Gathering of Voices 2009 - 2010

An Anthology of Student Writing & Art

Whatcom Community College
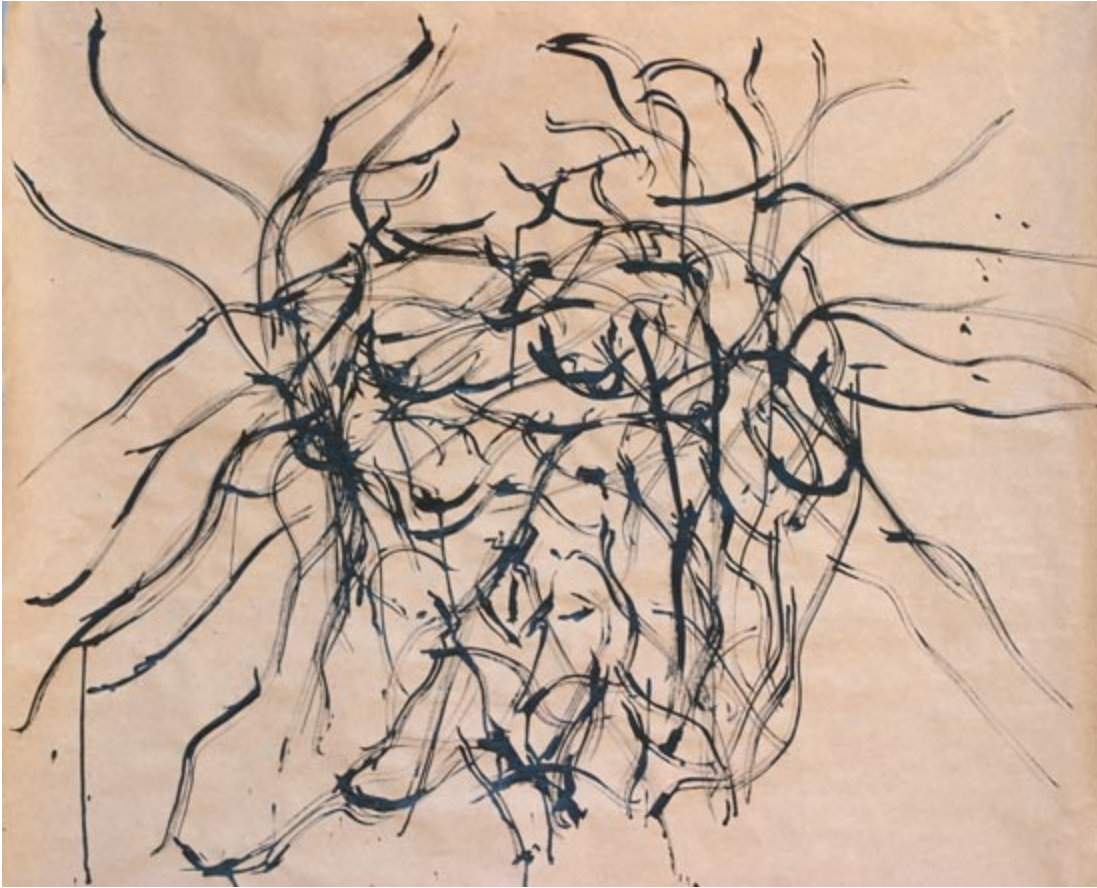

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The Whipping Boy (Jacob Garcia)

Ink, 34" x 39"

On Migration and Sleepwear

Wajeha Arshad

The first time I saw my neighbor outside her house wearing pajama pants and a sweatshirt, I thought she was just out to pick up her newspaper. But she hopped in her car and took off to wherever she was going. Then I told myself, maybe she just went to get coffee or something. But over the course of the week, I learned that her wardrobe consisted of nothing but pajamas, sweatpants and baggy sweaters of different colors. No, I do not spy on my neighbors from behind the curtains. It's just that my neighbor leaves her house every morning at the same time I usually leave for school. And, she makes me feel extremely overdressed. But also, her choice of clothes surprises me. Weren't Americans supposed to be well-dressed and organized?

I had a very different impression about Americans before I moved to Bellingham three months ago. The image that I had in my mind was just based on what I saw on TV and the lifestyle of the American community in Oman. However, now that I am living in the US, I have realized how skewed or one-sided my understanding of American culture was. Moreover, this experience has led me to question how much I really know about the people around me. Do I really have as much experience with diversity as I think? I know that I should not believe the stereotypes about different countries, but aren't they easy to believe? They require less effort, less need to comprehend what diverse cultures are about. Stereotypes are comfortable, just like pajamas and sweatpants.

I grew up in a beautiful country in the Middle East: the Sultanate of Oman. Muscat, the capital city where I used to live, is known for its pristine beaches, golden deserts, luxury hotels and rich culture. There is a large American community in Muscat but their lifestyle is very different from other foreigners living in the country. All I knew about them was that several of them were really rich and engrossed in their own little world. Most Americans lived in the most expensive, posh areas of Muscat: Qurum and Al Khuwair. They had white collar jobs and executive positions in successful Omani businesses. Therefore, they owned fancy cars, large houses, and had expensive hobbies such as mountain climbing, scuba diving and sailing. Additionally, I noticed that some residential areas of Qurum resembled American suburbs. The houses there had triangular rooftops and front lawns very similar to the set-up here in the US. Almost all American kids were enrolled in American international schools whose fees were well beyond other expatriates or even some Omanis' pockets. I felt that the lifestyle that these Americans established for themselves created a particular image of superiority in everyone else's mind. Sometimes, they were favored because they were assumed to be rich. For instance, in Muscat, if a taxi driver had to choose between an American passenger and an Asian passenger, he would definitely give the white man a ride with the hope of receiving a good tip and high fare. I did not believe the stereotype that all

Americans would be rich and blonde, but from the limited access and insight that I had into their culture, it was hard to imagine otherwise. For some reason, Americans seemed very unapproachable to me. While living in Muscat, I'm not sure whether I liked them at all.

When I decided to study in Bellingham, I was a little apprehensive about whether I would fit in with people here or not. All I was sure of was that the American education system was considered to be one of the best in the world. But I also wondered what impression Americans would have about Asians. One particular experience fuelled my curiosity even more: when I was waiting for my luggage in the baggage claim area of the Sea-Tac Airport, a Mexican airport employee pulled my bag off the conveyor belt for me. He didn't struggle with it much, it really wasn't that heavy, but what he said to me was, "You must be Asian, your luggage is really heavy". I did not understand what he meant by this. What does my luggage have to do with me being Asian? So I asked him why he thought so and he said, "Well, that's just how Asians are, they always have a lot of luggage". I am still confused about what he meant, but his claim made me wonder what image of Asians he had in his mind. Or was it just his observation? Similarly, I noticed that a lot of Americans would talk to me really slowly and use a lot of hand gestures. Did they already assume that my English was weak because I was not a native speaker?

But of course, stereotypes can be proved wrong. Assumptions can be changed. And that's exactly what I learned from moving to the US. Even my understanding of American culture was far from accurate, but I like to call this learning process "the evolution of my perspective" just to feel good about it. Now that I have started living among Americans, the image I had in my mind has been altered. A lot of my misconceptions have been clarified, but some of my observations have been confirmed as well. For example, I have always thought that I had a lot of experience with diversity since I grew up in international schools. But when I came to Bellingham and I saw people from all over the world living together, I was amazed. I have watched countless news reports about the problems with racism in the USA and that different cultures are not always appreciated here. But why would so many people want to live in this country, live the American dream, if there was absolutely no tolerance for diversity? Consequently, I realized that what the media shows us is not always fair. Politicians' views and mistakes are not representative or similar to those of the entire nation.

At first, middle class Americans seemed odd to me. I wasn't used to seeing them drive cars cheaper than a Mercedes or a flashy SUV. But now I've seen homeless Americans, Americans who live in small, modest houses, and Americans who struggle with money, healthcare and taxes. So now I know that they are not all rich and snobbish. But sometimes, people here do avoid conversation like I thought they would. For instance, people can ask me how I am feeling everyday but I would not have to give them more than a one or two word answer. "I'm fine" is usually all they would want to hear. I also noticed that neighbors do not really talk to each other. The occasional, "Hi, how're you doing?", while pulling out of the driveway is the only interaction I've had with people living on my street so far.

But, perhaps the most important thing I learned about Americans is that they are open-minded. Despite the conflicts that arise sometimes, freedom of speech and thought is valued here. In high school, I was always told what to do and how I should behave. Standing out of the norms and thinking outside the box was not always appreciated, and so I usually responded through rebellion. I know that exists here in America too, but when it comes to higher education, it is not all about spoon-feeding. I know that at some level, American education is also standardized in terms of the exams and textbooks, but creative thought is not always discouraged. Consequently, while going to school here, I have more opportunities for advancement.

Now that I realize how inaccurate my initial impression about Americans was, I often wonder to what extent I can improve my understanding and attitude towards diversity. I can't help believing in racial stereotypes because I cannot go and live in every country in the world to gain an accurate understanding of its culture and environment. Nevertheless, it always overwhelms me when I realize that there are so many countries, and so many people who have different traditions, different religions, and different lifestyles. There are so many things I know nothing about. This shows me how small and close-minded we humans are in front of the level of understanding, knowledge and wisdom we strive to acquire. We rely on assumptions, stereotypes and what the media shows us to build some credibility and meaning in our lives. Our tribe, your tribe, insiders and outsiders: maybe this is human nature. It's just how we are. But I suggest that we should at least be open-minded enough to allow our perspectives to evolve. We can try not to judge the new people we meet, the people we are unfamiliar with, merely based on the notions or ideas we have about them. We should not let ourselves be consumed by our judgment because this can have serious consequences.

So the next time I see my neighbor leaving her house still wearing her pajamas, maybe I won't judge her like I did before. She has every right to wear whatever she wants to. After all, we are both living in the United States of America, and pajamas are pretty comfortable.

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Emery Pulaski

Untitled

Digital art, 10" x 7.5"

I Write

Rachel Elizabeth Brown

Outsider. Left out. Not welcome. Like black people, Hispanic people, poor people. Lepers. That girl from Greece that annoys me in sixth grade by saying things like "in my country..."

Not me, I am white. Middle class, fair skinned, blue eyed. Educated. I'm well traveled, well read and curious. I have a history, and a family, and friends. An ipod.

None of this is any help in the fluorescent-lit isle at Haggen when I can't find Tipex. Cutex. Cellotape. Disprin. Guava. Rocket. None of this helps when I am no longer a tourist, just visiting; when suddenly I have a distinct identity that does not belong here.

It doesn't help when I ask the man, again, a hundred times, if he'd like pepper on his pasta. Pepper<u>rr</u>. When people give me vague eyes and pretend they understand what I'm saying. Or worse, when they nod their heads and smile, but their eyes say horrible things. It makes me think of Antwone Fisher and his monsters with masks.

I'm the party trick. I'm the observer again. The most common and recurring theme. My spelling is different, my accent is different, and the meaning I attach to words and ideas is different. I can't touch the difference. It's like having tick bite fever. You don't notice at first; you just feel cold when everyone else feels hot and hot when everyone else feels cold. Slowly you slip into delirium.

I meet a man at work one day and his voice feels like cream on a blister. I can hear him speaking from across the room and it sounds like home. Home. What a funny concept. I've never had a home. Afterwards I'm disorientated and dizzy. Another person speaks and I am confused. I don't know how I suddenly drifted miles from home to be standing here. In this country. I'm defensive all the time and catch myself saying things. In my country.

Not that I mind either, I've never thought of my voice as appealing. Attractive. It makes me talk more. I'm braver sometimes. This is the first time in my life that I am able to speak, to solidify and materialize the things inside me. Talk. I suddenly understand my ex-boyfriend's mother. Thirty three years in a foreign country and she never lost her thick French accent. Which always got thicker when she was in trouble. I use it to my advantage.

I am surprised at my attachment to home, something I've never had. And now it seems I've left the only home I ever had. A whole country. So I go back. But again. I don't belong; I have a disease. I've been saying pep<u>perrr</u> and par<u>rm</u>es(h)an too often, my vowels are slightly raised

and push into my friends ears like squishy marshmallow down your esophagus. Soft and cute and funny, and annoying after too much sweetness. They leave an uncomfortable feeling in your stomach.

Comfort is an important thing where I come from. (In my country). Or more specifically, fitting in. Scrambling for enough, because you know it's not yours.

Like Lebanese men that get rich off of other peoples poverty. Like big black rich Zulu men that parade around with government money. Like old Afrikaans men, hard and drunk and bitter. Like stuffy English men stuck in the vapors of a regime that's long gone, but unable to move forward.

Makwerekwere's are not welcome here. Amongst the millions left out of this battle.

I never thought I could be a white makwerekwere, among white people that speak English. A derogatory word used by black people for foreign black people. Specifically foreign black people that are a nuisance and a threat. Refugees. Starving.

 I am used to being lost. Six towns, ten houses, and six schools. Make new friends, start over. Sweep under. Forget. Move on.

I travel back after being gone for two years and my eyes hurt when I see the land. It takes a long time to work out why. Something feels strange, even though I recognize (recognise) the land and feel its heartbeat, I can't adjust, focus. There are horizons everywhere. Horizons and walls. Vertical and horizontal lines opposing each other.

Where I have come from now the trees are so tall and the mountains obstruct everything. The ocean obstructed by islands. My eyes hurt form not being able to see far.

 And then they hurt form seeing too far.

A stranger in my own country, a tourist, a feeling I worked hard to resist, I stare at the barrenness of the land. My feet are dirty all the time. I forgot how this red earth, mixed with so much blood, clings to your feet. Mixed with the sweat of the men and the tears of the women in my family. These barren, hollow, echoing spaces shaped me. They are inside me. They have been inside me since before I can remember.

I'm surprised by the language I speak and how much it tells about me. Not just the language, but the way I speak it too. It's like the rings on a tree that show change and indicate growth. If anyone listened closely they would hear my mother, and the way she laughed. Would hear my grandparents and their narrow-mindedness or their despair at a life they could not bring to fruition, or their strength. Their bigotry. They would hear their NG-Kerk conservative-ness and their pain. They would hear my father. They would hear the empty silence of our house, the emotional restraint and the fear. They would hear awkwardness and shyness,

My language, and the way I use it contains my culture. It contains me. Its shortness and brevity, it's echoing. I don't know how it got there but it reveals my vulnerability. A mind that works faster than my language has ever allowed.

My family also planted a silent language inside me. It is silent now. I used to shift between the two with ease. Now I have to stop and think. But its dormancy is dangerous. It sits like a predator and waits. For me. With its vicious and beautiful spirit.

My language, shaped and carved by things that are so old and come from so long before me. It is not about me. It is not for me. That I write.

Language is the container for everything. Like a quick-sand-serpent-river that meanders through time and space. It ebbs and flows, and builds levees, and floods. It gorges, takes and gives. But I've never been able to access it. So I'm left with a monsoon inside me. Pressure building. Sometimes I get lost along the edge of an internal desert and an ocean so deep - where the two meet - and things spit out of me in blunt, forced, uninvited ways.

Why do I write? I don't write. I've never written. But I read. I read Huckleberry Fin when I was five. And then I read about Mark Twain and Hailey's Comet. I read all the books in the little school library when I was six. I read Mills and Boons romance novels a teacher snuck me in boarding school so I wouldn't have to think. About my mom, my Ouma, my Oupa, my grandfather, all dead. I read anything: the back of toilet stall doors, Bukowski, Gordimer, Krog, Brink. I read in two languages. I read Nancy Drew and Enid Blyton, and Sweet Valley High. I read my dad's sci-fi novels. I read so that my mind would be quiet. So I could breathe one more time. In. And out. I read Estes and Allende and Marquez, nonfiction, esotericism, Thomas Merton, People Magazine and Kafka. I read Sula, and The Power of One, and The Anthropolgy of Turquoise, and The Scarlett Letter. Hemmingway. It doesn't matter.

I feel like I've just woken up from a dream that lasted twenty one years. There wasn't a specific moment in my twenty first year that felt like waking up either. It could have been my twenty second year too. Maybe it was my twenty third, after my aunt killed herself. It feels more like a slow rise to breath. Drifting up from the bottom of the ocean through hazy, murky water. Dappled light on my skin. Half dreaming. Yearning. But the ocean is full of creatures.

 Twenty one years in a dream that I have to unravel. Like Louise Bourgeois or Carl Jung. I construct things, external spaces, building, rebuilding, my inner self externally. So that I might take the rough edges off, so that I might understand. Like a river bottom pebble. Worn smooth until I disintegrate into sand. Nothing.

My dad holds my hand and walks me down the passage turning on the lights. I tried to go to the bathroom but I couldn't reach the light switch, even on tippy toes. Everyone is in the kitchen, washing up. Laugh-talking. I reach for the light I with my eyes squeezed shut and I

can't breathe. I don't want whatever is at the end of the hall, in the darkness, to rush at me. I don't want to see it. Finally the fear consumes me. I go get him. Holding his index finger I ask him why he's not afraid.

He says you grow out of it.

Just like he tells me the devil is a cartoon character.

I am four. I hope I grow out of it soon.

I hope I grow out of it at twelve when I sit in the bath and a little girl with red eyes sits and watches me.

I hope I grow out of it when I'm 18 and I wake in the middle of the night paralyzed by fear. Spiders and dead people around my bed.

I hope I grow out of it when I'm twenty one and I've fallen in love for the first time. When I'm with a boy for four years and peace on a level I could never have imagined seems possible, but my mind won't let me keep it. It is destructive.

I hope I grow out of it when I'm sleeping in this boy's bed because he's in the other room studying and the beat-up woman sitting in the corner of the room slides over on all fours and sniffs at me.

I hope I'll grow out of it when I dream my mother is bitten by a long gelatinous white snake the year she got sick. I am six. Nobody told us.

I hope I grow out of it when I crash into myself. When I can't breathe anymore at twenty and beg my father to let me go see someone, anyone, that can hear me.

I think I write because I want to paint. Because since the beginning painting belonged to my mother. I'm better at it than she was. Now I write like an artist paints. Compulsively, with a need inside, pushed to understand myself or go crazy. It is the only reason I write, and it frustrates me. My early literary experiences are not verbal, and distinct, they are emotional, overpowering, internal, irrational and scary. They shape and define me.

I feel as if I've woken from a dream.

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Tal Connor

Freeflow

Flash animation

The Rise of Change: Observational Analysis of Samsung F300 in Mass Media

Yunjung Katie Baek, Bryan Beard, Amber Icay and John Drayer

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine the commercial ad for the Samsung Ultra Music F300 starring singer/actress Beyonce Knowles. The analysis of this commercial was conducted through the use of four theories; Source Creditability, Agenda-Setting, Two Step Flow and Semiotics. Through observational analyzes these particular theories were used to better understand the content and general message present by the Beyonce Samsung Commercial and its effects on its audience.

The conclusion of this study found that Beyonce Samsung Commercial is indeed influence by these particular theories. Wherein, these theories create a frame work that allows for increased audience understanding and shows that a clear relationship is established between Samsung and its targeted audience through the Beyonce Samsung Commercial.

Company History & CEO

When most people hear the name Samsung they think of that name along side other brands like Sony, Microsoft or even Apple. Samsung which started in the 1950's has grown to be a major world player and doesn't look to be slowing down anytime soon with great innovation and quality backing it's brand name.

Samsung is a South Korea based company with its main corporate headquarters in Suwon, Gyeonggi-do. Samsung is the largest company in South Korea and employs over 164,600 people worldwide. Samsung's CEO Yoon-woo Lee who was appointed in 2008 has been working to re-organize the company's priorities. Lee looks to pull the company though these hard economic times with a new leadership team and continued production of quality goods and services by the Samsung Group (Samsung.com).

The Samsung Company is divided up into many branches with different focuses, the three core branches are Samsung Electronics, Samsung Heavy Industries and Samsung C&T. The word Samsung means "Tristar" or "Three Stars" and as a company in 2008 had a revenue of $173.4 Billion, a net income of $10.7 Billion, total assets of $252.5 Billion and a total equity of $90.5 Billion USD (Samsung.com).

Samsung Heavy Industries deals mostly with ship building and is the second largest shipbuilder in the world. Samsung C&T deals with Engineering and Construction as well as Trading and Investments. And last there is Samsung Electronics which is one of the worlds

largest electronic company supplying TVs, DVD/Blue Ray Players, cell phones, computers, washing machines, air conditioners and much more.

Over the years Samsung has continually tried to raise the bar in regards to technological advancement and has even surpassed Sony and Motorola in areas of Mobile Phone Technology. Samsung Electronics has even worked with such film/radio star as Beyonce to help campaign for products such as the Ultra Music Samsung F300 handset which combines the features of a mobile phone with a MP3 player (Technology Weekly). Beyonce was featured in a Television advertisement created by Cheil Communications who's CEO is sister to Samsung general owner, Lee Kun-Hee. In the end, Samsung has as a company earned its marks and had the honor of participating in the Beijing Olympics as an official Olympic partner (Samsung.com).

Commercial Description

The commercial begins with a close up camera shot of a woman's hand pushing play on what looks to be a MP3 player with the Samsung name on it. On the screen of the Samsung MP3 player there is a small picture a woman with illegible words underneath (*the image is actually of Beyonce Album cover B' Day which has sold 3.2 million copies worldwide*.) The shot ends with the MP3 player being drawn up and off screen.

Next, with a quick transition over to a new camera angle we can now see a woman beginning to cat-walk down the right side of a side walk while listening to some music with visible store fronts in view. The shot is taken from a mid-long range angle with a panning effect following the figure slightly off to the right. The woman is seen to be wearing a white shirt, jeans and very bright red heels (*very carefree natural style*). Those shoes really stand out because red is such a powerful color and the setting is very bland. Before the shot finishes you see that the woman in the red shoes is being passes on the right by an African American male wearing what looks to be jeans and a grey hoodie (*dressed very casually as not to take away from the Woman walking*).

Immediately, the shot switches again to a close up framed shot of the woman walking down the street with the background out of focus. We now know the identity of the woman in the red shoes, who happens to be the proclaimed Pop/R&B Singer Actress Beyonce Knowles. At the bottom left side of the screen a small set of words can be seen, these words being in the same style as a music video stating the song being used which is "Irreplaceable" from her new album B'day. Also, her name Beyonce Knowles is seen in the description as well (*which reconfirms that this is indeed Beyonce on the screen*). She is seen to be actually wearing a white V neck T- shirt with large Hoop Earrings. Her make up is very simple and everyday so to speak. Beyonce is simply walking down the street humming to her own song as she enjoys the day. Now we move onto the next shot.

This new shot opens with the sound of a ring and Beyonce coming out of an elevator. This shot is a mid-close up of a now professionally dressed Beyonce in a black dress with hair pulled back and long oval drop shaped earrings. The shot once again quickly changes to a close up of Beyonce's hand pressing a button on her Samsung phone to answer a call and then drawing it off screen. Then the shot changing right back to a side profile shot of Beyonce answering the phone and saying hello. The shot changes again panning left and you can now see that Beyonce is in a lobby of a Hotel (*which is actually the Hotel Gansevoort in Manhattan*). Beyonce jumps into the conversation by asking if "the House of Dereon samples are ready to be shipped?"

In the background you can see out of the Hotel Lobby's large windows and a few individuals sitting and doing business (*two African males and one Caucasian*). As the shot comes to a close we can see an African American walking past Beyonce on the right dressed in a business suit and carrying a brief case (*earlier in the commercial we saw the same situation with a person walking to the right of Beyonce on the street*).

Now we cut back over to the Beyonce that was walking out side. The shot is still a close up framed shot of her shoulders and face. She is still listening to music with the song "Irreplaceable" playing as she sings along on her carefree day.

Here we have a shot that includes both professionally and casually dressed Beyonces'. This shot is setup with a long wide view of business Beyonce coming out of revolving doors of the Hotel Gransevoort's lobby and casual Beyonce walking in from the right to pass the front of the hotel's entrance. We quickly move to a blurred semi-close up from behind shot of business Beyonce coming out of the revolving doors as it pans out of focus and to the right to show casual Beyonce walking just in front.

They are both completely unaware of each other and as you can guess end up colliding with each other (*with their left shoulders as the songs plays out the chorus, ON THE LEFT ON THE LEFT*). Just before they collide you can notice a yellow cab in the background passing, also in an earlier shot there was a yellow dress in the store front these were used to foreshadow her next outfit (*a way to ease a viewer into a sudden change*). The phone and MP3 then drop together perfectly to the ground music side up.

After looking at each other for a quick second they both moved to pick up their dropped items off the ground. The camera angle changes yet again to show a brand new Beyonce in a yellow blazer. She picking up the phone and then flipping it back and forth to look at it. A British voice then speaks telling the audience that you can switch to your music or phone in just a flip of a phone and then back again with the Samsung F300 (*the British voiced used to sound more technical and educated*). Telling us that with this product it's not too hard to imagine as the actual word imagine is shown every time they flip back to the phone. The new Beyonce then draws the phone to her ear and answers it as she continues on with her day. Her single irreplaceable starts playing again, and a picture of the phone appears back on

screen. The Samsung logo is shown followed by a short jingle that is always played while you see the Samsung logo. The phone is also flipped from music to phone to music side emphasizing on the music side more than anything.

On the surface, the commercial may seem like it's only about selling more Samsung phones, but if we look deeper into the commercial we find that there is much more to it than meets the eye. The entire wardrobe used in the commercial is actually from Beyonce Knowles and her mother Tina's store named the House of Dereon. This store is furthermore the topic of discussion that the professional Beyonce is having while walking through the high class hotel lobby as she is walking towards the door. Another interesting fact is that every Samsung F300 Ultra music phone also receives a free ring tone of Beyonce's new hit single "Irreplaceable" that is playing in the background during the commercial.

Theory Review

Semiotics

Semiotics is the study of communication and signification as part of social life. It is an approach to all different aspects of cultural analysis obtained from structural linguistics. It involves the study of sign systems and how meaning is made within a culture. Semiotics is a tradition of thought drawing audience's attention to the formal structures of signification in terms of a shared language. The process of producing and interpreting signs is always present, even when there is no intent to communicate anything. Semiotics is a sign which is made up of these components: the concept named signified and its acoustic or written or painted image named signifier, plus the relation between the two, which forms the sign, plus the relation to the user (Thuerwaechter, 2007). A signifier does not constitute a sign until it is interpreted. Not only is the meaning arbitrary, but it also is a form of constructed character. There are two different types of sign systems; the denotative is the literal meaning without ideological content and the connotative is a second level of meaning which usually is an implied meaning of the sign, representing an idea of a thing rather than the thing itself.

Agenda Setting Theory

Agenda Setting Theory explains how media influences which issues the public finds important. The issue was first suggested in 1992 by the newspaper columnist Walter Lippman, concerning that the media had the power to present images to the public (U. Twente, 2004). McCombs and Shaw believe that mass media apparently influence voters' perceptions of what is important. They also quote University of Wisconsin political scientist Bernard Cohen's observation saying, "The press may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about" (Griffin, 2008). In other words, the media accomplishes the agenda-setting function not by directly telling the public, instead, the media signal the importance of certain issues by giving more frequent coverage and more prominent positions (Jian-Hua and Deborah). McCombs and Shaw investigated presidential campaigns in 1968, 1972 and 1976, focusing on

awareness and information, and assessed the relationship between what voters in one community said were important issues and the actual content of the media messages used during the campaign (U. Twente, 2004). The hypothesis predicts a cause-and-effect relationship between media content and voter perception (Griffin, 2008). As a result to this, they concluded that the mass media had a significant influence on what issues voters should mainly consider during the election campaigns.

In follow-up studies, McCombs and Shaw also discovered what kinds of people are more likely to be affected by the mass media. They concluded that people who have a willingness to let the media shape their thinking have a high *need for orientation* (Griffin, 2008). In other words, people with high relevance and uncertainty are more likely to be influenced by the media because they try to pursue more information.

According to the University of Twente in Amsterdam,

> Two basis assumptions underlie most research on agenda-setting: (1) the press and the media do not reflect reality; they filter and shape it; (2) media concentration on a few issues and subjects leads the public to perceive those issues as more important than other issues.

Another area that has gained importance in concern to the Agenda Setting Theory is in commercial advertising, which was first investigated by Sutherland and Galloway. They concluded that instead of persuading the audience to buy products, the more achievable goal of advertising is to focus the consumer's attention on what vales, brands, and attributes to think about when considering purchasing a product. As a result, the Agenda Setting Theory became an important and necessary first step in the marketing process, ultimately ending in sales (Jian-Hua and Deborah).

The Agenda Setting Theory can be summarized as a theory which, "is a relational concept that specifies a transfer of salience from agenda primers to agenda adopters" (Shailendra, 1986). The news media, or advertising in the media has a significant power to influence audience' mind of what issues to think about, giving suggestions what to do unconsciously or encouraging a specific behavior at times.

Source Credibility Theory

Source Credibility is a multi-dimensional concept that refers to a person's perception of the "*Truth.*" It serves as a means for the receiver of information to rate the source of communication in relation to the information. (Hovland, 1953, p. 21).

Source Creditability as a whole is a major contributing factor to the idea of how people's thoughts are communicated to others in a given society through the use of mass media and other such channels. Source Creditability can be experienced in everyday life; it can be seen on TV during a commercial break, it can be heard on a popular radio show or even while

reading a national news paper. This concept is very important in this ever evolving technological day and age because communication is the quintessential link between people, businesses and countries and the diffusion of their ideas and innovations.

Source Creditability in this study can be generalized as the believability of a speaker as defined by the viewers of that said speaker or in other words the speakers' credibility in concern to a particular topic that they are speaking on or behalf of. Source Creditability in this particular study can then be separated into two main attributes for observation; one of which being "*Perceived Expertise*" and the other being "*Trustworthiness of the Source.*" (Gilbert, Daniel T. 1998, Parts of Source Creditability)

Wherein, "*Perceived Expertise*" can be defined as the perception of a given audience to the supposed expertise of a speaker on a particular issue. While the other attribute of Source Creditability being the "*Trustworthiness of the Source,*" that can be defined as the ability for people to believe a person to be honest. In other words, more simply put a measurement of character by a group or viewer.

C.I. Hovland and his colleagues are in many ways considered to be the fathers of this Theory of Source Creditability from their studies on persuasion and communication. However, some critics believe this theory to not really be a theory at all but more of a scientific re-statement of an already general piece of knowledge known to society at large.

Over the years the theory of Source Creditability has been observed and tested under various controlled conditions to see how it influences certain outcomes involving individuals and their opinions. Source Creditability can be applied to a variety of studies ranging from politics and law to even marketing and consumer buying trends. There were even studies on Source Creditability during World War II focusing in on the propaganda used during that time. One such study looked into the affects of Source Creditability on Communication Effectiveness which was conducted by Carl Hovland and Walter Weiss. While another study focused on Source Creditability and the Effectiveness of Firewise Information which was conducted by Alan D. Bright and others from Colorado State University.

In the study on Source Creditability and its affects on Communication Effectiveness the main focus was on administering similar informational journals from different levels of creditable sources (*one highly creditable and the other with low creditability*) to a group. For example, in the journals there would be two articles about the future of movies; one written by FORTUNE and the other by an unknown writer. It was hypothesized that "*the extent of agreement is usually higher when the statements are attributed to a higher prestige source.*" The results of the study showed that opinions were changed immediately after the communication in the direction advocated by a communicator to a significantly greater degree when the material was presented by a trustworthy source than when presented by a untrustworthy source (Hovland and Walters, p. 650).

In the other study they focused on Source Credibility and the effectiveness of Firewise Information. They were interested in how multiple roles of source creditability influences elaboration and the impact of messages about conducting firewise behaviors. This study was carried out by mailing various surveys to Coloradoan residents with informational flyers and surveys about Firewise behaviors in the wildland urban interface of Colorado. These informational flyers came from three agencies; the U.S. Forest Service, Colorado State Forest Service and last the local fire departments. The findings from this study concluded that source creditability does influence behavior change, where 5 out of 7 fire wise topics were affected. And, that such behaviors would change as a direct result of the information presented in the study.

The study of Source Credibility is at times a very difficult theory to grasp. At times being used in conjunction with other theories to help improved the general understanding of the nature of Source Credibility. The Sleeper Effect has been once such theory that has always been hand in hand when discussing Source Credibility. In the end, the study of Source Credibility will continue to be a topic of study with new findings and studies yet to be.

Two Step Flow Theory

The two-step flow theory was initially introduced in 1944 by Paul Lazarsfeld, Bernard Berelson, and Hazel Gaudet as a study of the Roosevelt vs. Dewey Presidential election performed on the decision making process throughout this campaign. In their quest to find support for the direct influence of media messages on voting intentions, they instead found that informal yet, personal contacts were mentioned far more frequently than exposure to radio or newspaper as sources of influence on voting behavior. Based on these findings, Lazarsfeld and Elihu Katz began constructing the two-step flow theory into what is still widely utilized today by communication theorists around the world.

Lazarsfeld and Katz study, titled "The People's Choice" (U. Twente, 2009), hypothesized that the researchers would find a direct influence of the media's messages on voting intentions. The theory emphasizes that information from the media progresses into two distinct steps. The initial step in the spreading of information consists of individuals who pay close attention to the media messages and then influences their own interpretations of the media content. These individuals are known as "opinion leaders" (U. Twente, 2009). "Personal influence" was the term chosen to refer to this process of intervening between the media's message and the audience's reaction to the message (Center for Interactive Learning, 2008). This personal influence has been found to be more effective than that of the media influence. As a result, this leads to opinion leaders becoming extremely persuasive in getting people to shift their attitudes in agreement with those they have an influence in. An example of opinion leaders would be Levi Strauss and the way he advertises his jeans or more importantly Samsung and how they utilize Beyonce Knowles to advertise their product. This theory has provided a new perspective on how the mass media influence public attitude, as well as helped to explain why some media messages may fail in attempts to change audience behavior. It also paved way the diffusion of innovations theory which was founded by

sociologist Everett M. Rogers in 1962. The theory supplements the two step flow theory in that it "predicts that media as well as interpersonal contacts provide information and influence opinion and judgment" (U. Twente, 2009). These theories have been applied to commercials in order to influence society in purchasing the product advertised.

Theory Application

Semiotics

Mass communication techniques utilize the power of colors in commercials to invoke desirable emotions from the viewing audience. The advertising agency for Samsung has represented this clearly using an assortment of colors tied to signifiers within this advertisement.

The first Beyonce that is seen by viewers is walking very provocative down a city street in a semi-casual outfit thus representing her sexuality and femininity. The outfit consists of a white shirt, blue jeans, and bright red high heels. These colors together patriotically corresponds to the American flag colors that signify "red symbolizes hardiness and valor… white symbolizes purity and innocence…blue represents vigilance, perseverance and justice" (Hughes, 2010). When such powerful colors are systematically placed together, it brings about meanings in a message.

In another scene, Beyonce is seen is in a black professional one piece dress suit coming out of the elevator with a briefcase symbolizing her status within the corporation. She represents a position of hierarchy by being able to execute orders over the phone to subordinates. Weaved throughout is the use of bright colored objects that foreshadow, placing emphasis on upcoming important details. The two color uses in this advertisement are red and yellow. "Color knowledge mediates object recognition and knowledge of an object's color can be more influential in the recognition of an object than the actual surface color of the object itself" (Joseph & Profitt, 1996).

One example of this color foreshadowing is when she is walking in front of storefront windows that are displaying a bright yellow and bright red dress that automatically draws the eye toward those colors. These bold yellow and red colors are each observed over ten times in the thirty second commercial. This foreshadows the bright yellow shirt of the last Beyonce yellow shirt when the final product is finally being presented. The multiple continual uses of utilizing bold colors assisted in making the connections throughout the commercial, contributing in capturing the audience's attention and being able to retain it until the end where the actual product gets introduced. The colors help to create a fond memory and relate it to an emotion oneness with the actresses' character that she portrays.

Agenda Setting Theory

Simply stated, the agenda-setting theory describes that the mass media has the ability to tell the public what issues they should focus on and think about unconsciously rather than telling them what to do directly. The Agenda Setting Theory also has been used commonly in advertising, focusing on consumers' attention on what values, products, brands, or attributes to think about rather than try to persuade consumers what to think of these (Sutherland and Galloway, 1981). One of the most common strategies to get the consumers' attention is to catch their eyes by using a specific sign with a message, which is called branding. This branding strategy is used in certain ways in the Ultra music F300 commercial setting agenda to improve trust with the public towards Samsung brand and Beyonce.

After the new Beyonce draws the phone to her ear and answers it as she continues on with her day, the commercial shows the phone flipped back and forth with "Imagine" logo. This logo promotes Samsung Electronics' brand marketing campaign kicked off since 2005. There are four major ads followed by the campaign, and the ads consist of all aspects of people's lives such as work, hobby, leisure, and relationship. According to Samsung' website, the "Imagine" campaign is sending a specific message that "You become captivated by functions and conveniences you never dreamed possible. Then suddenly you begin to feel the limitless possibilities, With SAMSUNG, it's not that hard to imagine" (Samsung.com). It basically implies that all products are designed only for YOU, so you are the only one who can imagine a fuller, more engaged and satisfying lifestyle, and Samsung helps make that happen. The Samsung's blue elliptical logo is also shown followed by a short jingle, which is used in most of Samsung commercials at the very end. The jingle is composed of only five familiar tones to make a simple melody, and the viewers' mind gets caught by the melody unconsciously. This image advertising is to produce gradual shifts in our perceptions of a brand with regard to a particular attribute. Even the small effects of advertising can influence which brand we choose especially when all other factors are equal and when alternative brands are much the same (Sutherland, 2000).

The brand campaign uses images that make the consumers consider the products from Samsung, and they will be likely to trust Samsung products when it comes to purchasing them. Followed by the aforementioned branding agenda, the commercial has another major agenda, promoting racial issues.

Beyonce is the true American success story she came from your normal middle class Texas family, and worked her way up from a pop star to a prominent business woman. Beyonce is proud of her African American culture, and definitely has an agenda of her own to portray races in commercials other than just Caucasian. Race is definitely something that our country has had problems with in the past, and even though things have changed for the better you still do not see that many minorities in television commercials, or even ads. During the interview with Larry King, Beyonce says, "Of course, definitely here, but it's getting better. I always try to focus on positive progress that we've made. Hopefully in couple of years, it won't exist" followed by the question whether she ever felt racism (CNN.com). Beyonce also includes other races in her commercials in a positive light. In the Samsung Ultra music

commercial Beyonce is surrounded by other African-Americans in various scenes. In the beginning of the commercial while Beyonce is walking down the street and singing she passes an African-American man who also looks very modernly dressed. This again happens when the commercial flashes to her in the business setting while she is walking and having a conversation about her business House of Dereon, in the background of the setting you see two very professionally dressed men talking. These features are also shown in Beyonce's other American Express commercial. She is surrounded by many African-Americans in her performance and business world except for the Caucasians: one is her assistant, and the other is a maid in a hotel room, implying that both are in lower position than Beyonce. This is something that is usually portrayed differently in American culture. Her commercials are part of an agenda to show a more tolerant American. Also, her implicit promotion during various interviews and performances also has impacted peoples' thinking about racial issues unknowingly.

In response to the question of singing for the President Barack Obama in inauguration on the evening of January 20, she calls it "the highlight of my career." Followed by the answer, she also says,

> I'm so proud. I never thought that I will see this moment. I'm very happy with the progress that our country as made. It is time, and it is here. We are all so fortunate to be here. We all feel like we can give back and be more involved. Now it's called to be involved and to do other things for other people. (CNN.com)

Her composure brought to the surface the reality of what had happened: We had elected a black man to be the President of the United States. By the time the song was over, Beyonce had become not just part of historical moment but the perfect symbol of it (Vogue.com).

Samsung use of Beyonce benefits both of their agendas, because they can reach a wider audience with someone like Beyonce, than they could with other performing artists. She can use her star power to promote an anti-racist message, which reflects back on Samsung as a more tolerant and modern company. This is all part of the advertisements plan to create public awareness about an important issue, that in turn makes the company as a whole look better, while promoting sales.

Source Credibility Theory

In this next section we are applying the theories of Source Creditability to what this study is focusing on, which is the Beyonce Knowles Samsung commercial advertising the Samsung Ultra Music F300. The first two items at hand to discuss are the Perceived Expertise and Trustworthiness of the Source in regards to Beyonce and Samsung.

Beyonce derives much of her perceived expertise from the fact she is a known movie actress and singer on the international scene of world entertainment. Beyonce's history in the music field speaks for itself, from being with Destiny's Child, to going ahead with her solo career

and marrying Husband Rapper renowned Shawn Corey Carter (*better know by his stage name Jay Z*).

Beyonce is also a successful business woman, owning and running the House of Dereon with her mother Tina Knowles. This is also significant to her perceived expertise, because when she is portraying her business side in the commercial she is not simply acting but really does operate an international clothing company. With this making Beyonce that more believable in the portrayal that a business person would use the Samsung F300.

As for Beyonce's ability to be a trustworthy source in the commercial, this is reconfirmed through the fact she has not had any negative media coverage over the course of her professional career. Her image is untarnished on both a professional and personal level. Her story is an inspiration, a real rags' to riches story. As a result of this, she is one of the most highly sought after individuals for product endorsement (having *contracts even with Pepsi and L'Oreal)* whom is not only trusted by the public but loved as well.

These attributes of Source Creditability in relation to Beyonce's Samsung Commercial and the initial thoughts derived from the commercial are the best when first seen and in subsequent viewings. However, it is through repeated exposure to the commercial that those attributes are re-enforced to the viewer. Thus, increasing the creditability of the source or Beyonce, which in turns helps to sell the Samsung product. We have to remember that the very nature of commercials is to ensure that viewers are exposed to the message at hand as many times as possible (*in many ways a hope that the commercial might go viral*). A commercial is not simply created to be seen once then disregarded, that would be counter productive to the reason why the commercial was created in the first place with Beyonce endorsing the Samsung F300.

Another topic that is worthy of note is that viewers are personally involved in the commercial. This is because cell phones have a social standing in society and at times represent socio-economic status. They represent an interest in people in concern to how they are viewed by others, the same way clothes or jewelry might have. So, because of this viewers would be more inclined to pay attention to the commercial because of its indirect influence on their social status.

Two Step Flow Theory

After creating the new and innovative Samsung F300 cell phone and Mp3 player, Samsung Electronics needed to find an opinion leader who would represent and advertise their product well. While searching for their spokesperson, Samsung Electronics was looking for someone who was well known and versatile as well as would advertise to a wide range of consumers. Samsung was able to find Beyonce Knowles who they considered "a talented individual who has shown her versatility in the entertainment industry through music, acting, and as a fashion icon" (Samsung, 2007). This led to the first step of the two-step flow theory as Samsung sent a message of innovation to Beyonce to influence her into advertising

their product in a commercial they came up with. Beyonce was then utilized as an opinion leader for Samsung and both set their sights on marketing this product to a wide range of consumers.

Charles Choi, Vice President of Samsung Mobile Philippines Business explains "Samsung is thrilled to be working with Beyonce because we share a lot in common – both have a strong passion for all music, video and entertainment, and are considered icons in our respective industries" (Samsung Electronics, 2007). Samsung was able to influence Beyonce into advertising their product for the reason that they believed both had common interests as well as aspired to make music come to life.

In the second step of the two-step flow, Beyonce took Samsung's message of innovation and was able to send her own message to her fans. When Beyonce's fans see the commercial they are immediately drawn in because they see her as a singer and a business woman. In the commercial she is shown as both a musician and business woman as her ring tone can be heard right before she answers the phone to deal with her fashion line business. These two communication strategies are utilized in the commercial to advertise Samsung's innovative phone as well as show Beyonce as the opinion leader for the commercial.

In essence, Samsung and Beyonce worked together in influencing viewers of their commercial to buy their products. They applied the communication theories of two-step flow and the diffusion of innovation in order to effectively market their products. This shows the theory's created by Lazarsfeld, Katz, and Everett M. Rogers many years ago are still widely used by communication theorists around the world.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of Beyonce as both singer and business woman in Samsung Ultra Music F300 phone commercial. The commercial was examined through the history of the company, the creation and methodology of creating the commercial using four theories of study: Semiotics, Agenda Setting Theory, Source Credibility Theory, and Two Step Flow Theory. Through these four theories we were able to show that Samsung successfully increased trust with the public by using Beyonce as a spokeswoman.

Semiotic patterns devised and delivered by biased advertisers show how all colors used in the commercial can be analyzed and that those colors are intentionally to manipulate the viewers' perceptions.

The Agenda-Setting Theory demonstrates that this commercial, along with Samsung's brand campaign and Beyonce' racial promotion, influences the audience's perceptions and trust towards the image of Samsung. It basically increases unconscious perception, built by the frequent media exposure, to the products offered by Samsung. The Source Credibility Theory focuses on the ability of Beyonce to connect with her audience and gain their trust. The two

components that make up this audience trust are based off her perceived expertise and trustworthiness as a spokeswoman for Samsung. Through this trust a relationship is formed between Beyonce and her audience increasing not only sales but also the believability of the product to the public.

Lastly, the Two Step Flow Theory analyzes the idea that Beyonce, as an opinion leader, obtains information from Samsung and sends the message of information to the audiences in general. Beyonce' message is to connect the product with her fashion iconic image and to promote racial issues implicitly.

Samsung Ultra Music F300 Phone commercial was created intentionally edgy in the creative process to the media aftermath to create a marketing scheme to bring attention to the company and in particular Beyonce Knowles. Through analyzing this commercial, we were able to uncover substantial evidence that it was not simply an advertisement designed to raise viewers' awareness toward the image of Samsung, but a potentially racial promotion of Beyonce. This is important because it emphasizes the influential powers of the media as a whole, and raises the general awareness to look for hidden agendas in all advertisements.

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Gathering of Voices | Student Anthology of Writing & Art, Whatcom Community College

Chao Chen

Natural

Watercolor, 10" x 14.25"

Gathering of Voices | Student Anthology of Writing & Art, Whatcom Community College

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Watercolor, 10" x 14.25"

Phantasm: The Illusory Nature of the Gothic Genre

Diane Chapman

In its original trailer, the theme of Don Coscarelli's 1978 film *Phantasm* is posed in a series of questions: "Phantasm. Is it a nightmare? …is it an illusion? …is it an evil? …is it a fantasy? …Is it alive?" It does not answer its own questions, but sums up by stating, "Whatever it is… if this one doesn't scare you, you're already dead." Based in a small town in America and played out through the life of an orphaned thirteen-year-old boy, the story of Phantasm is one about the boundaries between life and death, and the fragility of reality. Michael is desperately attached to his older brother Jody, as they were orphaned by the deaths of their parents before the film's beginning. When Michael follows his brother to a friend's funeral he stays after the service and is witness to The Tall Man; the name given to the mortician of Morningside funeral home and cemetery. The boy watches as The Tall Man lifts the coffin of the recently deceased out of the grave alone (a feat that would demand the strength of six men) and carts it away in his hearse. In his further investigations, Michael is chased by hooded dwarves, floating silver balls with drills that can bury deep within their victim's head and drain away their blood, and of course, The Tall man himself. After proving to Jody and his friend Reggie that something sinister is happening, the three team-up to figure out how to defeat The Tall Man.

Phantasm has always been called a classic of the Horror film genre. But in creating an iconic gothic figure in The Tall Man (a legendary performance by respected stage actor, Angus Scrimm), by presenting the permeability of the boundaries between reality and nightmare, and by reflecting the anxieties of humanity, the filmmaker has made a distinctly Gothic film that keeps its audience in suspense as to the truth. The open-ended question, "what is phantasm?" is the underlying theme which characterizes the film as Gothic through and through.

The mortician of a funeral home and a haunt of cemeteries and nightmares, The Tall Man is a new iconic figure, a manifestation of the unknown and of death. As Misha Kavka explained in her essay "Gothic on screen,"

> For instance, the central figure of the gothic, …has traditionally been some form of the undead, the revenant, the corpse, or a patchwork or corpses brought back to life. As the Gothic so chillingly seeks to remind us, the boundary between life and death is not forever fixed; it may not be the one-way passage that we would like rationally to believe. (Kavka 211)

In the same way that Frankenstein's monster breached scientific borders between life and death and Dracula made a mockery of human mortality, so The Tall Man makes a mockery of human mortality *by* crossing the borders between life and death in his reaping of graves to

make slaves to do his bidding. Both historic Gothic figures' superhuman abilities left humans inferior by comparison and The Tall Man is an exception only in that he is a modern figure who also defies what is real and makes everyone inferior in his stature and strength.

In the 1818 novel *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley, the title character is an obsessive young man, bent on overcoming death due to his own fears of it, instilled in him by his mother's death, as a precursor to his transition to a world of science. In his seclusion and submersion into the world of the dead, he successfully pieces corpses back together and re-animates the tissue to create a being that crossed the boundary of death, returning to life. Upon completing his creation, Frankenstein finally comprehends the perversion he has given life to, and abandons it in fear. Perhaps since the creature's existence is itself defiant of human capability to cross that line, it is bestowed with capabilities exceeding that of humans by doing so. However you explain these traits, when Frankenstein confronts the creature again in the story, he is able to recognize its inhuman qualities even at a distance, due to his inhuman maneuverability.

> As I said this, I suddenly beheld the figure of a man, at some distance, advancing towards me with superhuman speed. He bounded over the crevices in the ice, among which I had walked with caution; his stature also, as he approached, seemed to exceed that of man. (Shelley 67)

The creature's strength, speed, and height "seemed to exceed that of man," as does The Tall Man's, illustrating the dominant/submissive fears between humanity and that which we fear to be "super" human and therefore able to apply these in their control of us.

In Bram Stoker's 1897 novel *Dracula*, we are introduced to another being stronger than its human characters, which surpasses limitations upon humanity. Count Dracula is an ancient vampire who does not eat except to drink the blood of the living, controls animals and thereby seems to be more closely aligned with them, and casts no shadow, since he is the manifestation of what otherwise would be hidden from sight. While preying upon London, he is seen in many different forms. Whether or not the characters who witness this recognize him while disguised, the readers know it is him. Whether he is seen as a bat, flapping his wings at his victims' window, as mist and moonlight, trickling through cracks and filling a room until he resumes solid form, we know him to be capable of bending physical laws to his impose his will. A victim of Dracula's feeding quickly succumbs to what appears to be mysterious illness and dies, only to return as an infantile vampire who also preys upon the living and becomes servant to Dracula.

The Tall Man of *Phantasm* is also able to change the form he takes and does so in order to overcome a victim. Assuming the smaller, seductive figure of a beautiful blonde woman in a lavender dress, he lures men into the cemetery and stabs them. Like Bram Stoker's Dracula-- although most The Tall Man's victims are usually already dead--we see the motif of those we loved transformed by these "superhumans" into something monstrous. The bodies of The Tall Man's victims are crushed to the size of dwarves, yet still weigh the same and bear some facial resemblance (although their faces are shadowed in hoods) to the humans they were.

This suggests that The Tall Man has control over not only his own shape but also the physical world, and uses that control to enforce his will over those around him. This puts humans at a submissive level to The Tall Man, representative of his power to diminish them to living pawns under his control.

 Central to both of these novels' iconic figures is their embodiment of death's presence in life. This is also central to modern Gothic villains, such as J.K. Rowling's Voldemort in *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*. As humans--or wizards as in the *Harry Potter* series-- our most instinctual fear is of death. And for the thirteen-year-old main characters Michael and Harry, the deaths of their parents begin their story. Death, as part of each character's infancy, comes from the past and begins existing in the present with the appearance of The Tall Man or the attempts of Lord Voldemort to re-establish his power. Death, for both characters, always holds sway over the future in its inevitable nature. Like death itself, both The Tall Man and Voldemort seem unbeatable.

Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban is the third installment in the story of an orphan boy who lives a harsh life with his involuntary guardians and relatives, the Dursleys. Until he discovers that he is a wizard, who will attend a school for young wizards called Hogwarts. With this he learns the truth of his parent's death at the hand of

Lord Voldemort, the darkest wizard that ever lived, which he mysteriously survived.

Voldemort lurks in the realm between "dead" and "alive" throughout much of the Harry Potter series, as we never know if he "died" in the way mortals do. All that is known is that Voldemort's attack was somehow rebounded upon himself when he tried to kill Harry, and that he fell from power and sight. Even in this he defies even the typical "reality" of death. But his presence is felt throughout each and every year of Harry's life and he resurfaces in many forms, always beaten back only to return in another way. The Tall Man certainly also begs to be defined as "undead', as he can be wounded yet regenerates, can be buried, yet always returns once more to enslave the dead. Kavka describes the nature of Gothic to be centered on the ability to return from somewhere humans are incapable of returning from: "What the Gothic insists on ... is a speaking from the "beyond" in the form of a figure that arrives from beyond the present, beyond the grave, or beyond the rational, material world" (Kavka 226). While both characters are exemplary of this, Harry Potter eventually learns all about how Voldemort came to be what he is. The Tall Man is never explained as returned in terms of "beyond the grave," but from "beyond" the present, rational world. In his superhuman abilities, his enslavement of the re-animated dead, and his return from somewhere beyond our rational understanding, The Tall Man emulates the iconic Gothic of Frankenstein, Dracula, or Voldemort but is all the more frightening, as he lacks explanation.

The supernatural is also presented in *Phantasm*. It suggests a lurking threat in the shadows and spaces of the tangible world. Through its expressionist lighting that heightens angle to illustrate tension and conflict, its deep shadows that suggest what you can't see that could be there, and its form-fitted Gothic settings of the cemetery and the invaded/haunted home, it

creates a familiar world that begins to look unfamiliar. However, the use of tangible tools and power of the mind completely undercut the very tangibility of the world it is manipulating. Magic begins to have sway, from fortune telling and dreams, to tools like dimensional portals. What is really happening is always in question. As Michael becomes more conflicted due to The Tall Man's attack on his town, the world becomes a less and less certain place until what he thought was real becomes a dream and the dream becomes reality.

What could be a more Gothic setting to open with than that of the shadow-strewn cemetery? And while this is an overused and now stereotypical setting for the Gothic, as it is used in *Frankenstein* (the tombs and graves of the dead that Frankenstein pillages for material for his experiments) and *Dracula* (cemetery watches over Lucy's grave which lead to the discovery that she has become a vampire), it has since retained its disturbing quality. This is because it remains a trigger of humanity's fear of death. As such, it's an apt setting for our introduction to The Tall Man, and one obvious to film with shadows, yet throughout the film the use of light and darkness artfully conveys the fluctuating state of reality and the supernatural. Kavka recognized the role of spatial dynamics and the contrast between shadows and light in her essay:

> Casting shadows is one way of manipulating space, either by taking something of human dimensions and recasting it in an extended, larger-than-life form that exerts menacing control, or by using shadows to create planes in space, so that the shadow serves as a metaphor for what lurks in another plane. (Kavka 214)

The scenes of the "plane of existence" as Michael knows life and reality to take place in are highlighted by the daylight and open sky suggesting that the world is just as it appears to be, with nothing to hide. But any scenes in which Michael seems to address the boundary of reality and magic, we are immediately brought away from light into the shadows. These shadows are "creat[ing] planes in space" that encroach on the established reality and suggest another.

This is also symbolic of the end of Michaels' "established reality" of having parents, and the frightening world that is living without them. His fear of losing his family dominates the film, and is a large reason that the film is explicitly Gothic. In one scene, he visits Grandmother, a blind mute woman who tells fortunes via her granddaughter. This is a situation that lends weight to the power of magic outside of The Tall Man's. In this scene, Michael exhibits a kind of clairvoyance himself--though it being clairvoyance is unknown to the audience at this point--in sensing that Jody is "leaving" and ask Grandmother to tell him if that's true. Grandmother assures him that if Jody leaves, he'll take Michael with him. Knowing Michael's fear is of being left behind, she also warns him about the power of his fear. "Fear is the killer," he is told.

This is a strong lesson for young main character of *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* as well. In this third year of Harry's wizard life, he learns that a great dark wizard named Sirius Black who once served under Lord Voldemort has broken out of Azkaban, the

wizard prison that no one has ever broken out of before, and that he is personally out to kill Harry for destroying the Dark Lord's reign. In order to protect the school from Sirius, the guards of Azkaban (cloaked mystical creatures called "dementors") are placed around the school grounds. The dementors effect humans by feeding off of their happiness and amplify the emotions of fear and desperation to a incapacitating degree. As Harry is confronted by them accidentally on several occasions, he begins learning how to defend himself. But the only way to fight them is to conjure a strong enough happy memory to use as a shield against this attack. The mind's power to focus on one memory that's strong enough to manifest from his wand and defend him is a constant struggle, as Harry continually hears the screams of his dying mother whenever near a dementor.

Michael's fear is tested similarly by Grandmother, after he reports seeing The Tall man taking the casket. A black box appears from nowhere and he is instructed to place his hand inside. After some convincing, he obeys and almost immediately exclaims in pain, panicking because he's unable to remove his hand. It isn't until he is told, "Don't fear," and calms himself that he is freed. If this suggests that something as intangible as thought can hold sway in physical reality, the definition of what is real and what isn't remains suspended. The power of thought working for or against you becomes a strong detail in the film's ending, which leaves its conclusion just as illusory as a fleeting memory, feeling or dream.

If the power of thought can hold physical sway, then the film's use (and The Tall Man's) of physical objects to control the metaphysical/dimensional furthers the "blurring of boundaries between self and other" (Kavka 226), and between natural and supernatural. In a halcyon scene between Jody and Reggie where they bond by playing some music together, the happiness is punctuated by an odd fixed shot of Reggie striking his tuning fork, and an abrupt cut as Reggie silences it. At the time the significance is unknown, but as the film is reaching its climax we recognize a similar "tuning fork."

The three have infiltrated the mortuary in attempt to destroy The Tall Man and come upon a room whose purpose mystifies them. Where previously the film's shadows and light have ebbed and flowed, here the room is cast in a brightness exceeding any else in the film. Light floods in from the ceiling and floors, and stacked against the walls are odd barrels of a strange metal that contain bodies about to be shipped off for transformation into servants of the Tall Man. In the center of the room stand two silver cylinder poles, similar to the forks of Reggie's guitar tuner. When Michael gets near, a force pulls him through the invisible gateway they outline and finds himself falling towards the surface of a rocky terrain below a violently red sky, where a train of dwarves cart the barrels into the horizon. Pulled back by Jody, Michael returns, but from where? Was it another planet, another dimension, or an underworld? This question is never definitively answered. But if shadows have suggested hidden worlds, then the extreme lighting suggests a highlighted, unhidden alternate reality, and these "rods" seem to be the gateway. The Tall Man seems to be able to manipulate both

Michael's world and this alternate reality, which he is set on condemning them to. Also significant is that, as a tool, anyone may use it. The Tall Man is not alone in his ability to flex reality or break it, and this is also significant in the film's ending.

The conclusion of Phantasm reinstates the entire film as even more definitively Gothic, as it is removed from the laws of reality entirely with its surprise ending. What it instead falls back on is the power of humanity's (specifically Michael's) "anxieties from within" (Kavka 213) to shape the world. His anxieties, from the beginning of the movie, are based on loss of family relationships. From the death of his parents to his paranoia that Jody will be "leaving" him, this loss is immediately tied in with his fear of death, the death of his innocence, and of isolation.

Fred Botting suggests in his essay "Aftergothic: consumption, machines, and black holes" that Gothic originated as a means to reflect and encourage a return to family order and paternal authority. But as we have moved into a postmodern culture, "Gothic images and horrors seem less able to restore boundaries by allowing the projection of a missing unifying (and paternal) figure" (Botting 281). *Phantasm* is no exception, as the story is about an orphan. Like the "ultimate evil" of Harry Potter, Michael's anxieties take on a morbid version of that paternal order for the main character: "The paternal metaphor is formal and not substantial in its operations: different figures can assume its function (God, father, teacher, priest, etc.) in acts of "imposture" (Botting 282). Voldemort and The Tall Man have extreme influence over Harry and Michael's lives respectively; since the beginning they seem personally connected and almost to challenge and define each other by this challenge. "Imposing," as it seems, in crude roles of father or guide.

This challenge is of good versus evil, the innocent versus the villainous; a long established Gothic plot device. As *Phantasm* climaxes, good triumphs as Michael and Jody lure The Tall Man to an abandoned mine shaft where they bury him, one thousand feet into the earth. But Michael wakes up from the happy ending to learn that Jody died a week ago in a car accident, that this story has only been a nightmare.

> The symbolic structure depends on the identification of those positioned within it and is underpinned, not by any positive content, but by a fundamental absence, gap, or lost object providing a locus of projection and subjective fantasy." (Botting 282-83)

Even as Reggie holds him close and promises to take care of him, that everything will be okay, that the Tall Man doesn't exist, Michael (and the audience) can't quite swallow that this is true. However, looking at The Tall Man as a symbol for the inevitability of death in all our lives (the "fundamental absence" Michael is still dealing with) in a dream, does makes sense for a grieving boy of thirteen. The Tall Man's role as the one unearthing the dead is a representation of the disinterred past. In Jody's recent death, the death of his parents in fresh again, and adds to the pain of this new loss. Therefore, in Michael's dream, Jody is alive

and they team up to defeat the man who digs up the past (the pain of death in the family) by "re-burying" him. The idea that it was a nightmare from the mind of a grieving child makes logical sense. What is never made explicit sense of is what happens then.

In the final scene, Michael stands alone in his room, looking down at Jody's picture, coming to grips with his death and Michael's consequent isolation. As he closes the door, a mirror on the back reveals The Tall Man, waiting for him. "BOY!" he threatens, seconds before the hands of his slaves break *through* the mirror, shattering Michael's view of reality once again and pulling him through into the other side. This final collapse of "reality" cements the story as Gothic. It is not only the fact that the entire film is a tug-of-war between the natural and the supernatural. It is that it never answers the question posed by the film's title. *Is* it a nightmare? The ending suggests that the Tall Man is a real, though supernatural, being who can break through dimensional barriers in order to harvest humanity. Or is it an illusion? If power of thought and anxieties from within really do hold sway over our realities, couldn't it all easily be a nightmare within a nightmare?

What is frightening and essentially Gothic about *Phantasm* is "precisely that we *cannot* see, which has metaphorical and affective import…. Whatever is dwarfed or shadowed or half-concealed is marked out as being something more than representation can fully encompass… The beyond is thus not strictly a thing but the very permeability of the shadow-thin boundary, and always existing 'in-between-state' potentially arousing paranoia." (Kavka 227) Reminiscent of Henry James' *The Turn of the Screw* whose young governess believes the children in her care are being haunted by their previous caretakers, it has an abrupt ending that leaves no room for resolve or clarification. Though the governess can see the ghost, no other adult can and the children will not directly admit to it. Whether or not she had imagined the possession of the children is never made clear. The frightening aspect to both "Turn of the Screw" and *Phantasm* is that they never deny the unknown, but rather lets the audience see both the real and the unimaginable existing in the same plane to suggest that this co-existence is possible, not that it necessarily is reality. But the possibility is enough to terrify.

> "Is it an evil? Is it a fantasy? Is it alive? Whatever it is, if this one doesn't scare you, you're already dead." (Phantasm trailer)

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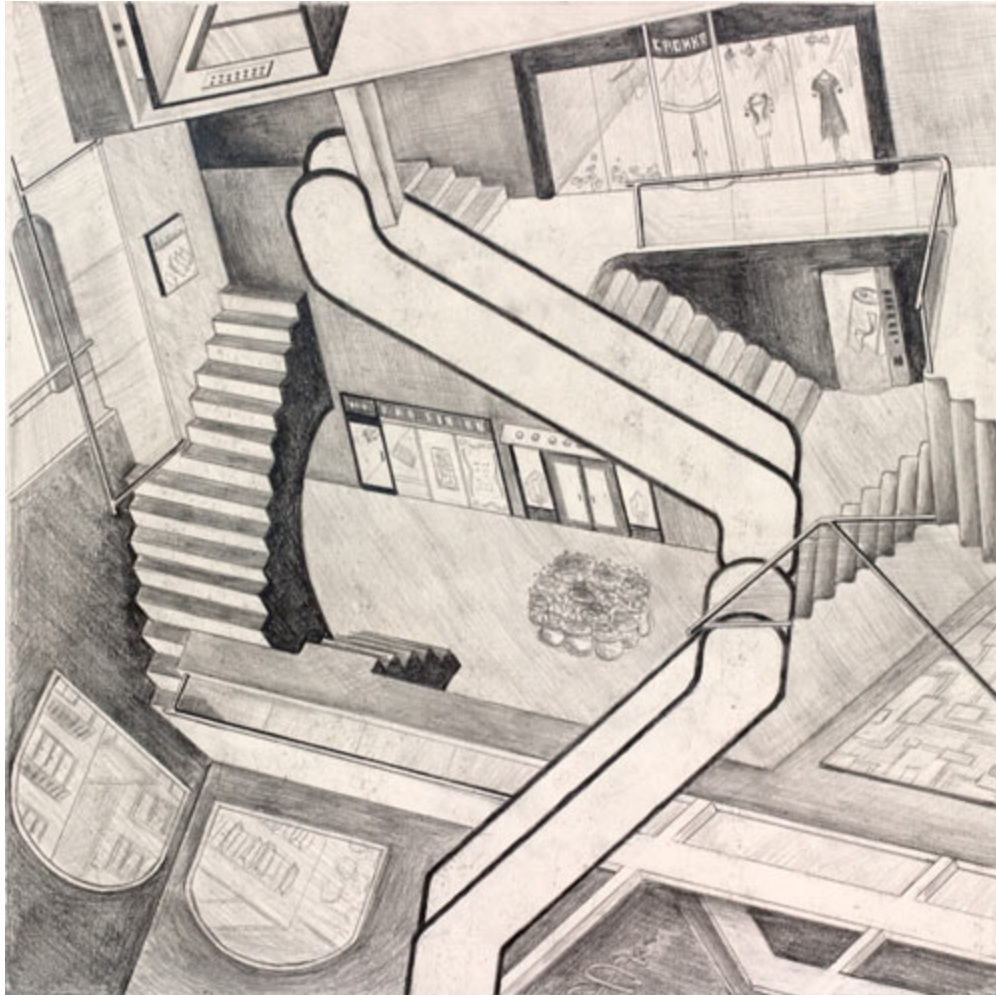
Wai Leong Chan

Relativity–Shopping Mall,
after M.C. Escher

Pencil, 11.8" x 11.8"

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Alla Lysikov

Metamorphosis

Pastel, 24" x 18"

Vending Machine

🌐 **noisywater.whatcom.edu**/site_0910/pages_0910/12essay.html

Hung Nguyen

The man put a coin into a machine and pressed some buttons, and a can of coca cola rolled out for everyone. That was a show at the fair nine years ago in my country, Vietnam. At the time, it was welcomed as a new technique and a wonderful thing that will change our old-fashioned, buy-sell habits. But after seven years, there are still only about ten machines in my home city, a city with over ten million people. Coming to America, I have seen these machines everywhere. Vending machines service Americans effectively, and have become accustomed to by most Americans.

As most McDonaldized systems; in America, vending machines have got a high effect on commercial area. An owner can run a lot of machines, and they only need to hire one worker who can manage at least one hundred machines (I guess). All profit, of course, is poured back to their owner. There are some machines even inside supermarkets, even though if we walk several feet into the store, there is a much cheaper price. Why do Americans buy food from this machine?

In America, time is money. Individuals always rush for business, so taking a snack when you are hungry is a good choice at the vending machines. The goods are prepared simple and stable. Customers, even a kid, can guess how much they need to pay for an item. Customers only look at symbols, numbers, and signs to decide what they need, and in only five seconds, the customer can buy their foods from machine. They can experience a snack quickest. And in winter, under the cold weather outside, these machines will be useful for most people who are often lazy to prepare meals at home. The money is less than a half hour average income of Americans; they will buy cake, candy and soft drink for a snack. So why haven't vending machines become more popular in my country?

One reason is that owners need to invest a lot of money at one time for all machines. With so much money available and the high technologic development in America, it is very easy to invest in the machines as well as maintain them, while it is a difficult task in my country. In fact, Americans always invent new techniques to serve people, and most people are also easy to accept and perform a new technique even though it's changing ancient habits. As in "Technopoly", Postman stated that, "A new technology does not add or subtract something. It changes everything." (Postman18). Really, science has been changing everything. Inventing a new technology and accepting it easily is one of active characteristics that helps the USA develop fast. However, in Vietnam, it is a little bit difficult to accept a new tech that will be able to change ancient customs. Most people are always suspect of what is high tech. That is one reason why vending machine couldn't be accepted in my country.

In addition, there is a bigger reason for our disuse of vending machine though. In Vietnam, small shops for food or some drink are often run by housewives or disabled persons. They can't find a job to support themselves. In my developing country, unemployment and disabled individuals aren't able to be supported by government. Therefore, they make food at their home similar to what vending machines sell for customer and that is a worthwhile income for their life. People enjoy supporting those store's owners. These owners have to be responsible to their customers and can take pride in running their own business. These small stores are also interesting places for people in the neighborhood to communicate together; they come to this small shop not only to buy and eat food, but they also discuss everything happening in society. When we buy foods at those stores, we create an income for these people. And they feel welcomed by the community and believe they can be useful and good for society. This is important thing and a reason people don't want to change to the vending machine.

While high tech has been helping America run business effectively, all the inventions have poured money into the pockets of big bosses. Vending machine chains, for instance, had operated and become popular everywhere on the whole of USA, and we think that these new techniques have liberated humans and given them much more free time than they had. Looking at nice and modern machines, we will see one America developing wonderfully. However, applying a new technique, we will also analyze their pros and con factors. As in "Technopoly," Neil Postman argues that we don't understand how technology can affect society and that there usually end up losers. In addition to this, and more important, it is not always clear, at least in the early stages of a technology's intrusion into a culture, who will gain most by it and who will lose most" (Postman 12). Usually, it is the poor who lose most though. In fact, if we go to the unemployment or welfare office, we will see a lot of people who maybe would not need to get benefits from the government if they had not lost their job because of high tech. These people are often considered as disabled or "lazy" persons. High tech capitalism has clearly split society people into two polar sides. The richer employers use high tech, so the fewer employees will be hired, and in time, the workers will become unemployed. In the USA, these workers who don't have employment are looked down upon by everyone and frowned at for their actions. People in my country talk to poor and disable while America sees them as invisible.

I used to go to a small store in Ferndale (I read in newspaper it is a farm market) and was surprised when it was a small food store as similar as in my country (therefore, I think it is an old buy-sell habit of Americans before, too). I also saw two customers (husband and his spouse) choosing goods in there. Although there are not many goods in that store, those customers stayed in store a long time and talking to the seller until my family left. And there, they only accepted cash similar to my country. Furthermore, I asked myself, how many stores are there in America that stays this way with human connection even though they are not efficient? Now when I read essays "Technopoly" and "McDonaldization," and the ideas of efficient and always more convenience advancing fast in America, I wonder how long until these farm markets will become our memories? Some day, perhaps we will only read it in the

books. I ask myself when vending machine will develop with more and more choice and convenience and have many functions more that they were having. Do we always accept efficient over the traditional? Will small farm market with organic products exist or not?

When traveling to other states in America, it is as similar as McDonald chains. I saw vending machines appearing everywhere with the same kind, the same symbol, the same service. Therefore, I am not afraid of the food and drink they provided and know ahead of time how everything will taste. That is a successful business way of this machine. However, the sad part is I miss being surprised or experiencing new things. Everything are similar. On our trip, it would be nice to find new and local culture to attract us when traveling in this boring industrial world. It is a clear consequence of industrial chains that have being developed in the USA. These days, we can see many stores as McDonalds, Subway, Cold Stone, etc everywhere, but very few businesses with unique culture and personality.

I like most how Postman says we should approach technology. He states," When we admit a new technology to the culture, we must do so with our eyes wide open." (Postman 7) Americans idealize technology almost to the point of foolishness. Every technology has effects no one can predict, and it affects what our culture knows and values. Even the big benefit technology has negative that balance it. For instance, when computers were introduced to my country, the government was hesitant to accept them. Consequently, until 1990, there were only a few computers at the biggest medical university in Vietnam. In the last years of twentieth century, computers became the value machine of families. We often wished to own a computer at home. To develop high tech, the government decided to import computers into my country and connect towns to the internet. In some way, it is benefit, but they have been becoming a big problem in society, too. Beside the effective functions, they have become the worry of the whole society. The "bad web" as well as addiction games on line has been ruining our children. It is also a problem for American children. Although parents try, they often can't get their kids to leave computer for homework. Computers and the internet have been changing the ancient culture of my Asian country. In "Technopoly", Postman quotes a letter from Sigmund Freud in which he talks about the negative impact of technology that he witnessed in his life. Freud admits that technologies such as railroads and telephones have made communication and travel easier, but notes that "if there had been no railway to conquer distance, my child would never have left his native town and I should need no telephone to hear his voice."(qtd. in Postman 8). Therefore, we always remember that all of things have pros and con facets; in new tech, besides accepting new things, we have to warn and prevent negative factors caused by these new techniques.

From a simple technology, vending machines have succeeded commercially in the USA. They have moved us to a new habit little by little, and it has become accustomed to by everybody. Beside a small advantage of convenience, they are part of a system to change our traditional buy-sell habits form personal to technological. Is it good for our world when scientists always develop higher techniques to serve human and be more efficient always, so we don't need to talk each other or communicate about market and food. Maybe in several decades more, we

will see that most restaurants have become vending machine forms without anybody serving at them. No cook, no waitress, no conversation between people. All will be set up automatically. Communication will become a strange notion for all of us. That is the world of machines and contracts.

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noisywater.whatcom.edu/site_0910/pages_0910/13art.html

Rachel Smith

Close enough to touch

Pastel, 18" x 24"

Partners in Learning – Margaret Cooper and Ozzie

Carol Hogan

Do you know Ozzie Cooper—a stand-out at Whatcom Community College? Maybe you've passed him in a crowded hallway walking with his best friend, Margaret Cooper, from class to class. Maybe you've noticed him during class, lying quietly under the desk, his long, wavy, gold hair complimented by a bright blue jacket with the words "Brigadoon" embroidered on the side. He looks friendly, with what could be a sly smile as he winds his way single-mindedly through the hallway close by Cooper's side. When he and Cooper approach the heavy double doors leading outside, like any gentleman with good manners, he reaches out and pushes the handicap button for her with his paw.

Did you say paw?

Yes. Because Ozzie is a three-year-old golden retriever service dog who lives with Cooper, 24, and escorts her to school each day on the bus, napping under her desk while she's in class. (Sometimes he snores.)

Cooper's search for the perfect dog to match her needs wasn't easy, and finding Ozzie took time.

"It takes about four years just to get a dog," she said of the process that begins with an application packet requiring, among other things, reference letters and a doctor's recommendation. Next a first visit is scheduled where the trainer introduces applicant and canine in an attempt to match the applicant's needs with the dog's ability.

"Each dog requires two years of nurturing and training before they can be placed with their human...you train with them and they don't graduate until they're two years old," Cooper said of Ozzie, who graduated last year from Brigadoon Youth and Service Dog Programs, in Bellingham, while Cooper is still working on her transfer degree, in quantum physics, from Whatcom.

But their training together is never ending. "It's always a process to keep learning and growing with each other," she said. "It's a good, slow process."

The Brigadoon website says "it's all about the right personality and the bond between..." applicant and dog.

 "They (the trainer) see your needs, and then you go with the dogs out to train," said Cooper, who needs Ozzie for her chronic pain caused by a neurovascular disorder. Ozzie guards her sensitive right side and when people get too close, such as in a crowded Whatcom hallway, she can ask him to hold his stance, either with quiet commands or by leash signals and he takes the brunt of people bumping into her. Sometimes she drops things because her hand "locks up." Never fear, so far Ozzie has been able to pick up everything she's dropped including pencils, papers and boxes. "He (even) brings my shoes," she said.

Before Ozzie, it was much harder for her. Often, just petting him can relieve the pain. "I can pat him and just relax, and what not," she said.

The kind of dog she requires must have the ability to keep pace with her and Ozzie is very good at leading. If Cooper changes pace, he must be willing to do exactly what she needs, without force. When asked if the two hit it off right away, she replies "He's pretty loving, so he's willing, but it's more of what he can do and how we work together." Ozzie has a stubborn streak and at the end of a long day working day can be peevish. When she first got him, Ozzie would run away when she tried to board the bus. Mastering the handicap button on Whatcom's doors took a lot of tries; "if it didn't work he'd stop trying. I would have to go around the building, going to each door and making him open it to figure it out. Now he's on to it totally," she said.

Her biggest obstacles are people related. Dog lovers are naturally inclined to reach out and pet him, but that's a real no-no since he's not allowed to be petted while working.

"It's more of a problem for others because they want to touch him and they think it's sad that they can't touch him all the time," Cooper said. But practically speaking, he could trip her if he reaches for a person across from her. Others giving him dog treats is another problem because it might lead him to take food off plates in a restaurant, which could get her kicked out.

Ozzie has special needs too. He's a cat lover so Cooper got him a cat of his own. "I had to get him one because he likes cats so much he kept running after them," she said. Now he has his own cat and they sleep in the same bed.

Cooper's passion is learning and while she couldn't become the doctor she hoped to because of her disabilities, she has completed one of her goals -- to get her phlebotomy certificate. "It was a good testament to what I could do."

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Abby Chapman

Sorrow

Graphite, 17" x 20"

Is Lying an Ethical Alternative to Self-disclosure?

Michael Handron

Introduction

My objective for this paper is to truthfully and objectively answer the question "Is lying an ethical alternative to self-disclosure" by sharing my thoughts, opinions and insights drawn from my own life experiences and learnings from this class. In order to gain more insight, I tracked my own lies for a week and made notes on the significance of the lies I told. I also kept notes on lies that were told to me (that I was able to determine). In addition, I watched five episodes of a popular sitcom and kept a tally of the lies told in those episodes. Some of the lessons learned from these exercises were instrumental to my final answer which I will discuss in the conclusion of this paper.

Part One: Catharsis

To begin, I will start with a catharsis of sorts. In our textbook Looking Out/Looking In, Catharsis is listed as the first benefit of Self-Disclosure. What follows is the first entry on my list of personal lies:

> *"Today, November second 2007, I told the first lie of my project. I think it's appropriate that this first lie was told to my communications teacher Martha by way of e-mail. I told Martha that I could not attend her class because I needed to take a shift at my work, when in fact, I just did not want to attend class and listen to my classmates give a presentation and watch a movie that I have already seen. My justification for the lie is that I have three other computer lab classes that need my attention, and I can also start to watch the television shows required for the research aspect of this paper. While I think this is a very valid justification, I can't help but wonder how telling the truth in this situation would portray me in the eyes of Martha. Would I be seen as a "bad" student for not supporting my classmates and participating in the discussions of the day? Or rather, would I be seen as wise to budget my limited time effectively by missing one class that is not (in my grand scheme) too important? The possible consequence of my lie will be that Martha will take note of my absence as a sign of not being involved with the class work, and in turn affecting my participation grade. 1"*

This intentional lie was my first step in answering the question "Is lying an ethical alternative to self-disclosure?" As with many questions, the answer is not always as simple as yes or no, but rather in degrees of right or wrong depending on your perspective. While I can easily justify missing a class to myself, can I just as easily justify lying about missing class to my instructor? Why did I feel the need to lie?

These questions have made me think about the many different perspectives, rationales and judgments that accompany the lies we tell to others and ourselves. In the case of my first lie, I was dealing with some of the common risks of self-disclosure. I felt the biggest risk to managing my self image was giving a negative impression to my instructor. Self-disclosing that I had "more important" things to do than attend her class that day would surely not go over well and I would risk the consequence of hurting my instructor's feelings. I would also potentially hurt my final participation grade in the class.

Our book brings up some guidelines for self-disclosure. One guideline being, "Is the Risk of Disclosing Reasonable?" By revealing this deception to my instructor in this paper, I believe that I am opening myself up to reasonable risk because I don't think that my transgression was a major one. Another question posed is "Will the Effect Be Constructive?" In this case, I think the disclosure is very constructive because it is helping me to illustrate what is involved with my decision of when and where to self-disclose, and for what purpose (I can only hope that my instructor shares my views!)

The main question of this paper is dealing with the ethics of lying. Ethics is defined as conforming to accepted standards of conduct. Was my conduct in lying to my instructor ethical? I believe this is a matter of opinion and perspective. There is no rule in the class syllabus that states "You are not allowed to lie to your instructor", but by the same token, it is understood that lying is "bad" or "wrong". In this case, I equate my lie to someone calling in sick to work when they are not. This is something that almost everyone has done at some point (or many times!) in their life. The ethics of this behavior can be debated to exhaustion, but the fact remains that for the majority of society, the taking of a "sick day" is perfectly acceptable. It is this social acceptance that makes the behavior fall under the umbrella of an ethically accepted standard of conduct.

I should note that I balance this opinion with the fact that in my job as a retail manager, I have been on the other side of this type of deception with one employee ("Jane") in particular. She has called out sick on numerous occasions and crossed the line of the acceptable amount of sick days 38,39,40. In her case, it did affect me personally because I had to spend time in my busy day to get her shift covered and protect the day's business. What was interesting and frustrating, was the fact that I discovered her deception because of a posting she made on Facebook. Had she not been my "Friend" on Facebook, I would not have been completely sure about her deception. As a consequence of this experience, I have lost trust with her as an employee and de-friended her and a few other employees as well.

Once the lines of friend and employee have been blurred, it becomes much more difficult to manage interpersonal relationships in the workplace. I have chosen to re-evaluate who I invite into my online world and make sure that my online friends don't become a liability to my real world existence.

Part 2: Lies at Work

I have always had a self perception that I am an honest person and generally believe that I don't make a habit of lying too often. In preparation for discussing the question at hand, I spent a week tracking my lies as best I could. I also tried to determine if someone else was lying to me. This tracking of lies was a difficult and eye-opening process. The fact that I work as a retail sales manager in a clothing store puts me in very dangerous waters when it comes to equivocating or "stretching the truth" with my customer and co-worker interactions. One major requirement of my job is to sell products or ideas to customers and employees that I don't always believe in. This can range from selling company credit cards to feigning excitement about new company policies and directives to our employees.

My first day on the sales floor with a heighted awareness of my lying behavior quickly made me realize that I am not nearly as honest as I thought, and my "little" lies began to add up quite quickly. The art of selling requires quite a bit of positive reinforcement for a decision that a customer has already (sometimes unconsciously) made. In these cases, telling the truth of your opinion ("Why yes, you DO look fat in those jeans") will not fall on appreciative ears. With these customers, I see it as my job to make them feel better about what they will buy anyway (and truth be dammed). I balance and justify this type of selling behavior with the more honest selling to customers that *truly want my opinion*.

As I tracked more and more lies at work, I soon realized that I would have to focus on recording the major transgressions because otherwise I would not be able to do my job! (This was an unfortunate discovery). I found that the majority of my lies centered on selling our store credit cards. It's a reality for many businesses that getting customers to sign up for a store credit card will increase that customers potential to buy more product by a substantial margin. Unfortunately these credit cards can be easily abused and cause problems for the users. I personally don't think they are a good idea for most of our customers, but I am required to sell them or risk losing my job. As a result of this ethical dilemma, I end up feeling guilty most of the time when I do get someone to open a card. Why? Because, I end up lying about the "great" benefits of the card in order to convince people that they are a good idea.

Of all my lies that I tracked, the credit card lies were the most difficult to ethically justify. While I don't enjoy this part of my job, or the way it makes me feel, I have accepted that it's financially necessary for me to do it in the short term until I finish school and get a better position.

Part 3: Lies on Television

The second research aspect of this paper was to watch five episodes of a popular television show and keep track of the lies being told by the actors. In contrast to my self-discovery about my own lying, I had believed that watching the five episodes of a sitcom on television would result in several pages worth of lies to talk about. I picked one of my favorite shows, *Friends*. This well known sitcom follows the lives and situations of six best friends as they navigate through the many funny (and sometimes serious) events of their young lives in New

York. To my surprise, the writers for the show use far fewer lies then I had expected to make the stories funny. The run times for these shows are 23 minutes and in that time, the two episodes with the most lies only had eight each. The remaining three episodes had four, four, and three lies respectively. I thought there would be many more than this! What I found interesting to watch was how the writers would use the snowball effect of lies as a plot device to carry the storyline of the episode. The season 10 episode 9 story in particular used this method to take a case of mistaken identity and carry it over the course of the entire episode. What follows is my brief synopsis from my episode notes page on the Friends episode 9 and how lies moved the storyline along.

> *"This episode brings the morality of lying to the forefront with the mistaken identity of Monica and Chandler to their potential adopted baby's birth mother. Upon their first meeting, the teen mother mistakenly mixes up the information files of Monica and Chandler (Monica is a Chef and Chandler is a middle manager) with the file of another much more "desirable" couple where the husband is a doctor and the wife a minister. Monica chooses not to correct the mother on her mistake, and thus begins the string of deceptions to the mother. The fact that Monica is lying about being a minister and making religious comments along with it, ("and behold, adopt unto them a baby, and it was good", ""you are SO going to heaven!") gives the morality play an obvious (if slightly overbearing) blasphemous edge to drive home the point that lying is wrong. In the end, Chandler gives a heartfelt speech to the mother about how he is sorry that they lied, and it was only because they want to be parents so much that they lost sight of what was morally right. Ironically, the lies told to the mother by Chandler and Monica laid the groundwork for Chandler's speech that ultimately sways the pregnant girl to choose them as the adopted parents. It is implied by the teen mother's discussion with them (Monica and Chandler) that if they had told the truth about their identities at the outset, the mother would have surely passed them up for the actual doctor and minister."*

This was the most lie centric of the episodes I watched and I observed almost every type of deception listed in our text book. I found it interesting that even though the message of the episode seemed to be that lying is wrong, the outcome of the episode (with Chandler and Monica getting the baby) sends the mixed message that it is ok to lie if the lie is told for a good reason.

Part 4: So Why do we lie?

Our textbook *Looking Out/Looking In* discusses some of the reasons for lying as an alternative to self disclosure. The first reason being is *to save face,* or in other words, to tell a tactful lie in order to protect the feelings of the other person. A personal example of this I can share is when my good friend Michael emailed me a piece of music he recorded, asking for my opinion 35. I told him (honestly) that I enjoyed the music and the instrumentation. I also (dishonestly) told him that his vocals on the piece sounded good. The truth of the matter is that I don't like his singing voice. I have chosen to carry on this evasion on my opinion of his singing ability for over two decades in order to save face and protect our friendship. In this case, I value my friendship with Michael so much that I pay the personal transactional cost of

feeling guilty for telling him the occasional lie. I also know that telling him the truth of my opinion would serve no useful purpose since he cannot change his voice. All it would serve to do is put a strain on our friendship and most likely prevent him from sharing his music with me.

Another good example of saving face was in one of the Friends episodes I watched (episode 10). The character Phoebe looks into a crib where her friend Rachel's baby is sleeping next to an ugly doll. She remarks to Rachel that her new baby looks "just like a doll". Rachel then remarks "that IS a doll next to Emma (the baby)". Phoebe then replies "oh good, because that doll looks creepy". Here we have Phoebe comparing the baby to a doll, which we would assume to be a compliment. When she remarks later that the doll looked "creepy", we know that she actually (mistakenly) had thought that the baby looked creepy. Since she did not want to offend her good friend, she *saved face* by equivocating. I think most people have been in a situation where a friend or relative shares a baby picture with you, and you have to tell them how "cute" the child looks, no matter what you really think. This type of equivocating lie is a cornerstone of social niceties, since no one wants to hear that their child is ugly!

In both these situations, the act of lying was done out of consideration for the other persons feelings and not malice. It is also clear in both examples that the cost of the lie is less than the price paid for telling the truth. When I look at the previously mentioned situation at my job where I need to lie to customers in order to be considered a valued employee, the justification for lying becomes much more difficult. I do think that the majority of these types of lies are ethical because otherwise we would end up alienating those who are close to us because of too many unpleasant truths.

Conclusion: Is Lying an Ethical Alternative to Self-Disclosure?

So is lying an ethical alternative to self-disclosure? I say yes it most certainly is. I believe that to answer the question honestly, I must take into account the social nature of the world that surrounds us. We all have our own moral code and compass that we try to follow to lead our lives, but these codes are not shared by everyone. The decision to tell a lie is based on hundreds if not thousands of little reasons that can change minute by minute in our dealings with other people. So I would have to answer that not only is lying ethical, but in most cases it is mandatory in order to survive socially in our world. My opinion may come off as overly pessimistic, but I believe that the majority of the communication in our society is facilitated by the alternatives to self-disclosure (Silence, lying, equivocating and hinting). The fact that we try to live as good people within this frame work is ultimately the measuring stick of our ethical behavior. Depending on your personal point of view, one person's political, religious, or social ideals could be based on what you perceive to be lies, thereby creating a level of distrust based on those ideals. In this type of social climate, is it any wonder that we need to lie to each other on a daily basis in order to function as a society? I am not speaking in

absolutes, because it will always be vitally important to share thoughts, ideas and ideals with those that don't agree with our own, but in the interest of living peacefully in our diverse society, lying in many forms will be a continual and necessary occurrence.

As a result of this project, I have come to question what can be done to reduce the vast number of lies we tell on a daily basis? I believe the answer lies in education and self awareness. By the relatively simple task of tracking my own lies and becoming more aware of my behavior, I was able to pinpoint more clearly some of my own shortcomings as a person and communicator. My dissatisfaction with my current job was the original catalyst for returning to college after many years. Discovering the frequency that I need to lie at my job, and the relative ease in which I do it, has helped to reaffirm my decision to get my degree and put a finer focus on the steps I need to take to create a healthier work life environment for myself. By following this path I truly believe that I will be able to lead a more truthful and better life.

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Tara Watson

The Paint Box

Mixed media, 10.5" x 13.5"

The Fantastic and Horrifying World of Neil Gaiman

Laurel Harris

There are some people in the world who are quite happy to go about their day never wondering about the possibilities of "what if?" What if the guy bouncing at the bar was actually Thor? What if there was a whole world hidden in the sewer? What if the bricked up door in that house led to a tiny dimension ruled by a woman who lured children in to be her pets? What if behind that wall was the portal to the entire realm of Faerie and all one had to do was walk through it? Some people never wonder about these things, but some people do. One of these people is Neil Gaiman. Gaiman uses the backdrop of the everyday to create fantastical worlds full of angels, demons, gods, and much worse into which the reader can easily become lost making it hard to come back to reality, as it can be argued Neil Gaiman himself would like to abandon in favor of these other worlds.

Gaiman began life in Portchester, England on November 10, 1960. Many years later he began a short career in journalism, publishing a few articles in a publication called Knave magazine. During this time in his life he wrote a little known biography for the pop band DuranDuran, though its presence is notably missing from most of his self published bibliographies. Later Gaiman collaborated with artist Dave McKean to create two graphic novels: "Violent Cases" and "Signal to Noise." Due to the success of these graphic novels, Gaiman was given a job at DC Comics. This would lead to his most ambitious work ever, the Sandman series. This 75 issue meta-narrative was to be the groundwork upon which Gaiman's reputation as an author would be built. After Sandman, Gaiman wrote a much more obscure comic miniseries called "The Books of Magic," as well as a handful of other comic issues for other well established comic series such as "Hellblazer" and "Swamp Thing." While Gaiman is best known for his comic books, he has written many novels which have cemented his name among the general population. These include *Anansi Boys, Coraline, Stardust, The Graveyard Book*, his best known novel *American Gods*, and *Good Omens* which he coauthored with Terry Pratchett. He also has many short stories, plays, screenplays, poems, children's books, and songs to his credit (Neil Gaiman Biography).

In his writings, Gaiman explores many different themes. Sometimes his writings can be quite ominous and challenging, such as his Sandman series which follows the personification of human dreams as he undertakes a quest at the end of which he knows he will meet with his ultimate disaster. However sometimes Gaiman is not so serious with his writings, sometimes he can be quite playful. In the short story "Chivalry" he writes about an older woman, Mrs. Whitaker, who goes to an Oxfam shop, which is a chain of charity shops in England much like Goodwill, and buys herself a little treat. One fateful day she finds "...the Holy Grail; it was under a fur coat (Chivalry, 40)." The next day a young man shows up at her door and tells her he is on a quest to find the Holy Grail. When she asks for identification, as it is "unwise to let

unidentified strangers into your home when you are elderly and living on your own (Chivarly, 43)." The young man returns with an elaborate scroll identifying him as Sir Galaad, as signed by King Arthur himself. He requests the Grail, but Mrs. Whitaker refuses to give it to him. Galaad returns often to have tea and plead with Mrs. Whitaker for the grail, he is however refused every time, though he is usually set to some task about the house. Finally Galaad offers her a phoenix egg, the Philosophers Stone and an apple which has the power to restore youth and health and can grant eternal life, in exchange for the grail. Mrs. Whitaker declines saying " 'You shouldn't offer things like that to old ladies. It isn't proper.' (Chivalry, 53)." However she finally gives in to the knight and sends him on his way with the Grail. She is not without the mystical for too long as she finds Aladdin's Lamp on her next Oxfam visit. In this story Gaiman shows off his playful side as he plays with a "What if?" Here he is postulating what would happen if major religious and historical relics could be found in little second hand shops.

A more serious side of Gaiman can be seen in the best example of the world according to Neil, his novel *American Gods*. In this book the reader follows Shadow Moon, a man newly released from prison as he tries to rebuild his life after finding out that his wife is dead. His first taste of freedom is his wife's funeral. On the way he encounters a man by the name of Mr. Wednesday. This dubious man offers Shadow a job which, in time, he accepts as a bodyguard of sorts, protection for Mr. Wednesday . As the novel unfolds the reader discovers that the whores, barflies, morticians, strippers, little old ladies, cats, even employers Shadow meets are all gods of times gone by who have been abandoned in America by their followers and are now trying to find their own way in life. This is how Gaiman presents the wild story of an old forgotten god who wants to be worshipped again and his quest to recruit other old gods who have been forgotten to wage a war against the new gods in America. If the story of Mr. Wednesday were presented from his own perspective or even from the perspective of one of the other gods, the impact of the novel would be lost. Gaiman instead chooses to relay the tale through the eyes of a simple man, Shadow, making the entire story much more potent and interesting, as every person who picks up the book can find something in Shadow to identify with. It is Shadow's presence that makes this unlikely world interesting and accessible for the reader, even though the presence of the gods is familiar to many readers with a working knowledge of mythology. This is an excellent example of how Gaiman uses the stark contrast between fantasy and reality to make the fantastical more interesting and appealing.

Sometimes in his writings Gaiman uses familiar tales to ask his readers to reevaluate the finite nature of reality; not only the inevitability of it, but the validity of it. In "Murder Mysteries," Gaiman presents the possibility that God set Lucifer up to fall by way of a noir detective story surrounding the death of an angel at the beginning of creation. This can be seen when the angel Raguel explains to the Lord his theory on why the events in question were set in motion: " '...perhaps it was needed that I destroy Saraquel, in order to demonstrate to Lucifer the injustice of the Lord.' (Murder, 410)" Since, as modern people, we

were not there at the beginning of creation, Gaiman is suggesting that we should not blindly accept the events we know nothing about. History is written by the winners, so the old saying goes, maybe we should question it sometimes.

While history may be written by the winners, destiny can be altered by the foibles of a few major players. This can be seen in another example of Gaiman interpreting a familiar story in another light in *Good Omens* which tells the story of the Christian apocalypse as heralded by the coming of the antichrist. In the book the antichrist is indeed introduced to the world, however through the follies of Sister Mary Loquacious, a satanic nun, the antichrist ends up with a middle class family in rural England, as far from the political realm as possible, which was to be the original home for "the Adversary, Destroyer of Kings, Angel of the Bottomless Pit, Great Beast that is called Dragon, Prince of This World, Father of Lies, Spawn of Satan, and Lord of Darkness (Good Omens, 28)," also known as Adam Young. Without the evil political training he was supposed to receive, Adam Young finds the end of the world to be a bit premature, " ' The world is full of all sorts of brilliant stuff and I haven't found out all about it yet, so I don't want anyone messing it about or endin' it before I've had a chance to find out about it' (Good Omens, 354)." So as the coming of the End draws near, Adam goes in search of the four bikers of the apocalypse to try to stop the whole production. When Adam says he would like it to not proceed Death replies "SURELY YOUR VERY EXISTENCE REQUIRES THE ENDING OF THE WORLD. IT IS WRITTEN (Good Omens, 353)." To which the unlikely antichrist retorts "I dunt see why anyone has to go an' write things like that, (Good Omens, 354). After which a scraggly gang of young English misfits takes on The Four and win, in effect stopping Armageddon. Here Gaiman again asks his readers to question the inevitability of life, or death. In this novel Gaiman has set up a charming situation wherein one can never take anything for granted, even the end of the world.

While many of his works take place in a world similar to the one most people inhabit, but with a twist, not all of them do. In his short story "Other People" Gaiman proposes what would happen to the bad apples of the world after they died. Relying again on Christian mythology, Gaiman proposes a Hell worse than any other imaginable. In Gaiman's version of the fiery pit, a man is tortured first physically, then emotionally and mentally as he is forced to relive all the sins he acquired during his stay on this plane. By creating such a horrible set of consequences for a life led frivolously, Gaiman shows that being a member of the real world can have terrible consequences to those who live it without thought.

> Every lie he had told-told to himself, or told to others. Every little hurt, and all the great hurts. Each one was pulled out of him, detail by detail, inch by inch. The demon stripped away the cover of forgetfulness, stripped everything down to truth, and it hurt more than anything. (110)

By the end of the torment, the man comes to to find that he has become the demon and another man has entered the room. The story ends as the new demon begins as the other had " 'Time is fluid here,' he told the new arrival." (112) Here Gaiman leaves the fate of the characters to the reader's imagination. He never explains what happens to each character. However with the opening and closing lines regarding the fluidity of time, it can be imagined

that the man we follow through the initial torture is caught in an endless loop wherein he plays every part in turn. He is simultaneously the demon and the man being tortured, in effect punishing himself over and over again throughout eternity. This realization adds a new level of horror to the story, which asks reader's to reevaluate just how great living your life in the real world is if a fate similar to this may be waiting on the other side.

As a general rule, Gaiman seems to favor the idea of the fantasy worlds he creates to be preferable to the one inhabited by the sane among the population. While some of his creations are terrifying, such as the Hell in "Other People", there are many worlds which are quite welcoming despite the horrors present in them. One example of this is London Below which is described in *Neverwhere,* a book which recounts the adventures of an average man, Richard Mayhew, as he travels through the subterranean version of London in search of an angel who can return him to his old life. In this place there are beautiful women who steal your warmth, vile angry angels, a real Piccadilly Circus, vicious warriors, and a cult of people called Rat Speakers who always prostrate themselves before the sewer rats who are royalty to them. While this may seem distasteful to some, the main character Richard Mayhew finds it to be familiar and comfortable after dwelling there for a time. After being put to innumerable and unpleasant tests in order to get back to his home in London Above, Richard realizes that the fantastical world of London Below was far more preferable to the one into which he was born. The novel ends after he packs his bags and goes in search of a way back below. It can be argued that Gaiman himself sees the world of the unseen to be preferable and he lives out his fantasy through Richard. This can be seen with the closing lines of the book as Richard tries to contact his friends from Below. The Marquis de Carabas, who had been a companion on his subterranean adventure, appears to him and

> Then Richard nodded, without trusting himself to speak, and stood up. And they walked away together through the hole in the wall, back into the darkness, leaving nothing behind them; not even the doorway. (387)

In another example of Gaiman's heroes choosing the fantastical world over the one they know is *Stardust*. In this novel a young village boy, Tristan Thorne, goes into the kingdom of Stormhold which is on the border between England and Faerie, in search of a fallen star has pledged to find for his love. Upon finding the star he discovers, instead of a hunk of rock, a beautiful woman, who he persuades to come with him back to his village of Wall so that she may meet his love and he may marry her. However by the end of the story Tristan has found his true love actually dwells in the star he set about to find, along with his history and his identity. It turns out the Tristan is the only surviving male heir to the royal Stormhold line and by the end of the book he has taken his rightful place as King. In this story the hero finds a place as fantastic as any imaginable and after finding his footing in this new environment, decides to stay there forever.

> He looked upon the lights of Wall for what (it came to him then with certainty) he knew was the last time. He stared at them for some time, and said nothing, the fallen star by his side. And then he turned away, and together they began to walk toward the East. (209)

Sometimes Gaiman's message to question the nature of reality and weigh the benefits of reality and fantasy can extend to other authors works. In the story "A Study in Emerald" Gaiman recasts the familiar world of Sherlock Holmes into an H.P. Lovecraft story. In this world Gaiman sets the renowned detective and his assistant about the task of discovering who killed a member of the royal family, who are in turn all members of Lovecraft's Old Ones. It is still Queen Victoria who reigns in this imaginary world, but no Queen Victoria who has ever graced our history books.

> She was called Victoria, because she had beaten us in battle, seven hundred years before, and she was called Gloriana, because she was glorious, and she was called the Queen, because the human mouth was not shaped to say her true name. She was huge, huger than I had imagined possible, and she squatted in the shadows staring down at us, without moving (Emerald, 11).

If this were not enough of a twist for most readers, Gaiman goes one further by dropping little hints throughout the story which climax at the end when the reader realizes it is not Holmes and Watson he has been following, but the nemesis of each man, Professor James Moriarty and Colonel Sebastian Moran, respectively. This means that the villains of the tale then become Holmes and Watson, which would never happen! In "A Study in Emerald" Gaiman has demonstrated the flexibility, possibility, and desirability of life in the fantasy world by meshing different familiar characters into his own creation.

In another similar story, "Forbidden Brides of the Faceless Slaves in the Secret House of the Night of Dread Desire" Gaiman imagines a world in which the deepest darkest opium dreams of Edgar Allen Poe are a reality and any dark deed is possible. "From the forbidden room at the top of the house an eerie, ululating cry rang out, echoing through the house. The young man sighed. 'You had better feed Aunt Agatha, Toombes.' (Forbidden, 53)." In this story a man is trying to write a serious piece of literature about a young woman who inadvertently stumbles onto the horrible legacy left to her by her father, yet is vexed by humor and irony trying to creep in. Throughout the story the young man distracts himself by battling a long dead brother for birthright, and taking in a new maid who has shown up to the house under suspect circumstances which are purposefully left mysterious. At one point during his procrastination, a raven asks him, rather casually, " 'Do you *like* writing that stuff?' (Forbidden, 60)." This causes the man to reevaluate his creation. Finding it lacking, he turns to fantasy writing and tells a short story about a woman who, while making breakfast for her husband, realizes just how miserable her life is. This is where the story ends. Because of the way it is written, the story takes a couple of reads to decipher, but in the end the reader comes to the conclusion that even within a world of fantasy and horror, a person may wish for the escapism offered by a well crafted piece of completely unrealistic literature. Perhaps here Gaiman is pointing out that no matter your surroundings, escape from them is preferable, at least for a while, to the day to day operations.

It can definitely be argued that regardless of whether Gaiman is drawing from history, religion, other authors or his own mind, he often times provided his readers with something new, interesting, and preferable to the mundane world inhabited by most people. He is a

creator of fantasy and fairy tales, horror and humor. Within his writings can be found doorways to many other worlds, one only has to open to access.

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Gathering of Voices | Student Anthology of Writing & Art, Whatcom Community College

Gary Young

Untitled nude

Ink, 24" x 18"

Malicious McNuggets: How the Modern Chicken Industry is McDonaldized

Francis Sauter

In any modern-day supermarket, you'll find manufactured chicken in all shapes and sizes. Diced and sliced, canned and whole, chicken is filling a growing demand as customers shift away from red meats. Wrapped in shiny plastic, the tender white meat is appealing for many consumers. But hidden behind the superficial fabrication are unspeakable horrors.

Nearly ten billion chickens are hatched in the United States annually ("Factory Poultry" 1). Thousands of birds are crowded into massive, factory-like warehouses, with less than one half a square foot of space per bird. Such confinement densities make it impossible for birds to carry out normal behaviors so natural social order is nonexistent. Yet, companies just want to find the least amount of floor space necessary to produce the greatest return on investment. Chicks have the end of their beaks seared off to reduce injuries when stressed birds are driven to fighting. These mutilations are typically performed without anesthesia ("Factory Poultry" 1).

"Factory farms" are unsanitary and disease runs rampant. A Washington Post writer said that the "dust, feathers, and ammonia choke the air in the chicken house and fans turn it into airborne sandpaper, rubbing skin raw" (Goodman A23). Excrement is left to rot among the chickens, and the creatures are forced to inhale the stench of feces 24/7. Michael Specter of The New Yorker reported that he was "almost knocked to the ground by the overpowering smell of feces and ammonia" (Specter 52). His "eyes burned" and he could "neither see nor breathe" (Specter 52). Broilers' lives are a horrible six-week nightmare of total darkness. Many suffer from chronic respiratory diseases, weakened immune systems, bronchitis, and "ammonia burn," a painful eye condition ("Diagnosis of

Poultry Disease" 1). Birds often experience heat prostration, infection, and cancer. According to the United States Department of Agriculture, 98% of chicken carcasses are contaminated with E. coli bacteria by the time they reach the grocery store, largely due to the filthy conditions on the farms.

Today's broiler chickens have been genetically altered to grow twice as fast and twice as large as their historical counterparts. Hundreds of millions of birds die every year before reaching slaughter weight at six to eight weeks of age. The average breast of an eight-week old chicken is seven times heavier today than it was 25 years ago (). In the 1950s, it took 84 days to raise a five-pound chicken. Due to selective breeding and growth- promoting drugs, it now takes

an average of only 45 days ("A COK Report" 2). The University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture puts the growth rate in perspective: "If you grew as fast as a chicken, you'd weigh 349 pounds at age 2" (qtd. in "A COK Report" 2).

Pushed beyond their biological limits, chickens suffer crippling leg disorders, as their frail legs are not made to support their abnormally large bodies. As a result of lameness, six-week old broilers spend 76 to 86 percent of their time lying down amid putrid excrement (Weeks 1). This causes breast blisters, burns, and foot pad dermatitis (Esteviz 1). Some birds develop such obesity that they are unable to reach the water nozzles. An industry journal, *Feedstuffs,* explains that "broilers now grow so rapidly that the heart and lungs are not developed well enough to support the remainder of the body, resulting in congestive heart failure and tremendous death losses" ("A COK Report" 1). Two researchers wondered: "Is it more profitable to grow the biggest bird and have increased mortality due to heart attacks, ascites, and leg problems, or should birds be grown slower so that birds are smaller, but have fewer heart, lung and skeletal problems? . . . A large portion of growers' pay is based on the pound of saleable meat produced, so simple calculations suggest that it is better to get the weight and ignore the mortality." To put it simply, companies are willing to run the risk of health problems if it guarantees the heaviest bird possible. And they'll do their best to keep corpulent fowl packing on the pounds. Chickens are fed immense quantities of antibiotics to keep them alive in horrific conditions; approximately 11 million pounds of antibiotics are used every year in poultry feed, whereas only 3 million pounds go towards human medicine, estimates the Union of Concerned Scientists (Hayes 1).

 Upon reaching slaughter weight, chickens are shipped to the slaughterhouse in crates stacked atop the backs of open trucks ("Factory Poultry" 2). Tens of millions of birds suffer broken legs and wings due to rough handling. During transportation, birds are vulnerable to extreme weather conditions, and many are expected to die from heat stress or freeze to death. After hundreds of miles on the truck, the birds are either yanked by the handful from their cages, or cranes or forklifts lift the crates. As they are dumped onto a conveyer belt, chickens often miss the belt and fall to the ground. Slaughterhouse workers don't have the time to rescue fallen birds; so some are crushed by machinery, while others may die of starvation or exposure weeks later ("Factory Poultry" 2).

Fully conscious birds are snapped upside-down by workers, and hung by their ankles from metal shackles along a moving rail ("Factory Poultry" 2). Many slaughter plants first stun the birds in an electrified water bath to immobilize them and therefore increase efficiency during killing. In the United States it is not mandatory to render a chicken unconscious before bleeding and scalding, so the electrical current is commonly set at one-tenth the level required to knock out the chickens. Many birds are still capable of feeling pain as they emerge from the tank. ("Factory Poultry" 2). Next, their throats are slashed, often by a mechanical blade. The blade inevitably misses the throats of struggling birds, but slaughter line speeds of up to 8,400 chickens per hour hardly permit accuracy during killing ("A COK

Report" 2). Consequently, quite a few chickens are still fully conscious when they enter the boiling hot water of the scalding tank. In fact, so many birds are boiled alive that the industry nicknamed them 'redskins' ("Factory Poultry" 3).

As you can see, the broiler industry focuses more on the quantity of meat produced and the speed of production than the quality of the birds' life. In other words, profits have taken priority over animal welfare. This is what George Ritzer calls "McDonaldization. In his article, "An Introduction to McDonaldization," George Ritzer refers to a specific form of business management that is currently widely-spread throughout the United States. Such systems tend to involve a rationalized process, which means that all elements of the process are tightly managed to ensure "efficiency, calculability, predictability, and control" (Ritzer 1). According to Ritzer, although these systems amount to massive profits, there are hidden costs, including environmental damage, dehumanization of employees, reduction of choice, elevation of quantity over quality, de-personalization of services, and disenchantment. Ritzer strongly emphasizes his point that "the principles of the fast-food restaurant are coming to dominate more and more sectors of American society" (1).

The broiler industry clearly exemplifies McDonaldization. The sixty companies ruling the industry have created an undeniable "oligopoly" ("Factory Farming" 1), which revolves around the mantra: push for more weight, faster lines, and higher profits, and ignore the suffering of innocent chickens. Factory farming originated in the 1920s, soon after the discovery of the vitamins A and D ("Factory Farming" 1). As these vitamins were added to feed, animals no longer required exercise and sunlight for growth ("Factory Farming" 1). Disease spread rapidly through the new indoor farms, but this was quickly combated with the development of antibiotics in the 1940s ("Factory Farming" 1). Companies found they could increase productivity and reduce expenses by using assembly-line techniques. Mechanization provided speed and efficiency. But while profits soared, animals suffered incredible pain. Their treatment as living, breathing creatures abruptly terminated; after all, they were machines.

True, says my inner skeptic, but who cares? These are animals we're talking about, not human beings. You act as if they'll go on strike. Besides, you know very well that the modern poultry industry employs tens of thousands of workers. People need these jobs to feed their families and pay for basic necessities.

Yes, people do depend on the broiler industry for employment. Yes, people do need to provide for their families. But are they really getting the wages they deserve? During the 1990s, poultry industry profits rose over 300 percent. ("Injury" 1). Over the past five years, operating profits have more than tripled. As conglomerates prosper, their employees do not share in the good fortune. A study by the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union found that real wages for workers have increased by "less than 1% over the past decade" ("Injury" 1). 71 percent of all contract poultry growers earn below poverty-level wages. Chicken catchers earn roughly $92 per day, as opposed to $107.70 a decade ago, regardless of their twelve-hour daily shifts ("Injury" 1). And working in a slaughter plant is

one of the most dangerous jobs in America. Illness and injury rates for poultry workers are twice those for all manufacturing. One in every five poultry workers is injured on the job. And increasing line speeds aren't helping matters. Each worker processes an average of 190 birds per hour, up from 143 ten years ago ("Injury" 1). Making the same repetitive cutting motion 10,000 to 40,000 times a shift, workers commonly experience repetitive stress injuries, along with lacerations and amputations.

Immigrants are enticed to work at poultry plants with the promise of good jobs with decent benefits. But in reality, workers are treated very poorly. A 2000 survey by the Department of Labor found that over 60 percent of plants violated basic wage and hour laws ("Injury" 2). The survey also pointed out that over 50 percent of poultry plants illegally force workers to pay for their own safety equipment. Workers are usually denied payment for working overtime. This not only cuts into their regular wages, but also reduces their retirement benefit ("Injury" 2). On May 9, 2002, after a hefty lawsuit, twenty-five thousand poultry workers got millions in return for the off-the-clock violations of Perdue Farms ("Injury" 2). On August 7, Perdue Farms announced it would pay ten million dollars in compensation its failure to pay 60,000 workers at 18 plants for time spent administering protective gear ("Injury" 3). Tyson Foods, another poultry corporation, was charged with cheating its employees out of wages by forcing them to work overtime without pay and denying break time.

Contract poultry growers are no better off. Growers provide all of the land, buildings, equipment, utilities, and labor in raising a company's birds to slaughter-age ("Industry" 3). To eek a living out as a chicken grower, one must first sign a firm contract, accepting the company's terms without any personal input. Earnings of a grower are determined by calculating the weight of the market-ready birds, the weight of the feed delivered by the company, and the ratio of live birds to feed consumed ("Injury" 3). And it's no surprise that companies often corrupt these numbers to their own advantage.

Chicken catchers put up with more than just meager salaries. They work late night shifts since birds are calmer and easier to capture during the night. Scooping up handfuls of chickens and tossing them into crates to be hauled to the slaughterhouse is not child's play. Catchers suffer from respiratory diseases due to dust and bacteria on filthy factory farms. One researcher says: "Saturated with ammonia and thick with the dust of feed and feces, each breath feels like sandpaper against the lungs" (Nutt 1). Wherever the catchers "walk their boots kick up whirlpools of powder and when they emerge at dusk, after 10 or 12 hours, they shimmer in the pale ash that covers them head to foot" (Nutt 1). It's no wonder their chronically ill. In addition, they are illegally considered "independent contractors," so companies refuse to pay them for overtime or provide a safe workplace.

Farm workers face health issues as a result of bacteria, fecal matter, and toxic gas that go hand in hand with factory farming. A study by the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health found that "more than half of processing plant employees and more than 40 percent of [a sample of] chicken catchers tested positive for campylobacter, which causes

cramping, diarrhea, abdominal pain, and fever" (Nutt 1). The American Veterinary Medical Association warns that workers frequently suffer from hearing loss due to the constant loud noise of animals and machinery (Kuehn 1). High concentrations of particulates and airborne dust enhance the toxic effects of irritating gases or chemicals ("Iowa" 126). Certain mineral particulates, such as silica dioxide, can provoke pulmonary inflammatory and scarring conditions known as pneumoconiosis ("Iowa" 126). Simple dust particles can have long-term effects on the respiratory system. According to a study released in 2002 by the Iowa State University, up to 70 percent of workers in concentrated animal feeding operations are afflicted with acute bronchitis, and up to 25% are afflicted with chronic bronchitis ("Iowa" 133). These employees are often exposed to hydrogen sulfide when they work near decomposing animal wastes or breathe fumes from manure pits ("Iowa" 124). Hydrogen sulfide levels above 100 ppm are considered immediately hazardous to life and health, but "levels as high as 1,000 ppm have been reported following the perturbation of manure lagoons" ("Iowa" 124). Workers also inhale ammonia on a regular basis, which damages the upper airway epithelia, and irritates the eyes, sinuses, and skin ("Iowa" 123). Kevin Harmon, a 32-year-old chicken catcher from Virginia, told reporters: "The ammonia rises up from the manure and it takes your breath away. I used to throw up a lot; cough a lot, too. I have diarrhea all the time" (Nutt 2).

Employees at the slaughterhouse have it the worst. Although the rate of cumulative trauma injuries at slaughterhouses is 33 times higher than the national average in industry (Schlosser 173), workers rarely take time off, file a health insurance form, or fill out a workers' compensation claim. If they do, they will likely by fired. One worker confesses: "I worry every day that I will break my hand or get hurt, but I never say anything for fear I'll lose my job. No American would do this job. This is a shit job, for shit money" (qtd. in Clarren 1). Radio advertisements lure Mexican immigrants to meatpacking plants in the U.S. (Gardner 2). Illegal immigrants are often recruited for the job, attracted by the promise of financial security for their families. But these promises are short-lived. In one instance, a meat company actually bussed workers from the Mexico border to a homeless shelter in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The meat industry has also been caught exploiting children – hiring people in their early teens who are too young to work legally in the United States. In November 1999, the U.S. Department of Labor fined Tyson Foods, Inc., for violations of federal child labor laws that contributed to the death of a 15-year-old employed in the firm's Hempstead County, Arkansas facility and the serious injury of a 14-year-old employed in its Sedalia, Missouri facility (Mokhiber 22). The company was fined $59,274 for violations of the child labor provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act at two of its plants (Mokhiber 22).

To put this in perspective: Tyson Foods was named one of the "The Ten Worst Corporations of 1999" (Mokhiber 21). This is largely due to the fact that seven workers have been killed at Tyson facilities in the past seven months (Mokhiber 21). On August 5, 1999, the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union demanded that the Occupational Safety and Health Administration launch an investigation of Tyson poultry plants across the country. The order came after James Dame, Jr. and Mike Hallum fell into an open pit of decomposing

chicken parts and by-products and suffocated from the methane gas emissions at Tyson's Robards, Kentucky facility (Mokhiber 21). The Robards plant had not undergone state or federal inspection by Occupational Safety and Health agencies since January 1998. Furthermore, Tyson was found to have a high number of wage and hour law violations and workplace injuries. As the industry leader, Tyson sets the standards for working conditions in poultry plants. If Tyson continues to set a bad example, other companies may follow in its footsteps.

Union busting is another common tactic of the meatpacking industry. Illegal intimidation and harassment ensure that pro-union employees are silenced. The Human Rights Watch discovered that workers who "try to form trade unions and bargain collectively are spied on, harassed, pressured, threatened, suspended, fired, deported, or otherwise victimized for their exercise of the right to freedom of association" ("Blood" 13). Employees are also pressured to refrain from reporting work-related injuries in an effort to keep insurance costs low. Those who work with struggling animals are at constant risk of being hurt. Russell Cobb, author of "The Chicken Hangers," elucidates the details: "The birds, weighing approximately five pounds each, fight back by pecking, biting, and scratching the hangers . . . Then, as workers finally hoist the birds unto the hooks, the chickens urinate and defecate out of desperation, often hitting the workers below" (13). Hangers often suffer debilitating injuries such as the trauma-induced 'claw-hand,' in which the injured fingers lock in a curled position ("Blood" 36). Employees handle frightened animals, along with knives, hooks, and heavy machinery, while line speeds increase inexorably. And to top it off, workers are rarely given time to stop and catch their breath, let alone relieve themselves. Joe Fahey, a Teamster investigator, reports his visit to an IBP meatpacking plant in Pasco, Washington: "People were crying, talking about being covered in diarrhea the entire shift because the supervisor wouldn't let them go to the bathroom" (qtd. in Olsson 2).

The frantic, fast-paced environment does not provide workers with any opportunity to ensure that they are taking proper safety precautions. Slaughterhouse worker Maria Martinez explains: "The chain goes so fast it doesn't even give the animals enough time to die. People don't even have time to wash their knife if it falls on the floor" (qtd. in Olsson 4). Employees are routinely forced to cut up animals that are still alive, struggling to escape. Knives inevitably slip, and injuries are everyday occurrences. A former factory nurse says she "could always tell the line speed by the number of people with lacerations coming into my office" (qtd. in Gardner 3). Fast lines speeds make it difficult for workers to prevent contamination of the animal carcasses. As one Northwest Arkansas poultry worker describes, everybody "is on top of each other, so a lot of people get cut, especially their hands. Or they stick themselves with [marinade] injection needles. Blood and flesh fall into the meat. The birds just keep going" (qtd. in "Blood" 38). Another poultry worker sums it up this way: "The lines are too fast. The speed is for machines, not for people" (qtd. in "Blood" 36). Clearly, the broiler industry is dehumanizing workers in an effort to gain higher profits.

All right, you say, but what about the fact that chicken provides a cheap, efficient source of protein for America? What about the fact that chicken consumption has more than doubled over the turn of the century, rising from 27.4 pounds per person in 1970 to 59.2 pounds per person in 2004 (Buzby 1)? What about the fact that, for many parents, McDonalds is the only financially feasible option, and Chicken McNuggets are the most convenient, kid-friendly item on the menu? What's wrong with chicken, anyway? It's relatively healthy, inexpensive, and tasty. And it's the easiest way to fill your child's belly after a hard day's work.

The nutritional aspects of chicken come at a price these days. Modern poultry are loaded with bacteria resulting from disease, uncontrolled waste, and filthy conditions at factory farms. Fast line speeds at slaughter plants cut down on the time workers spend inspecting carcasses for contamination. Eating animal products contaminated with bacteria can result in food poisoning, which causes symptoms ranging from stomach cramps and diarrhea to organ failure and death. The Center for Science in the Public Interest compiled a report announcing that 75 million cases of food poisoning occur in the United States each year, and each year, 5,000 of these cases are fatal ("CSPI" 1). Antibiotics fed to meat birds to promote growth and fight illness may also pose a threat to human consumers. Take arsenic, for instance. Arsenic is a heavy metal, a poison that naturally occurs in trace amounts of drinking water, dust, and wood (O'Brien 2). Daily exposure to lower levels of arsenic may lead to skin, respiratory, and bladder cancers (O'Brien 2). In recent years, the Environmental Protection Agency has limited arsenic in drinking water to a maximum level of 10 micrograms per liter (O'Brien 2). But arsenic has been used for decades to stave of infections in chickens and help poultry grow bigger, faster. On factory farms, chickens are fed arsenic through an antimicrobial drug known as Roxarsone (O'Brien 2). In a January 2003 study, USDA researchers confirmed that arsenic levels in chicken were four times higher than those in other meats (O'Brien 2). Not all of the arsenic the chickens ingested was being excreted through their manure. Researchers discovered that eating 2 ounces of chicken per day exposes a consumer to 3 to 5 micrograms of inorganic arsenic, the element's most toxic form (O'Brien 2). Chicken lovers may eat up to 10 times that amount (O'Brien 2).

Arsenic is also a problem for Mother Nature. Ellen K. Silbergeld, a prominent toxicologist who won a MacArthur Foundation 'genius grant' in 1993, says that arsenic in chicken feed ends up contaminating ground water in areas surrounding factory farms (O'Brien 1). Arsenic in the chicken manure is broken down by sunlight. It then migrates to the soil, where it can easily taint groundwater (O'Brien 1).

Abuse of pharmaceuticals in chicken feed has also spurred the evolution of antibiotic-resistant super-bacteria. A study by Johns Hopkins University focused on antibiotic resistance, specifically fluoroquinolone-resistance in campylobacter ("Drug-Resistant" 1). Campylobacter bacteria are responsible for 2.4 million cases of food-borne illness per year in America, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ("Drug-Resistant" 1). Study author Lance Price, a doctoral candidate and member of the Bloomberg School of Public Health's Center for a Livable Future, contended that "our use of medically important

classes of antibiotics in food-animal production creates a significant public health concern. Companies that use antibiotics foster the development of drug-resistant bacteria which can spread to the human population" (qtd. in "Drug-Resistant" 1). Poultry products are a major source of campylobacter infections in humans. Danger of infection through undercooked products or cross-contamination is heightened when the pathogen is antibiotic-resistant ("Drug-Resistant" 1). Fluoroquinolones are some of the most important drugs used to treat a variety of infections. Widespread presence of the drug-resistant form of campylobacter makes the antibiotic less effective in human medicine ("Drug-Resistant" 1).

The Food and Drug Administration proposed to withdraw approval of fluoroquinolone drugs for use in poultry production in 2000. In 2002, poultry producers Tyson Foods and Perdue Farms proclaimed that they would immediately stop using fluoroquinolones to treat their flocks ("Drug-Resistant" 1). A year later, Price and his team began a survey of campylobacter isolates on uncooked chicken products from Tyson and Perdue. They also investigated products from two other companies, Eberly and Bell & Evans, who claimed that their chickens were completely antibiotic free. Ninety-six percent of the Tyson products tested and forty-three percent of the Perdue products tested were contaminated with fluoroquinolone-resistant bacteria ("Drug-Resistant" 1). On the contrary, only five percent of the Eberly products tested and thirteen percent of the Bell & Evans products tested were contaminated ("Drug-Resistant" 1). These results lead Price to believe that fluoroquinolone-resistant bacteria may persist in the commercial poultry environment for a substantial period of time, even after antibiotic use is terminated, and that "fluoroquinolone use in poultry production presents a long-term threat to people" (qtd. in "Drug-Resistant" 1).

If bacteria, hormones, and arsenic don't take their toll on human health, dioxins certainly will. Dioxins are a group of chemical compounds that share certain chemical structures and biological characteristics ("What Are Dioxins?" 1). These compounds are members of three closely-related families: chlorinated dibenzo-p-dioxins, chlorinated dibenzofurans, and polychlorinated biphenyls ("What Are Dioxins?" 1). Dioxins are the result of combustion processes such as commercial or municipal waste incineration. Within animals, dioxins tend to accumulate in fat. Over 95% of human exposure to dioxins occurs through dietary intake of animal fats ("What Are Dioxins?" 2). Why the worry? Well, studies have shown that exposure to high levels of dioxins has an adverse effect on health. People exposed to large amounts of dioxin often suffer from chloracne, a severe skin disease that causes acne-like lesions on the face and upper body ("What Are Dioxins?" 1). Dioxins also cause skin rashes, skin discoloration, excessive body hair, and mild liver damage ("What Are Dioxins?" 1). Some studies suggest that people exposed to high levels of dioxins over long periods of time have an increased risk of cancer ("What Are Dioxins?" 1). Low levels of dioxin exposure over many, many years might result in reproductive or developmental problems ("What Are Dioxins?" 1).

So, if commercially produced chicken meat is so horrible, what are we supposed to eat? How about free-range and organic poultry? Labels like "free-range," "organic," "cage-free," and "all-natural" comfort the consumer. These reassuring words conjure up images of healthy

animals roaming freely in green pastures on warm sunny afternoons, chickens clucking to one another as they scratch for seeds. In order to be labeled as "free-range," a chicken must be provided with 'access to open air runs' that are 'mainly covered with vegetation.' Meat birds must live for at least 56 days ("Welfare" 1). Fresh grass and fresh air are great for a bird's physical and mental health. "Free-range" sounds a whole lot better than life on a factory farm.

However, commercial free-range production falls short of the image portrayed. Non-organic "free-range" chickens can be reared in very large flocks, compromising their health and welfare ("Welfare" 1). Organically certified birds are raised in flocks of up to 9,000 ("Welfare" 5). Many non-organic "free-range" birds never see the light of day, due to the massive quantity of chickens and unsatisfactory conditions. Shelter is not required in the range area for broilers, which may further discourage them from venturing outdoors. Quarters are cramped. Stocking densities inside the chicken house may be up to 13 birds per square meter ("Welfare" 4). Organic certifiers permit ten to sixteen birds per square meter, but often allow up to twenty ("Welfare" 4). Pasture is rarely rested, so access to fresh grass is limited and disease may build up in the soil ("Welfare" 1). Research has proven that a large majority of free-range birds are free-range in name only. According to the Soil Association, a "literature review by Elm Farm Research Centre concluded that 'many of the birds in free-range poultry production do not leave the house'" ("Welfare" 2). During some studies, the number of non-organic "free-range" birds "venturing outside at one time was as low as 12 to 15% of the flock" ("Welfare" 2).

Labels like "farm fresh" and "country fresh" are misleading- they do not mean "free-range." Many marketers now sell meat from "corn-fed" chickens. Consumers are attracted to the yellow meat and perceived enhanced flavor. Although there are no legal standards for "corn-fed" chickens, there is a general consensus that fowl must be fed at least 50 percent corn for the fattening period ("Welfare" 2). These chickens typically live indoors for their entire lives and eat GM corn ("Welfare" 3). Most non-organic chickens bear the Red Tractor mark, indicating that they were produced under Assured Food Standards. A study by Compassion in World Farming found that Red Tractor chicken standards "fulfilled only 5 out of 13 animal welfare criteria" ("Welfare" 3).

So packaging is clearly an illusion, a hyper-reality. There is a thick curtain between the consumer and the life of the broiler chicken. We have lost contact with how our food is produced. We have forgotten that there is a life attached to the slab of tender white meat we see in the grocery store. We have forgotten the blood, the gore, the guts, the unpleasant things that connect to our meals. We have forgotten to look out for the welfare of the innocent creature behind our McNuggets, the welfare of the people who manufacture our chicken, the welfare of our own bodies. And this is all the result of the McDonaldization of the poultry industry. By emphasizing control, calculability, predictability, and efficiency, his form of business management has gradually drawn our attention away from the more pressing matters at hand. If this is how we treat our animals, how we treat employees, how

we treat ourselves, how will we treat other people? How will society behave as a whole? Will we overcome this lasting "oligopoly" ("Factory Farms" 1), or will our form of existence become a McDonalds of sorts? Will we hear the last pleading cluck for mercy, or will all living creatures turn into machines?

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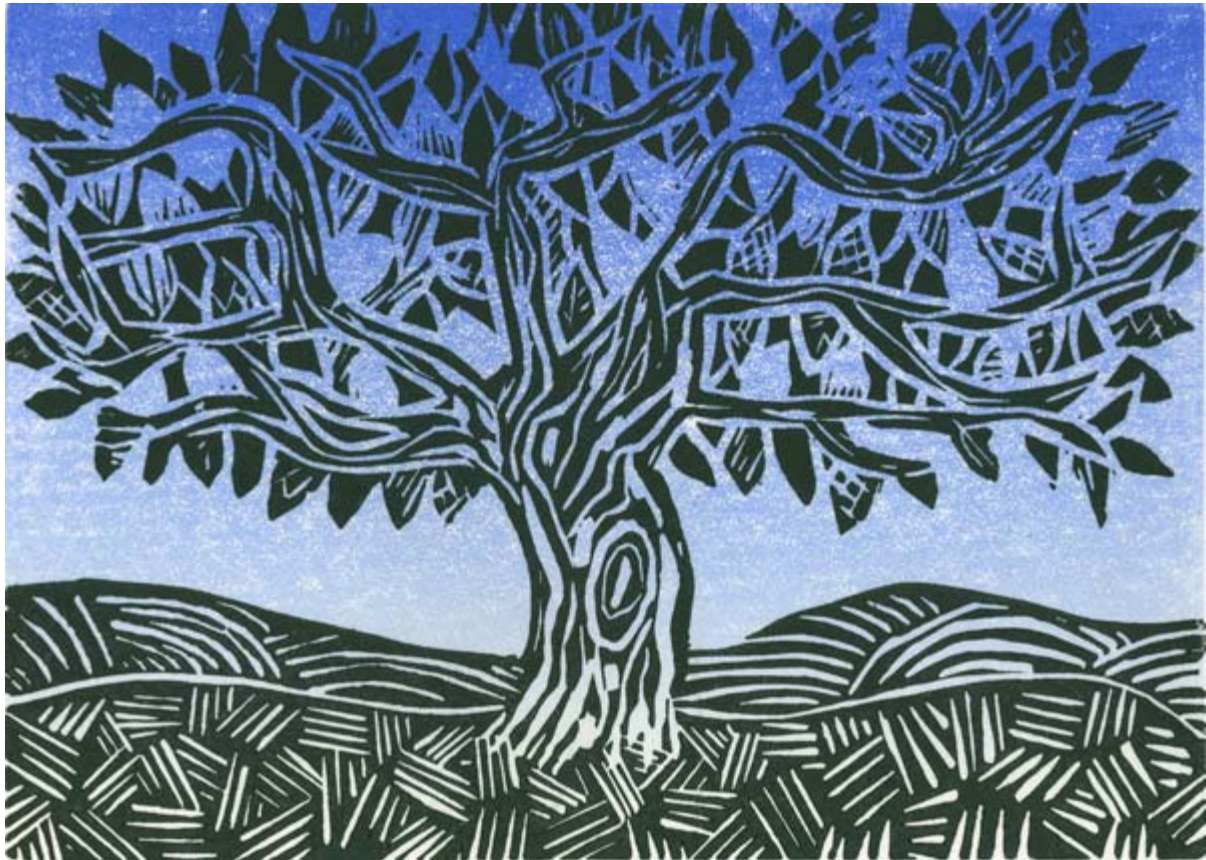# Gathering of Voices | Student Anthology of Writing & Art, Whatcom Community College

Ravyn Schmidt

Eohippus to Equus

Mixed media, 12" x 15"

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Mallory Hayes

The Tree of Life Blue

Linocut, 5" x 7"