, the military or their family businesses. Many of the students have been abroad both as tourists and on business. Living in Saudi Arabia itself calls for at least a basic understanding of English, as many of the people employed in the service industry do not speak Arabic. The Middle East has always been the great crossroads of the world; many people find it to their benefit to learn the current lingua franca, which is English nowadays. There are intrinsic reasons for learning

English as well. Many of the students enjoy movies and other types of media where the spoken language is English. The students are also incredible proficient with technology and the Internet. Saudi Arabia has a partially undeserved reputation for being something of a hermit kingdom, happy to look inward to its religion and traditions and forsaking the rest of the modern world. The truth is somewhat counterintuitive however; Saudi Arabian people can be very outward looking. Many of the students enjoy European and American television and are interested in international things such as football and hip-hop music. More and more of the young people are reading for pleasure as well. The popularity of books such as "The Hunger Games" and the works of J.K. Rowling are slowly but surely encouraging young Saudi Arabians to read for pleasure.

My students are from a culture that does not place as much emphasis upon writing as mine does. Saudi Arabia features more of an oral culture. This is changing, but for now, it holds true. Most of the students are gifted speakers. They are usually gregarious, polite and enthusiastic. The one deficiency that is common to nearly every student is in writing. There are many reasons for this. The Arabic script that the students learn is completely different than the Roman one used in English. English is an alphabet while Arabic, when written without its diacritics, is an abjad or syllabary in which only the consonants are written with regularity. Another aspect of Arabic that is worthy of notice is that it is written in an opposite direction to English. As students in a university, the students face many challenges when learning to write English correctly. By the time they begin 08R they typically have a

fairly good grasp on things like sentence structure, spelling, punctuation and rhetoric. 08R is an advanced class, which is more heavily geared towards essay writing.

I am quite able to sympathize with the students and the difficulties that they have with writing. I grew up in a rural setting where it was often more important to learn practical skills such repairing a tractor or caring for livestock than to study. As a result my schoolwork often suffered. I barely scraped by in high school, somehow miraculously graduating with a low grade point average. I decided to go to university after some years of working and traveling. It was incredibly difficult for me at first because I did not have the necessary educational background to excel academically. I had virtually no concept of what words like thesis or rhetoric meant. The University of Regina in Saskatchewan had a bridging program for students who, much like I was, were returning to studying in their adult years. Students took two extra classes which dealt primarily with academic writing and research strategies. I was very grateful for the opportunity not only for the essential skills it gave me, but because it showed me that were merely deficiencies in my education and not in my intelligence. After the bridging classes, I maintained a high grade point average and then transferred to, and graduated from, Simon Fraser University, one of Canada's top schools. I have a keen understanding of how it feels to be in a situation where I was completely baffled as to how things were to be done. I believe that the students in 08R sometimes find themselves in a similar situation. It is my sincerest wish that I

can be the kind of teacher to alleviate some of this pressure and help them to succeed.

I have always believed that modeling and scaffolding are crucial to a student's success. As a learner myself and as a teacher of seven years, showing rather than telling has always been of greater benefit. I believe this axiom to be doubly true when the student is obliged to produce a tangible product such as an academic essay. What better way to understand how to write one, then to study one in depth? I chose to use two essays in the class for two different reasons. We studied "Broken Windows: The Police and Neighborhood Safety" by James Q. Wilson and George L. Kelling as well as "Apes and Language" by Karen Shaw. Again I would like to reiterate here that teachers should choose their essays for themselves. It is important to select an essay that you understand well. It is also important to consider the appropriateness of the text for the students at hand. The essays that I chose fill two very specific niches and they were relevant to what I was doing in the class as a whole.

I will include a framework of questions that a teacher could ask themselves before designing a similar class. This framework is useful because it helps a teacher to anticipate any problems that may arise. I would also suggest that anyone using this framework be as culturally competent as possible. It would be helpful to do some research about the culture that you are teaching in.

1. Can you get a sense of how rhetoric is conveyed in the culture where you are teaching? Are relationships between people more hierarchical or egalitarian? Does religious dogma play a significant role to your students? What are the implications of this? Are you and students from similar or disparate backgrounds?
2. Are there any taboo subjects that your students would find either offensive or overly distracting? Selecting an essay that addresses issues common to all cultures can be helpful.
3. Do you understand the essay that you have selected properly? You will need to have a firm grasp on the essay to properly use it as a model. Make sure that the essay is pertinent to what you are trying to accomplish in the class. If you are focusing on building a strong thesis with the students, the essay that you select should have a strong one.
4. Does the content of the essay assist you as a teacher? ESL students are not necessarily prepared to engage an academic essay. Homi K. Bhabha once received an award for using a fifty-six word sentence which was full of rarely used vocabulary and jargon. Try to find material that your students will be able to understand somewhat. You may find that you will have to grade it down for them.

Broken Windows:

I chose to use the “Broken Windows” essay for a great multitude of reasons. Firstly, the essay has a very clearly discernable thesis. Its argumentative rhetoric is very straightforward, and it shows some interesting ways to provide and deflate

counter-argument. Secondly, the essay has relatively simple vocabulary. Its intended audience is not primarily other people from the academic community but rather policeman and anyone else with a vested interest in keeping their neighborhood safe. This was an important factor regarding my choice of the essay. To properly use the essay the way that I intended, the students would have to have a nuanced and complete understanding of it. Choosing an essay that was excessively reliant upon academic jargon would have been overly daunting for the students. The vocabulary in the essay is valuable to a language teacher. There are lots of words with affixation that can be deconstructed for example. The essay's layout is also convenient; is can be broken down into more manageable fragments that can be covered in a single class.

The essay is also important because it offers the students a chance to engage with an actual academic text. I believe that giving the students this opportunity empowers them and gives them some much needed confidence. They will need to start doing much more of this kind of thing as they begin working on their degrees proper.

My primary reason for choosing this essay is because it was effective and the results of its argument and research could not be more patent. I believe a brief overview of the essay is in order here for the purposes of clarity.

The “Broken Windows” theory was published in 1982. The basic premise of the essay is that taking swift and resolved action upon a problem will ensure that larger issues do not occur. The essay uses many examples, often of actual controlled scientific experiments, to back up its arguments. The essay explains how a human environment can begin to show exceedingly problematic symptoms of urban decay if left unattended. When an innocuous act such as the breaking of a window in a vacant building is left unaddressed, crime increases due to the perception that nobody cares about the habitat. As more and more graffiti, and other types of vandalism manifest in the area, violence and property crimes also increase. Soon the area becomes reminiscent of a warzone and the residents are no longer willing or able to repair the damage. The essay provides a fascinating experiment. Two cars are abandoned in two different areas of the United States. One car was left in a neglected and economically disadvantaged neighborhood in the Bronx, the other was left in a more affluent and suburban part of Palo Alto, California. Predictably, the one in the poorer neighborhood is stripped immediately, and the one in the richer area sat for over a week before it was even noticed. The essay argues that the reason for this is because of the perceptions of the residents of each neighborhood. The residents of the poorer area believe that there will be no consequences for stealing the parts from the abandoned car. Cars are often dumped in their neighborhood and not removed in a timely fashion, so why not make some extra money from the spare parts before their neighbors do. In the cleaner and richer neighborhood an ownerless automobile is a rare sight. More importantly, even littering in this neighborhood would be unacceptable and would result in some form

of corrective measures being heaped upon the perpetrator in one way or the other. Tampering with someone's car would have some very unfavourable consequences, and would result an unpleasant encounter with California's justice system. A week after the car sits unmolested; one of the people involved with the experiment starts destroying it with a crowbar. Other residents of the neighborhood begin to join in the fun and the car is reduced to scrap. The essay provides many other examples of how fixing small problems quickly prevents having to fix big ones later. Arguably, this logic is applicable to nearly any other problem. This is what makes it effective to students learning to write academic essays. The students can write about how they would like to solve a problem, and then source "Broken Windows" as an authoritative text.

The essay's layout makes it an extremely powerful pedagogical tool. The authors write in chunks. The essay begins with a treatment upon policing tactics in Newark New Jersey. The section is nine paragraphs long, or about two pages. Reading this section as a group takes an entire class. The students read a paragraph each, mindful that they should be underlining difficult words or sentences. After the section is read and clarified, we discuss the ideas in the essay and then the students write a short response to the section. I am watching for signs of either agreement or disagreement in the students. When they begin their essays they will have to choose to either argue the benefits and merits of the theory, or it weaknesses. I strongly encourage this polarity with the hope that it will ignite the student's passions about

their essays and they will be starting to formulate an opinion and thinking of ways to argue it.

The first nine paragraphs of the essay talk about a situation in Newark, New Jersey. The police implemented a system whereby officers would again patrol a beat on foot. There were many critics to this way of doing things. Many officers believed that they would be far more effective if they used squad cars. They could respond to calls faster and could pursue suspects much more capably. Walking beats did accomplish something unexpected. People began to feel safer in their neighborhoods and felt more inclined to be more meaningfully involved with their community. Uniformed police presence lowered the perceived threats to safety that panhandlers, drunks and loitering teenagers constituted. Vagrants were moved along and beggars were no longer permitted to accost people walking on the streets. Crime rates went down as the communities became more vibrant. Thus the police, by walking a beat, fixed a small problem and averted a larger one. After the class reads this section, I assign a writing task. I ask the students to write a response to the nine paragraphs. The main reason for this is to stimulate their thinking for their own essays. I reinforce that they may also disagree with the essay if they feel that its thesis is controversial or untrue.

The essay provides, and debunks, an interesting counter-argument in the first nine paragraphs as well. The students often infer that the police have too much power because they are allowed to harass people who are simply standing in the

street. The odd student seems to identify this problem and then chooses to argue contrary opinions to those found in "Broken Windows." I believe that affording the students this choice empowers them further in terms of formulating a thesis and arguing their points. I also encourage the students to put some thought into some possible counter-arguments to their theses. A good essay anticipates counter-arguments, debunks them and then goes on to argue why its viewpoint is superior or more rational.

The tenth paragraph of the essay contains the thesis. Working with this single paragraph usually constitutes an entire class. We read the paragraph very closely and then describe the argument that it is making. This is the class where I have the students decide on their own essay topics. They may choose to write about any topic that they wish as long as they choose one relating to the benefits or problems with the "Broken Windows" theory. The students often have very little contact with life outside of Saudi Arabia. This means that they do not have the necessary background knowledge to argue rationally about topics concerning the wider world. I encourage them to choose topics that are relevant to them personally and are closer to home. I will provide the example that I often use to get them writing. Riyadh has a system of traffic cameras that detects infractions such as speeding and running red lights. The name of this system is *Saher.* Once the camera detects an offence, a fine is issued to the driver. This fine is often excessively large. This system is highly unpopular with the citizens of Riyadh. Some of their common complaints are that it is untrustworthy and that nobody really knows where the

money taken by the fines goes. So we have half of our thesis, a problem. The second half of the thesis needs to be how to solve it. “Broken Windows” can be applied to this problem in several ways. The student could argue that before the system was in place there were far too many fatalities on the roads. By fixing a small problem such as speeding cars, the larger problem of people perishing in automobile accidents is thus averted. The student may then choose to agree or disagree with this logic. Other students have chosen to argue that the *Saher* system itself is the proverbial “Broken Windows” small problem. If the government would do away with it, the larger problem of an angry populace would be checked, and maybe the citizens would begin to drive more prudently.

The most important aspect to the “Broken Windows” essay, for the purpose of the class, is that it worked. The mayor of New York in the 1980’s and his subsequent successors implemented and continued to use the advice given by the “Broken Windows” essay. The New York Police Department began to take a zero tolerance policy towards small crimes such as vandalism or jumping a subway turnstile without paying. These infractions were dealt with harshly, often resulting in jail time, and as the essay predicted, New York’s crime rate began to plunge. Anyone who has visited New York both in 1979 and in 2012 can attest to the potency of the argument put forth by the “Broken Windows” theory. There are few cities that have undergone such a dramatic improvement for the better in such short time. It could be argued that Kelling and Wilson’s text is the perfect essay in terms of its efficacy and the tangible results that it has produced.

Going into the class, I had hoped that the students would see this essay for its efficacy, and they would then have a clearer idea of what could be done in terms of bettering the world with an essay. I wanted to instill in them what power they could be capable of if they learned to write well. I told the students that the authors of the “Broken Windows” essay were no different from them. They began as undergraduates in a university learning to write just as they were themselves. They worked hard and learned to write well, and now one of the greatest cities in the world will be forever in debt to them because of their work. The students responded favourably to this and they seemed to be willing to approach their own essays with a heightened sense of purpose, vigour and enthusiasm.

I faced a dilemma with how to provide the “Broken Windows” essay to the students. It seemed that there were two possible ways to deliver the essay to them with maximum effect. I could bring the essay itself and we could go through it slowly, page by page, and take each difficult word or phrase apart one at a time, or I could provide them with a graded version of the theory. I decided to take the first approach. Dealing with a real piece of academic work, daunting as this might be, would give the students a visceral real-world experience. I also discovered that covering the essay this way would provide me an opportunity to show the students some strategies for parsing out a linguistically problematic piece of writing. I emphasized the use of a thesaurus and peer correction.

I provided the students with a photocopy of the essay. I put a great deal of thought into doing this because the essay is eleven pages long and could be considered as being too time-consuming. I decided to provide the entire essay because of not only its intrinsic value to the essay assignment, but because it had some ancillary value as well. After providing the essay, I began a discussion about criminology with the students. This is a fascinating topic to almost anyone, because many of us have had to deal with it in some form during our lives. The students had a great deal of insightful information to share about their opinions on crime. The best thing for me was that many of them had divergent opinions, and arguments often erupted. Here, at last, I was seeing the passion and conviction that is required to complete an academic essay. I sent some of the more vociferous students into neutral corners, and told them that I was happy to see such a level of dynamism. I told them now all there is left is for you to do is to write an essay proving the rest of your classmates wrong. Simply explain the point that you want to make and then go on to argue it for a few pages and voila, you have an essay. The students were pleased by this and seemed to want to get started on their essays as soon as possible.

After the discussion we began reading the Broken Windows essay together as a class. The students would read a page and then we would pause to examine any difficult words or phrases together. Whenever possible, I allowed the students to define the words themselves. I only stepped in when they got a definition wrong. I was also careful to allow this task to have breathing room. The students were

encouraged to go off on tangents whenever they so chose. I felt that lots of discussion was important for them to better understand the essay. Covering the essay properly takes between two and four classes. After we had finished the essay, I asked the students to submit a response to it. They were to write a page about their thoughts and feelings towards the essay. I encouraged them to either love it or hate it, and then explain why they felt the way that they did. This is an important step to take before beginning the essay. It allows the student to get their viewpoints clear in their minds. It also helps them articulate what exactly they would like to write about.

The essay also had some value to the students because of its form. It states its thesis directly and explicitly. The rhetoric of the essay is also fairly straightforward. The authors provide examples to back up their claims. I asked the students to consider the essay's form and then include any comments that they may have in their journals. I asked them to think about how the essay differed from other texts that they had read previously.

The first time that I taught the class, there were no problems with us reading the entire essay together over a span of a few days. The second time around I realized that a contingency plan was needed. Many of the students were beginning to show signs of boredom near the halfway point of the essay. As I mentioned before the essay is a rather difficult piece of writing for an ESL student. The essay goes on to argue its points by providing different examples. Towards the end, the writing

becomes a little superfluous. It might be argued that the authors had made their point by then. For the class's purposes, some of the essay could be reasonably omitted without the reasons behind studying the essay being compromised. The second time that I taught the course, I decided to assign one of the remaining pages to a group of three students. They would spend some time reading it and understanding it. They would then teach their page to the rest of the class and listen as the other groups presented theirs. This strategy works well when the class consists of more talkative and spirited students. Another effective exercise is to assign an amount of reading from the latter half of the essay and have the students choose a number of difficult words and then define them and teach them to the rest of the class.

The "Broken Windows" essay is very useful in a Saudi Arabian context. It can be described as being fairly culturally neutral. That is to say it deals with a topic that is common to most people all over the world. Crime prevention is undertaken by all societies in many different ways. Saudi Arabians are largely devout Muslims and as such are aware of the system of justice called *Shari 'a*. Comparing and contrasting the information in the essay with *Shari 'a* is also a worthwhile endeavor. The students are able to take concepts that are familiar to them and examine some that are not. This is empowering to them and many students find their essay topics as a result of these discussions. Riyadh does not have a serious problem with crime although it certainly does exist. The students usually always have a lot to talk about when this topic comes up. This is a topic where there are few opportunities for

cultural missteps to occur, so both the students and I are able to lower our inhibitions somewhat and get great discussions going.

I try to steer the students towards using the basic premise of the essay for their own and not its actual topic. There are no panhandlers in Riyadh, and there are certainly no roving drunkards. The essay is about problems in the U.S. anyway and is therefore completely irrelevant to the students in Saudi Arabia. I encourage them to use the logic that is found in it instead. Wilson and Kelling argue that small problems should be addressed quickly before they get worse. This piece of wisdom has infinite applications in the wider world, as well as Saudi Arabia. Some of the issues in Saudi Arabia include never ending road construction and nepotism. I try to direct the students towards a topic that, most of all, they have a lot of familiarity with.

The essay is useful because it is a true piece of academic realia. It is indeed challenging for the students to get through it, but doing so is empowering to them. 08R is the last preparatory class that the students will take before they begin their degrees in earnest. Engaging with a text such as Broken Windows gives them a sense of what university will be like. It also shows them just what is possible with writing an academic essay.

Apes and Language:

The next essay that I gave to the students is titled Apes and Language. Karen Shaw wrote the essay, however, and more importantly, it was annotated by Diana Hacker. I provided the essay to the students because it is perfectly formatted in the APA style. The students were quite deficient in the skills required to format an academic essay properly. I had to explain to them that essays must conform to rigourous standards if they are to be taken seriously and if they are to be accepted by scholarly journals.

The essay provides every kind of citation that a student might need in the course of completing an essay. It shows how to properly cite journals, magazines, newspapers, books and websites. Hacker's annotations are helpful because they explain how to use things like the in-text citations that occur in brackets throughout the essay. She also provides some interesting input about the title and reference pages. I realized after teaching the class for the first time that simply providing the students with the essay and allowing them to figure out for themselves how to cite properly was insufficient. The second time that I taught the class, I created an assignment where the students would have to go to the library and find three different kinds of sources: journal, book and website. (See appendix c) The students would create a references page with properly lined margins and complete information about the author, date, title, place of publication and publisher. The students responded well to the assignment. They began to realize the writing an

essay is a precise task that takes a lot of care and determination. I noticed a burgeoning sense of pride in them at this time as well. They seemed to be internalizing this new skill and took much more of an interest in using it correctly.

The Essay:

The students spent a lot of time engaging with other essays before they began writing themselves. I hope to instill in them what the word essay means by showing the students the ways that other people have written them. I give the students some other supplementary material before they get writing as well. Saudi Arabian students do not know what the word essay means. Surprisingly enough, most academics educated in the West don't either, but that is beside the point. I give a short lecture about the how the word came into English from the French verb *essayer*, meaning to try. I tell them that they are trying to convince someone to believe the arguments put forth in their essays. If any of the students are interested in any of the history of the essay and how it evolved, I direct them to the works of Michel de Montaigne, who is widely believed to have written the first essay as such. "The Courtier" by Baldassare Castiglione was another early example, although it reads more as a rulebook than an argumentative text.

Once I feel that the students have a firm grasp on essays, we begin writing. The students create an outline first, and then write the introduction to their essays. I insist on seeing and marking these initial paragraphs first, as quite often the student

has not provided a proper thesis statement containing a problem and a proposed solution. Often the topic chosen by the student is too broad. By marking each introduction face to face with the student, I am able to help them restate what it is that they are trying to say, and to narrow their respective fields of focus. This can sometimes mean that the student will have to revisit their outline, and then choose fewer problems to treat upon.

For the next paragraph, I tell the students that they have a choice. They can either write an expository paragraph which highlights and clarifies the problem in the thesis, or they can begin the first body paragraph and start arguing how to solve the problem in the thesis. I only look at these paragraphs at the particular request of the student who wrote it. From this point on I usually take a more hands off approach. I am available for help if the student wishes to see me, but I allow the students to cruise on their own initiative.

The course always includes at least two library days. These days are essential because it helps me to guide the students with both their writing and their research. I provide the students with some pointers regarding the academic databases that are available to them. I also help them with some research strategies using the internet. We discuss the merits of a particular source and whether it should be permissible to use in an essay. We also discuss some of the bias issues with using sources. As they research, I walk around the students sitting at their computer terminals. If a student is facing difficulty with finding sources, I help. This usually

involves rewording search phrases or finding more relevant material in the journal databases.

I assign the first draft of the essay to the students around the halfway point of the course. It is to be typed and it should contain three scholarly sources; one of which must the Broken Windows essay. It should also contain a properly formatted title page and reference page. When the essays are submitted I mark each one with the student who wrote it. I circle misspelled words and incorrect grammar, and ask the student to see if he can fix it himself. I make some comments on how the logic is flowing, and if the provided sources are germane to the student's argument. Some students prefer to consult me often about their essays, and in this case I help as much as they need me too. Others would rather run with what they have after their introductions are approved.

I believe that the context where I teach warrants a reconsidering of how essays are assigned and marked. There are simply too many new skills being imparted to the students for them to have only two or three attempts at handing in something satisfactory. I give the students an unlimited amount of drafts. I mark each draft with the student face to face. This is very important to the learning process because it gives the student a tactile and realistic experience with correcting errors. After I finish grading the essay, I write what I call a 'ghost grade' on the paper. I do not use straight lines, but rather dots. I tell the student that the essay is his to fix. I will mark it as many times as necessary until he feels that he has

achieved a personally acceptable grade. The last day of the class is the last opportunity to hand something in. I believe that this puts more of an onus upon the student. It gives him a task to work on and a result to strive towards. I have seen copious improvement in most of essays from the first draft to the final one. This strategy also fulfills the requirements of the student-centered approach. Each student gets customized help according to what is required by him. He is responsible for his own success, and is afforded as much help as he personally needs. Obviously, marking the essays in this way is quite time-consuming, but the results that I have seen demonstrate that it was time well spent.

The Future:

There is still room for growth with the method that I have used for the class. I hope that I will be assigned to teach the course in the future because I have discovered some additional aspects that could be improved. It can be notoriously difficult to encourage Saudi Arabian students to read by themselves. This is a cultural difficulty because theirs is a highly oral culture. This translates as a difficulty for the essay because the students are not putting an adequate amount of time into their research. Many of them tend to write the essay first and then insert convenient sources into it after it is finished. This is quite obviously not an ideal way to conduct research. Until such time as I can find a way to get them reading, I have been encouraging them to use sources that offer statistics and other easily gleaned data. I have been considering different ways to incorporate extensive reading into

the class, thus far without much luck. I would also like to try the method that I have used with another essay. This would allow me to gauge how much of the success that I had with the course was due to “Broken Windows”. I would also like to take an in depth look into the field of contrastive rhetoric. It has recently come to my attention and some of the literature seems to relate to what I have been writing about here.

Implications for a Language Teacher:

Parker Palmer tells us “we teach who we are.” This sentiment rings true with the method of teaching academic writing that I am proposing. This method allows a teacher to use an essay that they know well to guide their students towards excellence in academic writing. Using an essay to teach an essay has an uncountable number of applications for a teacher. It turns a receptive skill into a productive one. If done properly, it is a high enjoyable and fun way for a student to learn a difficult skill. Many people do not realize that academic writing as it exists today evolved out of the Western university system. Not all cultures have had as much experience with it as others. We, as teachers, must understand that it can be a wholly alien concept for some students and we must always remember how difficult and time-consuming a task it can be.

Conclusion:

There are few experiences in life that are as rewarding as teaching in a foreign culture. Every day brings a new challenge and an opportunity to help people. I believe most resolutely that teachers must try to understand the culture of the country in which they are teaching. They are better able to give the students the affordances that they need to succeed. Modeling materials in class is also of great benefit. Teachers too often take for granted what knowledge their students have, and what they have not yet acquired. Showing a student how to do something and then giving them an example of something done properly allows the student to better comprehend what is being asked of them. Using an essay to teach an essay has been an invaluable strategy for me in class. It has allowed my students to piece together for themselves what an essay is. I hope that in the future they will use this method to teach themselves other things as well.

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Appendix 1.

Broken Windows: The Police and Neighborhood Safety
George L. Kelling and James Q. Wilson

In the mid-1970s The State of New Jersey announced a "Safe and Clean Neighborhoods Program," designed to improve the quality of community life in twenty-eight cities. As part of that program, the state provided money to help cities take police officers out of their patrol cars and assign them to walking beats. The governor and other state officials were enthusiastic about using foot patrol as a way of cutting crime, but many police chiefs were skeptical. Foot patrol, in their eyes, had been pretty much discredited. It reduced the mobility of the police, who thus had difficulty responding to citizen calls for service, and it weakened headquarters control over patrol officers.

Many police officers also disliked foot patrol, but for different reasons: it was hard work, it kept them outside on cold, rainy nights, and it reduced their chances for making a "good pinch." In some departments, assigning officers to foot patrol had been used as a form of punishment. And academic experts on policing doubted that foot patrol would have any impact on crime rates; it was, in the opinion of most, little more than a sop to public opinion. But since the state was paying for it, the local authorities were willing to go along.

Five years after the program started, the Police Foundation, in Washington, D.C., published an evaluation of the foot-patrol project. Based on its analysis of a carefully controlled experiment carried out chiefly in Newark, the foundation concluded, to the surprise of hardly anyone, that foot patrol had not reduced crime rates. But residents of the foot patrolled neighborhoods seemed to feel more secure than persons in other areas, tended to believe that crime had been reduced, and seemed to take fewer steps to protect themselves from crime (staying at home with the doors locked, for example). Moreover, citizens in the foot-patrol areas had a more favorable opinion of the police than did those living elsewhere. And officers walking beats had higher morale, greater job satisfaction, and a more favorable attitude toward citizens in their neighborhoods than did officers assigned to patrol cars.

These findings may be taken as evidence that the skeptics were right- foot patrol has no effect on crime; it merely fools the citizens into thinking that they are safer. But in our view, and in the view of the authors of the Police Foundation study (of whom Kelling was one), the citizens of Newark were not fooled at all. They knew what the foot-patrol officers were doing, they knew it was different from what motorized officers do, and they knew that having officers walk beats did in fact make their neighborhoods safer.

But how can a neighborhood be "safer" when the crime rate has not gone down—in fact, may have gone up? Finding the answer requires first that we understand what most often frightens people in public places. Many citizens, of course, are primarily frightened by crime, especially crime involving a sudden, violent attack by a stranger. This risk is very real, in Newark as in many large cities. But we tend to overlook another source of fear—the fear of being bothered by disorderly people. Not violent people, nor, necessarily, criminals, but disreputable or obstreperous or

unpredictable people: panhandlers, drunks, addicts, rowdy teenagers, prostitutes, loiterers, the mentally disturbed.

What foot-patrol officers did was to elevate, to the extent they could, the level of public order in these neighborhoods. Though the neighborhoods were predominantly black and the foot patrolmen were mostly white, this "order-maintenance" function of the police was performed to the general satisfaction of both parties.

One of us (Kelling) spent many hours walking with Newark foot-patrol officers to see how they defined "order" and what they did to maintain it. One beat was typical: a busy but dilapidated area in the heart of Newark, with many abandoned buildings, marginal shops (several of which prominently displayed knives and straight-edged razors in their windows), one large department store, and, most important, a train station and several major bus stops. Though the area was run-down, its streets were filled with people, because it was a major transportation center. The good order of this area was important not only to those who lived and worked there but also to many others, who had to move through it on their way home, to supermarkets, or to factories.

The people on the street were primarily black; the officer who walked the street was white. The people were made up of "regulars" and "strangers." Regulars included both "decent folk" and some drunks and derelicts who were always there but who "knew their place." Strangers were, well, strangers, and viewed suspiciously, sometimes apprehensively. The officer—call him Kelly—knew who the regulars were, and they knew him. As he saw his job, he was to keep an eye on strangers, and make certain that the disreputable regulars observed some informal but widely understood rules. Drunks and addicts could sit on the stoops, but could not lie down. People could drink on side streets, but not at the main intersection. Bottles had to be in paper bags. Talking to, bothering, or begging from people waiting at the bus stop was strictly forbidden. If a dispute erupted between a businessman and a customer, the businessman was assumed to be right, especially if the customer was a stranger. If a stranger loitered, Kelly would ask him if he had any means of support and what his business was; if he gave unsatisfactory answers, he was sent on his way. Persons who broke the informal rules, especially those who bothered people waiting at bus stops, were arrested for vagrancy. Noisy teenagers were told to keep quiet.

These rules were defined and enforced in collaboration with the "regulars" on the street. Another neighborhood might have different rules, but these, everybody understood, were the rules for *this*neighborhood. If someone violated them, the regulars not only turned to Kelly for help but also ridiculed the violator. Sometimes what Kelly did could be described as "enforcing the law," but just as often it involved taking informal or extralegal steps to help protect what the neighborhood had decided was the appropriate level of public order. Some of the things he did probably would not withstand a legal challenge.

A determined skeptic might acknowledge that a skilled foot-patrol officer can maintain order but still insist that this sort of "order" has little to do with the real sources of community fear—that is, with violent crime. To a degree, that is true. But two things must be borne in mind. First, outside observers should not assume that they know how much of the anxiety now endemic in many big-city neighborhoods

stems from a fear of "real" crime and how much from a sense that the street is disorderly, a source of distasteful, worrisome encounters. The people of Newark, to judge from their behavior and their remarks to interviewers, apparently assign a high value to public order, and feel relieved and reassured when the police help them maintain that order.

Second, at the community level, disorder and crime are usually inextricably linked, in a kind of developmental sequence. Social psychologists and police officers tend to agree that if a window in a building is broken and is left unrepaired, all the rest of the windows will soon be broken. This is as true in nice neighborhoods as in rundown ones. Window-breaking does not necessarily occur on a large scale because some areas are inhabited by determined window-breakers whereas others are populated by window-lovers; rather, one unrepaired broken window is a signal that no one cares, and so breaking more windows costs nothing. (It has always been fun.)

Philip Zimbardo, a Stanford psychologist, reported in 1969 on some experiments testing the broken-window theory. He arranged to have an automobile without license plates parked with its hood up on a street in the Bronx and a comparable automobile on a street in Palo Alto, California. The car in the Bronx was attacked by "vandals" within ten minutes of its "abandonment." The first to arrive were a family—father, mother, and young son—who removed the radiator and battery. Within twenty-four hours, virtually everything of value had been removed. Then random destruction began—windows were smashed, parts torn off, upholstery ripped. Children began to use the car as a playground. Most of the adult "vandals" were well-dressed, apparently clean-cut whites. The car in Palo Alto sat untouched for more than a week. Then Zimbardo smashed part of it with a sledgehammer. Soon, passersby were joining in. Within a few hours, the car had been turned upside down and utterly destroyed. Again, the "vandals" appeared to be primarily respectable whites.

Untended property becomes fair game for people out for fun or plunder and even for people who ordinarily would not dream of doing such things and who probably consider themselves law-abiding. Because of the nature of community life in the Bronx—its anonymity, the frequency with which cars are abandoned and things are stolen or broken, the past experience of "no one caring"—vandalism begins much more quickly than it does in staid Palo Alto, where people have come to believe that private possessions are cared for, and that mischievous behavior is costly. But vandalism can occur anywhere once communal barriers—the sense of mutual regard and the obligations of civility—are lowered by actions that seem to signal that "no one cares."

We suggest that "untended" behavior also leads to the breakdown of community controls. A stable neighborhood of families who care for their homes, mind each other's children, and confidently frown on unwanted intruders can change, in a few years or even a few months, to an inhospitable and frightening jungle. A piece of property is abandoned, weeds grow up, a window is smashed. Adults stop scolding rowdy children; the children, emboldened, become more rowdy. Families move out, unattached adults move in. Teenagers gather in front of the corner store. The merchant asks them to move; they refuse. Fights occur. Litter accumulates. People

start drinking in front of the grocery; in time, an inebriate slumps to the sidewalk and is allowed to sleep it off. Pedestrians are approached by panhandlers.

At this point it is not inevitable that serious crime will flourish or violent attacks on strangers will occur. But many residents will think that crime, especially violent crime, is on the rise, and they will modify their behavior accordingly. They will use the streets less often, and when on the streets will stay apart from their fellows, moving with averted eyes, silent lips, and hurried steps. "Don't get involved." For some residents, this growing atomization will matter little, because the neighborhood is not their "home" but "the place where they live." Their interests are elsewhere; they are cosmopolitans. But it will matter greatly to other people, whose lives derive meaning and satisfaction from local attachments rather than worldly involvement; for them, the neighborhood will cease to exist except for a few reliable friends whom they arrange to meet.

Such an area is vulnerable to criminal invasion. Though it is not inevitable, it is more likely that here, rather than in places where people are confident they can regulate public behavior by informal controls, drugs will change hands, prostitutes will solicit, and cars will be stripped. That the drunks will be robbed by boys who do it as a lark, and the prostitutes' customers will be robbed by men who do it purposefully and perhaps violently. That muggings will occur.

Among those who often find it difficult to move away from this are the elderly. Surveys of citizens suggest that the elderly are much less likely to be the victims of crime than younger persons, and some have inferred from this that the well-known fear of crime voiced by the elderly is an exaggeration: perhaps we ought not to design special programs to protect older persons; perhaps we should even try to talk them out of their mistaken fears. This argument misses the point. The prospect of a confrontation with an obstreperous teenager or a drunken panhandler can be as fear-inducing for defenseless persons as the prospect of meeting an actual robber; indeed, to a defenseless person, the two kinds of confrontation are often indistinguishable. Moreover, the lower rate at which the elderly are victimized is a measure of the steps they have already taken—chiefly, staying behind locked doors—to minimize the risks they face. Young men are more frequently attacked than older women, not because they are easier or more lucrative targets but because they are on the streets more.

Nor is the connection between disorderliness and fear made only by the elderly. Susan Estrich, of the Harvard Law School, has recently gathered together a number of surveys on the sources of public fear. One, done in Portland, Oregon, indicated that three fourths of the adults interviewed cross to the other side of a street when they see a gang of teenagers; another survey, in Baltimore, discovered that nearly half would cross the street to avoid even a single strange youth. When an interviewer asked people in a housing project where the most dangerous spot was, they mentioned a place where young persons gathered to drink and play music, despite the fact that not a single crime had occurred there. In Boston public housing projects, the greatest fear was expressed by persons living in the buildings where disorderliness and incivility, not crime, were the greatest. Knowing this helps one understand the significance of such otherwise harmless displays as subway graffiti. As Nathan Glazer has written, the proliferation of graffiti, even when not obscene,

confronts the subway rider with the inescapable knowledge that the environment he must endure for an hour or more a day is uncontrolled and uncontrollable, and that anyone can invade it to do whatever damage and mischief the mind suggests."
In response to fear people avoid one another, weakening controls. Sometimes they call the police. Patrol cars arrive, an occasional arrest occurs but crime continues and disorder is not abated. Citizens complain to the police chief, but he explains that his department is low on personnel and that the courts do not punish petty or first-time offenders. To the residents, the police who arrive in squad cars are either ineffective or uncaring: to the police, the residents are animals who deserve each other. The citizens may soon stop calling the police, because "they can't do anything."

The process we call urban decay has occurred for centuries in every city. But what is happening today is different in at least two important respects. First, in the period before, say, World War II, city dwellers- because of money costs, transportation difficulties, familial and church connections—could rarely move away from neighborhood problems. When movement did occur, it tended to be along public-transit routes. Now mobility has become exceptionally easy for all but the poorest or those who are blocked by racial prejudice. Earlier crime waves had a kind of built-in self-correcting mechanism: the determination of a neighborhood or community to reassert control over its turf. Areas in Chicago, New York, and Boston would experience crime and gang wars, and then normalcy would return, as the families for whom no alternative residences were possible reclaimed their authority over the streets.

Second, the police in this earlier period assisted in that reassertion of authority by acting, sometimes violently, on behalf of the community. Young toughs were roughed up, people were arrested "on suspicion" or for vagrancy, and prostitutes and petty thieves were routed. "Rights" were something enjoyed by decent folk, and perhaps also by the serious professional criminal, who avoided violence and could afford a lawyer.

This pattern of policing was not an aberration or the result of occasional excess. From the earliest days of the nation, the police function was seen primarily as that of a night watchman: to maintain order against the chief threats to order—fire, wild animals, and disreputable behavior. Solving crimes was viewed not as a police responsibility but as a private one. In the March, 1969, Atlantic, one of us (Wilson) wrote a brief account of how the police role had slowly changed from maintaining order to fighting crimes. The change began with the creation of private detectives (often ex-criminals), who worked on a contingency-fee basis for individuals who had suffered losses. In time, the detectives were absorbed in municipal agencies and paid a regular salary simultaneously, the responsibility for prosecuting thieves was shifted from the aggrieved private citizen to the professional prosecutor. This process was not complete in most places until the twentieth century.

In the l960s, when urban riots were a major problem, social scientists began to explore carefully the order maintenance function of the police, and to suggest ways of improving it—not to make streets safer (its original function) but to reduce the incidence of mass violence. Order maintenance became, to a degree, coterminous with "community relations." But, as the crime wave that began in the early l960s

continued without abatement throughout the decade and into the 1970s, attention shifted to the role of the police as crime-fighters. Studies of police behavior ceased, by and large, to be accounts of the order-maintenance function and became, instead, efforts to propose and test ways whereby the police could solve more crimes, make more arrests, and gather better evidence. If these things could be done, social scientists assumed, citizens would be less fearful.

A great deal was accomplished during this transition, as both police chiefs and outside experts emphasized the crime-fighting function in their plans, in the allocation of resources, and in deployment of personnel. The police may well have become better crime-fighters as a result. And doubtless they remained aware of their responsibility for order. But the link between order-maintenance and crime-prevention, so obvious to earlier generations, was forgotten.

That link is similar to the process whereby one broken window becomes many. The citizen who fears the ill-smelling drunk, the rowdy teenager, or the importuning beggar is not merely expressing his distaste for unseemly behavior; he is also giving voice to a bit of folk wisdom that happens to be a correct generalization—namely, that serious street crime flourishes in areas in which disorderly behavior goes unchecked. The unchecked panhandler is, in effect, the first broken window.

Muggers and robbers, whether opportunistic or professional, believe they reduce their chances of being caught or even identified if they operate on streets where potential victims are already intimidated by prevailing conditions. If the neighborhood cannot keep a bothersome panhandler from annoying passersby, the thief may reason, it is even less likely to call the police to identify a potential mugger or to interfere if the mugging actually takes place.

Some police administrators concede that this process occurs, but argue that motorized-patrol officers can deal with it as effectively as foot patrol officers. We are not so sure. In theory, an officer in a squad car can observe as much as an officer on foot; in theory, the former can talk to as many people as the latter. But the reality of police-citizen encounters is powerfully altered by the automobile. An officer on foot cannot separate himself from the street people; if he is approached, only his uniform and his personality can help him manage whatever is about to happen. And he can never be certain what that will be—a request for directions, a plea for help, an angry denunciation, a teasing remark, a confused babble, a threatening gesture.

In a car, an officer is more likely to deal with street people by rolling down the window and looking at them. The door and the window exclude the approaching citizen; they are a barrier. Some officers take advantage of this barrier, perhaps unconsciously, by acting differently if in the car than they would on foot. We have seen this countless times. The police car pulls up to a corner where teenagers are gathered. The window is rolled down. The officer stares at the youths. They stare back. The officer says to one, "C'mere." He saunters over, conveying to his friends by his elaborately casual style the idea that he is not intimidated by authority. What's your name?" "Chuck." "Chuck who?" "Chuck Jones." "What'ya doing, Chuck?" "Nothin'." "Got a P.O. [parole officer]?" "Nah." "Sure?" "Yeah." "Stay out of trouble, Chuckie." Meanwhile, the other boys laugh and exchange comments among themselves, probably at the officer's expense. The officer stares harder. He cannot be certain what is being said, nor can he join in and, by displaying his own skill at

street banter, prove that he cannot be "put down." In the process, the officer has learned almost nothing, and the boys have decided the officer is an alien force who can safely be disregarded, even mocked.

Our experience is that most citizens like to talk to a police officer. Such exchanges give them a sense of importance, provide them with the basis for gossip, and allow them to explain to the authorities what is worrying them (whereby they gain a modest but significant sense of having "done something" about the problem). You approach a person on foot more easily, and talk to him more readily, than you do a person in a car. Moreover, you can more easily retain some anonymity if you draw an officer aside for a private chat. Suppose you want to pass on a tip about who is stealing handbags, or who offered to sell you a stolen TV. In the inner city, the culprit, in all likelihood, lives nearby. To walk up to a marked patrol car and lean in the window is to convey a visible signal that you are a "fink."

The essence of the police role in maintaining order is to reinforce the informal control mechanisms of the community itself. The police cannot, without committing extraordinary resources, provide a substitute for that informal control. On the other hand, to reinforce those natural forces the police must accommodate them. And therein lies the problem.

Should police activity on the street be shaped, in important ways, by the standards of the neighborhood rather than by the rules of the state? Over the past two decades, the shift of police from order-maintenance to law enforcement has brought them increasingly under the influence of legal restrictions, provoked by media complaints and enforced by court decisions and departmental orders. As a consequence, the order maintenance functions of the police are now governed by rules developed to control police relations with suspected criminals. This is, we think, an entirely new development. For centuries, the role of the police as watchmen was judged primarily not in terms of its compliance with appropriate procedures but rather in terms of its attaining a desired objective. The objective was order, an inherently ambiguous term but a condition that people in a given community recognized when they saw it. The means were the same as those the community itself would employ, if its members were sufficiently determined, courageous, and authoritative. Detecting and apprehending criminals, by contrast, was a means to an end, not an end in itself; a judicial determination of guilt or innocence was the hoped-for result of the law-enforcement mode. From the first, the police were expected to follow rules defining that process, though states differed in how stringent the rules should be. The criminal-apprehension process was always understood to involve individual rights, the violation of which was unacceptable because it meant that the violating officer would be acting as a judge and jury—and that was not his job. Guilt or innocence was to be determined by universal standards under special procedures.

Ordinarily, no judge or jury ever sees the persons caught up in a dispute over the appropriate level of neighborhood order. That is true not only because most cases are handled informally on the street but also because no universal standards are available to settle arguments over disorder, and thus a judge may not be any wiser or more effective than a police officer. Until quite recently in many states, and even today in some places, the police made arrests on such charges as "suspicious

person" or "vagrancy" or "public drunkenness"—charges with scarcely any legal meaning. These charges exist not because society wants judges to punish vagrants or drunks but because it wants an officer to have the legal tools to remove undesirable persons from a neighborhood when informal efforts to preserve order in the streets have failed.

Once we begin to think of all aspects of police work as involving the application of universal rules under special procedures, we inevitably ask what constitutes an "undesirable person" and why we should "criminalize" vagrancy or drunkenness. A strong and commendable desire to see that people are treated fairly makes us worry about allowing the police to rout persons who are undesirable by some vague or parochial standard. A growing and not-so-commendable utilitarianism leads us to doubt that any behavior that does not "hurt" another person should be made illegal. And thus many of us who watch over the police are reluctant to allow them to perform, in the only way they can, a function that every neighborhood desperately wants them to perform.

This wish to "decriminalize" disreputable behavior that "harms no one"- and thus remove the ultimate sanction the police can employ to maintain neighborhood order—is, we think, a mistake. Arresting a single drunk or a single vagrant who has harmed no identifiable person seems unjust, and in a sense it is. But failing to do anything about a score of drunks or a hundred vagrants may destroy an entire community. A particular rule that seems to make sense in the individual case makes no sense when it is made a universal rule and applied to all cases. It makes no sense because it fails to take into account the connection between one broken window left untended and a thousand broken windows. Of course, agencies other than the police could attend to the problems posed by drunks or the mentally ill, but in most communities especially where the "deinstitutionalization" movement has been strong—they do not.

The concern about equity is more serious. We might agree that certain behavior makes one person more undesirable than another but how do we ensure that age or skin color or national origin or harmless mannerisms will not also become the basis for distinguishing the undesirable from the desirable? How do we ensure, in short, that the police do not become the agents of neighborhood bigotry?

We can offer no wholly satisfactory answer to this important question. We are not confident that there is a satisfactory answer except to hope that by their selection, training, and supervision, the police will be inculcated with a clear sense of the outer limit of their discretionary authority. That limit, roughly, is this—the police exist to help regulate behavior, not to maintain the racial or ethnic purity of a neighborhood.

Consider the case of the Robert Taylor Homes in Chicago, one of the largest public-housing projects in the country. It is home for nearly 20,000 people, all black, and extends over ninety-two acres along South State Street. It was named after a distinguished black who had been, during the 1940s, chairman of the Chicago Housing Authority. Not long after it opened, in 1962, relations between project residents and the police deteriorated badly. The citizens felt that the police were insensitive or brutal; the police, in turn, complained of unprovoked attacks on them. Some Chicago officers tell of times when they were afraid to enter the Homes. Crime rates soared.

Today, the atmosphere has changed. Police-citizen relations have improved—apparently, both sides learned something from the earlier experience. Recently, a boy stole a purse and ran off. Several young persons who saw the theft voluntarily passed along to the police information on the identity and residence of the thief, and they did this publicly, with friends and neighbors looking on. But problems persist, chief among them the presence of youth gangs that terrorize residents and recruit members in the project. The people expect the police to "do something" about this, and the police are determined to do just that.

But do what? Though the police can obviously make arrests whenever a gang member breaks the law, a gang can form, recruit, and congregate without breaking the law. And only a tiny fraction of gang-related crimes can be solved by an arrest; thus, if an arrest is the only recourse for the police, the residents' fears will go unassuaged. The police will soon feel helpless, and the residents will again believe that the police "do nothing." What the police in fact do is to chase known gang members out of the project. In the words of one officer, "We kick ass." Project residents both know and approve of this. The tacit police-citizen alliance in the project is reinforced by the police view that the cops and the gangs are the two rival sources of power in the area, and that the gangs are not going to win.

None of this is easily reconciled with any conception of due process or fair treatment. Since both residents and gang members are black, race is not a factor. But it could be. Suppose a white project confronted a black gang, or vice versa. We would be apprehensive about the police taking sides. But the substantive problem remains the same: how can the police strengthen the informal social-control mechanisms of natural communities in order to minimize fear in public places? Law enforcement, per se, is no answer: a gang can weaken or destroy a community by standing about in a menacing fashion and speaking rudely to passersby without breaking the law.

We have difficulty thinking about such matters, not simply because the ethical and legal issues are so complex but because we have become accustomed to thinking of the law in essentially individualistic terms. The law defines *my* rights, punishes *his* behavior and is applied by *that* officer because of *this*harm. We assume, in thinking this way, that what is good for the individual will be good for the community and what doesn't matter when it happens to one person won't matter if it happens to many. Ordinarily, those are plausible assumptions. But in cases where behavior that is tolerable to one person is intolerable to many others, the reactions of the others—fear, withdrawal, flight—may ultimately make matters worse for everyone, including the individual who first professed his indifference.

It may be their greater sensitivity to communal as opposed to individual needs that helps explain why the residents of small communities are more satisfied with their police than are the residents of similar neighborhoods in big cities. Elinor Ostrom and her co-workers at Indiana University compared the perception of police services in two poor, all-black Illinois towns—Phoenix and East Chicago Heights with those of three comparable all-black neighborhoods in Chicago. The level of criminal victimization and the quality of police-community relations appeared to be about the same in the towns and the Chicago neighborhoods. But the citizens living in their own villages were much more likely than those living in the Chicago

neighborhoods to say that they do not stay at home for fear of crime, to agree that the local police have "the right to take any action necessary" to deal with problems, and to agree that the police "look out for the needs of the average citizen." It is possible that the residents and the police of the small towns saw themselves as engaged in a collaborative effort to maintain a certain standard of communal life, whereas those of the big city felt themselves to be simply requesting and supplying particular services on an individual basis.

If this is true, how should a wise police chief deploy his meager forces? The first answer is that nobody knows for certain, and the most prudent course of action would be to try further variations on the Newark experiment, to see more precisely what works in what kinds of neighborhoods. The second answer is also a hedge—many aspects of order maintenance in neighborhoods can probably best be handled in ways that involve the police minimally if at all. A busy bustling shopping center and a quiet, well-tended suburb may need almost no visible police presence. In both cases, the ratio of respectable to disreputable people is ordinarily so high as to make informal social control effective.

Even in areas that are in jeopardy from disorderly elements, citizen action without substantial police involvement may be sufficient. Meetings between teenagers who like to hang out on a particular corner and adults who want to use that corner might well lead to an amicable agreement on a set of rules about how many people can be allowed to congregate, where, and when.

Where no understanding is possible—or if possible, not observed—citizen patrols may be a sufficient response. There are two traditions of communal involvement in maintaining order: One, that of the "community watchmen," is as old as the first settlement of the New World. Until well into the nineteenth century, volunteer watchmen, not policemen, patrolled their communities to keep order. They did so, by and large, without taking the law into their own hands—without, that is, punishing persons or using force. Their presence deterred disorder or alerted the community to disorder that could not be deterred. There are hundreds of such efforts today in communities all across the nation. Perhaps the best known is that of the Guardian Angels, a group of unarmed young persons in distinctive berets and T-shirts, who first came to public attention when they began patrolling the New York City subways but who claim now to have chapters in more than thirty American cities. Unfortunately, we have little information about the effect of these groups on crime. It is possible, however, that whatever their effect on crime, citizens find their presence reassuring, and that they thus contribute to maintaining a sense of order and civility.

The second tradition is that of the "vigilante." Rarely a feature of the settled communities of the East, it was primarily to be found in those frontier towns that grew up in advance of the reach of government. More than 350 vigilante groups are known to have existed; their distinctive feature was that their members did take the law into their own hands, by acting as judge, jury, and often executioner as well as policeman. Today, the vigilante movement is conspicuous by its rarity, despite the great fear expressed by citizens that the older cities are becoming "urban frontiers." But some community-watchmen groups have skirted the line, and others may cross it in the future. An ambiguous case, reported in The Wall Street Journal involved a

citizens' patrol in the Silver Lake area of Belleville, New Jersey. A leader told the reporter, "We look for outsiders." If a few teenagers from outside the neighborhood enter it, "we ask them their business," he said. "If they say they're going down the street to see Mrs. Jones, fine, we let them pass. But then we follow them down the block to make sure they're really going to see Mrs. Jones."

Though citizens can do a great deal, the police are plainly the key to order maintenance. For one thing, many communities, such as the Robert Taylor Homes, cannot do the job by themselves. For another, no citizen in a neighborhood, even an organized one, is likely to feel the sense of responsibility that wearing a badge confers. Psychologists have done many studies on why people fail to go to the aid of persons being attacked or seeking help, and they have learned that the cause is not "apathy" or "selfishness" but the absence of some plausible grounds for feeling that one must personally accept responsibility. Ironically, avoiding responsibility is easier when a lot of people are standing about. On streets and in public places, where order is so important, many people are likely to be "around," a fact that reduces the chance of any one person acting as the agent of the community. The police officer's uniform singles him out as a person who must accept responsibility if asked. In addition, officers, more easily than their fellow citizens, can be expected to distinguish between what is necessary to protect the safety of the street and what merely protects its ethnic purity.

But the police forces of America are losing, not gaining, members. Some cities have suffered substantial cuts in the number of officers available for duty. These cuts are not likely to be reversed in the near future. Therefore, each department must assign its existing officers with great care. Some neighborhoods are so demoralized and crime-ridden as to make foot patrol useless; the best the police can do with limited resources is respond to the enormous number of calls for service. Other neighborhoods are so stable and serene as to make foot patrol unnecessary. The key is to identify neighborhoods at the tipping point—where the public order is deteriorating but not unreclaimable, where the streets are used frequently but by apprehensive people, where a window is likely to be broken at any time, and must quickly be fixed if all are not to be shattered.

Most police departments do not have ways of systematically identifying such areas and assigning officers to them. Officers are assigned on the basis of crime rates (meaning that marginally threatened areas are often stripped so that police can investigate crimes in areas where the situation is hopeless) or on the basis of calls for service (despite the fact that most citizens do not call the police when they are merely frightened or annoyed). To allocate patrol wisely, the department must look at the neighborhoods and decide, from first-hand evidence, where an additional officer will make the greatest difference in promoting a sense of safety.

One way to stretch limited police resources is being tried in some public housing projects. Tenant organizations hire off-duty police officers for patrol work in their buildings. The costs are not high (at least not per resident), the officer likes the additional income, and the residents feel safer. Such arrangements are probably more successful than hiring private watchmen, and the Newark experiment helps us understand why. A private security guard may deter crime or misconduct by his presence, and he may go to the aid of persons needing help, but he may well not

intervene—that is, control or drive away—someone challenging community standards. Being a sworn officer—a "real cop"—seems to give one the confidence, the sense of duty, and the aura of authority necessary to perform this difficult task. Patrol officers might be encouraged to go to and from duty stations on public transportation and, while on the bus or subway car, enforce rules about smoking, drinking, disorderly conduct, and the like. The enforcement need involve nothing more than ejecting the offender (the offense, after all, is not one with which a booking officer or a judge wishes to be bothered). Perhaps the random but relentless maintenance of standards on buses would lead to conditions on buses that approximate the level of civility we now take for granted on airplanes.

But the most important requirement is to think that to maintain order in precarious situations is a vital job. The police know this is one of their functions, and they also believe, correctly, that it cannot be done to the exclusion of criminal investigation and responding to calls. We may have encouraged them to suppose, however, on the basis of our oft-repeated concerns about serious, violent crime, that they will be judged exclusively on their capacity as crime-fighters. To the extent that this is the case, police administrators will continue to concentrate police personnel in the highest-crime areas (though not necessarily in the areas most vulnerable to criminal invasion), emphasize their training in the law and criminal apprehension (and not their training in managing street life), and join too quickly in campaigns to decriminalize "harmless" behavior (though public drunkenness, street prostitution, and pornographic displays can destroy a community more quickly than any team of professional burglars).

Above all, we must return to our long-abandoned view that the police ought to protect communities as well as individuals. Our crime statistics and victimization surveys measure individual losses, but they do not measure communal losses. Just as physicians now recognize the importance of fostering health rather than simply treating illness, so the police—and the rest of us—ought to recognize the importance of maintaining, intact, communities without broken windows.

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Appendix 2

APA Citation Assignment:

Academics use essays as the tools of their trade. Essays must be correctly formatted to be taken seriously. Each comma, period and set of brackets must be in its correct place or your work may be passed over. This would be very unfortunate because you will have put a lot of time and effort into it, only for it to be dismissed as incorrectly formatted.

Please create a references page in the APA style.

- Include three scholarly sources: one academic journal, one book and one website.
- Use the "Apes and Language" essay that I have provided you with as a template.
- Be mindful to include each punctuation mark, and please remember to indent where appropriate.

07R Academic Essay Assignment

You are required to write a two page academic essay. Your essay must conform to the APA style of writing. To fulfill this assignment you will have to provide three academic sources in your both in-text and on the references page. Refer to the “Apes and Language” essay to help you format it correctly. One of your sources must be “Broken Windows” by George Kelling and James Wilson.

A good essay presents a strong thesis containing both a problem and a proposed solution to this problem. Your essay must have a title page, no fewer than seven paragraphs and a references page.

You may submit this essay as many times as you need to until you have achieved a mark that you are satisfied with. Your essay will be accepted up until the last day of class.

Good Luck!

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