

Analysis Paralysis

by

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Dramatis Personae

Lower Brain: Responsible for breathing, blood pressure, heartbeat, a bit of a troglodyte.

Mid-Brain: Responsible for emotions and memories. Twin of Amygdala. Is talkative, naive, and child-like.

Prefrontal Cortex: Responsible for higher-order thinking, conscious thought, and decision making. An intellectual concerned with the brain's overall performance. A voice of reason.

Amygdala: Responsible for the base emotions, such as flight, fight, or freeze response. Twin of Mid-Brain. Is judgemental, selfish, and passive aggressive.

Scene

A crowded high school classroom.

Time

Early morning, approaching noon.

ACT I

Scene 1

SETTING: We are sitting in the corner of a classroom during 4th period. There are four rows of desks. A vase of roses rests on the teacher's desk at the front of the room next to a basket full of finished assignments. Other students are scribbling away on an assignment. Soft conversations can be heard.

LOWER BRAIN
(breathing noises)

MID-BRAIN
The classroom smells like roses-

PREFRONTAL CORTEX
(worried)
We have an assignment to do.

LOWER BRAIN
(heart beats)
(Thoomp thoomp)

MID-BRAIN
My mom likes roses-her birthday was the other day and her friend brought her beautiful roses that were pink and I have a friend named Ella whose

all time favourite color is pink-since we were in 1st grade- and she even has pink seat covers in her car-

PREFRONTAL CORTEX

Let's just start the assignment. That's not-

LOWER BRAIN
(more breathing)

MID-BRAIN

I actually recently got a car which is cool well actually it's my parents car but I can drive it whenever I want, except I can't drive friends yet not for a few more months which is fine because summer is in a few months and I can't wait for summer because that means I can go to the beach and I haven't been to the beach in a while-

PREFRONTAL CORTEX

It's 12 o'clock. The bell is going to ring in 40 minutes.

MID-BRAIN

Wait huh? That's not enough time...

AMYGDALA

No it is not. You won't finish. Unless you start now, because then you might have a chance to finish. Everyone else is already done. Just start now. But you can't waste any more time.

LOWER BRAIN

Wait, I forgot to breathe. How do I breathe again?

PREFRONTAL CORTEX

Alright, why don't we just do as much work as we can?

AMYGDALA

Nope, it's too late. You need to finish it now.

MID-BRAIN

Wait, how much time do I have?

AMYGDALA

Not enough.

PREFRONTAL CORTEX

Let's just choose a topic and get started-

LOWER BRAIN
(Heart beating faster)

(thoomp-thoomp-thoomp-thoomp-)

MID-BRAIN

There's too many topics to choose from I'm never going to finish I'm going to fail this assignment and then my grade will go down which will lower my GPA which lowers my chance at scholarships-

AMYGDALA

And you won't get into college.

PREFRONTAL CORTEX

Calm down guys. Lower Brain, breathe.

LOWER BRAIN

(breathes)

PREFRONTAL CORTEX

MidBrain. Amygdala. We don't know that for sure-

AMYGDALA

Actually, we do. If we weren't going to fail, we would have done the assignment by now. By the way, great job at initiating work Cortex. Isn't it supposed to be *your* job to do the executive functioning? Clearly not because I don't see any *functioning* happening.

MID-BRAIN

This is just like the time I didn't finish the work packet for history and also like the time I didn't get off the ski lift in time so I had to ride it again and like the time I burnt the cookies that were supposed to be for my grandma and I had to show up to her house with store bought cookies and that made me sad and her sad and we were all sad-(breaks down)

PREFRONTAL CORTEX

Wait . . . am I really that incompetent? Oh Amygdala, maybe you're right. I give up.

LOWER BRAIN

(Heartbeat slows)

(thoomp . . . thoomp . . .)

MID-BRAIN

(Defeated)

I give up.

PREFRONTAL CORTEX

(Exasperated)

I . . . give up.

AMYGDALA
(Smug)

I feel better.

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF SCENE)

Annotated Bibliography

Lindsay Leiviska, MAT. "ADHD Paralysis: 5 Tips to Stop It from Destroying You." A Heart For All Students, March 9, 2023.

<https://aheartforallstudents.com/adhd-paralysis-meaning/#the-brains-role-in-paralysis>.

Author Lindsay Leiviska describes her own experience with the phenomenon of ADHD paralysis and how it can cause difficulty making decisions, and cause you to become overwhelmed with responsibilities, tasks, and decisions causing a person to freeze. For my essay I focused on the brain's role in paralysis. Specifically, the three part brain model composed of the lower brain, middle brain, amygdala, and prefrontal cortex. I characterized these three parts according to each role they play: the lower brain is responsible for breathing, blood pressure, heartbeat, etc. The middle brain is in control of emotions and memories, which includes the amygdala. Finally, the prefrontal cortex is in charge of higher-order thinking, conscious thought, and responsible decision making.

Team, ADDA Editorial. "ADHD Paralysis Is Real: Here Are 8 Ways to Overcome It." ADDA - Attention Deficit Disorder Association, April 21, 2023.

<https://add.org/adhd-paralysis/#:~:text=ADHD%20task%20paralysis%3A%20When%20a,other%20activities%20or%20zoning%20out>.

ADD.org explains that ADHD task paralysis can cause a person with ADHD to feel hesitant and avoid a task as much as possible. This article's description of task paralysis allowed me to characterize the interactions of the prefrontal cortex with the other parts of the brain. This made it easier to show how task paralysis manifests for me. The article also offers 8 different strategies on how to overcome and cope with task paralysis. It goes on to list mental paralysis and choice paralysis as problems those with ADHD experience. My paper portrays a symptom of mental paralysis which is sensory overload. In my essay this is shown as the almost incomprehensible chatter of the mid-brain.

Gillette, Hope. "ADHD Freeze: Understanding Task Paralysis." Psych Central, May 4, 2022.

<https://psychcentral.com/adhd/adhd-paralysis#adhd-paralysis-defined>.

Psych Central discusses ADHD paralysis defining what it is, listing the different types, listing ADHD symptoms, and giving possible solutions for dealing with it. The most relevant aspect of this article to me is the description of "freezing" as a biological response when the brain perceives a threat. This is shown in my essay when all three parts of the brain shut down and no longer attempt to work together. Psych Central takes a similar approach to this topic as ADD.org by the way that they're organized and offer similar coping mechanisms.

Rubric for the Lyrical Essay (12 points possible):

	Excellent (3 points)	Satisfactory, but needs some improvement (2 points)	Partially complete/ needs significant improvement (1 point)
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.

<p>Research</p>	<p>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 (describe, evaluate, and explain why/how it is relevant to your lyrical essay). See here for guide.</p>	<p>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 (describe, evaluate, and explain why/how it is relevant to your lyrical essay).</p>	<p>Chicago-style footnote format is missing, or, writer does not cite 3 sources in the text. Or, annotated bibliography is incomplete.</p>
<p>Mechanics</p>	<p>The text is free from errors of spelling, grammar, and punctuation. From a mechanics standpoint, this essay is ready for publication.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>The text contains some significant errors. These errors affect the reader's ability to understand the material in some places.</p>

Score: __ / 12