

Version	# Headings (w/o In & Co)	# Words (w/WC)	# Works Cited	# Pages (w/WC)
ChLA	2	3587 -347 strikeouts = 3240	4	9
May 2, 2016	3	8308	17	22
June 25, 2016	3	8584	27	29
August 25, 2017	4	7552	12	25
September 15, 2017	4	9196	15	29
September 26, 2017	4	8807	15	29

CONFERENCE PAPER June 2015 (Anderson.Abjection&HighStakesTesting.050415):

Title: The Abjection of Genius: Subverting High-Stakes Testing in *First Grade Takes a Test* and *The Report Card*

Intro: 4-5 paragraphs; first two introduce the topic and Cohen’s and Clements’ texts; third has quote from Wilkie-Stibbs re borderland children and a reference by Wilkie-Stibbs to Kristeva; fourth/fifth paragraph argues that special needs students (including gifted children) occupy borderland in school system as statistical “outliers”

Miriam Cohen’s *First Grade Takes a Test*: 6 paragraphs describing verbal and visual text in horror story terms, including the Test, the Mind Behind the Test, the teacher as forced accomplice to the test, and the trope of a seemingly benevolent alien representing a system—a powerful empire—who comes bearing gifts or the promise of a solution to a problem or something similar but which, of course, turns out to infect and destroy. No references to Wilkie-Stibbs or Kristeva.

Andrew Clements’ *The Report Card*: 10-11 paragraphs describing text in terms of Nora as spectacle and her protective cover-up. The Test is mentioned in the fifth paragraph and the Testing Machine in the sixth. Eight paragraph references Wilkie-Stibbs and Kristeva.

Conclusion: 3 paragraphs; first shows how all children in both books are made, to some extent, abject by the Test; second rejects notion that gifted must be separated; last paragraph contrasts satisfactory story endings with reality.

ESSAY SUBMITTED May 2016 (Anderson.Abjection&HighStakesTesting.FINAL.050116.doc):

Title: Horrors! Promulgating a Fear of Testing in Children’s Literature and the Abjection of Genius in *First Grade Takes a Test* and *The Report Card*

Intro: 1 paragraph; thesis: “In this article, I trace the development of high-stakes testing, then examine the ways illustrations and text in some children’s fiction promulgates a discourse of fear by depicting testing as attacking from without, and finally consider the more insidious depiction of testing as a destroyer of individual growth, of interpersonal relationships, and of the processes

of learning, especially as seen in Miriam Cohen's (2006/1980) *First Grade Takes a Test* and Andrew Clements' (2004) *The Report Card*." (read in light of Kristeva's thoughts about abjection)

Compulsory Public Education and High-Stakes Testing: 5 paragraphs (1142 words) tracing education from 1870 Britain to present day U.S., development of Department of Education, NCLB, et al.

Testing in Contemporary Children's Fiction: 10 paragraphs (2131 words) examining, in the light of Altheide's (2002) mediated discourse of fear, five books written for elementary school children about testing.

The Abjection of Genius in *First Grade Takes a Test* and *The Report Card*: 25 paragraphs (3951 words) examining Cohen's and Clements' texts – almost verbatim from conference paper with the inclusion of stricken passages. First two paragraphs, however, discuss Scout's experience with the abjection of genius and of going along to get along in *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Next two paragraphs cite Wilkie-Stibbs, Kristeva, and Colangelo re borderland children and special needs children (including gifted children) as on the borders.

Conclusion: 1 paragraph (220 words).

NOTE: How did I get so far off track? Look at the first and last sentences of my proposal!

JULY REVISION (Anderson.Abjection&HighStakesTesting.DRAFT2.062516.doc)

Title: Horrors! High-Stakes Testing, the Promulgation of Fear, and the Abjection of Genius in Children's Literature

Intro: 1 paragraph; thesis: "In this article, I trace the development and some of the consequences of high-stakes testing, then examine the ways illustrations and text in some children's literature reflects and promulgates a discourse of fear of tests, and finally consider the more insidious depiction of testing as a destroyer of individual growth, of interpersonal relationships, and of the processes of learning, especially as seen in Miriam Cohen's (2006/1980) *First Grade Takes a Test* and Andrew Clements' (2004) *The Report Card*." (read in light of Kristeva)

High-Stakes Testing, the Perception of Normal, and a Discourse of Fear: 8 paragraphs (1870 words) Condensed history of education to NCLB, et al., and accountability mindset creating an inevitability of testing under NCLB, RTTT, and ESSA. Explanation of standardized testing, normalcy, and Altheide's *Creating a Discourse of Fear*. Connection to Kristeva's abjection as "place where meaning collapses" and Altheide's note that word *fear* has collapsed in meaning (p. 8). Description of real-life high-stakes suicides and other "collateral damage."

Fear of Testing in Contemporary Children's Literature: 9 paragraphs (1972 words) Descriptions of covers of six books for elementary school children that induce fear and short discussion of coping strategies offered in these books.

Questioning Testing and the Abjection of Genius in *First Grade Takes a Test* and *The Report Card*: 22 paragraphs (3364 words) examining Cohen's and Clements' texts – almost verbatim from conference paper with the inclusion of stricken passages. Intro cites Wilkie-Stibbs, Kristeva, and Colangelo re borderland children and special needs children (including gifted children) as on the borders and gifted children as needing to be removed from the general population (physical abjection/expulsion).

Conclusion: 2 paragraphs (380 words)

AUGUST 25 REVISION (Anderson3.AbjectionGenius&Testing.081516.doc)

Title: High-Stakes Testing and the Abjection of Genius in Miriam Cohen's *First Grade Takes a Test* and Andrew Clements' *The Report Card*

Intro: 4 paragraphs (827 words) tracing applications of Kristeva's work in other ChYA lit (*Magic or Madness*, *Harry Potter*, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*), extending Kristeva's thoughts to include all literature as abject, and explaining abjection. Thesis: Read in the light of Julia Kristeva's (1982/1980) thoughts about the abject as that which is on the border of identity, however, Cohen's and Clements' stories raise the specter of a disturbing scenario involving underlying assumptions about so-called high-stakes testing that blur borders of identity, collapse meaning and perceptions of what is normal, and contribute to the resulting abjection of genius in children who occupy an intellectual borderland.

The abject as on the border of identity: 6 paragraphs (1162 words) explaining Kristeva's thoughts on physical abjection as a getting rid of part of one's self in order to save, preserve, or establish one's self.

High-stakes testing as blurring borders of identity: 7 paragraphs (1296 words) placing *First Grade Takes a Test* and *The Report Card* within the context of Kristeva's abjection and considering the identity of the test also as abject, with a fuzzy identity (measure students? measure teachers?) and with a double-standard (what is normal?). The test has gone from being a solver of accountability problems to a foul-mess.

High-stakes testing and the collapse of meaning: 7 paragraphs (3638 words) Cohen questions meaning of *smart* and Clements questions meaning of *normal*. While all participants become abject because of the test (teachers, too), children identified by the test as above normal become abject in specific ways.

High-stakes testing and the abjection of genius: 10 paragraphs (4877 words) introduces the Mind Behind the Test that acts like a monster in a horror story.

Conclusions: 4 paragraphs (552 words) Testing a part of life, but shouldn't define life.

SEPTEMBER 15 REVISION (Anderson4.AbjectionGenius&Testing.091516.doc)

Title: Caught in a Web of Abjection: High-Stakes Testing in Miriam Cohen’s *First Grade Takes a Test* and Andrew Clements’ *The Report Card*

Intro: 3 paragraphs (982 words) Kristeva’s physical abjection and metaphorical abjection. Thesis: “Both authors clearly present the more insidious aspects of testing and question the tests’ assumptions of normalcy, and both authors suggest the adults themselves are caught in the same web created by the agencies and institutions they serve. Read in the light of Kristeva’s (1982/1980) descriptions of the abject as that which is on the border of identity, however, Cohen’s and Clements’ stories go further, raising the specter of a disturbing scenario involving an underlying and diabolical institutional mindset—a Mind Behind the Test—that, through the guise of testing, blurs borders of identity, collapses meaning and perceptions of what is normal, and contributes to the resulting abjection of genius in children who occupy an intellectual borderland.

High-stakes testing and blurred borders of identity: 10 paragraphs (2300 words) Shifts and morphing in identity of tests and testing as seen through both books and with historical testing input.

High-stakes testing and the collapsed meaning of *learning* and *teaching*: 9 paragraphs (3659 words) using Smagorinsky’s discussion of culturally constructed meaning as applied to normalcy, testing, accountability, education . . . and how the books challenge the concept of education as mere conditioning.

High-stakes testing and the abjection of genius: 7 paragraphs (3766 words) discussing how, when teaching and learning no longer have meaning—and become abject themselves—the books show how those who are identified as being far above normal are made particular abject, including physical expulsion.

Escaping vs. finding meaning within the web: 5 paragraphs (1240 words) More analysis and conclusions.

SEPTEMBER 26 REVISION (LP_EAM_Anderson4.AbjectionGenius&Testing.092616[101416])

Title: Caught in a Web of Abjection: High-Stakes Testing in Miriam Cohen’s *First Grade Takes a Test* and Andrew Clements’ *The Report Card*

Intro: 2 paragraphs (650 words) introducing Kristeva and the books. Thesis: “High-stakes testing and blurred borders of identity: Read in the light of Kristeva’s (1982/1980) descriptions of the abject as that which is on the border of identity, however, Cohen’s and Clements’ stories go further, raising the specter of a disturbing scenario involving an underlying and diabolical institutional mindset—a Mind Behind the Test—that, through the guise of testing, blurs borders of identity, collapses meaning and perceptions of what is normal, and contributes to the resulting abjection of genius in children who occupy an intellectual borderland.”

High-stakes Testing and Blurred Borders of Identity: 10 paragraphs (2290 words)

High-stakes Testing and the Collapsed Meaning of *Teaching* and *Learning*: 8 paragraphs (2061 words)

High-Stakes Testing and the Abjection of Genius: 8 paragraphs (1918 words)

Escaping Vs. Finding Meaning in the Web: 5 paragraphs (1238 words)