

## Fixing a Hole

*For my Revision Exhibit, I've isolated one paragraph which began with a full idea and a terrible delivery in order to focus on the logical flow mentioned in my Introductory Reflective Essay. In my first draft, I aim to explain how the W. E. B. Du Bois's short story "On Being Crazy" changes setting over the course of the story. Unfortunately, I begin with two different topics in one paragraph, and the first cut does not read well because of it.*

### Key

Needs to relate to thesis

Needs support from text

Needs to be rephrased

Added

Changed

### Draft 1

In the story, the narrator is a black man who is repeatedly obstructed or provoked by various citizens while attempting to talk part in incredibly normal activities. Comparing the activities of the narrator and the different parties who attack him, one finds two patterns. First is that the story opens with the narrator attempting to enjoy Beethoven's fifth symphony and dining out, and ends with him unable to get a room for rest or a train to ride out of town. The desires of the narrator descent from recreation towards necessities throughout the story. Second is that the progression of the narrator's needs is paralleled with the economic class of the individuals who seek to

antagonize him. In the restaurant and the theatre, the narrator is confronted by high class consumers, in the hotel and train station, the narrator is confronted by the working class, and in the final exchange is with a drifter, who is presumed to be homeless. The consistency to which the narrator is received by the public is a trait each of the classes have in common. From this lens, the insanity of the drifter's racism is central to the message of the story.

*This draft bit off more than it could chew, and compensates by simply explaining what I'm trying to say instead of showing the reader with the broader context from the story. The flow is clunky, it lacks a proper topic sentence and really doesn't give any clue as to how these ideas relate to the thesis. What I needed to do was to boil the paragraph down to its core idea and then build it back up with a more precise message.*

## **Draft 2**

The social status of the narrator declines as a result of the five individuals who demoralize him and deprive him from more and more basic goods and services. The story opens with the narrator attempting to enjoy Beethoven's fifth symphony or dine out, and ends with him unable to get a room for rest or a train to ride out of town. These comments impose a second class status on the narrator. In the theatre and restaurant, the narrator is confronted by high class consumers, in the hotel and train station, the narrator is confronted by working class employees, and the final exchange is with a drifter, who is presumed to be homeless and unemployed. Each aggressor aims to

lower the narrator to just below themselves until he is reduced the status of the drifter who shouts illogically.

*In the second draft, I've moved some of the ideas out to support different body paragraphs, leaving it hollow. In order to clarify my thoughts, I've simplified the core idea of the first draft of this paragraph into a single header sentence and followed with a summary. The flow of paragraph still needs serious improvement, but now the ideas are all immediately visible and ready to be rearranged and supported.*

### **Final**

From beginning to end, the social status of the narrator sharply declines as a direct result of those who deprive him from increasingly basic goods and services. At the start, the narrator is a consumer of middle to upper class luxuries, such as dining out or enjoying a performance of Beethoven's fifth symphony. In reaction to the color of his skin, his fellow patrons ask why he would go where he is not wanted and impose his presence on others. Their accusations, although not physically preventing him from eating his meal or listening to the symphony, impose a second class status on the narrator and transparently express that he does not belong. Afterwards, he is denied a room by a hotel clerk and a sleeper car by a ticket agent, each citing race as the primary reason. These interactions go further in their oppression because not only is the narrator denied acceptance among his working peers; he is denied basic goods and services despite an economic incentive to accept his patronage. Having to walk to his destination, the narrator meets another wayfarer who is clearly of very low social status.

The story ends with a series of illogical attacks and racial slurs shouted at the narrator, who is left contemplating the way his society has treated him.

*The final draft has all the same ideas as the second draft, but reworded and extra language to clarify some of the ideas put forward. In previous drafts the paragraph attempted to establish two ideas at once: that the needs of the narrator were becoming more basic, and that the cast of the individuals was decreasing in parallel. In the end I changed the focus to be less on the status of the individuals and more on the effect their aggression had on the narrator. I elaborated more on the status of these individuals, giving better context to my claims. As the paragraph goes on, I begin to foreshadow later topics while simultaneously wrapping up the paragraph.*