

2013-2014 The Noisy Water Review Anthology of Student Writing & Art Whatcom Community College



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The Devil Does 90

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Barthalamew Arnold

It's bizarre how events unfold
one minute I was sipping a cool beer
the next I was careening down
Pittman Road in a midnight black Cadillac
with a donut tire and a deadbeat driver
the veins of his hands bulging as he
gripped the wheel, incapable of caring less
about the neon numbers of the speedometer
the needle pointed ominously toward
ninety miles per hour, and gaining
a lead weight kept me
from hurling my words
at that man, whose name
I never learned
I could see his shadow torn face
under a cult-like black hood. I recall
the smell, the music, the rush of adrenaline
as I tried not to think
of the oncoming notorious ninety degree turn

it really is bizarre how things happen
one second I was in the back seat
and the next I was picking myself up
from the ground, barely scratched
Kyle, hunched over in the front seat
and the driver, twenty feet from the car
mouth wet with red, and his body
contorted in that impossible way
the others rushed to his aid. and I
watched as the sirens lit
the woods

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

noisywater.whatcom.edu/site_1314/pages_1314/02-01art.html



Harminder "Paul" Grewal

Origins of Creation

Pen and colored pencil, 12" x 8"

Haiti's Garden of Bloom or Gloom?

 noisywater.whatcom.edu/site_1314/pages_1314/03-01essay.html

Marianne Brudwick

681 miles southeast from Miami, Florida, the sun sets on a Caribbean island where you would expect to feel the tropical breeze, sand between your toes and your body unwind as the heat of the day dies down. Instead, a Haitian woman vendor puts her few belongings away for the night, prepares her meager meal, then lays down to rest, amongst the garbage-filled pit that seems to grow up around her feet like weeds in a neglected garden. The smell, danger, and risk of disease are part of her everyday life. Klarreich (1996) writes about Haiti's environmental health hazard in her article, "In Haiti, Trash on Streets Becomes the Norm," quoting Olivier, a Haitian woman who said, "We live just like the animals that feed off the garbage we're sitting on." Olivier is just trying to make a living by selling bananas along the side of the road like many others. Jobs are difficult to come by. Klarreich believes the garbage crisis is due to the economic crisis in this country. Unfortunately, there are thousands of poverty-stricken Haitians affected by what she calls this "health menace." But just who is responsible for this ruination?

The problem of growing trash on this island quickly became known to me when I visited with a group of ten other people in March, 2012. My prior cultural awareness was limited by local news reports and testimony of friends until I actually experienced it firsthand. Once there, I was shocked by how anyone can live in such an impoverished state. I questioned why there isn't a system in place to control the trash? Why doesn't the government do something to help prevent disease and organize a system to pick this up? I had never really given garbage much thought before. Unbeknownst to me at the time, my ethnocentric attitude was characteristic of a middle-class American citizen, guilty of assuming others think like "us" or at least, others *should* think like us since we seem to have our act together, right? But in my naiveté to know the facts, I failed to consider what happened to Haiti to bring it into this disparaging state. Perhaps the problem is bigger than the garbage itself. My research has led me to address environmental health hazards related to the garbage crisis in Haiti and how they came to be, presenting statistical information to compare their culture to that of the United States and what prospects of hope exist.

An insightful look into Haiti comes from author Tracy Kidder, winner of the Pulitzer Prize for his book, *Mountains Beyond Mountains* (2004). He journeyed into the depths of Haiti with Dr. Paul Farmer, Chief Strategist and Creator of Partners In Health. Kidder describes the Haitian culture, their desperate needs and what the "blan" (white man) has done to them. For instance, Farmer often spoke about the Peligre Dam along Haiti's largest river, the Artibonite. Similar to the dams along the Nu River in China, the project's intention was to improve irrigation and generate power but came at a greater expense to the environment and community. The project's money came from the U.S. Export-Import Bank and was planned

by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Built in the mid-1950's, it was believed to be a "gift" to Haiti. Unfortunately, the people in the area where it was built did not receive electricity or water to compensate for their land. The ones who benefited most were American-owned agribusinesses downstream, the tiny, wealthy Haitian elite and foreign-owned assembly plants that existed in Port-au-Prince (37, 38). Kidder was exposed to the hopelessness of these people who, as Farmer said, "are a fastidious people...they blow their noses into dresses because they don't have tissues...and have to apologize to their children for not having enough to eat" (40). He explains what he refers to as "white liberals"; prosperous, influential spokespeople of different skin color who believe, "all the world's problems can be fixed without any cost to themselves. We don't believe that. There's a lot to be said for sacrifice, remorse, even pity. It's what separates us from roaches" (40). Kidder's comparison of the U.S. individualistic mindset to the true needs of Haiti's collectivistic society leaves a noticeable ravine between.

According to a *Newsweek* eLibrary article entitled, "For Haiti, No Relief in Sight" (Interlandi 2010), Haiti suffers from a broken bureaucracy. Their history of corruption and mistrusted leaders is decades long. Just within the last twelve years, the Bush administration directed a ban of foreign-aid from reaching their government because of its dislike for their leader, Jean-Bertrand Aristide. Instead of distributing aid to their government, the United States trusted the non-governmental organizations, or NGOs, to use and distribute aid to help the people in need. Other countries followed suit and the arduous workers of the native land naturally followed the money, going to the NGOs for higher-paying jobs. Unfortunately, because of this wave of new influential power, the public sector weakened; health and education crumbled even more and corruption became rampant while the NGOs increased in numbers. A good intention turned bad again.

Non-profit organizations are quick to help impoverished nations such as Haiti, known as the poorest country in the western hemisphere (Worldbank). According to Global Finance Magazine's website, Haiti is currently the 20th poorest country in the world, listed as having \$1,358 GDP per capita, with a population of about 10 million. On the other hand, the United States has a GDP per capita of \$51,248 and is listed near the top as one of the wealthier nations in the world (2011). Interestingly, more than half of United States citizens volunteer in some capacity but would rather not have the government help take care of the poor (Jandt 216). Much of this work is done through non-profit organizations. Despite the fact that the United States citizens pursue goals saturated in self-interest, the underlying belief introduced by Adam Smith, founder of economics (1776) was that the good of the society would be promoted in the process. This concept, explained in *Introduction to Economic Reasoning* (2009) became known as the "invisible hand" (37). I have to wonder at our intentions of helping other impoverished areas when we are a nation built on self-interest. Are we honestly trying to help a hurting country get on their own two feet again, or is our giving a way to make us "look good"? Is there a better way to help a nation help themselves?

Along with corruption and projects such as the Peligre Dam, other disasters have only added to the garbage pileups in this fragile country. The January, 2010, 7.0 earthquake left this poverty-ridden country in an upheaval. 1.3 of the 1.5 million people that were displaced (worldbank.org) have since left the makeshift camps and relocated. 11 million cubic meters of debris have been removed, but even as I saw firsthand, bouncing along the Port-au-Prince roads in 2012, much work is still left to be done. Most of the mountains are barren, though they used to be lush in forestry. Ninety-eight percent have been cut down since the early 20th century to be used as fuel for cooking, leaving little land to be farmed and adding to the desertification (Wikipedia). The World Bank (2001) estimated that, "around 54 percent of the population lived on less than US\$1 a day and 78 percent on less than US\$2. Haitians often resort to gathering water from 'garbage-filled' rivers to supply their households with water for their daily needs, including cooking and drinking when water becomes too expensive or they do not have access to a clean water source" (Sentlinger).

In Shahafi's article, "Effects of Waste and Dirtiness on our Health and Wellbeing," health and well-being are the primary concern for every human being. The Haitian's right to it is taken away because filthy conditions not only lead to many diseases such as cholera, but also exacerbate health costs. Healthcare centers produce medical waste if left unchecked, known as clinical garbage, which is extremely harmful to humans as well as the ecological system. Ordinary garbage including food items spoil easily, creating air pollution and causing even greater damage to the environment than non-food garbage from cans, glass, and plastic (Shahafi).

Bettighofer explained how Haiti currently handles their garbage, learning through his work as a volunteer with Solidaridad, an NGO working in fifteen countries on four continents. He says there are two bodies of people in charge of Haiti's waste management. Townships are responsible for bringing garbage to the roadside and the central government is responsible for collecting and disposing it. The collection service, directed under the Ministry of Public Works, Transport and Communications only picks up a fraction of the garbage. As the garbage piles up and waits for pickup, serious hazards to the environment increase. Along with sanitation issues, bacteria spreads and beaches are contaminated, in turn harming marine life. Burn piles are common, as I can attest to, releasing a high amount of CO₂ in the air (harmful to respiratory systems) due to the toxic smoke from plastic contaminants made to withstand hundreds of years of life in our world. It's not that the Haitians don't want to recycle. I drank from several recycled Coke bottles on our trip and saw people walking long distances with a plastic container in hand, hoping to get their fill of clean water for the day. Bettighofer states that there are no current recycling "systems" such as in the United States. However, several initiatives have begun to initiate change. Such projects include using demolition rubble from the earthquake to build new houses and sidewalks and instigating collection centers that accept recyclable plastics for cash. Still, much remains to be done.

Why not build a waste incineration plant? This idea has been considered by a United States company (Crawford). Of course, it requires high costs due to the elaborate garbage incineration system and amount of technology needed. The percentage of moist organic compounds is so high that an additional auxiliary firing is necessary, further increasing costs to which the country would need to commit.

Could entrepreneurship be an answer? The government has attempted to use money given from other countries for cleanup but has come up short. Bayrasli (2011), a Forbes contributing writer, discusses comparisons and potential improvement for Haiti. China, Turkey and India have had some success with letting trash collection become a private enterprise. In order to have an economic ecosystem, there needs to be a higher level of order and consistency to maintain a clean environment. To quote Bayrasli:

In Istanbul, for example, that garbage is picked up and mail delivered even in the poorest neighborhoods reflects a level of not only physical but psychological mobility... Struggling to get around Port au Prince, let alone in or out of it, highlights the important place city planning and design have in an economic ecosystem. Haiti's rugged topography makes that a harder task than normal. It does not, however, make it impossible. Unfortunately, the country's politicians just might.

Valuable lessons can be learned by watching others develop systems that work in similar impoverished environments. Bayrasli sees private enterprise as a possible solution for Haiti, despite the lack of governmental support and believes it would improve the quality of life.

Hardship pleads for help and creative solutions. Determined to help Haiti, The Phoenix Project has broken ground to find a solution through a massive building creation (Project Phoenix). The creators, Morad Fareed, a real estate developer and Boby Duval of the youth charity L'Athletique D'Haiti came together at the Clinton Summit in 2012. Both were high level, competitive athletes who share the passion of teaching discipline and teamwork through sports. They quickly created a partnership with a global mindset to build sports facilities in impoverished countries, including work recently begun in Haiti (Inhabitat). Their vision includes, "...directly impacting impoverished communities and the lives of children globally through creating bold, innovative sporting facilities." Their inaugural project, the Phoenix Stadium (capacity of 12,000 people), is being built in Cite Soleil, an area within Port-au-Prince well known for crime. This environmentally conscious project is supported by native Haitian Robert Duval, a Haitian human rights activist and world-renowned architect, Carlos Zapata. The stadium will not only host professional soccer teams, but also help local youth, providing a safe, clean environment in which to learn teamwork, sports discipline and host a soccer academy. One of the project's goals is to create green, sustainable facilities based on natural resources, such as constructing the facility out of the rubble, once considered useless. It will house elementary and middle school dormitories and include a composting/recycling plant. Even the landscape is considered sustainable, containing edible gardens and a small lake with tilapia fish.

Other, smaller scale projects sponsored by NGOs have been successful at fighting garbage from different angles such as the Global Handwashing Day (Wikipedia), where events including a soccer tournament combined with food, music, dancing and prizes have been held in Port-au-Prince. About 8,000 schools in Haiti have been reached through this project, teaching and interacting with kids and adults about the importance of hand washing for cholera prevention.

Is creating a sustainable environment only a concern for the rich, developed countries who can afford to pour money into protecting the earth's resources? Jandt refers to global health saying, "scarcity of resources and natural disasters are hurting the poor, making care for the environment a moral responsibility for all the faithful" (205). Money is a necessary component of environmental care but how does it get into the right hands to make the most effective changes when a country has had a history of undependable government leaders and an inner circle of corruption? There is no question the Haitians want to see a better, cleaner environment. Many others have tried to approach the problem from the outside, but the best solution it seems, would need to come from within. Haiti is not without hope to become beautiful and clean once again, but it will take collaboration of like-minded people working together for the betterment of their country.

Presenting Haitians with sustainable solutions is the fertilizer needed to transform them from a garden of gloom back to a garden of bloom. As front-line workers, Engineers Without Borders (Shaott) understand that creating sustainability in a third world country doesn't mean handing them a tractor. They cannot afford the gas or maintenance. For outsiders to help, technologically simple solutions must be considered, given what little they have to work with so that once outsiders leave, the community can maintain the equipment, build their own, new systems and spread technology amongst themselves. Pride doesn't come from a foreigner dumping a basket of goods at your doorstep, grateful though you may be, but rather from producing something from your own hands, your own personal sacrifice of love and labor, working as a community toward a common goal from within your native borders; then you take collective ownership in celebrating the rewards to call your own. Haiti is a unique community consisting of hard working, fun-loving, exuberant people with a strong heart. Though ruination has reigned in Haiti this last century, I believe restoration will grow from within so its flowers will bloom again.

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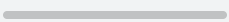

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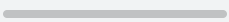

~ Theme and Variations in D Minor ~

 noisywater.whatcom.edu/site_1314/pages_1314/04-01music.html

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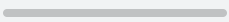

Theme in D Minor

Marianne Brudwick, Devin Jansa, Ilona Kolesnikova, Kyle McAllister, Emily Millious-Gates, Stephanie Neely, Nathan Rasmussen, Sarah Yates

 0:00 / 0:00  

Variation: Canon

Sarah Yates

 0:00 / 0:00  

Variation: The Whatcom Rag

Marianne Brudwick

Theme and Variations in D minor began as a class composition exercise in Music Theory III. Students in this class have been studying the forms and materials of music since fall quarter and this represents their culminating project. After studying theme and variation forms of master composers from Mozart to Stravinsky, the class collaboratively composed the theme for this work. Each student then composed a variation on that theme, retaining some unifying element of the original and varying other elements such as meter (triple meter), texture (canon), mode (major key), harmony, and rhythm. In each of these variations, you will hear the same melody (sometimes fragmented) and the same overall form (a a b a). In addition to composing original work, they rose to the challenge of orchestrating their variations for the instrumentation you hear in this recording, as well as learning and rehearsing them together.

~ Melanie Sehman,
Music Theory III Instructor

NEXT PAGE



Math Poetry

noisywater.whatcom.edu/site_1314/pages_1314/05-02crwriting.html

Cornelius Bonhoeffer

If Σ = metaphor

And Φ = honesty and emotional truth

What does $\Phi + \Sigma$ equate to?

Well, let's think about this

Let's say we set variable x to (m) meter

Assuming x can contain only iambs we'll set x = to pentameter

If breve = b then $x \div b = 2$

2 is the exact number of breve and ictus in an iamb

Iamb is congruent to metrical foot

Metrical foot is a factor of prosody

Prosody \div (rhythm x the initiation of speech) = stress, stress \neq breve

Stress is what I feel when writing a sonnet

Sonnets can either be English or Italian

And there are ~ 25000 cognates between the two languages which we'll set equal to c

If L = the number of lines in a sonnet and θ = the degree to which I hate sonnets

Then $c \div L^\theta = 9.11$ (can you solve for θ ?)

9.11 is either a number I call in case of emergency or the date of a national tragedy

That last line is called a volta which = a dramatic shift in thought

As a dramatic shift in thought \rightarrow rhetorical structure the poem will start to contradict itself

The rhyme scheme of this poem so far is AxC BAACD EFBEDFE xFxx where x = no rhyme at all

But that contradicts the fact that x already = meter which = rhetorical structure

Sense every stanza in this poem is an odd prime number of lines long

And cicadas only breed every prime number of years to protect themselves from migratory predators

And this poem is hidden in a metaphor to protect itself from critical predators

And Φ is represented by math which is equal to metaphor Σ

And since poetry is dictated and controlled in most cases by its Φ

Than $\Sigma + \Phi$ can only equal one thing

Controlling metaphor

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Devin Littlefield

Simply Twisted

Acrylic, 8" x 8"

The Allegory of the Pen

noisywater.whatcom.edu/site_1314/pages_1314/07-02essay.html

Katelyn Carlton

I have just three things to teach:
simplicity, patience, compassion.
These three are your greatest treasures.
Simple in actions and in thoughts,
You return to the source of being.
- Lao-Tzu

The simplest solutions are the most elegant. We witness this in solving mathematical equations, personal dilemmas or even the telling of a tale. Often the process and problem involved in reaching these solutions are neither simple nor elegant. They are a tangled thorny mess of overlapping grey hues that we must unravel if we are to move forward. It takes a wealth of resources, thoughts and a bit of bold action to work our way through the briar of our existence. Those that are able reach an elegant solution did not get there alone. They borrowed and stole the tools they needed from many predecessors and contemporaries. In order for our best work to be done we must be welcomed into the minds of others as friends and neighbors, free to partake of the wealth we find there. Conversely we must leave the doors of our vaults open for others to explore and extract. We do a great favor to all when we package our insights for easy transport in the forms of stories, songs, and equations.

All the great thinkers are thieves, they simply cannot help themselves, like a crow when it sees the shiny marble of an idea they must pick it up. When many ideas have accumulated they begin to look over their cache. They compare each gem, looking not at the stark contrasts, but at the many shades and values that can be connected and combined to form another vision of what lies beyond the briar and how we might get there. It is not a compromise between extremes that we seek, but commonality. No one person or society is truly absolute. We are all made up of many and often conflicting truths.

Culturally we have conventions for expressing and comparing our truths, parables about marbles and crows, stories of caves and gardens of metaphors as lush and varied as Eden. These are packages that contain our ideas and experiences. Why not grab one of these bundles and tuck it under an arm? Don't be afraid, the thinker left it there for us and we are engaged in an ancient and noble form of larceny. Now that it is liberated from that dark and dusty attic perhaps we should open it and see where it takes us. The label says, "The Allegory of the Pen" and this is what is inside...

Imagine a pen. It is a very large pen, full of sweet grass, fresh water and sunshine. There is shelter to get out of the wind and the rain and warm dry bedding available. The pen is completely surrounded by an electric fence and in the pen there are two goats. The first goat loves the pen. It makes her feel safe. She spends her days eating sweet grass and enjoying the feel of the sun on her back. It is her joy in these simple pleasures that makes her feel alive. She has no desire to leave the pen or test its borders.

The second goat loathes the pen. He sees it for exactly what it is; a prison, a false environment of dangerous contentment. He longs to know what lies beyond its borders. What other plants and animals might exist. He longs to know what it would be like to be wild, to be free. He spends his days testing the perimeter. He is searching the border for breaks and weaknesses in his captivity. He spends his life pushing the fence. Each time he pushes he is stretching and weakening the electric wire, microscopically expanding the parameters of his world. Each time he tests, each time he pushes, he is shocked by the electric fence that contains him. It is the pain experienced from challenging his limitations and expectations that reminds him that he is real. It is the pain that makes him feel that he is alive.

The allegory just described leads us to ask the questions; which goat's life has more meaning? Which goat is free? And finally are freedom and happiness mutually exclusive or intrinsically intertwined? If we were to present these questions to Lao Tzu the philosopher from the sixth century B.C. and author of the *Tao-te Ching*, we would find answers as poetic as they are opaque, but consistent in their commitment to the Tao. The Tao is sometimes translated as "The Way" it embodies the philosophy of the middle path. A method of living that is centered and balanced in harmony, humility and compassion. It is a path of least resistance as Lao Tzu reminds us "The great Way is easy, yet people prefer the side paths. Be aware when things are out of balance. Stay centered within the Tao" (29). The Tao is as much a manifesto for the governance of a great society as it is a prescription for personal fulfillment and meaning. It does not differentiate between the individual and the whole for in its full manifestation they are one. "If a country is governed wisely" Lao-Tzu promises, then:

People enjoy their food,
take pleasure in being with their families,
spend weekends working in their gardens,
delight in the doings of their neighborhood.
And even though the next country is so close
that people can hear its roosters crowing
and its dogs barking,
they are content to die of old age
without ever having gone to see it. (33)

This description of life as it could be reminds us of our goat at the center of her pen. Living a life of contentment and simple pleasures she is free. Free from want, free from pain, free from the questioning discontent that torments her brother. As Lao-Tzu puts it "The Master

sees things as they are, without trying to control them. She lets them go their own way, and resides at the center of the circle” (26). There is no pursuit in her happiness or her freedom by the means of her existence, it simply is.

But what about the dogs barking and the roosters crowing in that country so near? Is it not a shame to live an entire life without ever knowing or experiencing anything beyond one’s own existence? It could even be argued that it creates a mentality that is potentially dangerous. In his essay “The Individual in the Chains of Illusion” Erich Fromm, a twentieth century sociologist and humanist, describes how primitive clan mentality translates its self in nation states and world cultures. He explains:

There are moral laws governing the members of the group, and without such laws no group could exist. But these laws do not apply to the “stranger.” When groups grow in size, more people cease to be “strangers” and become “neighbors.” Yet in spite of the quantitative change, qualitatively the distinction between the neighbor and the stranger remains. A stranger is not human, he is a barbarian, is not even fully understandable. (333)

Thus regardless of how large or well-connected a person or a nation is by never experiencing the inhabitants in the countries nearby they never have a chance to become “neighbors” and will remain “strangers” thereby creating an isolationist mentality rife for defensiveness and brutality. Ignorance is the mother plant of fear and fear an invasive weed that chokes out both freedom and happiness.

This brings us to the question of the fence its self. To fence something in or to fence something out is an act of segregation. In “The Letter from Birmingham Jail” civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. asks his detractors “Isn’t segregation an existential expression of man’s tragic separation, an expression of his awful estrangement” (3)? This question asks us that by allowing socially constructed fences to exist, have we been “strangers’ to one another and is segregation both a symptom and the cause of our estrangement? Segregation is one of many social constructs dictated by the written laws and unwritten codes of our cultural infrastructure. This suggests a moral imperative to disobey any “code that is out of harmony with the moral law” as an unjust law (3). Dr. King explains this:

In the terms of St. Thomas Aquinas, an unjust law is a human law that is not rooted in eternal and natural law. Any law that uplifts human personality is just. Any law that degrades human personality is unjust. All segregation statutes are unjust because segregation distorts the soul and damages the personality. (3)

Returning to our allegory, the goat that feels compelled to test the fence also questions his segregation and isolation from the other creatures of the world.

A pen is related to a penitentiary and to be incarcerated in one whether it is complacently or against one’s will, is to have one’s freedom denied. Anyone cognizant of their captivity should feel compelled to take action against it. To challenge their constraints and test their limits is

both a direct act of disobedience and the greatest act of hope. Just as we have seen that ignorance is the mother of fear, we must acknowledge hope as the seed of freedom. In reminding us of the virtue of “the capacity for disobedience,” Fromm draws upon the Hebrew and Greek myths (332). He uses Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden and Prometheus stealing the fire of the gods to illustrate how “Disobedience was the first act of freedom” (332). Just as Adam and Eve were punished and Prometheus chained to the rock for their daring, so too is the goat punished when he does not obey the limits of the pen. Not only is he experiencing physical punishment, but even more deeply, the emotional and spiritual malaise caused by the unjust fact of his segregation. Still as long as there is continued struggle there is continued hope. For him the pursuit of happiness and the pursuit of freedom are in no way exclusive from one another, but intrinsic in that happiness is impossible and irrelevant without freedom. Fromm validates these struggles when he writes:

Man has continued to evolve by acts of disobedience not just in the sense that his spiritual development was possible only because there have been men who dared to say “no” to the powers that be in the name of their conscience or of their faith. His intellectual development was also dependent on the capacity for being disobedient, disobedient to the authorities who try to muzzle new thoughts, and to the authority of long-established opinions which declare change to be nonsense. (332)

What do Erich Fromm, Martin Luther King Jr. and our revolutionary goat all have in common? They all have their freedom, freedom to think for themselves, freedom to act with integrity, and freedom from fear. They are aware that there will be recourse and punishment for their thoughts and actions, but continue on their path with “simplicity, patience, [and] compassion” (Lao-Tzu 32). The value of their beliefs is of greater importance to them than the fear of punishment or the allure of comfort. This makes them extreme in their integrity and free in their thinking. Lao-Tzu writes that “There is no greater illusion than fear” once we dispel this illusion we are free to be direct in our actions and generous in our thoughts (28). Free to remove the battered walls that protect our fragile hearts and be defenseless in our happiness. All great thinkers are thieves of ideas. The questioners are invaders laying siege to our castle walls. Upsetting and destroying the safe and ordered sovereignty of our established beliefs. These are the forces for personal growth and social evolution.

What do these two goats have to teach us? Should we strive for the peace and contentment of Lao-Tzu’s goat or the sacrifice and passion of Fromm’s and Dr. King’s? If we step back we can see that both are fully and honestly experiencing their worlds. While one fights to destroy the fence that he perceives to be a barrier to his true self, the other takes a different path, one that goes within to discover her true self and the fences cease to exist. Each is gaining a greater understanding of themselves and their world through their experience. The methods and ideals that they both represent “have given us the intellectual tools to break through the sham of rationalization and ideologies, and to penetrate to the core of individual and social reality” (Fromm 336). They demonstrate that the pen is of our own construction.

We build fences around ourselves, our communities and our nations to protect what is inside, but in fact we are segregating ourselves from the world at large, from our fellow humans and our greater selves. History has shown us through countless wars and personal heartbreaks, that no good can come this. As long as we maintain the territorial mentality of protecting what is “ours” our fellow man will always remain “strangers” having never been allowed to become “neighbors.” In order to free ourselves from this self-imposed segregation we must be brave and allow ourselves to be vulnerable. The Yin and Yang of our convictions balance us on a center path toward our ideals, but in order to maintain this balance we must be both brutally honest and compassionately empathetic with ourselves and others. Lao-Tzu states it more elegantly when he writes “Patient with both friends and enemies, you accord with the way things are. Compassionate toward yourself, you reconcile all beings in the world” (32). Inspired by the Buddha, Gautama Siddhartha who was a contemporary of Lao-Tzu’s, Fromm addresses this in his own way when he introduces his One Man ideal:

As long as any fellow being is experienced as fundamentally different from myself, as long as he remains a stranger, I remain a stranger to myself too. When I experience myself fully, then I recognize that I am the same as any other human being, that I am the child, the sinner, the saint, the one who hopes and the one who despairs, the one who can feel joy and the one who can feel sadness. I discover that only the thought concepts, the customs, the surface are different, and that the human substance is the same. I discover that I am everybody, and that I discover myself in discovering my fellow man, and vice versa. In this experience I discover what humanity is; I discover the One Man. (336)

In order to discover the One Man we must first fully emerge as individuals. We must eliminate the fences within ourselves only then will we have the strength and the sovereignty to know all men as neighbors and the whole world as a community.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Erich Fromm and Lao-Tzu were each in his own way working to end segregation. Dr. King fought for civil rights on a physical and political plane. Erich Fromm writing about the “One Man” ideal connected the individual in “One world, One nation” on a cultural and national level and Lao-Tzu teaches that spiritual oneness is possible through the Tao. All these great thinkers were thieves and they hoped for their ideas to be freely plundered. They have shown us a path through the briar. A solution as simple and elegant as it is challenging. That with an open mind and a generous heart there can be both freedom and happiness, but only if we can overcome both the internal and external fences will our pens cease to exist. No longer strangers to one another we can be free to each travel our own paths and find a place at the center of the circle.

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

noisywater.whatcom.edu/site_1314/pages_1314/08-03art.html



Kacia Julius

The Costa Rican

Pencil, 14" x 17"

Cherishing My Chance to be a Whole Person

noisywater.whatcom.edu/site_1314/pages_1314/09-03crwriting.html

Robert DeCoteau

I stand in front of my kitchen sink washing the dishes. My six-year-old son is playing with a handful of toys at my feet. In my mind, I am a scholar and a student, a reader and a writer, an academic and a philosopher. In my kitchen, I am a single father with chores.

My English 101 class just ended and I raced home to meet my son at his bus stop. I'm stressing about a creative nonfiction essay that's due on Monday. This style of writing is hard for me. I'm so used to making my own rules. My son's imagination is running rampant on the freshly mopped floor.

"Heh, heh, heh," the little figurine of Pablo from *The Backyardigans* says to a Spiderman action figure at my feet. My son's voice is a fair imitation of Pablo from the *Master of Disguise* episode.

"You won't get away with this," Spiderman says to the dastardly penguin, "I'll turn on the bat signal and call the Dark Knight to help me."

"I'll just call my henchman," Pirate Pablo replies.

Out of nowhere Boots, who is normally Dora the Explorer's sidekick, appears to render aid to the make-believe villain and not a moment too soon, I might add. The Batmobile blazes into action.

To my knowledge, although both are products of Nickelodeon, there has been no crossover between *The Backyardigans* and *Dora the Explorer*; Pablo and Boots have never met.

Meanwhile, Batman and Spiderman are opposing forces in a more than fifty-year struggle for market share between the two largest and most influential comic book companies in existence. But, in my son's mind it's all fair game. He makes his own rules too.

It dawns on me that my son is a writer. Actually, storyteller is a more accurate term. I think that maybe all children have this creative ability. He is drawing on his limited experiences, citing movies and television, to create his own epic battle on our kitchen floor. There is a beginning to the story, middle, and an end. He even has a rudimentary plot.

Are we all gifted with the ability to create fiction and somehow most of us lose the knack along the way? Maybe that talent is still in all of us just waiting to be reawakened. It's possible that we just need to pull the skill out occasionally and dust it off, sharpen it and make it a useful tool again. Being creative helps us to open our minds so we can see the world with new eyes. If nothing else, we can come to understand ourselves better.

In early April of 2011, I started writing a short novel entitled *The New Days: The First Son*. It is set in a post-apocalyptic world infested with zombies. My intention wasn't to create my masterpiece like *Moby Dick*. In fact, I completely intended to write some gratuitously gory, hack fiction in between homework assignments.

Upon completion, I looked back at what I created and saw that my analytical writing teacher was right; everything is just a remix. In my novella, I saw elements of several books and short stories I have read. I took a repeated description of a peaceful future from *Of Mice and Men*. *The Running Man* lent me the idea of entertaining the masses with the life or death struggle of contestants and I borrowed the arduous journey of a father and son from *The Road*.

I also noticed influences from movies such as *Mad Max: Beyond the Thunder Dome*; my intellectual antagonist is backed by a physically powerful cohort. From *Gladiator* I took the protagonist's need to destroy the ruler that was turning average citizens into a bloodthirsty mob and the nocturnal nature and speed of my zombies are reminiscent of the movie version of *I Am Legend*. None of this was done intentionally, mind you, all these elements are standards used repeatedly because they make stories interesting.

But, when I look past all the fluff that makes for a good story, I see something more. Who I am is spread out for the world to see. Very few people know me well enough to read my pains and losses and fears in those pages, but through what I have learned in analytical writing class those things are plain as day to me now. Sven Birkerts calls it reading intensively. We learned to search for a deeper meaning in the text, word choice, and even the way the words are arranged.

*

"I had to wonder what it was like to be a kid that didn't get to play or laugh or shout."
-*The First Son*, DeCoteau-

I was born the fourth child of a welfare mother. There were four fathers and no dads. Due to drug addiction, there was no mom either. My sister, who was nine when I was born, attempted to fill that gigantic void. She changed diapers and prepared bottles, wiped my nose and tied my shoes. In retrospect, I believe she did these tasks to avoid punishment. Physical abuse was normal for us in those days. Even at a very early age, we became conditioned to be quiet and stay out of the way. *Children are to be seen and not heard*, was a family adage handed down from Great Grandma Verle.

My mother had a fifth child two years after me, then she was diagnosed with ovarian cancer and had to have a hysterectomy. Was it divine intervention? At times, I think it was.

I was just one of many children in our house. Our mother didn't have a favorite; she expressed the same amount of disregard for each of us. No one hugged us or tucked us in. There were no bedtime stories. My life was already burgeoning with fear and uncertainty.

After I turned four, there was a stepfather in my life occasionally, but the state of the marriage was dictated by the availability of drugs and alcohol. Domestic violence became a common excuse for both of them to indulge in a weeklong binge. My mother would initiate an argument to force her husband into a fury just to compel a physical reaction from him. After striking her, he would shamle out of the house drenched in shame and guilt, intent on self-medicating. As soon as he was gone, she would spend a few minutes applying makeup to her gaunt face, hiding the dark circles under her sunken eyes. She was thin in a sickly, drug-induced way, but this too would be hidden with just the right outfit. Then away she would go without as much as a backward glance.

As the yelling started, I would ghost under the bed or into the closet until all was still again. We became shadows shaped like children clinging to the dark, quiet corners. Even after they were gone, we crept around the house with kitten soft steps always keeping one ear tuned to the gravel driveway dreading their imminent return and praying that they didn't bring the party back with them.

"No! ... Arrghh," Spiderman cries. He takes a beating at my feet. By the end of all the newer movies, he is bloody and bruised, so that is how it must be on the linoleum battleground.

"I'll get you next time, Pablo!" Batman yells as he rushes his compatriot off to the refrigerator shaped hospital in his black convertible with colossal Cadillac fins. Pablo and Boots narrowly miss being run down as Batman speeds away.

"Heh, heh, heh," is Pablo's sinister reply.

*

"I screamed like a child as the howling and grunting of eight deaders filled my every thought. I was going to die; my boy was going to die. There was nothing I could do. I was just a man. A father, who had promised his son a new life and couldn't deliver."

Sometime after my fourth birthday, my father came into town to visit. My grandmother, who was sick with cancer at the time, pulled him aside and told him to leave us alone. My mother had a new husband now and he shouldn't poke his nose in where it didn't belong. Go away and let her be happy. He chose to heed her demand. He walked away, and it was ten years before I heard from him again. By then it was too late; he didn't know how to be a dad and I had no interest in being his son.

What my grandmother did wasn't fair to either of us, but that was not a reason to abandon me; it was an excuse. I would move a mountain a single stone at a time if it were standing between me and my son. One sick and frail old woman should have posed no problem at all for my father.

"Look out! Aaahhh!" My son runs the Batmobile into my foot while I'm adjusting the water to rinse the dishes.

“Ouch!” I yell startling him.

I hop on one foot feigning a severe injury. He giggles and ruthlessly repeats the crash into my other foot. On his third attempt, I dodge and his toy car completely misses both my feet.

“Dad...” he admonishes me.

My boy expects me to be there no matter what abuse is inflicted.

*

“Nothing makes you grow up like searching for food and water knowing you’ll die without them, all while you’re trying to avoid the zombies trying to eat you at every turn”

Food in our house became scarce after I turned eight. Our mother figured out she could sell food stamps for half of face value to other families. Four hundred dollars worth of food stamps became two hundred in cash and that was enough to buy an eight ball of cocaine and a few cases of beer. Add that to the welfare check and she could party for half the month on government funding and maybe find a guy to pay her way until the first of the following month.

By the time I reached the third grade, there were only three of us left in the house. She sent my oldest brother to live with his father and my sister had fled with her boyfriend. Neglect had replaced most of the physical abuse.

At eleven, nine, and six years of age, my remaining siblings and I were expected to become self-sufficient. We cooked and did laundry. We did the dishes, vacuumed, swept, mopped, and mowed the lawn with an old push mower. We cut and stacked firewood. We hauled it in all winter and woke several times during the night to keep the woodstove burning. Winter was the hardest time for us. We foraged in our bare cupboards and became good at creating practically palatable meals out of the paltry provisions available.

The United States government had set up the commodity foods program to combat the third-world conditions on many American Indian reservations. My brothers and I ate generic oatmeal soaked in powdered milk for breakfast because none of us could figure out how to make the powdered egg packets taste like anything other than gritty, yellow rubber. We fought over the generic, canned fruit cocktail or peaches as an after school snack and ate dinners consisting of meat from shiny cans labeled BEEF or PORK or CHICKEN. It never tasted like any of those things and there was never enough to go around.

We set our own alarm clock and got out to the bus stop on time every morning careful not to wake our mother. We had been signed up for free lunch at school and you didn’t pass up any chance of a real meal in our world.

“Dad, can I have a snack?” my boy asks.

“Sure, let’s see what we got,” I say, drying my hands on a dishtowel and stepping over his battlefield.

I pay two dollars and seventy-five cents a day for my son’s school lunch. He barely picks at it due to the anticipation of the recess that follows. I smile at this. In my adult life, my fridge and pantry are packed to the point where they are hard to close. I am grateful that my son has so little to worry him. I love that he takes for granted that there will always be a snack waiting for him behind the overstuffed pantry door.

*

“No one should have to suffer so much indignity that they responded to a moment of kindness in such a way. I felt like I was crying all the time now. Some big tough guy I was.”

Just after I turned twelve, my sister and her boyfriend, Tony, moved in with us. They were adults now, each with their very own drug habit. Life changed for my brothers and me for the next few years. Our mother delegated her authority to Tony. He became our mother’s minion.

Tony was in his twenties, a burly young man who didn’t know his own strength. An abusive, alcoholic widower had raised him and had instilled a twisted idea of child rearing. After being the victim so long, he relished the opportunity to become the victimizer. My mother would yell for him to “shut those kids up” and he would become a snarling beast in our small room, unsparingly meting out our mother’s wrath.

Tony used belts, metal spatulas, and wire hangers to inflict pain in the guise of punishment, all the while berating us and telling us we didn’t know how good we had it. The rule was if one of us gets it, we all get it. I couldn’t tell you how many times I was awoken from a sound sleep, yanked from the top bunk, and beaten for my brothers’ indiscretions. The welts and bruises were a shame we hid. It was easy; we had been training all our lives with our mother’s drug habit and our living conditions. It was just one more thing we concealed from the outside world.

I lost copious amounts of dignity standing in my underwear at the age of fourteen gripping my ankles waiting to be beaten with a curtain rod. But if we didn’t grab our ankles, we got it much worse. I silently cried myself to sleep more often than not in those years. It’s not at all easy to attain manhood under such conditions. I think it was yet another act of God that Tony was never able to father children of his own. For that, I am grateful.

“Time to go water the strawberries,” I say to my son after his fruit snacks and pudding cup are gone.

“Can I do it myself this time?” he asks as I drag the hose into place.

I hand him the nozzle and step back to avoid the splashing cascade as he pulls the trigger. Together we are learning to nurture the ten strawberry plants beside our house. Who knows, maybe we’ll get more than five stunted berries this year and the plants will nourish us in that

way too.

Just as my boy turns the nozzle on me, I kink the hose. The water trickles from the tip falling well short of his target. The smile he flashes me is a mix of childish innocence and boyish mischief. His father always seems to know what he's up to. I still have the ability to astound him almost as much as he amazes me.

*

"I've suffered my fair share of losses, Riley. I lost my wife and her parents, I even lost my daughter. I know what loss feels like."

On December 2, 1993, I sat across the table from my first love as she broke the news that she was pregnant. The bad coffee and the poor service at the Horseshoe Cafe in downtown Bellingham was a nightly thing for us at the time. We were nineteen, four years into our relationship. Connie's home life was nearly as bad as mine was; the Horseshoe was an escape for both of us.

I was scared about the news. Fatherhood was not a thing I was ready to face at that point in my life. I was nervous, but I was excited too. I stared across the booth at this young woman I had clung to as she had clung to me. We had become so entwined in our mutual rescue of each other that we were like a single person.

I proposed to Constance Solomon that night in the bustle of that busy little dive. We stayed late planning the rest of our lives together. I had time to let the idea of becoming a father sink in. I would do it the way it should have been done for me.

On the way home from the Horseshoe a drunk driver hit our car head on doing one hundred and ten miles per hour. Connie, my high school sweetheart, died in my arms just after midnight on December 3, 1993. Our future died with her.

"Dad, can I play outside now?"

"Sure, shut the water off first and you can play in the backyard," I tell him, "I'll watch you out the kitchen window while I finish the dishes."

He goes around back while I put the garden hose away. When I reach the kitchen sink again, the view from the window distracts me. I stare out and have to shake my head as he uses a stick to battle unseen adversary despite owning a veritable arsenal of toy swords, lightsabers, and dart guns.

*

"Something broke inside me. I could feel it like a physical thing. My strength fled and I was a broken thing shambling upward step by step."

That night, in the early morning hours of December 3, after hearing that we had been involved in a car accident and that Connie was dead, Mom got on her knees next to her bed and promised God that she would quit everything because He hadn't taken her son from her. She has never touched drugs or alcohol since that promise. I made a full recovery physically within a month. My mental and emotional recovery took much longer.

For a year or more after Connie's death, I threw myself into alcohol wholeheartedly. Or should it be hole-heartedly? I don't know. The best part of me died on that cold, dark road. I was hollow inside. I felt like half a person. A series of bad relationships followed because I was incapable of caring about anyone.

"HELLO!" my boy yells charging up the stairs.

"Hello," I call back from my computer desk.

This is his version of the game Marco Polo. Every time he comes in he calls to me so he can figure out where I am in the house, it is the only time he doesn't have to use his inside voice and he takes advantage.

His face is red and his hair is matted with sweat from the physical effort of vanquishing the invisible invaders in our backyard.

"Check the chores list and get your chore done while I decide what we are having for dinner," I tell him as I save my work and log off.

"Vacuum the stairs," he reads from the paper on the fridge and then runs to get the Dust Buster.

*

"He stood over me, my son, so lank and small. He had been my treasure, my hope, my will to live."

I didn't have much when I was a boy. I was no one's treasure, no one's hope. My world was a wasteland filled with the walking dead. Is it ironic that my favorite hiding places were in the closet and under the bed? Parents are supposed to be there to chase away the monsters in those places. But what if your parents are the monsters? What if they invite other monsters right in? I believe that my imagination failed to create monsters in my childhood because I was already surrounded by them. Anyone who knows about addiction knows that addicts keep to their own. Every adult that ever crossed our threshold had the disease. Every one of them was a potential threat to my siblings and me.

It was eleven years after Connie's passing that I finally did become a father. In that time, I learned and grew as a person. I did my best to become a productive member of society, leaving people from my childhood behind and burning all the bridges that led back to that life

I so despised. I face each new day head on and squeeze the most life I can out of every one of them.

One of my biggest fears is that nothing I do for my son will change his lot in life. He was born into a broken home, birthed by a recovering drug addict who quickly relapsed and abandoned him. I fight a silent battle everyday to parent the way I know it should be done. I keep my struggle to be a good person and a good parent a secret from my boy. Part of being a parent is protecting him from my own worries and fears. I'm sure eventually he will figure it out; he's a very bright kid. But, at the age of six, the thought that his father doesn't know best should never cross his mind.

Perhaps when my son is old enough to read this novella that I wrote he will see how much the father in it loves his son and know that we are those fictional people. I want him to see it that way. Mere words just don't do justice in describing what I feel for him. I would rather he not know the other stuff, how I struggled through my childhood. He loves his grandma for who she is now. I don't blame him; I love her too.

Today, I count my mom as one of my closest friends. We are closer in my adulthood than we had ever been. She understands my daily battle after seventeen years clean and sober. She has taken the steps and made amends. I have mostly forgiven her.

Now, I am living a sort of childhood through my boy. I get to be there as he experiences things for the first time; many of them are firsts for me too. I see the wonder in his eyes and the excitement he feels heals me. He would tell you that I'm not very good at playing and he's right. It's hard for me to sit on the floor and be co-author of an epic saga such as he creates. I struggle to understand the steps in his creative process when he gets into storyteller mode. It may be that I just need to pull the skill out, dust it off, and sharpen it, but I don't have many memories of my own playtimes to call upon. I didn't play all that much.

Still, the hole in my heart has been filled; I am a whole person again. It took fatherhood for me to know love the way I once did. My greatest hope is that the stories my son the writer composes will all have happy endings. Every morning, as I get my son out to the bus stop I remind myself that my duty is to give this boy a chance. That's how I chose his name.

"Chance, what are you up to?" I ask my son from the kitchen.

"Just playing in my room," he responds.

"It's time to put your toys away and get washed up," I call down the hallway. I nearly puncture the bottom of my foot on the pirate's peg leg after stepping on Pablo again.

All the cupboards and fridge are wide open. I try to build a meal in my mind with the ingredients we have available. It's so much easier now than it was twenty-five years ago. There's so much more to choose from.

“What’s for dinner?” Chance asks, coming around the corner with a bin for his toys.

“Anything we want,” I tell him and smile.

A Necessary Medieval

 noisywater.whatcom.edu/site_1314/pages_1314/10-03essay.html

Elliott Cribbs

The final decades of the Roman Empire proved fertile ground for the humble (and humbled) beginnings of the Catholic Church and Christian belief but it didn't get any easier from there. Despite fervence and devotion, the Church of its own strength required ever greater support structures to win adherents as it spread the teachings of Christ across Europe. Any system of belief will encounter enemies from without and within as it grows, and even more in a chaotic era like the Medieval Period. Christ's teachings are a beautiful set of tenets professing the importance of loving each and every other, with a strong emphasis on forgiveness. Morality as He presents it is as steadfast in the rules seen in other belief systems, admonishment against murder, theft, and adultery, and stressing virtues such as patience and charity. The ideas hold true after two thousand years, a testament to the universality for people of any age, but how did the foundling religion assure its perpetuation amid such a dark age?

Learning about Christianity's complex ideas in a largely illiterate age requires not only teachers but physical manifestations of the Church's glory as reminders to the laity. For those whose hearts are set upon being near to these manifestations, journeys of pilgrimage must be made to reach them. The act of physically traveling to far-flung cathedrals has the dual benefits of bringing the devout Christian into close contact with fragments of their faith's foundations and providing a quest for absolution. These teachings, manifestations, and journeys are all equally important to this day, though now we have the benefit of the interceding reflections upon history to elaborate the meanings, the value of what Christianity's beginnings meant to those alive at the time and to the wider Western world. In retrospect we can see the interconnectedness that a shared religious tradition has provided for a vast portion of Europe. Moving past lives of tremendous difficulty, it could be said because of those difficulties, people of the Medieval Era crafted a framework for the varied nations as they exist today. The solidity of Christian traditions left a skeleton upon which the proceeding centuries' societal structures would be built, an amazing cohesiveness that aligned identity and purpose.

An intrinsic aspect of devotion to Christian teachings is found in the orderliness of monastic traditions. In perfect quietude and walled off from the disorder of the early Medieval Period were the foundations of Europe's cloistered lifestyle. Saint Benedict is the eponymous founder of the Benedictine Order and literally wrote the Rule Book on monastic existence. His ideas took hold in the century after his death in the 6th century C.E. And gained a permanent foothold in the 9th. Of his brethren he frequently advises spareness of words, an all but total silence in which one may speak when spoken to or by virtue of one's station, as a reader in the oratory for example. Repeated entreaties to forgive others and to exercise humility and obedience run throughout his Rules, which apply to each brethren and also to –

especially to— priests, priors, and Abbots. A rise into one of these stations requires even greater attention to the precepts to guard against prideful behavior as well as closer watch from peers as insurance against this.

Monastic living is characterized above all by service to the Lord of course, but on a daily basis by toil and study of His Word. Of manual labor, Saint Benedict says that monks need “. . .not be discontented; for then they are truly monks when they live by the labour of their hands. . .” (Chapter 48). Psalms are read either aloud or silently to oneself several times a day and into the night, and Benedict is precise in which Psalm should be read when. Sundays and specific holy-days are marked by prayers and liturgy, fasting or special observance. In fact, 11 of the 73 chapters of the Rules pertain to these schedules so that not an 'alleluia' is uttered out of time or place. Where the initial portion of The Rules advises an Abbot specifically, these earlier chapters also contain terse commandment-like phrases such as “Not to bear false witness” and “not to return evil for evil” and stresses obedience unto death (Chapter 4). It is interesting to note that in counsel, the Abbot is advised to listen to the juniors among them for “. . . the Lord often reveals to the younger what is best,” a curious contrast to the deference to seniority otherwise professed throughout (Chapter 3). Many of the chapters following the prayer rules deal with managing the community within the cloister; what kind of punishment to dispense when a monk fails at his work, what he is to wear, and situational guidance for many occasions including the election of Abbots. Benedict brings his Rules to an appropriate close, reminding adherents that all shall “. . .tender the charity of brotherhood chastely; love their Abbot with a sincere and humble charity; prefer nothing to Christ. . .” (Chapter 72). One final chapter below the last reinforces the divine inspiration of the holy books as tools of virtue, but pure as his intentions were, of course not everyone in the Medieval Period was in agreement. Within the confines of the monastery's walls peace is all but assured but outside those walls, especially in a time when villains and thieves abound.

One of the most notable contenders to Christianity's prevalence by sheer numbers and organization was Islam. Despite similar origins to Christianity, both emanating from Semitic peoples of the near East, these two historically have not blended well. Initial observation of their shared ties to Abraham as an integral ancestor might infer some cooperative element but neither wishes to submit to the other, nor agree to disagree. Both are monotheistic powerhouses, their differences in beliefs, lifestyles, and goals have been distinct enough to invite endless animosity from the Medieval period into present day politics. Islam spread comparatively *very* quickly, reaching further than Christianity had in 1/4th the time. Ideas from the Muslim world did cross-pollinate, and theirs were quite advanced next to what Christianity had thus far uncovered. Islam brought to the West reintroduction of Greek language which had been lost in previous centuries, allowing access to vast stores of ideas that had become inaccessible for that time. They brought algebra, new ideas in biology, astronomy, and philosophy and an improved awareness of medicine, though still based on the four humors. From the 8th to the 11th century C.E. Muslims occupied the Iberian peninsula in Spain, far from their place of origin in the East. This foreign influence brought wealth and sophistication to the region and that country still clearly bears the mark of 3

centuries of Muslim occupation in some of its architecture and this impact can be seen in France, Italy, and Sicily as well (Bartlett 238). The Christian world benefited greatly from association with the Islamic people but this relationship was marvelously infuriating for both sides. Each having their own agenda empowered by zealous believers in the one true God did not equalize the balance of exchange.

Other equally important, less impactful factions and religious influences dotted the Medieval European landscape, and for a Christian of the time, it might suffice to capture most of these under the indiscriminate –yet discriminatory– title, “Pagans.” This is a gross simplification of whole cultures with rich ancestral heritage and belief systems but as Christianity was developing, it absorbed what it could of these older beliefs, making a transition easier for those cultures. Saint Jerome (d.420) was accredited with the following: "If it is called the day of the sun by the pagans, we willingly accept this name, for on this day the Light of the world arose, on this day the Sun of Justice shone forth." Acculturation took place no doubt, but the exactness of who took what is difficult to discern. Some say that the Celtic end-of-harvest holiday Samhain was transformed into Hallowe'en but then, just as many think this is untrue and the Christian tradition of All Saint's Day had its own origins for that time of year. In any case, those outside of the Church's jurisdiction were often branded as heretics or at least contradictions to Church doctrine, but telltale signs of these absorbed cultures remain. A truthful account is not likely to be made which credits each “pagan” culture their due respect. Still, the hybridization of cultural traditions has its own uniqueness, unattainable without each incorporated element.

A perhaps unavoidable result of the growth of large organizations is conflict arising from differing opinions within its widely spread peoples. What began as a simple structuring of essential truths evidently spawned a massive hierarchical system which has affected the lives of people across Europe since the early Medieval Period and today has a reach extending around the globe. At the top is the Pope, a powerful figure with the power to excommunicate kings and peasants alike, a serious threat to the devotee who hopes to achieve their heavenly reward. Bishops and priests to a lesser extent wielded power over the people and were as human as everyone else and prone to failures of morality. Saint Benedict warns his Abbots to tend to newly elected priests lest the sin of pride rule them and they become corrupted by their new-found power. It is one thing to expect monks within a cloister to regulate each others' actions but who can tell the Pope what to do? Who can argue with a provincial priest who decides to excommunicate a local craftsman who accidentally slights him? Against a man of God in otherwise cutthroat lands, there is little chance of rebuking such aspersions and emerging dignified.

A personal agenda can certainly cast the Church's reputation in a poor light, and this may have been hard to contest one thousand years ago, but where one person may have a dangerous idea of how matters should be handled, sometimes others will agree and gradually a movement is born. This has historically taken place within larger groups where dissidents may begin to find strength in numbers and find a voice for their grievances, enthusiasm for

their cause. Whenever a splinter cell developed within the Church, it was stomped out fiercely. Such sacrilege is exemplified in the Waldensians who tried to put more official power in the hands of laypeople, allowing even women to preach. The powers that preach didn't like the sound of this so they put a stop to it. The Albigensians sprung up in the 13th century with the idea that our physical plane was “. . .a battleground between God and the Devil, and that all things material belonged to the Devil, and was therefore inherently evil” (Bartlett 91). The Albigensians' ideas were in stark contrast to Church ideas, as this would mean Christ in any manifestation was evil. This was likewise destroyed. One final example of heretical movements, the Hussites, left a lasting impact on the Medieval mind when they denied Papal and priestly authority over all aspects of their lives. Again, their heresy was exterminated but they, and to a lesser extent, the Albigensians, provided the foundations that Martin Luther would build upon to initiate the Reformation of the Church in the 16th century, shortly after the Medieval period.

Corruption was and is a part of human struggles for power far beyond any association with the Church, and as the Church happens to be run by human beings so there were inevitably some whose moral fiber was more elastic than others. Ideally, the founding ideas initially preached by Christ himself plead for an altogether different focus in life than personal gain. Recognition of the divine on Earth is rather closer to the goal than a complete religious/political unity and there are fantastic examples of this in the Medieval Period as well. Absolving one's personal distance from the divine requires atonement for transgressions, seeking penance for sinful behavior; one may confess their sins in church, but another way to seek relief is through pilgrimage. A tradition persisting over so many centuries inevitably produces champions to their cause and some of them will be martyred for their beliefs.

Those who not only suffered this fate but were party to miraculous events could become saints, officially canonized by the Church. Remnants of these venerated individuals, fragments of their clothing or artifacts of their existence often became equally venerated by the faithful. These fragments are known as relics and were kept in ornate, jeweled containers called reliquaries. Relics became the embodiment of Earthbound divinity and the destination of pilgrimages, as a way to seek salvation or to ask for help from the saint in question. Aside from the Vatican and the holy city of Jerusalem, one of the most well known pilgrimage sites for Christian saints is Santiago de Compostela. It is said the bones of Saint James were discovered here in the 8th century C.E. and ever since then, people have walked immense distances to visit his bones. Sites such as these still garner attention and pilgrims still flock to tombs such as Santiago de Compostela. The journey itself, the pilgrimage, is an act of atonement itself, some prostrating themselves along the way or offering perpetual prayer along the route.

Aside from the spiritual reasons for such sites to exist, there are also some more mundane reasons, though in manifestation they are anything but mundane. Where these fragments of religious history lay, cathedrals would be constructed to entomb them. These Catholic

shrines provoked their own veneration through superb architecture and elaborate ornamentation, which adds an impressive gravity to the pilgrim's experience. Framing the relics thusly accomplished three things. It protected them from harm, drew increased attention from the populace, and through this attention, guaranteed that area's financial solvency. Sometimes a relic would disappear or otherwise be disturbed from its resting place and where it resurfaced, another cathedral would arise, bringing the pilgrims, attention, and financing with it.

Cathedrals themselves served another purpose on top of this framing of relics; the illiterate pilgrims and churchgoers in the Medieval period could, through the pictures in stained glass windows, come to know the stories of the Bible in a new way. The pilgrim who sought the cathedral no doubt had some initiation into the stories and would know the sagas and characters depicted, and there they would be in living color, lit as if divinely so. All together, these storytelling windows, the cathedrals themselves, and the relics made for a religious experience worth seeking. Pilgrimage sites and cathedrals retain their impact into the present despite all the flashy technological marvels of modern living. The veneer of mysticism remains a testament to traditions and people nearly two thousand years past.

Between the 15th and 18th centuries, Europe's Renaissance, it was considered a thousand-year wash of ignorance and distasteful behaviors, thus the moniker "The Dark Ages." As humankind began to enter into the Industrial Age, a rediscovery and renewed interest in the Medieval Period gripped the western world's imagination. Each nation in its own way romanticized every aspect of the period that there was to learn. European countries began to find national identities in this history, and in ways chose to define themselves by it. Violent and dark though the Dark Ages may have been, it was in a way, an awkward adolescent period for Western Europe. Wrangling with inner turmoil and fraught with conflicting beliefs, there was no apparent end to the suffering for those trying to live through it. As Europe grew into itself and established firmer national and cultural boundaries, a degree of actualization took place which has since rendered it clearly. Perhaps looking back upon this period has allowed a positive reflection upon past trials and errors as though they were the 'glory days,' so far gone as to have softened the memory of necessary growing pains. Through reflection on history, a people and their traditions can see themselves in new ways which both empower and mollify actions in the present.

From the Edict of Toleration in 311 C.E. through Saint Benedict' defining of monasticism, already Christianity had earned a solid footing and only shined brighter as it came into contact with other religious powers. Islam was a triumphant force to reckon with in the Church's rise to power and heavily impacted Western civilization. The sheer wealth of information that was exchanged shows the value of the interaction between West and Middle East; contrarily, both sides pay consistent attention to the Holy Land, the literal 'common ground' of these faiths. It is proof of the vivifying power of devotion that conflict over this area is still a point of consternation, that adherents willfully sacrifice themselves for the tenets they have vowed to uphold. Power struggles and internal conflict are both inevitable

with world religious powers operating across great geographical space and while those deemed most heretical were squelched, their contributions still provided important variety to the current branches of faith. A definition of the western world would be necessarily incomplete without inclusion of the Christian way of life and its peoples' struggle and success. The Church has undoubtedly achieved a degree of dominance among world faiths extant today, though as to how closely it follows the original teachings of Christ is uncertain. There is however a necessity of mystery that wraps a religious tradition which breeds fascination and allows the development of faith. In this it has succeeded admirably.

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

noisywater.whatcom.edu/site_1314/pages_1314/11-04art.html



Kristel Leung

Jas-o

Charcoal, 24" x 18"

The Juan de Fuca Plate

 noisywater.whatcom.edu/site_1314/pages_1314/12-04crwriting.html

Megan Fortin

Longstanding and all-knowing, the strata sighs in relief as it has seen the ebb and flow of the tides and of seasons wandering past, it's very certain nature wrapped up in deep time. I wonder if uncertainty disappeared epochs ago, or if this terrain knows nothing of incumbent events. The Eocene truly left it's heavy-handed thumbprint with no painless tale to tell; everything here insists upon the dark beauty of the naturally profound. I walk upon the great cataclysm of tectonic law and volcanism that obliterated all left in the wake of the white-hot depth of an angry earth, unforgiving yet innocent, catastrophic yet a voice of revival, murderous yet innately true.

Evolution of the earth's surface and of each organism that has graced it's antique presence has inevitably crept upon each fractured piece of rock my bare feet balance on. Oh, to stand here and bear witness to a light-speed time lapse, to drink in the visuals that composed such a complex journey. These mysterious intricacies swirl in a breathless dizzying cloud around my skull as I scuttle along the fifty-five million year old sandstone and admit to myself how little meaning lies within the veins of our brief existence. Science is not well-suited for one who turns cheek at the humbling nature of the earth's crust, of extinct bipedal ancestors with binocular vision and artistic capabilities. Are we strong enough to grasp the omnipotent truth that lies within each sheet of archaic rock? Well don't look now: a primitive cranium that shares the same sequences of amino acids that code for your existence is being unearthed at this very moment, a lineage buried but inevitably buoyant.

This inert metamorphosis that birthed each mountain and brain cell is not unfamiliar. It lies between every cellular regeneration, in every step of mitosis, in the stretched expanse of rock-hard tundra that turned to soft, forgiving grasslands in the Pleistocene. It is in each perfectly timed glaciation that allowed our ancestors to fill their hungers and adapt. It is laden within the collective unconscious that gave us silent communication, reflecting the truth of a prefrontal cortex that could not stop growing. Within each molecule of stardust that composes our very nature lies the inevitable change that will continue until the end of time, that elusive schedule that evades our grasp and skips unhesitatingly out of the peripheral.

*

When I was six years old, I asked my Sunday School teacher how rainbows were formed so elegantly in the sky, that expanse that always drew me in with it's boundless stretching. She said God was an artist, that this was his divine promise, that he would never again drown the earth with such an unbelievable mass of water, that all living species were safe from his holy vengeance, at least until Armageddon. I accepted this answer as truth, slipped it in the pocket

of my heart as I did with each and every theistic answer that followed every bit of my childlike curiosity. It is easy to squelch out the natural inquisitiveness of a child's soul, simply by failing to admit that *you* just Don't Know.

*

Here on this rock, the staggering clarity of immense duration offers itself to me, and all its simple yet circuitous implications. And yet I can taste the slight sour of being a stranger to this land, unable to match the wisdom of the rock I stand upon, unable to offer anything to the conversation. It is quite a thing to admit your own ignorant fragility. The truth of one's surroundings is quite a thing to yield to.

Truth: I consider the word. I feel it hover around in the back of my throat and in the marrow of my bones, recognizing its precious potency as it scratches at my throat with its persistence, bruising up my insides in a manic swing of the fist. I am reminded of the sense of guilt I have buried under beloved anthropology textbooks and copies of *Scientific American*, as if to subconsciously protect it, to hide it from this new truth I have accepted. The world of science is a place my family considers blasphemy, a sputtering stepping stone to the gates of hell. The weight of this ideological animosity cuts into my shoulders as I carry it secretly. The monkey on my back, it leaves swollen red marks of dishonesty every time I leave my grandmother's home. I'm the Quiet Closet Atheist.

Years ago, in my first adolescent introduction to the vocation of science, this shame negatively permeated my intellectual capacity, held my mind in two places at once. Sitting in class with the sequenced DNA genome of a chimpanzee on my desk, I would float between denial and acceptance, cognitive dissonance fighting its way through my consciousness, practically unable to admit that Noah and his ark were factually falsifiable, that the earth was so much older than six thousand years, that the ascent of man from a primal ancestry is all but a black-and-white reality, that we hold the puzzle pieces showing the step-by-step flourishing of our species carefully in brightly-lit museums and in twice-locked drawers. And so many, still buried.

*

There is enough cosmic magnetism in this world. There is enough natural magic that slips and slides between the reality of mathematics and the unknown universal phenomenon. Dark matter, black holes, quantum physics. This big blue dot is inundated with enough that leaves me astonished in the face of reality — a child seeing a rainbow for the first time. I don't need resurrection. I don't need farfetched stories of water to wine, immaculate conception, traveling angels, "on faith alone". No, my questions burn within, embossing their enduring messages underneath my skin. I resent any hundred-times translated truth, for *my* truth is out there: In the Scientific Method We Trust.

*

Underneath the tectonic location I tread on, the ocean floor is parting. I imagine the two halves exchanging delicate sweet sorrow as they kiss goodbye. And between them — fresh,

pristine, scalding magma from the earth's interior rises to meet a more advanced existence, finally given a shot at a new formation that will take a more concrete shape, contorting itself into crust at the Bottom of Everything. I see my soul in that magma, set ablaze and soaring towards new growth, new formation — an ultimate divergence.

The subduction zone bursts with chaos; it wells up from within the inner depths of the planet and begs for release. The bottom of the ocean slips surreptitiously into the interior of the globe, igniting with friction and sizzling — it's enough to melt surrounding rock. Here is where Mother Earth plays with red ochre, plopping new dots of crimson onto the canvas on which we reside, dots that will someday erupt and in their desolation, create something wholly new.

*

It wasn't until the third grade that I learned about prisms; bending wavelength colors, specific angles of perfectly arranged droplets that lead to such an electric spectrum, a kaleidoscopic feast for the human eye, a form of art that could be scientifically explained. That morning in Mrs. Willie's classroom as she drew a diagram of sunlight and droplets on the whiteboard, asked us the different colors of the rainbow and told us how they were formed, I began to settle into a new perspective: it was the notion that factual evidence would nourish me.

*

Geology says all living things inhabiting the crust that floats upon this plate will be subject to it's rage once again. The wrath that carved sawtooth mountains and rocky caves of limestone will endure inevitably, sweeping up whatever part of Cascadia that may lie in it's path. Sooner rather than later, natural disaster will rush into our windows, permeating every secret place: Mother Earth's Armageddon.

Tangled in this veracity, suddenly flittering with nervous pangs of What If, I lighten my stride. Stretching each toe to give a humble whimpering thanks, ball of the foot hovering coyly out of utter respect, I tread lightly, as if any force of my stance will suddenly decide our fate.

And then all at once I am reminded of a sermon I once heard a man speak from the pulpit. He said, "Fear is the heart of love." With that stark and sudden memory, all at once I detest the notion of tiptoeing around the raw edges of this truth, the truth I have nested within, the truth that pricks me with tiny stinging thorns of guilt but still rests on my heart with the softness of transparency. With one swift physical decision I pound my heels into the rock, quadriceps flexed with hideous abandon, and run.

Come if you will, forces of the earth. Death awaits like a cold hard stone, and I will be buried under immense time, like a Neandertal buried in flowers, my skull slowly pick-axed and examined by someone in search of truth. I live with this word coursing through my veins, so flooded it may even fossilize.

Anorexia Nervosa: Starvation and Sacrifice of the ‘Self’

 noisywater.whatcom.edu/site_1314/pages_1314/13-04essay.html

Jordan Gardner

Abstract

Anorexia Nervosa is a complicated psychiatric disorder, for which effective, long-term, treatment has yet to be found, based upon numbers that reflect alarming relapse and mortality rates. Although anorexia has been diagnosed and treated for years, the numbers do not reflect positive outcomes or promise for many suffering, which is a significant issue. The purpose of this essay is to understand why modern treatment methods are ineffective for treating people suffering with anorexia long-term, and if the answer to successful treatment lies within the roots of the disorder. Some research has indicated attachment style may play a large role in development of anorexia, and if more research were to be done in this area perhaps we could determine whether or not this is useful in creating successful long-term treatment, or management, of anorexia.

Introduction

For the purpose of lending a different perspective on how modern treatment of anorexia nervosa is flawed, and more often than not, ineffective for many who suffer, this essay will include a bit of personal experience and anecdotal evidence. As someone who has endured life with the disorder, gone to treatment, relapsed, then had to regain weight—on my own, once more. I hope my experiences with both anorexia and treatment, will provide insight into areas of the disorder modern treatment neglects, and potentially offer a slightly different approach on how clinicians could go about effectively treating anorexia long-term.

In the context of this essay, it is important I specify a few things. First, I will be referring to the anorexic as “her” and “she” throughout the paper. It is also necessary that I clarify my stance on “recovery” from anorexia, and whether or not I believe a “full recovery” is possible. As a diagnosed anorexic, I will be honest and admit: I do not think there will be ever a day where not one disordered thought won't cross my mind. I may not be under 100 pounds, or running myself into the ground, but the invisible war between mind and mirror wages on. Some days it will be easier to ignore, but other days it will be tempting to resort to old habits again. In any case, I will never be able to go back to how life was before anorexia. I will not be able to forget that I once looked in the mirror and truly, honestly, believed I was fat, and there will always be a nagging voice in the back of my mind quietly reminding me how many calories are in a serving of chips. Thus, in my personal opinion, “full recovery” from anorexia, if not impossible, is an unrealistic, and potentially damaging goal when reality does not match idealistic recovery. I prefer to use the term “managing” as a more realistic way to describe overcoming an eating disorder, as it will always be lurking among shadows in the

recesses of my mind to some degree. However, I do believe that with future research and trials, there is promise for those suffering in successfully managing a life outside of their illness.

The Disorder

Anorexia Nervosa is a psychiatric condition that currently boasts the highest mortality rate—of *all* psychiatric, or mental, illnesses—yet remains relatively shrouded in mystery to psychologists, clinicians and researchers alike. Contrary to popular belief, eating disorders are not simply a fad diet, trendy lifestyle, or “just for attention;” they are a coping mechanism, and a way to control and escape. Any eating disorder has the potential to be life threatening, but anorexia is deemed exceptionally so. One reason the mortality rate is so high is because people suffering with long-term, or chronic, anorexia often end up committing suicide. Though we have come a long way in recognizing that anorexia is more complex than first thought, and often times, not about food at all.

Eating disorders are a subject that have been misunderstood and stereotyped for ages, and only within more recent years have we really begun to decipher the hidden motives that feed these disorders. Unfortunately, anorexia is not always easy to identify, and notoriously difficult to treat, especially over the long-term, as relapse rates are high. And sadly, more people suffer with anorexia than statistics report, because not everyone who has an eating disorder seeks treatment, therefore not all people with eating disorders can be accounted for. In many cases, people suffering with anorexia will also not seek treatment for reasons such as cost, availability, or simply because it would be an “inconvenience.” It can also sometimes be more harmful than helpful, in certain situations. But more importantly, of those who receive treatment and still ended up relapsing, why was treatment ineffective? Can treatment be improved upon so that it is more beneficial in improving overall quality of life in the long-term to those suffering? Is relapse potentially preventable, or are some things simply the “nature of the disorder?” These are questions that currently have no real answers, but if research were to focus on what lies at the root of anorexia, and shift course of treatment to more directly address those issues, then perhaps effective long-term treatment for anorexia is on the horizon.

According to the National Eating Disorder Awareness website, or NEDA, 20 million women and 10 million men in the United States suffer from a “clinically significant” eating disorder at some point in their life. Though anorexia may not be so obvious, as it thrives off secrecy, the statistics reveal a serious problem. Diagnoses of eating disorders are becoming increasingly common in our physical appearance-obsessed society, especially among youth, due to a variety of both biological and environmental factors. The reasons behind one becoming an anorexic are often misunderstood, and though each disorder is as unique as each individual, there is definitely a common thread shared among disordered individuals. Because anorexia still remains a complex subject, with the help of modern medical technology we have been able to expand upon what limited knowledge we had of the disorder. For example, brain chemistry research of the past two decades has given us a new

perspective on both origins, and treatment of anorexia, and shows us there is still much to be learned (Rumney 75). Past research suggests there does not appear to be a sole, overarching cause for development of an eating disorder, but rather, multiple contributing factors that come together to form a deadly “perfect storm.”

In the book *Dying to Please: Anorexia, Treatment and Recovery*, author Avis Rumney, an eating disorder specialist, therapist, and “recovered” anorexic, offers a thorough understanding of many potential causes and attributes of anorexia, in addition to providing information on different types of therapies and treatment options. She includes a personal touch through offering her perspective on dealing with anorexia, and what she found helpful in managing her symptoms during recovery. The first half of the book is primarily about the disorder itself, such as giving an in-depth explanation to a question so many people do not understand: why a person afflicted with anorexia engages in the disorder, or chooses to starve.

Avis Rumney asserts the idea of “self-annihilation in service of self-preservation” and introduces this concept in the first chapter, defining it with a quote from Rand and Asay Rosenberg, authors of *Body, Self and Soul: Sustaining Integration*, who define Self as: “a non-verbal sense of well-being, continuity, and identity in the body, plus the verbal structure and cognitive process one learns” (12). Rumney suggests that the Self the anorexic tries so desperately to hide are her real emotions, or her “True Self,” fearing that exposure will mean invasion, usurpation and annihilation. So instead of looking inwards when she seeks comfort and security, she finds solace in her mask of compliance, strict defiance, rigid self-control and endless self-deprivation. Essentially, it is because she lacks the coherent, developed, sense of Self, that was supposed to be constructed during the first several years of emotional and physiological experiences of development, that lies at the root of anorexia.

Causes and Contributing Factors

It should be no surprise that environmental factors have a tremendous impact on later psychology, especially in the early years of childhood, when the brain is going through so much growth and development. But there truly are numerous factors that contribute to someone developing anorexia, such as psychological aspects, family dynamics, spiritual hunger, cultural milieu, and triggering events, to name a few. And according to Simona Giordano, author of *Understanding eating disorders: conceptual and ethical issues in the treatment of anorexia and bulimia nervosa*, “Gene variations do seem to be associated with the disorder. However, these alone cannot explain why eating disorders occur. In conclusion, despite the importance of genetic/neuro-physiological factors, it cannot be claimed that they are purely ‘determined’ behaviour” (Giordano 265). This is interesting, because it means that although a link between genetics and eating disorders has been observed, genetics is still only one of many contributing factors of anorexia. Avis Rumney believes certain personality traits such as perfectionism, competitiveness, and emotional sensitivity may be precursors for anorexia, especially when coupled with other attributes, like unresolved grief, and immature sexuality.

Rumney additionally talks about how an anorexic encounters issues with loss and grief relating to beginning and ending eating. She fears if she begins to eat, she won't be able to stop, and once she has begun to eat she is also wracked with guilt and grief because she has let her guard down, succumbing to her desire of food, and her lost sense of control. Initially, an anorexic may feel a surge of control every time she denies her hunger; but there comes a point when fear takes over her rational mind, and she will no longer feel in control, food will ultimately control her. The anorexic then becomes trapped; a prisoner to her mind and thoughts, and as long as she remains prisoner, her fears will control everything.

Control is a key aspect of someone suffering with anorexia. The main way an anorexic exerts power, or control, is over self-discipline through her food choices. With food, she tries to control her intake. She hoards and saves food to control the presence (to her, the very existence) of food. Food becomes much more than a form of sustenance; it is something that she can hang onto that protects her from the void" (Rumney 47). The "void" Rumney is referring to is that sense of Self the anorexic is lacking; she has no solid core of Self, and instead feels excruciating emptiness (47). Food then becomes a tool used to fill the void.

In those suffering with anorexia, it is not uncommon for other psychiatric conditions to coexist alongside the eating disorder. Some of the conditions commonly associated with anorexia include anxiety, depression, and obsessive compulsive disorder, though there are certainly more. Like many others, I frequently fought with depression, but long before I was diagnosed with anorexia. Some anorexics develop depression as a symptomatic side effect of the eating disorder, because they become so wrapped up in the world of to-eat-or-not-to-eat that they neglect normal social behaviours, opting instead for isolation, as food consumes every aspect of their lives. As a result, many of those who suffer with eating disorders often feel estranged, or cut off from the world around them.

Inadequate nutrition also has a direct influence on mood, and energy level, which only serves to fuel an anorexic's desire to hide away and disappear. The anorexic effectively does so when she "regresses into an immature, safe, less complicated pre-puberty state, single-mindedly pursuing starvation" where responsibilities and conflicts of adult womanhood can be avoided (Rumney 54). Many of the fears fueling anorexia are related to the anorexic lacking a secure attachment to the mother, or caregiver, and sense of Self. In effort to avoid all horrible consequences of failure, the anorexic seeks to reject, humiliate, or deny herself before anyone else has the chance, especially her mother. For the hunger, cold, and exhaustion she experiences are not as painful to her as the terrifying threat of rejection, the specter of failing to meet her mother's expectations and being denied her mother's love (38).

Few studies have been done which illustrate the importance of the maternal bond and attachment style, and its connections to manifestation of anorexia, but the few that have been done show intriguing results. One interesting piece of information studies exploring the brain and neuroendocrine systems have found is that anorexics seem to have deficiencies relating to oxytocin functioning. According to Strathearn, a study done by Baskerville and Douglas which focused on maternal neglect and attachment style discovered that two neuroendocrine

systems critically involved in maternal caregiving behaviour are the oxytocinergic and dopaminergic systems. Another study, done by Ferguson's team, found the oxytocinergic system to be important in the formation of social and spatial memories, affiliative behaviour and emotion regulation. And a study conducted by McClure and his colleagues indicates the dopaminergic system is involved in reinforcement stimulus-reward learning, and in decision-making based on future predicted reward (1058). A more recent study illustrates anorexic test subjects to have oxytocin receptor (OXTR) variations from those of healthy subjects, though it is not clear whether this is because of environmental adversity or a consequence of the illness (Kim 1). These results are exceptionally interesting, because previous studies showed oxytocin and dopamine to play a role in symptoms of anorexia, and these subsequent studies further back up those claims that there is a connection between early attachment, neuroendocrine functionality, and eating disorder pathology.

According to Rumney, "by the age of two, the normal child asserts herself and begins to develop a sense of herself as a separate being with limits and boundaries that are fostered and reinforced by her parents" (36). However, the future anorexic refrains from this self-assertion, and continues to conform to her mother's ideals. In doing so, she avoids establishing her sense of Self, and continues to behave in accordance with her exaggerated view of what she believes her mother expects. Of course, it is not just early interpersonal interactions that shape the adolescent's sense of Self, including her capacity to handle painful feelings, but the continuous repetition of psychological events in various forms during infancy and their entrenchment in childhood and preadolescence (45).

Nuances in the early interaction between mother and child affect the kind of attachment that the child develops, and if there are disruptions in the attachment process, the child will likely face difficulties later in life. The four types of attachment are categorized as: secure, insecure, disorganized, and ambivalent. Although attachment style is one of the many elements that contribute to anorexia, "insecure attachment can impair a child's development of Self and can contribute to the Self deficits that are common to anorexia" (45). Rumney says, "the capacity for healthy attachment gets passed down from one generation to the next. When the child who lacks a solid attachment becomes a parent to the next generation, she often unconsciously repeats her own parent's attachment style," which means that although attachment style is not necessarily genetic, it exists in families and is passed down like a genetic mutation would (13). In fact, Rumney says "some traits in families are inherited by the anorexic, such as a proclivity towards perfectionism; others, such as attachment styles, have doubtless been passed down through the family culture for generations" (21).

In discussing how attachment plays into core feelings associated with anorexia, Rumney suggests that, a deficit in nurturance is one issue that can contribute to the later development of anorexia, as the infant anorexic-to-be lacks a sturdy foundation from which to develop a sense of her own importance—she does not believe she is inherently all right, thus her development of self-worth is impaired, or in extreme cases, seemingly non-existent (36). This is significant because, as Rumney states, "the infant gradually learns to deny her own needs,

physical and emotional,” which is a key aspect of anorexia and the struggle for control (36). The anorexic receives subliminal, or outright, messages from her caregiver that eventually become ingrained in her thoughts at an early age, and ultimately lead to manifestation of the disorder later in life.

An interesting point that further goes along to illustrate importance of attachment in development of anorexia is a study conducted by psychologist and researcher Sylvia Brody. Although it was a rather small sample, Brody’s experiment consisted of following a number of girls from birth to age seven, with follow-up studies at ages eighteen and thirty. Out of the experiment, two 18-year-old subjects reported having been anorexic for a few years. When Brody went back to her observations, she discovered that the mothers of both girls in the study exhibited little capacity to emotionally invest in their infants. Thus, it can be said that “the parent-child relationship, and particularly the mother-child connection from infancy onward has major impact on a child’s development” (Rumney 54).

More research examining maternal attachment style as a significant part in the root of anorexia still needs to be carried out, as that is an area of study that has been somewhat ignored. I think it is especially important to look into it more closely because a lot of feelings associated with insecure attachment style are also associated with anorexia, such as suppression of feelings, loneliness, and emptiness, to name a few. Researchers and notable psychoanalyst Alan Sugarman have attributed the sense of emptiness and loss many anorexics experience to a serious depression, caused by under or over-involvement (Rumney 45). I have had personal experience in struggling with major depression, including suicidal thoughts—as well as anxiety—long before my eating issues had ever come to light.

In retrospect, I can see from the beginning the stars were aligned. Honestly, I am a bit surprised my anorexia became an issue when it did, and not sooner, since the underlying feelings and driving forces have seemingly been a part of my life as long as I can remember. My parents got a divorce when I was five, and my mom was a functional alcoholic for thirteen years following. I moved around almost every year as a kid, either to a new school or a new state, therefore was not able to form close friendships with my peers. I was also an extremely shy, sensitive, and anxious kid, which further kept me from engaging with my classmates and forming normal relationships. After constantly moving around all the time, I eventually stopped trying to even engage at all. From middle school to 9th grade, I was enrolled in an all-girls college prep school, the place where I first felt inklings of an eating disorder. I was in 8th grade when I had my first bitter taste of depression, back before my eating issues became a serious issue. In my opinion, I believe having depression before my anorexia significantly complicated my eating disorder, thus its treatment. When in residential treatment, the biggest problem I had was lacking the simple motivation to eat and recover.

I was involuntarily admitted to Center for Discovery, a residential treatment center in Washington, and taken out of school for 2 months during my senior year. At that time I was going through a tremendous amount of stress, and although I was deep in the throes of my disorder, I was utterly petrified at the prospect of not graduating the year I was supposed to

due to my anorexia. I was so upset because I felt like either way I was going to “lose.” On top of leaving my life behind, going to treatment meant gaining weight, which meant undoing the hours of hard work, sweat and tears I spent on losing weight to begin with. I remember feeling like nobody was listening to me, and that the counselors, therapists, and doctors just wanted to make me fat and miserable. I felt like I was not allowed to do anything to try and change how I felt about myself, because the one thing I changed, and was successful at, ended up being bad and now it was going to be taken away when I put the weight back on.

This does not even take into account the depression aspect of treatment, and how persistent suicidal thoughts made it all the more difficult, because when I would feel overwhelmed or frustrated with treatment, my thoughts would immediately resort to death, and how that would be a more than welcome escape from this hell, and be the end of my anorexia. It was hard to eat the food and even consider recovering at the treatment center, because I had hardly any interest in life in general, especially one where I’d be “fat.” The only reason I completed the program was because I really had no other options, and I knew it would be my only chance at getting out of there fast.

According to the treatment center I went to, the average stay in residential varies, but can last anywhere from one month—if insurance decides to stop paying, which unfortunately, happens quite often—to 2 months, or in some cases, even longer. Most anorexics, however, who are severely underweight need a minimum of 8 weeks, and typically more, to successfully restore weight. The residential treatment center is a lot like an upscale prison where copious amounts of food are piled on your plate six times daily. Many patients admitted to treatment end up doing okay for the duration they are in treatment, just to get out quicker so they can get back to disordered behaviour again.

This is a big part of why I believe treatment is ineffective. The treatment environment to an anorexic is suffocating, and often times downright humiliating, and little focus is given to addressing underlying reasons for anorexia, because most of their focus is on weight normalization and medical stabilization. This is also why I believe relapse and mortality rates are high, because treatment does not focus on cultivating an overall improved quality of life and sense of well-being in the long-term.

When someone has an issue like depression, or anorexia, death can seem like the only true escape from an existence dominated by control, food and numbers. Since anorexia treatment is not profoundly effective, many of those who don’t perish due to a physical health related consequence often end up losing hope and retreat to an early grave through suicide. This is a difficult issue to address, because when someone is involuntarily hospitalized and they have no say in the matter, the rest of her already limited motivation for living might as well be thrown out the window, too. People suffering with anorexia are generally so distraught by the idea of gaining weight and changing their eating habits that they may view death as an easier, less painful, and permanent “fix” for their problems, than putting on the weight and

changing. This is significant, because if a patient is unwilling to want to get better, putting them in treatment is a self-defeating purpose. They may do better temporarily, but at what costs?

Residential treatment centers can charge upwards of a thousand dollars a day for care, which adds up quickly for someone who needs to be in a center for an extended period of time. And that's not even taking into account the emotional tolls of treatment, such as creating additional anxiety and chaos in someone who already deals with enough internal chaos and anxiety on a daily basis. Most importantly, if anorexia treatment is designed to be a short term symptom fix, that does not actually address the roots of the issue, a short term fix is all it will ever be. This is why it is important that we go about treating disorders, such as anorexia, in an effective way with few set-backs and long-term health and happiness of the patient as the main goal in mind. If treatment were to take this approach, and focus on developing the anorexic's sense of Self, then perhaps we would see the mortality rate decline somewhat, and relapse rates lessen.

Because eating disorders are a complicated matter of life or death, one cannot truly “live” with an eating disorder, as the eating disorder itself serves a purpose: to destroy. Concerning matters of eating disorders, life, and death, or rather—recovery and suicide—Giordano's book discusses, in great length, how eating disorders are viewed as autonomous, or conscious, choices made by someone suffering in attempt to cope, and by interfering with a person's conscious choice it infringes upon her rights to make decisions regarding her health, since she is more than capable of making decisions in other areas of her everyday life. Giordano raises the controversial question of whether or not it is ethical to provide treatment for eating disorders, since a person is autonomously engaged in disordered behaviours for a perceived “good enough reason” that she is unwilling or resistant to change. Her final thoughts on the subject are “if we really want to understand eating disorders, and to understand *what it is right to do* with eating-disordered people, we do not need to focus on how people eat, but rather to look at *what they* believe, and more generally at *what we all believe—at our morality*” (Giordano 263).

Treating the Disorder

In general, when going about treatment of anorexia, severity of the illness must be taken into account. While all eating disorders are equally serious and potentially life threatening, more intensive treatment options, such as hospital inpatient or residential treatment, are more suited to extremely severe cases, where that amount of intensive care is appropriate, and sometimes even necessary. Of course, that is from a medical stability standpoint. From a mental and emotional well-being standpoint, treatment can be a tricky task. With many of the longer-term treatment options, that people with more severe illnesses generally go through, treatment can sometimes do more bad than good. It can be incredibly inconvenient if someone has to be taken out of school or a job due to their anorexia, which then causes further setbacks, and can make the disorder even stronger, since one of its main sources of

fuel is loss of control, which happens when an anorexic has to go to treatment. Control is forfeited to the facility caregivers, and the anorexic's priority is to rebel against recovering at all costs, until she is forced to realize her illusion of control is all it ever was, just an illusion.

As mentioned previously, Avis Rumney is a strong advocate of the concept of one's Self and seems to firmly assert that maternal bonds formed during childhood have a lasting and important effect on a long-term general sense of well-being experienced in adolescence and adulthood. Based upon research, and personal anecdotal evidence, I think effective long-term treatment of anorexia is within reach if further studies on the importance of a secure mother-child attachment, as well as revising treatment to address the root of anorexia, which appears to lie within cultivating a coherent, secure, sense of Self in an anorexic who lacked that initial stability, due to early childhood experiences and attachment style passed down from the parents.

In conclusion, further addressing the effects an insecure attachment style has on development of anorexia would be an interesting area of focus in potential successful long-term treatment of anorexia, and eating disorders in general, since it would essentially mean successful treatment of the disorder can hopefully be achieved if treatment focuses on adjusting, or balancing, the anorexic's weaknesses within her Self. Developing a sense of Self, as Rumney puts it, would give an anorexic the ability to live a secure, rich, and fulfilling life, without being anchored down by the disorder. In developing the anorexics Self, and creating the sense of security initially absent in the anorexics life and relationships, not only with people, but food as well, there is hope for an improved overall quality of life. By addressing what lies at the roots feeding symptoms of the disorder, anorexia can be managed long-term. This would be especially true if treatment takes a patient's best interest into account, and is ultimately helpful, rather than harmful. If we approach treatment with a focus on rebuilding the anorexic's shaky foundation of Self, we may find an effective strategy to treat anorexia without further setbacks or hang ups, which will hopefully result in lower relapse and mortality rates. Until treatment of anorexia is revised to accurately reflect what those suffering are truly starved of, the number of lives lost and consumed by the disorder continues to grow.

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

noisywater.whatcom.edu/site_1314/pages_1314/14-05art.html



Liliya Moroz

The Rustic Water Faucet

Photograph, 8" x 12"

When Fire Fall Fell

noisywater.whatcom.edu/site_1314/pages_1314/15-05crwriting.html

Amber R. Frick

The land's last cry was heard by all.

The ocean boiled, it swirled with a lust to devour.

That day, we saw the fires fall.

“Great King!” they prayed, “Please, save us all!”

And the bells rung deep within the tower.

So the land's last cry was heard by all.

The remorseful king, he knew death's call.

Like a child he wept and turned blind eyes. The coward.

That day, we saw the fires fall.

An entire kingdom pulled under, life and all.

Over stone walls the sea's salty black depths overpowered.

And the land's last cry was heard by all.

We watched on in helpless sorrow from atop the walls

As time left the land in its final hour.

That day, we saw the fires fall.

Now nothing remains but waves to rise and fall,

But we'll not forget the ocean's great power.

When a land's last cry was heard by all.

On the day we saw the fires fall.

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

noisywater.whatcom.edu/site_1314/pages_1314/16-06art.html



Jodie Permen

6260 Olson Rd

Charcoal, 24" x 18"

In the World Without a Voice: A Disease that Breaks Barriers Between Realities

noisywater.whatcom.edu/site_1314/pages_1314/17-05essay.html

Katherine Haveman

Author David Malouf wrote, “When I think of my tongue being no longer alive in the mouths of men, a chill goes through me deeper than my own death, since it is the gathered death of all of my kind.” A chill, perhaps, strong enough to shake a whole society loose of its sense and drive people like Rye mad with longing for the communication that has been lost. Rye, a character in Octavia Butler’s “Speech Sounds” is faced with the very same phenomena, being one of the last speakers of her tongue. Human nature is at its worst in the sci-fi world of Rye, as society crumbles in time with the onset of a disease that strips people of their ability to read and write, or strips them of the ability to speak. The effect of this disease is astronomical, it “was stroke-swift in the way it cut people down” and its effects were obvious, “language was always lost or severely impaired” (Butler 411).

With the amount of value modern day society puts on effective communication, “Speech Sounds” begs the question, can a society function if it is incapable of verbal and written communication? Like painting to art, speech and writing are two mediums to which people convey messages. Imagine those mediums gone, and the world sapped of its communication richness. No more text messages, emails, letters, flyers, articles, newspapers, no more phone calls, verbal conversation, skype, voice recordings; and suddenly our dependence on such mediums becomes clear. New ways of communicating will have to be unearthed for a society like the one in “Speech Sounds” to survive. Perhaps to answer the question posed in this sci-fi world, we can look to real life examples of people living with impaired communication.

As far as conveying messages goes, what good is hearing if you cannot speak, and likewise, what good is speaking if you cannot hear? Characters in “Speech Sounds” may be lacking the ability of speech, but closely related is the very real Deaf community and their hearing impairment. An extremely proud and independent community of people, the Deaf have come up with a few solutions of their own. Unsatisfied with the way the term ‘deaf’ is defined, Ben Bahan, a Deaf person himself, offers that it is not the Deaf’s inability that defines them, but instead their ability. Referring to the word ‘deaf’, Bahan says, “I have no alternative suggestion for a better word to describe ourselves. The closest I can come to is, seeing person. By using that word I put myself in a position of things I can do, instead of what I can’t do” (32). Refusing to see themselves as a disability group, Bahan and other Deaf people have made use of their keen seeing abilities to overcome many obstacles. This is a trait that both Deaf people and the characters in “Speech Sounds” share, eyesight. Utilizing this, the Deaf

have developed Sign Language as a primary means of communication, and if the characters in “Speech Sounds” are to communicate effectively, they must be able to create a communication system of their own.

As a ‘visitor’ to the Deaf community, an adult who learns sign as a second language, I can assure you, the effectiveness of American Sign Language (ASL) as a form of communication is nothing to scoff at. To appreciate the implications Sign Language could have on the society in “Speech Sounds” it is important to have a foundation of understanding of how ASL works. With the five basic rules of sign in mind: hand-shape, location, non-manual-signals, orientation and movement, ASL might seem like a second-rate language, but as Ronnie Wilbur and Veda Charrow explain this is not so. Deaf writers, Wilbur and Charrow write an article in *American Deaf Culture: An Anthology* about the legitimacy of ASL as a language. Where there was once doubt, “Within the last fifteen years, however, linguists have begun to study ASL, and have found it to be a true language,” complete with “a complex grammatical structure, capable of expressing anything within human experience and imagination” adding that despite common belief, ASL “is also very different from English” (110). Sign Language then, a language revolving much around gestures, symbols and facial expression, is a viable form of communication that has been satisfying the Deaf community for thousands of years. This leads me to believe that if the Deaf created a genuine language revolving around their seeing ability, the same can be said of the people living in the disease ridden world of “Speech Sounds.” Communication can be sculpted to the needs of those who seek it.

As “Speech Sounds” progresses, a once isolated character, Rye, comes in contact with another character, which is less impaired by the illness than other people seem to be. This man who is left-handed demonstrates advanced levels of competence, “Left-handed people tended to be less impaired, more reasonable and comprehending, less driven by frustration, confusion and anger,” thus leading to an uneasy alliance (Butler 409). He was referred to as “the bearded man.” That would not do; no reader can develop a connection to someone called, “the bearded man” and further interactions between characters would be stifled by the lack of identification between one another. This man needed a name.

So how important are names? I, for one, have two names, one in English, and one that was given to me by my Deaf professor, a “sign name” (Supalla x). Author Samuel Supalla accomplished something completely unheard of when he wrote and recorded an entire book of traditional “name signs” for the Deaf. Hand-shapes and movements are illustrated to create the common symbols that Deaf people take on to represent themselves to other members of the Deaf community. It is Supalla who asks the very same question, “Names and naming are one of those things that many of us take for granted... Could a person function without a name? What would it feel like to be nameless? Could a town function if all its citizens had no names?” and knowing a great deal about how names play into culture and communication, Supalla arrives at the conclusion that, “It appears that names and naming are essential for the socialization of a person in a community” (xiii). As a result, members of the Deaf community have ways of identifying themselves that does not require spoken word

or writing, called “name signs.” This is paralleled in “Speech Sounds” when Butler addresses the issue of “the bearded man” herself. Finding a way to represent their English names, Butler gives her characters “name symbols” objects that they carry with them that symbolize their name (412). These two concepts, so closely related, both stem from the lack of verbal communication; finding ways to identify ones self without spoken or written word.

While I do not carry a “name symbol,” I do have a name sign. Supalla goes on to offer readers a brief description of what a name sign entails, “Name signs are formed by combining one of a small set of possible hand configurations with certain possible locations, which are then blended with a limited number of movements” (Supalla ix). My name sign is the hand configuration for the letter ‘K’, located at the top right of my forehead, followed by a movement similar to a ‘U-shape’ away from my head to the right. This concept may seem very vague, but as Sign Language is a visual language, it is meant to be seen, not read. There is no direct translation for the sign I described; it does not represent the word ‘Katherine’ it represents only myself. Supalla articulates on the arbitrary element of a name sign, “Many people, particularly those just learning the language, believe that name signs have an inherent meaning and often demand this meaning when they encounter a name sign. One might ask, ‘What does your name sign mean?’ ...Imagine the same question being asked of someone’s spoken name... ‘Why is your name Bill?’ or ‘What does Jeanette mean?’” and concludes that, “Most traditional name signs do not have any inherent meaning” (Supalla xiv).

This arbitrary element applies also to the naming system that Butler has created in the world of Rye and “the bearded man.” This man hands Rye what can only be his “name symbol” shortly after meeting, “he slipped a gold chain over his head and handed it to her. The pendant attached to it was a smooth, glassy, black rock. Obsidian,” this is the meaning that Rye pulls from the object, but she knows that it is only an arbitrary symbol, “his name might be Rock or Peter or Black, but she decided to think of him as Obsidian” (Butler 412). Her own “name symbol” has the same imprecise meaning, “She handed him her own name symbol—a pin in the shape of a large golden stalk of wheat,” she realizes that while her name is Rye, people might have misinterpretations of her symbol, “people like Obsidian who had not known her before probably thought of her as Wheat. Not that it mattered. She would never hear her name spoken again” (Butler 412). The characters in “Speech Sounds” were quick to develop their own way of maneuvering the difficulties the disease has set before them. Using their ability as “seeing people” the characters came up with a system eerily similar to the method for naming that Deaf people use (Bahan 32). So if the characters are able to communicate things like names, then there is nothing stopping them from further developing that form of communication.

Sign Language then, is a complex language with its own grammar, own structure, own dialects, and even its own naming system, yet it is a language revolving around gestures and symbols. Butler has explained that most speech is gone, and most writing and reading is gone as the world slowly falls into silence (411). Silence is something the Deaf are familiar with,

something that, in a way, they have conquered. However, they have conquered it through the use of Sign Language, and as Rye explained, “language was always lost or severely impaired” (Butler 411). If Sign Language could be the answer to their communication impairment, then it would have been damaged or lost.

Nevertheless, I have hope that a language so unique, a language based off gestures, the language of the Deaf, could have survived the disease. The interaction between Rye and Obsidian give me that hope. At a time they were two people isolated by their silence, but once together, they find a way to share ideas and concepts with one another. Though not fully developed like Sign Language, the characters in “Speech Sounds” have already created gestures to represent meaning, “She shrugged, tapped his shoulder, then her own, and held up her index and second fingers tight together, just to be sure. He grasped the two fingers and nodded. He was with her” (Butler 414). The gestures made by Rye are being completely understood by Obsidian, and she need not say a word. These simple gestures are not so far from a simplified version of ASL, and as language always does, it progresses and changes. There is nothing stopping these seemingly simple movements from transforming into their own communication system.

Butler gives the reader countless other examples of how gestures and signs are used and understood by different characters, “One of the men who had been fighting,” a complete stranger to Rye, “tapped another on the arm, then pointed from the bearded man to Rye, and finally held up the first two fingers of his right hand as though giving two-thirds of a Boy Scout salute. The gesture was very quick, its meaning obvious even at a distance. She had been grouped with the bearded man” (Butler 411). In description, this sign means nothing to me, but “obviously” the people in the society of “Speech Sounds” have a similar understanding of what certain gestures represent. Imagine yourself, a hearing person, looking on a conversation between two people using ASL and you might feel as I do about this statement in “Speech Sounds”. Two people have sent and understood each other’s messages, isn’t that all language and communication is?

Granted, such understanding in communication did not develop instantly, and naturally there was trial and error between the characters. At first meeting, Rye and Obsidian are hesitant in their communication; perhaps they are unsure how to proceed. Not all gestures are universally understood, so to further communication they had to set up a common language, however this was not without difficulty, “She asked Obsidian if he would come home with her, stay with her,” but after Obsidian did not replay, Rye tried again, “She asked once more if he would come home with her, this time using a different series of gestures” (Butler 414). Between two people who could not use their natural language to communicate, they had to develop their own way of identifying things. Rye was not sure at first if Obsidian had understood her gestures, so she tried different gestures in order to get a response.

In language, this is not a rare occurrence, and it is called Pidgin. A professor of linguistics, David Crystal, dedicated an entire book series to the study, specifically his book *How Language Works* details every ‘how’ in language, pushing aside the more trivial ‘who’, ‘what’,

‘where’, and ‘when’. In the chapter “How Languages are Born,” Crystal talks about the evolution of Pidgin, “A pidgin is a system of communication which has grown up among people who do not share a common language, but who want to talk to each other for trading or other reasons,” and while “they have a limited vocabulary, a reduced grammatical structure and a much narrower range of functions... they are nonetheless a main means of communication for millions of people” (344). With their English speaking abilities taken away, the characters of “Speech Sounds” do not share a common language and must begin establishing one, however simple it may be. It might be surprising to find that ASL has a Pidgin of its own, a common ground between English speakers and ASL signers. This watered down version of the respective languages is just as Crystal says, “limited vocabulary” and “a reduced grammatical structure.” Stephanie Hall, who writes yet another article in *American Deaf Culture: an Anthology*, explains this combination of the two languages, “Signing that uses English word order or syntactic patterns has been given a variety of names; Manual English, Ameslish, and Pidgin Sign English, among them” (Hall 90) much like Crystal describes Pidgin, “Pidgins have been variously called ‘makeshift’, ‘marginal’, or ‘mixed’ languages” (Crystal 343). In any case, a Pidgin encompasses a common communication between people who were not able to communicate prior. This process was mimicked by Obsidian and Rye as they relied on their makeshift gestures to adequately communicate meaning regardless of how crude it may be.

In the case of communication between Rye and Obsidian, gestures seem to be an adequate form of expressing ideas; no vocalization is needed for comprehension to take place. But Rye and Obsidian’s encounter is brief and more complex conversations might not be able to be achieved by the same means.

Author of the textbook *Language: Its Structure and Use*, Edward Finegan works to give students the most complete insight into language with the understanding that “some of today’s insight will replace those of yesterday serves as a reminder that tomorrow’s insight will replace today’s” (Finegan iv). Finegan, however, addresses language with the mindset that voice is the most complete form of human communication, “Perhaps the most basic observation about language is that it faces in two directions. The fundamental task of every language is to link voice to meaning—to provide words for the expression of thought and feeling” (Finegan 1). He believes that the “fundamentals” of language is centered on “voice” and “words.” Sign Language uses neither of these methods, relying on ‘signs’ instead of ‘words’ yet it is deemed a legitimate language. Signs are a form of gesture and expression; therefore they do not always have direct translations into words. Expressions and gestures themselves are not taught, but natural, and can be sculpted into a language. This language is without ‘words’ or ‘voice’ and instead embodies natural movements and it is that instinctive element that makes me think that Sign Language could survive the disease.

Perhaps gestures do not even cross Finegan’s mind, but another author, bestselling author, Desmond Morris, would disagree. With his own series of books dedicated to the study of human behavior, Morris speaks highly of gestures in his book *Gestures: Their Origin and*

Distribution. In the beginning of his book dedicated to human gestures, Morris reflects on the importance of gestures:

In the first place, gestures have quite wrongly been considered a trivial, second-class form of human communication. Because verbal exchanges are man's crowning glory, all other forms of contact are viewed as somehow inferior and primitive. Yet social intercourse depends heavily on the actions, postures, movements and expressions of the talking bodies. Where communication of changing moods and emotional states is concerned, we would go so far as to claim that gestural information is even more important than verbal. Words are good for facts and for ideas, but without gestures, human social life would become a cold mechanical process. (Morris ix)

Morris would certainly disagree with Finegan's idea of the "fundamentals" of language, claiming that instead different forms of communication are not as "inferior and primitive" as others claim. Language is a concept that should not be tied down to ideas like "voice" and "words" since language in of itself is ambiguous and arbitrary. In the same way that my name sign does not translate to 'Katherine' all languages have arbitrary elements. With the exception of onomatopoeias, words are symbols created by humans to represent things; the word itself is only a way of representing something in life. Crystal provides a good example of this when discussing the two forms of meaning, conventional and natural meaning, "The conventionalist position emphasizes the arbitrary relationship between words and things, and this is the principle accepted by modern semanticists. There is nothing in the form of the word 'table' that bears any direct relationship to the 'thing'" (187). Knowing that words do not hold any "direct relationship" to the thing they express seems to diminish their importance. Contrarily, I can tell you that the sign for 'table' in ASL looks very much like the flat top surface of a table. This symbol is more accurate than the random configuration of letters humans decided would represent the thing: table. ASL then, has the implications of being an effective way of communicating ideas, so effective, it has a greater connection to the thing the sign identifies than any word in a spoken language.

Finegan was not wrong when he said that the key to language was to "link voice and meaning" (1) and while that may be the key to a spoken language, this can become encumbering with all of the arbitrariness of a verbal language. Manfu Duan writes an article titled "On the Arbitrary Nature of Linguistic Sign" in the journal *Theory and Practice in Language Studies* discussing the 'first principle of linguistics' established by the universally known "father of modern linguistics" Ferdinand de Saussure. Indeed the 'first principle of linguistics' is the arbitrary element of language. Duan expands on our understanding of arbitrariness, "In order to understand arbitrariness, we should first of all have a deep understanding of what a linguistic 'sign' is. According to Saussure, a linguistic sign is a combination of a 'concept' and a 'sound pattern' in our associative mind," and more importantly, "when we talk about an object, it always arouses a reflection of something in our mind; and when we have something in mind, it always refers to something in the world" (54). When I hear a word, the thing it references comes to mind, not because the word "bears any

direct relationship” to the object, but because I was taught that it is so, because I was taught English (Crystal 187). If I had not been taught English, there is no way I could have derived the word ‘table’ by looking at a table. But because I also know ASL, I could describe that table with gestures and be understood universally.

All I have to do is look at Rye and Obsidian’s conversation to see how they are able to easily express ideas with the use of gestures. After some time together, Obsidian is able to ask a more complex question and be understood by Rye, “He made rock-the-baby gestures and looked questioningly at her. She swallowed, shook her head. She did not know how to tell him her children were dead,” although another set of gestures solved this problem, “He took her hand and drew a cross in it with his index finger, then made his baby-rocking gesture again,” and Rye understood, “She nodded, held up three fingers, then turned away” (Butler 414). This method of trial and error with gestures is not new to me. When first learning ASL, my professor did similar motions: he would sign a phrase, and if the gestures were not instantly identifiable, he would act out or mime the phrase with a different set of motions until he was understood. How different is this really from what Obsidian and Rye have already accomplished?

To answer the question, could a society function if it was incapable of verbal or written communication, the answer can only be yes. In fact, I offer that such a society already exists. It is called Eyeth. Where we live, Earth, contains the word ‘ear’ and for the Deaf community who cannot hear, they prefer to live in the world of the seeing people: Eyeth. While some people in the Deaf community can find their own Eyeth within Earth, others are still longing to reach this planet of the seeing, for in that world Sign Language is the primary language and it is alive in hands of all of their kind.

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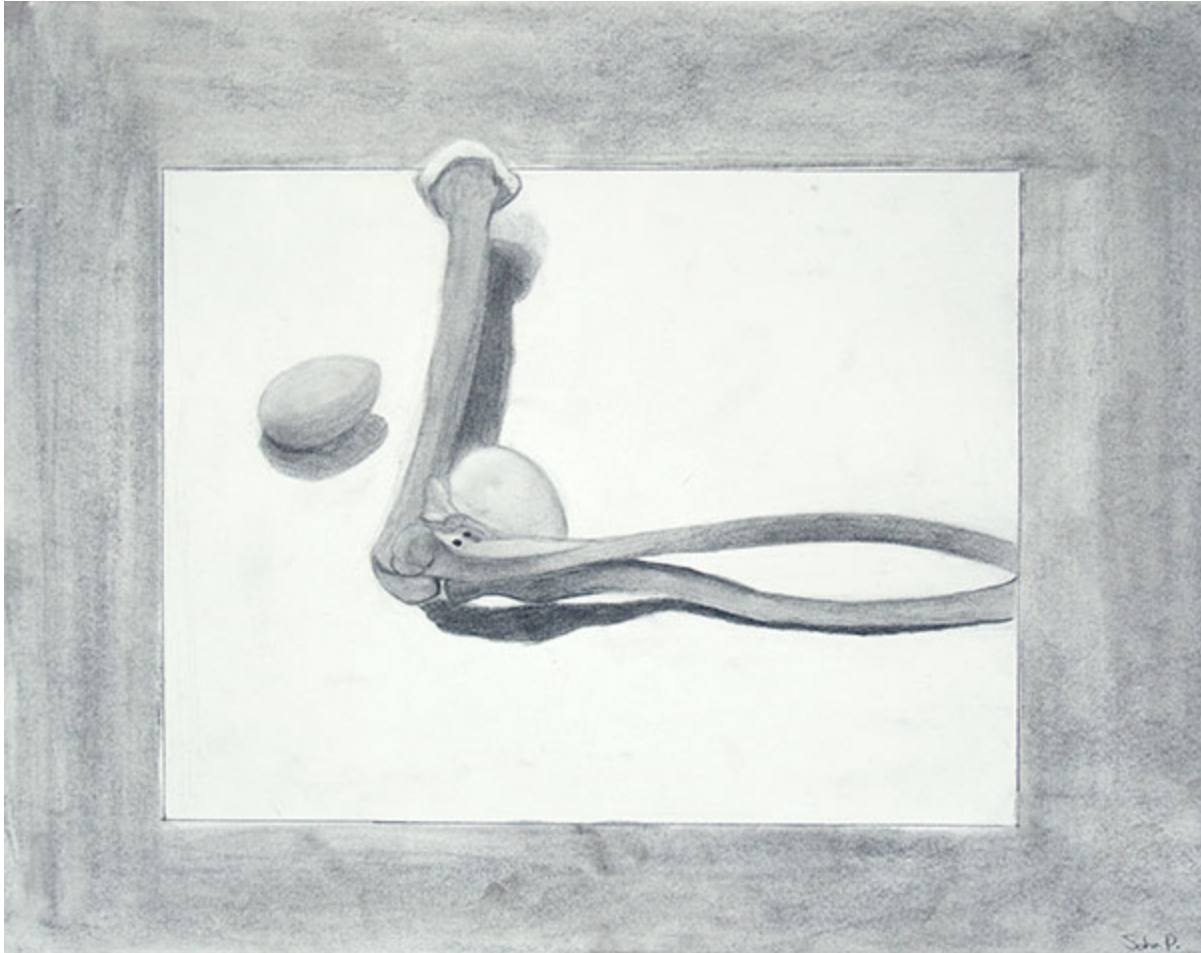
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The Noisy Water Review | Student Anthology of Writing & Art, Whatcom Community College

noisywater.whatcom.edu/site_1314/pages_1314/18-07art.html



Soha Pourpirali

From beginning to end

Graphite on paper, 18" x 24"

Ethnocentric

 noisywater.whatcom.edu/site_1314/pages_1314/19-06crwriting.html

Katherine Haveman

Sun aloft in sky,
yellow amid canvas painted blue
so blindingly bright you would think
it the greatest light.
But there are those that only illuminate
at night like holes punched
in a canvas painted black.
Beneath the coldest skies
and the brightest lights
galaxies make their home
in darkest nights.
Whole constellations
balance on a thumb, heroic
stories, scenes from play.
But in a place where time
and space bend
more than a million miles
away, each star its own sun.

Making Films Politically: Depicting Women in Documentary

noisywater.whatcom.edu/site_1314/pages_1314/20-06essay.html

Rowan McDowell Thompson

“There is a need to make films politically as opposed to making political films.”

-Trinh T. Minh-ha

More documentaries are being created now than ever before. In the British documentary heyday of the 1930's and 40's, more than 30 films were made per year; now that many are produced each month (Ellis). Additionally, documentaries are gaining greater viewership and acclaim. Documentaries previously have been primarily watched by people already invested in a film's subject matter, but more and more viewers are being introduced to topics by documentaries that just intrigue them. Over time, the power of documentaries is growing because filmmakers are no longer just preaching to the choir, but proposing new ideas to greater audiences. And following the events of September 11, 2001, the documentary genre has shifted focus towards political topics rather than the stories of individuals (Ganahl). However, documentarian Amanda Micheli has continued to make films about individual people's lives. The hallmark of her work is a commitment to sharing the perspectives of women in particular. Mainstream cinematic media, by contrast, rarely represents the experiences of real women. But as the viewership of documentaries grows it is vital that representation of subjects grows as well. Micheli's films have significantly positive impacts on real life because they do justice to their subjects in ways that many fiction films do not and cannot. By representing women's stories realistically, telling the stories of marginalized people, and showing them in a sympathetic light, Micheli is combating the cultural narratives of passive, bland, and invisible women and inspiring hope and respect.

The documentary genre's commitment and confinement to truth makes it ideal for portraying the lives of women (Ellis). Hollywood offers audiences almost exclusively stories of the privileged and when it makes exceptions they tend to be caricatures rather than realistic portrayals (Siddiquee). To be blunt, in the majority of mainstream narrative cinema, marginalized people are fictionalized distortions catering to the white, affluent, straight male audience.

Documentaries don't have the opportunity to misrepresent marginalized communities in the same way as mainstream narrative films because they are “derived from and limited to actuality” (Ellis). However, the genre still disproportionately tells the stories of the privileged. Recently, an alternative to the now-classic Bechdel Test was proposed based on the character Mako Mori from *Pacific Rim*. The Mako Mori Test asks whether there is at least one female character that gets her own storyline which isn't just a support for a male character's plot arc (Romano). Micheli's films all pass the proposed Mako Mori Test.

Moreover, their representations of low-income communities, communities of color, and women are true to life. As another documentarian, Pratibha Parmar, reflected, “you have to be very committed to women and changing women’s lives to do... this kind of work” (Redding). The creation of each film requires enormous effort not only in distribution and scrounging together funds but also in expressing adequately the truth of the subjects’ lives.

In the commentary track for *Double Dare*, a film about the careers and mentoring relationship of two stuntwomen, Micheli discusses the difficulty of gaining access to the sets where one of the subjects, Jeannie Epper, was working during the filming of the documentary. Ultimately, footage of only one of Epper’s jobs was included. Despite challenges, Micheli consistently seeks the most accurate representation possible of the individuals documented in her films. Her film *The Save*, a short about the coach of a soccer team for at-risk youth, touches on such multifaceted and painful issues as the gang violence perpetrated by many of the players. In *La Corona*, which documents a beauty pageant held in a women’s prison, the camera similarly takes a warts and all perspective when it lingers on the tattoos of the inmates. A swastika tattoo in particular does not paint the most sympathetic picture nor does the inclusion of their convictions and mug shots. But by representing each contestant in the beauty pageant as the imperfect people they are, Micheli depicts the complexity of the real women she’s portraying.

That complexity is what sets her documentaries apart. In mainstream narrative cinema, women’s insecurities, economic hardships, queer romances, and physical aptitudes tend to be swept under the rug or harmfully overemphasized. Not so with Micheli’s films. *Double Dare* and *La Corona* both specifically address the pressure placed on women to conform to cultural beauty standards. In *Double Dare*, Jeannie Epper even goes to see a plastic surgeon to consider liposuction so that she can remain competitive in her line of work. Similarly, *La Corona* and *The Save* explore the financial struggles faced by the films’ subjects and their communities. Gina Castañeda’s impoverished upbringing is mentioned in *The Save* to illuminate her investment in at-risk youth. Angela Valoyes talks about how her relationship with her girlfriend impacted her outlook on life in *La Corona* and frequently throughout the film the viewer is reminded of the significance of that relationship. Additionally, *Just for the Ride*, *Double Dare*, *La Corona*, and *The Save* all center on women who excel in some physical area, be it riding broncos, dancing, performing stunts, or playing soccer. In this way, Micheli gives audiences truly representative depictions of women’s lives above and beyond the narrow image generally offered by media.

Documentarian Allie Light wrote about herself that she is “interested in [her] own life, so [she’s] also interested in the lives of others” (Redding). Micheli’s experience as a professional rugby player may inform her interest in women in active roles. It’s significant that Micheli’s background as an athlete inform her filmmaking decisions because women are so infrequently depicted in active roles. The women in Micheli’s films aren’t simply scenery; they are participants, competitors, and professionals. Her choices as a director help her viewers see this. One of the opening shots of *Double Dare* has prominent stuntwoman Zoë

Bell flying toward the camera. The low angle shots of the contestants on the stage in *La Corona* suggest the degree to which these women are admired and looked up to. Gina Castañeda is in the middle of the action coaching her team and switching fluidly between English and Spanish in *The Save*. Shots such as these promote a positive image of women as competent, invested, and participatory.

Often sympathy for female characters in narrative storytelling is drawn from the damsel in distress trope. This stereotype is born of the idea that women in stories exist solely to add intrigue to male plotlines. The women in Micheli's films, however, are depicted sympathetically without relying on vulnerability as a crutch. Gina Castañeda in *The Save*, Zoë Bell in *Double Dare*, and several contestants in *La Corona* cry during interviews, but that is not the sole reason that audiences connect with these women. The struggles each have faced and the triumphs they experience are what draw the viewers to the subjects. The game bracket used in *The Save* involves the audience in the effort toward the Championship game for Castañeda's soccer team. When an inmate in *La Corona* discusses life in the prison after the Beauty Contest, the camera zooms in on a pail of garbage underscoring the hardships of their everyday existence. Zoë Bell plunges downward onto her shoulder over and over in one scene of *Double Dare* until she gestures toward her arm and says, "It's dead." Her toughness and unrelenting commitment to doing her job fosters deeper investment for the viewers in her life and career. Micheli cultivates understanding, respect, and empathy for her subjects in this way.

The kind of earnest, compassionate filmmaking Micheli's work exemplifies is crucial to building a more just society. Movies shape the way their audiences view the world (Giroux). One way communities are normalized or alienated is through the availability of accurate representation or lack thereof. Especially as documentaries gain greater influence over media, who is depicted and how shapes the narratives of marginalized communities in the world off the silver screen. By representing these individuals and communities accurately and sympathetically filmmakers are challenging toxic cultural narratives and sustaining hope for a better world.

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noisywater.whatcom.edu/site_1314/pages_1314/21-08art.html



David Voyer

Bromeliad Curves

Photo manipulation, 7.5" x 10"

Another Life

noisywater.whatcom.edu/site_1314/pages_1314/22-07crwriting.html

Kara Johnson

There comes a time in everyone's life when they are confronted by their beliefs, or in my case, disbeliefs. Because I spent my childhood in a hospital, I didn't believe in God. I saw people coming in and out, and sometimes only in. I, myself, never wanted to go out for good because I knew it would be with a sheet or a body bag over my head.

I never believed in fate, or in goodness. Most patients see the good doctors and nurses, the volunteers, and their faith is restored. They see people being healed, or they see loved ones gathering around, and they believe. This wasn't the case for me.

I was born in a hospital, and it soon became my second home. After finally being released from the hospital with a cured Bronchopulmonary Dysplasia, I had a few good, barely-remembered years of normality before my lungs again decided to turn on me and develop cancer.

It's all I've ever known, really. My parents are both doctors, so we basically live in the hospital. I mean, we have another house a few blocks away, but I could count on my left hand the number of times the three of us have been there together. My parents come visit me between shifts, but they never stay too long; they deal with enough sick people already. I was instead raised by the constant flow of smiling nurses, and my crazy nanny-turned-second-mother, Helga.

Helga always said I was too bitter, and that I should be lucky I was even alive. My snide and sarcastic comments would stop for a while, because I knew Helga had lost one of her boys when he was younger, and that she missed him everyday. I used to wish that I was Helga's son, because then I could have an ordinary home, and maybe I wouldn't be sick.

Helga had a son named Jose, and we had been friends since before I could remember. He took the bus to the hospital or my house, whichever one I was at, everyday after school, bringing Helga and I food. We would play video games, and talk about life beyond the walls of my room and the borders of our city. Jose always had a new girlfriend, and he would bring them to meet me when I was in the hospital after a surgery. I laughed everytime he came in the door with a new girl. But I always remembered their names. They were polite, but I saw the pity in their eyes. I saw them notice my bald head, my yellow eyes, my bones that stuck out against my skin; I saw their eyes dart away from mine as I caught them looking, and I saw apologetic, pitying smiles turn their faces towards the floor.

Jose brought new girls every couple of weeks. But his senior year there were a few months without any girls.

It's not like we didn't talk about who we thought was hot, in real life or otherwise. Jose had a thing for Megan Fox, but I was more of a Scarlett Johansson kind of guy. We would laugh and joke, and it was nice, just the two of us. I could tell there was something though, a reason to why no girls had come by, and Jose seemed to have more purpose and wisdom in his words as he spoke to me.

"Dude, whats up? You aren't bringing me any girls anymore! You ran out of pretty ones at your school?" I joked, but still wondered about the sudden change.

Jose laughed. "Nah, we got lots of pretty girls. But man, there's this one girl. I can't get her off my mind."

I nodded. "What's her name?"

"Amanda." Jose smiled when he said her name. "She moved here a few months ago from a small town a few hours away."

"So," I said, "You lost your touch? Why haven't you brought her here? Why aren't ya'll dating?"

Jose sighed. "This one's special, man. I gotta be careful."

I saw the look in Jose's eyes, that glow that held hope and light. That was the first time my view of the world was challenged.

*

The moment that absolutely confronted my belief in the world's indifference came later on though, a long time after Jose finally brought Amanda to see me.

It was about a month after Jose had first spoken of her. We didn't talk about her too much, because I knew Jose was serious, and somehow that scared me. If Jose started to become serious, wouldn't that mean everything in my life would turn and do the same? I did ask about her a few times though, and Jose would just smile and say he was 'making progress'. Whenever Helga was around during these times she would just swat him on the head and tell him to make a move already; she wanted to meet this young lady!

It was a Tuesday, and I had no warning. I had gone through chemo a few days before and I wasn't feeling so great so my parents had reserved a hospital room where they could keep a closer eye on me. A nurse was in changing my IV fluids and another was giving me my after-lunch pills when they came in. Her hair was the first thing I noticed, because it was red, and very long. Her smile was next, because it was so genuine.

"You must be Ian!" She came over to where I was sitting up in bed and gave me a light hug. "I'm Amanda." She smiled bright, and I blinked a few times.

“Oh, hey.” I said when I regained my composure. Her easy comfortability in my hospital room and with me being a sick person had surprised me.

“How long have you been here at the hospital?” Again, her straightforwardness caught me off guard.

“I’ve been in and out of treatment for almost six years.” I gave her a small smile. “I’ve lived a lot longer than they expected.”

Jose laughed at this. “He’s a beast. They keep telling him he’s gonna die, but then he surprises them. My mom thinks he must be waiting for something.” Any other girl would have been shocked at our easy talk of death and sickness, but Amanda just nodded, and even laughed.

I explained more. “It’s whenever they take me out of this damn hospital that I get worse. We’ve learned that it’s better just to keep me here.”

“His parents also work here, so they actually end up seeing more of him when he’s here.” Jose added.

Amanda’s eyebrows rose. I nodded. “Yes,” I said, “I live quite an ironic existence.”

Amanda smiled at me, though her eyes showed me she recognized my pain, and questioned my bitterness.

“My sister is staying on the fourth floor right now.” For the first time, her voice didn’t emanate confidence, and her eyes shifted. “We moved here a few months ago so that she could have better treatment.”

“I’m sorry.” I said, and I was, because I knew what it was like, and how it affected people. I gave her a smile. “What’s her name?” I asked, trying to be a comfort to this beautiful, sad girl before me.

I saw her hand reach for Jose’s, and I saw an idea developing behind her eyes. “Emma.”

*

I hope I haven’t mislead you, because Amanda is not the one who changed my life and who made me believe. It was her sister Emma. Emma, who was an identical twin and shared Amanda’s smile, her eyes. She also shared a confidence with Amanda that didn’t dim under the stress of her sickness, but instead grew.

I learned later that Jose and Amanda had from that very first moment that I heard her name, been thinking about putting us together.

The day that I finally met Emma, I thought it was pure coincidence. I would have never have gone so far as to blame it on fate, but I knew something was at work.

It was at my next chemo session, weeks later. I always arrived early at the hospital on chemo days, to prepare my room since I usually responded badly to the treatment. I arrived early, and after settling my things in, went early to the third floor chemotherapy wing. The room was always rather empty, but I had always liked to observe the few familiar faces. One caught my eye.

It was Amanda -but it wasn't Amanda. She had the same face, the same light in the eyes, but the red hair was gone, because all hair was gone and she seemed a size or two smaller than Amanda's abounding presence.

"Emma?" I couldn't help but ask.

She looked up and into my eyes, surprise igniting in her expression. She wore a pink bathrobe and blue slippers. A darker shade of blue hung around her head in the form of a silk scarf.

"Hi," she said, "have we met?"

I shook my head, beginning to feel embarrassed.

She laughed at me. Then gave me her hand to shake. "Nice to meet you then. I see you know my name. I'm beginning to think I know who you are too." I raised one eyebrow. How would she know me? "Are you Ian?"

I laughed, beginning to sit down beside her. "Yes," I stared into her green eyes. "I am Ian."

Emma's smile grew wider. "I was wondering when I was going to get to meet you."

*

To save time, I am going to fast forward my story a year. This year, from that moment onward, was the very best of my life.

There are many love stories where the protagonists die suddenly and miserably at the end; a tragedy. But what does one do with a love story in which the protagonists are already dying, and fully aware of that fact? Perhaps most would think it boring. In reality, it's exciting; no one wastes any time.

My year with Emma was difficult. She saw me at my worst, and I saw her at hers. I saw her in and out of surgeries, and she saw me dwindling into nothing more than bones and sallow cells that failed at making themselves into believable skin. Countless times we had to watch each other retch until our stomachs were weakened and withered.

But I held on to life — and to Emma.

Each day I thanked the universe, or someone, somewhere, for giving me Emma. And each day I cursed the world and everyone in it that I was sick and Emma had to be too.

I didn't believe in a God who could miraculously make us all better. I didn't believe in grace, which would have healed Emma ages ago if it were able to. I didn't believe in purpose, since I had spent my whole life in and out of a hospital bed. How was I a benefit to the world at all?

But I did believe in love, if nothing else.

Emma looked at me and saw my bitterness, and she understood it in her own way. She got mad herself sometimes, but still she always seemed at peace. When I looked at Emma I saw her love and her anger at her situation and yet, occasionally I would catch in her eyes a look of gratefulness, which every time I witnessed opened my mind to curiosity.

The day I finally understood Emma's gratefulness was the day I was tested in my disbelief of fate.

We were taken to the beach, by Jose and Amanda, because they knew Emma was nearing the end, and we wanted to experience something beautiful. It was planned to be a surprise.

"Emma." I whispered close to her ear.

She opened her eyes at me, light igniting behind her pupils. "Hey-" She smiled at me, her bottom lip catching on her one crooked tooth as her lips opened wide.

"We're going to the beach."

"What?" She began a shaky effort to sit up, and Amanda came over to help her. Emma looked up at her. "Are we? Is it true?" There was such hope in her features: a bitten lip, eyes wide, face turned up.

"Yes, honey. Ian's taking us to the beach!"

Emma turned to me and gave an attempt at a playfully seductive look, batting her eyelashes at me as she always did when questioning my motives, and I laughed. She tried to laugh, but I could see the effort catch in her throat. She reached out her hand and I took it eagerly.

"Thank you." Her voice was just a breath escaping her mouth, so light and quiet. A whisper the world carried up to my ears.

I just smiled and shook her hand.

Jose drove with Amanda in the front. Their voices were quiet as Emma and I sat delicately in the back. Emma fell asleep a few minutes into the trip, while staring out the window at the city passing by. Her body fell against mine in her sleep. The city outside my window gradually got smaller, and sparser. Each beat of my heart grew faster, excitement and thrill taking over my nervous system. My hands balled into fists on my lap in an attempt to calm myself; so much happiness was usually a drain of my energy.

Wheelchairs don't mix all that well with sand. Jose pushed me, while Amanda pushed Emma. It was a hard effort so we didn't end up making it out that far towards the water.

It was late spring, still a little chilly, but the sun was shining. I wore a jacket still because of a light breeze. Emma wore her fuzzy pink bathrobe that she wore almost everyday.

Amanda and Jose stayed for a while with us, but took my and Emma's silence as a sign and started a walk down the beach, hand in hand.

"Ian?" Emma was staring out at the water, my name was just a whisper on her lips.

"Yeah?"

"Thank you." She turned to me and I could see that her eyes stung with tears. She turned back to the water.

I joined Emma in looking out over the sea. Birds were flying out over the water and I saw Emma's eyes follow their progress through the sky, dipping and diving and flying around. "You know, in another life we wouldn't be sick. We could run around together, down to the water. Splash around. Do you remember what it was like to run?"

Emma smiled. "It was freeing."

I let out a sigh because I actually did not remember what it was like to run. I couldn't remember if I ever had. Too many memories of machines and medicines and long nights with sterile smells blocked out any memories of the wind rushing past my face, and my feet pounding against the earth.

We sat in silence for a time, taking in the beauty of the world, because we would soon have to leave it.

"It's endless." Emma whispered.

I closed my eyes for a moment. Because the ocean was endless, and it frightened me in a way, how infinite and immortal something could be.

When Emma spoke again, her voice carried a bitterness that I had yet to hear in my year with her. "You were wrong in what you said before. About in another life. We wouldn't be able to run here together. We wouldn't even know each other." She turned her body away and a visible chill shocked her spine.

I didn't know what to say.

But she was right. We had met in the hospital, because we were both sick. I remembered the first time I ever saw her, with her fuzzy pink bathrobe tucked snugly over her hospital gown.

Even in that first meeting, with that smile, that handshake, that confidence, and that stupid pink bathrobe, I had loved her.

“You never know,” I whispered, almost solely to the wind, “We could have met each other eventually. Maybe in a park, or a coffee shop.” Was I now the one who believed in fate?

Emma turned to me. “We’re sick, yes. But things happen for a reason, Ian.” She looked back out at the ocean. “You’re the reason I’m sick, Ian. It was for you. Otherwise, how ever would I have met you if I hadn’t moved here for treatment?”

Her words shook me. *I was the reason she was sick?*

Emma’s words washed over me as I stared almost blankly out at the sea. I was the reason Emma was sick? That must mean that she was the reason *I* was sick. At this thought my spirit calmed and I watched a seagull suddenly dive under the water’s surface.

“Don’t worry.” Emma’s words awakened my mind once again to the world spinning around me. “I wouldn’t have it any other way.” She reached for my hand and met it at her lips with a feathery-light kiss.

*

Emma taught me that there is purpose, and destiny, and no coincidence. She hoped to befriend me to fate with the same gratefulness that she had found in our circumstance. She had believed so unshakably that she was mine, and that I was her purpose. We spent our lives caged up inside a hospital that prodded and tested us, so surely there was a reason for that. Surely she found what it was when, that very first day, her face turned up to see me, a young stranger, calling her by name.

But fate is a fickle friend.

I go back to that beach still. There the years that have passed seem to grow transparent and I can almost reach back to the young man I used to be. I sit on the sand and play through my mind the scenes of Emma and I on this beach. When she had stopped treatment and the red that used to fill her cheeks was slowly slipping away. I sit on the sand and watch as waves crash against the shore, just like that day.

I feel Emma in this place as if her spirit dwells in waves. Or maybe simply in the air that is sweet flowing down my throat. Some things are simply timeless, and this beach, along with Emma’s love, will live forever in my soul.

I hear the seagulls call and watch them fly down to the water.

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

noisywater.whatcom.edu/site_1314/pages_1314/23-09art.html



Wayne Stoner

Free Drum

Charcoal, 17" x 14"

Being Black in Modern America

noisywater.whatcom.edu/site_1314/pages_1314/24-07essay.html

Diane Tymony

It might sound strange, but sometimes I forget that I am black. There are times though, as I move about in the public sphere; say the grocery store, at school, or at some event, I can be hyperaware of it. I can't help it. It's impossible not to feel how different I am when my skin is juxtaposed against so many others. However, despite this, I do sometimes forget the implications of my skin. I sometimes forget that other people take a look at me and think that I'm up to no good; that I'm lazy, unmotivated, uneducated, don't know who my father is, come from the ghetto, probably have a child, get angry or loud at the drop of a hat, steal, can't be trusted, or that I am incapable of being a valuable asset to my community. I forget that people can see me this way without knowing a thing about me.

The reason I forget is simple. I am human. Throughout my day I have the same general worries as anybody of any race in my situation would have. What homework do I need to do? Do I have enough money to pay rent? Should I look for a better paying job? Should I decrease my hours at work since they're conflicting with school? When my lease is up, where will I live? Should I spend this twenty on a dress or food? I don't find my situation that particularly enthralling. There are millions of us attempting to build futures for ourselves while maintaining balance and sanity in the present. I am no different. I want the same things for my family and myself as anybody else.

However, there are those jolts of reality when you realize that others are incapable of seeing you that way; as human. I am taking an Intercultural Communications class. The point of the class is to be able to learn to effectively communicate with diverse individuals of varying backgrounds and cultures. In my Intercultural Communications class, we watched a documentary that we also watched in this Sociology class. The clip that got the Intercultural Communications class stirring was called *Bourgeois Blues*. In it, middle and upper class African-Americans voice feeling that working class African-Americans perceive them as stuck up and elitist, therefore, they do not always fit in with other African-Americans. However, they also do not fit in with white citizens making similar amounts of money because they are black and still not widely accepted in this class. Growing up in a middle-class family, I could relate to their feelings.

After the clip, a white woman raised her hand and went on a rant. She complained that she didn't understand why "they" or "black folks" have to try so hard to fit into white culture. Why couldn't they just be happy with the way they are? Why do they have to copy us? I was appalled. I've faced many forms of racism but this just didn't make sense. So I voiced my opinion back. I said that people wanting nice houses, nice things, good schools for their kids, and a secure future wasn't a white thing, it was a people thing. Wanting fine things and

financial stability is part of American culture. Why can't African Americans aspire to these things as well? Does that mean that they're ashamed of their race? Does that mean they're trying to be something they're not? Above all, why is there something threatening about an affluent black American but not an affluent white American?

African-Americans continue to face discrimination in all sorts of ways. As Conley writes, discrimination is "harmful or negative acts against people deemed inferior on the basis of their racial category without regard to their individual merit" (361). It is frustrating to think that no matter how hard I work, there will still be a distinctive, and perhaps somewhat sizeable, group of people who will continue in their attempt to push me out of this world.

The discussion became somewhat heated I suppose. My professor attempted to make a point that blacks are the only group that have been enslaved in America and that this still affects the country today. At this, the woman got upset and said, "So?! They need to get over it!" While I sat in my seat fuming and shaking, I listened to my classmates sigh and exclaim at her statement. My teacher silenced the woman and moved on to a different subject. But the entire exchange sat with me for days afterwards and I still revisit the moment.

I have heard and been told on a number of occasions that black people are too sensitive and that we get offended over everything. In such situations, the person has always been white. The only way I can explain it is this: I think when anyone has gone through immense pain; it's frustrating when other people act like it isn't real or it isn't a big deal. I compare it to when I lost my father. I would feel even more hurt when friends or acquaintances would wave off the ache I was struggling with.

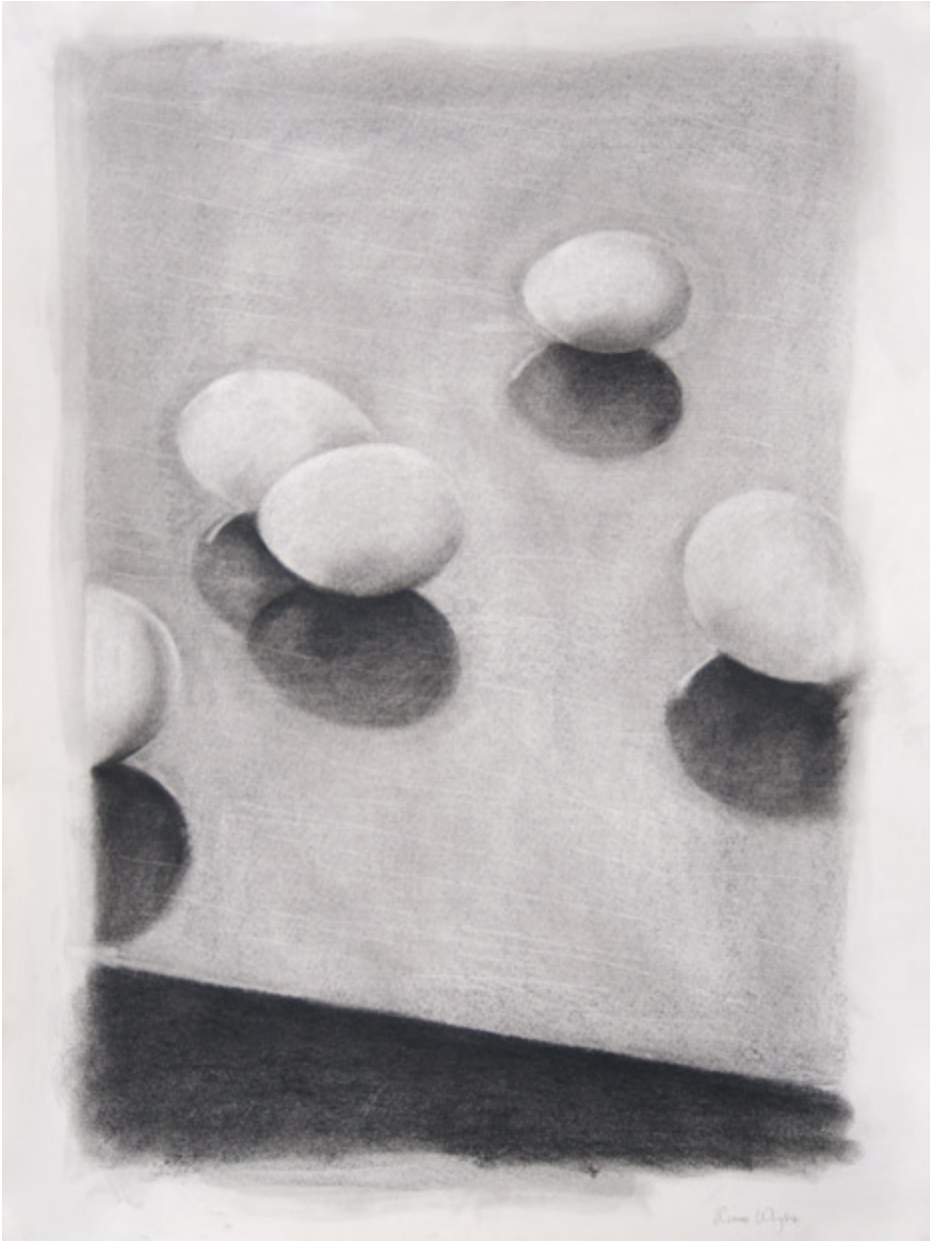
Racism affects our entire world. In the case of the United States, it's a collective struggle of an entire group still trying to figure out where they fit into a society that has looked at them as lesser beings, enslaved them, devalued them, alienated them, ostracized them, and at times is still trying in indirect and subtle ways to keep them from fully integrating into society, while all the while denying that anything wrong ever happened. Despite such phenomena, I am proud of what I am. Conley describes ethnicity as, "one's ethnic quality or affiliation." (339). I may face stratification, which is structured social inequality (Conley 240), but it certainly has not diminished my pride in my family, my ancestors, and myself.

Works Cited

Conley, Dalton. *You May Ask Yourself*. 3rd ed. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2013. Print.

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

noisywater.whatcom.edu/site_1314/pages_1314/25-10art.html



Aimee Wright

Eggs

Charcoal, 24" x 18"

Molds

noisywater.whatcom.edu/site_1314/pages_1314/26-08crwriting.html

Carly Sandberg

It's that familiar itching on the shallow skin of your cheek. Or the urge brought on by the hair escaping from the confinement of your ear. You've got to run the flat bottom of your front teeth over the grooves of your bottom lip. You can't help but ensure the hair on your brow is flattened and in place. No matter how hard you try to keep your arm at your side where it belongs—its vertical, intended home—you're helpless to stop it from raising like yeasty bread, intent on replacing that hair, feeling for crumbs there, smoothing over that spot, and scratching the skin that's not even itchy. But once your arm and hand do their defiant deed, the urge is staved off for a moment, delegating your extremity to be content to hang obediently at your side until the longing decides to begin again.

I try to care less when I'm swaddled in my cotton pants and loose t-shirt, my hair a mess and greasy in the confines of my home. But walking down a busy street, with strangers on looking, I feel the need to fit and fidget, to keep busy to keep my eyes from theirs. I'm always sure they'll see the seam of my pant leg in disarray and declare I don't belong. That my place is poorer and private. Even reminding my mind that I have rights as much as they, I've still got to frame the hem of my shirt so it curves just-so on my waist.

But then there are times when I'm all alone, with no prying eyes or ears. I still graze my touch along the bump growing on my chin and tap out a rhythm on my knee. I don't trust the hairspray that claims "extra hold" to keep the mold I've set my tresses in. I know why I do it, why I just can't seem to help but keep moving. They'd called it Generalized Anxiety Disorder when I asked what was wrong with me, and they said that it explained my broken record of a brain – why it wouldn't stop spinning around those unrealistic worries and common occurrences and just take a tiny break. They said that GAD helped push my grating thoughts to outward actions, so my brain wouldn't ruin me. A self-comforting practice to keep me functioning like every other normal, well-adjusted person. "You mean not everyone thinks about that call they have to make a week from now every minute of the day?" I'd asked in disbelief. "It's just me that can't help but think every person walking by has noticed how pudgy my fingers are?" It simply wasn't possible. I'm medicated now, but the fidgets haven't left. Call it habit, call it hobby, it's still a comfort when I'm supposed to be still.

The pencil in your hand is too perfectly balanced to *not* spin it, to wrap your index finger around its body and let the weight fling it in circles. The ring on your right middle finger would really feel better on your left one, even though you just switched it to your right twenty minutes ago. Your heel springs up and down of its own accord, nearly silent on the carpet, with your knee grazing your elbow on every bounce.

My mother doesn't fidget. Her palms are anchors at her thighs. They're not pulled to straighten the colorful hooks she wears in her ears, or to flatten the hair she's just splayed from throwing her head back to laugh at the neighbor's stupid joke. The miniscule bit of lettuce stuck to the edge of her mouth goes undiscovered, her tongue and the pads of her fingers in no hurry to go probing for its presence.

Her fingers actually do what she tells them. They don't clamber to skin and hair to calm the twitches and twines. While thousands of people are spreading their individualized, finger-printed inches to their wrinkles and spots, hers clasp together tightly on the table to rest completely content. She's not anxious, she doesn't displace. The coffee she drinks doesn't send her knee a-bouncin'. Her attention's not deficient.

Why's it so easy to feel as though our skin is not our own, that our bodies are something for us to shape and revise to fit the mold that no one fits? To use our extra energy to fix our imaginary flaws? To even keep our minds occupied so we aren't tempted to think of the eyes that might be judging us from the table across the room or from behind the check-out register in Rite-Aid?

When I'm at work, with my wrists aching from chopping onions, and I mistake a pound of butter for four instead, the redness of my face just won't lighten or forgive. The rash on my cheeks reflects my necessity for perfection, reflects the pain I feel at just the slightest hitch in my plan. I've never bought blush and doubt I'll ever need to. To rouge my cheekbones all I need is to think of the shaky words I spoke at school the day before.

My mother makes mistakes all the time. She never really stops. She calls her boyfriend by her ex-husband's name and her face stays pale as ever. She'll smile wide and crinkle more wrinkles by her eyes as she lets her error streak off her tongue in wheezing laughter that makes it hard to not laugh along with her.

My mother must care not for pretense or presentation. There's no need to fictionalize the façade to fit what people idolize.

She's firmly her with no alteration or edition.

The mold she fills has give. It doesn't crush her down and in. It moves with her and follows with no judgment, no appraisal. The cast I have lets me bounce up and down somehow. Lets me tug on my ear lobes and re-cross my legs. Why won't it let me push and pull it when it allows me my unnecessary fidgeting?

Spandex, Lycra, rubber, that's what my mother's must be comprised of. My mold's cement, when I tug it to be a me that everybody might not agree with, my palms and knuckles are scraped, red, raw, and bumpy.

I fear my skin will satisfy. Will turn prison into home. A home that judges me when I snort while laughing, that reigns me in with warning. A home that's safe in all the wrong ways, it's got security, it has minimalized risk, but there's no chance of winning without a gamble.

I want to find a way to crack it now, either piece by piece or wholly, so I'm not later sitting at my child's graduation, too ashamed to cheer them on, their name a weighted and waiting exposure on my tongue. What if his gaze finds me in the crowd, his face pale with his resignation? What if he learns that I'm more attached to my timidity than being proud of him? His excitement will fade, his shoulder may slump, and surely he'd no longer be surprised. He'd be used to my reservations at his birthday parties, his baseball games, everything that should be lively. What if he learns to animate like me, to reign his emotion in? What if the plaster slowly grows?

What if it shapes and encases him in, like his mother taught it to?

I'll need a chisel and a mallet, maybe some acceptance and less scrutiny. I'll use practiced swings of new perspective to carve out small cracks and holes. The mold that I've allowed to harden, I can't let it keep me rigid for much longer. Of course the thought is scary, to have my shelter chipped away, but I can't help thinking how cramped it is in here, it might be nice to stretch my legs.