

The Good Life

Questions

1. Identify the thesis statement of this essay.
2. Russell states that “knowledge and love are both indefinitely extensible; therefore, however good a life may be, a better life can be imagined.” In this context, how does Russell define the concept of “knowledge”?
3. How is “love” important to the pursuit of “knowledge”?
4. In being an “altruistic emotion” how is “benevolence” not the same as “love”?
5. Describe how “love” must be a combination of “delight and well-wishing”.
6. Why does Russell state that ethical knowledge is not as important as scientific knowledge? Explain.
7. How do love and ethics relate to a sick child? Explain.
8. Annotate each of the 13 paragraphs of this essay and detail the development of its argument.

The Eichman Trial in Retrospect

Questions

1. Identify the thesis statement of this essay.
2. Eban discusses the systematic procedures of the Holocaust. How does this relate to knowledge? Explain.
3. What is the purpose of “memory”? Explain.
4. If Nazism emerged from a society with high standards of science and technology, how does this differ from Russell’s definition of “knowledge”? Explain.
5. Explain the statement: “He looks gropingly into the past in the hope of finding a beam of light to illumine his future”. Identify the literary devices Eban uses and explain how they reinforce his argument?
6. How could people such as Jewish people become “lives that are not enclosed within the same framework of law and social morality as the lives of other people”? Explain.
7. “The story of this dark and evil assault enters the memory of man as one of his weapons in the struggle for the vindication of his essential humanity.”
 - a. Explain this statement.
 - b. What literary devices does Eban use in this statement and how do they function in developing meaning?
 - c. Why is this the final statement of the essay? Explain.
8. Annotate each of the 13 paragraphs of this essay and detail the development of its argument.

2. THE GENERIC ESSAY

Key Work:

"The Good Life" — Bertrand Russell

Associated Readings:

"Duck Shooting on Yonge Street" — Ghislaine McDayter
(student essay)

"Excerpt from *Walden*" — Henry David Thoreau

"The Eichmann Trial in Retrospect" — Abba Eban

Essays are categorized sometimes according to the writer's purpose (to describe, to explain, to persuade) or approach (formal or informal). The essays in this unit are labelled generic because their authors do not conform to any specialized conventions other than standard English usage. On the other hand, contained within this category are many specialized forms of the essay which adhere to criteria as seen in the essays in other units of the text: the review, the report, the scholarly essay, to name a few. These are the nonfiction formats you will likely read most often in your post-secondary career.

The Key Work, "The Good Life" by Bertrand Russell, represents the classical essay. The French essayist, Montaigne, is credited with inventing the genre; in 1580, he published a collection of short prose writings, *Essais*, which means "attempts." That is, his *essais* were his attempts to understand himself and his world. Russell's essay is "classic" in that it follows this tradition.

The Associated Readings demonstrate the scope of the generic essay. Ghislaine McDayter's wry "Duck Shooting on Yonge Street" contrasts sharply in tone with the dry definitional approach of Russell and the more lyrical philosophizing of Thoreau's "Excerpt from *Walden*." Eban's rational approach to a highly emotional subject in "The Eichmann Trial in Retrospect" shows that a skilled writer is able to approach an intensely emotional subject and argue a point in a reasoned manner.

BEFORE READING

- Familiarize yourself with Russell's life by reading a brief biographical sketch in a reference book such as *The Reader's Encyclopedia* by Benét.
- In your view, what are the essentials of a good life?
- Who epitomizes the good life? What does your selection indicate about your values?

THE GOOD LIFE

BERTRAND RUSSELL

There have been at different times and among different people many varying conceptions of the good life. To some extent the differences were amenable to argument; this was when men differed as to the means to achieve a given end. Some think that prison is a good way of preventing crime; others hold that education would be better. A difference of this sort can be decided by sufficient evidence. But some differences cannot be tested in this way. Tolstoy condemned all war; others have held the life of a soldier doing battle for the right to be very noble. Here there was probably involved a real difference as to ends. Those who praised the soldier usually consider the punishment of sinners a good thing in itself; Tolstoy did not think so. On such a matter no argument is possible. I cannot, therefore, prove that my view of the good life is right; I can only state my view and hope that as many as possible will agree. My view is this: *The good life is one inspired by love and guided by knowledge.*

Knowledge and love are both indefinitely extensible; therefore, however good a life may be, a better life can be imagined. Neither love without knowledge nor knowledge without love can produce a good life. In the Middle Ages, when pestilence appeared in a country, holy men advised the population to assemble in churches and pray for deliverance; the result was that the infection spread with extraordinary rapidity among the crowded masses of supplicants. This was an example of love without knowledge. The late war afforded an example of knowledge without love. In each case, the result was death on a large scale.

Although both love and knowledge are necessary, love is in a sense more fundamental, since it will lead intelligent people to seek knowledge, in order to find out how to benefit those whom they love. But if people are not intelligent, they will be content to believe what they have been told and may do harm in spite of the most genuine benevolence. Medicine affords, perhaps, the best example of what I mean. An able physician is more useful to a patient than the most devoted friend, and progress in medical knowledge does more for the health of the community than ill-informed philanthropy. Nevertheless, an element of benevolence is essential even here if any but the rich are to profit by scientific discoveries.

Love is a word which covers a variety of feelings; I have used it purposely, as I wish to include them all. Love as an emotion — which is what I am speaking about, for love "on principle" does not seem to me genuine — moves between two poles: on one side, pure

delight in contemplation; on the other, pure benevolence. Where inanimate objects are concerned, delight alone enters in; we cannot feel benevolence toward a landscape or a sonata. This type of enjoyment is presumably the source of art. It is stronger, as a rule, in very young children than in adults, who are apt to view objects in a utilitarian spirit. It plays a large part in our feelings toward human beings, some of whom have charm and some the reverse, when considered simply as objects of aesthetic contemplation.

The opposite pole of love is pure benevolence. Men have sacrificed their lives to helping lepers; in such a case the love they felt cannot have had any element of aesthetic delight. Parental affection, as a rule, is accompanied by pleasure in the child's appearance but remains strong when this element is wholly absent. It would seem odd to call a mother's interest in a sick child "benevolence," because we are in the habit of using this word to describe a pale emotion nine parts humbug. But it is difficult to find any other word to describe the desire for another person's welfare. It is a fact that a desire of this sort may reach any degree of strength in the case of parental feeling. In other cases it is far less intense; indeed it would seem likely that all altruistic emotion is a sort of overflow of parental feeling, or sometimes a sublimation of it. For want of a better word, I shall call this emotion "benevolence." But I want to make it clear that I am speaking of an emotion, not a principle, and that I do not include in it any feeling of superiority such as is sometimes associated with the word. The word *sympathy* expresses part of what I mean but leaves out the element of activity that I wish to include.

Love at its fullest is an indissoluble combination of the two elements, delight and well-wishing. The pleasure of a parent in a beautiful and successful child combines both elements; so does sex love at its best. But in sex love, benevolence will only exist where there is secure possession, since otherwise jealousy will destroy it, while perhaps actually increasing the delight in contemplation. Delight without well-wishing may be cruel; well-wishing without delight easily tends to become cold and a little superior. A person who wishes to be loved wishes to be the object of a love containing both elements, except in cases of extreme weakness, such as infancy and severe illness. In these cases benevolence may be all that is desired. Conversely, in cases of extreme strength, admiration is more desired than benevolence: this is the state of mind of potentates and famous beauties. We only desire other people's good wishes in proportion as we feel ourselves in need of help or in danger of harm from them. At least, that would seem to be the biological logic of the situation, but it is not quite true to life. We desire affection in order to escape from the feeling of loneliness, in order to be, as we say, "understood." This is a matter of sympathy,

not merely of benevolence; the person whose affection is satisfactory to us must not merely wish us well but must know in what our happiness consists. But this belongs to the other element of the good life — namely, knowledge.

In a perfect world, every sentient being would be to every other the object of the fullest love, compounded of delight, benevolence, and understanding inextricably blended. It does not follow that, in this actual world, we ought to attempt to have such feelings toward all the sentient beings whom we encounter. There are many in whom we cannot feel delight, because they are disgusting; if we were to do violence to our nature by trying to see beauties in them, we should merely blunt our susceptibilities to what we naturally find beautiful. Not to mention human beings, there are fleas and bugs and lice. We should have to be as hard pressed as the Ancient Mariner before we could feel delight in contemplating these creatures. Some saints, it is true, have called them "pearls of God," but what these men delighted in was the opportunity of displaying their own sanctity.

Benevolence is easier to extend widely, but even benevolence has its limits. If a man wished to marry a lady, we should not think the better of him for withdrawing if he found that someone else also wished to marry her: we should regard this as a fair field for competition. Yet his feelings toward a rival cannot be *wholly* benevolent. I think that in all descriptions of the good life here on earth we must assume a certain basis of animal vitality and animal instinct; without this, life becomes tame and uninteresting. Civilization should be something added to this, not substituted for it; the ascetic saint and the detached sage fail in this respect to be complete human beings. A small number of them may enrich a community; but a world composed of them would die of boredom.

These considerations lead to a certain emphasis on the element of delight as an ingredient in the best love. Delight, in this actual world, is unavoidably selective and prevents us from having the same feelings toward all mankind. When conflicts arise between delight and benevolence, they must, as a rule, be decided by a compromise, not by a complete surrender of either. Instinct has its rights, and if we do violence to it beyond a point it takes vengeance in subtle ways. Therefore in aiming at a good life the limits of human possibility must be borne in mind. Here again, however, we are brought back to the necessity of knowledge.

When I speak of knowledge as an ingredient of the good life, I am not thinking of ethical knowledge but of scientific knowledge and knowledge of particular facts. I do not think there is, strictly speaking, such a thing as ethical knowledge. If we desire to achieve some end, knowledge may show us the means, and this knowledge may loosely pass as ethical. But I do not believe that we can decide what

sort of conduct is right or wrong except by reference to its probable consequences. Given an end to be achieved, it is a question for science to discover how to achieve it. All moral rules must be tested by examining whether they tend to realize ends that we desire. I say ends that we desire, not ends that we *ought* to desire. What we "ought" to desire is merely what someone else wishes us to desire. Usually it is what the authorities wish us to desire — parents, schoolmasters, policemen, and judges. If you say to me, "You ought to do so-and-so," the motive power of your remark lies in my desire for your approval — together, possibly, with rewards or punishments attached to your approval or disapproval. Since all behaviour springs from desire, it is clear that ethical notions can have no importance except as they influence desire. They do this through the desire for approval and the fear of disapproval. These are powerful social forces, and we shall naturally endeavor to win them to our side if we wish to realize any social purpose. When I say that the morality of conduct is to be judged by its probable consequences, I mean that I desire to see approval given to behavior likely to realize social purposes which we desire, and disapproval to opposite behavior. At present this is not done; there are certain traditional rules according to which approval and disapproval are meted out quite regardless of consequences. But this is a topic with which we shall deal at some other time.

The superfluity of theoretical ethics is obvious in simple cases. Suppose, for instance, your child is ill. Love makes you wish to cure it, and science tells you how to do so. There is not an intermediate stage of ethical theory, where it is demonstrated that your child had better be cured. Your act springs directly from desire for an end, together with knowledge of means. This is equally true of all acts, whether good or bad. The ends differ, and the knowledge is more adequate in some cases than in others. But there is no conceivable way of making people do things they do not wish to do. What is possible is to alter their desires by a system of rewards and penalties, among which social approval and disapproval are not the least potent. The question for the legislative moralist is, therefore: How shall this system of rewards and punishments be arranged so as to secure the maximum of what is desired by the legislative authority? If I say that the legislative authority has bad desires, I mean merely that its desires conflict with those of some section of the community to which I belong. Outside human desires there is no moral standard.

Thus, what distinguishes ethics from science is not any special kind of knowledge but merely desire. The knowledge required in ethics is exactly like the knowledge elsewhere; what is peculiar is that certain ends are desired, and that right conduct is what conduces to them. Of course, if the definition of right conduct is to make

a wide appeal, the end must be such as large sections of mankind desire. If I defined right conduct as that which increases my own income, readers would disagree. The whole effectiveness of any ethical argument lies in its scientific part, i.e., in the proof that one kind of conduct, rather than some other, is a means to an end which is widely desired. I distinguish, however, between ethical argument and ethical education. The latter consists in strengthening certain desires and weakening others. This is quite a different process.

We can now explain more exactly the purport of the definition of the good life with which this essay began. When I said that the good life consists of love guided by knowledge, the desire which prompted me was the desire to live such a life as far as possible, and to see others living it; and the logical content of the statement is that, in a community where men live in this way, more desires will be satisfied than in one where there is less love or less knowledge. I do not mean that such a life is "virtuous" or that its opposite is "sinful," for these are conceptions which seem to me to have no scientific justification.

EXPLORING THE GENERIC ESSAY

1. After the first reading of Russell's essay, make sure you are familiar with the following vocabulary in the context the author has used it: amenable, supplicant, philanthropy, sonata, utilitarian, benevolence, altruistic, sublimation, indissoluble, sentient, ascetic, sage, ethical, superfluity, potent, moralist.
2. Underline the thesis statement.
3. (a) State Russell's definition of the good life.
(b) What does Russell say about the role of knowledge in this life, and about the two poles and the role of love? (Since this is a challenging work, you might consider rereading it before answering the remaining questions.)
4. Pick out examples of the following methods of proof:
 - (i) historical references
 - (ii) illustrations that use contrast
 - (iii) statements of opinion and personal belief
 - (iv) literary references
 - (v) appeals to authority figures
 - (vi) attempts to draw the reader into the argument
 - (vii) verifiable fact, and explain why there is little of this
5. In the margin, number the major steps in Russell's argument. Then summarize the main idea of each step.
6. Examine the language. Pick out examples of phrasing and literary devices that contribute to the reader's enjoyment and/or understanding of the passage.

THE EICHMANN TRIAL IN RETROSPECT

ABBA EBAN

He who cannot remember the past is doomed to repeat it.

GEORGE SANTAYANA

On a winter day in 1944 the head of an industrial concern in Berlin calmly signed the following letter to Gestapo headquarters:

Following our verbal discussion regarding the delivery of equipment of simple construction for the burning of bodies, we are submitting plans for our perfected cremation ovens which operate with coal and which have hitherto given full satisfaction.

We suggest two crematoria furnaces for the building planned, but we advise you to make further inquiries to make sure that two ovens will be sufficient for your requirements.

We guarantee the effectiveness of the cremation ovens as well as their durability, the use of the best material and our faultless workmanship.

Heil Hitler!

C.H. Kori

There was a good reason for the writer's complacent mood. The places in which 'full satisfaction' had been given included Dachau and Lubin, where 'the best material and faultless workmanship' had efficiently converted the bodies of men, women, and children into piles of anonymous powdered ash. Why should not the Kori Corporation now receive the Belgrade business? Competition, however, was keen. The I.A. Topf Corporation was showing great technical ingenuity, as is clear from its terse note of February 12, 1943, to the 'Central Construction Office of the S.S. and the Police at Auschwitz':

Subject: Crematoria 2 and 3 for the camp.

We acknowledge receipt of your order for five triple furnaces, including two electric elevators for raising the corpses and one emergency elevator. A practical installation for stoking coal was also ordered and one for transporting ashes.

These documents, produced at the Nuremberg trials of Nazi war criminals and at the Eichmann trial in Jerusalem, are excellently typed. There was, of course, an adequate number of carbon copies for the files. One can imagine the respectable industrialists going off to their clubs in a fine glow of patriotic duty and commercial enterprise.

But there was no point in cremation furnaces without the human fuel. Not far away in his Berlin office, Adolf Eichmann was

signing a briefer document. It was a telegram to his emissaries in occupied countries. It read simply: 'Children's transports can get under way.' The reference was to children who no longer had parents with whom to embark on the journey to Auschwitz for collective gassing. Even these presented problems. The Jerusalem court sat transfixed in silent horror as Attorney-General Hausner unfolded the story: 'You will hear evidence of tender infants pressed by their mothers to their bodies in the gas chamber so that they were not immediately poisoned, until the executioners came and threw them alive into the furnaces.'

This was standard practice. But a special routine was now necessary to organize the asphyxiation of Jewish children who had no parents to accompany them. How this worked in occupied France was factually described at the Jerusalem trial.

The children would arrive at the Drancy Camp packed in busses guarded by policemen. . . . On the arrival of the busses they would begin to remove the children and lead them in groups to the halls, the older ones holding the hands of the smaller children; or carrying them in their arms. They did not weep, the children; they walked terrified, disciplined, miserable, and complied with the orders like a flock of sheep, one helping the other. . . .

On the day of deportation, they would be wakened at five o'clock in the morning. Irritable, half asleep, most of the children would refuse to get up and go down to the courtyard. The volunteer women would have to urge them, gently, patiently and so tragically, so as to convince the older children that they must obey orders and vacate the halls. On a number of occasions the entreaties did not help. The children cried and refused to leave their mattresses. The gendarmes would then enter the halls and pick up the children in their arms as they screamed with fear, struggling and grasping at each other. The halls were like a madhouse; the scene was too terrible for even the hardest men to bear.

In the courtyard they would call out the names of the children one by one, mark them off in the register, and direct them to the busses. When a bus filled up it would leave the camp with its cargo. Since many of the children remained unidentified and others would not answer to their correct or assumed names, they would include them in the convoy to make up the number.

Each convoy consisted of about five hundred children and five hundred adults chosen from the camp prisoners. Within a period of about three weeks, during the second half of August and the first part of September, 1943, four thousand children, thus made into orphans, were transported in this fashion to be exterminated with adult strangers.

Hauptsturmführer Roethke was present at these transports and would inspect personally the parading of the children, the roll call, and the loading into the busses.

The people of Israel are the sons, the daughters, the brothers, the sisters, the fathers, the mothers of the millions whose agony was re-enacted during the twelve months of the Eichmann trial. The procedures at every stage were marked by careful decorum and high legal scholarship. But behind the reserved procedures one could see the marching ghosts.

If you were a Jew in Europe during those years, and if Adolf Eichmann knew of your existence, your fate was inexorable. You would be rounded up with your family in Amsterdam or Paris, in Belgrade or Venice, in Budapest or Brussels, in Warsaw or Kiev. You would be put on a train for Auschwitz or Treblinka, and then either lined up naked with hundreds of others behind your neat pile of clothes while German soldiers shot you in the neck on the edge of a huge ditch or else herded into a shower room for mass asphyxiation. Your hair would be shorn beforehand, your gold fillings taken afterwards, your ashes used for fertilizer. You could be useful to the German war economy. Today the capital cities and villages of Europe contain ghostlike streets with their communal buildings, synagogues, and schools in which the bustle and laughter of living men, women, and children were choked by the grim ukase issuing from the sinister office in Berlin where Adolf Eichmann pored meticulously over his files, before affixing the most macabre signatures ever inscribed by mortal hand.

All this happened in recent memory. Anybody alive today over the age of thirty-five is in some way a part of this experience. For we belong to the unique generation that committed or suffered or failed to prevent these things. In each of the three contingencies we have a direct relationship to the drama. The theme of the Jerusalem courtroom was the unending tension between the sublime attributes of man's nature and his unlimited capacity to distort the human image. And in this conflict our generation has lived the moment of man's darkest defeat.

Some would have preferred not to evoke the past. Does not the tormented human imagination deserve respite from the assault of such memories? There are people of impeccable sincerity who advocate its oblivion. Mr. Victor Gollancz, for example, has written that 'The sooner we forget the cruelties of the past, the better.'

After millions of years of evolution, a species emerges on this planet endowed with the gift of memory and articulation. Man is the only animal able to transmit experience. And the transmission of experience is the central core of education and moral progress. Memory is the father of conscience. The issue is whether we should wipe from the tablets of memory the most vivid evidence of the consequences flowing from chauvinism, racial discrimination, and inhumanity.

The question must be answered in the name of the future, not of

the past. Man is the only animal that has ever shown a tendency to destroy its own species. He may now become the first and only creature to devastate its habitat. He cannot afford to ignore any experience that throws light on the social consequence of his nature. 'The fundamental principle of all morality,' wrote Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 'is that man is a being naturally good, loving justice and order; that there is not any original perversity in the human heart and that the first movements of nature are always right.'

There may have been evidence for this outlook in the eighteenth century. It is less easy to reconcile it with the memory of ordinary men — tens of thousands of them — going calmly about their work of slaughter or writing solemn minutes in impeccable commercial jargon about the 'satisfactory' attributes of machines for burning bodies. The human conscience needs an alarm bell, not a sleeping pill.

The first lesson of the trial takes us back to the moral torment of our age. The horrors of Nazism sprang from a society in which high standards of science and technology were fostered. We are reminded here of the fallacy of a technical rationalism uninhibited by moral restraint. Man has probed deeply into the spectacle of nature, but he stands baffled before the incalculabilities of his own character. He has exercised command over his external realm but seems impotent to control his inner domain. Thus the age of scientific triumph is the epoch of confusion. Man is conscious of his lack of inner and outer harmony, obsessed by a sense of helplessness before the forces generated by his own creative imagination. He looks gropingly into the past in the hope of finding a beam of light to illumine his future.

It is for this future, and for its sake alone, that the trial was held. Its lesson and counsel affect every layer of social experience. It teaches how discrimination, taking root in small beginnings, leads to vast and uncontrollable disaster. The outrages of Auschwitz and Treblinka could not have occurred had there not been tens of thousands of men who became accustomed to look at other men as though they were not human at all. A man cannot murder others in cold blood, he cannot dash a baby to the ground or fling children into a furnace, unless he is first convinced that they are not a part of his own humanity.

The trial asks urgent questions about the limits beyond which racial incitement cannot be tolerated. This is the oldest dilemma of liberalism. If a society is free and tolerant, must it even tolerate attacks on its own toleration? If a society can suppress pornography without ceasing to be free, why is it forbidden to establish some criterion whereby ideas fatal to social morality may be denied the sanction of law? The indulgence granted the Nazi doctrine in the

1930's before it reached irresistible proportions stands as an ominous warning against inertia and apathy. In the Weimar Republic this indulgence flowed from the doctrine that there is no limit to the free dissemination of opinion — not even the limit of decency and survival. On the international plane, it sheltered behind a doctrine of sovereignty applied with such rigid pedantry as to inhibit effective international intervention. In the postwar world, lesser outrages have fortunately evoked a much sharper and more insistent international reaction.

In the particular terms of Jewish history, the trial represented Israel's assertion of the dignity and equality of Jewish life. The few voices that were raised against the verdict had not questioned similar action when the allied governments inflicted condign penalties on men who had not been responsible for a small fraction of Eichmann's butchery. There has been an insidious, if unconscious, assumption across history that Jewish lives are not enclosed within the same framework of law and social morality as the lives of other peoples.

It was probably in response to this background that the Jerusalem courts took care to remain in the orbit of the Nuremberg jurisprudence and of the legal practice of other nations outraged by Nazi violence. To have done anything else would have been to convict the allied and resistance powers of excessive severity. In a world in which the capital penalty still exists and in which the precedents for penalizing racial massacre have been so clearly and recently demarcated, any other course would have been a rebellion against the established juridical standards. Israel was created in order to make Jewish history flow in harmony with the universal procession of law — and not outside its realm, as in all previous generations. It is true that the Jerusalem courts had a particular message to write. But there was no clean slate on which to write it. I can personally testify that some in the legislative and executive branches who are passionate opponents of capital punishment felt inexorably that this was not the area in which to commence the writing of new law.

The news of Eichmann's most active operation — the gassing and burning of Hungarian Jews — reached the free world in the summer of 1944. The spokesman of that world brandished an impotent fist at the distant murderer:

Prime Minister [Churchill] to Foreign Secretary,
11 July 1944.

There is no doubt that this is probably the greatest and most horrible crime ever committed in the history of the world, and it has been done by scientific machinery by nominally civilized men in the name of a great State and one of the leading races of Europe. It is quite clear that all concerned in this crime who may fall into our hands, including the people who only obeyed orders

by carrying out the butcheries, should be put to death after their association with the murders has been proved.

It is not a matter of vengeance. The children clutching each other's hands as they were herded into the slaughter chamber are beyond vengeance or expiation. The issue is whether the human society can be denied the ultimate right to banish from its midst those who massively violate its most sacred compassions. Beyond this issue is the question of whether we are safe against a renewal of the tragedy. We may become so if we save it from oblivion and deduce its lessons in the political, social, and educational domains.

The renaissance artists portrayed the human soul as being drawn upward and downward by elements in its own nature. Both the upward and the downward pull can be discerned in the life of our times. It is still not certain how the tension will be ultimately resolved. The story of this dark and evil assault enters the memory of man as one of his weapons in the struggle for the vindication of his essential humanity.

3. THE SCHOLARLY ESSAY

Key Work:

"Spiritual Longing in Laurence's *Manawaka Women*" —
Leslie-Ann Hales

Associated Readings:

"Our Two Cultures" — Patricia Smart

"The Tragedy of Ugliness" — John Hunter (student essay)

The scholarly essay is the essence of critical thinking and writing. It demonstrates insightful opinion supported by depth of research and an objective and reasoned approach.

Those who write scholarly essays may concentrate their investigation on the subject itself (primary research), as do Hales and Hunter; as well, they may consult other authorities in the field (secondary research) as does Patricia Smart. If secondary research is needed for your project, use these sources only after you have sufficiently explored your primary material.

Unlike the generic essay, the scholarly essay is a highly specialized essay form. Each subject area (English, History, Philosophy) has its own requirements for organization and format, particularly documentation of sources.