



CRITIQUE OF THE SNOD-ERN ESSAY

By Erik Lynch

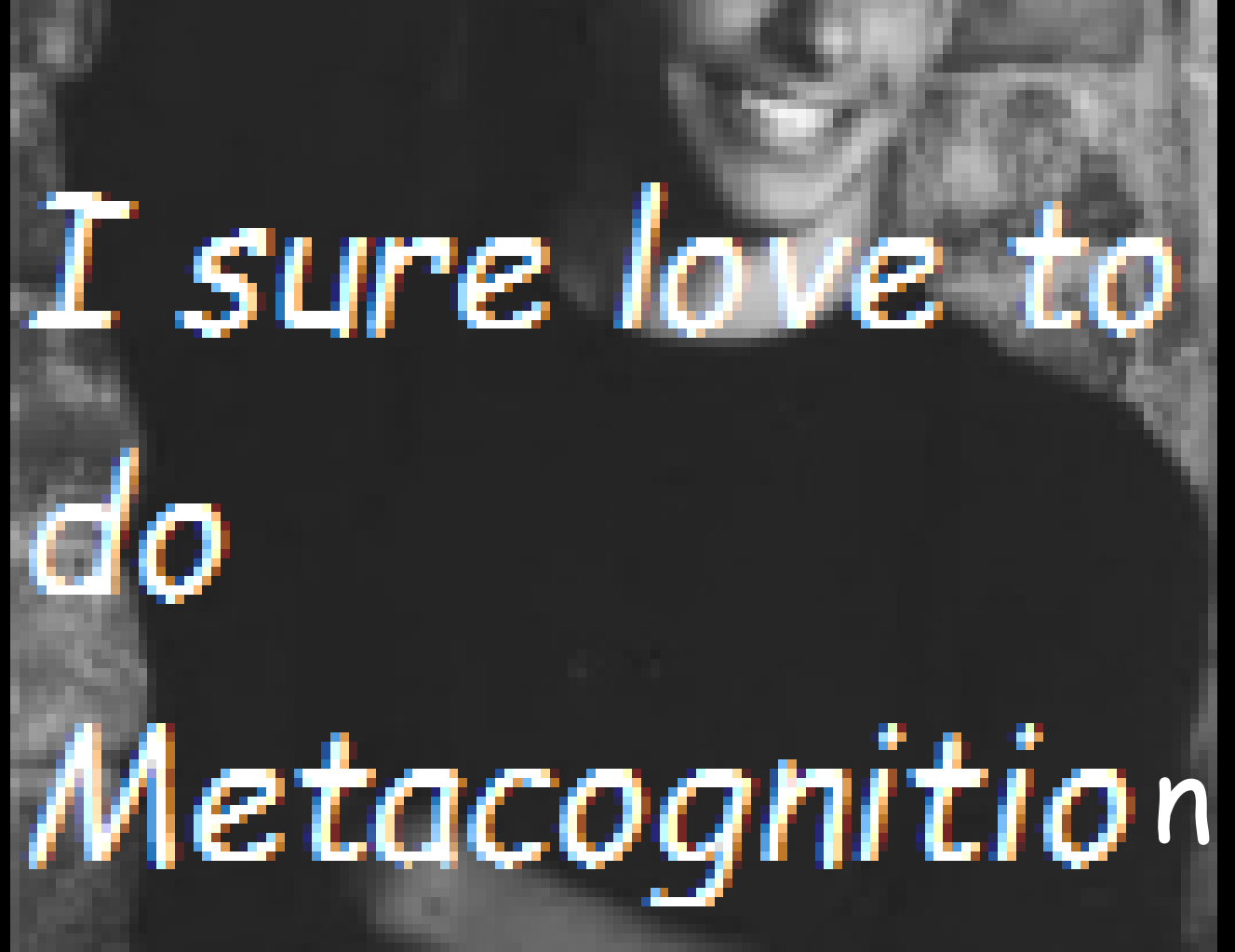
Memorial of the Five Paragraph Essay by Kevin Snodgrass

- *Memorial of the Five Paragraph Essay* is a 2011 article penned by ISU alum Kevin Snodgrass
- *Memorial* is a fantasy narrative, set in a bleak hellscape in which young Kevin's only friend on this mortal coil is a rigid, cold, and unloving essay organizational structure.
- Through his higher education, Kevin learns that there are greener pastures beyond the limiting and creatively void drudgery of the Five Paragraph Essay.
- Emerging from this intellectual tunnel, Kevin turns back and offers us his hand and a word of advice, for we too can escape the frosty clutches of the Five Paragraph Essay.



Snod on the writing process

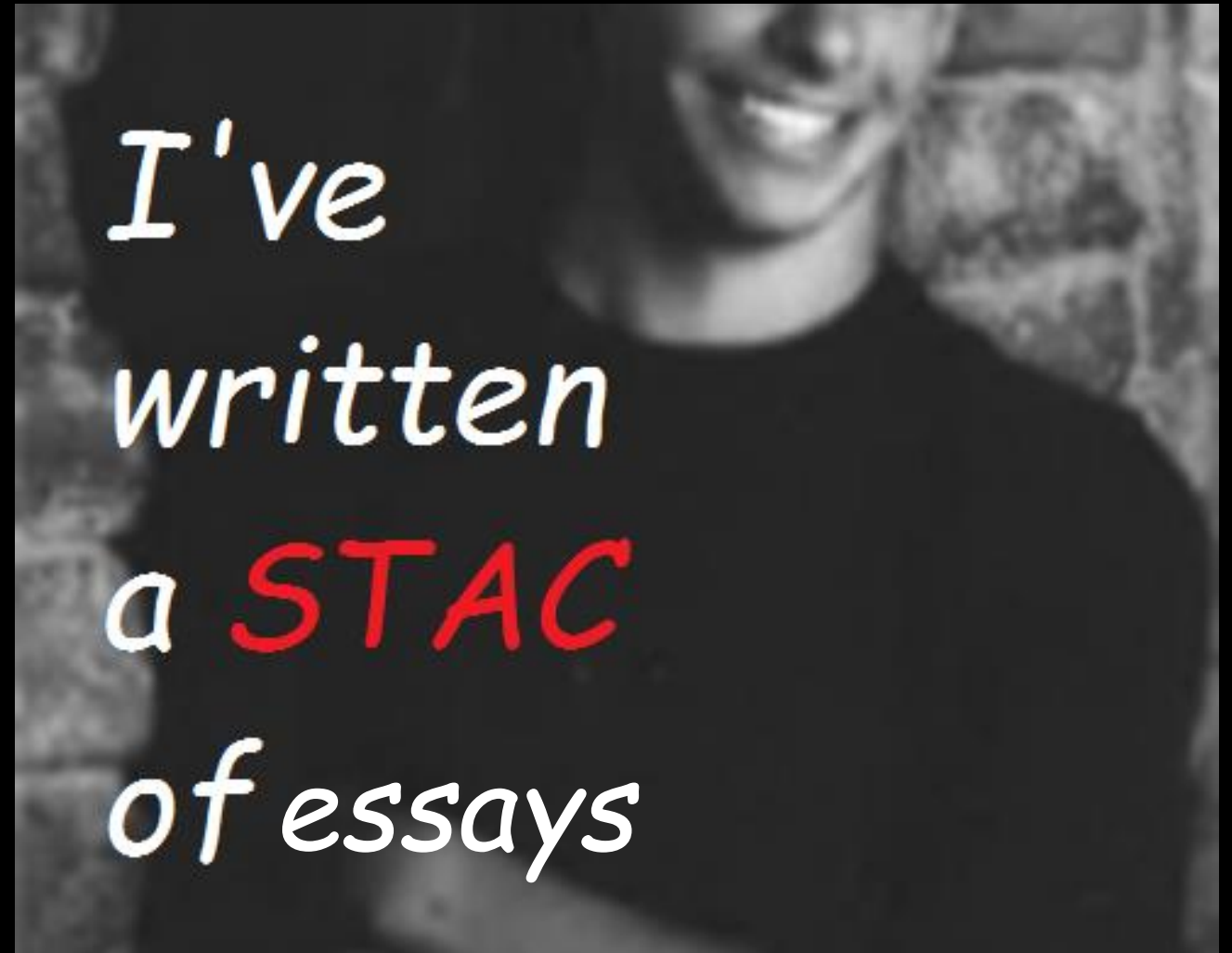
- Kevin Snodgrass is initially smitten with the Five Paragraph Essay structure, marveling at the ease of its implementation.
- Snodgrass alleges his teacher, “Told me to follow the steps of writing an introduction, body paragraph, body paragraph, body paragraph, and conclusion. He said that if I followed those guidelines I would be guaranteed a good grade “(Snodgrass, 2)
- For a writer standing in young Kevin’s light up Sketchers, the Five Paragraph Essay format seemed to be a gift from the heavens. Essays that all but write themselves? Young Kevin was nearly bursting with pure, unbridled joy.



*I sure love to
do
Metacognition*


Snod on the writing process 2: the Snod Awakens

- Young Kevin Snodgrass rode this wave of pre-cooked essays gleefully for many years, happy to churn out passable papers on everything from lizards to philanthropy.
- The diminutive Snodgrass was even more elated upon entering junior high, where he was introduced to two new transfer students: **ACTS** and **STAC**. ACTS and STAC were hip new templates for organizing the introduction and conclusion, respectively, of a Five Paragraph Essay.
- **A**ttention Getter **C**onnector **T**hesis Statement **S**ummary Sentence
- **S**ummary Sentence **T**hesis Restated **A**ttention Getter Restated **C**lincher Sentence



Snod on the writing process 3: the one where I finally get to The Point

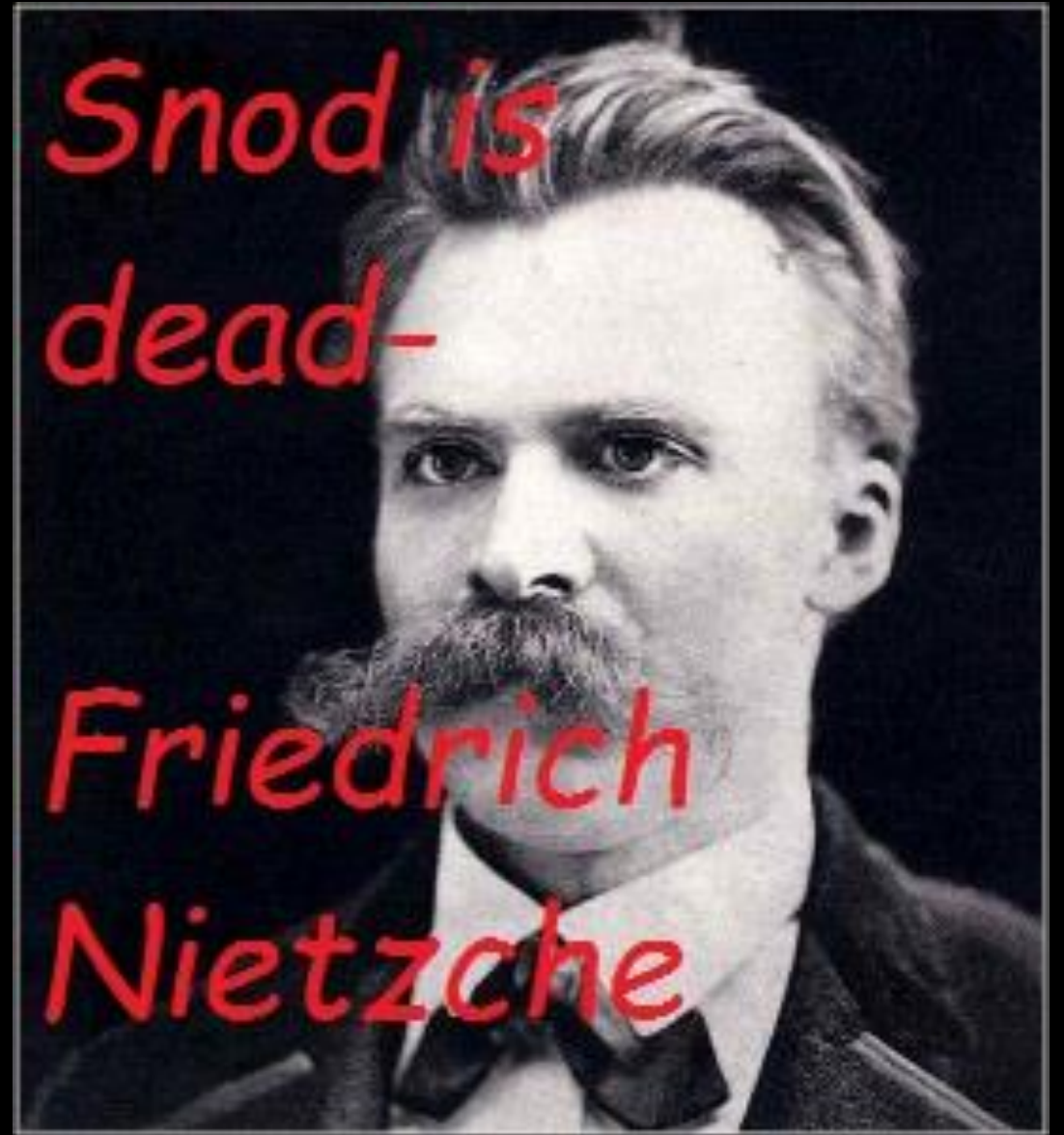
- While the Five Paragraph Essay structure provided young Kevin with countless hours of entertainment and much needed companionship, the good times could not last forever.
- The last hurrah of the ailing Five Paragraph Essay was with the introduction of **MEL-Con**, an efficient organizational template for the body paragraphs. **MEL-Con** consisted of a **Main Idea**, **Evidence**, **Link** from Evidence to the Main Idea, and a **Conclusion**.
- But, as all youths do, the juvenile Snodgrass went through a period of teenage rebellion, abandoning his old friends for **Creative Writing**, a cool new format with no bedtime. Kevin was already drifting away from his old pals.



*I think
this is
good,
actually*

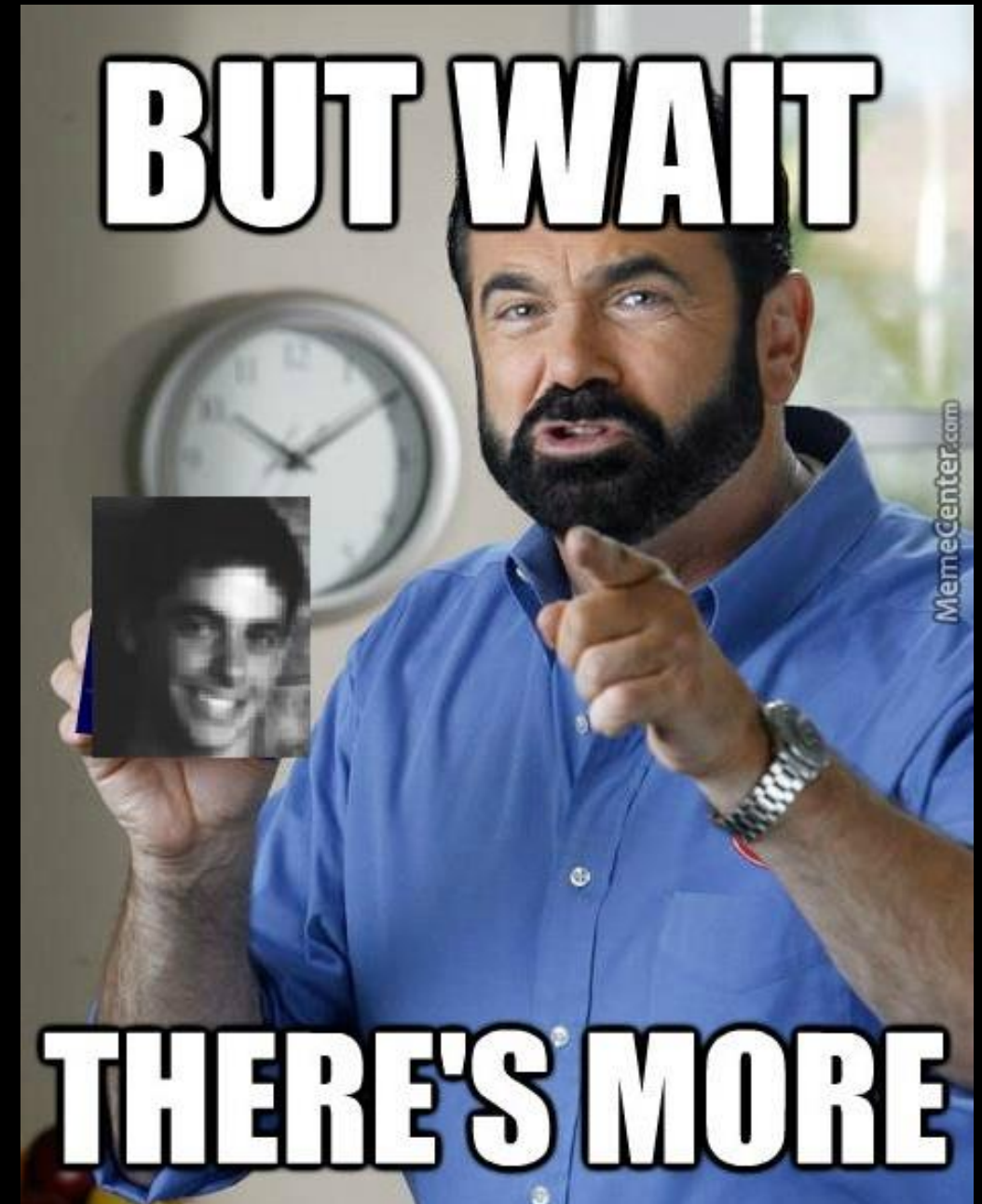
Snod4ever: The Elusive Point

- Despite its inherent lack of creative space, the Five Paragraph Essay apparently has a sense of dramatic timing. Like the climax of some great melodrama, the distraught Five Paragraph Essay bursts in from stage right, only to see how well their scorned lover is doing in their absence, thus prompting them to drop dead on the spot. *Curtain.*
- Kevin had discovered that the Five Paragraph Essay was actually binding him to a rote and lifeless mode of intellectual expression. Snodgrass realized he had nothing to lose but his chains, and abandoned the barbarous ignorance of Five Paragraph Essays for the fertile pastures of Creative Writing.



Through The Eyes of Snod

- The look of Kevin Snodgrass' writing process developed alongside the actual words on the paper.
- The most significant change introduced was that of **MEL-Con**, which has been defined previously.
- Snodgrass claims, "for each body paragraph I wrote I needed a main idea, evidence for that main idea, a link from the evidence back to the main idea, and a conclusion for each body paragraph in my 5-paragraph essay "(Snodgrass, 2-3).
- This change made Kevin Snodgrass' writing much clearer, but it did not address the fatal systemic flaws of the Five Paragraph Essay in the realm of creative expression, or lack thereof.



*For Your
Consideration:
Questions to
Mull Over*

1. How seriously does the rigidity of the Five Paragraph Essay structure curtail creative expression?
2. Is the Five Paragraph Essay's ease of use worth the trade off of little room for personalization?
3. Should the Five Paragraph Essay still be taught to our nation's schoolchildren, and why?
4. If not, what ought to replace it?

