**11AP**

**Close Analysis Essay**

Task: Read the following essay written by Christopher Morley in 1920. Annotate it or develop a graphic organizer; generate some questions about its style. Develop a thesis statement, and write an essay in which you analyze the ways that the style of the essay helps Morley achieve his purpose.

Due Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**On Laziness**  (by CHRISTOPHER MORLEY)

Today we rather intended to write an essay on Laziness, but were too indolent to do so.

The sort of thing we had in mind to write would have been exceedingly persuasive. We intended to discourse a little in favour of a greater appreciation of Indolence as a benign factor in human affairs.

It is our observation that every time we get into trouble it is due to not having been lazy enough. Unhappily, we were born with a certain fund of energy. We have been hustling about for a number of years now, and it doesn’t seem to get us anything but tribulation. Henceforward we are going to make a determined effort to be more languid and demure. It is the bustling man who always gets put on committees, who is asked to solve the problems of other people and neglect his own.

The man who is really, thoroughly, and philosophically slothful is the only thoroughly happy man. It is the happy man who benefits the world. The conclusion is inescapable.

We remember a saying about the meek inheriting the earth. The truly meek man is the lazy man. He is too modest to believe that any ferment and hubbub of his can ameliorate the earth or assuage the perplexities of humanity.

O. Henry said once that one should be careful to distinguish laziness from dignified repose. Alas, that was a mere quibble. Laziness is always dignified, it is always reposeful. Philosophical laziness, we mean. The kind of laziness that is based upon a carefully reasoned analysis of experience. Acquired laziness. We have no respect for those who were born lazy; it is like being born a millionaire: they cannot appreciate their bliss. It is the man who has hammered his laziness out of the stubborn material of life for whom we chant praise and allelulia.

The laziest man we know—we do not like to mention his name, as the brutal world does not yet recognize sloth at its community value—is one of the greatest poets in this country; one of the keenest satirists; one of the most rectilinear thinkers. He began life in the customary hustling way. He was always too busy to enjoy himself. He became surrounded by eager people who came to him to solve their problems. “It’s a queer thing,” he said sadly; “no one ever comes to me asking for help in solving my problems.” Finally the light broke upon him. He stopped answering letters, buying lunches for casual friends and visitors from out of town, he stopped lending money to old college pals and frittering his time away on all the useless minor matters that pester the good-natured. He sat down in a secluded café with his cheek against a seidel of dark beer and began to caress the universe with his intellect.

The most damning argument against the Germans is that they were not lazy enough. In the middle of Europe, a thoroughly disillusioned, indolent and delightful old continent, the Germans were a dangerous mass of energy and bumptious push. If the Germans had been as lazy, as indifferent, and as righteously laissez-fairish as their neighbours, the world would have been spared a great deal.

People respect laziness. If you once get a reputation for complete, immovable, and reckless indolence the world will leave you to your own thoughts, which are generally rather interesting.

Doctor Johnson, who was one of the world’s great philosophers, was lazy. Only yesterday our friend the Caliph showed us an extraordinarily interesting thing. It was a little leather-bound notebook in which Boswell jotted down memoranda of his talks with the old doctor. These notes he afterward worked up into the immortal Biography. And lo and behold, what was the very first entry in this treasured little relic?

Doctor Johnson told me in going to Ilam from Ashbourne, 22 September, 1777, that the way the plan of his Dictionary came to be addressed to Lord Chesterfield was this: He had neglected to write it by the time appointed. Dodsley suggested a desire to have it addressed to Lord C. Mr. J. laid hold of this as an excuse for delay, that it might be better done perhaps, and let Dodsley have his desire. Mr. Johnson said to his friend, Doctor Bathurst: “Now if any good comes of my addressing to Lord Chesterfield it will be ascribed to deep policy and address, when, in fact, it was only a casual excuse for laziness.”

Thus we see that it was sheer laziness that led to the greatest triumph of Doctor Johnson’s life, the noble and memorable letter to Chesterfield in 1775.

Mind your business is a good counsel; but mind your idleness also. It’s a tragic thing to make a business of your mind. Save your mind to amuse yourself with.

The lazy man does not stand in the way of progress. When he sees progress roaring down upon him he steps nimbly out of the way. The lazy man doesn’t (in the vulgar phrase) pass the buck. He lets the buck pass him. We have always secretly envied our lazy friends. Now we are going to join them. We have burned our boats or our bridges or whatever it is that one burns on the eve of a momentous decision.

Writing on this congenial topic has roused us up to quite a pitch of enthusiasm and energy.