

Human Convention

No matter how you'll live, you'll always die alone.

Rats! A bit gruesome and deathly to be starting off a lyrical essay with such a dark foreboding quote isn't it? And, I get it, if you're not one for thinking about your inevitable demise. It's not a thought most people like considering while they experience their life. Most people know it's coming and whether it be the doctor's diagnosis or the fear that randomly a giant fluffy duck would fall out of the sky and squash you into jam and jelly, the fear that at some point in their life they will lose control of the one thing that holds them to this realm is quite potent in many people.

Fear, being such a mistress for torture, toys with that and throws us every day into an endless dance of morals and facts, life and death, chocolate milk or plain milk. Decisions decisions, because that's the one freedom we have with fear. If you're one for drinking chocolate milk while your friends bash on you with their pure 2% milk compound of chemicals that don't contain chocolate, you might find yourself in an argument.

Fear controls most of that argument. No one ever wants to be seen as some idiot who doesn't understand how taste works, or how to present themselves. Because that's the true fear of that argument; to have someone see through what character and what person is presented in front of them. No one likes being wrong and certainly, no one likes being told that their wrong because it means for them they failed to understand a concept others seem to grasp.

Do you fear Death?

It turns out that the most feared thing in the world is public speaking, with death coming into a close second. It makes sense, for some part, that our ultimate fear would involve the communication of an idea without any chance for anyone else to comment on it. It's hard to know what someone is thinking and for all your knowledge everyone in that room could be against you and that picture on the wall is writing an angry comment at you on its Twitter. To be alone in your thoughts, to be alone on your stage, and to be alone in your fear. Whether it be public or private speaking, communication is how you show off your ideas, show empathy and sympathy, and most importantly show that whoever you're talking to has the right to understand and be understood. Socialization is a dance of listening and arguing figuring out what kind of pizza your friend best fits as, and caring for them when the world drowns out their voice.

For that, I believe is the greatest gift life has to offer. The option in anyone's life is that they can communicate any thought or idea that comes to their mind. And that's crazy, isn't it? The fact the mind can imagine anything, and that we can tell each other to imagine that same stuff? It's bound to be lost in translation somehow someday sometimes or taken away from you, but it's always there as an option.

The world would be a very different place if the only minds that built things for everyone did it by themselves, without the fear that their idea might fail without the help of others. For fear

is not evil, it's a necessary motivator. The gift we're given does not become a gift if it's one we can do easily. Our gift allows us to combat fear, twist it, and use it for our own voice and in some scenarios even bestow that gift onto others voices who might sing more silently.

But sometimes,

Well, it gets the better of us sometimes.

Turns out the biggest epidemic sweeping the world isn't the invention of fingerless gloves, it's the invention of lying and the invention of duality in fear. That you should always live in fear because somehow somehow you're failing at something everyone else is doing better than you. So of course, you lie, because you want to be better than them. That is fear.

I'm sure it doesn't take an expert to find examples of politicians and other powerful figures lying, as it's estimated at least once a day even you will tell a lie. Whether it's a white lie, or just telling someone what they want to hear, lies create the true game of fear that comes with socialization and it's integrated into every part of our modern-day culture.

Money is a great example of a lie, because really, what value does this little green piece of paper really have? If anything, it's just good kindling. Food and necessities become bound to this paper though, and all of a sudden hearing about someone using it as toilet paper seems idiotic and egotistical. We've built up our entire world under the idea that in order to be successful you need to have tons of these kinds of papers, that the number of that is high enough that you can live in a house too big for even a family of 8. But that fear, the fear of being seen as poor and as worthless kicks us into overdrive to obtain this money. It becomes even worse because now without money you can't even live. When did a token mean for occasional trading become the root cause of societal hunger, death, and almost every problem in the world? It's the best lie there is, because now it's advertised to everyone in the world, and if you have enough, you can run parts of the world. It's interesting how society gradually changed that fear of not having enough to trade, to now not enough to eat through the invention of money. Money provides a solution and a problem for fear and so becomes so sacred as a tool for people to use.

But lies are not all so grand you see, as maybe those cookies grandma baked weren't up to their usual standards, and you don't want to let her know. Subconsciously, you now created a divide between yourself and that individual because now you know something they don't, and you don't plan on letting them understand it. You've removed their right to understand, and to be understood because now you've taken away the ability to exercise that right by lying. Socialization is weird in that way because it's all about understanding and shit it's hard to understand people sometimes.

Those people, those idiots who don't understand that plain milk is good. It is good. How is it not good? It's literally just chocolate milk without the chocolate, how isn't that good. It should

be fundamental that plain milk is good. Why can't they understand? Why don't I understand them?

There is a sadness, in the realization that you may never see certain friends again. Sometimes, that person you just argued with about milk might be the last time you ever talk to that person. Both of you will split, and go on with the merry walk in the concrete human convention. 10, 20, 30 years go by, and you might remember a conversation or two from that interaction and you'll wonder how that person is doing. Maybe they're a billionaire now and joined the lie of money, or maybe they've grown past these societal chains and are living off-grid doing their own thing. But as you imagine that person you've not talked to in a long time, realize how cool that is. The fact you can remember a person from another time, about an idea that happened years ago and with people who've changed and look different since then. Despite reality changing them, you visualize them as when they were younger and know about them through that person they were years ago. That those same times you remember that person as being older or younger, those people think of you in that similar way. That fear of being annoying to that person so long forgotten about and the fear that those experiences affected you negatively is long gone.

The duality of fear is that at the moment it will consume you and swear it's taking you over. But once it's over it'll be like it never happened and you'll want something like it again. Chasing that fear, that excitement is our endless crusade for happiness. Money brings the opportunity to experience fear, and others bring the opportunity to share the fear. In times where we feel like we're dying, another person can understand, imagine and even sometimes feel the same pain we might've felt years ago. But just like those people you remember long ago, those same fears and experiences of sadness and torture that might've consumed your life at the time once gone will never happen again in that same way, and those negative experiences will heal and grow with time even if you believe they won't.

Everything is an analogy of this. The human experience can be defined from being consumed at the moment feeling like every second takes an hour to happen, or time went too fast and you want it to happen again. Time is an illusion, a human invention. Watches, weekdays, years, just another convention.

Imagine if those experiences didn't go away? Imagine those experiences stuck with you as if they happened yesterday, all experiences you've ever had feeling fresh and overwhelming, all those boring and happy times playing at once in your mind, every single friend at the top of your agenda, every thought communicated and thought about always leading back onto each other in a never-ending conversation.

That would suck

But happily, you die with yourself in control. Happily, you die alone. So live life to the fullest. You don't die in fear. You don't die with yourself years ago, you die with yourself today, not from years ago. So yeah, the world may suck, and you might not be able to control it, but you're in control of yourself, and that does a lot more good.

Wilder, Hilary, and Sharmila Pixy Ferris. "Communication Technology and the Evolution of Knowledge." *Communication Technology and the Evolution of Knowledge*, The Journal of Electronic Publishing, June 2006, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/j/jep/3336451.0009.201?view=text:rgn=main>.

Svendsen, Lars. *A Philosophy of Fear*. Lars Svendsen, 2012.

Svendsen delves into science, politics, sociology, and literature to explore the nature of fear. He examines the biology behind the emotion, from the neuroscience underlying our "fight or flight" instinct to how fear induces us to take irrational actions in our attempts to minimize risk. The book then turns to the political and social realms, investigating the role of fear in the philosophies of Machiavelli and Hobbes, the rise of the modern "risk society," and how fear has eroded social trust. Entertainment such as the television show "Fear Factor," competition in extreme sports, and the political use of fear in the ongoing "War on Terror" all come under Svendsen's probing gaze, as he investigates whether we can ever disentangle ourselves from the continual state of alarm that defines our age.

Ingham, Geoffrey. "Money Is a Social Relation - JSTOR." *Money Is a Social Relation*, Taylor & Francis, Ltd., 1996, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/29769872>.

Money continues to present theoretical and conceptual difficulties for mainstream neoclassical micro-and macroeconomics. In most treatments, it is "neutral," as either: a symbolic "veil" over an underlying "real" economy; a special "commodity" with utility for the rational maximizing individual; or as part of a model of aggregate economic "variables." The methodological assumptions of these approaches cannot account for the fundamental characteristics of money as a measure of value and acceptable means of payment. Many of these difficulties are resolved if money is conceptualized as a structure of social relations.

Intention Statement:

The goal of Human Convention and my brash and harshly worded blunt sayings was to try and be brutally honest about how things are, with an over-aggressive undertone to the sayings so that the humorous bits hit harder and would give a sense of relief to the individual reading. I really enjoy Metaphysics and so much of the philosophical world and it sometimes feels hard to talk about those things with people due to the sense of uneasiness and trippy topics being hard to wrap our minds around and write about. I decided to go down the route of blunt “teachings” to try and give an argument as to why we shouldn’t be afraid of death and dying alone while giving a reason as to enjoy life, as it’s common people aren’t afraid of death and yearn for it. I used many callbacks to humor as a way to connect with the audience and ground them back in reality with a sense of ridiculousness at every turn, implying the craziness and implying the massive size of the idea I’m trying to convey. I used a lot of imagery combined with more underused words to give a sense of wonder and unknowingness to the voice talking to the audience as if it was some ancient being giving light. I took inspiration from my favorite YouTuber exbur1a who gives wonderful analogies of deep posing questions such as this and took the time to research and read a good book he made, as well as one he recommended by Lars Svendsen, who wrote a number of books discussing similar topics. It was really interesting to try and put into words these ideas and I’m happy with how there are so much more interpretations and lessons and advice you could underlyingly learn from the lyrical essay due to its “get to the point” writing style. I am excited to see the feedback I got from others be put to good use and make the essay better and I’m excited to have people read it. I think I emulated the technique of exbur1a quite well with his British charm, and I hope the humor does its part in making the story enjoyable and entertaining.

Rubric for the Lyrical Essay (100 points possible):

	Excellent (20 points)	Satisfactory, but needs some improvement (15 points)	Partially complete/ needs significant improvement (10 points)
--	----------------------------------	---	--

Focus	Purpose of the lyrical essay is clear and compelling. Writer represents the complexity of the subject perceptively, reflecting deep, sensitive, and sustained thinking.	Purpose of the lyrical essay is clear but could be more compelling. The writer could be more perceptive in their representation of the subject and its complexity.	Purpose of the lyrical essay is unclear. Or, the essay represents the subject too simply, neglecting complexity.
Style	The writer employs a variety of stylistic techniques (poetic devices, narrative perspective, varied prose forms) to challenge the reader to interpret meaning and shape the reading experience. Metaphors are fresh, original, and apt representations of the subject matter.	The writer employs several recognizable stylistic techniques but could do more stylistically to challenge the reader and shape the reading experience. Apt metaphors are present, but could be more specific or original.	The writer is fairly one-dimensional in their application of stylistic techniques. Or, metaphors fall into cliché territory.
Research	Writer uses accurate Chicago-style NB footnote format , indicating clearly at least 3 research sources in the text. Annotated bibliography follows proper format and conveys insight into the writer's thinking about the value and purpose of each source (summarize, assess, and reflect). See here and here for guides.	Chicago-style footnote format has some errors. Writer indicates 3 research sources in the text. Or, annotated bibliography has some errors or does not include all required elements for each source (summary, assessment, and reflection).	Chicago-style footnote format is missing, or, writer does not cite 3 sources in the text. Or, annotated bibliography is incomplete.
Intention Statement	Clear, insightful, and polished explanation of the meaning of the lyrical essay. Multiple techniques are accurately identified and explained with	Clear explanation of the meaning of the lyrical essay. A couple of techniques are accurately identified and explained, although	Unclear explanation of the meaning of the lyrical essay. Literary techniques are limited, misidentified, or missing. Reflection neglects to account

	specific references to the text. Reflection shows sensitive consideration of constructive feedback and literary influence(s).	the intention statement could be more insightful and polished. Reflection includes some reference to feedback or literary influence(s).	for both feedback and literary influence.
Mechanics	The text is free from errors of spelling, grammar, and punctuation. From a mechanics standpoint, this essay is ready for publication.	The text contains some errors. These errors do not impact the reader's ability to comprehend material. One more round of editing/polishing is necessary.	The text contains some significant errors. These errors affect the reader's ability to understand the material in some places.

Score: 90 / 100