



MARGIN

CRITICAL MASS

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Haverford College

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Margin is Haverford's themed student-edited publication.

Each issue features a topic marginalized in academic discourses, presenting submissions of critical essays, reviews, creative writing, visual media, and any other artifacts that critically or creatively engage the theme. We seek to publish the work of students, scholars, artists, musicians, and writers, both from within and outside of the Haverford community.

margin.journal@gmail.com

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Design by Duncan Cooper

Cover: *Bravery and Grace Go Hand in Hand*, 2015, oil on canvas,
by Ashley Thompson

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LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

Cora Johnson-Grau and Shahzeen Nasim

Editors-in-Chief

As short-hand we've tended to explain "Critical Mass" as an issue that explores the interstices of community, identity, and representation. In fact, it started somewhere much smaller. In *Corpus*, Jean-Luc Nancy writes, "the unity of a body, its singularity, is the unity of a touch, of all the touches (of all the touchings), of this body. And its this unity that can make a self, an identity."¹ Nancy, seeking to dismantle the dichotomy of exteriority and interiority, senses that subjectivity is inextricably tied to what our body is to the world. In other words, my subjectivity is coterminous with my body, to the point of being indistinguishable—though, of course, also distinct. Nancy's idea radically collapses identity and alterity: since my exposure to others, to the world, is inextricably bound to who I am, and indeed forms who I am, how can I understand myself to be apart from you? The concept for "Critical Mass" emerged in that moment, reveling in the awareness of touch and undeniable intersubjectivity.

"Critical mass" is a phrase that spins out many meanings and we became very attuned to its usage in the months following our call for submissions. Our professor says we need it to start class. A roommate says the kitchen has reached it. My boss references it a lot. It's an adrenaline-rush of beginning. It's both technical and pop cultural. It's precisely quantitative and deeply open-ended. It's vested with histories of U.S. atomic age imperialism. It's ripe for word play. In our call for submissions, "critical mass" became an unintentional way of letting community grow strange on itself. What is it that people would respond to if community seemed foreign? What changes if community has a telos, moves in particular direction? What if community was no longer synonymous with comfort, but in fact required discomfort?

In *Margin: the Divas Issue*, the magazine's first issue published in 2012, then editor-in-chief Hannah Silverblank described the magazine's aims as, "first, to invite the margins to become the body-text of our journal, and second, to facilitate

1 *Corpus*, (New York: Fordham University Press, 2009), 131.

multi-media modes of critical inquiry that have themselves been marginalized.”² The magazine sought, as its mission, to explore topics on the margins of critical discourse. After *Divas*, *Margin* published issues on 9/11, cash, food, and now “Critical Mass.” This issue is the most eclectic yet, hardly because of its incorporation of multi-media submissions which range from blog posts, photography, painting, and song, but because of the expansiveness of our theme. Initially, we were wary of this expansiveness, concerned that abstraction of our project would confuse our audience and be detrimental to “finding the answer.” Yet we also posit that *Margin*’s projects since its founding has been to decenter the place of truth in critical discourse. Just as Silverblank refuses to offer a definition for “diva,” we can’t say what “critical mass” is. On the surface, the term seems like an abstraction, but it isn’t any more-so than *divas*, 9/11, or cash. Though those concepts are tethered to historical events and phenomena, “critical mass” is also uniquely bound, simultaneously, to each of our individual and collective experiences.

Our issue opens with Miranda Joseph’s definitional article “Community,” first published in *Keywords for American Cultural Studies*. *Margin*’s editorial board first read the article as a primer for our conversations surrounding this year’s issue. Critical of the seductive draw to “community,” as a word with exclusively positive connotations, Joseph examines its usages in the way of structures of capital and power. Her article is especially pertinent for our context; as an institution, Haverford emphasizes the close, tight-knit nature of its community. By unpacking our “uncritical deployment” of the term, as Joseph says, we seek to understand, if not confront, our own complicity with systems of power and capital.

Next, Elana Kates’ photographs, taken in the port cities of Eliat, Israel and Tangier, Morocco, show the sudden and inexplicable presence of what she refers to in her artist’s statement as “expressive topography,” even in banal spaces. In interrogating her relationship to space, the parking garage, the highway, her work marks the desires and apathies that confront us when we confront the world. Elena Harriss-Bauer’s piece “Semiotics of the Desert” tends to a swirling amalgamation of landscape and relationships between women. Set in the liminal spaces of the long desert drives, her work pushes on how people approach edges and bounds, including their own, as spaces of survival. Her work phrases womanhood of two of her protagonists as “a community bound by shame and

2 “Letter from the Editor,” 7.

humiliation" and shows how, in conversation, they form themselves and each other. Julia Schrecengost's work instructs the viewer "HOW TO understand what you see in the MIRROR." Her images excavate the fraught, often enigmatic, relationships we have with our bodies and consider how a community of one might be equally shattered, fragmented, yet whole.

Shahzeen Nasim's photo-essay lays out the antinomies of a singular technology of educational communities, the yearbook. Using her own yearbook photos and the archive of Haverford yearbooks, she outlines how the promise of community, as instantiated in objects of institutional and individual memory, fails. Her work seeks to understand the mechanisms through which yearbooks produce racialized and gendered subjects. Ashley Thompson's paintings, featured in the issue and on the front cover, find humor and absurdity in familial and national histories. Based on Chinese propaganda posters, her paintings are vibrant and hyperreal. They are unflinchingly critical of and generous to the communities of which she is part.

First published on his blog *Keywords for the Age of Austerity*, "The rise of the curator in the age of austerity," by John Patrick Leary analyzes the recent import of the "curator" into the service economy. Next, Tara Mingjie Sun takes brainwashing literally. Her piece's multiple media, highlighted in the photographs of her process, evoke the materiality and malleability of the human brain. Glorín Colón's comical drawings offer a similar strategy, as her illustrations depict the ways we opt out of community in favor of technology, often without realizing it. Her cartoons explore the paradoxical degradation of our connections, as a result our current ability to be connected everywhere, all the time.

"New Chiangeles City" by Matthew Ridley personifies imperialism as the speaker of the poem. Exuding hypersexualized masculinity but threatened by imminent impotence, imperialism is constructed as a timeless character, reflecting upon its doing, from colonial territories in French Indochina to Columbus' voyage to the Americas.

In her piece, "Media and Message in DIY, From Whole Earth to World Wide WEB," Chloe Wang considers the role of DIY instructional literature, focusing on the example of Stewart Brand's *Whole Earth Catalog*. The title of Brand's magazine or "information service" comes from his 1966 campaign to have NASA

release satellite images of the Earth as seen from space. Wang relates the ethos of the Whole Earth Network to the uses of the Internet, complicating its status as a revolutionary, democratizing platform. Following Wang's essay, Caleb Eckert's photographs follow his participation in different communities: the classroom, his hometown, DIY maker groups, a world under environmental duress. The photographs and the poetic field notes that accompany them attempt to make sense of the poignant openness that being in community requires.

"When I Pass Through Your Town," a song by Morgana Warner-Evans about the experience of singing and walking in Maine with a community of activists protesting against drones, rounds out the issue. In the refrain, she sings "But I know that it's all worth it, and that makes me carry on / For I know that you will welcome me when I pass through your town." Her cheerful song suggests that criticisms, such as those expressed in this issue, of the call for community in the service of state and institutional power are inspired by a belief in our shared vulnerability.

Cora Johnson-Grau, Editor-in-Chief

Shahzeen Nasim, Editor-in-Chief

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“COMMUNITY”¹

Miranda Joseph

In the contemporary United States, the term “community” is used so pervasively it would appear to be nearly meaningless. And in fact the term is often deployed more for its performative effect of being “warmly persuasive” than for any descriptive work it accomplishes.² Carrying only positive connotations—a sense of belonging, understanding, caring, cooperation, equality—“community” is deployed to mobilize support not only for a huge variety of causes but also for the speaker using the term. It functions in this way for Starbucks and McDonald’s, both of which display pamphlets in their stores proclaiming their commitment to community, as well as for the feminist scholar who seeks to legitimize her research by saying she works “in the community.” It is deployed across the political spectrum to promote everything from identity-based movements (on behalf of women, gays and lesbians, African Americans, and others), to liberal and neoliberal visions of “civil society,” to movements seeking to restore or reaffirm so-called “traditional” social values and hierarchies.

The relentless invocation of “community” is all the more remarkable given the persistent critique to which it has been subjected. Beginning in the late twentieth century, scholars have examined its use in the contexts of identity politics, liberalism, and nationalism, in each case pointing to its disciplining, exclusionary, racist, sexist, and often violent implications.³ Feminist activists and scholars have argued that the desire for communion, unity, and identity among women tended in practice to make the women’s movement white, bourgeois, and U.S.-centric.⁴ Feminist critics of liberalism have pointed out that the supposedly abstract political community constituted through the liberal

1 This essay was originally published in *Keywords for American Cultural Studies*, ed. Bruce Burgett and Glenn Hendler, (New York: NYU Press, 2014): 57-60.

2 Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, (New York: Fontana, 1983), 76.

3 Miranda Joseph, *Against the Romance of Community*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002).

4 Biddy Martin and Chandra Mohanty, “Feminist Politics: What’s Home Got to Do With it,” *Feminist Studies, Critical Studies*, ed. Teresa de Lauretis, 191-212, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986).

state actually universalized exclusionary gendered and racial norms.⁵ Critics of European and postcolonial nationalisms have historicized the communal origin stories used to legitimate those nationalisms and emphasized the hierarchies and exclusions likewise legitimated by those narratives. Post-structuralist theories have underwritten many of these critiques, enabling scholars to argue that the presence, identity, purity, and communion connoted by "community" are impossible and even dystopic fantasies.⁶ In light of these critiques, many scholars have tried to reinvent community, to reconceptualize it as a space of difference and exposure to alterity.⁷ Such stubborn efforts to build a better theory and practice of community only emphasize that the crucial question to pose about "community" as a keyword is this: Why is it so persistent and pervasive?

One answer to this question lies in the realization that particular deployments of the term can be understood as instances of a larger discourse that positions "community" as the defining other of capitalist "modernity." As Raymond Williams (1983) notes, "community" has been used since the nineteenth century to contrast immediate, direct, local relationships among those with something in common to the more abstract relations connoted by "society." While community is often presumed to involve face-to-face relations, capital is taken to be global and faceless. Community concerns boundaries between us and them that are naturalized through reference to place or race or culture or identity; capital, on the other hand, would seem to denature, crossing all borders, and making everything and everyone equivalent. The discourse of community includes a Romantic narrative that places it prior to "society," locating community in a long lost past for which we yearn nostalgically from our current fallen state of alienation, bureaucratization, and rationalization. This discourse also contrasts community with modern capitalist society structurally;

5 Wendy Brown, *States of Injury: Power and Freedom in Late Modernity*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995).

6 Iris Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990).

7 Chantal Mouffe, "Democratic Citizenship and the Political Community," *Dimensions of Radical Democracy: Pluralism, Citizenship and Community*, ed. Chantal Mouffe, (London: Verso, 1992); Giorgio Agamben, *The Coming Community*, trans. Michael Hardt, (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1993).

the foundation of community is supposed to be social values, while capitalist society is based only on economic value. At the same time, community is often understood to be a problematic remnant of the past, standing in the way of modernization and progress.

The narrative of community as destroyed by capitalism and modernity, as supplanted by society, can be found across a wide range of popular and academic texts; one might say that it is one of the structuring narratives of the field of sociology.⁸ And it has taken on a fresh life in the works of contemporary communitarians such as Robert Bellah (1985), Robert Putnam (1993), Amitai Etzioni (1993), E. J. Dionne (1998), and others, all of which are aimed at least in part at nonacademic audiences. These works inevitably misread Alexis de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* (1835) as describing a now lost form of local community that they believe would, if revived, promote democracy and economic prosperity and solve many contemporary problems, including drug use, crime, and poverty. In the post-Soviet era, "community," in the guise of nongovernmental organizations, has featured prominently in the promotion of "civil society" in both former communist countries and "developing" countries of the "Third World."

The discursive opposition of community and society provides a crucial clue to the former's pervasiveness in contemporary discourse; community is a creature of modernity and capitalism. Williams optimistically suggests that modernity positively constitutes communities of collective action. In *The Country and the City*, he argues against the nostalgic idealization of pre-enclosure communities that he finds in late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century British literature, pointing out that pre-enclosure villages supported "inequalities of condition" and that "community only became a reality when economic and political rights were fought for and partially gained."⁹ More pessimistically, Nikolas Rose reads the invocation of community as a central technology of power, arguing that in its contemporary deployments "community" is used to

8 Thomas Bender, *Community and Social Change in America*, (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1978).

9 Raymond Williams, 1973, 102, 104.

invoke "emotional relationships" that can then be instrumentalized.¹⁰ He suggests that the communities so invoked are required to take on responsibilities for "order, security, health and productivity" formerly carried by the state. And certainly there is substantial evidence for his argument in the proliferation of public-private partnerships, neighborhood watch programs, restorative justice initiatives, and the like, all of which mobilize familial and communal relations to promote subjection to law and order rather than to fight for economic or political rights.¹¹

Community thus can be understood as a supplement to the circulation of state power and capital; it not only enables capital and power to flow, it also has the potential to displace those flows. Because the circulation of abstract capital depends on the embodiment of capital in particular subjects, the expansion and accumulation of capital requires that capitalists engage in an ongoing process of disrupting, transforming, galvanizing, and constituting new social formations, including communities. Community is performatively constituted in capitalism, in the processes of production and consumption, through discourses of pluralism, multiculturalism, and diversity, through niche marketing, niche production, and divisions of labor by race, gender, and nation.

This complex relation of community to capitalism is particularly evident in the promotion of nonprofit and nongovernmental organizations (NPOs and NGOs)—"civil society"—in the context of "development" in the United States and internationally. In the United States, nonprofit organizations are said to express community and often stand in for community metonymically. They are the institutional sites where people contribute labor or money to "the community." And they are posited as the form through which community might be reinvigorated as a complement to capitalism, providing those goods and services that capitalism does not. In the context of "development," NGOs have been explicitly promoted as a means for developing human and social

10 *The Powers of Freedom*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 172, 174.

11 Nicola Lacey and Lucia Zedner, "Discourses of Community in Criminal Justice," *Journal of Law and Society* 22, no. 3 (1995): 301-25; Nicola Lacey, "Community in Legal Theory: Idea, Ideal or Ideology," *Studies in Law, Politics and Society* 15 (1996): 105-46; Miranda Joseph, "A Debt to Society," *The Seductions of Community*, ed. Gerald Creed, 199-226, (Santa Fe, NM: SAR Press, 2006).

capital and involving the poor in development projects—as, in other words, sites for constituting liberal capitalist subjects and subjectivities. At the same time, the necessity for such organizations suggests that subjects are not always already capitalist subjects. And in fact, the promotion of NPOs and NGOs has often been explicitly intended to stave off socialism or communism.¹² The incorporation of subjects as community members at the site of the NGO can be understood as hegemonizing, wedding potentially resistant subjects (potentially or actually communist subjects) to capitalism.

The centrality of community to capitalism has been made even more explicit in the context of globalization. Politically diverse iterations of globalization discourse, both popular and academic, argue that capitalism now depends on communities, localities, cultures, and kinship to provide the social norms and trust that enable businesses to function, and that contemporary globalized capitalism is and should be more attuned to particular communities, localities, and cultures.¹³ While a number of scholars have portrayed the localization and culturalization of capitalism as a positive development, creating opportunities for local or communal resistance, others have emphasized the weakness, dependence, and vulnerability of the local. The claim that capitalism has just now discovered community is, however, problematic. It suggests that communities, and the economic inequalities between them, have not themselves been constituted by capitalism. To the contrary, the explicit deployment of community within globalization discourse tends to legitimate economic inequalities and exploitation as the expression of authentic cultural difference even as it articulates all communities and cultures as analogous sites for production and consumption.¹⁴

The project of examining “the seductions of community” remains a crucial

12 Joseph, 2002.

13 Michael Piore and Charles F. Sabel, *The Second Industrial Divide: Possibilities for Prosperity*, (New York: Basic Books, 1984); Francis Fukuyama, *Trust: The Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity*, (New York: The Free Press, 1995).

14 Melissa Wright, “The Dialectics of Still Life: Murder, Women, and the Maquiladoras,” *Public Culture* 11 (1999): 453–74.

one.¹⁵ Exploring the ways in which community is constituted by or complicit with capital and power can reshape our understandings of the dimensions of our communities and the connections among them. Such exploration might enable us to recuperate and rearticulate the needs and desires for social change that are so often coopted by the uncritical deployment of the term.

15 Gerald Creed, ed., *The Seductions of Community*, (Santa Fe, NM: SAR Press, 2006).



Elana Kates

On the bus, 2015

Artist's Statement

These images are an attempt to interpret foreign environments and unfamiliar places as a tourist and guest. The pictures' inanimate subject matter is a reflection of my desire to avoid the ethical issue of appropriating the local population as ornaments in an "exotic" travel shot. Rather, I want to let the landscape speak for itself. In my view, the visible impression a population leaves on its environment is a personally evocative and salient mode through which to understand a new place. Strikingly expressive topography might be found anywhere—along the highway, at a rest stop or outside the airport. I find these ordinary spots to be extra potent spaces.



Elana Kates

Abandoned Building, 2015

SEMIOTICS OF THE DESERT

Elena Harriss-Bauer

Remnants of Goddess-worshipping societies suggest the powerful role mothers and daughters played in establishing culture and society. Mothers and daughters have a special place as cultivators and creators of life.¹

Helen, like me, was a Scorpio. Somehow, this made me feel closer to her, like I understood her in a way other people didn't—we both had the stubborn self-reliance that, according to the shoddy horoscopes in the *Red Rock News*, was characteristic of Scorpios. She was, until the end, my mother's closest friend. Helen had separated from her husband in August and had submitted to the cancer. She was gone before the summer was. My mother read a book called *Proof of Heaven* aloud to her at the end, even though she knew Helen didn't really go for that sort of thing. It was an act of selfishness but it was my mother more than Helen who needed comforting. Helen herself had attained an augural sense of calm. That part, toward the end, that odd waiting for death and the preparations one makes—that was the most difficult for my mother. As for Helen, God knows. She had long since retreated into herself, sought her own refuge as an oracle, made somehow sacred in pain. She was a disciple of it. By the time the Ponderosas had dropped a layer of their thick yellowed needles, she looked as though she had aged thirty years. When I arrived, I mistook Helen for her own mother. She lay sunken into her bed like it was claiming her. Her hair had turned perfectly, pristinely white and seemed to retract into her skull. She was unable to admit, even then, that the pain she was wracked with was from sources other than the cancer in her bones.

We were driving through the dry nothingland between Phoenix and Flagstaff when my mother first told me about her abortion. She and Helen had both been twenty-two, pregnant, and alone. By the grace or mercy of some power unknown, they had been delivered to each other, and so founded a friendship on their shared bad luck. Theirs was a community of two, a community defined

1 Shelley Phillips, *Beyond the Myths: Mother-daughter Relationships in Psychology, History, Literature, and Everyday Life*, (London: Penguin, 1996).

by shame. So often, this is women's fate: communities of taboo and cults of ostracization. Perhaps this is what is meant by female mysticism—simply to be marked, constantly awaiting relegation to a community bound by shame and humiliation. To be constantly awaiting your lot. This is the fundamental indignity of being a woman, the crude indecency of the female body, all its processes, and all that it houses. This is the room for women to inhabit.

We were driving to Helen's funeral, which was to be held in the desert-cape of Sedona, which she had loved despite its unseasonal tourists and the fine red dust that cast everything in sunset haze. It was her home. We talked about Helen's siblings, the people she was leaving behind. It was then that I told my mother, as I used to when I was young, about wishing vainly for one more sibling, about wishing I was a middle child. She didn't look at me when she said, in the matter-of-fact way she has when addressing the nebulous discomforts of family, politics, and death, that in a certain way, I was. She said she had always imagined that it would have been a boy. I looked out my window and all the earth was red.

"...There was this whole thing about how to get Helen to the Planned Parenthood with her broken leg, without her dad seeing her...it just added this whole element (look at all those houses!) to the process. I had been with Helen and her family for Christmas, and while we were skiing she breaks her leg. And I can't remember if she knew she was pregnant before that or if she discovered it after. And it was like, oh my God, she's got this broken leg and she's pregnant and I have to get her to Planned Parenthood for this abortion and her dad is picketing there. Her dad was the dean of the college too. He taught at Saint John's from 1954 until whenever, and then the year that Helen was there in Annapolis, he and Martha went on sabbatical.

So they were never there together? He wasn't ever her dean?

Well not that year. But the year that I'm talking about was my senior year, and she was at Bryn Mawr doing her premed, and so when she was in Annapolis she was staying at her parent's house. And it's funny, I don't have a memory of much. I have the memory of Mikey and his signs and...

Mikey the wicked Catholic?

Yeah. The dean, the Catholic, her father. One thing Helen was talking to me about was how hard her parents' breakup was for her. After 40 years, Mikey the Catholic sought to have their marriage annulled.

What does that mean?

Eight children, one who committed suicide, one who's crazy and lives on the street and 40 years of devout Catholic marriage. And now Helen dead too. Annulled means that it never... it takes all its reality out. Annulled is like saying it never should've really happened.

He couldn't get a divorce because he's Catholic.

Right. Because then he wouldn't have been able to get married again. Annulled means like, "I get a free pass, right?" And it was just one of those moments of real pain and sadness."

I do not like to be a passenger; it makes me nervous. When my brother drives, when my father drives, I grip the seat and watch the horizon line as if struck by a mariner's syndrome, trying to balance a roiling inner ear. But here, it let me speak to my mother as I never could have otherwise. Driving occupied her, allowed her to treat the conversation as a distraction no more causal than changing lanes or checking her mirrors. It lent her a degree of privacy, letting her keep her focus on the ribbon of road disappearing into the high-walled mesas.

Sometimes, we talked about death. We always came back to it, or it to us. "You know what to do with me, don't you?" she asked (she would have called this morbidity pragmatism, the shield of indifference she thrust at the world). "Burn my body and scatter the ashes on the outgoing tide in Chatham, near the point. But not too close to Scatterree, or I'll get caught in the bay." She looked at me then, as if asking that impossible question, And you? Where will you spend your eternity?

Helen had seven siblings, surpassing even my mother's five, which seemed to me already verging on the impossible. Helen's youngest brother, Christopher,

spent his summers at the family home in Vinalhaven building boats. Like her, he died in August, hanging himself from the high rafters of the airy workshop. He was long dead by the time I met Helen. "That's why he's missing from the photo," my mother said as she passed me a picture printed off an ancient roll. "This one is Bezi—Elizabeth. She lives on the street somewhere in Texas now; she fell off the map a little bit. She was mean, even when we were young. This one is Bartholomew; they call him Bat. He lives in Hong Kong and I don't remember the last time I saw him. Probably at Helen's wedding, but that was 25 years ago now."

It was always them—Helen's family—that defined her. Their faults, their lies, their triumphs, subsumed her identity. She could never forgive that. And in the end, these are the things we hold onto, the things we refuse to let go, to be forgotten. We aren't gentle with ourselves; we are stingy with our forgiveness, and, even in death, we don't allow ourselves restitution. There are measures that rise to meet these last acts of harshness, that make a grand show of mitigating them. The last rites, for instance, a sort of hasty restitutory clause written into the Catholic cannon, meant to ease these quiet backdoor exits. But of course the question remains, for whom, really, are these measures meant? What flimsiest absolution may they bring? In the end, it is not the dying who must live with themselves.

"So really, you get to be the middle child you always wanted to be!"

Not under the circumstances I would've imagined.

No...I definitely think about it sometimes, and I see him...it...when I look at Sadie or Ben because they all would've been the same age...

You mean imagining if you had had it? Him?

Yeah. If I hadn't had an abortion. Yeah. I mean it would've been a whole different life. And who knows if you would've been the middle child or not.

Shit, who knows if I would have existed at all.

Exactly. And you know, it could've been the icing on the Karel and Nancy cake right there. Karel was still in New York doing his undergraduate; I was on the East Coast, and hadn't done any... hadn't started thinking about what was next. I'm sure I was taking the LSAT then though, because I had to take that test before I could apply to school, and applications were due, so I must've been in the midst of the process of applying to law school.

Well what did you do, did you talk about it with Dad?

Like how, like making a decision? That's what I mean, there wasn't even a decision to be made, you know, it was just like, it was almost taken for granted that... I mean I'm just thinking about me; I don't know what Karel would've thought. But I found this place called the Crittenton Women's Clinic in Boston and it was like an old-fashioned home for unwed mothers. Now it's probably part of Beth Israel or something like that. And Karel did come with me, but as far as he was concerned it was probably like, okay, we're pregnant... and I actually remember getting pregnant. It was like this foolish unprotected sex moment, because I used to use a diaphragm all the time. My period was absolutely like clockwork and... we were in New York in his bedroom... and I was like we should stop... and we didn't... and then lo and behold we got pregnant. So my imagination, (and Karel might remember differently), is just saying, I'm pregnant and I scheduled this time and... I'm pretty sure Karel was there when... was there with me...

You don't remember?

I'm pretty sure. You know, of the things I remember, I remember this old-fashioned house, I remember going in and I remember something about glass rods to make your cervix dilate. And then... and I remember kind of laying low afterwards. Helen and I were living together at that point and working on these boats together, and she (it was much later), she goes, "I can't believe you had an abortion and you didn't say anything to me about it! I couldn't believe you didn't even flinch, you just sort of like..." because I remember sort of having some cramping but just sort of... having a tough constitution. But that's what I mean, it was almost so pragmatic, because it was

available to me and because it was just the... how do you say it? It's just what people did, you know? You wouldn't have thought of doing anything but having an abortion. It's a tricky thing, you know, because yes that's what you do, but it's also kind of sad, to sit here and spin out the older brother you might've had. Which again, it's all fake, because had I chosen that, then everything that came after wouldn't have happened, would not have been the same...and then who I did have as eldest was you.

Yeah, but you'd certainly love that other eldest just as much.

Yes, but isn't that the sort of fluky thing, like if Karel and I hadn't had sex the night we had sex when you were conceived, someone else would be sitting here. And every moment those decisions are made.

I think about that all the time, those minute decisions that affect the entire course of your life...

And every single one of them is like that. That's the thing, they all do.

My mother and I walked together near our motel each of the three nights we spent in Sedona. Though the process may be prolonged, the moment of death is instantaneous. There is something otherworldly about the desert for those who come to it late in life like my mother. It held a mystical wonder for her: the strangeness of the geography, the fineness of the dust, the particular resilience of all the creatures that make their home there...she was breathless amidst all that unlikely vitality. Walking in the desert at nighttime is a lesson in the dogged persistence of life and all those organisms who seek it. It is an exercise in improbability, a reminder of all that endures *despite*. This, coincidentally enough, has been a theme in the life of my mother, as in Helen's life: enduring, enduring despite. I maintain that the line between desert and sky, accented at night by a light that seems to emanate from the desert itself, is the only place where one can see the curvature of the earth.

Helen didn't sleep much at the end of her life. My mother would stay up with her, because that's what you do when someone is dying—you try to look at them as much as possible and as hard as possible, sit with them as long as

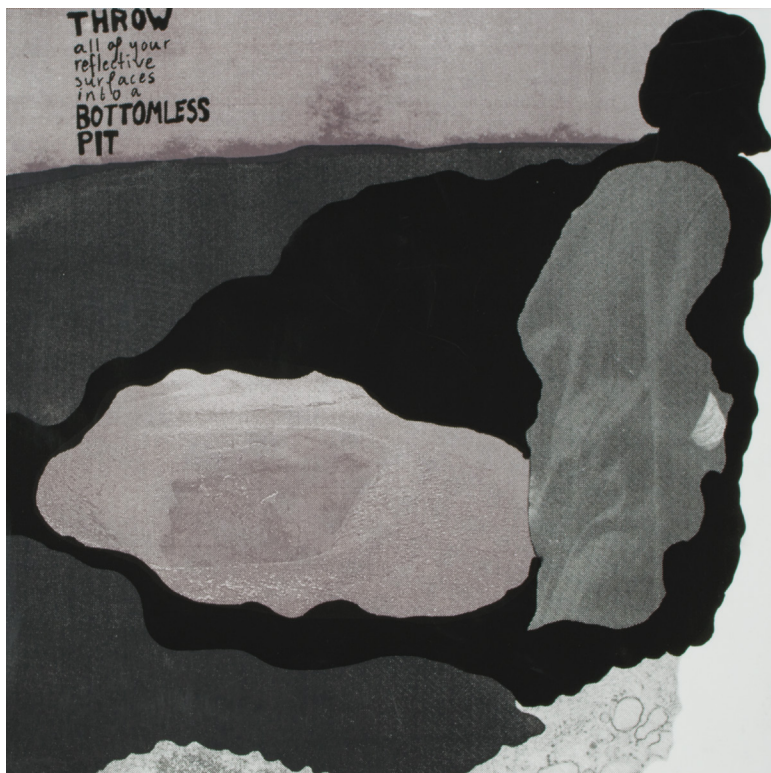
patience allows, try to breathe them in, to saturate your senses with them, as if to finally uncover, or forcibly create, some smallest intimation of immortality. There were nights, she said, when Helen would talk to death as though it were there in the room, incarnate in the light passing along the walls from headlights on the desert road outside. She spoke to death softly, as a lover almost, as someone who sat with her through the dark.

In death, her body was bent, though not in submission. Her shape mirrored the arc of the desert sky, the vast plane of that sloping horizon. Her death was like her life: no less fraught, no less painful, no less complete. Both Helen and my mother realized this, and saw that final recognition of the self as a negotiation with memory. Maybe this is the sadness we feel when someone we love dies—it is a negation of all the places inside them occupied by their past selves, and all the places in us taken up by their memories. The two women, throughout nights spent awake in the vastness of the desert landscape, shared their joys, their fears, their public and most secret pains, lest they be subsumed and forgotten. Even in death, my mother was Helen's dearest friend, and Helen gave my mother those quietest parts of herself. This is the ultimate duty of mother to mother; of woman to woman—they preserve the memories of their own past selves for us, their children, both living and unborn, who survive them. A long cry, reaching across all our bodies, and all the bodies that remain: let the pain of the woman not be forgotten, lest it be in vain.

Later, as we drove home together through the totality of the desert night, the sky was everywhere.



Julia Schrecengost
SELF-HELP FOR THE BODILY CONFUSED
2015
Screen prints
10" by 10"





RECOGNIZING MYSELF IN A SEA OF WHITENESS

Shahzeen Nasim



My mother sent me to school in these frocks. They're referred to as frocks in Pakistan, an English loan-word, likely as a tiny but sustained piece of Pakistan's colonial heritage. The frocks appear in photographs from my childhood: a blue checkered one, a red checkered one, and a powder pink one, with puffy sleeves and several ruffled layers in the skirt. This is how I was sent to school, with short hair that my mother cut in our kitchen and T-strap plastic leather shoes with buckle clasps. My mother brought our belongings, including kitchen pots, bedding, and lotas, to the States when she emigrated from Pakistan. We moved to the East Bay Area, where my father had a job as a computer programmer. I remember that these clothes made me stand out from the other children at my elementary school and that I was ostracized because of this difference. I remember that I had hated this dress, haircut, hairband, though my mother's efforts to carry our possessions across the Pacific are striking to me now. I am not as good at packing,

nor as frugal. When I moved from California to attend Haverford College, I made the trip alone. I had been adamant about moving far away from home, though I hadn't thought as much about the repercussions. In this way, I stumbled upon the painful reality of dislocation, in a pig-headed effort to become independent.

Yet, in other ways, I didn't really make a decision. I applied to Haverford through QuestBridge, a national scholarship program that matches "low-income, high-achieving" students with elite colleges. The application process involved ranking up to eight colleges, while partner colleges decide which students best fit their institution. In the panic of college admissions, I had imagined only worst-case scenarios, generally to the tune of "I won't get in anywhere and I'll have to move back to Pakistan and get married!" I filled out all eight slots with a list of colleges and only a vague idea of where I was applying and even less as to where I wanted to go. For comparison, many QuestBridge finalists don't rank any colleges in the first round of admissions. Instead, finalists can send their applications during regular decision when acceptances aren't binding. This ensures that colleges receive their extensive QuestBridge applications, which are more personal and include more financial information about the applicant. Then the applicant, after comparing admission offers and financial packages, can choose between offers.

When I was matched to Haverford, I retrospectively understood how my personal essays resonated with the College's brand, as oriented towards social justice, community, and intellectual curiosity. In fact, what I recall from my admissions interview with an alumnus then attending Stanford Medical School was his emphasis on Haverford's supportive community. One of my college essays responded to the prompt, "If you could make one change in your community, what would it be?" I wrote that I would change the local Borders bookstore's practice of hiding their outlet plugs behind bookshelves and under the carpet. Given the scope of "one change in your community," it was a trivial issue. I only recently stopped feeling badly about it when a friend suggested that I was critiquing the corporation's profit-model and gesturing towards a revised understanding of communal space that didn't revolve around capital gain.

My response also reflects what was, at the time, a fundamental part of my personality: optimism to the point of willful naiveté. I had to be optimistic about what was possible. If a process seemed flawed and easily repairable, I couldn't accept that it would stay the way it was. I was extremely hopeful about the future and construed painful experiences as stepping-stones deliberately set in

my path so that I could grow. When I was freaking out about how to go to college, I decided that as long as I was fully-funded, I could be happy and successful anywhere. Then I set out to make that happen. But one of the repercussions of such an optimistic attitude is that it doesn't prepare you for what could go wrong. It made it difficult, for example, to understand that moving far away from my family and home, from the spaces and people I know, would be dislocating and profoundly painful. That wasn't a possibility I could even imagine and when it happened, I didn't understand. I was an adaptable person. I had adapted to and from California and Faisalabad, Pakistan several times over. Why was it at Haverford, with all of its amenities, its helpful staff, concerned faculty, and supportive community, that I felt so isolated?

Beyond being frugal and pennywise, my mother brought so many of her belongings with her as a means of preserving her identity. She was born in 1974 and moved to California in 1998. Eventually, my mother will have spent as much of her life in the States as she had in Pakistan. Though I quickly outgrew frocks, she still wears her salwar kameez and chador. This is her silhouette as I've always known it, standing in front of the sink, washing dishes every morning before school. All that fabric comforts her, protecting her against cultural assimilation. More importantly, my mother's use of objects and clothing acts as recognition, affirming her identity and forcing others to recognize her and her textured history.

* * * * *

The Record, Haverford College's yearbooks, are housed in Quaker and Special Collections. Yearbooks from 1888 to 1974 are also accessible digitally in the "History of Haverford College" collection through the Special Collections' database. As the title suggests, this collection spans from Haverford's founding in 1833 to the present. I examined Haverford's archive of yearbooks to explore the relationship between individual and institutional memory, identity, and biography. Through photographic images and text descriptions, yearbooks relay information about the student body and their relationship to the institution. The yearbook's symbolic uses are three-fold. First, a yearbook identifies members of the institution, simultaneously individuating them and signifying their inclusion within the

collective. Secondly, yearbooks mark the passing of each academic year. Lastly, by visually embodying the events of each year, yearbooks are representations of the institution's identity and can be considered a form of institutional biography. A yearbook archive can represent the institution's identity over time, revealing both institutional changes and continuities.

As yearbooks incorporate photographs of students, they can document racial diversity on campus. The poster exhibit "*Get off the Dime and Deal*": A History of Haverford's Struggle to Diversify (2008) uses yearbook photos to trace diversity on Haverford's campus through the 20th century. Printed on the College's signature colors, a royal red with black accents, the exhibit reproduces photos of Man Hoi Tang '15, John Bhaskar Appasamy '31, José Padin '07, Augustus Tanaka '47, and Paul Moses '51 from their class yearbooks, noting that they were each respectively the first Asian, Indian, Latino, Asian-American, and African-American student to graduate from Haverford. Yearbook entries also tend to include biographical details, such as place of birth and secondary school, indicating students' nationalities. The richness of these visual and factual details make the yearbook an incredibly powerful tool to examine the relationship between institutional whiteness, racism, and diversity. The yearbook is an archive of the lived experiences of students, documenting how they understood each other and themselves.

At the same time, the capaciousness and accessibility of the visual information contained in the yearbooks, particularly the portrait-style photographs, make the yearbook susceptible to analyses that reproduce institutional whiteness. Portrait photos in yearbooks are intended to be easily consumed; they depict the sitting subject as prim and proper, wearing their best clothes and offering wide smiles. Given the uniformity of the photograph's size and the sitter's comportment, a small collection of these images can easily be organized into a multicultural mosaic. Such analyses, which ultimately only do a body count of nonwhite students, risk reinforcing and prioritizing the optics of diversity over the education and well-being of students of color.

In *On Being Included*, critical race theorist Sara Ahmed describes the pervasiveness of diversity as a structuring model and the institutional investment in images. "Diversity involves a repicturing of an institution," she writes, in order to

create “a new institutional face.”¹ “That diversity is about those who ‘look different’ shows us how it can keep whiteness in place,” Ahmed explains, “If diversity becomes something that is added to organizations...it confirms the whiteness of what is already in place.”² Reading the yearbook archive for diversity in this way, counting black and brown faces, threatens to obscure the academy’s institutional whiteness. Ahmed demonstrates how diversity simultaneously hides whiteness while affirming its centrality. Moreover, in its present form, diversity dismisses the discomfort that characterizes the experience of “inhabit[ing] whiteness as a nonwhite body,” a feeling she describes as being in a “sea of whiteness.”³

In an alternative reading of the archive, these photographs can enable a recognition of institutional racism, and subsequently, the recognition and embrace of difference. Oft characterized by its indexical properties, i.e. that the photograph retains a “trace” of an actual existence, photography bears witness to the past. Within the yearbook, photographs assist collective memory by portraying narrativized events and capturing the presence of those who once inhabited Haverford’s campus. In some cases, photographs bear witness to instances of racial violence. Reading these photographs, rather than consuming images of students of color, enables a recognition of that violence and its place in our collective history. Acknowledging institutional complicity and the institutionalization of whiteness is crucial to recognizing and accepting difference; the acknowledgment itself is anti-racist.

In each yearbook, senior class members are presented in individual entries with his name, extracurriculars, biographical details, thesis title, and photo. The content of the entries remain consistent over the years, while the format varies greatly. The earliest yearbooks from 1888-1889 do not include any photographs. Yearbooks from 1901-1903 are either missing or, more likely, were never published. Until the 1970s, each entry includes captions for every member of the graduating class and often students who left the College prior to matriculating. These descriptions range from skeletal to verbose, and are usually followed by

1 Sara Ahmed, *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012), 33.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid, 40.

narratives titled "Class History:"

In examining the College yearbooks, I made use of both the electronic database and the physical archive in Magill Library. To facilitate browsing, the database makes use of metadata categories. One metadata description I was surprised to find was "Minority." The "Minority Photos" folder includes files titled "Minority_Students_in_DC.jpg," "Men_of_Color_in_the_DC.jpg" and "Two_Female_Students_of_Color_Reading_Baldwin.jpg." Results also include unintended usages, e.g. documents summarizing "minority opinions." Images of women are also named to identify their femaleness. Titles like "Studying_With_her_Shoes_Off.jpg," "Female_Student_Studying.jpg," "Female_Student_Looking_Up_From_Reading.jpg" depict women reading or attending classes. Photos of white, male students are not marked to indicate their whiteness or maleness. The metadata categories reproduce whiteness as the unnamed category, while "minorities" and "female_students" are fixed signifiers.

As I read through yearbook entries, I realize that some seem more autobiographical than others and I wonder about their authorship. Consider, for example, Fredric Jameson's entry, where the now-prolific theorist is described as:

"the major defender of the literary Weltanschauung in this neck of the woods [French House]. As the much-misunderstood editor of the Haverford Revue [sic], he can often be seen, clutching his specially pre-packed cigarettes, and with unkempt hair, debating some point of aesthetics with a disgruntled contributor. Apart from his one dramatic effort as the club-footed villain in the *Duchess of Malji*, this youthful Henry James is addicted to wine, project courses, Fulbright scholarships, raking books out of the library unsigned, writing unreadable sentences, and taking refuge in the many-times repeated playing of a certain Dixieland disc."⁴

As an editor of *The Record* that year, Jameson possibly wrote his own description. On the other hand, it is highly improbable that entries under "Ex-member" were authored by the students they describe.

4 *The Record of the Class of 1954*, 1954, 37.

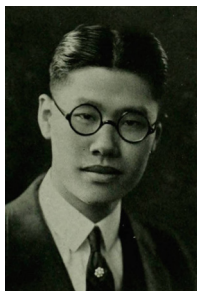


Fig. 3 Kung Huie Yeh
The Record, 1922, pg. 33

A student originally from the class of 1922, Kung Huie Yeh (fig. 3) is shown in a portrait accompanied by a description of his departure: "...And everyone was sorry that he did not decide to return in the fall of 1919, but he thought the Middle West was nearer to China than Philadelphia, so off he packed."⁵ Yeh, who moved to Urbana, IL, smiles faintly, wearing black round glasses and a tiny, barely noticeable flower pin in his tie. The text emphasizes Yeh's foreignness, conflating his Chinese identity with an ignorance of U.S. geography. It projects homesickness onto Yeh, implying that he lacks grit. Moreover, the

description treats foreignness — specifically, in this case, as a Chinese national — as otherness, wherein Yeh is marked as dissimilar and stupid for the yearbook's audience.

That same year, two other Asian students left Haverford: Shigeo Nakane, a Japanese student who transferred to Bowdoin, and Samuel Hiok Chang from China. The yearbook, which does not include a photo of Chang, describes him as "Lively Little Chang was a sketch,"⁶ or a "a ridiculous sight, a very amusing person."⁷ The yearbook immortalizes Chang with these infantilizing instructions: "Just tickle his ribs and see what will happen. A giggle, a protest, a convulsion, and a scream — it is all over and Chang has vanished." Moreso than wholly depicting Chang, the yearbook offers a caricature, typifying him as an Asian man. It reduces him to an emasculated stereotype, made possible by the perceived difference between Chang and Haverford's student body. The yearbook goes on to describe him as a "merry optimist and we hope to find him in his usual mood when we visit our missionary cousins in Canton." During Chang and Yeh's time at Haverford, neither Chinese immigrants nor any person of color (besides African Americans, due to laws passed during Reconstruction) could become a U.S. citizen. Based on the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, Chinese laborers were

5 *The Record of the Class of 1922*, 1922, 33.

6 *Ibid.*, 35.

7 "sketch, n.", OED Online, March 2016, Oxford University Press.

barred from even entering the United States until the act was repealed in 1943. The insistence upon Chang's characterization as a "merry optimist" obscures a national history of violence, exclusion, and alienation.

The tone that pervades the early Haverford yearbooks is largely comical. For white students, this is perhaps suggestive of fraternal camaraderie and friendship. On the other hand, the use of college-aged humor obfuscates violence when it comes to the experiences of students and communities of color. In that vein, anti-black racism reverberates through the backwaters of Haverford's self-archive. "*Get off the Dime and Deal*" notes that "Haverford's failure to integrate black men into its student body after the Civil War while some liberal arts colleges were at least attempting to do so is particularly striking," considering the contributions of some abolitionist Quakers to the antislavery movement and to promoting the education of people of African descent in the 18th and 19th centuries. Despite these expectations, Haverford students casually performed and lauded minstrel performances well into the 20th century.



Fig. 4 Students in blackface
The Record, 1904, pg. 26

Fig. 4 and 6 depict groups of students in blackface. Fig. 4 is included in "Class History," written in the first-person plural, which relays highlights from the Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, and Senior years of the graduating class. The account imagines the class as a collective body with an intimately shared range of experiences that forms its collective memory. In the anecdote pertaining to fig. 4, the plural coauthor(s) writes, "...we stole from the windows and doors of Barclay laden with cans of paint, some scarlet, some black (the scarlet was a little pale)."⁸ After vandalizing the campus with their school colors, the class of 1904 "tackled the goal post at the Grammar School." The anecdote does not reference the blatant use of blackface, saying only of the photograph, "...we once more went on exhibition before the College in the cakewalk and made as large fools of ourselves as possible." The cakewalk is an act in a minstrelsy performance, originally enacted by slaves in Southern plantations.⁹ "We won much applause by our costumes, those of 'Baldy' and the 'Englishman' being especially unique, as may be seen from the photograph."¹⁰ According to the class' index (fig. 5), "Baldy" refers to Charles Christopher Morris, the celebrated cricketer and the eponym for C. Christopher Morris Cricket Library. Cricket, a British import, is instrumentalized to reproduce and fetishize white Englishness in colonial territories.¹¹

Fig. 6, titled "Junior Play," shows the participants of "A Night of Darkness," performed on May 15th 1903 by the members of the class of 1904. Twenty-one men are in blackface, while five in the front row are holding banjos. Based on the list of characters (fig. 7), it is difficult to assess any logic, aside from racial bigotry, behind the use of blackface. Though these racist performances are long-forgotten, they are still recorded and reproduced photographically in the 1904 yearbook. By omitting and thus dismissing C. Christopher Morris' participation in minstrel shows, revering him for his accomplishments in cricket, and naming parts of the campus after him, Haverford perpetuates his legacy uncritically. In refusing to recognize the racism of our past, and in fact dragging it into our present and future, Haverford maintains an environment of racial bigotry.

8 *The Record of the Class of 1904*, 1904, 26.

9 Patricia J. Williams, "Taking the Cake," *The Nation*, April 10, 2003, <<http://www.thenation.com/article/takingcake/>>.

10 Ibid, 27.

11 See: C. L. R. James, *Beyond a Boundary*, (New York: Pantheon, 1983).

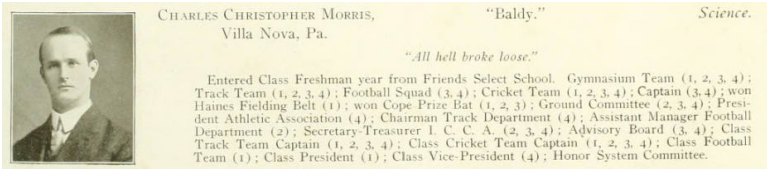


Fig. 5 "Baldy"
The Record, 1904, pg. 14



Fig. 6 "A Night of Darkness" performance
The Record, 1904, pg. 64

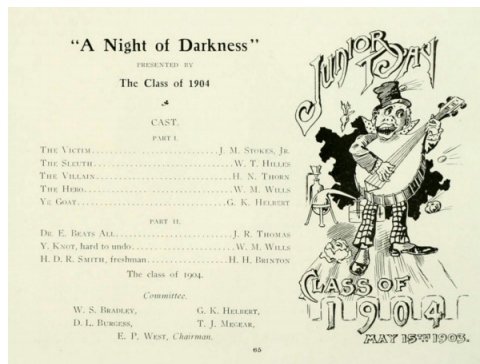


Fig. 7 "A Night of Darkness" cast list
The Record, 1904, pg. 65

Alternatively, these photographic testimonies can also enable recognition of a system of racist representation. To be sure, a politics of recognition such as the one I'm enumerating could still be unhelpful. Sara Ahmed problematizes the recognition of institutional racism, through examples of what she terms "institutional therapy culture." As per Ahmed, "speaking about racism" can become about the institution's hurt feelings, rather than being reparative. Moreover, Ahmed questions whether reparation itself is a possible outcome, since violent histories cannot be retroactively repaired.

The Record of the Class of 2005 is the last physical yearbook produced by Haverford students. It opens with this bold but odd preface:

The yearbook industry survives on the idea that each year holds something different from the last. In a person's life, time means something: I went to my freshman year of college in 2005. I graduated in 2005. I had a killer course load in 2005. You will be flipping through the pages of this book in twenty years, trying to see some trace of your life story mirrored in them. What do we all share? Construction continued on the GIAC, President Tritton came under fire by the student body; Professor Sikov taught his last Haverford class. Maybe these are sign posts in Haverford's history, but they are not the sign posts in ours.¹²

The preface opens the section titled "Gallery." It is situated alongside a full-page photograph of two women standing in a familiar but unidentifiable part of campus. They do not notice the camera. One of the students sips a beverage in a styrofoam cup through a straw. After sifting through dozens of yearbooks featuring countless stern-looking men in their formal attire, it is refreshing to come across an artifact of institutional history that intimates dissent against the institutional history. The preface suggests that the pages to follow will "sign post" "our" history, as something distinct from "Haverford's history."

The Record then goes on to present collages of personal and formal photographs organized into subsections by class year and campus activities. The

12 *The Record*, 2005, 2.

first page includes a photo of a woman sitting serenely on the ledge on Magill's stairway. The photos in this section seem candid; students are not posing, but laughing exasperatedly, making faces, tackling in the snow, and playing with each others' hair. The "Gallery" also includes photos of Campus Safety members, and students making a smoothie in the bathroom. This is the only section that includes color photographs, as if to celebrate its unstructured theme. Unlike sections like "Club & Activities," "Athletics," the "Gallery" seems to serve no particular point, other than to showcase a collage of quasi-artistic photos. Only the "Seniors" section includes portrait-style photographs. Surrounding or overlapping the collages are sentence-long descriptions and quotes. The "Middle Years" section, which is dedicated to the sophomore and junior classes, includes "Junior Advice to Sophomores," with the likes of, "'Don't suddenly decide you need to improve your GPA. 'Cause its not gonna happen.' Sarah Hallenback '06."

Unlike the early yearbooks which included a photo of the ten-or-so members on the editorial board, the identity of 2005's yearbook editors is only revealed on the final page, and even then, only partially. The last page, written in the first-person, suggests that the yearbook was a two-person job, though it received help from many, including "Phil Klein and the team over at Jostens," "Team Duck Pond." One of the co-editors is Emily Katz, until she left for France. The identity of the person writing is never revealed. The early yearbooks also used the first-person, but in the plural, suggesting that the class, in its entirety has authorship over the contents of the yearbook. The use of the first-person plural, "we," works to homogenize the voices of the members of the class into one voice. In contrast, this unidentifiable voice of the 2005 yearbook leaves descriptions incomplete and is at times unclear as to what she is "signposting." However, she speaks clearly as herself, and recognizes different histories that are part of the collective Haverford community, without incorporating these histories into the collective.

* * * * *



...but finally, I suppose, the most difficult (and most rewarding) thing in my life has been the fact that I was born a Negro and was forced, therefore, to effect some kind of truce with this reality. (Truce, by the way, is the best one can hope for.)

James Baldwin, "Autobiographical Notes," *Notes of a Native Son*

Jesse Chin once told me that Indians smell like curry, and when they buy a house the house price falls and that no Asian or white guy would date an Indian girl. He killed my self-esteem. I feel like my race is the worst to be.

An entry from my journal circa 2007

Based on this photograph, from the 7th grade yearbook at Pine Valley Middle School, I can deduce that I straightened my hair for Picture Day, and that I possibly recently visited Pakistan. My skin would normally not be so light, unless I had just spent the summer indoors at my grandmother's house, where the coordinated efforts of my mother and grandmother mean that I am subjected to daily turmeric masks and minimal sun exposure. This photograph is a testimony to my own desire to assimilate and to minimize difference between myself and my white peers. The

photograph also bears witness to a postcolonial fetishization of whiteness. Finally, this photograph registers the effects of racism on my body. Looking at this image, I note my bad posture, hunched over shoulders, comported smile, and tired eyes. My body is a manifestation of the stress and anxiety produced by racial alienation.

In this next photo, from my 10th grade yearbook, I am wearing green-colored contact lenses. I purchased these lenses from Pakistan, where they are considerably cheaper than in the States. My family tries to buy most of our eye-ware and schedule dental surgeries in Pakistan for this reason. Colored contact lenses were also a fad in Pakistan at the time. I look happier and more relaxed. My smile seems genuine, but I also know I was a merry optimist by then.

My yearbooks and school photos were packed in boxes from my parents' move from California. Upon finding them, I felt extremely attached to the portrait photographs. I was transfixed by my expressions, ranging from inviting curiosity and earnestness to anxious posing. My own experience of sifting through a personal archive of yearbook photos had felt reparative, as though the photographs were proof of the traumas of childhood, immigration, and assimilation. Upon finding them, I had to acknowledge the discomfort that was evident in my expressions and posture. That process of recognition, of seeing myself and my body through time, was a process of healing.

I graduated from Haverford in December 2015. I'm the first girl from my family to graduate. My journey through college was painfully wrought. That experience isn't unique to me, but I have wondered if my education was worth it. What is my relationship to this institution? At its best, Haverford taught me to consider it in critical terms. By developing a vocabulary to understand racism and disinvest in whiteness, my education enabled me to form, as Baldwin says, "some kind of truce" with myself.

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Ashley Thompson

Humbly Offering Chairman Mao 10,000 Years of Boundless Longevity

2015

Oil on canvas

60" by 48"



Ashley Thompson
Ah! Another Big Cockerel!
2015
Oil on canvas
60" by 48"

ARTIST'S STATEMENT

Ashley Thompson

My mom pees in the shower, cuts in line, and greets my friends by saying they look extra fat. My mom dropped out of college, got divorced, and has worked the same low-wage job for twenty years. My mom will have lengthy conversations about my failures—I'm not a physics major, I'm too fat or skinny, I don't moisturize enough—with my dentist while he's scraping plaque off of my teeth with sharp objects. My mom has sent my dad to jail on false charges. My mom has slammed the door in my face and pushed me away—pushed everybody away—over and over and over again. It's easy to dismiss her as cruel, stupid, rude, or a bad mother. It's easy to go through life only looking at the surface of things. It's easy to accept the most convenient explanations: the explanations that fit tidily into one's worldview.

My mom was three when the Chinese Cultural Revolution began in 1966. Her mother and father were sent to separate labor camps, where they would perform demeaning physical labor in brutal conditions. There was widespread famine and more than twenty million Chinese died of starvation. My mom recalls sneaking out of her commune in the middle of the night to dig up raw potatoes. She recalls children being trampled to death in a narrow staircase on the way to bed. Hers is a world where terrible events can enter one's life at any instant. Hers is a world where being a girl means preparing for the likelihood of starvation, betrayal, and rape. She tells me that every single person in my life has the capacity to turn against me.

Looking at Chinese propaganda posters, it would seem that communist China was a paradise. Women smile serenely as they perform hard labor under a rainbow. Little girls with bows in their hair fill canteens while butterflies flutter around them. A happy, chubby boy holds his rifle while getting a haircut from a PLA soldier.

It's difficult to reconcile the broad, positive narrative of these posters with the painful histories of the Cultural Revolution. By inserting my own black-and-white image into these bright scenes, I aim to integrate the specific, personal experiences of my family into this generic lexicon, and capture it in a singular canvas, so unlike a mass-produced poster. I draw on the posters' iconography

of agricultural bounty and Maoist utopia—the bright, false propaganda of an oppressive regime. I recreate this visual language in my paintings, accentuating their surrealism to question their effect. Propaganda is effective because people don't look closely enough. Through strange juxtapositions and manipulations of scale, I want to invite active viewing. Whereas the posters told people what to see, I want to change the way they look. Even when I explicitly subvert the posters' optimism, I don't articulate a clear message. In my self-portrait with a rooster, one of my hands is missing, in reference to the many people who cut off their own limbs to escape excruciating agricultural labor. But you don't need this historical context for this image to make you feel uneasy. Instead of an answer, the empty sleeve is a question mark.

Like propaganda posters, there's nothing subtle about my paintings—nor should there be. At first glance, they seem absurd. In western culture, Mao has assumed kitsch status, and the atrocities of 20th-century Chinese history can seem like gaudy farce. My paintings invert this trend, rendering surreal details and gag jokes on a grand scale, in authoritative oils. But irony is never my end goal. Chinese visual culture is hilarious, just like my mom is actually funny. Humor allows me to grab your attention, to make you feel something, to relate. In my paintings, laughter is a coping mechanism.

Propaganda posters dictate the way people should behave and what they should value. They hold immense power in shaping collective thinking, whether good or bad. Art holds this power as well. I believe in art with a sense of morality. I believe that art can save lives. Art gives meaning to experience. It provides a reason for darkness: a breakthrough is waiting on the other side of a breakdown. Making art is learning to fall laterally; it offers solutions, connectivity, and a place for what might otherwise tear us apart.

THE RISE OF THE CURATOR IN AN AGE OF AUSTERITY

John Patrick Leary

Judas Priest doesn't just release a greatest-hits album, Metallica and Slipknot "curated" that album; a high-end sneaker store doesn't sell shoes, it "curates" them. A high-end bartender doesn't mix cocktails, he "curates an experience." Web-based media are "content curators." An event planner or music booker is an "experience curator." And really, how in today's fast-paced world can you find the time to interact with luxury brands without a curator? You probably didn't even think to dignify throwing out your moth-eaten sweaters and Ragu-stained shirts as curatorial work. And you almost certainly didn't even know what a terrible job you were doing. As one maniacal closet-cleaner on the blog Fashionising.com writes,

[W]ith the death of average in mind, we must cull from our wardrobe removing from it all that looks average. We must become our own curators. Becoming a curator, however, not only takes effort it takes practice. If you're anything like so many of my friends then your wardrobe is overflowing with goods. For them, cutting it back, curating it to include only the exceptional, is not only a daunting task, it's a paralysing one.

Alex Williams in the *New York Times* has described the proliferation of "curators" as a form of pretension by which relatively humble pursuits, like shoe-selling or party DJing, attain the lofty heights of the trained connoisseur. In this way, something we might have once called "selecting" or "editing" is treated as a form of expertise equivalent to the work of a museum scholar. And there's plenty of truth to this, but a merely eye-rolling response overlooks a deeper economic logic at work, one inflected by the rise of a low-wage, precarious service economy and its gendered division of labor.

Curating's migration from the academy to the boutique is about claiming for the latter the prestige of the former, certainly, but it's also about substituting prestige for more tangible forms of compensation. It also brings the caring function of the curator/curate into the service sector. This is significant, since "curate" belongs to sectors like fashion retail, associated with female labor. It has also proliferated in library and archival work ("data curation," for example, is a term of the digital library world). It seems at least tangentially relevant that the rallying cry of university unions, "We Can't Eat

Prestige," was coined by the female white-collar support staff at Harvard in the mid-70s.

This connection to care-work comes from the word's etymology. Before the word became predominantly associated with the work of museum academics, "curate" had a mostly religious meaning. In the Catholic and Anglican Churches, the curate is a priest at the local level entrusted with the care (Latin *cura*) of souls. The verb is a back-formation of the noun, derived from the Latin *curare*, "to care for," and *curator*—a "guardian" or, tellingly, "overseer." There is something of both in the contemporary consumer-capitalist curator. On the one hand, selling me sneakers becomes a work of aesthetic expertise and spiritual comfort. On the other, my experience is no longer my own—it is curated for me, as *Forbes Magazine* reveals with its credo for online entrepreneurs: "Curate and Control."

The word's combination of moral purpose and creativity aligns it closely with the "innovator" and the "entrepreneur." In the most enthusiastic celebrations of each, marketing ingenuity and aesthetic imagination are scarcely distinguishable from one another. The rise of the retail/experience "curator" perfectly captures this commodification of creativity by combining in a rhetorical flourish the function of the manager and that of the artist/caretaker. Curators have always been both "bureaucrat and priest," as the art critic David Levi Strauss writes in *From Head to Hand: Art and the Manual*. The contemporary use, therefore, is novel only in its expansion of the "priestly" side of this equation to the care, not of souls, but of wardrobes and palates. Yet most "curators" at sneaker stores, of course, just work there, for wages supplemented by whatever prestige they can find.

Like the "entrepreneur" and the "innovator," "curating" as a business practice presents profit-seeking activities as the pursuit of virtue. It also captures some myths about Big Data and the democratic spirit of the Internet. "Data curators" manage the vastness of digital information; the older "archivist" is concerned with its scarcity. Shopping curators exist to cull the variety of goods online. Online publishing democratizes information access and authorship itself, as in an article in The Guardian's business section, entitled "How 'content curators' are connecting consumers," which gushes about "new breed of media businesses that see themselves more as curators of content rather than owners." Business-literature critics can only be grateful for low-hanging fruit like this, business journalists who guilelessly presume that the way media moguls "see themselves" is in fact the way they are: all priest, no bureaucrat.



Tara Mingjie Sun

Brain-washed

2015

Acrylic on wood gel

18" by 24"



ANTI-SOCIAL MEDIA

Glorín Colón



"Poor connection"



"Tweet-a-Tan"



"Thanks for sharing!"

NEW CHIANGELES CITY

Matthew Ridley

Last night, in a New Chiangeles wet dream,
I was a fat, leather Gucci duffel handbag—bleeding everywhere.

My moist, silvery coins—spilled to the floor
and my Founding Fathers—wedged deep
between bikini lace and bare, skinless bosoms.

The morning rouses me
like a tombstone in mist. Having been dead
for so long, was it *still* just a dream?

From my window, Indonesia burns, the young and guiltless
making their declarations of death in French model cars
while sipping on French model wine.

I shave off my beard. The faucet drips with every second I take.
The tree's leaves fade the longer they hold on.
The streets remain as black as I left them in that night,
cooling the coal of a community under asphalt.

I touch the skyscraper's cold, metallic erection—more recognizable
than my own father's—and believe, *something has to give*.

To give. What? My usage of *mys* in favor of *wes, uss*? Dinner
and a movie? The Empire State Building? October 12, 1492?

The oppressed and the unfortunate are all with me,
eating the last line right up. They begin with a round of applause.
They give me a standing ovation.

They think I'm doing the right thing.

I have a key to the city, a plaque in my honor, and the guarantee
that my DNA will live on in some space incubator after my death.
They never stop. "*Something has to give. Something has to give.*"

MEDIA AND MESSAGE IN DIY, FROM WHOLE EARTH TO WORLD WIDE WEB

Chloe Wang

In 1964, Marshall McLuhan famously proclaimed that “the medium is the message,” the “‘message’ of any medium or technology” being “the change of scale or pace or pattern that it introduces into human affairs.”¹ He argued that media shape our lives, simply by how they operate, in ways that are more influential than the media’s “content” and how they are instrumentalized. This idea would seem particularly applicable to Do-It-Yourself (DIY) culture, a broad categorization of movements that seek to challenge major political and economic structures via actions of making and doing. Implementing DIY media in daily life can make a statement while also fundamentally altering the way one relates to the world. A bicycle, for example, allows a person to travel without participating in the fossil fuel market, and confines its user to a relatively localized area. Such are “messages” of the bicycle. One feature that seems to be common among DIY movements is the important role played by textual and communicative media. Prolific print cultures are attached to DIY movements of many kinds, from popular, pre-World War I “back-to-the-land” literature to *Riot Grrrl* zines, and today the Internet provides a venue for many forms of DIY exchange. These media can both embody the principles of DIY in their accessibility and create tensions between theory and practice in only *talking* about the *doing* they are meant to encourage. An interesting phenomenon to consider in this context is the connection between aspects of hippie counterculture that arose in the 1960s and of today’s Internet culture. Stewart Brand and the Whole Earth Network provide a narrative for this progression and were actively involved in bringing technology and counterculture together under a vision of individual empowerment, egalitarian community, and the sharing of information. In McLuhan’s terms, this story shows that seemingly disparate media can converge around a common message and that the effects of media can escape the intentions of their creators and proponents.

1 *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*, (New York, NY: Signet, 1964), 24.

Stewart Brand and his wife Lois established the *Whole Earth Catalog* in 1968. The *Catalog* was a publication initially designed to supply communes that were starting up all over the American West. Its expansive pages contained a diverse range of items, from the latest Hewlett-Packard calculator to the *I Ching*. On the cover was a photograph of the Earth from space and the sub-title "access to tools." By its final incarnation in 1971, its contents were divided into nine sections: Whole Systems, Land Use, Shelter, Industry, Craft, Community, Nomadics, Communications, and Learning. The "Catalog Procedure" states that the *Catalog* would accept no payment from manufacturers for listing items and that its reviewers and suggesters were amateurs who received \$10 for their contributions. The reader is also advised that "most of the stuff in the CATALOG can be borrowed free from a library."² The *Catalog's* format served its stated goals in that it was inexpensive (\$5 in 1971) and available by mail to people in diverse geographic locations. The language was unpretentious and straightforward. It sought to provide the everyman with the resources to live independently and craft a better self, and declined to centralize economic power around itself by directing readers to manufacturers and retailers of tools rather than reselling them. Brand's statement of purpose began, "We are as gods and might as well get good at it." He wanted people to recognize and act on their individual freedom as well as the responsibility associated with their collective power to shape the world. In this collective spirit, readers were invited to write in with recommendations, feedback, or experiences they wished to share with others.³ In this way, the *Catalog* allowed for communication in multiple directions and across great distances, serving as a "textual forum within which back-to-the-landers could meet one another; as well as technologists, academics, and artists, and share information."⁴ This "network" function of the *Whole Earth Catalog* would be preserved in Brand's subsequent, and increasingly computer-based, projects.

In *From Counterculture to Cyberculture: Stewart Brand, the Whole Earth*

2 Ibid, 2.

3 Fred Turner, *From Counterculture to Cyberculture: Stewart Brand, The Whole Earth Network, and the Rise of Digital Utopianism*, (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2006), 71.

4 Ibid, 79.

Network, and the Rise of Digital Utopianism, Fred Turner provides an exhaustive account of Brand's influence on the cultural role of digital media. In 1984, Brand published the *Whole Earth Software Catalog* to "do for computing what the original had done for the counterculture: identify and recommend the best 'tools' as they emerged."⁵ In preparing this publication, Brand organized a Hacker's Conference, a three-day gathering of about 150 self-described hackers, who took a politically rebellious, creative, and hands-on approach to computer programming. Also in attendance were Brand and his *Whole Earth* colleagues, and around 20 journalists.⁶ The resulting media portrayals began to link countercultural rebellion with computer hacking, blending what might have previously been seen as disparate images.⁷ Like the *Whole Earth Catalog*, the Hacker's Conference facilitated interpersonal networking, this time face-to-face, and in the following year Brand would bring this model to a digital interface with the WELL (Whole Earth 'Lectronic Link). The WELL was an early instant messaging system that allowed members to remotely engage in conversations by sending typed messages through a central computer in Sausalito, California. It was one of the first examples of a "virtual community," and one that was similar in composition to that of the Hacker's Conference. Users could enter a multitude of different conversations grouped by a broad category and specific topic or create a new topic. Its organization was reminiscent of the *Whole Earth Catalog's* sections, and it tapped into the analogous social potential of the computer.

Turner frames Brand's endeavors in the context of a broad evolution of the "computational metaphor" in American culture: "computers may have threatened automation from above, but they also offered metaphors for the democratic creation of order from below."⁸ The computer, which for many had represented the psychological fragmentation of corporate bureaucracy, found new associations with collective consciousness and the potential to break down hierarchical power structures. These new perceptions of technology were partic-

5 Ibid, 29.

6 Ibid, 135.

7 Ibid, 138.

8 Ibid, 23-24.

ularly at home with the group Turner calls the New Communalists: those who set out to establish communes and who “saw the transformation of consciousness as the basis for the reformation of American social structure.”⁹ There was a curious duality to their approach, as they looked to recreate an imagined pre-industrial harmony by adopting the “information theories,” “collaborative, experimental orientation,” and “underlying world-saving mission” of the hyper-progress-oriented technocrats they sought to subvert.¹⁰ In fact, the ideologies of New Communalism were in part the legacy of the weapons research of World War II. The demand for war-related research and development had forced experts to de-specialize, collaborate across disciplines, and think in new ways. Norbert Wiener, a mathematician who participated in such research, founded the field of cybernetics on the idea that mechanical, biological, and social systems were all governed and linked by the exchange of messages and information. In moving through a series of artistic, scientific, and academic communities influenced by these notions, Stewart Brand was struck by the potential of cybernetic systems theory combined with communal living to fulfill the need for individualism in daily life. The networks he created on paper and digital interfaces preserved the New Communalist philosophy as technology advanced, making new technologies more approachable by linking them conceptually to the past.¹¹ Just as the cybernetic ideology outlived war laboratories and was appropriated by the New Communalists, the communes of the 1970s were succeeded by the pioneers of Silicon Valley in embracing the techno-utopian vision. Turner notes that the marketing of personal technology retained the language of the counterculture, and that “Apple Computer, in particular, advertised its devices as tools with which to tear down bureaucracy, enhance individual consciousness, and build a new, collaborative society.”¹²

This history at once exemplifies and challenges the idea that the medium is the message. It depicts media evolving around a consistent message, but also

9 Ibid, 33.

10 Ibid, 37, 261.

11 Ibid, 251.

12 Ibid, 247.

a substantial shift in the message of the computer medium. This is due in part to the downscaling of the computer from room-sized machine to desktop device. Still, it suggests that a single medium is not confined to a single message, and the metaphors it conjures up do not reliably dictate its observed effects. We can attempt to select media that we interpret to be consistent with our values, but we do not always foresee all of their consequences. The emergence of back-to-the-land sentiment in American culture, as early as the late nineteenth century, tells a cautionary tale in this regard. Commenting on the literary nature of the back-to-the-land movement, Dona Brown cites the observation that back-to-the-landers have produced "as many texts as vegetables."¹³ Many of these texts reported on experiments in self-sufficiency with the message that "you, too, can escape the confines of society," but their historical meaning is somewhat altered by the number of readers who did no such thing. It is difficult to measure inactivity, but for every person who actually tried going back to nature, Brown suspects there were more who never moved beyond passive, idealistic dreaming. "Perhaps they hoped one day to go back to the land," she conjectures, "but in the end they simply went back to work. These were the 'consumers' of the back-to-the-land dream: the people who bought the books and read the magazines."¹⁴ Fictional stories about leaving the city behind and practical advice on growing beans offered equally compelling material for escape fantasy, and their writers were often ironically motivated by the economic incentive of readily sold, popular literature. The discrepancy between the ideals articulated in these texts and the nature of their production and consumption illustrates potential instabilities in the relationship of textual media to the principles they espouse, particularly when those principles are highly idealistic.

Turner also points to some of the dangers that arise when utopia meets reality. In the case of communes, implementation was often flawed. Many struggled with the abandonment of formal government, failing to acknowledge their continued dependence on material support from others and to engage with existing

¹³ Dona Brown, *Back to the Land: The Enduring Dream of Self-Sufficiency in Modern America*, (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press), 12.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 9.

communities among which they installed themselves.¹⁵ The computer world, too, has deviated from theoretical idealism. Ellen Ullman, a freelance software engineer, wrote about her less-than-idyllic experience in a 1997 memoir: Moving between employers, she had only temporary relationships with colleagues, many of them scattered throughout the world, and relied primarily on people like herself for consultation. She found that the demands of her job were compromising her engagement with actual local community.¹⁶ A career that, in theory, embodied flexibility, collaboration, and shared information, made her feel like just another specialized cog in the economic machine.

The Internet of today carries mixed messages as well. Stewart Brand and his contemporaries crafted a hopeful vision of techno-utopia at the very advent of personal technology as we know it. It was utopian because it was anchored in the new and driven by the infinite potential of the future. The online world has since exploded into entirely new levels of pervasiveness in daily life. Some people maintain enthusiasm for the Internet in its current stage, but it also seems that in embracing the Internet, we have become much more wary of its power. In *Making is Connecting*, David Gauntlett sings the praises of the Web as an historically unprecedented "opportunity to make media and, in particular, share it easily, making connections with others" that has "opened up a world of diversity and imagination where the content itself is created by everyday users."¹⁷ In the 1990s, John Perry Barlow and Esther Dyson, who both wrote on the social potential of computers, emphasized the extent to which their mobile lifestyles depended on the Internet: "Like the Net, my life is decentralized... I live on the Net," wrote Dyson. Barlow made nearly the same statement: "I live at barlow@eff.org. That is where I live. That is my home."¹⁸ These writers saw in the Internet a revolutionary new mode of existence, but their statements would seem unusual if spoken today. Now, it is taken for granted that many of us depend heavily on virtual communication and devote a lot of time to our online presences, but few of us would take such pride

15 Turner, 247.

16 Ibid, 258.

17 *Making is Connecting: The Social Meaning of Creativity, from DIY and Knitting to Youtube and Web 2.0*, (Boston: Polity Press, 2011), 3.

18 Turner, 14.

in saying so. This is likely because the less desirable "side effects" of the medium are difficult to ignore. Gauntlett applauds the DIY ethos built into the Web, pointing out that "sites such as YouTube, eBay, Facebook, Flickr, Craigslist and Wikipedia only exist and have value because people use and contribute to them, and they are clearly *better* the more people are using and contributing to them. This is the essence of Web 2.0."¹⁹ But there is more to the essence of social networking sites, including a narcissistic culture concerned with the cultivation of a personal brand and digital persona. And when we venture beyond our personal profiles, there is so much content to experience that one can easily play an exclusively receiving role, spending hours reading and viewing. Gauntlett hopes that the Internet will signal a shift from a "sit back and be told" culture to one of active making and doing. He makes reference to McLuhan's "the medium is the message" essay and explains how the television medium enforces a largely passive lifestyle. "Internet-based interactivity" may indeed be an improvement with respect to the nature of our engagement, but much of the time, we are still sitting.

This has to do, in part, with the paralysis that can set in when we are confronted with the unimaginably vast. This is a common theme in a globalized world facing global change, and the World Wide Web can be overwhelming as a symbol of endless possibility. It is difficult to navigate the Internet without some initial direction in the mind of the user. There are free, online resources for nearly any imaginable purpose, but we need a clear impetus to breach the expanse. The *Whole Earth Catalog* is similar – it only truly achieves its goals when used by someone actively pursuing, to some extent, a DIY lifestyle. It can be just as symbolic a document as the early back-to-the-land literature that Dona Brown describes if its readers remain dreamers. Collectively, its items amount to an ideal of empowered self-sufficiency and self-development, but it would be impossible to attain and use all of them to their full potential. A reader might marvel at the quantity of material and societal model presented in the *Catalog* and then maybe order a single fruit juicer, or nothing at all. The *Last Whole Earth Catalog* features a story called "Divine Right's Trip" interspersed throughout its pages. It is introduced thus: "This original folk tale will be found proceeding episodically along the right-hand pages...making

19 Gauntlett, 7.

the CATALOG what it has longed to be, a work of drama."²⁰ In its scope and ideals, the *Catalog* had been something of a dramatic work all along, playing out a story of a harmonious Whole Earth that humanity still has yet to achieve. The cybernetic notion reflected in the *Catalog* of the world as a unified information system was "deeply comforting" to a generation coming of age under the threat of nuclear destruction.²¹ This comfort is reminiscent of the escape fantasies fed by earlier back-to-the-land writing. The function of media intended to motivate people to get up and do things can easily be distorted into that of a coping mechanism, an antidote to reality. The value of DIY cannot be realized on the page or screen through which it gains an audience. It requires action on the part of those it reaches. DIY media will never accomplish the goals it articulates if it remains in dreams, only treating the symptoms of discontent with the systems it opposes.

Stewart Brand and the networks he created facilitated a shift in the cultural image of computers and information technology away from symbols of restrictive bureaucracy and toward "emblems of countercultural revolution" that grew stronger with the proliferation of "personal technology."²² Marshall McLuhan identified the same message in the computer that Brand and the New Communalists did: the essence of automation technology was "integral and decentralist in depth, just as the machine was fragmentary, centralist, and superficial in its patterning of human relationships."²³ McLuhan did not live to see the birth of the World Wide Web. He could not have imagined the full extent to which automation would decentralize access to information, nor its potential to perpetuate a self-centered, ephemeral, and distracted culture. The Internet has given us "access to tools" on a level far beyond a 400-page catalog, and we remain at the edge of great potential. However, even the finest tools are not useful without accompanying action and intent. The medium may indeed be the message, but a message is not enough. Figuring out how best to harness our ever-growing toolbox to actively improve the world is the next challenge, and hopefully one that will not always remain ahead of us.

20 Brand, 2.

21 Turner, 5.

22 Turner, 238.

23 McLuhan, 23.



Caleb Eckert

Crow Feathers, 2015

I encountered this scene on Haverford's campus on a walk after hearing about the Northern Arizona University campus shooting in Flagstaff, AZ, my hometown.



Caleb Eckert
Schuylkill Punt, 2015

Mare Liberum, a New York-based boatbuilding art collective that explores the intersections of public space, participatory urbanism, and water. They led a five-hour workshop with Haverford students and faculty to build a DIY punt, which was launched the same day, May 2, 2015, from Bartram's Gardens onto the Schuylkill River.



Caleb Eckert

Shrine to Chronic Social Indigestion, 2015

Plastic, glass, cotton, rubber. Rinse, vomit—repeat?

WHEN I PASS THROUGH YOUR TOWN

Artist's Statement

Morgana Warner-Evans

For the last three October breaks, I have participated in a peace walk led by Maine Veterans for Peace. With our signs and leaflets we take to the side of the road with our message that our nation needs an alternative to war. After walking about twelve miles each day, we stop at a church or community center where we speak or sing about why we are walking, and local supporters provide a potluck supper and a place to sleep.

By far the most valuable part of these walks for me has been the opportunity to connect with people in the places through which we walk. They range from onlookers, who spontaneously jump out of their cars and join us, to seasoned peaceniks, who attend multiple programs and open their homes to us each night. There are church congregations, initially wary of letting twenty strangers sleep in their sanctuary, who generously host and feed us, and end up singing with us by the end of the evening.

I think a great deal of the walk's power comes from making these connections with other human beings. There's a perception in our society that activism only happens in cities, where young liberals gather at rallies to voice their concerns. But what makes the peace walks so special is that there aren't many cities in Maine. We walk through some conservative parts of the state and we aren't just connecting with a typical activist demographic. We're connecting with everybody who's driving where we happen to be walking. I've had many of my personal biases broken down by the places where I've found support for our message, and I think breaking down these biases is an important step towards a more peaceful world.

This is a song of thanks for the communities whose support, expected or not, has made our walking possible.

LYRICS

Walking past the pine trees and the fences and the stiles,
Will this worn-out pair of sneakers carry me another mile?
But I know that it's all worth it, and that makes me carry on,
For I know that you will welcome me when I pass through your town.
G D G D / G D D A / G D G D / G D A D

I started up in Bangor on a grey October day,
And I joined with other activists who'd walked for many days.
We walked for peace and freedom and against the killer drones,
And though there were but few of us, we knew we weren't alone.
D D G D / G D A A / D D G D / G D A D

Walking past the pine trees and the fences and the stiles,
Will this worn-out pair of sneakers carry me another mile?
But I know that it's all worth it, and that makes me carry on,
For I know that you will welcome me when I pass through your town.
G D G D / G D D A / G D G D / G D A D

Some of us were drumming and we chanted to the beat,
And the sounding of the drums made us forget our weary feet.
The logging trucks would honk and wave as they passed us by
And we raised our signs against the wind and the blue October sky.
D D G D / G D A A / D D G D / G D A D

Walking past the pine trees and the fences and the stiles,
Will this worn-out pair of sneakers carry me another mile?
But I know that it's all worth it, and that makes me carry on,
For I know that you will welcome me when I pass through your town.
G D G D / G D D A / G D G D / G D A D

And every town we stopped in, when the day was at a close,
The people there would welcome us and open up their doors.
And they gave us food and shelter for our stories and our songs.
In the morning they would see us off; sometimes they'd come along.

D D G D / G D A A / D D G D / G D A D

Walking past the pine trees and the fences and the stiles,
Will this worn-out pair of sneakers carry me another mile?
But I know that it's all worth it, and that makes me carry on,
For I know that you will welcome me when I pass through your town.

G D G D / G D D A / G D G D / G D A D

But soon ten days were over and the walk was at an end,
And it grieved our hearts most sorely to depart from all our friends.
But when we create a world of peace, when we see this struggle through,
I know that it will always be because of those like you.

D D G D / G D A A / D D G D / G D A D

Walking past the pine trees and the fences and the stiles,
Will this worn-out pair of sneakers carry me another mile?
But I know that it's all worth it, and that makes me carry on,
For I know that you will welcome me when I pass through your town.

G D G D / G D D A / G D G D / G D A D

Listen to the song here:

<http://www.folkalley.com/openmic/song.php?id=22667>

CONTRIBUTORS

Glorín Colón is a graphic designer, muralist and multimedia artist, born and raised in Guaynabo, Puerto Rico. She studied graphic design and fine arts at Washington University in St. Louis, where she earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts. Through the years, she has worked as art and creative director for major advertising agencies in Puerto Rico and the United States, and as a freelance artist. Glorín currently lives in Puerto Rico with her husband of 27 years, and works in projects involving a wide range of mediums. She is the mother of three daughters, and enjoys her three dogs and various cats.

Elena Harriss-Bauer '19 is a first year student at Haverford College with a long last name and a longer list of favorite Kubrick films. She spends her free time trimming her split ends, following meme accounts, and collecting hoop earrings. She intends to major in anything that is not Computer Science or History, and plans to diligently avoid completing all quantitative requirements until her senior year. Eggs are her favorite food.

Caleb Eckert '17 was born in the Matanuska-Susitna Valley in Alaska and lives in the high mountain desert of Northern Arizona. His photography exists in the intertwined spaces of documentary and poetry, where an intimate ecology of world, self, and other is found. He will graduate from Haverford with a BA in Anthropology and Environmental Studies.

Miranda Joseph is Professor of Gender & Women's Studies at the University of Arizona. She is the author of *Against the Romance of Community and Debt to Society: Accounting for Life under Capitalism*.

Elana Kates '19 is a first-year student at Haverford College. Next year, she will be a Peer Awareness Facilitator living in the Music and Arts House. She likes Art History and Anthropology and her obsessions with eggs is simultaneously endearing and tasty for her close friends. Among other talents, she does reasonable impressions and listens to albums from start to finish.

John Patrick Leary is Assistant Professor of English at Wayne State University in Detroit, where he teaches 19th to 20th-century transnational American literature. He is the author of *A Cultural History of Underdevelopment: Latin America in the U.S. Imagination*, forthcoming from University of Virginia Press (2016). He is also the author of *Keywords for the Age for Austerity* (theageofausterity.wordpress.com), an online primer for the vocabulary of inequality.

Shahzeen Nasim '15.5 was born in Pakistan and grew up in the East Bay Area in California. She struggles with an escapist impulse to move to faraway places. She graduated from Haverford College with a degree in English.

Matthew Ridley '19 is a terror from Philadelphia. His mommy raised him. His sister raised him. His daddy raised him, but at a distance. His teachers showed him the path. Now, he spends most of the day talking to this silence within his room, between walls, and to some concept of a black squirrel that neither presents itself nor makes itself shown, but is there nonetheless.

Julia Schrecengost is currently a second-year at Oberlin College, majoring in Studio Art. She lives in Avon, Connecticut, with her twin sister Anna (who goes to Haverford!) She has mostly been doing printmaking, but is also taking a digital photography class.

Tara Mingjie Sun is an international student from Shanghai. She is a freshman at the School of Art Institute of Chicago, where she studies Studio Art, Visual and Critical Studies.

The product of a Chinese immigrant and a white polygamist from Fort Scott, Kansas, **Ashley Thompson** was born in Washington in 1993 and grew up in San Francisco. She studied at Kenyon College (BA, 2015), where she received Honors and Distinction in Studio Art. Now based in New York City, she has exhibited her work in various galleries in Brooklyn, Chinatown, and the Lower East Side. She is currently the artist-in-residence of Local Project Art Space in Long Island City.

Chloe Wang '17 is a Chemistry major with an Environmental Studies minor and a humanist soul. She puzzles over how we might navigate the fuzzy lines between disciplines, between local and global community, and between public and private self in making positive change.

Morgana Warner-Evans '16 is a student at Haverford College who believes in a United States foreign policy that respects human and other lives, and an economic system where people aren't dependent on jobs in the war industry to feed their families. She is a member of the People's Music Network, an organization which uses music and culture to promote progressive values.

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