Winston Churchill once said, "Attitude is a little thing that makes a big difference." Attitude is defined as thoughts or feelings preconceived towards certain actions or individuals that are reflected in a person's behavior ("Attitude"). In the poems "The Red Wheelbarrow" and "An Apology," one can see two different individuals who show how attitude reflects in their personality and how influential attitude is on the way they treat life and others. In William Carlos Williams’s "The Red Wheelbarrow," the narrator is depicted as a male with a simple and hopeful mindset, and in F.J. Bergmann’s "An Apology," the narrator is also described as a male but with a more condescending mindset. These two mentalities respectively paved the course for a life of compromising and a life of yearning.

In order to understand a person's attitude, one must also consider a person's personality, for attitude is also reflected in personality. According to Bandura's Social Learning Theory, nurture and environment largely influence a person's personality; environment can also largely influence an individual's attitude as well (Bandura). In the poems "The Red Wheelbarrow" and "An Apology" both narrators reveal certain traits about their own personality. According to the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, the narrator in "The Red Wheelbarrow" depicted an ISTJ personality, which stands for introvert, sensing, thinking and judging; these individuals are quiet, serious, and earn success by thoroughness and dependability ("The 16 MBTI Types"). They also enjoy making everything orderly and organized - their work, their home, their life and value traditions and loyalty ("The 16
MBTI Types”). On the other hand, the narrator in "An Apology“ showed an ENTJ personality, which stands for extraversion, intuition, thinking, and judging; in addition to being well informed, well read, decisive, and straightforward, people with this personality type assume leadership readily and enjoy expanding their knowledge and passing it on to others ("The 16 MBTI Types“). Understanding a person's personality gives one greater insight on that person's attitude.

Along with seeing how attitude is reflected in a person's personality, one can also see how attitude influences a person's behavior. According to Saul McLeod, the strength of which attitude affects one's behavior depends on how strongly that individual feels about the certain action or person. The strength of the opinion can be determined by the personal relevance and the knowledge that individual already has about the topic. Another thing attitude impacts is personal thoughts and reasoning. In the poems "The Red Wheelbarrow" and "An Apology," the narrators revealed their inner thoughts by showing their ego-expressive and ego-defensive functions of attitude. The narrator of the poem, “The Red Wheelbarrow,” showed the more expressive side because he was proud of using a wheelbarrow, which reflected his deeper understanding of others' feelings. Contrary to this, the narrator in "An Apology," revealed a more defensive side because he used his self-needs as a way to excuse himself of the guilt that he felt for smashing the wheelbarrow, which is symbolic of hurting others' feelings. Therefore, one sees how a person’s perspective impacts how he/she behaves.

In the poem “The Red Wheelbarrow,” one sees just how much the narrator’s attitude impacted his outlook on life. The lines, “so much depends/ upon// a red wheel/ barrow./” (Williams lines 1-4) reveal two important aspects of the individual. The first characteristic the lines portrayed was that the narrator enjoyed traditional practices. He
understood that he had to work to succeed in life, and he was grateful that he could work. He showed his gratefulness by referring to a wheelbarrow, which requires a lot of physical labor, instead of a tractor or a lawn mower, which requires less physical labor. A wheelbarrow also symbolizes a well state of mind because it is a stable tool to do work, so the second quality that the lines revealed was that he truly knew the importance of having and maintaining a healthy mindset. One can also see this in the lines, “glazed with rain/water//beside the white/chickens,” (Williams lines 5-8) because they show that he ranked a healthy mentality as important as water and food. This type of mindset is what allowed him to identify with others instead of just with himself.

Likewise, the narrator in "An Apology" showed how his attitude interfered with his outlook on life. In the lines, “Forgive me/for backing over/and smashing/your red wheelbarrow,” (Bergmann lines 1-4), one sees that the individual was not truly sorry for his actions. In William Carlos Williams’s poem, the red wheelbarrow symbolizes an individual's mindset, which entails opinions, feelings, and habits. The narrator in F.J. Bergmann’s poem did not care to smash others' feelings if that meant he got where he wanted to be, which shows that he was not sorry for running over the wheelbarrow but sorry that the other person's wheelbarrow was in the way. Then, the lines, “It was raining/and the rear wiper/does not work on/my new plum-colored SUV,” (Bergmann lines 5-8) prove this point even more. He thought so highly of himself that he was clouded by his own ambition, and he felt that his actions should be excused because of this clouding. He believed the other person was standing in the way of his success, which was reason enough to harm the other individual. Due to this, one can see how his mentality only made him think of himself and never of others.
After discussing the mindset of the individual in “The Red Wheelbarrow,” one sees the effect it had on how he treated others. This individual understood the importance of feeling just as good mentally as well as physically, and because of this, he was able to compromise with others. His cooperative trait allowed him to be loyal and dependable, which are both character traits of his personality. This ability also allowed him to sympathize with others and put others' needs temporarily above his own. In the end, this mentality enabled him to make small sacrifices but still lead a successful life. He was able to appreciate the good that comes from these sacrifices and happily celebrated the small victories in life.

Moreover, the narrator in "An Apology" showed how his differing attitude also largely affected his treatment of others. Contrary to the first individual, he could only feel successful with large victories. Due to this, he was always yearning for greater things and was never truly satisfied. His constant desire and need for new objects, such as materials or knowledge, also relates back to his personality type. His yearning prevented him from living a fulfilling life, so he took it out on others. He believed that his needs should be put above everyone else’s regardless of the situation. In the lines, “I am also sorry/ about the white/ chickens,/” (Bergmann lines 9-11), he knew that by hitting the chickens—which symbolize food—he was stripping an individual of his or her chance at survival. However, all he had to offer that person was an insincere apology. He did not see an issue with what he did because he saw an opportunity and took it. Overall, one sees how this simple change of attitude has an everlasting imprint on another individual's life, whether it be good or bad.

In conclusion, an individual’s mindset clearly plays a key role in how that individual is perceived by others and how he or she treats life and people. In the two poems discussed, one sees two men who revealed so much about themselves with just their
outlook on life. One also sees the life of man who was willing to cooperate and felt successful, and the life of man who was constantly wanting and lacked the feeling of successfulness. This drastic difference in lifestyle can all be tied back to one simple thing: attitude. These attitudes are as simple as one random thought or as complex as generations worth of passed down biases. Regardless, an individual sees how Winston Churchill’s saying rings true in every possible situation.
Works Cited


