

“I understand and will uphold the ideals of academic honesty as stated in the Honor Code.”

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### Addressing the Heroin Issue Among Young Adult Males in Baltimore

The heroin problem has been growing and growing in Baltimore in the past two years. The title of being the “Heroin Capital of the US” has tainted the city’s image as this sub-economy continues to thrive, since its beginnings in the 1950’s. The fact that the street price of heroin in Baltimore has decreased, and its availability has increased, displays how this drug is an even bigger issue today as both the supply and demand of the drug have risen. To help combat the drug problem, Baltimore has mandated stricter access by consumers to prescription drugs. Unfortunately, this enforcement had a more negative than positive impact by making heroin the alternative drug of choice. As St. Mary’s County Sheriff, Timothy Cameron, put it, “We [were] a victim of our own success” (Banister par. 24). Young adults, especially males, are very vulnerable to starting to use heroin because of many factors. The history of Baltimore’s drug use and the fact that many male Baltimore young adults are socio-economically challenged, create a lack of employment and educational opportunities. Young adults are highly influenced by their external environment, so with all of these factors at work, the young adult male population in Baltimore will more than likely turn to drugs as a way to cope with their circumstances.

The purpose of this proposal is to work towards solutions to prevent young adult males in West Baltimore, from getting involved with heroin. Three possible solutions include an aftercare

program for high schoolers that is lead by Loyola student volunteers, a weekend faith-based program for young adults, and an incentive for Baltimore businesses to hire West Baltimore young adults. This approach to the drug issue in Baltimore focuses solely on male young adults, and this is very crucial since this group is the most vulnerable.

The history of racial tension in Baltimore continues to haunt the city, and many do not see the connection between racism and pervasive drug use. The history of the drug issues and racism continues to remain relevant to the city today. In the 1970's, many businesses were struggling and either moved out of Baltimore or failed. With abandoned streets and the lack of working Black businessman, the illicit drug economy surfaced. Maurice "Peanut" King was the head of the multi-million dollar drug organization during the 1980's and he "started using kids in his drug organization. [He] went out and gave mopeds to the kids to run the money and drugs" (Marbella and Rentz par. 78). The introduction of drugs to a younger market was the worst thing that could have happened, as this highly influenced group saw drugs as a way to make money and a way to feel important, working for such a evil, yet powerful, role model. With heroin being a part of the history of city, this idea of doing heroin has become "a rite of passage" which has the city's youth prey to this expectation (Yang 15).

An extensive study conducted by Ph.D's from Mercy College, Johns Hopkins University, and the University of Florida, collected data to find connections between problems in school and drug use. Results showed that problems in school and academic failure correlated to a higher frequency of heroin use. The researchers believed an explanation for these results was because of the fact that the teenage years are a developmental stage full of cognitive development, social changes, and peer influences. The book, "Counseling Heroin and other Drug Users," discusses

how poor family functioning, images of self, and other family influences tie into the drug-use among teens. Freddie Gray fell into this drug trap, and he provides a perfect example of how drug-use is connected to these factors. Freddie's mom was a drug user, and he was the "lookout" during heroin deals. With little education and few job prospects, most teens begin much like Freddie as the "lookout," and once a teen builds up a criminal record, they are trapped in this cycle of returning to the drug trade. These young adults feel hopeless because "they are basically unemployable [since] there are not many options for them" (Marbella and Rentz par. 14). The money that young adults can make from the drug economy can be as much as \$20,000 in one hour, and this easy way of making money is hard to pass up for so many teens and young adults.

The way this drug issue has been faced has shifted from being an issue of crime to one of public health. This new public health approach has led to the acknowledgement that, "addiction is a disease. Heroin hijack's the abuser's brain" (Hogan par. 3). Therefore, the new laws have focused on treating, instead of punishing, users. The White House has launched a new multi-million dollar program to combat the heroin issue, and Maryland has been given 2.5 million dollars. A youth city advocate said that this investment is "just a drop in the bucket" which, explains how money is not the only answer to fight this drug epidemic (Ileto par. 4). The Governor of Maryland is also focusing his efforts on the state's drug problem by zeroing in on teens and young adults. On the White House government website, Maryland's Drug Control Update states how there is a National Youth Anti-Drug media campaign, which is "in close partnership with local community-based, youth serving organizations" (Office of National Drug Control Policy [ONDCP], 2012). Since money is not the only solution to this drug issue, a five

pillar approach has been developed, as well as the idea that “it’s going to take the entire community to wrap around this issue to make any change” (Banister par. 41).

Clearly, the heroin issue in Baltimore will require many actions that are combined together to successfully fight this war on drugs. Criminal justice authorities can keep arresting drug users and dealers but that will not get to the root of the issue. The focus on young adults is a smart way to approach this heroin problem since they are the future generation, and young adult drug users will more than likely be adult drug users.

One solution to the young adult heroin issue is to have an aftercare program for West Baltimore high schoolers, where Loyola students volunteer to serve as mentors. The program will have a time period allotted for mentors to help the high schoolers on homework and then a second period to play recreational sports with the Loyola volunteers, as well as their peers. The homework and recreational aspect focuses on the balance of the mind and body, which mirrors Loyola’s mantra, *Cura Personalis*, which means, “care for the entire person.” This program will allow high schoolers to have them develop positive role models, have support with any academic struggles, and have the practice of team building and multi-personal skills. The recreational sports period will be a type of “reward” for the students for doing homework and will also have the importance of showing them that sports are a means of fun and relaxation, instead of getting involved with the drug scene.

Loyola’s York Road Initiative program has a current project, the DeWees Recreation Center, that is building a recreation council, as well as sustainable after-school programming. The Center for Community Service and Justice (CCSJ), has also partnered with Acts4Youth, which is an after-school program at Guilford Elementary. These programs are similar to my

solution for an aftercare program so this solution is feasible. These programs for younger age groups could then be a stepping stone to other programs geared towards high schoolers, further implementing this idea of support and structure for the children, teens, and young adults in Baltimore. Having this structured program across all these ages will definitely play a positive role in gearing young adults away from using drugs since these structured programs will begin at an early age and continue to young adulthood. Loyola's York Road Initiative even has its own building with a director, assistant director, and program coordinator. This demonstrates how this program has many resources so creating an aftercare program targeted to young adults is definitely an option.

The costs associated with the aftercare program will be very small, since the program will take place in the high school. The principal and school administration will have to approve of this, but once they see the wonderful benefits the students will get from Loyola volunteers, they will most likely allow the program to take place in the school with little or no costs. If the program did incur any costs, CCSJ and the York Road Initiative are very established organizations that will be able to get money through other resources and fundraisers.

The weekend is when young adults are more likely to linger around and possibly get involved in drugs from the lack of social activities. The aftercare program for high schoolers during the week must be backed by a weekend program to create continuity. Loyola's mission of *Cura Personalis* is again at work. Religion and faith are a great way to connect with others and they create a solid support structure. This weekend program will have Loyola CCSJ students volunteer to lead faith-based prayers and other activities for the high schoolers. The Johns Hopkins website has a list of mentoring programs in the Baltimore area and one called, "Mentor

Male Teens,” is a weekend group mentoring program that takes place on the first and third Saturday of every month. It is for males that are eight to eighteen years old. The program consists of one weekend of tutoring, and the other weekend for having role models come in. The program is from nine o’clock to two o’clock and this program takes place in the New Shiloh Family Life Center, which is located in the New Shiloh Baptist Church on Monroe Street.

The schools are closed on the weekends, so the question of where the weekend program will occur arises. Since the “Mentor Male Teens” program is much like my proposed weekend program, a possibility regarding space is to have this program on every Sunday at the same center the “Mentor Male Teens” program takes place. This will allow their program to carry on and, since these programs have similar aims of positively influencing males in Baltimore. The center is only fifteen minutes away from Loyola, which will make it easy for Loyola volunteers to get to this program.

A hearing was held before the Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy, and Human Resources of the Committee of Government Reform on May 21st, 2001. The purpose of the hearing to Congress was to ensure Government support for effective programs to decrease the demand for illegal drugs and to facilitate the inclusion of faith based programs. The author of the document brings up how, “President Bush remarked that family, school, communities, and faith-based organizations shape the character of young people” (U.S. Cong. House Subcomm. on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy, and Human Resources of the Committee of Government Reform). The author of the document goes on to present how promise can be found in faith-based programs and how “the faith community has achieved results in some ways which other programs have not” (U.S. Cong. House Subcomm. on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy, and Human

Resources of the Committee of Government Reform). This document clearly demonstrates how Loyola should take advantage of their Jesuit affiliation, values, and vision and use it towards creating this weekend faith-based program for Baltimore high schoolers. The fact that faith-based programs have been successful, shows how religion plays a role and can lead to positive results for a person.

The weekend faith-based program will require us contacting the “Mentor Male Teens” program to see if the New Shiloh Family Life Center will be available for the program on Sundays. It is very helpful that this program is fifteen minutes away from the Loyola campus. The “Mentor Male Teens” program costs \$120 and this money could be allocated to paying the mentors who lead the program, food for the teens, supplies for the program, and the role model visits. The fact that Loyola students are volunteering help to lower costs. It is perfect that the New Shiloh Family Life Center is located in a church because this will allow the faith-based activities to take place in an actual church setting. CCSJ can fund any other costs, like providing the lunch and snacks for the teens during this program. CCSJ can have a fundraiser solely for this program and promote it during campus masses when they hand out the baskets for donations. Since the New Shiloh Family Life Center has a church, they will most likely allow this program to take place in the center with little or no cost since we are a Jesuit institution. The priests at Loyola can contact the center to discuss the goal of this program and come to an agreement to allow this program to be carried out. The benefits from creating a faith-based program make the costs incomparable to the outcomes of creating a healthy mindset and means of support for the high schoolers.

The third solution to help prevent young adults in Baltimore from becoming involved with heroin includes having a summer business program for a group of young adults that works with local Baltimore businesses. This proposed solution ties in, once again, with Loyola's mission statement, which includes the Jesuit tradition of the commitment to service. This summer program will allow the young adults to take business classes at Loyola at the Sellinger Business School. This program will give the group of young adults, who are interested in pursuing business careers, the remarkable opportunity of taking classes at such a prestigious business school. Once they complete the program, this will serve as an incentive for local Baltimore businesses to grant internships and employment opportunities to these young adults in the future. An article in *The Wall Street Journal* titled, "Businesses Takes Steps to Boost Baltimore," displays how local businesses are willing to help out the city through a program called "B Local." Under Armor and Whiting Turner Contracting Co. are participating businesses that believe that opening up their employment opportunities to locals, especially city youth and women, is "a step in the right direction (Calvert par. 8). Employment is a huge struggle for Baltimore young adults and a reason they feel their only way to stay afloat financially is to turn to drugs. The fact that such well-known and successful companies are on board with hiring city youth proves that a Loyola summer program has support from the business community, helping to lead young adults to future employment and internship opportunities.

Johns Hopkins University has a summer program that helps introduce West Baltimore teens to science. This program, the Biophysics Research for Baltimore Teens, is funded by the School of Medicine Dean's office and other departments. It gave four teens the opportunity to be exposed "to the thrills of university-level bio-medical lab work" and in the end, "come out with

the assurance that they can do anything” (States News Service, 2013). This program helped an eighteen-year old from West Baltimore discover an interest in science and build confidence that he could pursue a career as a doctor. This program inspired the eighteen-year old to major in chemistry at the Community College of Baltimore County, and he returned for a second summer to the Johns Hopkins program. This program has had beneficial outcomes and demonstrates that if Loyola creates a similar summer program, the effects will be worthwhile; having the priceless outcome of inspiring teens.

The Loyola business summer program will require the most costs among the three solutions, since the young adults will be taking business classes at the Sellinger School. The way Johns Hopkins University funded their summer program was through their departments and the School of Medicine Dean’s office. Loyola’s business department can fund this program, as well as reach out to see if any businesses will be willing to help fund the program. Loyola has had Under Armor come to the campus and talk with business students about the company. Loyola also has an agreement with Under Armor since the athletic department only uses Under Armor. Loyola can use this powerful connection to help the business summer program come together. *The Wall Street Journal* article stated how Under Armor is a participating business in the “B Local” campaign so to carry through with their commitment to this campaign, Under Armor has this fantastic opportunity of being a part of the Loyola summer business program.

These three proposals are good first steps to begin combatting against the heroin problem that is in Baltimore among young adult males. The heroin use has “come to define the very culture of the city, as much as the Baltimore Ravens, or crabs doused in Old Bay seasoning” (Beyer par. 9). Loyola knows that Baltimore is much more than this label. Loyola

University has made a commitment to serving the community, which is why Jesuit institutions are placed in cities. Loyola can play the role in addressing Baltimore's drug problem and inspire other local universities to join in. As part of Loyola's value of discernment, Loyola can show the world that Baltimore is a city full of charm, hope, and a wonderful community of people.

I am so happy it was so helpful! I am honored that you would put it on the Writing for Change page. Thank you, that makes me feel so proud! Ok, great see you tomorrow.

Sincerely  
Claire Scott

## Works Cited

Banister, Jon. "Maryland's Hidden Epidemic." *The Diamondback* [College Park] 8 May 2015: n. pag. *The Diamondback*. Web. 6 Apr. 2016.

This source mentions how stricter enforcement of prescription pills lead to an increase in heroin. This article was helpful for my proposal because the content highlights how the drug issue is a public health issue instead of a criminal issue. This different approach is much better suited for the drug issue since it focuses on treatment instead of punishment.

Beyer, Scott. "A Bleak Narrative Behind the Title 'Heroin Capital.'" *Welcome to Baltimore, Hon.* Bruce Goldfarb, 2014. Web. 6 Apr. 2016.

This article concentrates on the drug of heroin's connection to the history of Baltimore. The author was informative by going back in history and explains how gangsters are the ones who introduced heroin to the younger market. The city's history of drugs has become a part of Baltimore's identity, and this is a reason why it has been so difficult to get rid of the drug issue.

Calvert, Scott. "Businesses Take Steps to Boost Baltimore." *The Wall Street Journal* [New York City] 4 Apr. 2016: n. pag. Print.

This newspaper article shed light on how businesses are willing to employ city youth through a new campaign that has the goal of pointing Baltimore in the right direction. This article fit so well with my third solution about the summer business program. The fact that businesses are on board with hiring city youth displays how the business community is willing to help make positive changes for the city.

Hanson, Bill, et al., eds. *Life with Heroin: Voices from the Inner City*. Canada: Lexington Books, 1985. Print.

This book discusses the drug history in Baltimore and the connection to how it has been labeled by being used only by Black inner-city dwellers. This source was helpful in pointing out how the drug issue has racism connected to it. The label that only Black inner-city dwellers use drugs shows how this drug problem has formed a stereotype that has stayed with the city.

Ileto, Christie. "Feds Launch New \$5M Program to Combat Heroin Epidemic." *CBS Baltimore*. CBS Local, 17 Aug. 2015. Web. 7 Apr. 2016.

This article highlights how the White House is launching a multi-million dollar program to fight the drug problem. This source demonstrated how the Feds are focusing on treating addicts, instead of punishing them. Even with money, the drug issue in Baltimore will require many more steps to make successful strides forward.

"Johns Hopkins Summer Program Hooks Baltimore City Teens on Science." *States News Service* 26 June 2013. *Academic OneFile*. Web. 7 Apr. 2016.

Johns Hopkins University has a paid summer internship program that is working towards helping high schools students from low income communities. This source was very helpful for my third solution about the summer business program. The fact that universities are giving young adults the opportunity to explore different fields in their facilities shows how universities play a huge role in making positive changes regarding the drug problem.

Lockley, Paul. *Counseling Heroin and Other Drug Users*. New York, NY: Free Association Books, 1995. Print.

This book discusses factors that contribute to a higher chance of teens becoming involved with drugs. This book was informative for my first solution of creating an aftercare program for high schoolers. Images of self and family functioning play a huge role during a teens development, and strengthening these aspects can lead young adults away from getting involved with drugs.

Marbella, Jean, and Catherine Rentz. "Heroin Creates Crowded Illicit Economy in Baltimore." *Baltimore Sun* [Baltimore] 19 Dec. 2015: n. pag. Print.

This article brings up how heroin has become a sub-economy and how teens get caught into a cycle due to the lack of education and employment opportunities. This article was very informative by how the author mentioned Freddie Gray and how he was involved with the drug trade. A goal of addressing the drug issue is to avoid other young adults from ending up like Freddie Gray.

"Maryland Drug Control Update." *The White House*. United States Government, 2013. Web. 7 Apr. 2016.

This government page on Maryland Drug Control has a graph that displays how heroin is the most commonly cited drug among drug treatment admissions. This update displays how drug campaigns are being targeted towards youth. This new youth focus highlights how focusing on a younger generation can create earlier drug awareness, which can help the drug problem.

Mathis, Don. "War on Heroin Starts with Teens." *The Baltimore Sun* [Baltimore] 27 Feb. 2015: n. pag. *The Baltimore Sun*. Web. 7 Apr. 2016.

This article discusses the Governor's actions on fixing the drug issue and it involves focusing on teens and young adults. The article was informative when the author mentions that research has shown policymakers that addiction is a disease. This public health approach will help assist users instead of punishing and prosecuting them.

"Mentoring Programs." *Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health*. Johns Hopkins University, n.d. Web. 5 Apr. 2016.

This page on Johns Hopkins website listed local mentoring programs that are trying to better the community's youth. This source was helpful for my second solution about a weekend program for young adults. After reading this source, I became aware of the current programs that exist, which are helping shape positive role models for young adults in Baltimore.

Trenz, Rebecca C., et al. *A Model of School Problems, Academic Failure, Alcohol Initiation, and the Relationship to Adult Heroin Injection*. N.p.: Taylor & Francis Ltd, 2012. Substance Use & Misuse. *Seeker*. Web. 3 Apr. 2016.

This model, conducted through research from Ph.D's from universities, saw connections between academic failure and drug use. This data was helpful for my first solution since it focuses on helping high schoolers with academics. This information was very insightful for me because it let me see that there is a connection between education and drug use.

United States. Cong. House. Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy, and Human

Resources of the Committee of Government Reform. *Effective Faith-Based Treatment Programs*. 107th Cong., 1st sess. Washington: GPO, 2002. *Seeker*. Web. 7 Apr. 2016.

This document is from a hearing with a subcommittee and Congress. This source was helpful for my solution about the faith-based weekend program. This source was uplifting because it pointed out how faith-based programs have had positive results.

Yang, Carter M. "Baltimore is the U.S. Heroin Capital." *ABC News*. ABC News, n.d. Web. 6 Apr. 2016.

This article discusses how heroin use has become a rite of passage in Baltimore since it has been passed down from generation to generation. This source was helpful for my proposal because it highlights how young adults are vulnerable to living up to this expected fate of using drugs. This article was eyeopening because recovering addicts mention in the article how you just want to die once you begin using the drug.

## Research Log

3/3/16: Watched the ten o'clock Fox Baltimore news and heard a report about Baltimore being a heroin highway. This interested me to learn more about this local issue. (30 minutes)

3/6/16: Watched the ten o'clock news again and saw that this heroin story is a regular topic on the news, indicating that it is a huge issue for the state of Maryland. (30 minutes)

3/8/16: The ABC news article pinpointed why Baltimore is such a prime spot for heroin use. The problems include increased availability, reduced street price, as well as past history of heroin use in Baltimore that makes it stereotyped as normal behavior. (30 minutes)

3/9/16: I went online and searched "heroin issue in Baltimore" and found a lot of articles from other news stations like Fox News including ABC and CBS local Baltimore news. These articles discussed how the mayor and government have gotten involved to create solutions for heroin addicts. Treatment centers seemed to be the solution that many authorities believe are a way to combat the issue of heroin for adults. (1 and 1/2 hours)

3/11/16: I found on the White House government website the state profile of Maryland. It provides stats on drug use in Maryland. A graph on the site shows how heroin is the top drug for treatment admission. Maryland has many programs, including the DFC program, to prevent drug use, especially among youths. (30 minutes)

3/12/16: I found an Baltimore Sun article that discussed the "corner" as being the hub for drugs dealing and the article mentions the story about Freddie Gray, who happened to be on the corner when he was arrested. Boys as young as 10 start dealing and view this corner as a rite of passage and their only opportunity. The money that can be made off the corner is a huge factor that lures youths into drug dealing. (30 minutes)

3/13/16: After our library class sessions, I used Seeker and found a great article that correlated how little education has shown to lead many teens to heroin. The article really concentrated on youths and how problems in school are a huge indicator of adult issues with drugs. (1 hour)

3/14/16: I found two books through the library website and requested them. One book is titled, *Counseling Heroin and Other Drug Users* and the other is titled, *Life with Heroin*. *Life with Heroin* was interesting because it brought up how race and drug use are closely associated and tend to be found among poor, Black, inner-city dwellers. The book also discussed how youths feel trapped and that drugs are their only opportunity since their social standing, education, environment do not allow them much, or any opportunities. (1 hour)

3/16/16: I filled out the stasis worksheet and was able to brainstorm two possible solutions for the heroin issue among black youths in West Baltimore. I think a youth faculty for recreational sports would be a great way to have teens stay busy and spend their time doing activities with

other teens. A second solution I thought of was a program for teens to have homework help and employment help. This program would focus on the educational side of things. (1 hour)

3/19/16: I brainstormed more about the solutions and thought it would be more cost effective to not build a faculty, but instead have an aftercare program at a school and use that space. I merged the two solutions into one by making it be an aftercare program for recreation and educational help. This program would have an hour of homework help with volunteers from Loyola and the hour after that would be for recreation. This program will help teens to do their schoolwork, and have confidence in themselves through team-building from sports. This will also take kids away from home life where they probably do not get help for schoolwork. (30 minutes)

3/20/16: I need another solution since I merged the other two I had. I thought of the idea that goes around the business side of things. Businesses could become involved in a program that hired teens from the West Baltimore neighborhood. This will show teens the array of opportunities for them and a way for them to make money and support themselves without drugs being involved. Baltimore is thriving with businesses that are around the higher income areas but this program will connect these businesses to these teens, which will show them a bright future and a gateway to getting other jobs once they have this program on their resume. (30 minutes)

3/20/16: I went through the many websites I found and was interested in the recurring mention of how the stricter enforcement on prescription drugs actually lead many to heroin. It is unbelievable how the seesaw tilts for drugs once one becomes less available. Since I have a more focused idea of my topic to be targeted towards the heroin issue for teens, I am getting rid of articles about older people and gathering more articles about teens. (30 minutes)

3/20/16: I watched the ten o'clock news on FOX for a few minutes and a story was about the actress, Jada Pickett Smith, going to a Baltimore church for Palm Sunday. Jada Pickett Smith grew up in Baltimore and the news story mentioned how she talked with members of her church about ways to stop the drug problem for teens in Baltimore. Having this famous celebrity see the drug issue for teens in Baltimore as a problem highlights how it is known to many. Jada probably grew up surrounded by this issue and could have some personal connection, but her willingness to help shows her love for her community and how regardless of her fame, she has stayed humble. Baltimore remains her home that she cares about improving. (30 minutes)

3/21/16: I searched current teen programs in Baltimore to see if they have any and if they have even been successful. I found the Johns Hopkins Public Health page that had many programs for teens including the "Mentor Male Teens" program. This was much like what I had in mind as my solution. It costs \$120 and the program includes meetings on Saturdays that have tutoring help, role models, and a camping trip. There is also a Big Brother, Big Sister program that meets weekly and it is a one-on-one relationship between a volunteer and at-risk child. After seeing these programs, it has made me see that my solution cannot just be for the school week. A lot of leisure time is on the weekends so my solution should include an aftercare program and a weekend program tied in. (30 minutes)

3/24/16: I looked for Baltimore youth programs that Loyola has and I found the page on the Loyola website about the York Road Initiative. They are working on a aftercare program at the Guilford Elementary school and this showed me how my solution of an aftercare program is possible. (30 minutes)

3/25/16: I printed all of my online sources so I can visually see all the research information I have and be able to see what is most important. (30 minutes)

3/29/16: I found my last source on Seeker and searched for teen programs in Baltimore. I found an article that discussed a Johns Hopkins summer program that helped teens open their eyes to possible jobs. I also found an interesting article through seeker about how President Bush believes faith plays a important and powerful component for teens. (30 minutes)

4/2/16: I found an article in *The Wall Street Journal* that fits perfectly with my solution about a business program. It listed two businesses that are willing to hire city youth as part of a new campaign. (30 minutes)

4/3/16: I have all my sources and got right into writing my proposal. I was able to type four pages. I am glad I have something to work with and know that I need to look up online how to cite the government website information and that I need to make sure my intro has a clear thesis. (3 hours)

Total: 14.5 hours