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An interview with student author Erik Buckingham

Erik Buckingham
SUNY Geneseo

Dimitri Wing-Paul
SUNY Geneseo

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An interview with student author Erik Buckingham

Dimitri Wing-Paul

What inspired you to write this paper?

First, I wrote it for a class as an assignment. We had to pick one theory from one of the readings that Professor Lee Pierce gave us. Professor Pierce suggested an article about tears in movies for the class Visual Criticism. We have watched a lot of movies, and we saw what different effects that [were] used and how these effects help them in the film. One of them was the use of tears. The theory was tears can mean something sad, or tears could mean a point of the story that says something about the narrative. So, I found tears interesting, and Professor Pierce suggested to me that there is a scene in *Get Out* where the maid smiles and cries, so she said, “You could do this one,” and I ended up writing about that. I’ve never thought about that scene until she mentioned it.

Had you watched the movie before?

I had watched it, but it was more for entertainment. I was not analyzing the movie at all. This was a completely different way of thinking. I would have thought I would be analyzing it for the plot, but my analysis was more about the visual cues and a lot of the history about it and what the movie was saying in a larger picture than just what usually happens at a horror film.

How was that experience of analyzing the visual cues, specifically the tears, for you?

I thought it was really difficult. However, Professor Pierce has a really good knowledge of rhetoric, and [she is] good at thinking that way. She really pushed me to think of tears as visual cues, in a way that says something more than just when someone is sad.

How did you present your work at GREAT Day and how was that experience?

That was the first time that I really talked about my paper. GREAT Day was the point that we had not completely finished the research papers, so I was not really sure if people would understand it because I did not understand it at first. I felt that I had to make it really relatable to the audience because it was such a theoretical piece. I was more so worried that people would not understand what I was trying to say. But, I

would say that it was a good experience overall. It was also a good experience in public speaking.

What did your involvement in GREAT Day mean to you?

It made me feel like I was contributing to the school's academic culture.

Are you planning to continue to present for the next GREAT Day?

I am not presenting for the next GREAT Day because I am going to Spain next semester.