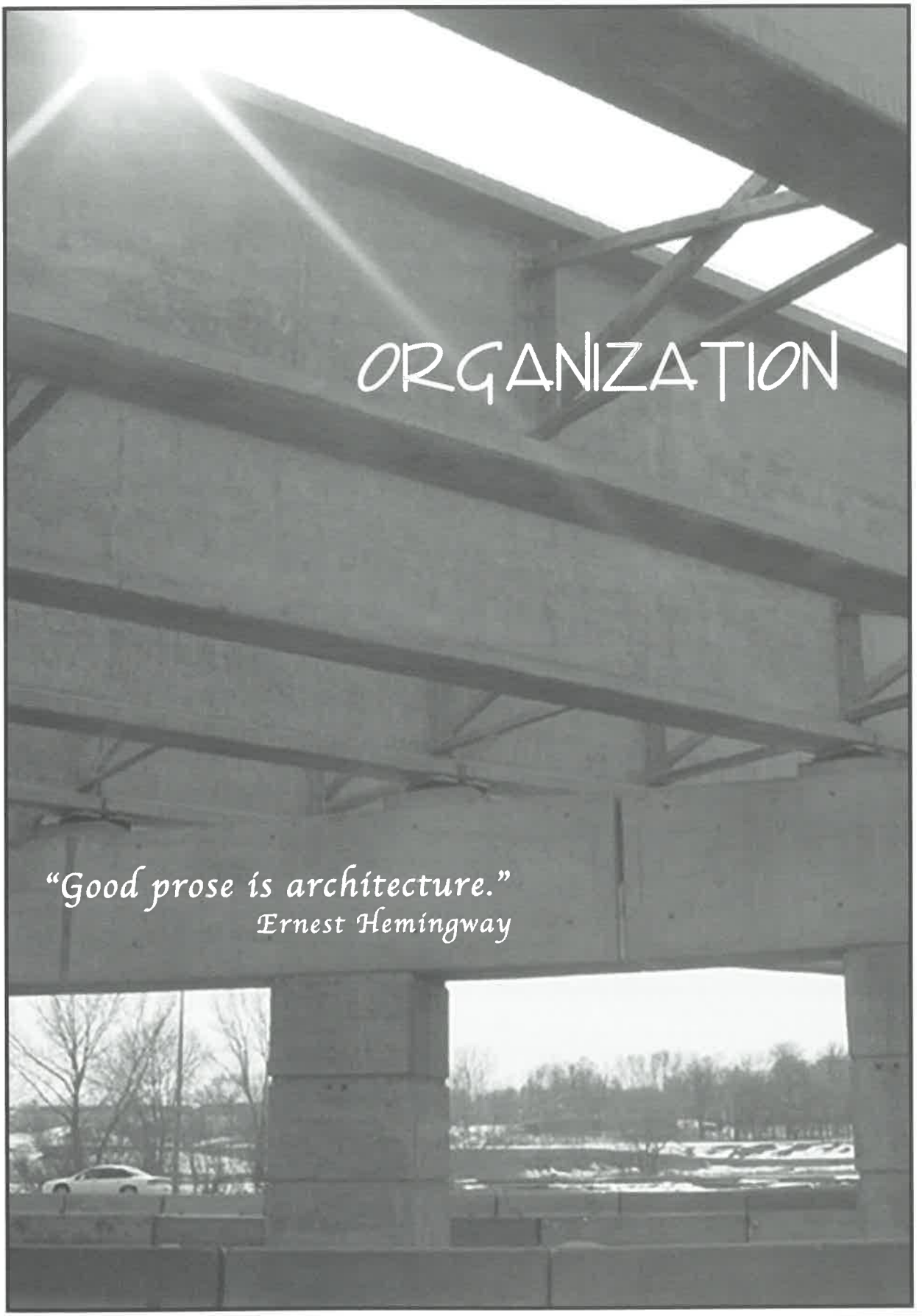
ORGANIZATION
"Good prose is architecture."
Ernest Hemingway

BRAVE NEW WORLD: AN ANALYSIS OF BEHAVIORISM AND CONDITIONING

JOHN TETZ, *Wayzata High School, grade 11*

"Community, Identity, Stability."

With these three words, the motto of the World State in Aldous Huxley's Brave New World, Huxley puts forth a hypothesis as to the cause behind all of mankind's efforts and actions. Throughout the novel, he demonstrates many different methods of achieving these same three things through his characters. What is important to understand about this work is that his comparison of drugs and religion, his arguments about the nature of happiness, and his theories about art and science, is that they play a supporting role thematically in the novel. What Huxley is writing, what he attempts to get across through his use of widely varied characters, is that everybody ultimately seeks the same things for themselves. The only difference is the manner in which these ends are achieved. The novel is almost simultaneously a tribute to and an exposé of behaviorism, the science of cause and effect in human and animal behavior. The paradox occurs because, while Huxley does show a (mostly) successful society based around behaviorism and conditioning, he also portrays situations which show the conditioned citizens to follow the same impulses which drive today's society. His claim, then, would be that all people, in this current society or his dystopian one, look for "Community, Identity, Stability."

The World State's vision of the community is an impressive one, if impossible. The citizens have been conditioned in so many ways and about so many things that one would imagine them to be like robots. And, in many ways, they are. However, every time Huxley gave us this view of the citizens of the World State as being productive, happy, and highly communal workers, he contrasted it with a grim dark side to the image, maintaining the novel's status as dystopian fiction. The importance of community in the World State is mirrored almost exactly by the so-called "savages" of the New Mexican Reserve. Where the World State has Solidarity Service, the Reserve has its odd coagualation of religions. The descriptions Huxley uses for the Solidarity Service meeting are very religiously based, writing of the "unescapably haunting melody of the first Solidarity Hymn," and the President having "made another sign of the T," instead of the cross. Likewise, through Lenina, Huxley describes the religious service of the savages to be very similar to the pseudo-religion present in the World State. So, what he is showing through this is that, though there is an immense difference between the World State and the Reserve, both societies push towards the same sense of community through religion or something akin to it. For if the World State has gotten rid of God, they still perform certain rituals to preserve the feelings faith engenders. These rituals, completely different in a physical sense, bind the participants together into the feeling of being united as a greater being, creating a well-knit community in both societies. The lack of effectiveness of the S. S. on Bernard adds greatly to his bitterness, while John's ostracization from the society of the Reserve on which he grew up also causes him great pain and has much to do with his grief, guilt, and ultimate demise. Despite conditioning one way or the other, at the base of both cultures is a primal need for being part of something greater, for being part of a community. Similarly, the need for identity also makes itself known through several of the characters as being distinctly primal and unconditionable.

John the Savage is a quintessential contradiction. On the one hand, he has made more sacrifices physically than any other character in the story and has seemingly found God, death, and time. He holds himself back from almost everything he really wants to do, in what might be considered a "noble" manner today. However, at several points in the novel, John becomes violent towards certain people who trigger neurotic episodes in him and doesn't realize that this is wrong at all. In fact, he takes it a step further to self-flagellation with a whip. So, while Huxley presents a character who seems to know himself and have fewer emotional and mental hang-ups over identity than most World State citizens, this is a ruse to show the true chaos of man's mental state. It also shows a certain futility in the search to find oneself. What is vital to note is that John represents modem society, or at least society in the 1930s when Brave New World was written. With this knowledge, John can be compared to the conditioned citizens of the World State. He is not, except in the extremity of his actions, any different than a conditioned citizen. He just looks for himself in different places. Where John finds solace in the sting of a whip, the typical citizen finds it in a gram of Soma or an especially pneumatic girl they "have." It is even a hypnopaedic maxim, "A gram is better than a damn." Examined a little more deeply, this basically means that drugs are better than pain. Now, to examine that a little further, it is obvious that the World State has conditioned its citizens away from John's method of penance through pain. This also means, though, that they could not completely decondition the citizens from finding awareness of themselves through pain, so they blunted the pain instead of the awareness of self. Also, every now and then, Huxley had a seemingly perfect citizen mentally consider the state of things and his or her place in them. Henry Foster, in one example of this, said, "Do you know what that switchback was? ... It was some human being finally and definitely disappearing. It would be curious to know who it was... "(75). This little statement shows that Huxley thought that even through layers of conditioning and common drug-induced stupor, some amount of searching for identity still occurred, and would occur. John, and this culture as a whole, search for identity through pain and end up just as confused as before they started wondering about it. Due to that confusion, the World State tried to misdirect these searches for identity to drugs and sex and other vices, as well as conditioning. But the key is that, though they would have liked to, it appears the World State cannot condition its citizens not to search at all. It can only direct the search, and then only to a degree. Huxley obviously wishes to add the search for identity to his list of primal needs for humanity.

Stability is the ultimate cause for everything the World State attempts, and every twisted moral code it upholds. They will seek stability and control (almost the same thing to the World State) at any cost. The flip side of it is, the savages seek this too. Even John, who argues with Mustapha Mond over that very point, is trying to gain stability and control. However, where the Controller does this on a worldwide level, John tries to win it for himself alone. Mustapha argues against strong emotions, while John argues the opposite through his actions. Mond says, "...passion and neurasthenia mean instability. And instability means the end of civilization,"(237). Despite this grave warning, John is still beset by guilt, which produces instability, and goes about attempting to gain control over it and return stability to his life by beating up Lenina and whipping himself. Once again, Huxley depicts a character raised in the World State with the same goals as an outcast character, finding the only measure of difference in them to be the extent of their actions towards that goal. In seeking stability, almost all the characters in the novel are the same, conditioning or no. Only Helmholtz Watson stands out from this generalization, and that is because he has chosen to embrace the search for identity as opposed to stability. And so Huxley finishes his three primal needs off with the need that humanity has, since its conception, been struggling to achieve.

What can be gleaned from all of this is something of Huxley's ideas regarding the nature of man. He obviously thought that behaviorism was inherently flawed in its blind acceptance of John Locke's Tabula Rasa, or blank slate, theory. On the other hand, he did have a huge preoccupation with the amazing success of conditioning. Combining his views of possible inborn instincts with the ideas of basic Pavlovian conditioning, Huxley created this world. A dystopia, to be sure, but a successful and mostly peaceful society nonetheless. A world in which all things spiritual are warped to suit the needs of the state and provide state-oriented community, identity, and stability. For though morals could be altered, beliefs abolished, and customs created, Huxley believed there were just some things about man that could never be gotten rid of, for good or ill. The motto of the World State illustrates what he believed all humans, regardless of race, class, even conditioning, would seek on some level. The aforementioned classifications and conditioning would only be able to determine on which level these things would be sought. So, despite Huxley's obvious fascination with behaviorism, he also saw its flaws, and was able to twist those flaws to his beliefs and imagine this not-quite-best of all possible worlds. This world without real heroes and with a culture dying in mediocrity. This Brave New World.

ARTHUR DIMMESDALE: A TORTURED SOUL

KELLY MILLNER, *Champlin Park High School, grade 11*

The Scarlet Letter, by Nathaniel Hawthorne, is set in Puritan New England. It is a tragic story of a forbidden romance and an intolerable pain. The story outlines the lives of Hester Prynne and Arthur Dimmesdale and vividly illustrates the strictness of the Puritan culture. It is a complex book, full of many emotions, and numerous paradoxes. Arthur Dimmesdale, the seemingly pious minister, is perhaps the most perplexing of the four main characters. To the town, he is a beloved symbol of humble purity. To himself, he is a repulsive, sinful coward. Throughout the book, he is driven mad by his conscience. But through all this, he stays alive, drawing strength from Hester to sustain his own existence. He appears to love her, but his love for Hester is one of his paradoxical qualities. He may think he loves her, but his treatment towards her suggests otherwise.

The idea that Arthur Dimmesdale really does love Hester is evident in many places throughout the book. "For Hester Prynne's sake, then, and no less for the poor child's sake, let us leave them as Providence hath seen fit to place them!" (Hawthorne 66). Dimmesdale knows that Pearl is the only thing Hester has left in her life that is of any value. When he sees that Hester may lose her daughter, he speaks on her behalf. He knows

that he is just as guilty as she is, and he doesn't want to make her lose any more than she already has.

It tears him apart to see her under such suffering while he is revered by the town. "More than once, Mr. Dimmesdale had gone into the pulpit, with the purpose never to come down its steps until he should have spoken words like the above" (95). The "words like the above" refer to his intent to tell everyone of his sin. He wants to be punished for his deeds, just as Hester is, because he knows that he is just as guilty as she is. He can't bear to see her suffer under the burden of her humiliation, knowing that he should be suffering too. Dimmesdale also seems to love Hester when he says "Do I feel joy again? . . . O Hester, thou art my better angel!... This is already the better life!" (157). They are planning to run away together, to escape the burden of their sins. He seems overjoyed by this thought, and is flooded with new energy. He wants to start a new life with Hester and Pearl in it. It is obvious that Dimmesdale is very regretful about what he has done to Hester, but his love for her is questionable at best.

"Woman, woman, thou art accountable for this! I cannot forgive thee ... I do forgive you Hester ... I freely forgive you now" (150). These words clearly show that Dimmesdale, in fact, does not love Hester. She had carried burden enough for both of them for seven years, while he didn't even take responsibility for his actions, but he still has the audacity to blame her for his own weakness. In many parts of the book, Mr. Dimmesdale seems to care about his own emotions more than those of Hester. "'I pray you," answered the minister, "if thou hast any means of pacifying the child, do it forthwith! ... Pacify her, if thou lovest me"' (165). He is very selfish in many places in the book, but especially in the above passage. The only way for Hester to "pacify the child" is for her to regain her shame by once again wearing the scarlet letter. He puts his own wants and needs above those of Hester, as if her feelings aren't as important as his. Towards the end of the book, it is evident again, that he does not really care for the poor woman. "One glance of recognition, she had imagined, must needs pass between them ... Her spirit sank with the idea that all must have been a delusion, and that, vividly as she had dreamed it, there could be no real bond betwixt the clergyman and herself" (194). As Dimmesdale marches by, in the midst of the procession on the way to deliver his election speech, he doesn't even look at Hester. All she wants is one reassuring glance so that she knows that he will follow through with their plan, but he doesn't give her even a thought as he walks past her. It's very cruel of him, as it leaves her with the feeling that they can never be together. These are but a few examples of all the times when Dimmesdale has proved that he doesn't really love Hester.

Dimmesdale is a very confused man. Even he doesn't know his true feelings for Hester. He is so confused by all that has already happened in his life, that his feelings mislead him, and he interprets them as love. He truly does need Hester, but not because he loves her. "The minister felt for the child's other hand, and took it. The moment that he did so, there came what seemed a tumultuous rush of new life, other life than his own, pouring like a torrent into his heart and hurrying through all his veins, as if the mother and the child were communicating their vital warmth to his half-torpid system! " (104). Dimmesdale is a very sick man, whether he has an actual disease or is just worn down by his burden, and he relies upon the strength of Hester and Pearl to sustain him. "Think for me, Hester! Thou art strong. Resolve for me! ... Be thou strong for me!" (152). He is so weak from carrying his burden that he doesn't even trust his own judgement anymore. He needs Hester because she gives him strength, not because he loves her.

Throughout the book, Arthur Dimmesdale deteriorates further and further, and is driven insane by the secret that he bears within himself. At times he appears to love Hester, and he himself even believes it. The truth is that he is very fond of Hester, and he does need her, but for other reasons than love. He has proven many times over that his love for Hester is a true paradox. He needs her for her strength and her courage, so that he may be able to find some ray of hope, no matter how small, to hold onto in order to sustain him throughout the rest of his life.

TEACHER REFLECTION

PAT MOORE JOHNSON, *Champlin Park HS*

A student's early experience with a literary analysis paper often seems to be a "work in progress." I frequently find portions of the assignment that are well done — maybe a strong thesis statement and organizational pattern, or a solid understanding of how to incorporate textual support, or an insightful understanding of themes and the subtle nuances of the piece. But Kelly Millner's paper stood out as one of the few that successfully mastered all these goals. Written early in the fall of her junior year in my AP English 11 class as our first attempt at a literary analysis paper, Kelly's task was to explore a paradoxical quality in one of the four main characters in Nathaniel Hawthorne's The Scarlet Letter. *She chose to examine a paradox in Arthur Dimmesdale's nature that isn't always apparent to students on a first reading. Critical reading and competent writing produced a fine piece of literary analysis.*

HAMLET: THE ADOLESCENT ARCHETYPE

PAUL GLEASON, *Northfield High School, grade 11*

In J.D. Salinger's classic *The Catcher in the Rye*, Holden Caulfield describes Hamlet as "a sad screwed up sort of guy." Indeed Hamlet is the classic tortured soul. He sees the world of trouble around him but cannot seem to set it right and hates himself for it. Caulfield's observation is significant because Holden himself can be seen as a modem Hamlet. Caulfield is the quintessential confused adolescent male; he is disgusted with the world around him and has absolutely no idea what to do about it. We can see in him the Hamlet archetype: a young man living in a world where all circumstances seem to be set against him, finding himself at a loss for solution. Caulfield fits the archetype perfectly. And if Caulfield fits the mold, then the archetypal Hamlet can be found in every adolescent male.

Every young man holds within him the Hamlet archetype, even though the vast majority do not contend with the world of troubles that so plagued the Danish prince himself. Hamlet feels that the whole world is set against him. Hamlet-like, adolescent males often feel hounded by various aspects of their lives: their parents, school work, themselves. Like Hamlet, young men seem to be unable to act without copious thought and meditation, only to explode into instant and irrational action, throwing caution to the wind. Like Hamlet, adolescent action is often characterized by painstaking, meticulous planning, followed by actions so extreme and ludicrous that they are often seen as a type of mania. Hamlet's final words are a request for immortality. He feverishly implores Horatio to tell his story, to preserve him forever in the annals of history. In the same way, every adolescent seeks immortality; he cannot imagine a world that does not contain him, and feverishly desires to be timeless. If one wishes to understand Holden Caulfield and the archetypical adolescent male, one would do well to read Hamlet. He is the very archetype of adolescent males.

A key element in the Hamlet archetype is a feeling of persecution. Hamlet sees the very skies as "a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours" (II, ii). He rightly feels that everyone around him is humoring him, that there are daggers in their smiles. The very heavens seem putrid to him. All circumstances have turned against him. This is often the sentiment of adolescent males. They believe that the world schemes against them. Hamlet endures the authority of his parents, both biological and otherwise. He must show respect to his foster father, abiding by his rules, and honor his seemingly adulterous mother. Also, at the same time, Hamlet senior is howling for blood from beyond the grave, a demand that Hamlet has little choice but to obey. In he same way, teenaged males feel that their parents are always making unreasonable demands. A chore as trivial as bringing out the garbage seems like a yoke unjustly imposed by parental tyranny. Teenagers see their curfew as an elaborate conspiracy set up by their parents, the police, the FBI, and the freemasons. Whether or not these suspicions of their parent's insidious intents are as justified as Hamlet's or are paranoid (such as a belief that J. Edgar Hoover wants you in bed by midnight), all adolescent males feel that they, like Hamlet, are in direct competition with their parents for control of their lives.

Hamlet's famous "to be or not to be" speech is about whether life is worth living. But it can also be applied to the question of whether or not school is worth enduring. Hamlet felt that the world was slowly bearing down on him, that it was wearing him down by attrition until he collapsed. In a similar way school hounds the adolescent male. Assignments are given out like stale Halloween candy and are either mind-bogglingly complicated or mind-numbingly mundane. And, like Hamlet, the choice is "to be, or not to be" (III, i). The student has two choices. First he can "take arms against a sea of troubles" (III, i); he can do his school-work with the full knowledge that another set of educational trials awaits him upon his return the next day. Or, secondly, he can "end the heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks that flesh is heir to" III, i); he can not do his school work and face the "unknown country" of flipping burgers or hauling lumber until his eyelids no longer wag. The fear of this unknown, possible failure is what drives the student to perform the menial tasks set before him. Conscience compels Hamlet to remain alive and it compels the adolescent male to succeed. Every day the adolescent male must endure a flurry of quick jabs in the form of busy work that only serve to distract him from the heavy clots of larger projects. The only reprieve is the fleeting weekend that gives him time to do little but wipe the blood and snot from his nose before entering the ring for another round with the tireless foe. Hamlet's question of existence handily illuminates the daily condition of adolescent males.

Hamlet is terrified of himself. He has no clear idea of who he is and how he should be acting. This is also true of the adolescent male. Not being a child, he can now fully decide on his own course of action. Since he feels that he must please not only himself but also those around him, he cannot clearly define what he wants and is therefore not able to get much of anything. In the same way that Hamlet is obligated to satisfy his parents, dead and living, his public, and himself, teenagers seek to satisfy not only themselves but their peers and parents also. This makes the young man's actions confused and disjointed. He will do things with his friends that he would never do with his parents and vice versa. Because of this he begins to develop a split personality that conforms to each situation. One is reminded of Hamlet's actions towards Laertes. Upon meeting in the privacy of the woods, Hamlet and Laertes almost fall to blows, whereas in the royal court Hamlet is full of jest in his conversation with Laertes, giving overdone compliments and playing to his crowd. Only in Hamlet's dying moment of clarity is he truly himself. Thus every adolescent male is like Hamlet, struggling to define himself.

Hamlet is a famous thinker. He is often derided greatly for being too much of a thinker. However, when he acts, it seems to be spontaneous, unpredictable. He spends countless hours brooding over his plans for revenge on his uncle and then brutally slays Polonious as almost an afterthought. He claims to have believed that it was his uncle—"thou wretched, rash, intruding fool, farewell. I took thee for thy better (III, iv)"—but he had just seen his uncle elsewhere, so this is highly dubious. A more probable explanation is that Hamlet just snapped; disgusted at himself for not slaying his uncle when the opportunity presented itself, he displaces his anger onto a smaller target. All of his careful planning is thrown to the wind in one act of irrationality. He is subsequently sent to England, and his revenge, which appeared so near, is delayed for years. Adolescent males are quite prone to this type of wild behavior. All of their carefully laid plans are easily laid to waste by circumstance. They, like Hamlet, are not yet experienced enough to let their intellect rule them in a crisis. Their actions, after the fact, seem ludicrous or even insane because, in the heat of the moment, they are ruled by impulse and emotion. Hamlet may be a great thinker, but he is a perfect example of how the adolescent male often forgets all his planning in response to what seems best at that moment.

Hamlet's dying request to Horatio is that he "Report me and my cause aright to the unsatisfied ... in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain to tell my story" (V, ii). When he says this he wants two things. The first is to repair his family's honor. He doesn't wish to be known as the mad Danish prince who slaughtered his entire court. But secondly, and most importantly, he doesn't wish to be forgotten. He wishes Horatio to tell his story, to make him immortal. This is the wish of every young man: immortality. Whether it is on the football field, in the laboratory, or on the stage, everyone wishes to be immortalized in history. This immortality is the supreme goal of every young man. Hamlet is no exception. With his final breath he implores Horatio to tell his story, to save him from being swallowed up by the vast sea of time. Even though Hamlet never lived, his memory and story exist in the minds of millions. He has succeeded; a man that was never really alive has, in a way, cheated death. In this way he emerges as an archetype. Adolescent males have difficulty imagining a world outside of themselves, let alone imagining a world without them. Hamlet has attained some small measure of this immortality that all young men aspire to.

Hamlet, like Holden Caulfield, is a character that all young men can relate to. This is because he shares all of their basic characteristics and is successful in their final goal. Hamlet, like all boys, often feels that the whole world exists for the singular purpose of making him miserable. He can't stand his parents and decides that it is better "to be," because at least that is familiar. His knowledge of himself is imperfect and ever changing, a cause of much confusion and dismay just as it was for Holden Caulfield. He thinks, plots, schemes, but when the chips are down, he does what most modern boys would do: exactly what his emotions tell him. But, most importantly, he achieves this final end, this partial immortality. Hamlet stands in the face of overwhelming odds and, although he is destroyed by these odds, he manages to pass on his legacy to Horatio, who will tell it to the world. If ever any literary character has succeeded in expressing an archetype of the adolescent male, that character is Hamlet.