The Noisy Water Review 2012-2013
Anthology of Student Writing & Art
Whatcom Community College

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Winter Solstice

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Madison Cooley

Boats of precious cargo breeze across Bellingham Bay

as I am sitting in the brisk cold of this Northwest winter.

Neither fog nor rain has come today,

just peaks of sunlight in the sky and some refreshing wind.

we live

for days like this one

rain pours down like a habit I have become numb to on most days,

making those with just the smallest amount of Vitamin D more valuable.

Winter causes some form of contemplation among most of us;

we think about the days when the sun lasted late in the night

knowing they aren't too far away.

Some form of solitude

peers through the ice on my windshield every morning

leaving me plenty of time.

Ducks diving into the brisk ocean water as I anticipate the man-made thunder bellowing from a train in the distance

I stay motionless and watch the train pass, knowing it's almost dinnertime.

It will get dark soon.

Naked tree branches intertwined with perfectly green ones giving me hope that spring and summer are soon to come.

But not soon enough, I think, as I put my hands to my mouth.

Blowing air into my wool gloves to heat my fingers

I can almost imagine the lush trees filled with sunlight.

A rogue cloud emerges in defiance of the tranquil day surrounding me.

The beaming sun reflects intently against the pale white rocks, forcing me to lower my gaze and smile softly.

Contentment with what surrounds me is rare these days.

Always searching for something more.

Violent white caps thrust themselves onto the broken rocks that make up the shoreline. The water ripples like a wrinkle in my linen dress

as I loose myself in the serenity

that is only found

in the stillness of the open,

Northwest air.

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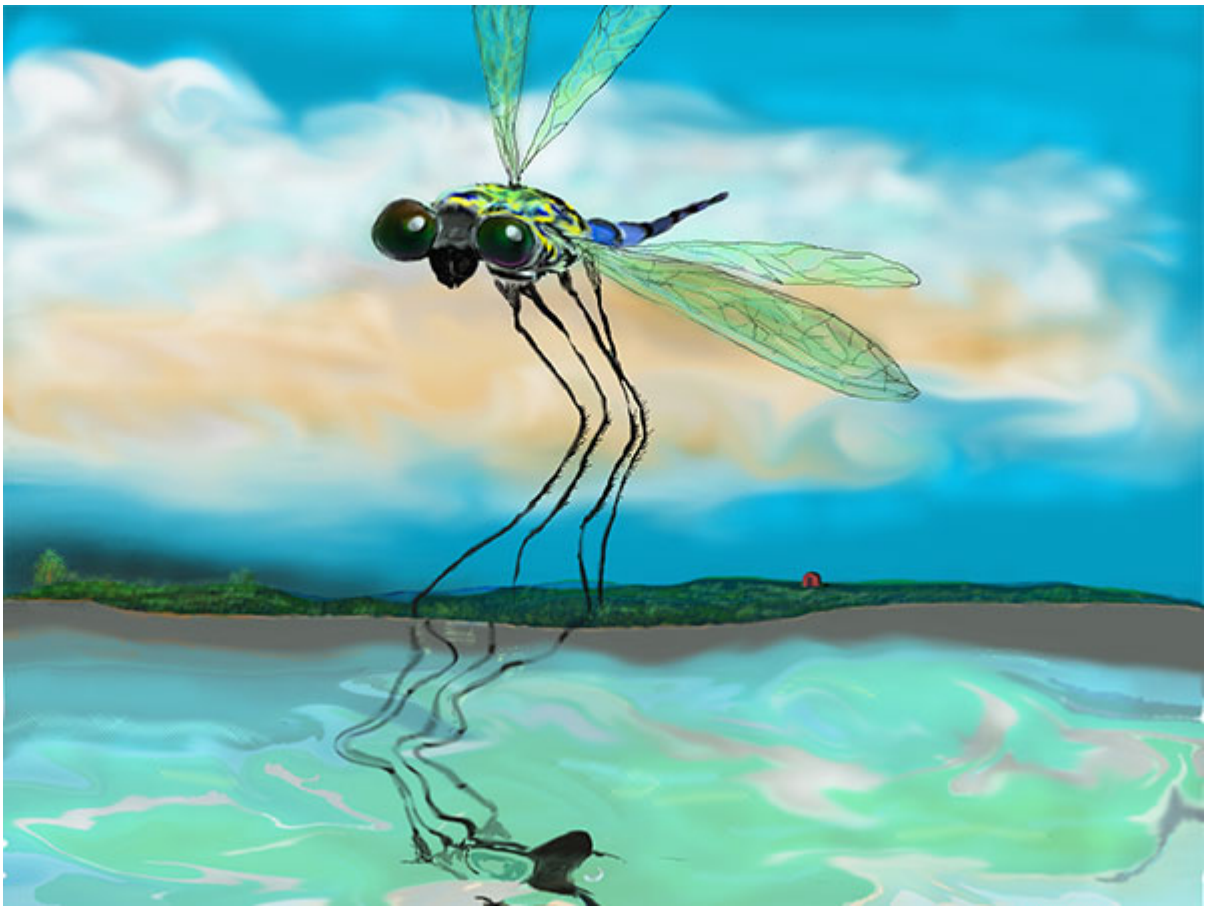

Annie Byers

Contemplation

Digital painting, 7.5" x 10"

The Psychosocial Effects of Sickle Cell Disease in the African American Population

noisywater.whatcom.edu/site_1213/pages_1213/03-01essay.html

Terri Anderson

Abstract

Sickle cell disease (SCD) is a genetic abnormality that deforms the red blood cell into a sickle shape that does not travel easily through the circulatory system. People of African descent are the primary victims of this debilitating disease. Every aspect of the life of the client with SCD is greatly affected. Clients with SCD have expressed their concerns about the lack of education among healthcare providers and the community, lack of skill in treating SCD, and the stigmatization of the healthcare system toward clients with SCD. Clients repeatedly become labeled as drug seekers due to the predominant symptom of severe pain and are undertreated. Education of the healthcare team about the pain associated with SCD can enable the nurse to advocate for timely and effective pain relief for the client. The ER nurse can empower themself and others to develop an open and trusting relationship with the client afflicted with SCD and avoid the stigma of a drug seeker. From school age children to adults, clients with this disease are often isolated and mistreated. The school nurse and teachers are in a prime position to work together and with the parents to educate each other and the community about this disease and the best ways to support the families. The disruption in family life is significant for the client and the caregivers. Families are separated for extended periods of time for hospitalizations and treatments creating increased stress and caregiver role strain. An increase in education among health care providers who in turn can educate the community about SCD would influence positive outcomes for these clients from infancy to adulthood. Advocacy for these clients is lacking, and nurses are in a position to be the advocates for an increase of quality of care and community support.

The Psychosocial Effects of Sickle Cell Disease in the African American Population

Sickle cell disease (SCD) is one of the most common genetic diseases in the United States, affecting approximately 70,000 African-Americans occurring in about 1 of every 500 African-American births (Mann-Jiles & Morris, 2009). SCD is a chronic, autosomal recessive disorder identified by the predominance of the protein hemoglobin S (HbS) in red blood cells (Gold, Mahrer, Treadwell, Weissman, & Vichinsky, 2008). Hemoglobin is critical for the transport of oxygen throughout the body and is composed of two alpha globulin chains and two beta globulin chains. In sickle hemoglobin, the beta globulin differs from normal globulin by the substitution of valine for glutamic acid at the sixth position resulting in a crescent (sickle) shaped red blood cell (Gold, et al., 2008). Due to the odd shape of the red blood cell, it does not move easily through the blood vessels and obstructs vital blood flow to

tissues and organs. After repeated cycles of deoxygenation and reoxygenation, sickled cells sustain permanent damage and are destroyed at a high rate, causing anemia (Gold, et al., 2008). The disease is characterized by chronic hemolytic anemia, increased susceptibility to infections, extensive organ damage, intermittent pain episodes, and chronic pain, all of which can range from mild to severe, often requiring emergency intervention (Mann-Jiles & Morris, 2009).

In addition to the debilitating physical symptoms and severe pain of SCD, the psychological and social effects of the disease have a significant impact on quality of life (Knight-Madden, Lewis, Tyson, Reid, & MooSang, 2011). The life of the person with SCD is continually interrupted and limited by physical symptoms, severe pain, hospitalizations, and treatments. The absences from work, school, and social functions create feelings of isolation and depression leading to negative coping behaviors (Mann-Jiles & Morris, 2009). This paper will examine the psychosocial impact of living with sickle cell disease and the nurse's role in implementing interventions to achieve positive psychosocial outcomes and improve quality of life among the African American population.

Methods

Research was conducted through EBSCO host and the Health Source: Nursing Academic Addition database. The research term used in the EBSCO search engine was "sickle cell disease." Research results were limited by the selection of peer reviewed journals and publication date of October 2007 through October 2012. Articles were chosen upon current research related to the psychosocial effects of sickle cell disease in the African American population. Articles chosen were of American peer-reviewed journals only.

The article by Graff, Hankins, Hardy, Hall and Roberts (2010), *Exploring Parent-Sibling Communication in Families of Children with Sickle Cell Disease,* reveals the findings of interviews with parent of children with SCD and the positive effects of communication within the family and members of the community. Their experiences of how providing care has affected their life relates to the topic of this paper.

The article by Bediako, Lattimer, Haywood Jr, Ratanawongsa, Lanzkron, & Beach (2011) was chosen for their examination of religious coping and hospital admissions among African Americans with SCD. Their article, *Religious Coping and Hospital Admissions Among Adults with Sickle Cell Disease,* discusses religion as a positive coping mechanism and how it is associated with positive outcomes. Their study relates to the topic of this paper as it is aimed directly at African Americans with SCD and how religion influences their quality of life.

The article titled, *Quality of Life of Adult Patients with Sickle Cell Disease,* written by Mann-Jiles and Morris (2009) discusses their study of quality of life in adult patients with SCD in comparison with the general population. This article was chosen for the information

provided about specific aspects affecting patients' quality of life. The psychological and psychosocial information provided relates to the topic of this paper.

The article, *Psychosocial and Behavioral Outcomes in Children with Sickle Cell Disease and Their Healthy Siblings,* written by Gold, Mahrer, Treadwell, Weissman, and Vichinsky (2008), examines the psychosocial functioning among children with SCD and their healthy siblings including caregiver evaluation of the children's behavior. This article was chosen for the study of behavioral outcomes among children with SCD. The article relates to the topic of this paper for the discussion of positive psychosocial outcomes and behavioral problems.

The articles by Knight-Madden, Lewis, Tyson, Reid, and MooSang (2011), *The Possible Impact of Teachers and School Nurses on the Lives of Children Living with Sickle Cell Disease,* and two articles by Haywood, Lanzkron, Ratanawongsa, Bediako, Lattimer, Powe, and Beach (2010), *A Video-Intervention to Improve Clinician Attitudes Toward Patients with Sickle Cell Disease: The Results of a Randomized Experiment,* and (2010) *The Association of Provider Communication with Trust Among Adults with Sickle Cell Disease,* were used as support of information found in the additional research articles. These articles were chosen for the relevance of the interventions and positive psychosocial outcomes.

Discussion

African Americans with SCD face stigma, discrimination, lack of specialty care, family and work issues, social isolation, disruptions in social activities and relationships, and significant risk for early mortality, all of which contribute to quality of life (Mann-Jiles & Morris, 2009). Research conducted by Mann-Jiles and Morris (2009) found evidence that psychological and social factors contribute substantially to complaints of pain. These authors identified factors related to pain issues such as race, gender, age, education, socioeconomic status, coping mechanisms, and social support. The disease process itself leads to leg ulcers, delayed growth and sexual maturation creating low self-esteem and poor body image. SCD negatively affects family functioning causing increased stress and depression among all family members. Frequent hospitalizations restrict the parents and siblings' opportunities to form or sustain relationships causing them to become isolated. One study reviewed by Mann-Jiles and Morris (2010) found that black clients had significantly increased pain scores when compared to white clients, while white clients were prescribed opioids more often than black clients due to the providers concerns of addiction, tolerance, and side effects. This indicates an important need for increased education of SCD among healthcare providers and the importance of nurse advocacy for greater quality of care without discrimination among this population.

The school life of a child with SCD can be a significant factor in their psychosocial functioning with both positive and negative outcomes. Due to the significant symptoms of SCD, children are treated differently among their peers along with increased absenteeism and cognitive deficits (Knight-Madden et al., 2010). Teachers and school nurses with the knowledge of SCD can intervene to improve the child's quality of life. Complications of SCD

can be detected early if the teacher and school nurse are taught what symptoms to watch for and how to detect them. Teachers can provide education to the class about SCD in an attempt reduce teasing and isolation of the affected child from the other students. It is important for the teacher to discourage comparisons between children living with SCD and their unaffected siblings who may have better academic performances (Knight-Madden et al., 2010). Increased disease-related absences will benefit from schoolwork being sent home or to the hospital to encourage the child to continue to learn. Knight-Madden et al. (2010) concludes that school-nurse case management for children aged 5-19 years old with SCD has been shown to improve educational and psychosocial outcomes, and nurses have sought to be at the forefront in trying to reduce health disparities such as those in children who suffer from SCD.

Interviews conducted by Graff et al. (2010) explored parent-sibling communication about SCD along with factors contributing to their experience of living with SCD and/or caring for a child with SCD. There is a significant demand of time and energy from the parents of a child with SCD, which can negatively affect siblings. Graff et al. (2010) found that parents felt uneducated or undereducated about SCD and have difficulty explaining it but were eager to learn more about the disease and communicate more effectively with their family and community. Open and problem-solving communication can lead to better psychological adjustment for siblings (Graff et al., 2010). Members of the community witnessing a crisis are fearful and avoid the child leaving the parent without support or guidance. Parents who are able to communicate clearly the effects and cause of the crisis can educate the community and receive support and acceptance of the child. For parents who find it difficult to communicate with their children or others, the nurse can intervene by providing educational materials, identifying resources, and introducing social networks within the community for guidance.

For clients with SCD and parents of children with SCD, navigating the health care system creates increased stress for the entire family. This author found that negative outcomes related to emergency room visits among clients with SCD was a recurring topic in the literature reviewed. Severe pain that varies in intensity and duration is what brings the client to the ER on numerous occasions. The pain of SCD is misunderstood and undertreated by the health care team. Graff et al. (2010) found that parents preferred a specialized clinic and avoided taking their sick child to the emergency room due to lack of skill and education of the health care workers about SCD. Increased sibling distress was associated with the number of ER visits as well as behavior problems in the child with SCD (Graff et al., 2010). There are long waits in the emergency waiting room despite the child experiencing a sickle cell crisis. Efficient and timely treatment of the client with SCD can help to decrease the amount of stress on the entire family. A nurse-initiated protocol (NIP) for a patient experiencing a sickle cell crisis should be implemented in all emergency rooms and hospitals as well as specialized training for IV starts and blood draws in patients with sickle cell disease.

The research study conducted by Gold et al. (2008) reported no significant behavioral issues between children with SCD and their healthy siblings with some exception. Their report found positive psychosocial functioning without clinically significant behavioral problems with the exception of somatic complaints and internalizing behavior such as withdrawal, anxiety, depression, and thought problems. In addition, Gold et al. (2008) found an increase in externalizing behavior problems such as aggression, delinquency, attention problems, and social problems that led to increased ER visits. Internalizing behaviors may go undetected by medical professionals and lead to increased external behaviors. By reviewing the complete medical history of the child including the number of ER visits, the nurse can determine the extent of increasing external behaviors and intervene by providing resources for additional medical/psychosocial treatment.

Within the African American community, the church is a significant source of support. The members of the church share the burdens of the families struggling with SCD and provide emotional as well as physical support. For single parents who have multiple roles within the family, the church is a source of strength and guidance. Bediako et al. (2010) revealed that religious coping such as Bible study, prayer, and church attendance led to positive health outcomes and fewer hospital admissions. Given that SCD predominately affects African Americans, attention by healthcare professionals to this culture's dependence on the church can greatly influence health outcomes. Holistic nursing for this population that incorporates increased pastoral care and spiritual support as primary nursing interventions will influence psychological well-being.

The treatment and support of the client with SCD at any age and the family requires education of the entire community. From school nurses and physicians to members of the church, everyone in contact with the client can be given the tools necessary to positively affect the wellbeing of the client providing positive psychosocial outcomes and a greater quality of life. Greater attention is needed for the possibility of an increase in the number of specialized clinics in densely populated areas of clients with SCD to provide care without stigmatization and a decrease in exacerbations by timely treatment and expert skill provided by specially trained nurses. For urgent care, the ER nurse should be armed with the necessary skill and compassion to identify a sickle cell crisis and act quickly to reduce the amount of strain and frustration on the family. Nurse advocacy for education and treatment for the child with SCD greatly increases positive psychosocial outcomes and may influence the adult life of the child by reducing stigmatization and providing opportunities for continued growth and positive functioning within society.

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Rain Comes Down

noisywater.whatcom.edu/site_1213/pages_1213/04-02music.html

Peter Haugerud

“Rain Comes Down” is an apocalyptic love song, I suppose. It's from our EP *3 Thumbs and a Pocket Full O' Nuthin*' that we recorded last year at Fairhaven Studios with Louis Ramsay. The musicians are myself “Stinky” Pete Irving on guitar and lead vocals, “Muther” Andy Ingram on stand up bass and harmonies, Charlie Baby on musical saw and harmonies, and Dr. Washbones on percussion. Our band is Hot Damn Scandal and our new album will be released at the Subdued Stringband Jamboree on August 9th. I am currently a student at Whatcom.

Kissing

noisywater.whatcom.edu/site_1213/pages_1213/05-02crwriting.html

Laura Hansen

cedric was the first person I kissed
it was too long ago though and I
barely remember remembering it

then I kissed Emily
we opened our mouths
and when we were in a hot tub together
we both did the same thing

Emily told me that she and Kate
tried to 'do it'
it didn't work
but they rubbed together

her house always smelled
kind of sweet and sick to me
and her dad use to sit
in the living room
and watch tv in his briefs

Emily told me that when
Kate and her sister slept over
she would lay between them in bed
and make out with one
then the other

it was easy to kiss Emily
because she liked to kiss
years later I talked to a mutual friend
"Emily was the first person I kissed"
"yeah me too" she said

I tried to kiss my best friend
but she didn't like to be touched
so one day I told her
to close her eyes and open her mouth

I never kissed my other friends
except in truth or dare
where I had a good excuse
to kiss anyone

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April Yoder

Wings

Photograph, 7.5" x 10"

Winning Women in Noir: Independence at Any Price

noisywater.whatcom.edu/site_1213/pages_1213/07-02essay.html

Shelly Bernstein

This writing looks at the roles of the leading female characters in two postmodern noir films, *Jackie Brown* and *The Grifters*. In order to understand where the characters fit contextually, four areas are considered here: The effects of the Production Code's end, how violence against women changed from classic noir to postmodern noir periods and the complexities of women's economic and familial issues these films illustrate. Each area contributes to understanding the postmodern noir female character and her real-world counterpart and the real-world ramifications these roles bring to light. Given the limited scope of this work, these views are regrettably cursory in nature, forcing this to be a "tap on the shoulder" rather than the "full frontal punch in the face" a true noir evaluation deserves.

After the conservative veil of the Production Code was lifted from American filmmaking in 1968, women's roles in noir began to more closely reflect the struggles and truths of women's lives. Nearly forty years of the Code had created a vision of life that more resembled the ideals of the Catholic Church than those of most Americans. Storylines were forced by Code law to punish those who committed crimes, especially women, and morality had to win, no matter what storyline contrivance was necessary in order to punish those evil women. Joan Crawford's diabolical demeanor and Barbara Stanwyck's controlled face and stilted manner were aspects of women in noir that shifted as the Code faded from its glory days, replaced with Kathleen Turner's sultry voice and heated presence and Angie Dickinson's seductive sexuality. A further shift occurred from the heavy stylization of the eighties into a period of greater realism in characterization from the nineties onward. Although *Jackie Brown* and *The Grifters* represent caricatures more than realistic stories and views of women, they maintain a sense of realism in the female protagonist herself that is less present in classic noir and through the stylized eighties. Certainly there are plenty of classic noir films and roles that are realistic, but overall, the Code infected films with false images through their quest for societal purity. The truth of what is real can be tested: Only in the last decade have laws against domestic violence begun to adequately protect American women. If not addressed in society itself, can the realities that women face be accurately portrayed in film?

Parallels can be drawn between the end of the Code manipulation and shift toward realism to the flood of American films in France after World War II. The absence of rules allowed changes in society to be shown overtly, without the artifice of suggestion in film. One might presume a creative backlog was waiting to be unleashed that would let the world see into American's living rooms and bedrooms, just as the creative flood entered France in earlier times. Women were more likely to be on birth control pills than sitting at home pregnant. They were intent upon having careers and knew what they wanted—regardless of whether those wants were realistic. The rapid changes in baby-boom society left countless women

without the necessary tools to navigate an increasingly complicated era. Women were attempting to crash the "glass ceiling," divorce was rampant, easy travel fractured family connections and the onset of trickle-down economics all contributed to women's challenges. The freedoms women gained were hard-earned but at a price. The onscreen physical abuse of Jo Ann in *The Long Goodbye* could not be portrayed under Code rule. In *The Grifters*, Lilly's failure to follow Bobo's rules of grifting caused her to endure his harsh punishment. Never in Code years would a woman be shown on-screen having her face sliced by glass or hand burned with a cigar. Fortunately, it is not entirely clear whether Lilly was actually gut-punched with a towel full of oranges but Jo Ann's face-slashing appeared real enough. Worse than hitting and burning Lilly, Bobo humiliated her by telling her in advance what he was going to do, that it might very well kill her (slowly) and forced her implication in her own torture. To illustrate the change in the handling of violence toward women in noir, simply compare how graphic the violence of Christina's murder feels in *Kiss Me Deadly*. As shocking as that "off-screen" murder feels, the treatment of Lilly by Bobo is more difficult to voyeuristically watch.

In *Jackie Brown*, Jackie should have been the "femme fatale" by her role as the double-crossing thief. Having an opportunity to win in the end, she chooses only to double-cross the person who threatens her very life. Jackie had a problem in her past, often a commonality for the true "femme fatale." She is not a bad woman, rather one with a problem needing solution and has no one but herself to rely on in order to find it. Being a black, middle-aged, single woman in America with no prospects for her future and a criminal record that limits her, she represents countless women—more true now than when the film was made. Jackie's is the problem of the woman who either chooses not to marry, had a difficult marriage that she was able to leave, or put her career first, all realistic situations for women from the seventies onward. Viewing Jackie's situation positively, she is the smart modern woman who knows each step necessary in order to win over the cops, her gun-dealing (second job) employer Ordell and all of his employees. One advancement for women's sake is that Jackie is spared on-screen violence.

Viewing these films through the lens of family, the obvious element to note is the incestuous nature of the relationship between Lilly and Roy. Rarely are women in noir allowed any normalcy in life, and negative stereotypes of abnormal family constructs are furthered in both films. Lilly gave up having Roy as family when she was young, perhaps too young to understand the need for family. Or perhaps she separated from him because she was forced to do so in order to survive, aspects of loss real-world women endure in the quest for autonomy and self-sufficiency. As circumstances drew Lilly closer in proximity to her son, she chose to reunite the relationship. Her desire for closeness to him appears layered, but at the end, as he is dying from her final error, her love for him and desire to have an authentic relationship seems to cause her deep anguish. She gets the money in the end but is alone, giving her an empty win. Lilly does not have the benefit of Jackie's happiness, illustrating the real-world dichotomy women face choosing between family and money.

The lack of family for Lilly and Jackie is a truthful indicator of what was happening in women's lives in the eighties and nineties, and if viewed honestly is truer now. In the "normal" work environment, women were (and are) expected to work as long and hard as men; certainly eighty hour work weeks were not out of the question in the eighties and nineties, a fact to which this author can attest. These characters represent an alternate choice to the rigors of the new work world in which women were, and are, forced to cope, getting the short straw in all areas of life, and represents their creative answer to the "you can have it all" mentality. The representation of their loneliness was part of the sacrifice women were making as they tried to achieve the self-sufficiency promised them by the earlier feminist movement. The lack of history for women in highly competitive and independent environments created a situation where there were no tools for meaningful dialogue about the problems that come with these territories. These modern women were in an old pickle, with no good solutions to their predicaments, having no one to talk to and learn from. Both films' core storylines center on the difficulty women face in attempting to solve the problem of financial and familial stability, however, neither film speaks to these challenges overtly, leaving the viewer to interpret each woman's obstacles and goals. Granted, it is not the goal in film to use words where interpretation and nuance speak volumes but this vagueness mirrors how American society has not openly addressed the problem of women trying to achieve all things, believing they would have to sacrifice none.

In *Out of the Past*, Ann's win is melancholy—she gets the man who will take care of her, but not the man she wants, and rather than choose on her own, the deaf/mute boy rescues this implicitly helpless woman by providing the necessary information to protect her. This kind of role is not part of the postmodern female character, as seen by contrasting *Out of the Past's* denouement to *Jackie Brown*'s; the sharp-minded Jackie makes the decision about who she ends up with and how it happens. Her detective is such a good man that he does not say a word when she makes the decision to take the well-deserved vacation, leaving her room to come to her own conclusion. Moreover, Jackie *alone* orchestrates the entire solution to the complex problem of getting the money, staying alive and outsmarting the cops. She gets the man and the money, without the threat of repercussions. It is unfortunate that she was forced to commit dangerous crimes in order to achieve both emotional and financial success, again representative of women's real-world limitations.

Lilly's situation is different than Jackie's in many ways. She leaves with the money, as did Jackie, and she really is not a bad woman, as with Jackie. However, what Lilly actually wants is love and family. She is lonely—more so than Jackie, and is seeking place and home, hopefully with her son who is the only family she has. Both have a pseudo-family in their respective crime communities, but those families are motivated to kill the women, serving as an anti-family structure. Jackie wants family, and like Lilly is concerned with self-sufficiency, but Jackie understands that having the independence money offers is what allows her to have the happiness of a loving relationship. She is determined to not be controlled by anyone.

Lilly's desire for freedom is the reason she needs the money, as opposed to desire for independence, a subtle but important distinction. Both are forced by lack of option to resort to illegal action in order to survive.

It may be obvious to the reader here that this work has not dealt with these characters through the easy prism of the "femme fatale." There are reasons for this. The first and most obvious reason is that the female characters mentioned herein are not necessarily "femme fatales" (certainly Jo Ann, Ann and Christina are not). The second reason is that the only way to break gender stereotypes and more equally balance the playing field between men and women is to withdraw from participating in the furtherance of those stereotypes. To that end, Julie Grossman suggests that yoking together sexuality, evil, and powerful women is insufficiently addressed in viewing film noir, and proposes a modified perspective that builds on the work of feminists who suggest that female viewers find grounds for empathy in understanding the "femme fatale" (25). She argues that in order to fully engage in reading film noir, it is necessary to confront simulacral fantasies that not only surround the "femme fatale" but that generate ideas in the culture that have material effects. She suggests that shifting our nomenclature to terms such as "hard-boiled females" or simply *femmes modernes*, rather than strictly as "femme fatales," we can more clearly see the ongoing force of binary oppositions in the presentation of gender in contemporary culture and we highlight film noir's aim to destabilize gender categories. She continues that the predominance of the idea of the "femme fatale" shapes our viewing of all women in noir and keeps us from recognizing complex levels of female subjectivity and the extent to which women are trapped in social roles they can't change or into performing the role of the "femme fatale" (in film) which then perpetuates ideation surrounding these women. This author agrees with Grossman and prefers to identify Jackie and Lilly as "hard-boiled," which is clearly supported by their stated history of difficulty in life. They are trapped by their circumstances. What is truly sad is that these hard-suffering characters have life so much easier (even considering their extensive suffering and hardship) than an incredibly high percentage of real-world women, and that women viewing these films can easily come away envying the characters, this author included. It is hard to locate a close counterpart role for men in noir—or film generally, a problem that speaks volumes on the work remaining in our world on the issue of balancing power between genders and assuring that all persons, regardless of gender or ability, have the right to survive without suffering. One way to identify Jackie and Lilly as stereotypes is to reverse gender in the films. It might be hard to escape the tendency to automatically expect the male success and to laugh at them for being fearful. Further, the entire story could easily collapse because the men would seem weak, be hard to empathize with, and worse, the story might very well turn comical. Yes, we do have work to do to level the field between men and women but at least these "hard-boiled" women in postmodern noir are able to achieve reasonable victories.

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noisywater.whatcom.edu/site_1213/pages_1213/08-04art.html

Lisa Arroyo

Girl

Charcoal, 24" x 18"

Scrap

noisywater.whatcom.edu/site_1213/pages_1213/09-03crwriting.html

Lucas Nydam

Come soak with me awhile, my sweet garbage child.
Let the wastes of the flesh turn your head,
and shake your hair, child, so the flies will not nest.
May the liquor rain of neon reflection in the manufactured street
make your skin crawl and burdens bleed.
Compost your thoughts awhile in this sweet garbage pile
and let it all wither wilt away in decomposed timing and grace.
Soil it into soil, as the elements twist and toil,
making fermented equilibrium of the father feeding
the child first, and the child feeding its father last.
I'm the junkman of this place, the dreamcatcher of the wastes,
overseeing city hall, from my trash heap, infinitely deep and tall.
Throwing obscenities from my rasp and knotted throat,
spitting rotten fruit to where garbage goes, not in my home,
but to the feet of the elected environmentalist throne.
Because this is my kingdom, my sweet garbage freedom,
my anarchist fields abiding by the laws of nature, not of old hands.
Sing as the equalizing grounds of a thousand breathing sounds
as the gases are released from the claws of the solid
into the atmosphere, oh, some days, I float away.
Shall I compare thee to a summer's day; making stink of my decay?
Dragging my ratty pant leg down into tenements to drown?
Air conditioning in the windows of factories pumping my sweet perfume
in wholesale clouds, so flowers don't need summer to bloom anymore,
setting them free from pattern in sweet, hands-free anarchy.
Exactly whose air are you conditioning, yours or mine,
to raise my garbage child as his lungs pull it in?
So I hope your new eyes see the world as it sees me,
certainly with a self-designed sense of horrid eccentricity.
But could you see your father as such, the man who
taught you how to touch the heavens and leave a smudge?
I guess we'll have to see, my sweet garbage soliloquy,
and by 'we' I don't mean 'me' because you see,
I'll be long, gone, gone, destroyed by the very thing I was
to society, and I'll become another bottle in the pond,
oh, some days, I float away.

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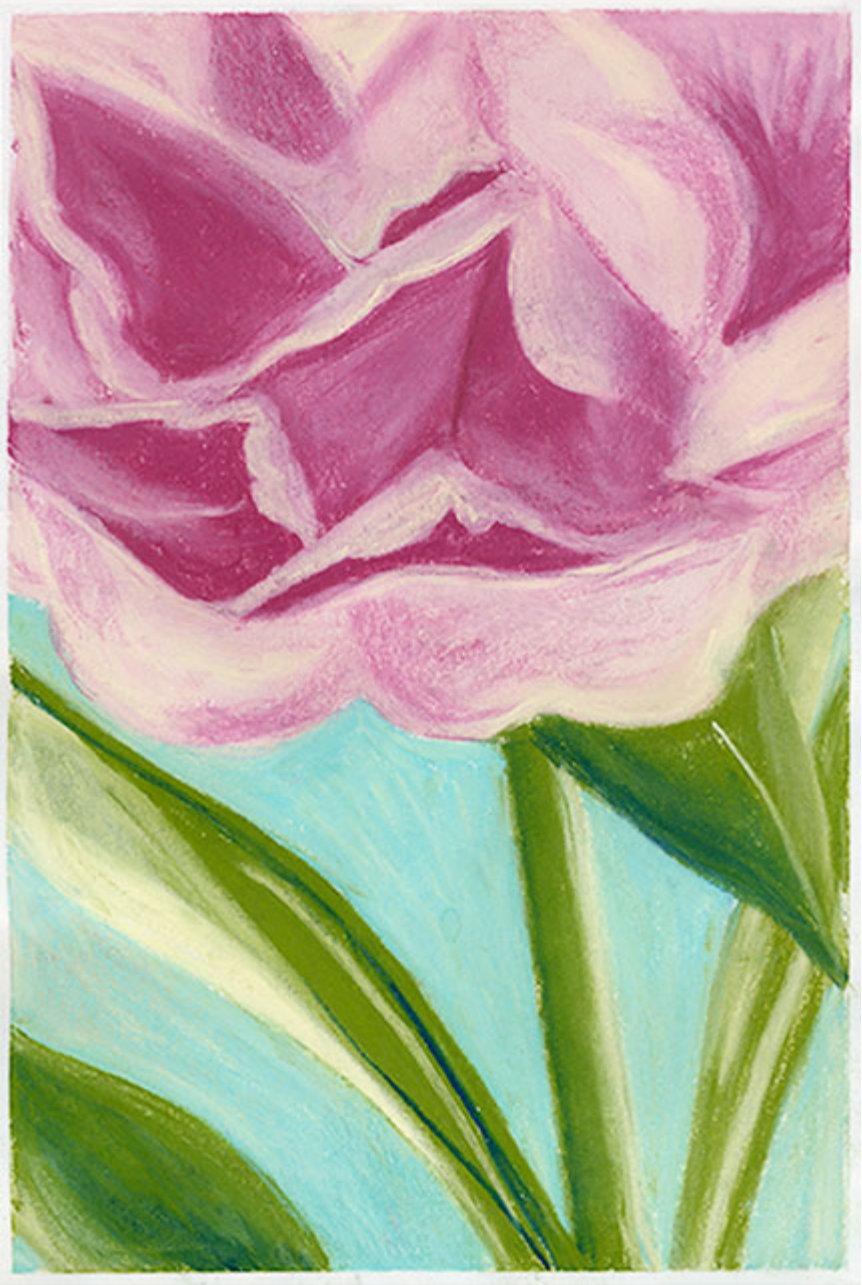

Michaela Owens

Peony

Pastel, 10" x 6.5"

IMPROVISATION: GALAXY UNFULFILLED

noisywater.whatcom.edu/site_1213/pages_1213/11-03essay.html

Marianne Brudwick

Like a horse and rider, the piano keys and I galloped briskly along keeping pace with the director and choir. We bumped over obstacles as we sightread a new jazz piece to consider for the next concert, but that's par for the course. Upon one particular page turn though, this rider slammed the horse to a stop before going over a cliff. The written music stopped and the simple words "ad lib" appeared, along with several measures of a blank galaxy staring at me, just waiting to be explored. The words “ad lib” literally mean “to improvise” or in other words, "make up something here.” My music education had not prepared me for this cliff. I had been trained to read and interpret music as it appeared on the page. This particular day I was faced with a situation in which I felt completely helpless, not to mention humiliated, despite twelve years of training and my parents' long-term investment into private music lessons. So why was I now unprepared to venture into this galactic "improvisational" moment?

Up to this point, I had been taught by three well-trained, private music teachers with years of experience. They didn't know any better. To their credit, they taught me according to how they had been taught, carrying on the traditions of typical musical pedagogy (the science of teaching music) including music theory, technique and standard classic repertoire. Occasionally I had heard of a rare species of people who played completely by ear, able to improvise freely over the keys, making the piano sing with their voice. Oh, how I envied them! But my ear did not cooperate in the same instinctive way so I became dependent upon my eyes reading the written music score and my fingers translating it onto the keys. Without the written page, I was lost. Thus, the horse and rider experience in my teen years catapulted me into new thinking about my music education and the lack of creativity within.

Another educator, Dr. Martha Baker-Jordan, describes a similar scenario in which concert pianists are at an informal affair and someone requests a rendition of “Happy Birthday” on the piano. Surprisingly, many were unable to do this on the spot and eventually Baker-Jordan was found and thus the need was met. Having devoted much of her life to the study of music pedagogy, she has gathered information to determine her best suggestions for becoming a well-rounded music educator. She integrated all this advice into a book entitled, *Practical Piano Pedagogy*. Within this book is a chapter called “The Black Hole,” which pinpoints the missing link in many piano studios. She explains the problem by saying:

> There seems to be a huge void in the universe of our classical piano training and concertizing that I call the 'Black Hole of Piano Teaching and Performance.' The gravitational pull of this black hole is so strong that the functional keyboard skills of harmonizing, transposing and improvising (all of which can include reading chord symbols) are sucked out of our world into oblivion. Concert pianists, studio teachers, even piano and pedagogy professors, all are affected, and many go through life without ever acquiring these skills. (242-243)

Evidently, I am not alone. I have witnessed the “deer in the headlights” look on many teachers I have met in various circles, social or educational, over the years at the slightest mention of improvisation. Ironically, as frightening as this black hole is, it also seems to be the earnest longing of so many adults – to just sit and create music for their own enjoyment. Unfortunately, many only remember one or two songs from years of lessons and though they are proud of those few accomplishments, that is the limit of their musicianship.

If a parent is willing to invest in private lessons to develop their child's musicality, shouldn't they expect their child to have opportunities to explore the creative, imaginative side of music through improvisation, along with learning to read and perform written music? Likewise, shouldn't the public school music curriculum allow for a window of time devoted to musically creative opportunities? Before exploring the repercussions of this, we need to more fully understand the meaning of improvisation. According to *The Encyclopedia of Music,* the simplest definition of the word is “the performer’s invention on the spur of the moment” (253). It also explains two different kinds of improvisation: the first is often used by jazz players, making up melodies over a given harmonic structure. The second is more complex in that the musician “plans a form” in which a “theme” is able to work into (253-254). If the improviser has a base knowledge of harmony and a good ear, his imagination can reach for the stars. But I firmly believe improvisation should not be limited to these two different kinds. If someone has no previous music training and is just beginning lessons, it may be as simple as playing on black or white notes to create their own unique “sound” for experimentation. It can also lead to discovery, self-expression or the beginnings of a composition to call their own, with or without a harmonic backdrop provided by a teacher, as will be explained later.

Improvisation is not a new concept in the music arena. It has always held a place of importance in history. Many of the greatest composers including Mozart and Beethoven were known for their improvisations and a keyboardist of the Baroque period was expected to improvise over a figured bass. Opera singers, organists and the earliest church choirs also had a history of practicing it in order to embellish their performances. Most often, in today's culture, Americans tend to regard improvisation as strictly associated with jazz. True enough, it was a vital part of our jazz history and continues to be used and studied within this category. In Duke Ellington's published essay "Swing Is My Beat!," written in 1944 and quoted in *Music in the USA,* improvisation sounds as easy as eating apple pie when described in this setting: "I might just sit down at the piano and start composing a little melody, telling a story about it at the same time to give the mood of the piece. I'll play eight bars, talk a bit,

then play another eight and soon the melody is finished. Then the boys go to work on it, improvising, adding a phrase here and there" (535). This is how jazz played out. Improvisation led to compositions but frequently there was room within the composition to freely improvise, giving jazz a spontaneity and spice unlike any other genre. This early twentieth century era produced many of our country's most well-known musicians and beloved songs but it should not be a category in which to box improvisation in.

So if improvisation can be practiced by the novice or the experienced musician, why has it evidently been missed or avoided in many musicians' training, leading to this major rush of fear in so many adults? This is not to say that all teachers train the same way, for there are a few who encourage such practices. Those that come from a background of playing jazz or had instructors who gave them opportunity to “play around” with notes are obviously more comfortable teaching it, but this is not the norm. One of my childhood friends grew up with a teacher so strict that her knuckles were slapped with a ruler if she played an incorrect note. Her story is not alone and I experienced a similar fear if I played the music in any way but what the composer (interpreted by my teacher) intended for my lessons. There was no room for personal interpretation, improvisation, or “playing around” on the keys and unfortunately, there were few smiles of enjoyment as well.

In answer to the question of what causes this "fear factor" amongst current day teachers, Forrest Kinney, creator of the "Pattern Play" piano instructional books responds:

> The problem is at its worst with people who have learned to read because they have a notion of what they “should” sound like. It is very difficult to get many experienced classical musicians to even try to step "off the page.” And yes, this is because we have generations of people teaching people to read [music] BEFORE they learn to “speak.” We need to teach people to improvise in the first lesson and then there is no fear. (Kinney)

He compares it to childhood and how from little babes, we are taught to speak words first and eventually read written words on paper. Likewise, a piano student should be taught to play or "speak" music first, to experience the touch, listening to their sounds and reacting intuitively, gradually working into note-reading. This develops more of a kinship between the student and their instrument, allowing them freedom to express themselves however they wish from the beginning.

It seems the typical approach in teaching private music lessons in the second half of the twentieth century included an emphasis on reading standard repertoire and performance techniques, otherwise known as traditional music pedagogy. Considering this alongside Forrest Kinney's thoughts, I wonder what happened to the message James Mursell presents to the listening audience of his book entitled, *Music Education: Principles and Programs,* written in the 1950s? Mursell reminds music teachers that their main “aim” is to provide people a means of pleasure; something they can enjoy here and now as well as the rest of their lives. He outlines expectations for both teachers and students at the elementary school level, reminding those in charge of the importance to be a “creative teacher," keeping the

spirit of enthusiasm for the art alive. We often think those “gifted” few are the only ones capable of being creative geniuses. But he dares to differ in explaining how each of us is capable of discovering something new in ourselves, even in our responses to music when he says, "They are creative responses because from them comes something new. So all creative response is discovery, and all discovery is creative response” (330). He further illustrates his point by saying, "The discovery of an unsuspected ability in oneself is a creative experience. A child whom you may have begun to consider unmusical suddenly finds that he can sing a descant part against a melody. To be sure, the descant may consist of no more than one or two notes. But he can do it! Finding this out is a creative act" (330). Though Mursell does not use the word "improvise" in his book, he does give much attention to the topic of *creative teaching,* (which could easily include improvisation) and goes so far as to say it is a "requirement" for promoting musical growth (329). I wholeheartedly agree that the most magical moments of greatest joy in my studio have been when the student “discovers” something about their music that comes from within. As a teacher, I can be the source and giver of musical opportunities, I can show them by example and I can encourage but I cannot discover their creativity for them. Once found, it is a rich and rewarding treasure to claim all their own.

Though it seems reasonable for improvisation to be introduced as a creative tool to a musician at any level, educators may feel hard-pressed to implement it. Pianist and elementary music teacher Julie K. Scott explains why in her article entitled, "Me? Teach Improvisation to Children?": the demands of a public school music teacher include teaching students how to sing in tune, read music, play various instruments and prepare for PTA programs. Their time is hard pressed to allow for anything else. Creativity and improvisation may end up low on the priority list. The other factor for causing an educator to hesitate teaching how to do this is that they may never have been formally trained themselves or trained in how to teach such creativity. She asks if it is worth the effort and "if so, where do we begin?" (par. 5). After suffering an embarrassing "horse and rider" experience similar to mine, her eyes were opened to her lack of training in this area. She then set out to find a program on her own that taught her how to improvise in order to fill in this "black hole" and prevent this from happening in her students' lives. How many educators would go so far to overcome their personal fear by determining to find solutions to help overcome their fear? Unfortunately, many just avoid the subject completely and stick with what is comfortable.

Likewise, valuable private piano lesson time is eaten up quickly if an instructor is trying to include all major elements of pedagogy including technique, theory and standard repertoire. To further her argument why improvisation is a valuable training tool, Ms. Scott lists five benefits, including how it can:

1. allow students to be musically creative and musically expressive,
2. improve their technical skills, aural skills and music-reading ability,
3. provide links to culture and tradition,
4. provide opportunities for musical social interaction and

5. give students opportunities to demonstrate their understanding of musical concepts and skills. (Scott par. 5)

If this is truly the case, then improvisation is a necessary and beneficial asset to music education, richly enhancing the other, more commonly taught skills listed above. Perhaps our focus as a whole needs to be shifted and an expectation of practicing creativity needs to be brought to the forefront so the musician can be "wholly" shaped from the beginning, making music a more personal exploration, one that can be taken out of the studio to be worked and reshaped the rest of their lives into a treasured gem to call their own.

I recently had the opportunity to attend a workshop by David Lanz, Grammy-nominated composer and world-renowned pianist/performer, who encouraged his participants to explore creativity by trying improvisation at home while making our own arrangements of favorite pop songs. When asking him why he thought improvisation could help every musician, he responded: "Improvisation is a way for the musician to reveal his soul and express what is inside of him or her. It is a way to free up the musical intellect and allow the muse to speak directly through the musician…without reading and/or relying on someone else's work to express your feelings" (Lanz). In response to the same question, Melody Bober, a mainstream composer/teacher/clinician answers, "[Improvisation] allows everyone a certain measure of creativity; it gives everyone a chance to understand the creativity of others as they learn other composers' music; teaching the rudiments of chord charts expands sightreading skills greatly; provides an opportunity to expand their ear; enhances expression, personalizes; may lead to composition" (Bober). Both agree that improvisation does things to the musician that cannot be taught otherwise, including self-expression and freedom of thought. There are too many benefits to quickly dismiss it from musical training and cast it aside as only for the jazz musician or those who have a good ear and a natural "feel" for it.

In order to avoid creating a "black hole" in training current young musicians, educators need to know the options available today and that they can enjoy learning improvisation right along with their students. Ms. Scott referred to the Orff Schulwerk training as her personal learning method but also mentioned Kratus, who proposed that improvisation be divided into seven sequential levels. Ms. Bober suggests finding method books, more readily available in the market now, that include improvisation as part of the whole learning experience. Mr. Lanz suggests starting with "simple input, like just play [...] the black notes (a natural pentatonic scale) so you really can't play a wrong note, or playing with a "C" pedal tone in the bass and playing any single or group of white notes—these two ways can start most students off on their own!" (Lanz). No matter what method is used, the important point is the starting point. Like putting a crayon in a child's hand to create their own unique visual masterpiece, let their fingers play the keys, creating their own aural musical masterpiece. When you might be tempted to tell your child to "stop fooling around" on the piano, listen closer. They may be speaking from their heart through their music.

Before we limit the introduction of improvisation to the younger crowd, we must consider those who have already been trained without the opportunity to find their creative voice. Specifically for pedagogy instructors and students, Dr. Martha Baker-Jordan, mentioned at the beginning of this essay, has two suggestions for plugging the "black hole" of classical piano music. First, she recommends a required course that covers harmonizing, transposing and improvising at a level corresponding with their keyboard skills. Her experience has seen music educators take such a course only if required, not realizing it is a practical step in helping teach their future students to "play something they know," which parents would like to hear as well. The second recommendation is to teach these potential music teachers "how to teach" these skills to their future students (244). I believe her experience of observing students has given her a credible link to discovering a problem that filters down to many students over time. Improvisation may be developed as far as a student wishes, but the basics are learnable and teachable, helping to fill in this gap of the vast unknown to a waiting audience of music appreciators and partakers.

The most effective way of incorporating improvisation into piano instruction that I have personally found is through Forrest and Akiko Kinney's "Pattern Play" books. They have developed an easy to use format for teachers and students that begins with a new improvisational idea on nearly every page. This idea, known as a "pattern," is typically easy to memorize consisting of a short sequence of chords/notes and rhythm that is to be played repetitively on the lower half of the piano by the teacher while the student gets to play music of their choice on the top half of the piano within a few guidelines. There are suggested ideas printed should the teacher or student feel overwhelmed by this new open galaxy of creativity. Unlike most piano instruction books, though, Kinney suggests taking the patterns and expanding them, making them your "own," using them as solo, duet or even trio piano creations. Through these simple little patterns, he paints musical pictures of thoughtful reflections, explosions of energy and various shades of emotion. He also introduces composer "styles," such as Beethoven or Chopin, and takes you on travels into foreign lands such as Ireland and China. Some patterns lead you into past genres of music such as blues, boogie-woogie and ragtime (*Pattern* 10-11). Through the magic of improvisation, he explores musical settings using your fingertips and imagination as the telescope and lens.

All four leaders in the music industry that I inquired through personal interview responded when asked what has happened to them as a result of improvising. For Melody Bober, it led to a successful career creating compositions and arrangements played out in pedagogy and repertoire books for all ages. For David Lanz it led to universally acclaimed compositions, arrangements and performances as a soloist and with well-known bands heard around the world, as well as the simplest reward of "a great way to just experience the moments of life." Robert Lundquist, a successful and distinguished vocal/piano instructor as well as composer responds: "It feeds my hunger for music and I can get lost in it endlessly. Free time and a tuned piano are exhilarating for the spirit and my musical soul!!" And finally, Forrest Kinney, having spent much of his adult life studying and writing about improvisation as well as performing in prestigious gatherings such as for Bill Gates says, "Often I will think deep

thoughts, or feel strongly, or feel peaceful, or feel powerful—it all depends on the moment. And that is the power of improvisation--it is a revealing of what is in the moment, right now." None of these leaders in the music industry would have been able to accomplish their feats without improvisation. Creative exploration was a necessary step to get to their next level of potential. Though not all young students will become such an accredited musician as those listed above, any outlet of personal creativity allows an expression of life, and a place to go to reflect inner thoughts and feelings that may otherwise feel trapped within.

On the contrary, the effects of not allowing children a window to discover their "genius" causes them to shut down their potential, believing they are not "capable" of creating something worthwhile, so why bother trying? It has been my observation that this attitude carries over from childhood into adulthood. It is sad to see many adults come to my studio for lessons, having already put limitations on their ability to create and explore more deeply the world of music. It takes time to break down their fears and destroy the barriers that have been built up unnecessarily. Fear of failure seems to be the largest barrier to overcome even though there may be no audience, no teacher to "fail" anymore, only themselves. Lundquist says adults are afraid of "1) the unknown and for many, composition and improvisation are unknowns, (2) being exposed as not knowledgeable and (3) not being able 'to do it', so therefore hide from it, and discourage their own students from exploring music" (Lundquist). There is a distinct issue of pride involved when a person has been trained to excel one-dimensionally but when pressed upon to create spontaneously, suffers humiliation because of lack of experience in this “black hole.” Despite the fact that we can become our biggest enemy, the potential for possible creativity remains in each of us and teachers must be determined to open that door for all, themselves included.

Clearly, the opportunity for students to practice improvisation opens doors for exploration into their imagination. The question is how to weave it into the current curriculum of the private and public spectrum so students of all degrees may experience it and use it to enhance, not deter from their performance skills. Though it takes perseverance to find help getting started, it is not impossible. The day of my "horse and rider" cliff experience was a turning point in my musical education. I determined, with the help of my parents, to find another teacher my senior year to fill in this black hole. My mother found me an elderly but spunky little man named Einar Moen, who happened to be her teacher years earlier, but also happened to be one of the last to ever play for the vaudeville shows at the Mt. Baker Theatre in Bellingham, Washington. I will forever be grateful. From the time he set his fingers to play, I was mesmerized. He was the first to teach me how to see beyond the page, to enter the musical galaxy, to let go of my inhibitions and just "play!"

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Lover Of My Soul

noisywater.whatcom.edu/site_1213/pages_1213/12-06music.html

Marianne Brudwick

“Lover Of My Soul” is a choral music composition project I have worked on in the last few years and was able to bring to performance through the Ferndale High School concert choir last spring. Under their director, Kay Hageman, we performed it at WWU as a part of their ‘Contest’ repertoire, as well as at their spring concert last March. For the past several years, I was their accompanist and it was a privilege to be able to compose, work with the director and kids, and finally accompany them on this culminating performance. I am currently a student at Whatcom.

Daydream for my Grandfather

noisywater.whatcom.edu/site_1213/pages_1213/13-04crwriting.html

Andrew Pine

In another world this all worked out
World south of this one
with two moons that howl at wolves,
the sun in a globe,
paperweight on the stacks.

There music has a physics
and a calculus.
Citizens judge time
according to offbeats.

Mozart lived to be 230
and compose a requiem
for guitar and glitter pop.
There he can hear the music
and not the cold pulse
of the heart monitor.

In that world, just below this one,
rivers run backwards,
everything enamored of its creation.
I go back into mother
lay beady eyed,
ready for birth.

Here gravity flits us up,
we bore into the heavens and space junk.
We cannot, try as we may, be down to earth.

This world I loved but it was not earthly.
This world above,
around,
inside our blood cells,
inside the yolk of dirt, I love.

But here we love ourselves more,
a kiss more a communion
with what's unsaid.

There I have a partner and there
I keep two pink tarantulas who
sphinxriddle and cast jokes at the damned.

There the absence of politicians
and the burning of bills
demands annual ritual.

There my grandfather hasn't the time for cancer.
There I never once had the chance to break your heart.
There I longed the song of longing and it was good.

There everything is almost the same,
except for the immutable details,
the clock a second off,

your mother's hair a gradation softer.
There I sit and daydream of easier,
softer worlds,
maybe this one.

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noisywater.whatcom.edu/site_1213/pages_1213/14-07art.html

Lydia Taron

Beauty & the Beast

Sharpie and pen, 24" x 18"

Finding self-identity with a damaged psyche; the analysis of societies isolated homme psychopath

noisywater.whatcom.edu/site_1213/pages_1213/15-04essay.html

Haley Conners

Throughout the history of film noir, the noir criminal has been a key figure in supplementing film noir's existentialist theme. In early film noir, the *homme* psychopath stemmed from the post-war veterans that could cope with, "the complex bureaucratized postwar environment through the pure pleasure of destruction itself, the delight in inflicting pain" (Douglass 30-39). This theme was carried out into modern noir films, such as *The Silence of the Lambs* by Jonathon Demme, where psychopath killers Buffalo Bill and Hannibal Lector were born. This existentialist theme is embedded into the disturbed behavior of noir psychopaths, such as Buffalo Bill, who is searching for a sense of self-identity through gender as he struggles with an unstable psyche and community rejection of his wish to become a woman. His existentialist fate is a by-product of society rejecting him. Communal rejection and the gap between the outcast protagonist is frequently demonstrated in many of the early film noirs as well.

Buffalo Bill's search for his own identity is complicated after his rejection from multiple hospitals after he requested a sex change. He becomes isolated and hateful toward society as a whole, and he looks for a different outlet in which he can satisfaction in his sexual identity, and revenge against society's blatant rejection of him. Unfortunately, he becomes so deranged and desperate to find this inner peace among himself, he kills and skins women his size, and wears them literally as a skin. This literal form of "feminine identity" proves how isolated he has become from his community. In the article "Consuming Community in Silence of the Lambs," Kendall Phillips develops this theory by saying, "Bill, according to the all-seeing Lecter, 'hates his own identity' and learns to 'covet the identity of those around him' – murder his means of transformation. Systematically abused as a child, Bill [...] seeks an identity in the absence of community" (Phillips 32-36). One of the most memorable scenes in *The Silence of the Lambs*, is when Bill has his hostage Catherine, and he is doing his make-up and trying on female clothing and tucks his genitals so that he appears and looks like a woman. The gender disillusionment and psychological instability challenges America's gender role acceptance, and this film in particular leaves the impression that society is to blame for the unstable psyche of those confused with gender identity.

The societal rejection that Bill faces due to him straying from normal gender role archetypes is explored not only in *The Silence of the Lambs*, but in other film noirs where the male criminal or psychopath isolates himself from society in order to obtain the identity he is looking for. Much of the time, there is a blurred distinction between the male victim and the psychopath. For example, Bill had to have thought of himself as a victim of society since he

felt rejected and unaccepted. Because of this, he became crazy and turned to immoral and corrupt outlets to find some sort of satisfaction within himself. This very likely could be a mirror of the director's portrayal of societal corruption. Quite frequently, noir films express some sort of societal or political sentiment or message that they want the audience to hear. In *The Silence of the Lambs*, the message deals with the consequences of an un-accepting and judgmental American society. These men, who have become 'victims' of this isolation, in turn resort to crime and corrupt engagements because they have lost all hope in society themselves.

The Silence of the Lambs, while being a modern noir, incorporated a lot of traditional aesthetic elements of the earlier film noirs such as the private eye, the damaged criminal, and the sexual elements among some of the main characters. Clarice Starling, a woman who is filling the role as the of the *femme* detective during her FBI training, brings a modern twist to the original perception of the detective archetype as she leads the investigation throughout the entire film desperately in search of the whereabouts of Buffalo Bill. Being a woman, and the main character representing truth and justice and the order of societal stability, she branches from the traditional noir *homme* detective, also paralleling the perception of gender roles in the contradiction of Buffalo Bill. However, even though each character pushes traditional boundaries of gender role archetypes, they still battle obtaining their own identity because of the pressures society still holds against them.

The infamous battle between the psychologically corrupt and the morally driven characters is a key component in *The Silence of the Lambs*, and determining the audience's opinion on the characters. Like most film noirs, the audience tends to empathize with the morally stable characters, who seem to be searching for justice and peace. In some cases, the audience finds themselves siding with the corrupt character if he or she is attempting to right their wrongs or smooth out all of their past crimes. This brings to light the importance of expressing the search for self-identity in film noirs, because society itself is interested in being comfortable with their own identity. These films are a way of comforting their audiences by letting them know that only the mentally unstable are doomed to their fate and deserve what they get, which is usually death. In Richard Rushton's article, "The Perversion of *The Silence of the Lambs* and the Dilemma of the Searchers: On Psychoanalytic 'Reading,'" he makes the claim, "And the heroes of this drama will always be those who side with "us" - a community of the same who can feel confident in their dissociation from the perverse pleasures of them: the community of others" (Rushton 252-268). He validates the claim that film noirs that express the struggle of self-identity find their success in emotionally engaging their audience to side with the character who they most associate with. In Silence of the Lambs, the audience tends to side with Clarice and empathize with Hannibal Lector because although he is insane and eats humans, he helps Clarice in finding Buffalo Bill and almost builds a relationship of respect with her. Even this glimpse of human empathy makes the audience have more respect for the serial killer. In one of the last scenes where Hannibal calls Clarice while on the loose, they have an exchange where he tells her he will not pursue her since he claims "the world is much more interesting with you in it." While audiences tend to side with Clarice and

find sympathy towards Lector, they feel a sense of satisfaction when Starling finally kills Buffalo Bill since he “got what he deserved” (Phillips 232-236). This separates the world of good and evil for film goers, and brings some sense of comfort within themselves and their own identity.

Another aspect *The Silence of the Lambs* addresses is the failure in society itself. The film seems to be mocking the homosexual community, and sides with the belief that sex changes and gender roles need not be re-defined or tested. After all, Buffalo Bill’s breakdown was a result of his rejection of a sex change. He had been pushed away, snubbed by his own community, and he took it personally, in some ways taking revenge on the isolation that was inflicted on him by his own neighbors. This outlook that the film seems to be expressing, is also a crack at society’s un-acceptance of homosexuals and the consequences of these actions. Like many film noirs, they usually are challenging the societal standards and morals that are established, and they explore the extremities and consequences of these standards. It makes one wonder if Bill wouldn’t have gone insane if he would have just been accepted by society and allowed his identity to be changed into that of a woman.

The noir psychopath has been explored and expressed in various film noirs over the ages, but one re-occurring theme always seems to emerge when doing so: the process of self-identity and acceptance in society, and the mental downfall usually stemming from societal isolation or rejection. *The Silence of the Lambs* brings this issue to light, and questions the consequences of rejecting one another based on gender-related choices to obtain personal identity. The birth of the psychopath demonstrated in noir films is just a reminder for audiences to take a step back and evaluate their own judgments and identities, as well as analyze the societal standards that are set in place that uphold a large portion of this responsibility and the consequences that accompany it.

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The Noisy Water Review | Student Anthology of Writing & Art, Whatcom Community College

noisywater.whatcom.edu/site_1213/pages_1213/16-08art.html

Harminder Grewal

Buddha

Acrylic on canvas,
36" x 24 "

All the Time in the World

noisywater.whatcom.edu/site_1213/pages_1213/17-05crwriting.html

Riley Richards

The cell phone slipped from his fingers, and he was only dimly aware as it tapped him on the thigh before thudding softly to rest on the carpet. His head tilted back, eyes staring without seeing at the ambiguous designs of the ceiling. Then, ever so slowly, his head dropped into his hands. Pent-up breath punched its way out of his lungs in a gusty sigh. The breath knocked out of him, now literally as well as figuratively, all he could do was shake his head and laugh tenuously.

Jude Goodrich was not having a terrific day.

He scratched at the downy stubble on his chin with one hand and rubbed his forehead with the other as if somehow he could wipe away the confusion and letdown and set his reeling mind back to order. No such luck. All he got was oily fingers.

Jude just couldn't decide how to react. He could cry softly to himself in a corner, he could rage and clomp about growling like a wounded grizzly, or he could put on a brave face, pretend nothing had happened and move on with his life. Truthfully, Jude didn't want to do anything. He felt numb and hollow and he wanted to fade away, like wisps of smoke from a candle, just waft into the bliss of nonexistence.

His eyes locked on his bed, sheets and pillows strewn about in glorious, inviting disarray. Sleeping actually sounded marvelous. Unfortunately, he was due at the nursing home in less than an hour. He volunteered at the Meadow Park Retirement Center twice a week, visiting the inmates—patients, guests, whatever they called the old folks living there—who had no family in the area or no family that never showed up if they were nearby. There would be no deadening slumber for him today.

"What's wrong with you?"

Jude lethargically turned his head to see his little sister standing in the doorway to his bedroom. Her eyebrows were quirked and a hand rested on a hip. Many people said the two of them looked like twins, same height, same thick blond hair, and the same pale blue eyes and button nose. She was always considered attractive however, while he was invariably deemed average. He didn't care. Esteem suited her much better.

"Jenny dumped me." He said it casually, impressed with the nonchalance of his delivery. He added a shrug just for effect. "Doesn't matter."

Her eyes softened slightly. “Want to talk about it?” Her voice was gentle, sympathetic. Suddenly, he was annoyed. There she stood in last season’s soccer jersey, hair tied high in her trademark ponytail, pitying him.

“No, Cassie, I really don’t want to talk about it. It’s no big deal.”

“Whatever,” she snorted. “You’ve been together for a year and you’ve been crazy into her even longer than that. How is it suddenly ‘no big deal?’ What happened?”

Jude threw his hands up, a bite in his tone. He did not want to talk about this right now, wouldn’t even if he wanted to. He would not expose himself or his pain, especially not to his kid sister.

“How should I know? You girls are so…” He trailed off, trying to think of a word.

“Fickle? Capricious?” His blank stare spoke for him. “Faithlessly erratic and inconsistent. Changing your mind like, every ten seconds.”

He shook his head and shrugged. “Sure.”

“You’re gonna need to get used to that, sweetie.”

A grunt.

“So she didn’t give any reasons? It was just out of nowhere like that?”

“She said I was losing interest in her, that I don’t care about her anymore.” He dropped his head again then immediately snapped it back up. “But I do! I totally care about her. I lo—” Pause. “I really like her.”

“Have you told her that recently?” Cassie had advanced a few steps into the room and now stood with her slender arms folded across her chest.

“No… But that doesn’t mean I don’t. She said I was distant and I don’t talk to her or spend time with her anymore, too.”

“You have been kinda listless, Jude.”

He rolled his eyes. “So I’ve been a little preoccupied lately. I’ve got a lot on my mind.”

“Like what?” She sat down on the carpet facing him, drew her bare shins up to her chest and wrapped her arms around them, resting her chin on her knees.

Jude just shrugged. “Life.”

Cassie stared at him, wide, pale eyes boring into him, unblinking. Her lips pursed as if she wanted to say something but was trying to hold it back. Finally, she clicked her tongue and asked, “Did she say anything else? I know you guys had that fight a couple of weeks ago. Did that have anything to do with it?”

“No.” Pause. “I don’t know, how could I tell? I apologized for it, what else can I do? I mean, it’s not my fault Lisa was kissed me.”

“Did you say something? Stop her, maybe?”

Silence. He remembered the argument, tears welling up and spilling out of Jenny’s usually piercing blue eyes. Her glossy black hair hung loose, falling across her face like a protective curtain. Her voice, normally so light and melodic cracked painfully as she yelled at him. All he’d wanted to do then was pull her to him, kiss her tears away and show her that she was his one and only. But he hadn’t. Instead, he just stood with a painful knot of guilt and remorse in his gut as he pleaded forgiveness, insisting how sorry he was. For the thousandth time he cursed his idiocy, his masculine obliviousness.

“Nothing happened. I apologized.”

“You’re killing me, Jude. Please say that you’re not serious.” Again, his silence was answer enough. “Come on, man!” Her voice rose in exasperation and her shoulders drooped. “She needs more from you than just a Facebook status. You can’t call yourself her boyfriend and just plod along like she’s nothing more than arm-candy to you. You need to make her feel special, loved.” Her voice softened again. “Helpful hint: women need to feel valuable. You can’t just toss them the scraps. You need to tell her, show her you truly care in order for her to believe it.”

“But what am I supposed to do?” Jude’s voice had risen as well in the confused, frustrated panic of any man in his position. “I do show her I care. She should know. I don’t tell you I care about you but you know I do, right?”

He’d expected that to be argument winning point, expected at least some consideration. Instead, Cassie clammed up for a moment, lips tight again, staring beyond him out the window or at his desk, or computer. What was she thinking? For that matter, what was any girl thinking? He just couldn’t handle it right now, couldn’t accept the reality that the girl he really did love was gone and it was probably his fault. His bed called to him, a promising escape.

“Have you ever wondered what it would be like to live alone?” She said it low, almost a murmur. Her eyes turned to the ground.

Jude stared, not sure he’d heard her right. “Say what?”

“Going through life with no intimacy, no one to pour your love into? Having no one to truly know you and love you deeply in spite of it? A life alone is pretty pointless.” She looked back up, into his eyes. “People find their value in relationships and interactions, you know that. Don’t throw yours away because you’re too apathetic or jaded or scared or whatever you are to see how wonderful life can be if you let it.”

Jude blinked. He felt a tumult of emotions rising within him, anger, confusion, grief and a hopeful desire that maybe, just maybe, life was more than just some soul-leech out to suck him dry of joy. He knew Cassie was right. Deep inside him where his beliefs were not distorted by conscious thought or feelings, he knew. But he could not accept it. Would not. For whatever reason, Jude was comfortable. Abruptly, Jude suppressed the rising tide of emotion, smothered it.

“Whatever. You’ve had like, three boyfriends and you’re not even out of high school. I really don’t think you’re an expert on relationships.”

Cassie stood up. “Oh, I see, you’re twenty and I’m only eighteen so you’re automatically the king of the world? Fine. Enjoy wallowing in the brothel of your jaundiced self-pity.” She turned on her heel and strode to the door, but then hesitated. Almost timidly, she turned back. “Hey, I’ve got a game tonight. We win, we’re in the playoffs.” Pursed lips. “It would be cool if you could make it.”

He saw the hopefulness in her eyes. She rarely asked ask him for anything beyond ‘pass the Lucky Charms,’ so he knew how important this must be for her. Jude almost said yes. Almost.

“We’ll see, kiddo.”

She nodded and he watched the disappointment flit across her face. “Okay. See you whenever, then.”

Jude wanted to wish her luck, say something to at least make her smile. But he didn’t. He just nodded and watched her walk out of his room, listened to her steps descend the stairs. Just like he did with Jenny those few weeks ago.

He looked back at his bed, decided not to sleep after all. He had somewhere he needed to be. Grabbing his keys and wallet, he flicked off his bedroom light and left the house. The chill hit him and he flipped up his hood. For a day with cloudless skies and a brightly shining sun, it was unpleasantly cold. He shivered releasing a misty puff of breath. Why did he need to visit a bunch of boring, ungrateful old people? He had a life. He had friends. It was Friday afternoon.

Why?
Why indeed.

Jude started for his car. The whirring sound of wheels on pavement caught his attention. Across the street a little girl was slowly riding her bike, watching him. He noticed her dark hair, tied in loose pigtails and drooping down to her shoulders as if they couldn't support their own weight. The sleeves of her blue hoodie were shoved up her skinny arms and bunched behind her elbows. Her eyes, though, were what really startled him. Great, luminous green pools that seemed to swallow her elfin face and absorb the world around them.

"Emily!" A woman's voice. "Emily, come on. It's time to go visit grandpa!"

The girl—Emily—and Jude both turned to the woman that called out from her porch, two houses down and across the street from his own. Wordlessly, and without another glance at Jude, Emily wheeled around and peddled back home. Emily's mother waited for her to reach the porch and then ushered Emily into the house, flashing Jude a tired, but friendly smile. He nodded, climbed into his car.

The passenger seat seemed naked without Jenny in it, her slender body relaxed on the red upholstery, legs always crossed at the ankle. They would sit for hours, talking and listening to music trickling from the radio. It was where they held hands the first time, even where they had their first kiss. He forced himself to look away, started the car.

Heater cranked up to high, and music blaring from halfway-blown speakers, Jude drove to the nursing home. By the time he arrived, he'd forgotten what he was listening to. All he could think of was Cassie's wounded eyes and Jenny's bleeding voice. He blocked them out. Ignored them. There was nothing he could do.

The car was cozy. He contemplated taking a nap, just leaning back the seat and letting the world evaporate around him. The idea of the cozy, peaceful feelings that would swallow him tantalized his imagination. That sounded so, so nice.

Jude opened the door, and the subsequent gust of frigid air shattered his warm visions like a cold shower. Hunching his shoulders against the cold, Jude crossed the street to Meadow Park. He always parked at the curb across the street because the parking lot was almost continuously full. Well, that and the fact that he did not want his car wrecked by some granny who didn't use her mirrors.

He pushed through the automatic doors into the lobby. It was warm. But that did not answer for the smell. Old people, vitamins, disinfectant, and other things he could not account for as well as a cacophony of scents ranging from apples to flowers to cheap air fresheners, all trying to make the place smell homey.
It did not smell homey.

"Jude Goodrich! There you are. Everyone has been asking for you, especially Violet. Where have you been?" It was Toni Johnson. She'd have been his boss were he an employee. Instead, she was more like an unofficial, and unnecessary, supervisor. Just his luck, she was behind the front desk.

She stared at him over the rims of her stylish glasses, waiting for his response. The bright red frames contrasted sharply with her dark irises. Toni had to be in her forties, late thirties at the very least, but she didn't look it. Cropped, dyed black hair was immaculately styled, bangs sweeping softly over her forehead. Deep red lipstick, trendy earrings, and even a tiny silver stud in her nose rounded off her distinctive fashion sense.

Jude shrugged, neglecting to mention the fact that he was actually ten minutes early. "I slept in." Toni's face took on the familiar look of suppressed displeasure that people often gave him when they didn't want him to know they were disappointed in him. But he always knew it anyway. He tried not to care. It worked this time. Oh the wonderful numbness of heartache.

"You know, Jude, you could really do great things if you applied yourself more."

Seriously?
This talk?
Again?
He smiled pleasantly, tolerantly. "So I've heard."

"It's true! You have such a way with these people. You could really change their lives."

Jude struggled to keep his smile in place, struggled not to verbalize just exactly what was on his mind. These people? Here 'these people' were, forgotten, downtrodden, completely disregarded as human beings except by a very select few. And that number was dwindling. Considered extraneous members of society, 'these people' were ignored even by their own their own children, the self-seeking scum that they'd hoped they raised right. There was no respect, no desire to learn from 'these people', no care. Yes, they were grouchy and ungracious, but Jude was sure he'd be too.

Why was he here?
Why indeed.

Jude shrugged again. "Their lives are over."

"Then what's the point?" Toni asked. Her face was bordering on sour.

"Maybe there is none."

A flash of blue caught his eye, and Jude turned to see Emily walking in with her mother. So, grandpa was an inmate…resident. Her eyes met his and wouldn't let go until the elevator doors closed between them and cut the connection.

He looked back at Toni. Her face had soured. Like old milk.

"Have you ever wondered what it would be like to have some direction in life?" She threw up her hands, bracelets jingling. "You sleep in and drift through life with no purpose. Doesn't that feel empty?"

Duh, he almost scoffed. But what could he do to change it? He couldn't even keep the girl he loved from leaving him. Emptiness was natural for him.

Jude said nothing, just kept that sweet smile on his face. Finally, he said, "I'm going to go say hello to Violet."

Toni pursed her lips and nodded. Then, without a word, turned and walked away.

Jude pushed the button for the elevator. When the doors opened with that elevator ding, he stepped in and rode it to Violet Abraham's floor. A widow, and in her late eighties, Violet lived alone in an apartment in the assisted living wing so she didn't need the daily care of some of the…residents, but she ate her meals in the dining room, and had her laundry cleaned for her, among other things.

A lone garden gnome stood just outside her door, beckoning for visitors to enter and grinning from between two rosy cheeks. Jude knocked, and following a muffled, "break it down if it's not open," stepped into the apartment.

While it did have a distinctly elderly odor, Violet's apartment was not nearly as smelly as the rest of Meadow Park, which Jude was always glad for.

Wall to wall bookshelves wrapped around one corner of the apartment. None of them were as tall as Jude due to Violet's remarkably short height and inability to climb stepstools. Even so, books of all sizes overflowed from the shelves, and many more were stacked precariously in seemingly random locations. A piano with its bench and a sofa with a short end table were the only other pieces of furniture in the small room.

"Look who it is," Violet said in her soft voice, stepping out from the doorway of her bedroom. Her cottony white hair frizzled around her head like stuffing from a torn teddy bear. She shuffled towards him, wide smile creating ripples of upturned wrinkles on her face. Wide, wire-framed glasses relaxed on her pointed nose. "Hello, Jude."

He took her arm and guided her to the couch. "Hey, Mrs. Abraham, how's it going?"

"Oh…" Her eyes took on a faraway look for a moment like the lesser lucid residents sometimes had. Jude waited, wondering if he should be worried. "Oh, it's going. Thank you for asking." She sat down and chuckled a little, patting the cushion beside her. "Today brings back some old feelings and memories." A sigh. "How are you doing, Jude?"

Jude hesitated, deciding what, if anything, to tell the old woman. "Not too bad," he said finally, smiling.

"Good. And how is that girl you always talk about? Your special friend, Jenny. How is she doing?"

His smile flattened just a little in spite of himself. “I’m sure she’s just great. I spoke to her this morning.”

“Oh good. That’s nice to hear. How about your family? You were so proud last week that your sister was going to the playoffs. Has that happened yet?”

“No, not yet.” Jude almost winced. “Just needs to win tonight.”

Violet’s hazel eyes widened, comically large behind her lenses. “Wish that girl luck for me. If she’s half as good as you say she is then they can’t lose.”

“She sure is, best in the league.”

Violet laughed a little and patted his shoulder. “You’re always so nice. She’s lucky to have a brother like you. And Jenny is lucky, too.”

“So,” Jude said, abruptly changing the subject, “You said today brings back memories? Like what?” He had to get her to stop talking about him, had to or he’d burst, or die, or cry, or something.

Besides, who else would she tell her stories to? Violet was one of those that had family nearby, a son and a daughter each with a family of their own living within fifteen miles of Meadow Park. When her husband died though, rather than being offered a place to stay with one of them, she was admitted into this old folk’s home, left to rot without more than two visits from them a year. It wasn’t as if they lacked the means to support her either. The son was a surgeon. Jude was amazed that she was able to remain so cheerful.

“Oh you don’t want to hear about that…”

“If I didn’t I wouldn’t have asked, Mrs. Abraham.”

She smiled and patted him again. “Today is the day that my sister died. It had to be oh, almost seventy-five years ago, now.”

“What happened?” Jude hadn’t even known Violet ever had a sister. Inadvertently, Jude pictured Cassie as Violet told her story.

“It was an automobile accident.” Violet sighed again, sagging slightly with the memories. Jude could see her trying to keep her smile in place, just as he had been. “Have you ever wondered what it would be like to have a second chance? To go back and change something, even just one thing that you regret?”

Jude could think of several. So he didn’t answer her, just lifted his brows and smiled to encourage her to continue.

She did. “I’m sure you haven’t. You’re so young, with your whole life ahead of you. But, then again, so was I. Margot—that was her name—had just turned eighteen and I was seventeen. There was this boy that we both liked, Frank. Frank Sutton. He had these cute dimples, and dark curly hair.” Violet’s eyes grew distant as she remembered, though her voice stayed strong. “I’d heard he was going to ask her out, and I just couldn’t stand it. So I convinced his brother to talk him into asking me instead.”

He could see where this was heading. Even though she was still smiling, Jude could see the pain behind her words as she retold the events. He appreciated her candor. She was a storyteller, like any old person, but hers were different.

“He did and it drove a wedge in between me and Margot. He and I truly cared for each other, it was true, and she knew it. But she couldn’t get over the fact that I’d gone behind her back. I’d betrayed her. Time went on and she was off to university, out of state. I was sure it was to get away from me and I didn’t blame her. A couple of weeks later we got a phone call saying there had been an accident. I had never apologized to her. I put it off as if I had all the time in the world. But I didn’t…”

She trailed off, regaining herself. Jude put his hand on her knee, trying to console her without really knowing how. Violet patted his hand and smiled at him, grateful nonetheless. “Soon after that,” she went on, “Frank broke it off with me, because I was angry and bitter all the time. I didn’t care I just wanted my sister back.”

“I’m sorry,” Jude managed lamely. He tried to be supportive, but as bad as he felt for her and wished her pain to be gone, he was having trouble focusing on Violet. His mind swam with visions of some pick-up truck slamming Jenny in her VW Beetle, or Cassie in their mother’s minivan on the way to her game.

Violet saw his face, misinterpreting the emotion. “Don’t worry about me, Jude. I’ve made my choices and I’ve come to accept them. My hubby Dewey helped a lot with the guilt, God rest his soul. But I’m waiting for the day that I can ask for her forgiveness in Heaven.”

“She’ll give it to you.” Jude was sure. He was also getting fidgety.

She smiled widely, showing her dull little teeth. “I just wish I would have known then what I do now. We’re so shortsighted when we’re young. We take for granted the things that we value the most and don’t even realize how much we love them until they’re gone.” Violet laughed and shook her head. “But I’m rambling like a crazy old woman. You’ve got your own lovely sister that you care for, and other friends. I’ll bet you have all this covered already.”

Jude couldn’t answer, only flashed a toothy grin to hide the knot in his stomach. If only he’d had that covered, wasn’t such a thoughtless, jaded chump. What he would give to be able to go back and change things. But why would he need to go back? The words Carpe Diem flared suddenly in his mind. Seize the day. Jenny had wanted to get it tattooed somewhere.

“Y’know, Mrs. Abraham, I wish I had it all together.”

She laughed, from the depths of her soul and through her belly so that it rocked her entire body. Her eyes shut tight, creating folds of wrinkles so that he couldn’t tell her eyelids from the rest. The skin on her neck jiggled as the surprisingly loud laughter vibrated through it. When she recovered, she took a few deep breaths and patted his hand again. “So does absolutely everyone in the whole world, Jude. And guess what? None of us do.”

He nodded. What else could he do? She was right, as always. But he not only did not have it all together, he’d lost the little bit he did have. The really tragic part was that he didn’t even know why or how. It was so easy to fall into a funk, for whatever reason. Getting out, of course, was another story entirely. Doubt yourself once, and it was much easier the next time, consequently becoming far more difficult to regain the faith you’d lost. Eventually, as Jude had experienced, you just lost the drive and desire to try.

Although he couldn’t pinpoint the moment it started, looking back now, Jude could watch his descent like a slow motion replay. He’d known it was happening but did nothing but enjoy the ride all the way down. Now here he was.

“You’re pretty great, Mrs. Abraham. You know that?”

She smiled and he could swear she blushed a little, which was good. Everyone could use a little more warmth and color in their faces.

“I could say the same about you, Jude,” she said. “And I will. You’re pretty great.”

There was sincerity in her eyes, and an open fondness. He felt so comfortable with Violet, so cared for, much like he always had with Jenny, and even Cassie. At that moment it was something he never wanted to lose and would do anything to keep. Beyond that, it was something he wanted desperately for the people he loved to feel when they were with him. Carpe Diem, today is the day. Jude Goodrich would not sleep this one through.

“Hey, Mrs. Abraham, I’ve really got to go, I’m sorry.” He touched her shoulder and smiled, genuinely this time. “Thank you so much for the story.”

“You’re welcome, Jude. Thank you for stopping by.” She squeezed his hand tightly in both of hers. “It’s always a pleasure to have you visit.”

Still smiling, he walked out of her apartment, almost tripping over the gnome. Could he really make a difference? Could he change things on a dime and become a new Jude like some version of Ebenezer Scrooge? He hoped so. For Jenny, for Cassie, for Jude, he hoped so.

He should apologize to Toni as well. The thought struck him as he rode down the elevator. Her day was ruined because of him. The doors opened with a ping and he stepped out, scanning the lobby. No Toni. His smile faltered. He’d let his careless indifference ruin her

day, just like he'd done to Jenny and Cassie. Now he couldn't even apologize.

A surge of futility rose within him. How could he have let himself do that? As if he could really regain what he'd lost. That ship had sailed. And who said he wouldn't lose it again if he did get it back? Why should he try if he was always, always going to fail?
Why indeed.

A tug on his sleeve caught his attention. It was Emily. The little girl stared into his eyes, head craned back like she was trying to swallow raindrops.

"What's up, kiddo?" Jude tried to smile at the girl, a little grin/grimace hybrid.

Emily gave him a little thin-lipped smile in return, still staring, never blinking. "Have you ever wondered what it would be like to die?"

"Uh…" Jude was a little bit stunned, at a loss for an answer. Fortunately, Emily's mother hurried over and took Emily's hand. She flashed a tired, apologetic smile at Jude and guided her daughter away. "Come on, I need to use the bathroom, then we can stop at the bookstore on the way home…"

Jude shook his head and left the building, putting Emily and her unexpected question out of his mind. Instead, he thought again of Jenny and Cassie, and how he needed to apologize to them. But no, he wouldn't just apologize. He'd already apologized to Jenny weeks ago and look how that ended up. It was a great start, a sincere "I'm sorry," but at the end of the day, they were only words. Words he'd tossed around like candy at a parade.

What he really needed to do was show it. He would prove that he was sorry, that he was willing to change and that he really would change.

He walked slowly through the parking lot, mind running circles around him as he did. Jude pulled out his phone and found Jenny's name. But then he hesitated. No. No, no, he would not text her, nor even call her. That was what old Jude would do. This was New Jude, and this Jude would go straight to her house, knock on her door until he saw her face.

After that, who cared? It would be just like when they first got together. He would win her heart again, he decided. He would show her that he truly cared about her, that he was committed to their relationship, that she was his best friend and he would always be hers. They'd hold one another, and gaze into each other's eyes until tears streamed down their faces and they went blind.

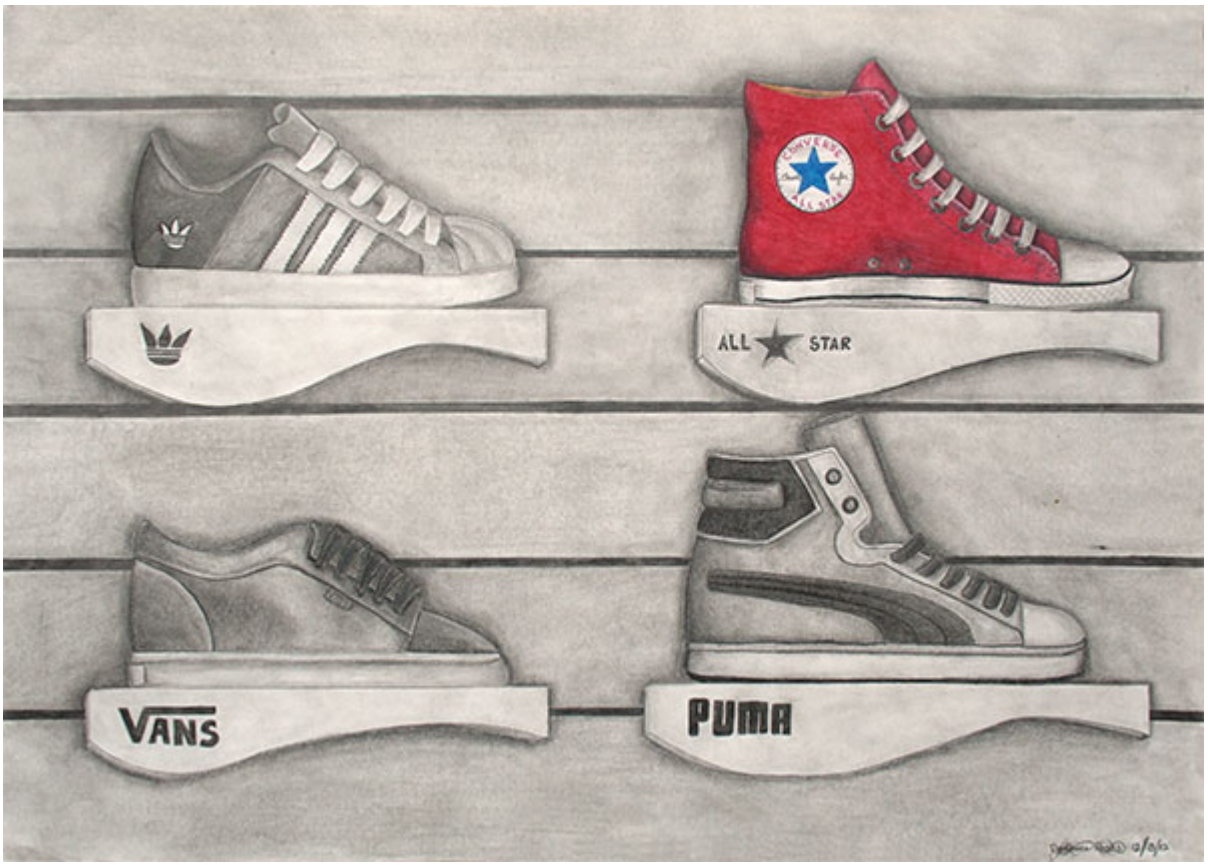
Once he and Jenny were reunited, their relationship was on the mend, and their silences were no longer tense, they would rush together to Cassie's game. He would cheer his little sister on until she was in the playoffs, and cheer her on every game after that until she had won the championship. Every time she scored a goal, or slide-tackled an opponent, he would only cheer louder until he was kicked out of the park. Then he'd cheer from his car.

A wide grin split his face and he skipped a little. Where this change came from, he didn't know. Violet's story? Cassie's talk? His love for Jenny? Maybe his apathy just became too bored, too indifferent and decided to leave him alone. It hardly mattered. Today was the day. Jude stepped off the curb, flipping his keys around in his hand. He laughed aloud, happier than he'd been in… he didn't know how long. He felt reborn.

Then the laughter stopped.
The bus driver swore he never saw him.

The Noisy Water Review | Student Anthology of Writing & Art, Whatcom Community College

noisywater.whatcom.edu/site_1213/pages_1213/18-09art.html



Roxanne Rosas

Homage to Andy Warhol

Graphite & colored pencil,
24" x 18"

Looking for Value Against the Odds: Finding College Success in My Bipolar Life

noisywater.whatcom.edu/site_1213/pages_1213/19-05essay.html

Dennis Crisp

I remember sitting on the comfortable brown couch at the mental health counselor's office. I listened to her explain all the reasons why college wasn't "a smart choice" for me. "Having Bipolar disorder makes it very difficult to stay on track in school," she would say, along with, "The pace of college tends to amplify mania and depressed moods. I believe its best that you wait until you can get on some medications that will keep you on an even keel." These thoughts, of waiting, were devastating to me as I was becoming very excited at the thought of going back to school. I felt it was a chance to get my life back on track; after all, college always reaps rewards. The subject of my schooling, or why I shouldn't school, became a constant topic at each counseling session we had. She always found reasons to wait and I have to admit, with time I started to buy into it. I began questioning what I had done enrolling at WCC. Was I crazy?

My mind couldn't let it just sit. I've never been good at taking directions that go against my intentions. This diagnosis of bipolar disorder was still so new to me that I felt I didn't have enough knowledge about the disease to take only one counselor's words; I needed more information, more people's views. It couldn't be as bad as this counselor had made it out to be. I started searching for terms like "bipolar symptoms" and "manic depression" on the web, and I acquired an overwhelming amount of hits. Being "Joe Intelligent," I went to the web sites that I felt were most reputable, ones I felt I could trust. What did I find? Information I didn't want to see. Web sites like the National Institute of Health, a very reputable institution, listed under bipolar symptoms phrases like "having racing thoughts, being easily distracted, having problems concentrating, remembering and making decisions, etc." The news didn't get any better when I went to other sites. WebMd stated, "Bipolar is a complex illness. There are many different symptoms—and several different types—of bipolar disorder. The primary symptoms of the disorder are dramatic and unpredictable mood swings." Even *The New England Journal of Medicine* was painting a fairly grim picture. These were all very well-established, well-qualified leaders in the field of mental health studies and all of them were painting the same grim picture of the disease. The results were only adding to my growing conviction that I was heading, once again, in the wrong direction with another of my life's choices. A little insight: don't give a bipolar person any extra reasons to doubt themselves.

The web sites were delivering pretty dour news. I found, mixed among these sites on the search pages, sites showing articles about research being done. When it comes to information on bipolar disorder and educational goals, the research articles weren't giving out any better

news. I went to the *Health Magazine* web site and in their article "Back to School with Bipolar? How College Can Unleash Mania," they stated, "Without the right treatment and support, bipolar college students face higher dropout rates, drug and alcohol abuse and even suicide." The research that was being done seemed to be backing up the claims put forth on the original web sites.

It was becoming very easy to buy into the negative rhetoric. Self-doubt is a constant companion of mine and this news was only fueling the fire. I had serious questions of what I was doing enrolled at WCC. I have always believed in the value of higher education, it was a belief I was raised on. I felt education can open doors that are closed to others. Unfortunately, I wasn't able to go to college right out of high school; opportunities for financing schooling were a lot fewer back then. Being the youngest of four kids left me out of luck on any money from home. Once again, I was starting to believe that maybe higher education was not available to me; this time for a different reason.

I just couldn't pass on the opportunity to try at least, so off to college I went. But I would have to say that the fall quarter, my first quarter, did nothing but add to my discouragement. I found that I went through multiple anxiety attacks and even ended up going to another counselor. It got very rough. I even spent a few weeks during the quarter sleeping only a couple hours each night as the anxiety that had built up spurred on manic episodes. Finals week was not a happy story as stress ran rampant the whole week. Much of what the articles I had read had stated was now bearing out to be true.

Here's the thing though, information can move mountains. I was fighting demons like self-doubt, fear, insecurity and depression. But I was also learning ways to look at these symptoms and fight through them. I had a big battle, but with the help of other people including my instructors, I was willing to try. I made a choice to take the option of quitting off the table. This forced me to have to look for other options when the going got tough and my mental capacities went south. I won some battles that quarter and, in the end, I stuck it out and made it through. I felt well enough about myself to go ahead and try the winter quarter.

The winter quarter has found me facing new challenges, including a classroom exercise that has pushed me to address my views on my college experience. One of the requisites of my degree program is English 101. I was very lucky to have Jeff Klausman as my instructor. The topics he presented for our consideration were thought provoking and relevant. Part of the class requirements were to write essays. For our first essay, the topic was "how important is a college education to being successful in the work force?" I put this topic in a personal perspective and asked myself how important is college to me? Am I willing to face my fears and get through it? I have never been in doubt about the value of college, so I looked more at was my condition going to hold me back. This assignment asked me to see if my negative outlook on my situation is the only option I have. So I'm taking another look into my feelings, trying to dig a little further into researching this view of bipolar disease and college success. I

plan to look at the stories of others that struggle with conditions that make college a challenge. From those stories I hope to find a connection that can help me on my path to college success.

I've begun by listening to my classmates tell their stories. Stories about how they've had to struggle to get here. In reading their comments, I am realizing that my struggles may not be any worse than the struggles being overcome by many of my fellow classmates. Financial hardships, social class biases, learning disabilities and the like are just a few of the hardships being faced by others. Struggles that are as difficult as my own, yet they are here, learning, believing in the "value" they can get from receiving a college degree. The same value I have believed in all these years.

I've continued looking into it by seeking out the views of other bipolar persons that have been through the college experience and survived. I inquired about their unique experiences and their thoughts on the value of going to college. Since mental health issues are a subject that still hides itself from open public discussions, I had to turn to my fellow WordPress bloggers online for input and I received replies like these:

Rainey, from N.C., wrote, "I went to college after both of my kids were born. I got through it, but a few times I had to withdraw from classes because I just couldn't handle it. When I was manic, I could do it all; when the crash came, it was almost unbearable. It took me 7 years, but I did it and I have been working in my field ever since."

Lennon, from California, wrote, "Good topic. College saved my LIFE! No joke. Before, I couldn't maintain interest because I was (1) un-medicated, (2) bored as hell, (3) crazy. College channeled that creative bipolar energy into something useful."

I also wanted to do more research online about bipolar, but after all the negative research I found when I first was looking for information, I was hesitant to look again. I found I was right to feel that way. To this day, the overwhelming majority of research articles out there tell only of the debilitating conditions of bipolar disease: they state all the problems, but rarely offer any solutions. Searching finally paid off though as I found little specks of gold in the sand. I found a few sites that offered help to go with all the gloom. Leave it to WikiHow to hold articles like "Get Help in Living with Bipolar Disorder" and "How to Manage Your Bipolar Disorder." They were articles that offered helpful hints to cope with the disease. They also offered links to other sources of help and other articles of help. I had finally started to find hope that there could be better outcomes in my life.

Yes, the challenges are still there; I'm still bipolar, always will be and that means the odds are stacked against me. Roadblocks, big and small will always be waiting. But by listening to the stories of others, in class and online, who are struggling just as hard with their own paths, yet are determined to succeed, and with reading the success stories of those who found a way through, I have found a little hidden strength to push harder. I am starting to realize that

attempting this “struggle against the odds” may be the hidden value I have always believed I would receive from my college experience. I may not gain substantially on a fiscal scale but I will have gained the skill to face up to long odds and win and that is worth every penny.

Follow-up: I am currently in my third quarter here at Whatcom (Spring of 2013). I still face challenges on an almost daily basis. I’ve experienced bouts of mania and depression in each of the quarters I’ve attended school. Sometimes I wonder if it will ever change, but I also realize that it’s the nature of the bipolar beast. I don’t know why, but that seems to drive me harder towards my goals of college success. I want to make it and I want to succeed…

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Winged

noisywater.whatcom.edu/site_1213/pages_1213/20-10music.html

Erik Wallace

“Winged” was written for a dance my mom choreographed. The dance was originally supposed to a part of a trilogy concerning a group of Japanese American women dealing with the internment camps during WWII. This song accompanied the first section and was mainly about establishing characters and the relationships between them. Unfortunately, the rest of the trilogy never got completed and I dropped out of the music department at Western. It was created on my computer using Cubase 5 and an orchestral sample library. I am a WCC and WWU alumni, a drummer, a composer, and an audio engineer. My business, Shibusa Sound, does digital recording, live sound, music production, and acoustic treatment. I also work at the WCC library.

A Champion with no Battle

noisywater.whatcom.edu/site_1213/pages_1213/21-06crwriting.html

Josh Sayler

Standing upon a barren field
With the wind breezing through the grass
He stands alone with sword and shield in hand
Listening for the battlecry of an enemy charging
Smelling the tang of iron on the bloodied wind
The clang of weapons clashing in battle
Echoing cries of pain rising in his ears
Raising his sword up to glint in the sun
Pivoting on his heels in a downward slash
Parrying an axe blow to the side with his shield
Blood dripping off his chin from a cut lip
Sweat blinding his eyes from seeing
He bellows a challenge to all his foes
All eyes upon him as he makes a charge
Crashing through the line of spears
Leaping over a phalanx of shields
Locking eyes with their general
The crowd circles around in anticipation
A duel to the death eye to eye.
Feinting with a rapier strike countered by a backhanded slash
Devastating cleave easily dodged
Piercing agony between the ribs
A blow under the shield through the mail
Wounded he lay on the ground exhausted
Darkness closing in around his view
The cold night clinging to his skin
Then a bright light appears
Reaching up towards its brilliance
The morning sun rising
Cool wind rustling through the fields
Far away echoes of long dead shouts
Cries of pain fading away
Standing once again alone
In an empty field with no battle.

The Noisy Water Review | Student Anthology of Writing & Art, Whatcom Community College

noisywater.whatcom.edu/site_1213/pages_1213/22-11art.html

Robin Wassong

Crazy Drawing

Digital art, 10.5 " x 8"

A Rotten Apple? A Rhetorical Analysis of the 2008 MacBook Commercial

noisywater.whatcom.edu/site_1213/pages_1213/23-06essay.html

Jessica R. Fletcher, Tiffany R. Holden, Ariana S. Rayment, and Merrick Parnell

This article has been condensed significantly for the Internet.

Abstract

This paper presents a rhetorical analysis of a 2008 commercial produced by Apple, Inc. Through the lenses of Symbolic Convergence theory and semiotics, we analyzed the following research questions: what fantasy is presented, and to create what fantasy chain? What semiotic features provide conditions for subconscious consent? The concept of greenwashing is also introduced and applied to the rest of the analyses, providing a theme and the largest research question: how are the rhetorical techniques implicit in the commercial evidence for or against the claim that Apple is greenwashing the viewer?

The consumer-provider relationship is the structure for the fantasy of 'being green'. The semiotics of the text supply implicit assent to the explicit claims—the words the narrator is saying--, not urging thorough analysis of claims, but rather an acceptance of them as fact. In the end, the verdict must be clear: based on the shared fantasy and the symbolism, in this text, Apple is either absolutely greenwashing the viewer or it is not.

Keywords: symbolic convergence, semiotics, greenwashing

Introduction

The Artifact

The commercial portrays Apple's effort to develop an eco-friendly image. It has the 2008 MacBook Pro as its centerpiece, placed in an all-white background. Every aspect of the new MacBook is shown because it continuously rotates, without showing the audience the cause of the rotation. During these rotations, animated green icons appear above the MacBook to illustrate the narrator's descriptions: an arrow, light bulb, chemistry beakers, and the earth. The commercial discloses to the audience Apple's claims that the new line of MacBooks is "the world's greenest family of notebooks" (Jared Best, 2008).

The air date of this specific MacBook commercial is unknown. However, there are circumstantial facts narrowing the field of possibilities to just under a month and a half. Matt Peckham of Time magazine writes of the "Unibody MacBook Pro," a 2008 development (2012 June 12). He writes "during a 'special event' held October 14, 2008, at company

headquarters in Cupertino, Steve Jobs unveiled a significantly redesigned MacBook Pro" (Peckham, June 12, 2012). The article identifies it as a notebook "carved from a single block of aluminum" (Peckham, 2012). A video embedded into the article shows Steve Jobs introducing the computer's environmentally friendly features as part of his keynote address. He lists 6 "green" characteristics of the new MacBook: arsenic-free, Brominated Flame Retardants-free, PVC-free system, 37% smaller packaging, and two features mentioned in the commercial itself: that it is free of mercury and highly recyclable (Peckham, 2012). In the video, he announces the new notebook, and the commercial itself was posted on YouTube on November 24, 2008 (Jared Best, November 24, 2008). This new MacBook Jobs talked about is certainly the object of this commercial.

The MacBook Green

The 2008 MacBook Pro is claimed to be more energy efficient and more likely to be recycled than previous laptops. The commercial states, "its advanced aluminum and glass enclosure is completely recyclable" (Jared Best, 2008). This feature reduces waste, which reduces the user's carbon footprint. The quality aluminum and arsenic-free glass can be used by other recyclers to make new products. Although not mentioned in the commercial, the computer is also made with polycarbonate, a lightweight plastic used to make things like compact discs and sunglass lenses. Polycarbonate is also the top choice for greenhouse coverings, another environmentally friendly element (Shah, 2009).

The commercial also claims that the MacBook is, "…engineered to be so efficient, it runs on a quarter of the power of a single light bulb" (Jared Best, 2008). This reduced amount of power needed to charge the laptop leads to fewer greenhouse gas emissions from power plants. It also reduces consumers' energy bills because they are not using as much electricity. In addition, the commercial declares that "[the new MacBook] is made without many of the harmful toxins found in other computers, like mercury" (Jared Best, 2008).

The National Advertising Division (NAD) of the Council of Better Business Bureaus evaluated these MacBooks based on the Electronic Product Environmental Assessment Tool (EPEAT) rating, which is used to compare computers based on their environmental impact. They discovered that Apple had high EPEAT ratings compared to other notebooks, and according to the NAD, Apple declared that they would "…only produce computer notebooks that meet the highest EPEAT ratings" (Shah, 2009). The NAD later discovered that other laptop companies had higher EPEAT ratings, but Apple never stated whether or not it would make changes to improve (Shah, 2009).

Apple was ranked higher than other companies such as Dell, in Greenpeace's ranking of green electronics and was praised for its effort to make more environmentally friendly computers. However, Sarah Westervelt, a spokeswoman for the Basel Action Network, explained that it is impossible for a laptop to be completely "green" because the batteries used will have chemicals, such as cadmium, that could be harmful to health, and they will still contain dangerous toxins like lead (Shah, 2009).

Research Questions

Under the lenses of Michel Foucault's concepts of biopower and panoptism, Ernest Bormann's Symbolic Convergence theory, and Peirce's semiotic triad, the following research questions were presented and analyzed: what fantasy is presented in the commercial, with the hopes of creating what fantasy chain? What semiotic features undergird the stated claims with psychological assent in the mind of the viewer? Where is power exercised in the exchange? The concept of greenwashing is also introduced and applied to the rest of the analyses, providing a structural backbone and the largest research question: How are the rhetorical techniques implicit in the commercial evidence for or against the claim that Apple is greenwashing the viewer?

Literature Review

Symbolic Convergence Theory

Ernest Bormann and his students at the University of Minnesota developed symbolic convergence theory (SCT) in the early 1970s. They were influenced by Robert Bales's observations of small group interactions. Bales noticed that students working together to accomplish a common goal would comment about people or events which were not physically present within the group (Kuypers & King 2001, p. 212-213). He called these comments 'fantasies', which are essentially small stories or jokes that contain or disclose emotion. They can comprise of events from a group members past or future. For example, a group member might make a remark about what they are doing after work, or what they have planned for the weekend. The member's statement might cause a response from the rest of the group.

Bormann and his students used Bales' observation of group interaction as their foundation for symbolic convergence theory (Baldwin, Perry, & Moffitt, 2004). The theory suggests that "members in a group must exchange fantasies in order to form a cohesive group" (Young, 1998). People reveal fantasies in small group situations because they can take the environment from awkward to comfortable by allowing group members to express their personal opinions. This is beneficial because sharing fantasies helps to establish common ground, which leads to group cohesion. Fantasies are not just limited to interpersonal interactions, as explained in an article in Simile that tied fantasy theory with virtual relationships when it looked at online discussion boards following the death of a well-known figure (Greer 2008).

According to symbolic convergence theory, the act of sharing fantasies can lead to what it known as a 'fantasy chain'. A fantasy chain is a positive or energetic reaction to the initial fantasy. This positive response is what establishes common ground between group members, which then leads to group cohesion. A single fantasy chain will not produce absolute cohesion within a group, because some group members might not be able to relate to the first

few fantasies expressed, and thus can't participate right away. It takes numerous fantasy chains to form complete cohesion, and thus it takes time for group members to establish a comfortable environment amongst each other (Young, 1998).

After a number of fantasy chains take place and common ground is established, members begin to relate to one another and group cohesion occurs. When members of a group share the same fantasy, it is evident that they have experienced the same emotion, celebrated specific actions as worthy, and have understood a common experience in the same way (Hirokawa & Poole, 1996). When group members share these experiences, a fantasy theme has been created. According to theorists Baldwin, Perry, and Moffitt, "[a] fantasy theme is a creative and imaginative interpretation of events that fulfills a psychological or rhetorical need" (2004). In other words, fantasy themes are topics of conversation that everyone can relate to. When every group member can respond and interact, the environment becomes more comfortable. Fantasy themes are component parts of rhetorical vision. A rhetorical vision is a complex drama, which unifies people in a common symbolic reality (Wells, 1996). As people share fantasies and various fantasy themes join together, rhetorical vision is created.

Semiotics

In a lecture to his students, Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure said, "*A science that studies the life of signs within society* is conceivable; it would be part of social psychology and consequently of general psychology; I shall call it *semiology*" (Saussure in Leitch et. al, 2010, emphasis Leitch's). Although not a formalized system of ideas and established structures based on a common underlying ideology, the theory of semiology is nonetheless useful for explaining meaning in an artifact.

In his book *Semiotics: The Basics*, Daniel Chandler presents semiology, often known as semiotics, as it is widely considered: the product of two researchers' consecutive but independent work (Chandler 2002, p. 6). Saussure (1857-1913) and Charles Peirce, an American philosopher (1839-1914), each developed a methodology to explain the relationship between concepts and the pictures and words used to express them (Chandler 2002, pp. 5-6).

Saussure presented a dyadic model of this concept. He labeled his two sections the *signified* and the *signifier*; the signified is the referent itself, and the signified is the "sound pattern" we use to connect to an idea of the referent (Chandler 2002, pp. 18-19). Peirce's model, however, was three-part. He proposed a *representamen*: what the sign looks like, which may or may not be material; an *object*: the actual concept that the sign refers to; and an *interpretant*: the connection the receiver makes, or how the receiver understands the sign (Chandler 2002, pp. 32-33). Chandler provides an example of this triadic model, explaining that in a traffic intersection, a red light (the *representamen*) causes the effect of stopped cars (the *object*) because of a trained belief (the *interpretant*) of what a red light (the *representamen*) means (2002, p. 33).

However, signs don't apply the same way in every situation (Chandler 2002, p. 147). They require a larger code, "a set of practices familiar to users of the medium operating within a broad cultural framework" to provide a context for analysis (2002, p. 148). Chandler presents several categories of codes: social codes like paralanguage, commodity codes, and behavioral codes; textual codes, which include mathematics, aesthetics, rhetoric, and mass media; and interpretative codes that refer to perceptions and ideologies (2002, p. 149).

Semiotics doesn't just belong with communication, psychology, or linguistics alone. It also involves and thus is involved in philosophy, anthropology, sociology, and media, literary, and aesthetic theories (Chandler 2002, p. 2).

Greenwashing

Greenwashing, a portmanteau of 'green' and 'whitewashing' (Costanzo 2009, p. 30), is "disinformation disseminated by an organization so as to present an environmentally responsible public image, where disinformation refers to deliberately misleading information" (Montiel & Ramus in Walker & Wan, 2012, p.231). When a company participates in greenwashing their aim is to convince the consumer that the company is environmentally friendly. While the company does this, it also makes an effort to influence the consumer's purchase behavior. Hence, it directs consumers' attention towards the positive consequences of purchase behavior because the consumer feels their purchase is positive towards the environment (Cherian & Jacob, 2012, p. 126). When a company uses greenwashing as a communication tactic they are simultaneously engaging in two types of behaviors: one is harmful—"poor environmental performance"—and the other is deceitful —"positive communication about its environmental performance" (Walker & Wan, 2012). Greenwashing can be seen as a rhetorical tool in advertisements and campaigns. When a firm participates in greenwashing, they attempt to "represent their bad environmental performance in a positive light" (Walker & Wan, 2012).

Many corporations in the United States can be accused of greenwashing. In the spring of 2007, TerraChoice ("The six sins of greenwashing" 2007) conducted a survey of six category-leading big box stores. Through their survey they identified 1,018 consumer products and 1,753 corresponding environmental claims. Out of the products that were examined, all of them but one made claims that were false and mislead intended audiences. Based on these results, the researchers identified six patterns of green washing known as the "six sins of green washing".

The first sin identified is called "hidden trade-off." This suggests a product is green based on a single environmental attribute. The second sin is known as the "sin of no proof." This makes environmental claims that cannot be substantiated by easily accessible supporting information. The third sin is the "sin of vagueness," a collection of poorly defined or too broad information with likely misunderstandings. The fourth sin is known as the "sin of irrelevance." This 'sin' is committed by a company making an environmental claim that may be truthful but for some reason it is irrelevant for consumers seeking a specific

environmentally favorable product. The fifth sin is called as the “sin of fibbing,” which occurs when a company’s environmental claims are false. The sixth sin is known as the “sin of lesser of two evils,” which states companies make green claims that may be true within the product category but jeopardize distracting the consumer from the greater environmental impacts of the category as a whole (“The six sins of greenwashing” 2007).

Analysis

Symbolic Convergence Theory

The symbolic convergence theory, or fantasy theory, can be used as a lens to analyze other aspects of persuasive communication. Advertisements attempt to sell, promote or simply communicate something to the general audience. The artifact presents Apple’s improved 2008 laptop and explains how it is more environmentally friendly than previous models. It explains how the new computer uses less energy and is made from recycled materials so viewers get a sense that Apple is working hard to create more environmentally responsible products. The final quote at the end of the commercial, “the greenest family of notebooks” also emphasizes that they’re environmentally conscious.

In this commercial, the fantasy being expressed is that they are now “green”. It is a shared fantasy theme amongst viewers. However, some reviewers speculated that consumers may be misled, or greenwashed, by their simplistic, earth friendly television commercials and online advertisements (“What is greenwashing?”, 2012). When a company goes “green” in order to gain support or increase profits through the perception of being environmentally responsible, they are manipulating people’s opinions. The company will essentially spend more money and time on advertising that states that they’re “green” than on making an effort to reduce their environmental impact (“What is greenwashing?”, 2012).

In 2006, Greenpeace, an international organization that seeks to conserve and protect the environment tried to push Apple to go green (“We love our Macs!”). They noted that Apple had no timeline for eliminating PVC (Polyvinyl Chloride) and BFRs (Brominated Flame Retardants), which are toxic and noxious when burned (Hutsko, 2008), and that they needed to create an easier way to take back and recycle old laptops. Greenpeace attended a Mac Expo and encouraged Mac fans to write letters to Steve Jobs, or sign up online to encourage Apple to be a world leader in environmental innovation. Some exhibiters were unhappy with the campaign, and Greenpeace was removed from the expo.

In 2007, Steve Jobs wrote a letter to the public titled, “A Greener Apple” which explained Apple’s movement to go “green” (Valdez, 2012). In response to this letter, Greenpeace published an article applauding Apple’s decision. Apple’s decision to move in this direction caused a positive reaction, or fantasy chain. However, complete cohesion will not be formed from this fantasy chain because even though many people share the fantasy of going green, not everyone does, so they can’t relate to the fantasy of an environmentally friendly movement.

After the arrival of the new MacBooks, competing manufacturer Dell decided to challenge Apple's "green" fantasy. In 2009, the company complained to the National Advertising Division (NAD) of the Council of Better Business Bureaus, claiming that Apple's slogan, "the world's greenest family of notebooks" was misleading consumers. Apple argued that the industry's common usage of the term 'family' "refers to a particular model or group of models and not the entire notebook line" ("Case #5013", 2009). They explained that according to this definition, Apple's earlier white MacBook wasn't counted as part of the new line and thus it doesn't have to fit the same environmentally friendly claims as the more recent models. But Dell's statement went against Apple's earth friendly image as a whole: their newer 2008 models might be more sustainable and "green" but the older white MacBook isn't up to date.

Since Dell also charged that "the world's greenest family of notebooks" was a "broad superiority claim" against other company's laptops, the NAD tested the MacBook line as well as other leading manufacturers' computers using the Electronic Product Environmental Assessment Tool (EPEAT) rating (5). The EPEAT tool lets buyers "compare PCs based on their environmental impact" (Shah, 2009). The NAD concluded that all of Apple's laptops had high EPEAT ratings and that no other manufacturer compared. However, after Apple won the dispute against Dell on June 3, 2009, the NAD explained that Apple's slogan could mislead consumers to believe that MacBooks are better than other manufacturer's laptops so they suggested that Apple change their slogan to avoid confusion ("Case #5013", 2009). This led Apple to change the slogan from "the world's greenest family of notebooks" to "the world's greenest lineup of notebooks" (LaVellee, 2009).

The question remains: is Apple's 2008 laptop really "green"? Or does the MacBook Green commercial greenwash viewers to believe so? Apple definitely made changes with the environment and petitioners in mind, and according to a New York Times review written by Joe Hutsko, "[the 2008 MacBook] achieves both Energy Star 4.0 compliance, as well as a gold rating from the Green Electronics Council. (Of course, 103 other notebooks have received gold status, too.)" (Hutsko, 2008). This statement reflects that Apple's changes are notable but that they aren't the only company to receive approval from the Green Electronics Council.

Greenpeace asked Apple to create more environmentally friendly and safe products before Jobs declared they were "going green". They applauded their step in the right direction, and approved of their 2008 MacBook, but Greenpeace International's toxics campaigner, Casey Harell explained, "Its laptops are definitely better. That in and of itself is a good thing. But not all toxic pieces have been eliminated yet" (Lane, 2008). Greenpeace was hoping that Apple would be the first to produce a laptop made without brominated flame retardant (BFR), or polyvinyl chloride (PVC) (Hutsko, 2008). Although Apple eliminated BFR, they didn't remove all of the PVC. According to Hutsko, Apple abolished PVC in the unit's internal connectors and cables but left them in the adapter and external power cord. This means that internally these MacBooks are entirely PVC-free, but Apple cannot say that their entire package is PVC-free (Hutsko, 2008).

The fantasy of "going green" expressed in the 2008 MacBook Green commercial leads viewers to believe that Apple is essentially an environmentally friendly company. There is enough evidence to support that Apple worked to make the necessary changes in order to be for the environment, rather than against it, but that doesn't mean that they are a "green" company. They are still producing laptops made from numerous chemicals that require enormous amounts of power and energy to manufacture.

Viewers of all types, previous Mac consumers or not, may or may not react to the fantasy expressed in the commercial. Those that do react will be able to relate to the idea of "going green" in some way and start a fantasy chain of wanting to be more environmentally responsible. This may include swapping their older, less sustainable laptops for the newer "green" Macbook. If something bigger than them, such as a thriving company like Apple, makes the decision to reduce its environmental footprint, then consumers will want to make similar decisions as well. The overall fantasy theme of becoming earth friendly will continue to capture those making "green" lifestyle changes and put them under the same "green" umbrella.

Semiotics

The symbols. As the commercial begins, the viewer sees the MacBook in question rotating in a nondescript white space. The space is anti-dimensional because it can simultaneously image a three-dimensional object (the laptop) and display two-dimensional symbols that are visually above the MacBook. Hence, when the first symbol appears, the viewer, with a modern perspective on space and depth, would recognize the hypothetical nature of the images, and psychologically the MacBook may become a signifier for the symbols pictured (which are themselves signifiers of concepts).

When one looks at the artifact in question to examine it for semiotic constructs, the six symbol outlines (arrow, recycling symbol, light bulb, chemistry beakers, explosion cloud, and an earth-sun-clouds scene) immediately advertise themselves as reservoirs of symbolic meaning. And to be sure, there are psychological connects involved with the choices of these symbols. But at a more basic level, even the spatial arrangement standard in the commercial holds its own interpretable meaning.

Use of space. All the drawn symbols in the artifact are pictured above the rotating MacBook (Jared Best 2008 November 24). In his book *Semiotics: The Basics*, Daniel Chandler explains the connotations of the vertical axis in visual images—the meaning things in a picture might carry because of their spatial positioning. He quotes two researchers, Lakoff and Johnson, who "observe[d] that (in English usage) *up* has come to be associated with *more* and *down* with *less*" (2002, p. 88, emphasis Chandler's). What is unclear is whether the 'more' and 'less' refers to visual emphasis of the higher and lower objects-- is the upper one is more noticeable?-- or if the two objects are of equal impact visually, but the upper one is cast in a slightly more positive air (in a Western culture where 'more' is 'better'

and ‘less’ is ‘worse’). In either case, the positive emphasis belongs to the symbols appearing above the MacBook, so the previous option would seem more plausible, as Apple, Inc. would certainly not want to psychologically shadow their new computer.

Unless Apple is playing a humility game, abdicating the role of ‘better’ and ‘more’ to the more abstract symbols of larger ideas, relying on the slightness of the psychological impression to keep the MacBook at ‘almost best’, if not as ‘best’ as the ideas floating above it.

Other researchers, however, presented a different case for connotations of the vertical axis. According to Chandler, Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen claimed that when “an image is structured along a vertical axis, the upper and lower sections” connote not the good/bad binary opposite, as Lakoff and Johnson explained it, but an ideal/real opposition, where the lower half relates to practical, factual, reality(what *is*), and the higher half represents the realm of possibility or abstract generalizations(what *might* be) (2002, pp. 88-89).

This evidence pairs neatly, if not exactly, with the conclusions from Lakoff and Johnson. The symbols of the environment are placed to signify a larger ideal of environmental protection. The MacBook sits lower, in the place of the thing that is in and of itself less important than the greater ideas *but at the same time* it is presented as the physical reality that meets those ideals.

The arrow. The first symbol to appear in the MacBook Green commercial is a highly recognizable, standard arrow outline. The arrow doesn’t appear until two seconds in to the commercial. By then, the viewer has already seen and slightly registered the image of the MacBook, without being distracted by having to decode a symbol right away.

When the arrow first appears and points at the rotating computer, the narrator says, “This is the new MacBook”. Why? The MacBook is the only thing on the blank screen-- it doesn’t need to be pointed out. Possibly the arrow is meant as a second emphasis—by a couple seconds in, the viewer has seen the computer. Then there is a distraction—and a new image, the arrow. The arrow, however, catches your attention only to refocus it on the product, re-emphasizing the laptop’s importance.

Through a semiotic lens, the recognizable shape called an arrow not only represents information (where something is, along the line of its axis), but also metonymically it could represent the concept of progress itself. In Gillian Fuller’s article on airport signage, “The Arrow—Directional Semiotics: Wayfinding in Transit”, she writes that “[a]t the airport that arrow is a tool for movement” (2002, p. 239), but also “determines specific procedures for movement, for transforming our relationships and personal status” (2002, p. 239). She explains:

> In a world where forward movement is privileged, where 'stasis' in one's job, personal psychology, or real estate holdings is seen as decline, the arrow is a trope as well as a tool in this 'supermodern' world of constant transit. The arrow is a curious phenomenon…it admits no turning back: move or be devoured, because the 'technical' (read global capitalist) world is upgrading (2002, p. 239).

Hidden in the innocent green arrow outline is a full deductive line of thought. The major premise, established above, is that an arrow points to the future. Secondly, the arrow points to the new MacBook (Jared Best 2008), the latest product from a company widely considered to be innovative. Thus, the symbol of the bouncing arrow subconsciously claims the beauty of the future to be in this laptop computer.

The recycling symbol. The viewer has seen a basic arrow, pointing at the new MacBook. When does he next see arrows? In the very next picture: the classic recycling symbol. This symbol not only represents recycling specifically, but also is sometimes adopted to symbolize the green movement in general. Subconsciously, there may be a connection between first the MacBook, then the arrow pointing directly at it, then the famous recycling symbol, which is itself made up of arrows. The arrows link the green symbol to the Mac.

This may be a subconscious claim that this MacBook is green. However, this isn't so wonderful of a discovery when one already knows that what the narrator is saying claims that directly. But there might be fewer perturbations to our subconscious assent minds because of these psychological connections that have already been made. Also, it is something to know that the nonverbal and verbal cues of this commercial, so far, are in accord.

The light bulb. After the arrow and recycle symbol, the narrator claims, "It's engineered to be so efficient, it runs on a quarter of the power of a single light bulb" (Jared Best 2008). What the semiotician may find interesting is that the progression from a cartoon of a common incandescent bulb to a symbol for energy usage follows Peirce's triadic framework, circling the model twice.

The first representamen: the cartoon. The first object: light. The obvious first interpretant: we recognize a picture of a light producer as a symbol of light itself.

The second representamen: a producer of light. The second object: energy. The second interpretant: we recognize that light is usually present at an energy exchange in the physical world. Thus, a common symbol for light is also appropriate as a symbol for energy.

Also, there is a common figurative use of a light bulb as representing a bright idea ("Idea Bulb" n.d.). It is appropriate that the company popularly revered as an icon of innovation uses a light bulb, a symbol of new ideas, to sell its 2008 MacBook, touted for green technology, especially energy conservation.

Themes. During the course of the MacBook Green commercial, over the rotating computer, six symbols appear to illustrate the narration. All the images are in the same color, a bright, fresh green, coordinating with but not directly matching the grass on the MacBook's screen. Because all of the symbols have the same brightness, they are equals in attracting the viewer. Thus they psychologically impart the same level of urgency, communicating a larger message in smaller, equally important parts.

Since all the symbols are in the color green, the grass in the computer screen is green, and the MacBook line is described as "the world's greenest family of notebooks," it is necessary to include a semiotic analysis of the color and its corresponding word.

The word green denotatively refers to the color seen in leaves and grass. From there, its symbolic referent expands to a general reference to the earth and nature. Relatively recently, however, the word 'green' expanded again to refer to efforts or attitudes to promote that protection of the natural earth in general and the natural, non-human beings on earth in particular. The color green, in a hermeneutic-like circle, was originally the color of some natural entities, and now represents efforts to protect those entities.

Visually, green is a calming yet vibrant color: a mix of soothing (but moody) blue and cheerful (but harsh) yellow. It keeps the positive psychological characteristic of each while negating the negative (O'Brien 2003). In this commercial, green is the color in focus. The silver MacBook against the white background is not especially distinct, and the default picture on the screen is also green.

Black, silver, and white, the three other colors in the ad, are all neutrals, and provide a clean, minimalist, spare, and slightly luxurious (the metallic of the silver aluminum) stage for the star color to have the fullest impact.

The code. Since signs must operate in a code in whose context they are analyzed for meaning (Chandler 2002, p. 147), there has to be a relatively uniform code or set of codes to guide this look at the semiotics in the MacBook Green commercial. Of the types of codes presented in *Semiotics: The Basics*, there are several that could apply. Since the symbols are artistic representations in a media environment advertising a product, it appears this commercial would be best analyzed under the category of textual codes, which includes aesthetics, mass media, and rhetoric (Chandler 2002, p. 149). However, the possible greenwashing—an organization presenting itself and its products as environmentally friendly, as a ploy to cater to the culture rather than as a reflection of truth—aspect of the artifact links it also to social codes and particularly interpretive codes. The ideological framework surrounding the green movement is itself a sub-code under the category of interpretative codes.

The idea of greenwashing as a code also sets up a company for success or failure on a scale they may not wish to be adjudicated on. If 'greenness' is a cultural code, companies are judged whether they are green or not, by society's current definition of 'greenness'. There is

no going outside the framework, and thus companies are under pressure to portray themselves as green, whether their products are strictly so or not. As a company known for its cool, hip, young, artistic, and modern image, Apple is under immense pressure to conform to the current standards of environmental responsibility.

In this artifact, the semiotics are clear: there is implicit assent to explicit claims, and a strong image of Apple's ideology, obtusely and obliquely, that if true is 'greenness', but if false is a case of greenwashing.

The Green Package

Apple, Inc. has likely participated in greenwashing by presenting symbolic actions and explicit claims throughout their commercial without corresponding substantive actions. The artifact examined here claims the new MacBooks are "the world's greenest family of notebooks." This message Apple Inc. sends to its viewers cannot be supported by concrete detail. Adrienne Jefferies claims the commercial tells viewers it is the greenest laptop in the world. However, there are 113 laptops that have also received EPEAT's (Electronic Product Environmental Assessment Tool) golden rating (Jefferies, 2009). Jefferies also states the Apple Inc. has not reduced the amount of harmful toxins to zero, and the MacBook is not one hundred percent recyclable because it does not use any post-consumer recycled content or bio based plastic (Jefferies, 2009). Apple Inc. cannot claim they are the greenest notebook and it is evident they are using green-washing as a strategic communication tool to attract consumers who value the environment.

Greenwashing is the main theme that ties together this analytical review of the "MacBook Green" commercial. Foucault's adaption of the Panopticon as a symbol of power can be linked to a major company's monitoring trends in consumer opinions. The company, from pilot tests, surveys, and sales data, can read the pulse of its consumer base and adapt its advertising to the trends of the day. Currently, a major trend is 'going green'. Foucault's idea of biopower as an institution granted power at the assent of the people fits with Apple as a mammoth company with an enormous consumer base. When the commercial tells the audience, already influenced by the cultural icon that is the sponsor company and the cultural value of 'greenness', that aspects of the computer are eco-friendly, it allows the consumer of the product to believe they have contributed to the going green trend. Therefore, consumers of the new MacBooks feel they have participated in an eco-friendly duty towards our environment.

Symbolic convergence theory fits into the framework of biopower and panopticism. The sharing of fantasies and the fantasy chain confirm the biopower element. With the trend of going green, Apple Inc. knows consumers can view their "MacBook Green" commercial as a shared fantasy because the majority of their consumers have the desire and feel the need to participate in going green. When viewers share the same fantasy of Apple Inc. going green, the fantasy chain reaction is formed. In this case, the fantasy of going green is portrayed and viewers have a positive, energetic response towards the company because they presented a

fantasy that is common amongst people in society. Apple greenwashes through this theory when it causes the consumer to feel their purchase is making a positive difference. For this reason consumers have participated in a fantasy chain reaction because their purchase with Apple makes them feel positive.

Semiotics is highly present in the communication tool of greenwashing. In the artifact we are analyzing here, it is apparent Apple Inc. has used semiotics to greenwash the audience. The commercial uses the color green for the icons, the home screen on the sample notebook, and drawn symbols (Jared Best 2008). It is commonly understood in our culture that the color green represents the environment, nature, and freshness. By doing this Apple Inc. uses a rhetorical approach towards the audience to attract them with the product they are selling. By using the color green, it tells the audience that the product they are selling is not only focused on the computer itself, but also focuses on how this product serves a duty towards the environment.

Conclusion

All together, the three theories provide different levels of evidence for a greenwashing case against Apple Inc. Biopower and panopticism deal with the situational framework of Apple as a huge company with fans and a customer base. Symbolic convergence theory explains the interaction between Apple and its customers through the commercial, and confirms the element of biopower, providing more data for the panopticon feature. And semiotics is the lowest level, the psychological influences to the individual mind within the commercial itself. The whole set, structure, interaction, and individual psychology, all wrapped up in the background, interplay, and thoughts of one commercial, form a solid, complete, and powerful package of brilliant advertising production. However, it is that exact solidarity of the production that is what makes Apple so susceptible to the charge of greenwashing. Such strong claims must be supported or they are themselves the best evidence against Apple in an accusation of greenwashing. The structure is firm. The fantasy is developed. The symbols are speaking. There is no middle ground.

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noisywater.whatcom.edu/site_1213/pages_1213/24-12art.html

Logan Reitz-Lambert

Point of View

Ink, 24 " x 18"

misc romance

noisywater.whatcom.edu/site_1213/pages_1213/25-07crwriting.html

Shellie Stevens

***From**: "K—" <z—@gmail.com>**
***To**: "Shellie Stevens" <p—@yahoo.com>*
My playlist for you. **Hurtful**, *by Erik Hassle.* **Bitter End**, *by Erik Hassle.* **Fatal**, *by J Holiday. Oh, and one more.* **Who I Am Hates Who I've Been**, *by Reliant K.*

Up until seeing the surveillance video I had tried to convince myself that it wasn't him. After that, nothing made sense. I watch as K— walks towards his wife Kriston's apartment at 4:53 am, carrying what looks like a shotgun on his right side, and comes back only seven minutes later, carrying the shotgun in his other hand. The defense argued that because of the lighting you couldn't see the person's face or even tell for sure that it was a man, let alone a black man. But I knew. That was his walk, those were his jeans, his shoes, and I caught a glimpse as he strode out of the first frame of him reaching up to adjust his glasses in the way only he did. I also knew, because he had told me he was going to do it.

The term psychopath was first brought up when I was interviewed by the police, before I saw the video, before I knew what to believe. When I told the detective my experience with K—, how he was really funny and super smart but had a really bad habit of lying, she said, "Yeah, we noticed that. He even seems to lie about stuff he doesn't need to. But then, that's how psychopaths are."

This was my statement to the police:
"My name is Shellie Stevens. I have known K— Dunya since approximately January or early spring of 2007. I have dated him off and on since that time. Approximately 1-2 months ago we were having a conversation about custody of Kai. K— was talking while I was making dinner. He was concerned that Kriston would take Kai back to Missouri. I thought and told him that he would just have to move to Missouri. He said he couldn't live there again due to the fact that he was treated poorly because he was black. I had seen some issues like that when with him in the community, so I kind of understood why that could be an issue. He then said something about Kriston and either her dying or being killed. I do not remember what he said, and thought he was joking around. I stopped what I was doing and hugged him and said, "You could never do that to Kai, he needs his mother." He said very quietly, "I have to.""

K— kills his wife with a shotgun; six months later I'm driving down Meridian Street and he appears in front of me. I had always thought we would end up together, in the end. This time he's wearing a black hoodie pulled up over his head, pointing a shotgun at my chest.

I flinch at the sound of the gun shot and can already feel the pain shooting through my chest and a feeling of cold wetness spreading from the wound. I hear Kriston say, “It should have been you.”

I can’t breathe. I know she is right.

The National Institute of Health says, “In some cases, hallucination may be normal. For example, hearing the voice of, or briefly seeing, a loved one who has recently died can be a part of the grieving process.” Listening to all this my therapist says, “You may be psychic.”

All I know is I’m really glad he is in jail, because if he wasn’t, he would probably kill me. If he wasn’t in jail…I would still want to be with him.

About 1 percent of the population can be defined as psychopaths, however they make up about 20 percent of prison inmates. Of those, they are responsible for half of the violent crimes and are 3 to 4 times more likely to re-offend (Craig et al.).

It was a Craigslist posting that broke us up the first time. His. He had posted under “strictly platonic,” looking for someone to go to lunch with him. In the posting I recognized his wording, his cadence, so I responded to the ad, asking if he was in a relationship. “No, nothing like that,” he replied. When confronted he said that he didn’t realize we were being exclusive. He sent me a link to Gnarls Barkley’s video, “Who Is Gonna Save My Soul Now?” In this video a woman is breaking up with a man giving him the, “it’s not you it’s me” speech in a diner. In response he casually asks the waiter to bring him an extra plate. He cuts his heart out with a butter knife and sets it on the plate, sliding it across the table towards the woman. He says, “Here, it’s yours now.” I took him back.

It’s scary how deeply I was sucked in. When I showed my friends at work the video they thought it was ridiculous and manipulative. I had thought it was sweet. My friends made it pretty obvious that they were not a part of the K— Fan Club and had no problem telling me how they felt about him. “You don’t need a fixer-upper!” they said. “You were so sad last time you broke up with him, I don’t want to see you that sad again,” they said. “If he cheated on you once he’ll do it again,” they said. “I know, I know, I know!” I said.

We had met through an ad he posted on Craigslist, under “misc romance.” He was working the evening shift at the Bellingham Herald and I met him downtown for one of his lunch breaks. We grabbed a coffee (me) and a chai tea (him) at Starbucks and walked around in the cold February night. We talked about Fight Club and jokingly about whether or not he was a serial killer. He said, “of course I’m a serial killer, I kill me some cereal every morning!”

***From**: “K—” <m—@gmail.com>*
***To**: “The Penguin” <p—@yahoo.com>*
It was nice meeting you. Thanks for coming out and freezing your ass off. :)

You're fun and I would "totally" like to spend more time with you.
***
I wanna live 'till I die, no more, no less.

***From**: "The Penguin" <p—@yahoo.com>*
***To**: "K—" <m—@gmail.com>*
LOL…I had a great time. You seem pretty normal for a cereal killer. But then, you never know, do you?

***From**: "K—" <m—@gmail.com>*
***To**: "The Penguin" <p—@yahoo.com>*
That's how we work, lure you in then next thing you know you're covered in milk.

He was a computer-nerd-video-game-playing-geek, with a funny, softer, serious side.

***From**: "K—" <m—@gmail.com>*
***To**: "The Penguin" <p—@yahoo.com>*
I feel the need to get some juice and make things dead, but before I get off here. I have a question. Do you think it's possible to have someone care for you as much as you do them? Or are millions of people just barking up the wrong tree. Are we going against nature by trying to have that kind of relationship?

Should I even be asking you these things?
***
I wanna live till I die, no more, no less

We broke up the second time in 2008. He had moved to Lynnwood for a new job and although we never had the "let's break up" conversation, I got the message because he just stopped texting and emailing. Failing at his job after a few months, he moved back to Bellingham. I saw him one day as he was dropping his son off at daycare. "Hey," I said. "It's good to see you. You should come over some time." And he did.

The next summer we moved in together. I figured it would be more difficult for him to have another girlfriend if he was living with me. It wasn't. I moved out. Tried to forget him.

July, 2010 posting on Craigslist. Mine.
bellingham craigslist > personals > missed connections

Keazy - w4m – 42 (Bham)

I don't believe that the best part of me was you
But what am I supposed to say
When I'm all choked up and you're ok

Now, I'm not falling to pieces
But when a heart breaks it doesn't break even

His response:

***From**: "K—" <z—@gmail.com>*
***To**: "Shellie Stevens" p—@yahoo.com*
I hope you are serious, because my heart couldn't take you changing your mind. I can't say I did picture what the future did hold, I am trying to know. I am trying a lot of things. I just know I love you and my life is poorer for you being gone. I will always care for you.

I do have two things. One, you assume I am in a relationship. Two, that I wouldn't come running at the thought of you needing me or wanting to be with me. Well, three, I want you to see the changes I am trying to make. If only from a distance or a little bit at a time.
The ball, as always, is in your court. I will always be there for you.

A year later, he's calling me on his way home from the police station after being questioned about his wife's murder. Excitedly he says, "The police told me Kriston was the victim of a violent act." I can hear the smile in his voice. "Is she going to be ok?" I ask repeatedly. "No," he finally says, "she's not going to be ok. And the great thing is I had nothing to do with it."

No empathy. No conscience. No impulse control. Studies have shown that the psychopathic brain is structurally different. Both the prefrontal cortex and the amygdala, areas that are known to control panning, prediction of consequences, and inhibition of socially unacceptable behavior, are substantially reduced in size in a psychopath's brain. Also, too, the axons connecting these regions are weaker, even though the axons leading to other parts of the brain from these regions were normal (Craig et al.).

The fear a victim has over being hurt or killed is meaningless to a psychopath, because they are unable to feel the emotion of fear like the rest of us do. This can actually be measured scientifically. In one test, prisoners who didn't respond to punishment received a painful electrical shock when a timer counted down to zero. An electrode taped to their fingers measured perspiration. Normally, people start to sweat as they anticipate the coming shock. Only, psychopaths don't sweat. They don't fear punishment, which also explains why they find it hard to empathize with their victims (Hercz).

In another experiment, groups of letters were flashed to volunteers. Some were nonsense and some formed real words. Subjects pressed a button whenever they recognized a real word. Non-psychopaths respond faster and display more brain activity when processing emotionally loaded words such as "rape" or "cancer" than when they see neutral words such as "tree." To a psychopath however, the words "rape" and "tree" have the same emotional impact—none (Hercz).

Almost all serial killers are psychopaths, and most dangerous criminals are too. However, violent criminals only account for a tiny fraction of the psychopaths around us. According to Robert Hercz, in his essay, "Psychopaths Among Us," "hundreds of thousands of psychopaths live and work and prey among us. Your boss, your boyfriend, your mother could be described as a 'subclinical' psychopath, someone who leaves a path of destruction and pain without a single pang of conscience" (Hercz).

At this time, the only advice the experts have to offer us is to know your own weaknesses, because the psychopath will find and use them (Hercz). This isn't that easy, as even the experts are often fooled. Hercz himself recounts a time when he had known a psychopath. He was a man who was charming and confident and on the fast track to success. In a few weeks though he was arrested for embezzling thousands of dollars from the company, running a marijuana business (and using the company's address for mailing) on the side, and robbed the apartment of the company's owner. Hercz felt ashamed that he had believed this brilliant, charismatic, audacious man. Hercz writes about the man, "He radiated money and power (though in fact he had neither), while his real self—manipulative, lying, parasitic, and irresponsible—was just far enough under the surface to be invisible. Or was it? Maybe I didn't know how to look, or maybe I *didn't really want to*" (Hercz).

There were so many things I had questioned and let go; so many times I did not follow my instincts. I convinced myself that the incredible intensity I felt with a madman was a fair trade-off for honesty and faithfulness. After all, I was only hurting myself. Right?

Until he was arrested, K—had continued to lie about still being married to Kriston. "I keep telling the police but they aren't listening," he would say. Just before they took him in, he called one last time. I asked him if there was going to be a lot of other stuff brought up that I didn't know and what kind of other dirty laundry did he have. Before he hung up the phone, he quietly said, "The only dirty laundry I have is you."

One last Craigslist posting. Mine.
bellingham craigslist > personals > missed connections

For Keazy - w4m – 42 (Bham)
My playlist for you:
***Puke**, by Eminem. **Best Thing I Never Had**, by Beyonce. **Bulletproof**, by La Roux.*

*Some names/emails have been changed.

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The Noisy Water Review | Student Anthology of Writing & Art, Whatcom Community College

noisywater.whatcom.edu/site_1213/pages_1213/26-13art.html

Shirley Obermeier

Untitled

Pastel, 16.5" x 10"

Psychedelic Drugs and Experiences of Personal Meaning and Lasting Insight

noisywater.whatcom.edu/site_1213/pages_1213/27-07essay.html

Dylan Forest

Define the Problem

Psychedelic drugs are a category of "consciousness expanding" substances, and for the purposes of this study will include LSD, psilocybin, mescaline, DMT, LSA, and any plant containing these compounds. Within drug subcultures, psychedelic drugs are often touted as having positive transformative powers on their users. It has been documented in various studies that many users of psychedelic drugs self-report these effects, citing experiences such as instances of epiphany, awakening of spirituality, psychological growth, or tremendous personal meaning. However, due to the paucity of research on contemporary psychedelic drug use and the fact that most experimental psychedelic research was halted after LSD was made illegal in the 60s, it is unclear whether these effects are in fact a direct result of psychedelic drugs. It remains possible that the proliferation of self-reported positive effects among users of psychedelic drugs is in fact a function of that demographic rather than a result of drug use—in other words, the population that is likely to use psychedelic drugs may just also be more likely to seek out and value these types of transformative experiences and to translate their drug experiences into those terms. This paper's purpose is to attempt to determine, through use of data obtained through a questionnaire and research into available resources on the subject, whether users of psychedelic drugs do in fact experience new insights and positive personal changes as a result of their drug use.

Review of Literature

Psychedelic plants have been used by many indigenous cultures in their spiritual and healing traditions, but it wasn't until the synthesis of LSD that psychedelics became popularized in Western culture, both scientifically and recreationally. There was initially a great deal of excitement in the scientific community over LSD, with numerous therapeutic uses theorized and with some figures professing it to be a "miracle drug" capable of curing almost any defect in personality or behavior. In the 1950s and 1960s, there were two main types of LSD psychotherapy. The first, called "psycholytic" psychotherapy, based on a psychoanalytical paradigm, administered low doses of LSD repeatedly over time with the aim of uncovering hidden parts of the unconscious. The second, "psychedelic" psychotherapy, administered high doses of LSD in order to induce a transformative experience and permanently change behavior, such as causing an alcoholic to abstain from drinking (Lerner and Lyvers 2006). These studies did have some promising results, but were generally not well-designed. By the

60s there was growing concern about the public abusing hallucinogens, so they were made illegal and there was a subsequent hiatus in psychedelic research until recently (Griffiths et al. 2006).

Following the poorly designed research and concerns about abuse, the dominant paradigm that developed regarding psychedelic use was one that regarded them as inducing a "model psychosis," similar to a temporary schizophrenia (Lemer and Lyvers 2006). However, more recent studies have suggested that psychedelic experiences should be "approached from a psychological viewpoint and seen as lying on a continuum with normality" (Moro et al. 2011: 189). Aligning with this paradigm is the fact that the altered states of consciousness that can accompany psychedelic use, such as loss of a sense of self or restructuring of perception, can also accompany other psychological triggers such as sensory deprivation or overload, emotional stress, or meditative states. This fact causes one author to conclude that "obviously the phenomena observed in [psychedelic] states form part of the human psychological repertoire and serve as reactions to extreme conditions" (Prepeliczay 2002: 432). This paradigm serves to normalize psychedelic states, rather than view them as a type of self-induced mental illness.

However, it is important to not glorify psychedelics as many were wont to do during the peak of the psychedelic movement in the 60s and 70s. While research does seem to signify that it is possible to obtain positive effects from the controlled use of psychedelic drugs, studies also show again and again that the effects any individual will experience are unpredictable. There have been cases of psychedelics triggering psychotic episodes, though they have been rare and tied to uncontrolled use (Prepeliczay 2002). So, while psychedelics pose little harm in regards to addictive potential or physiological impact, it is important that their psychological risks not be understated, and that in future experiments participants be fully screened for psychological risk factors. Prepeliczay also recommends that recreational users be provided with harm reduction information, such as the importance of preparation, environment, and attitude, commonly referred to as "set and setting" (Prepeliczay 2002).

Several recent studies, following this advice and carefully preparing their participants and their surroundings, have been able to induce mystical experiences by administering psychedelic drugs. One such experiment administered psilocybin, the psychedelic compound present in some mushrooms, to 36 healthy individuals with no history of hallucinogen use. Participants were then monitored throughout the experience and interviewed two months later. In the report of the study, the authors note that "it is remarkable that 67% of the volunteers rated the experiment with psilocybin to be either the single most meaningful experience of his or her life or among the top five most meaningful experiences of his or her life. In written comments, the volunteers judged the meaningfulness of the experience to be similar, for example, to the birth of a first child or death of a parent" (Griffiths et al. 2006: 276). Though we do not yet completely understand the mechanisms through which

psychedelic drugs are able to induce this type of meaningful experience, the few experimental studies that have been carried out do seem to indicate that under the right conditions these substances are able to induce such an experience.

Several studies have also found that recreational users report inducing both spiritually significant and personally significant experiences through the use of psychedelic drugs. The intent of this type of study should not be viewed as endorsing illegal drug use, but rather supplementing experimental studies of psychedelic drugs. Since it has been difficult in the time period since the criminalization of LSD use to have experimental studies approved, surveys of recreational users provide much-needed information that adds to our understanding of these substances. One such study extensively interviewed recreational users of LSD in Germany. Among their findings was the fact that "21 out of 26 respondents said their experiences with LSD and psilocybin had given new meaning to their lives, and linked their experiences with these drugs to profound changes in their self-perceptions and understanding of the world. These included insights into the "real" nature of things and mental and natural processes they consider highly relevant in the understanding and construction of their own personality, life values, the world, personal relationships and societal functions" (Prepeliczay 2002: 444). Studies such as these seem to indicate that recreational users are sometimes able to recreate the same positive results that laboratory experiments are.

Though evidence such as I have outlined does seem to point to psychedelic drugs' ability to induce positive personality changes, it is often not clear whether this ability is a direct result of the drugs themselves or a result of the demographic that is taking them. Psychedelic drug users do differ in several ways from users of other drugs and non-drug users. One study of users of psilocybin-containing mushrooms in the UK concluded that "the demographics suggest that these participants should not be theorized as pathological, nor should their drug use be linked with social or economic marginalization" (Riley and Blackman 2008: 65). Indeed, many theories about drug use that seem to apply seamlessly to users of other drugs do not explain the use of psychedelic drugs. Moro et al. point out that research has a tendency to overlook nonproblematic drug use, most likely because it poses little public health risk (2011). Because of this, we end up with an understanding of all drug use that is based on problem users, and very little scientific understanding of nonproblematic, or possibly even beneficial, use.

Psychedelic drugs users as a subculture have been shown to have certain characteristic that set them apart from other drug-using populations. In one survey of 667 drug users, psychedelic drug users scored significantly higher on the Intrinsic Spirituality Scale than both non-users of drugs and users of non-psychedelic drugs. It was also found that scores on the Purpose in Life scale corresponded negatively with the number of non-psychedelic drugs used, but not with psychedelic drugs. The authors point out, however, that these differences in personality traits may not be as much a result of the particular substance they use, but rather a result of the purpose and meaning of their drug use. They speculate that

“autognostic” (introspective) drug use may act as a “training session” whereby users put themselves through exceptional experiences in order to practice coping mechanisms and grow positively as people (Moro 2011). By this logic, then, the positive changes that psychedelic drug users experience may be more about their tendency to seek those changes than about the actual substance that was ingested.

Clearly more research is needed before we can come to any conclusions on the possible benefits of psychedelic drug use. It will continue to be important in future research to draw data from both recreational users and experimental studies, for both offer important insights into this subject. In recent years government approval for psychedelic drug research has become easier to attain again, and as we understand more we will be able to ascertain whether these substances are appropriate for therapeutic use.

Hypothesis

I expect that users of psychedelic drugs will rate their experiences with psychedelic drugs as very personally meaningful and having provided them with lasting insight. I also expect that these same users will rate their non-psychedelic drug use and alcohol use as less meaningful and less conducive to insights. Support of this hypothesis would also support the theory that psychedelic substances have some intrinsic property that encourages these positive effects, and that the positive effects are not just a function of the demographic obtaining them.

Methodology

In order to test my hypothesis, a web-based questionnaire was designed and made available online. Due to the time constraints on this research and the isolated nature of many drug subcultures, a posting was made on the online classifieds site craigslist.org, briefly describing the survey and seeking respondents who have had at least one experience with psychedelic drugs. No stricter guidelines were made as far as who was eligible to respond to the survey, so it is likely that this sample is not composed entirely, or even mostly, of regular or highly experienced drug users. It is also likely that due to the electronic format of the questionnaire, the sample is of higher socioeconomic status than the general population and also over representative of younger individuals. The questionnaire was completed by 27 people, 2 of which indicated that they had not tried psychedelic drugs. After discarding the responses of the non-users of psychedelic drugs, a sample of n=25 remained.

The sample was 37.5% male and 62.5% female. 70.8% of respondents were in the 21-29 year age range, 16.7% were in the 30-39 range, 4.2% were 40-49, and 8.3% were older than 60. 25% were high school graduates, with the remaining 75% either holding some type of college degree or currently a college student. In addition to indicating that they had tried psychedelic drugs, every respondent also reported that they had tried both non-psychedelic drugs and alcohol.

Table 1 illustrates the responses to the main questions on the questionnaire. Respondents were asked how much they agreed or disagreed with several statements about their drug experiences. To gauge insights gained from psychedelic drug use, the statement used was "Psychedelic drug use has provided me with helpful insights that remained relevant beyond the immediate drug experience." To gauge the meaningfulness of the drug experience, the statement used was "I have had psychedelic drug experiences that were very personally meaningful." These statements were also responded to separately for both non-psychedelic drug use and alcohol use.

Table 1 – personal meaning and insights obtained from varying substance use

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided/ No opinion	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
Psychedelic drugs						
Lasting insight	4%	8%	12%	36%	40%	100%
Personally meaningful	4%	12%	4%	32%	48%	100%
Non-psychedelic drugs						
Lasting insight	4.2%	16.7%	16.7%	41.7%	20.8%	100%
Personally meaningful	4.2%	12.5%	4.2%	54.2%	25%	100%
Alcohol						
Lasting insight	20.8%	25%	20.8%	20.8%	12.5%	100%
Personally meaningful	12.5%	20.8%	16.7%	33.3%	16.7%	100%

In addition, respondents were asked whether they felt the different categories of substances had had a negative effect on them overall. 12% agreed or strongly agreed that psychedelic drugs had had a negative impact on them, 8.4% agreed or strongly agreed that non-psychedelic drugs had had a negative impact, and 45.8% agreed or strongly agreed that alcohol had had a negative impact. Also, while 20% indicated that they believe psychedelic drugs are dangerous, 50% indicated they believe non-psychedelic drugs are, and 84.4% reported a belief that alcohol is dangerous.

Conclusion

It is worth mentioning that during the survey process, I received emails from 5 different respondents who wished to inform me that it was very difficult to reply to the section of the questionnaire about non-psychedelic drug use because of the grouping of drugs. In the

interest of making the questionnaire quick to complete, I had grouped all illegal drugs that had not been listed in the psychedelic drug definition together. This made it so that respondents were asked to make generalizations about a category that included both marijuana and heroin. All of the respondents who contacted me indicated that the differences between marijuana and the other drugs in the category made it difficult to respond, with one individual calling it “impossible.” An improvement upon this questionnaire would group marijuana by itself, and the remainder of illegal drugs separately. I expect that that grouping would yield very different responses to the questions about non-psychedelic drugs.

Despite that and other limitations, the data appears to support the hypothesis that the same demographic reports obtaining more lasting insights and meaningful experiences from the use of psychedelic drugs than from the use of non-psychedelic drugs or alcohol. At 76% agreeing or strongly agreeing that psychedelic drug experiences had left them with lasting insights, and 80% agreeing or strongly agreeing that psychedelic experiences had been very personally meaningful, these positive effects seem to be in the majority of experiences. This data supports the theory that insights and meaning derived from psychedelic drug use is not entirely a function of the make-up of the population that uses psychedelic drugs. It seems to suggest, rather, that specifically psychedelic compounds, in the right setting, have the potential to encourage these positive effects. It also suggests that a sociological understanding of psychedelic drug use cannot simply borrow from theory that was developed to explain other types of drug use, particularly problematic use. I do suspect that psychedelic drug users are more likely to translate their experiences with non-psychedelic drugs and alcohol into these terms and to report their experiences with those substances as meaningful and producing insights. Future research comparing whether non-users of psychedelic drugs report similar levels of insight and meaning from non-psychedelic substances would bring more light to this concept.

The results of this study, though tentative because of the small size of the sample and the relatively brief survey process, support previous findings outlined earlier in the literature review. Findings such as these point out the need for further research both exploring potential therapeutic uses for psychedelic drugs and pursuing a more accurate understanding of recreational psychedelic drug use. Doing so will definitely enhance our ability to reduce drug-related harm, and may eventually provide an opportunity to use these compounds to help people. We certainly will never know until the matter is investigated fully.

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The World Is Alright

noisywater.whatcom.edu/site_1213/pages_1213/28-14music.html

Michael D. Greene

"The World Is Alright" is a song written and recorded by myself a little while back under the band name Sleeping On The Freeway. Currently I am drumming for a band around Bellingham called King of Crows with James Tuttle. A possible release of two full length albums of my songs is in the works with a release date near the end of 2013. I'm a full time student at Whatcom and will go to WWU April of 2014. I also work in Media Services at the WCC library.

Blackface Skepticism

noisywater.whatcom.edu/site_1213/pages_1213/29-08crwriting.html

Diane Tymony

Good moanin, the earth the sun the sky
It’s a good day to be alive
We have the wisdom carved from her core
Rings in our ears, rings in our souls
My father gave me all these seeds to sow
My mother showed me how these would grow
My brother made me hold my head up high
My sister held the words when I would cry
We sit on giant, molten spectacles
My mountain's stirring like a wrecking ball
I traded my life for a golden bow
Knocked down the stars that line across the wall
Tick tock, dismantle this distant day
Lie back and watch, attempt to comprehend
Realize that you got all that you need
I have the key inside the straw casing
Sit sit, and let the pressure stick
My my, the sky looks bright tonight
Distract us with Anglo-Saxon words
Separate us with your white-washed curse
The melody runs through our veins
We clap along with the mighty chorus
Our voices echo out the fire hearth
Try to meet our eyes you little one
We are born of the soil, of the ground
Gripped, stripped, pulled, toiled all around the sound
We laugh at all your blackface stick figures
They boast of a narrow, shallow world.
I taught you all the things I ever knew
Not sure which one that you could ever use
You burst into that cylinder bouquet
Grew all the wings you promise that you would.

The Noisy Water Review | Student Anthology of Writing & Art, Whatcom Community College

noisywater.whatcom.edu/site_1213/pages_1213/30-15art.html

Jay McDougall

Colours of Fall

Watercolor, 9" x 12"

A Fire in the Forest: Ramifications of Oppression, and the Response of the Baha'i Community of Iran

noisywater.whatcom.edu/site_1213/pages_1213/31-08essay.html

Aziz Tebyanian

The Awakening

The letter is in front of me. The friend who emailed it to me this morning was sure that I would appreciate receiving it. Now, I am reading it over and over again. My lips say the words as I read them. But I have to stop frequently and try to overcome my emotions, my feelings of joy intermingled with sadness. The struggles for freedom in my beloved birthplace, Iran, have reached a milestone. At no time before have we, the intellectuals of this land, been able to accept that human rights knows no boundaries; at no time have we been willing to let go of the false assumptions that had entered our minds about the scapegoat, the oppressed Baha'i community.

And now at long last, a letter of admittance, of apology has been composed, that all who are sincere in their defense of freedom can sign and support. I am one of those who are, for the first time in a century and a half of persecutions, breaking their silence. "We are ashamed for all these transgressions and injustices, and we are ashamed for our silence over these deeds" is what the letter says.

I wonder about the reasons for the silence of intellectuals of diverse backgrounds and their unwillingness to defend a large group of their compatriots, the largest non-Muslim minority of their country. What has been the reason for my own silence? Am I not a renowned scholar and writer who could have used my influence to defend my fellow citizens? Have I not spent decades of my life to preserve our cultural heritage by strongly opposing acts and policies that were destructive to our national heritage sites? Where was I when the sacred places of the Iranian and world Baha'is were razed to the ground? Weren't these a part of our cultural heritage? How about when loyal and peaceful citizens were arrested, tortured, and executed on baseless charges? Or, when thousands were denied their basic rights to education and occupation?

We were all silent. Many of us believed in the century-long propaganda of the clerics claiming that these people were agents and spies of foreign governments. It is even more perplexing to see that even those of us that did not like the clerics did not question these claims and looked the other way when it came to the Baha'is, not bothering to investigate the issue. Many of us were too busy with our own ideologies and political affiliations, or had unaddressed inner fears and inhibitions. Among us, there was, and still is, a powerful

taboo surrounding this name: Baha'i. A nation was raised to think of it as the worst and the most wrong. How deep our lack of understanding when we said the oft-heard sentiment: "He/she is such a wonderful person; too bad he/she is a Baha'i."

What is it that has awakened many of us from the 160-year-long sleep? Is it because in the past three decades group after group of us were drawn in the same whirlwind of repression that had engulfed the Baha'is for so long? Now that we too have become targets, we are seeing the true face of the calumniators who had been making accusations against the Baha'is to keep the public afraid and resentful of them.

Sitting in my room all the way across the globe, looking at the historic letter, I am an expatriate with a burning desire in my chest for a day when I can cross the ocean I see from my window, on my way to a free homeland, a place with a glorious past when Cyrus, the great, the king of kings, composed the first declaration of human rights. With a hope for a future when all the children of that land can live together in peace, harmony, and freedom, I sign this letter, a letter that is a testament to the resolve of the great majority of the people of my country to see in every person a noble being with a right to freedom, a right to equality.

The open letter "We are ashamed!" addressed to the Baha'i community of Iran was signed and published in 2009 by a group of Iranian academics, writers, artists, journalists and activists throughout the world. The above fictional rendering—which was written in order to more comprehensively convey their point of view—can be considered as representing the sentiments of these individuals.

Baha'is are the followers of the Baha'i faith, which originated in Persia, present-day Iran, and is now the second most widespread religion in the world. Its main tenets are the oneness of God, oneness of religion, and oneness of humanity. It was founded in the mid 19th century by Bahá'u'lláh who declared his mission as the inaugurator of a new dispensation, and as the latest in the line of the Messengers of God who are sent by the one loving Creator from age to age to infuse spiritual impulse into the life of humanity. These divine Educators, who include Abraham, Krishna, Moses, Zoroaster, Buddha, Christ, and Muhammad, both renew some eternal verities such as belief in divinity and morality, and also bring social teachings that are suited for the needs of the time in which they appear. The Baha'i teachings include: the need for independent investigation of truth, the elimination of racial, religious and gender prejudices, the equality of women and men, the elimination of extremes of wealth and poverty, and the establishment of a world federal system of governance. These teachings, Baha'is believe, are suited for our modern time and can help humanity reach its collective maturity and attain the lasting peace that have been foretold in all the scriptures of the past.

Since its inception, the Baha'I Faith's progressive teachings made the newborn faith, and its adherents, a target of fierce opposition, slander, and attacks in the land of its birth. History repeated itself once again. Every time a reformer (religious or otherwise), and especially a new Messenger of God starts to effect a transformation in the structure of society, strong

forces of hostility resolve to stay the tides of change. The most notorious among these have been the clerics. In the case of the Baha'i faith, the Muslim clergy who perceived it as a threat to their much-cherished influence among the uneducated masses, and to their sources of wealth and authority, branded the new faith as heretical and blasphemous. Added to the incentives shared by all the rulers of the religions of the past, who opposed the new faiths to maintain unchallenged positions of power, was the fact that there is no ecclesiastical system in the Baha'i faith, and the affairs of the Baha'i communities are managed by lay governing bodies that are elected democratically. The Muslim mullahs soon joined hands with the despotic and much corrupted rulers of the land to wipe out both the new belief and its believers, who were rapidly increasing in number in Persia and the surrounding countries. The persecutions that followed were described by many European observers of the time as unspeakably brutal. Massacres led to the death of about 20000 men, women and children, and often involved horrific physical and mental tortures.

After a hiatus of relative freedom during the fifty years of the Pahlavi era, the Islamic regime that came to power in Iran in the late 1970's restarted a systematic campaign of state-sponsored oppression against the Baha'is. As reported by numerous sources including the United Nations' Office of Public Information of the Baha'i International Community, for more than three decades now, despite tremendous international outcry, hundreds have been executed and imprisoned, tens of thousands expelled from governmental jobs, and denied entry to colleges and universities; houses and workplaces continue to be burnt down; children are harassed by school administrators and teachers; even cemeteries are bulldozed.

In the last century and a half, the clerics were able to construct a taboo around the Baha'i phenomenon by on the one hand continuous slandering and on the other strictly prohibiting the availability of any unbiased literature or informational sources for the public on the beliefs and practices of the Baha'is. This has led to a universal lack of knowledge about the Baha'i faith among the Iranians, and a deeply entrenched psychological reluctance to investigate it. As Dr. Nader Saiedi notes, “the collective cultural unconscious has been so dominant and powerful that it has deprived many of our thinkers from the courage to think for themselves, leading to a situation that inserts the unconscious in place of consciousness, and collective prejudices and lies in place of scientific and rational investigation.” And, those few among the general public or the intellectuals who have known about the truth of the matters have been, for the most part, unwilling to openly speak about it, for fear of being branded a Baha'i or a Baha'i-sympathizer.

In the last three decades, and especially the last few years, though, more and more people have become aware of the facts surrounding the issue, to a degree that it can now be confidently asserted that the majority of the Iranian people are against the injustices that the Baha'is are subjected to. Professor Abbas Milani says “there is a new surging consciousness amongst millions of Iranians, dozens of intellectuals, and even a handful of Shiite clerics that the treatment of Bahais has been a shameful part of our past. More and more people are convinced that Bahais have, like any other Iranian citizen, the inalienable right to practice

their faith, and that as citizens of Iran, they should be entitled to all the rights allotted to any other citizen, from any faith." There are many reports of individuals who have evinced extraordinary courage in defending their Baha'i neighbors or co-workers against government attacks. Many Iranian human rights organizations, political parties, and scholarly associations have, likewise, advocated for the rights of Baha'is in Iran (Karlberg 248).

The All-Encompassing Problem

Not just the Baha'is, but all sections of the Iranian society— religious and ethnic minorities, dissidents and political activists, women and youth — are subjected, to one degree or another, to the prevalent discrimination and oppression. But, as both Baha'is and non-Baha'is have stated, the case of the freedom of Baha'is has a special significance in the struggles for achieving freedom and democracy in Iran. Professor Milani, who is the Director of Iranian Studies at Stanford, where he is the co-director of the Iran Democracy Project states "Iran can't become a democracy unless it has had a full reckoning with its Baha'i problem." This is not just because the persecutions they are subjected to are more severe than other groups, or that they are a peaceful community who are focused on service to their fellow-citizens, who obey the government and never get engaged in subversion activities, or partisan politics for that matter. But, especially because an end to the phenomenon of the scapegoating and ignoring this community will mark a maturation in the collective social life of the Iranian people, and in particular its intellectuals and activists, who while advocating freedom for all, have for a long time closed their eyes to the violation of human rights of a few groups, in particular the Baha'is. Dr. Saiedi rightly identifies anti-Baha'i prejudice as the key to the failure of the 1979 Iranian revolution saying "It was the presence of organized and pervasive anti-Baha'i sentiment in both the motivation for revolution and the dynamics of the revolutionary process that led to the emergence of a paradoxical situation in revolutionary Iran: the desire for democracy and freedom coincided with religious intolerance and racism; hence in the name of democracy a system of reaction and discrimination came to existence in Iran."

The following is a fictional letter from a moderate young Muslim who lives amidst the contemporary situations of unrest and convulsion of the Middle East, written to investigate the common experiences and thoughts of a large section of the non-Baha'i community that is nevertheless invested in reform:

The sounds are loud, with intermittent periods of silence. Every once in a while, I go to my mom's sickbed from where my teen sister never leaves, now sitting, now huddling. Mother is saying prayers quietly, asking me every time she sees me to promise to not leave the house until the situation is calm. My neighborhood has turned into a battlefield.

Where I live, in my city, in my country, peace and calm have always been fleeting. Indeed, the whole region of the Middle East seems to be at a never-ending turmoil. Why is it that the ideals of a just society who we as Muslims have always coveted have seldom been materialized? Why are we in our homelands captives of tyrannical regimes and in exile

marginalized and suspected? At many times in recent history, this region has seen uprisings born of people's desire for freedom. But the replacements to the systems of repression have, time and again, proved to be no more desirable.

I believe we have failed in achieving the goal of creating just societies because we have been losing some vital pieces of the puzzle all the way along, adamantly refusing to make changes to some of our divisive and destructive ways of thought and action.

I am a Muslim who has a firm belief in a Compassionate and Merciful God, in the prophet Muhammad who educated and united the barbarous and warring tribes of Arabia, and in the true teachings of Islam which promote tolerance and brotherhood. These teachings were instrumental in the creation of the first universities of the world by the Muslims, and for the efflorescence of arts and sciences. But whatever happened to the great Islamic civilization whose achievements inspired the European Renaissance? Despite having countless brilliant minds and tireless individuals who are devoted to the progress of our lands, why are the peoples of the Muslim world living under harsh conditions of social and economic deprivation and backwardness?

Just as the Westerners learned lessons from the golden era of the Islamic civilization, we may also have to closely examine and adopt some of their ways of conduct that have contributed to the creation of their relatively free and prosperous societies. The most glaring shortcoming of our societies is a lack of appreciation and tolerance for diversity, diversity of belief, religious or otherwise, and of race, ethnicity, and cultural background. We need to categorically and emphatically renounce every expression of exclusivity that has characterized even the moderate Muslims' treatment of others.

To be tolerant of others, and to strive to live a harmonious life with them, does not necessitate abandoning our faith in Islam, because Islam is a faith of tolerance in essence, although its course was changed by those who abused their power after the passing of Muhammad. Muhammad's wars were all defensive in nature. As both prophet and statesman, he had to defend his people, young and old, men and women, from the attacks of enemies who opposed the new and progressive religion and its followers. But many of the wars that occurred after his death were waged by those ambitious usurpers of power who wanted to broaden their dominions. Muhammad was most considerate towards the Christians and the believers of other religions. But many of those who profess belief in him consider people of other religions as infidels.

I am going to go a step further, knowing that I will be publishing this letter anonymously. If a belief in a faith or system of thought causes pain and misery for humanity, it has to be abandoned. I have, and many of us have, an ill mother who has not had access to medicine for three days, a sister who is traumatized and imprisoned at home instead of studying at school, a father who was tortured to death when I was a child by those whom he regarded as his Muslim brothers who needed to change their extreme interpretations of Islam.

We have had enough of the miseries of conflict and destruction that the extremists among us have brought on others and themselves. But they have not been the sole culprits. A large number of moderate Muslims, who are quick to lash out against the discriminations the Muslim communities in the West are subjected to, are silent, reluctant to speak, or sometimes agreeing when it comes to the minorities that are discriminated against in Muslim countries.

This double-standard is our nemesis. Unless totally obliterated, the line that separates and singles out some groups for unequal treatment has a tendency to stretch itself. Like an unchecked line of fire, it does not content itself with a few trees only. It will consume the whole forest.

Once and for all, we have to wipe out from our hearts and minds every element and trace of religious, ethnic and gender prejudice that keep us captives of our own narrow worldview. Unless and until we do this, we will not be able to bring lasting peace and prosperity to our societies, even by sacrificing thousands of lives to overthrow totalitarian regimes. They will be replaced by similar ones.

The Response

A whiteboard, an instructor, and a group of university students are normally found in classrooms and campuses. But it is not so in Iran. For thousands of young Iranian Baha'is, classrooms mean living-rooms and garages. Raids and arrests, also, bring to mind images of criminals and gangs. But pursuing higher education in those same living-rooms and garages has made these students a target of government attacks.

After the Islamic theocracy came to power in Iran, and a new wave of systematized attacks against the Baha'is was restarted, among the many discriminations that were put in place to socially and economically suffocate this community was a general ban on entering universities. The response of the community to the oppressions offers a unique alternative to the other forms of non-violent resistance experienced in the past century.

> The Baha'is established their own ‘‘open university’’ in a process that was described in the New York Times as ‘‘an elaborate act of self-preservation.’’ The Baha'i Institute for Higher Education (BIHE) was created in 1987 to provide for the educational needs of Baha'i youth and young adults after they were denied access to Iranian colleges and universities. The BIHE now operates via online courses, supplemented by seminars and labs in Baha'i homes and offices throughout Iran. Despite efforts by the Iranian authorities to disrupt the university's operation by raiding hundreds of Baha'i homes and offices associated with it, by confiscating BIHE materials and property, and by arresting and imprisoning dozens of faculty, the university has grown to the point that it now offers 14 undergraduate degree programs and 3 graduate degree programs in the sciences, social sciences, and arts. Over 700 courses are offered through the services and support of approximately 275 faculty and staff. The university relies in part upon the services of Iranian Baha'i academics and professionals, many of whom were fired from their jobs by the Iranian authorities following the Islamic revolution. It also relies on a network of affiliated global faculty that support the university through online courses, curriculum development, and other services. Its reputation for academic excellence has led twenty-five respected universities in North America, Europe, and Australia to accept BIHE graduates directly into programs of graduate study at the masters and doctoral levels. The BIHE is, in short, a clear illustration of the constructive resilience of the Iranian Baha'is (Karlberg 239).

Without denying the achievements of the civil disobedience movements, Professor Michael Karlberg suggests in his paper, “Constructive Resilience: The Baha'i Response to Oppression”, that many pitfalls of the methods employed by those movements can be avoided if, in response to oppressions, this little examined paradigm of social change is instead adopted (242-245). He says “The Baha'i teachings assert, in essence, that oppositional strategies of social change, whether violent or nonviolent, have reached a point of diminishing returns at this stage in human history because they do not address the underlying cause of injustice and oppression. The underlying cause, according to Baha’u’llah, is a widespread reluctance to accept, on a spiritual and intellectual level, the organic unity and interdependence—or common identity and interests—of all human beings” (Karlberg 242). As “a radical new model of social change—entirely non-adversarial in nature” the Baha'i approach seeks to promote the essential oneness of humanity in dealing with all issues confronting societies, even in situations of extreme pressure and antagonism (247).

In practice, this has meant, for one thing, to avoid diverting “valuable time and energy away from the construction of alternative institutional forms derived from the principles of unity and interdependence” and instead focusing on building institutions and communities that not only help the oppressed community to deal with its challenges but also serve as models for both the immediate society and also the world at large (244).

In closing, the following is another fictional voice based on reality:

My job takes me to many places around the world. One may envy me for having a sort of job that allows for seeing the beauties of the earth and its peoples. But the work that I do requires me to look into the ugly things of our world, into pain, deprivation, and

oppression. I work for Amnesty International, a human rights organization.

I have dealt with tens of cases of repression and have seen the face of evil inflicting misery on individuals and whole groups, but the last one I am working on is peculiar in some ways; it is the case of the persecutions of the Baha'is of Iran. To understand the motives of the oppressors have always been hard for me, but in this case it is even harder.

Imagine a religious minority who categorically believes in and observes obedience to the laws of the land, who has a shining record of a century and a half of service to their fellow countrymen in all the fields and spheres of activity, and who regards as holy the tenets of the official religion of the state, but is under the threat of constant surveillance and harassment from the government. This government which came to power in 1979 has had access to all the documents of the previous regime and the books and belongings that have been confiscated from Baha'i houses and workplaces. But despite its worn-out accusations against the Baha'is as stirrers of mischief, or spies of foreign powers, it has not produced a single document proving its claims. On the contrary, numerous documents and accounts are in existence pointing to the fact that the Baha'is are discriminated against solely on religious grounds. Time and again, for instance, the Baha'is have been offered their release from imprisonment if they recanted their beliefs.

The case of the Baha'is of Iran has other dimensions too. Despite threats to their lives and livelihoods, the Baha'is have not given in to the oppressors by either accepting the role of the victim or adopting the ruthless and violent ways of their persecutors. They have, instead, continued their constructive contributions to their homeland by every means at their disposal. One of their biggest achievements has been the establishment of a university for their youth who have been barred from acquiring higher education.

My organization and other human rights groups play key roles in preventing and stopping crimes against humanity by applying international pressure in various ways. Sadly, in most cases appealing to the humanity of the oppressors does not bring any results. But I believe that the oppressed of the world can learn useful lessons from the approach the Baha'is of Iran have taken in dealing with their situation. No matter how harsh the environment, they have through constructive and non-adversarial ways changed as much as possible the terms of the encounter, resulting in not only the worldwide recognition of their innocence but also winning over the admiration of a majority of their compatriots, including many inside the ruling circles. Moreover, they have continued their laudable contributions to the advancement of their country which is, in the long run, the best solution for the problem of ignorance and tyranny.

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The Noisy Water Review | Student Anthology of Writing & Art, Whatcom Community College

noisywater.whatcom.edu/site_1213/pages_1213/32-16art.html

Trevor Rubright

Plant Life

Pencil, 7.5" x 6.5"

An Ambiguous Call

noisywater.whatcom.edu/site_1213/pages_1213/33-09crwriting.html

Taylor Werner

I can barely breathe.

Each brick beneath my feet hums with the memory of each student, each hopeful soul, crushed to a pulp under the weight of their desire: to absolutely achieve their dreams, to transcend what others told them was impossible. I can feel them humming.

. . .

In New York City, there were two places that moved me more than any others. While I found Central Park to be charming, and while I was palpably repulsed by Fifth Avenue and Wall Street, nothing moved me quite like the graveyard in front of St. Paul's Chapel, and the campus of Columbia University.

St. Paul's Chapel was erected in 1764, twelve years before the United States was declared a nation. As I wandered through the graveyard – which is quite a strange patch of earth to encounter just beneath Freedom Tower on the island of Manhattan – I found myself overcome by the presence of ghosts. Each tombstone felt like a character, persistently braving the onslaught of tourists. Some stones were still legible; some were nothing more than a scar of rock that barely rose from the soil.

There was one that particularly drew me in. I had to kneel on the site where bones maybe still were in order to make out the lettering. It said, "Oh mortal man as you paſs by, as you are now so once was I. As I am now you soon shall be. Prepare for death and follow me."

My skin prickled with the realization that most of the people in the graveyard had died in their twenties. But while I found the proximity to death disturbing, I was also comforted by the sentiment shared by these ghosts: we all die. There's no sense fearing death any more than there is to fear giving birth. Every person came from a womb and every person ends up in a tomb.

. . .

This place is hallowed ground. I have walked between tombs as old as this country – standing crooked with moss filling their etched letters – and still not felt the sacredness that I feel here. Three hundred years of agonized sobbing for the dead is not as loud through time as the hushed longing of the hopeful, as the need to answer some ambiguous call.

. . .

Columbia University was founded in 1754 by the charter of King George II. Since then, it has been attended by Jack Kerouac, Langston Hughes, Issac Asimov, Ursula K. Le Guin, J.D Salinger, Hunter S. Thompson, and et cetera. Were they each once young fledglings, riddled with self-doubt? Did they sit on the steps, huddled in their own skinny arms, laboring to take up as little space as possible, simultaneously finding the vastness of their dreams untenable? Were they anxious about whether or not this was the place for them? Did they dread pretention and question the city life? Did they have to inflate their paper thin resolve like a Chinese paper lantern, threatening to go out?