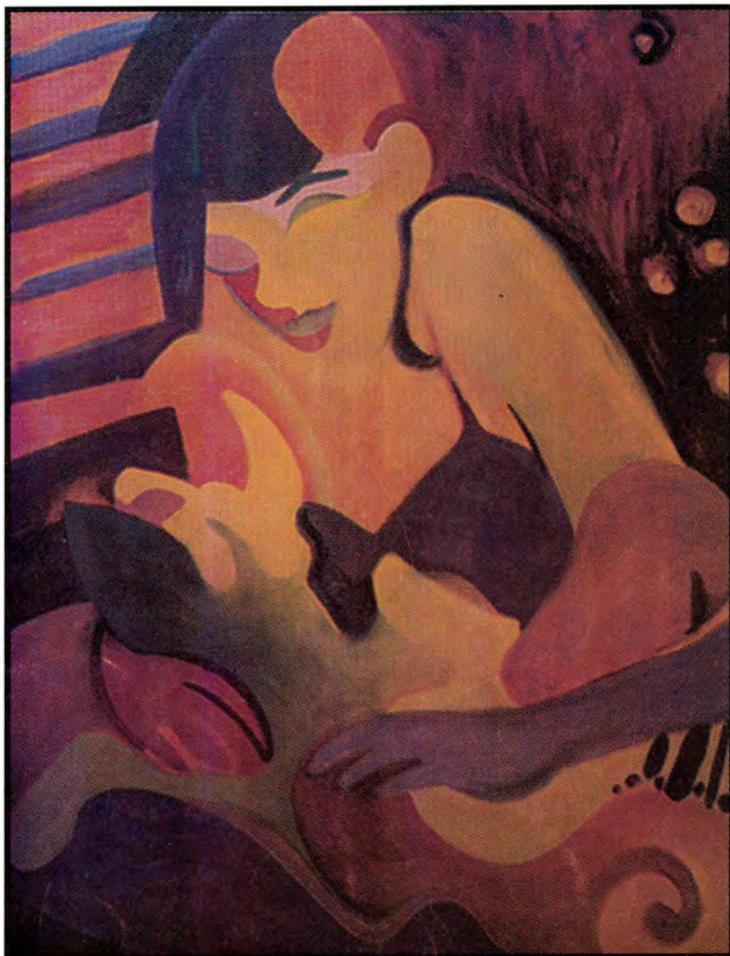


Spectrum

Volume 1, Number 1



Kapi'olani Community College

Spectrum

Volume I, Fall 1998

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We would also like to thank the members of the Board of Student Publications, Wini Au, Gene Phillips, David Behlke, Noreen Naughton, and Moriso Teraoka for their indulgence and enthusiasm.

Most especially, thank you to all the students who submitted their work for publication in this issue. It is apparent that the pool of talent on campus is as deep as it is diverse. It is not enough to say that we had difficulty choosing from many outstanding literary and artistic submissions; however, those that are represented in this issue are gems we may all be proud of.

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If there is one outlook on life that is shared by many, it is that life is unpredictable. We constantly contend with life's trials and tribulations and, in the process, most of us try our best to maintain an optimistic, if not realistic, perspective on day-to-day survival. But is positive thinking powerful enough to overcome any situation? Does having faith in God help? What if magic were an option? What would you do or change? Writers Chinua Achebe and Kobo Abe present readers with such questions. Achebe's *Civil Peace* tells of a cheerful and optimistic man who considers himself very lucky for the blessings he receives after having survived a war. Thieves, however, end his lucky streak and test his faith. Abe's story, *The Magic Chalk*, depicts a starving artist who finds he is in possession of a magical piece of red chalk. The magic produced by the chalk, however, has its limits and the artist must find a way to elude these limitations. Both stories deal with the idea of being optimistic and urge readers to contemplate what they would do in either situation. Although it appears that one story is more realistic than the other, both works illustrate a simple analogy of life made famous by *Forest Gump*: "Life is like a box of chocolates—you never know what you're gonna get."



Two Faces by Cathy Lorraine Wood - Oil

The authors begin their stories by introducing the main characters. The first sentence of *Civil Peace* reads:

"Jonathan Iwegbu counted himself extraordinarily lucky" (Achebe 28). The first sentence of *The Magic Chalk* reads: "Next door to the toilet of an apartment building on the edge of the city, in a room soggy with roof leaks and cooking vapors, lived a poor artist named Argon" (Abe 316). Similarly, both authors introduce their main characters within the first sentences of their stories; in contrast, they set very different tones as a result of their word choices. From the start, it is more likely that readers will categorize *Civil Peace* as an optimistic story and predict a depressing tale with *The Magic Chalk*. These predictions are verified as the stories progress.

The stories continue by defining the current state of affairs of Jonathan and Argon. Jonathan survives a war and finds a number of miracles waiting for him. First and foremost he finds five human heads—his, his wife's, and three of their four

children's. He also recovers his old bicycle, which he buried a year before, and finds his house has withstood the destructive effects of war. Jonathan is truly grateful because "Nothing puzzles God" (Achebe 29). At this point in Achebe's story, the optimistic feeling hinted at in the beginning is validated. Jonathan's blessings also illustrate how life can be full of surprises.

On the other hand, Abe's story begins to reveal elements of a fairy tale. Argon has not eaten all day and, as a result, he realizes his sense of smell has become quite keen as he idly discerns aromas entering his room. Soon after, Argon begins to draw food on the wall with a piece of chalk he discovers in his pocket. Later, the drawings materialize as food from the wall. Argon eats heartily and rejoices as "the laws of the universe have changed...the age of fulfillment, a world of desires, realized" (Abe 318). The magic chalk is a miracle and the story, which started off as depressing, is beginning to look optimistic. And similar to Jonathan's blessings, Argon's changed circumstances are evidence of life's unpredictable nature, albeit due to magic.

Life's unpredictability is further revealed in both stories as we follow Jonathan and Argon. Jonathan and his family provide for themselves in many ways. His children pick mangos and sell them, his wife makes *akara* balls for neighbors, and Jonathan uses his bicycle to taxi camp officials and their families. With his family's earnings, Jonathan buys fresh palm wine and opens a bar for soldiers and anyone with money. He also receives ex-gratia payments that he refers to as egg-

rasher. It appears Jonathan is on a lucky streak, until thieves accost him and his family for money. At this point, one wonders what happy-go-lucky Jonathan will do.

By comparison, Argon's lucky streak also takes on a new dimension. He finds that the magical effects of the chalk wear off in the rays of daylight. Argon, however, finds a way around this limitation by blocking the window and door of his room, preventing any sunlight from entering. He then optimistically considers the details of the new world he will create with his magic chalk. The problem is that he finds himself pressured by the responsibility of defining a new world and all of its details. As with Jonathan's predicament, one wonders what Argon will decide to do.

Both Jonathan and Argon find themselves in situations they never could have predicted. And, although one can't necessarily deduce that they are no longer optimistic toward life at the moment, it is safe to conclude that their optimistic attitudes may be strained because they are faced with having to make important judgement calls.

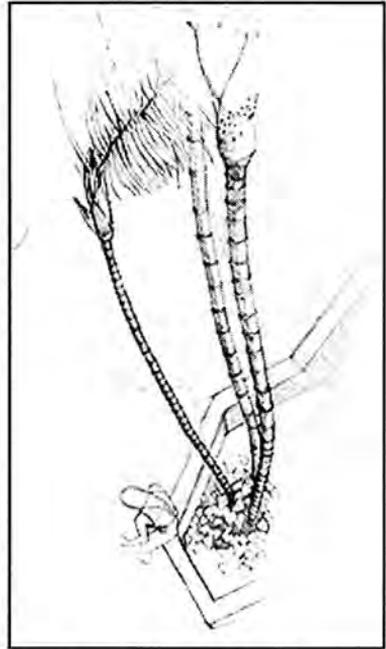
As both stories come to a close, we find out what Jonathan and Argon decide to do and the impact of their decisions. Jonathan decides to surrender his twenty pounds of ex-gratia money to the thieves. To his sympathizing neighbors, he says, "I count it as nothing. What is egg-rasher... I say, let egg-rasher perish in the flames!" (Achebe 33-34). Argon, who decides he has to create the world from scratch, creates a new Eve (actually, he draws Miss Nippon, whose picture he sees in the newspaper) and perishes

by the hand of his own creation. Eve shoots Argon, and his body, "which had eaten drawings from the wall continuously for four weeks, had been almost entirely transformed by them" (Abe 327). Argon becomes a drawing on the wall.

With these endings, it appears the predictions made based on the opening paragraphs of both stories are fairly accurate—*Civil Peace* ends on an optimistic note, while *The Magic Chalk* is depressing. Upon closer examination, however, we find that Jonathan's optimism is now laced with animosity. He still acknowledges his blessings, but he says of the ex-gratia money he has lost, "Let it go where everything else has gone. Nothing puzzles God" (Achebe 34). By "everything else," Jonathan may also be referring to the loss of his youngest child. In contrast, Argon's demise is even more unsettling. Argon, now a drawing on the wall, murmurs, "It isn't chalk that will remake the world" (Abe 328). Not only is this depressing, it's puzzling. In both cases, the endings support the idea of how ever-changing life, real or surreal, can be.

Life's unpredictable nature is a well-known constant to people, and *Civil Peace* and *The Magic Chalk* both illustrate this well. Both stories also show how an individual's optimism is defined and redefined by his circumstances. Although I suspect that Achebe and Abe had intended to convey deeper messages in their works, I prefer to treat these stories as reminders to me that I should focus only on what I have now and what I can control. After all, everything else is like egg-rasher.

— Ron Gosé



Three Trees by Henry Lee - Pencil

Tropical Sunrise

A grey winter rain
Under the eaves I'm watching
Tropical sunrise

— Cathy Lorraine Wood



Untitled by Danielle Howe - Photography

The Day's End

Shining, shimm'ring sun

Slowly...slips...into the sea.

Sweet silence follows.

— John Kuna
(Courtesy of *Ka Nani*)

Composure

Being of the earth then,
 I come from the tangible discipline
 Of bearing roots.
 Clutching
 Perhaps fearfully
 Is always my fault.
 I may be strange,
 Envisioning the vivacity of gardens
 Amongst autumn's furloughed planes;
 Walking along your wintry flesh
 To feel the heat of an impending bloom.
 (We rub surfaces gingerly
 as an act of obliteration of all pain).
 And though your silence
 Is an expansion, stretching
 So tautly a pale distance
 Into an unmanageable
 Translucent barrier,
 I wait in the belief
 That choirs will eventually emerge
 From long dormant throats.
 (I will never bury my dead).
 I breathe for us both, grasping
 Into the air to clench a fervid hope;
 An alleviation to these unquenchable
 Passions which only obstruct themselves.
 Or, being a woman,
 Perhaps it is my nature which
 Moves me toward such arduous love;
 To embrace a base as cold as stone.

— Sandee Saito

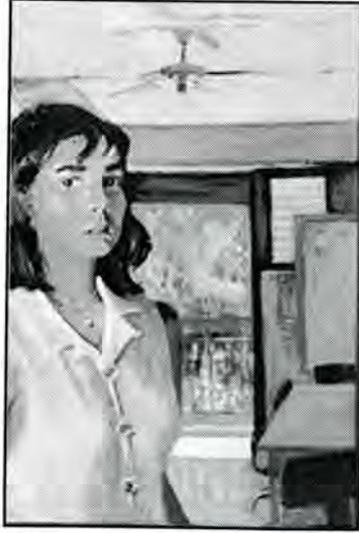


Tako by Jared Abdul - Photography

In his introduction to *Oedipus the King and Antigone*, Peter Arnott concludes that "Sophocles' work is a commentary upon the main current of thought in his own time." Greece, during Sophocles' time, was definitely a fertile field from which to draw subject matter. Popular philosophy explored the changing role of man in the universe. Indeed, this became a recurring theme for Sophocles. Greece was also undergoing a dramatic political evolution, and the seeds of democracy were being sown. While Sophocles' plays seem to deal primarily with the former subject matter, political themes were frequently laced into his plots. This is especially true in *Antigone*.

The ground for political upheaval is laid when Creon's sovereign decree challenges divine law. Resolving a conflict between church and state is a formidable undertaking for the noblest of characters. However, Creon is just a man who possesses many of the same flaws that other kings throughout history have possessed. *Antigone* explores the flaws of the man which, when manifested in his role as king, affect his ability to rule effectively.

Early into the play, Creon is portrayed as an unyielding man to be feared. His own ideas on the role of a monarch are revealed when he states, "Whoever the state appoints must be obeyed, in little things or great things, right or wrong" (lines 649-650). It is more important to be obeyed than for him to examine the merit of a decision. This inflexible attitude ultimately leads to Creon's destruction. Blind obedience can only be commanded by those who rule fools, or those who are absolutely sure they are always in control and always correct. Creon's situ-



Self-portrait in Studio
by Tiffany M. Catalfano - Oil

ation fits neither of these categories.

Ismene's words, "Defying the state—I am not strong enough" (line 81), gives the first insight into the feelings of the people toward their king. The "state" is something apart from the people, something powerful, and perhaps not holding their same interest at heart. With the entrance of the guard, this perception is not only confirmed, it is amplified. The guard is mortally afraid to deliver news of the attempted burial to Creon. Creon reacts as expected. He accuses the guard of being guilty himself and threatens him, saying, "Death alone will be too good for you; you will be left hanging" (lines 303-304). By this point, Creon has presented himself as a true dictator, ruling by fear and intimidation.

Creon's original intentions are good; he truly believes his decree is in the best interest of the Thebans. However, without the benefit of council,

he has failed to take into consideration how his subjects might view his edict. Since the decision to prohibit burial of Polynices is all his own, the responsibility for that decision lies totally on Creon's shoulders. Violating the decree not only questions the validity of the law, it also questions the wisdom of the man who issued it. When a king fails to take advisement on his actions, it is easy to understand how he could interpret an action opposing a decree as an action against himself. When Antigone breaks the law, Creon is unable to view her actions as anything but a personal affront to his pride.

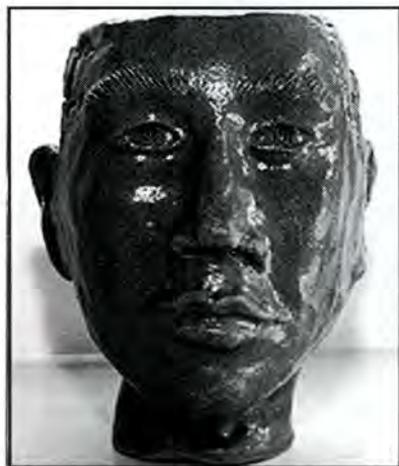
Even when he finally relents at the end of the play, the thought of damage to his pride is almost unbearable for Creon: "To yield is fatal; but to resist and bring a curse on my proud spirit—that too is hard" (lines 1045-1046). For Creon there are only two sides, his and Antigone's. No matter who the advocate, whether the seer



Ceramic Heads by Susan Gilhooly and Jennie Suen - Sculpture

Teiresias or his own son, Haemon, each person is judged to be either with the king or against him. The law itself seems to have been forgotten by Creon who is caught up only in the struggle.

Creon's story is a graphic illustration of how easily a solitary leader with what may have been the best of intentions can succumb to self-centered reasoning. *Antigone* makes numerous references to the state and to Creon's refusal to heed any but his own council. Interestingly, the other characters do not easily accept rebuttal. Teiresias, Antigone, and Haemon all argue with Creon and their attitude suggests that they expect a leader to listen to his people. The fact that Creon chooses to ignore their advice is met with resistance. When Haemon states, "There is no state, when one man is its master" (line 720), it is as if the idea of democratic input is a given right and a quality of a great state; unyielding and tyrannical rule is unacceptable.



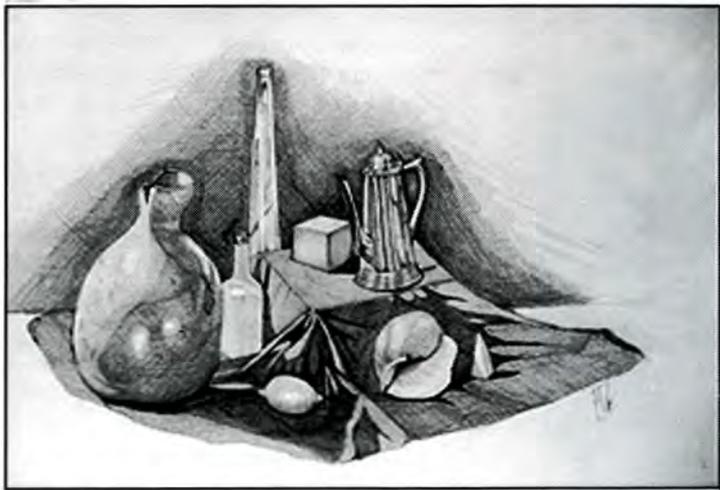
Ceramic Heads by Jennie Suen and Susan Gilhooly - sculpture

No single entity is able, one hundred percent of the time, to objectively and successively take all sides into account. Creon, in a way, is a victim of his own criteria for the measure of a king. At any point, had he been able to take into consideration what those around him thought or ask for council, the ending would have been quite changed. Unfortunately, Creon is stuck with the concept that first and foremost a king must be obeyed. When Creon does finally relent, it is from the same platform he rules—fear; he is afraid of what will be taken from him. Creon neither understands why his law was unjust nor why those he loved were willing to take their own lives. He dictates by fear, he operates from fear. In the end he is a broken man—alone, pitiful, and unenlightened.

— Georganne Nordstrom



Fan Palm by Jeff Kinoshita - Pencil



4:00 Still Life by Henry Lee - Pencil

The Soul

When your legs shake so badly,
You could never climb the stairs.
When it takes you forty-five minutes to write a check.
When you watch the moon rise and see it set at dawn,
Only to see the sun rise and set in the eve.

When your body's silhouette is painted in sweat on your sheets.
When you wake in the middle of the night to see a stranger by your bed.
When you spill more water down the side of your face,
Than you could ever get in your mouth.

When your body becomes accustomed to the taste of its bile.
When you turn away from everything that is important in life.
When you hear music so loud you can sing all the lyrics,
Coming from the air conditioner.

A scream, a horrendous, blood curdling scream.
A scream, a scream so loud it could never be heard,
Screaming for one more chance.

— Kenneth Van Hecke
(Courtesy of *Ka Nani*)



Untitled by Danielle Howe - Photography

I remember the media frenzy over the first televised news reports of the 1991 Gulf War. Two CNN reporters were actually filming from a high-rise building in Baghdad where they reported the progress of each cruise missile hitting its target as if they were children at a fireworks display. There was little talk of casualties or of the frightened Iraqi population. The buzz words were "accuracy" and "pinpricks," and the Western audiences were expected to believe that the first post Cold War conflict was like a high tech video game where military sites were destroyed, but nobody was seriously hurt.

As the military operation known as "Desert Storm" got under way, it was well known that the press was subjected to stringent censorship rules. I was not convinced that the sanitized war the public saw, courtesy of the Defense Department-approved press pool, was the whole picture. I attended an embarrassingly small anti-war demonstration in London where I heard rumors from Arab immigrants that thousands of Iraqi civilians were dying in the air strikes, but I was skeptical about such reports.

A week after hostilities had ceased, I attended a meeting called by various anti-war groups. Two young reporters from the BBC, who had just returned from the theater of operations on the Iraq-Kuwait border, had approached an anti-war group with exclusive photographs of what had become known as the "Highway of Death." The pictures revealed the chilling truth of the fate of Iraq's retreating army in what Kenneth Roth, Deputy Director of Human Rights Watch, described as "a panicked, desperate flight—and these were just lowly soldiers trying to get the hell out of there." He added, "It appears that this was a case of senseless slaughter" (qtd. in *Beyond*). The BBC reporters had somehow stumbled on the carnage with a battalion of ground forces and had managed to take photos that were later confiscated by the military commander in charge of the press pool. However, a reel of film had been smuggled back to England where the fresh, Oxbridge-educated journalists had presented it to their bosses at the BBC. Unwilling to remain silent, they gave up their prestigious jobs and went on the road, showing their horrific slide show to the dwindling numbers of anti-war protesters.

Choking back tears, the reporters, a man and a woman, talked the audience through the images of the charred bodies of soldiers and the incinerated remains of their trucks. But what the Pentagon restrictions had most hoped to hide were the hundreds of civilian cars trapped on Highway 6, the only road out of Kuwait, heading north to Basra. In those cars and on the ground around them, I saw the remains of women and children, blackened by the fireballs that had repeatedly hit the road. They were frozen, like the statues of Pompeii, as they sat in their cars, some with their hands melted onto their faces, others crawling off the road, arms outstretched. Their burnt belongings and toys were strewn across the blood-drenched highway. The reporters suggested that they were Arab guest workers and their families fleeing Kuwait.

Reports of the slaughter of the retreating Iraqi army did surface in the press at the time; one Washington Post headline read, "Like shooting fish in a barrel," U.S. pilots say, "but the photos revealing the civilian casualties are

a barrel,” U.S. pilots say, “but the photos revealing the civilian casualties are still under censorship today” (qtd. in Sterner 15). However, speculation and articles about the role of the massacre on the road to Basra bringing about a premature end to the war abound. It seems that Washington panicked at the



Korean Horse and Rider by Carol Yamashita - Sculpture

thought of public opinion turning against them as a result of reports of the attack on Highway 6 (Waller 23).

George Bush is quoted in a German newspaper in 1996 as commenting, “If we had continued the war one more day, just to destroy more tanks and to kill more pitiful soldiers retreating on the highway toward Basra with hands raised, public opinion would have immediately turned against the coalition” (qtd. in Sterner 19). Clearly Bush cared more for public opinion than the lives of Iraqis. The U.N. resolution required Iraq to quit Kuwait unconditionally; it said nothing about butchering retreating soldiers. What exposes Bush’s true feelings about the victims on Highway 6 is the fact that a decision to end hostilities at 5:00 a.m. on February 28 was later changed by the War Council to 8:00 a.m. that same morning for the sake of packaging. The extra three hours of fighting meant that the Gulf War would go down in history as the “100 Hour War” (Sterner 18). I wonder how many more “fish in a barrel” were shot that morning for a good sound bite.

What I saw at the slide show led me to investigate further the calamity of the Gulf War. I am convinced that the decision to wage war on Iraq was not guided by the elevated principles that Bush and his supporters claimed to be upholding. In an editorial at the end of the war entitled “The Reasons To Celebrate,” Mortimer Zuckerman wrote, “We celebrate because we reaffirmed our values that international borders are inviolable, [and] that aggression must

not stand and must not pay" (78). But the evidence suggests that for the Western powers these high-minded values are adhered to or ignored depending on what suits them best at any given time. The policy of the U.S. and its allies towards the Middle East is laced with hypocrisy and soaked in blood.

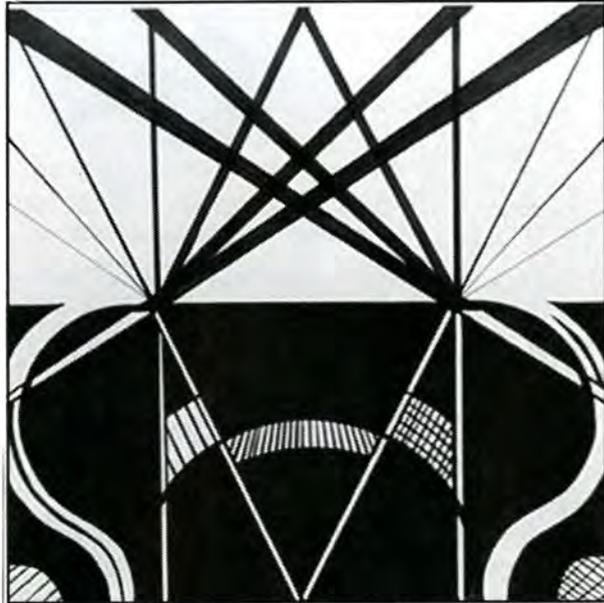
In a speech delivered in January 1991, Bush declared, "We will see that Kuwait is once again free, that the nightmare of Iraq's occupation is ended, and that naked aggression will not be rewarded" (28). "Naked aggression" was rewarded, however, when Iraq invaded Iran in 1980. As Robert Brenner, professor of history at UCLA, argues, "The United States symptomatically failed to denounce its aggression, and simply called for negotiations to settle the outstanding differences between the parties"(50). Brenner suggests that "U.S. action is in no way motivated by Saddam's awful regime or his violation of democratic rights" (50), and points out that Saddam was a close ally of the U.S. right up to his invasion of Kuwait in 1990 (50). The U.S., several European powers, and the Soviet Union gave huge amounts of military aid to Iraq in its war against Iran (50). The U.S., several European powers, and the Soviet Union gave substantial amounts of aid to Iraq in its war against Iran (50). Aid was given despite the documentation of Saddam's oppressive domestic rule and his campaign of genocide against his Kurdish population—45,000 massacred in the 1980's (Brenner 50). Considering the U.S.'s rhetoric about opposing weapons of mass destruction, it is shocking to discover that the U.S. actually "opposed the effort to pass an international resolution condemning Iraq for deploying chemical weapons against the Kurds, as well as against its external enemies"(Brenner 50). The eight-year Iran/Iraq war caused over one million deaths, but it seems Iranian and Kurdish blood is cheaper than Kuwaiti blood in the West's eyes.

But it is not just over Iran that we see the hypocrisy in U.S. Middle Eastern policy. There is a Middle Eastern regime that has weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons, receives billions of dollars in aid from the U.S., yet has illegally occupied three of its neighbors, has bombarded a city killing 20,000 people, and commits atrocious human rights abuses. Despite ignoring several U.N. resolutions demanding an end to its illegal occupations there are no crippling sanctions against this regime, which acts with complete impunity. I am speaking, of course, of Israel. U.S. policy in the Middle East is permeated by double standards. Like Brenner, I question the claims that military action against Iraq was motivated by opposing tyranny and upholding international borders (50).

Few Americans believed Bush when, during the military build-up prior to the war, he stated, "We seek nothing for ourselves" (28), regarding the war aims. Most recognized that securing the price of a barrel of oil had a role to play in the conflict. Perhaps a more honest proponent of military action was Stephen J. Solarz, a member of the U.S. House of Representatives and a Democrat. During the same period he stated that "the crisis in the Gulf poses a challenge not only to fundamental American interests, but to essential American values"(19). Examining these interests and values reveals much about the

real motives behind the Gulf War. The Middle East is an area of enormous strategic and economic importance for the U.S., Brenner states:

A central goal of U.S., and Western, policy in the region has been to keep oil in the hands of states of a very particular sort, and out of the hands of other sorts of states. A major part of the Middle East oil



Halves. Paths and Crossroads. by Luisa C.O. Wyant - Ink

is under the control of dictatorial rulers who are the direct clients and creations of the West, and who rule over sparsely populated nations that can in no way constitute a real alternative source of political power in the region. (52)

Brenner exposes the nature of the "puppet states" of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, which he argues are "hardly more than extended families closely attached to the West" and who have "little desire to spend too much of their money in developing their domestic economies, and are therefore quite pleased to place their gigantic incomes in Western Banks or businesses, vastly improving the liquidity of the capitalist economy" (53). Obviously, with their dense populations and access to oil reserves, Iran and Iraq pose a threat to the status quo set up by the British colonialists in the 1920s. Brenner points out that U.S. policy in the region has been about controlling Iran and Iraq (53). It is no wonder the West was happy to fund the Iran-Iraq war, which devastated both economies and ensured that neither state could become

a power broker in the area.

Many commentators argued that military action was justified because no one state could be allowed to monopolize the oil of the Middle East. But there is no evidence that Saddam intended to invade Saudi Arabia or the other gulf states and, whether Saddam remained in Kuwait or not, he would have to have sold his oil at world market prices (Brenner 53).



Still Life by Bobbie Slater - Pencil

Whatever the threat to Western oil supplies, there seems to have been no serious attempt by Bush to reach a peaceful settlement to Iraq's long-standing dispute with Kuwait. Noted author on U.S. foreign policy and a professor in Linguistics and Philosophy at MIT, Noam Chomsky, set out the strategic and political aims of the U.S. and its obedient lap dog, Britain, in *Beyond The Storm*. Chomsky details the diplomatic settlement offered by Saddam two weeks before the deadline for Iraqi withdrawal, which he notes, "scarcely entered the media or public awareness" (84).

The possible contours of a diplomatic settlement appeared to be these: Iraq would withdraw completely from Kuwait, with a U.S. pledge not to attack withdrawing forces; foreign troops leave the region; the Security Council indicates a serious commitment to settle two major regional problems: the Arab/Israeli conflict and the problem of weapons of mass destruction. Disputed border issues would be left for later consideration. (84)

But this time, the U.S. and Britain were unwilling to reward the aggressor as they had done in the past (Chomsky 85). The U.S. had decided on the military option as the best way to demonstrate it was in charge of the "New World Order." Bush alluded to this broader aim in his speech to the National Religious Broadcasters' convention in January of 1991, "When this war is over, the United States, its credibility and its reliability restored, will have a key leadership role in helping to bring peace to the rest of the Middle East" (30).

Why must the U.S. demonstrate its hegemony with military force? With its economy flagging far behind those of Japan and Germany, who had to bankroll the coalition forces, the U.S. is left with the "assertion of military strength as the only way of maintaining the appearance of American power" (Brenner 56). Chomsky sees a bleak future for the peoples of the Middle East. He contends:

[the U.S. and Great Britain] may try to turn their countries into mercenary states, serving as the global Mafia, selling "protection" to the rich, defending them against "third world threats" and demanding proper payment for the service. Riches funneled from the Gulf oil producers are to prop up the two failing economies. The rest of the Third World will be controlled by economic pressures, if possible, by force, if necessary. (87)

Perhaps this theory appears rather conspiratorial, but even if the U.S. had no ulterior motives in the region and was genuinely concerned with the plight of the Kuwaitis under Iraqi occupation, the results of the military intervention alone should persuade any citizen of the planet that the terror unleashed on Iraq was not justified. Saddam's occupation of Kuwait led to the deaths of some six hundred Kuwaitis. At the time, the Kuwaiti government in exile was accused of "orchestrating exaggerated tales of horror for political gain" and human rights organizations were arguing over the statistics of atrocities committed against Kuwaitis (Kramer 27). Clearly war crimes were committed, but did they justify the response of the U.S. and its allies?

In the official and most conservative estimates of war casualties, U.S. and Allied deaths are put at 549 and the Iraqi deaths at 115,000. This figure excludes the 3,000 civilian casualties admitted by the Defense Department, a result of the air war. However, no such data is available for the ground war. Yet these abominable figures are only half the story. Official statistics put the civilian death toll due to civil unrest (encouraged by Bush to oust Saddam) or war-related ailments at 100,000 to 120,000 (Waller 18). Therefore, at least 238,000 Iraqis died—and for what? In a *Newsweek* special report in 1992, Douglas Waller advised that "at the Pentagon, Desert Storm is increasingly viewed as a case of unfinished business and the fear now, as one army officer put it, is that 'we're going to be back [to the Gulf] doing this again in three to five years'" (18).

At the war's end, when the gulf countries were experiencing social and economic hardships, the result of losing their major trading partner, Iraq, and as they began the environmental clean up, an editorial in *The US News and World Report* stated that the people of the USA had much to celebrate:

This was a victory in a just cause. It liberated Kuwait. It did not depose Saddam Hussein—not yet—but it degraded his war machine at such a small cost that we robbed him of the image of hero and the masquerade of a victor. His influence is shattered. (Reasons 72)

This version of reality is far from the truth. Saddam's influence is stronger than ever. He presides over a frightened population that, despite his unbelievable cruelty in domestic affairs, sees the U.S. and its indifference to their suffering under sanctions as the real enemy (Lancaster A2). As for "such a small

cost," the cost to the Iraqi people is far from small. A U.N. study of conditions in postwar Iraq described the situation as "near apocalyptic" and announced that the coalition bombing had relegated Iraq to a pre-industrial age (qtd. in Cainkar 337).

As the U.S. attempts to muster support for a repeat performance, it is clear that the coalition is crumbling. Even in Kuwait these days, "Speculation runs rife that Washington prefers Saddam Hussein in power to make sure Kuwait and its weak neighbors stay firmly in the lap of the United States" (Assoc. Press A3). In an interesting development recently, Kuwait, which owes its existence to the U.S., did not support the latest calls for force against Iraq (A3).

The military intervention in the Gulf did not achieve the war aims. Kuwait was liberated, but Saddam had agreed to withdraw anyway (Chomsky 84). In Colin Powell's memoirs he openly admits, "What we hoped for, frankly, in a post-war Gulf region, was an Iraq still standing, with Saddam overthrown" (qtd. in Sterner 14). What they managed to achieve was an Iraq with virtually no communications, infrastructure, and fresh water, and a civil war that was brutally and swiftly dealt with, leaving Saddam more entrenched than ever. In an ironic reversal of Powell's stated aims, Saddam is still standing. But Iraq, as we knew it, has all but disappeared from the stage. It could be argued that Iraq's only options today are to split the alliance against it by offering lucrative oil deals to countries such as France and Russia that can not be exploited until sanctions are lifted, or to develop its bargaining potential with biological and chemical weapons.

In a CNN news report on 26 November, 1997, UNICEF estimated that one third of Iraqi children under five years of age are malnourished, despite the oil for food deal. Their future looks ominous, as it is widely believed sanctions will not be lifted while Saddam Hussein remains in power (Lancaster A2). While it is certain that Hussein is a brutal and tyrannical leader, I feel that it is the Arab people who should deal with their Saddams, otherwise a resolution will favor Western, not Arab, interests. Is it not racist to assume that Arab nations are incapable of determining their own future, free from Western interference, and settling their own disputes? At the beginning of this century, the British and the French carved up the old Ottoman Empire for their strategic and economic benefit by literally drawing lines in the sand. They created new nations, partitioned ancient ones, and imposed monarchical rulers. They planted the seeds of many of the disputes in the Arab world today and left a bloody legacy. In the nineties, the influence of Western powers is less direct, but no less sinister. We can expect more military interventions in the Middle East in the future as a declining U.S. struggles to maintain the status quo, protect its vital interests, and demonstrate its hegemony over the changing post Cold War world. As Eqbal Ahmad writes in *Beyond the Storm*:

We are now coming to the end of the American Century. And what we are witnessing is how hard it is for this American Century to die. The ending

proclaiming victory over a ravaged Iraq, remains the portent of the new century to come. (21)

While the trigger happy U.S. and its allies prepare for the next crusade in the Middle East, we need to question their record of defending the oppressed of the third world and ask what exactly they hope to achieve.

Since 1991, the war with Iraq has continued by economic means, and the Iraqi people have suffered terribly under UN sanctions. The diplomatic squabbles currently taking place between Iraq and the UN have drawn attention to the plight of Iraq, but a military strike by the U.S. is still a possibility. In light of the current military threat, it is more important than ever to expose the duplicity of the Western powers.

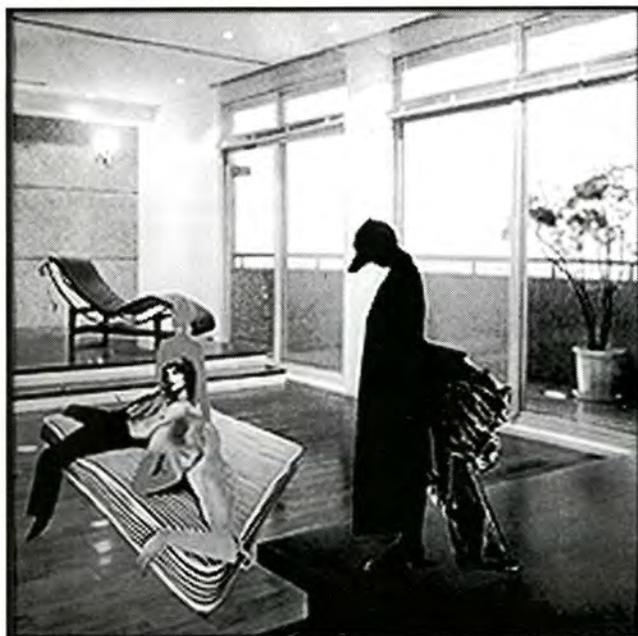
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— Madeleine Drew



VW Bus by Mercury Tanaka - Soap Sculpture



Interior by Wei-Jen Wang - Collage

My grandpa used to always spit in the beans. I figured that's what gave his beans that mouth-watering flavor that I grew so addicted to throughout my childhood. Being young and naive, I never fathomed that such a fascinating gesture could be unsanitary. In the innocence of my youth, ignorance led me to develop a rather creative explanation for grandpa's action. I would imagine him popping a clove or two of garlic into his mouth, chewing up the pulp, and then relaying the flavored juices from mouth to frying pan. I thought that's where his beans got their flavor. Although I never saw him popping those garlic cloves into his mouth, much less chewing anything while cooking, I always believed that he did it when I wasn't looking. Now and then I would get a spoonful of slimy, white jelly-like stuff in my beans. Grandma told me it was pork fat and that's why they called it "Pork and Beans." But I never believed her. I thought that it was really because grandpa had a bad cold. At the time, the thought of finding phlegm in my food didn't disgust me at all. In fact, I enjoyed the taste of that "slimy white stuff" to such an extent that after a while, it was the first thing I'd go digging for when a bowl of grandpa's beans was placed before me.

Years later I learned that grandpa wasn't really spitting in the beans. His lungs had been getting weaker in his old age and he was having trouble breathing properly. Every now and again his lungs would flutter a bit, causing him to struggle when he inhaled. As a result, the following exhale would be slightly more violent than usual and occasionally some

spittle would uncontrollably exit his oral cavity. I also eventually discovered that the slimy, white stuff was indeed pork fat after all. Grandma had been telling the truth all along.

From around the time I was first able to walk and all through grade school, I remember how hard my parents worked. My father held down two full-time jobs and sold his light blue, '73 Volkswagen bug just to save money. He rode a rusty red, secondhand ten-speed from our Makiki apartment to work every day in Waikiki. My mom would go to school at the University of Hawai'i in the daytime and straight to her job afterwards, working until the wee hours of the morning. They struggled so valiantly in those days just to make ends meet.

As a result they were unable to, no matter how much they wanted to, spend any considerable amount of time with me. My mother would drop me off at school early in the morning, but I was always picked up by my grandfather after school. He and I would catch the bus home together. When I say "home," I am referring to my grandparents' apartment because it was there that I spent more of my waking hours than I did at my real home.

As a child I developed a sort of emotional feeling for each day of the week. Monday was always so dreary, Saturday was always too short, and Sunday would consistently instill in me apprehension of the week ahead. Since Tuesday through Thursday was even more plain than ordinary, this left only Friday to my liking. Friday was more than just my favorite day of the week. In my excited little mind, I saw it as

the beginning of an adventure.

Every Friday after school my grandpa would take me on a suburban safari. He enjoyed taking long walks around the city and seeing all there was to see. Riding my fire engine red tricycle I would accompany him on his journey, my little legs pumping with cheerful effort to keep up with him. His pace was almost mechanical, like the ticking of a clock, rhythmic and precise—his rubber slippers making a slapping sound as they lapped up against his heels with each step he took. Flip, flap, flip, flap, flip, flap. Sometimes I would race several yards ahead on my tricycle and stop to let Grandpa catch up or I would circle him and trail several yards behind. Even in the midst of the bustling crowds I knew I could never lose track of him because my ears were always focused on the sound of his slippers. When I couldn't see him, I could hear him. Flip, flap, flip, flap. It was like a homing signal, and I knew I would never get lost.

Every week he would take a different route and every week my tricycle traversed fresh terrain. There were potholes and cracks, dirt paths and gravel ways, slopes and bridges, but for every obstacle there was always something new to see along the way. Whether it was construction workers pouring cement or an elderly woman weeding her garden, I never lost interest in the journey.

My favorite part of our weekly excursion was passing through Chinatown. No matter which path my grandfather chose to follow, we would always end up in Chinatown. It was a dirty place, covered with grime and soot, where pigeons perched on ev-

ery neon sign and stray cats chased sewer rats through side alleys. Strange as it may seem, I've always looked upon Chinatown with a sort of reverence because, for me, it was a place of simple pleasures for simple people. It reminded me of roasted peanuts and the mouth-watering scent of fresh manapua, fish heads as big as my body, and pig heads that chased me in my sleep. There were dragons wrapped around pillars and ancient men who had fuzzy white beards and spoke funny words. Chinatown was a magical place full of shops and people that always had something original and interesting to offer.

Entering Chinatown had always made me feel uneasy, as if the whole place just didn't belong there. I sometimes imagined that it was a region that time had forgotten to reconcile and, if you stayed there long enough, you would be trapped in that realm forever. I can remember feeling a tingling sensation whenever we passed the old Empress Theater at the edge of Chinatown. It was like a thick curtain of invisible fog creeping over my body, separating Chinatown from the rest of the city. On our way home, my heart wouldn't stop beating fast until we had reached the other side of the street and I looked back across the crosswalk to see the Empress Theater towering behind me like the gates to a forbidden city. It was a place that scared me, yet inculcated in me a lustful curiosity and a thirst to explore that would never be quenched no matter how many times we went back.

Grandma seemed to know exactly when we would turn the corner and come walking down the street towards the apartment because she would be

standing there, on the second floor balcony, waving her kitchen towel excitedly above her head and smiling down at us. I would wave back at her screaming, "Hi Grandma!" then pedal my little tricycle as fast as I could all the way down the lane until I reached

around the waist, I'd look up at her and immediately start blurting out fragments about all the new things I saw that afternoon, but she would always stop me and tell me to catch my breath before I continued. Before I had a chance to continue though, Grandma would quickly march me to the bathroom and make me wash my hands before I did anything else.

She always had dinner waiting on the table when her weary travelers returned and, by the time Grandpa reached the front door carrying my tricycle, it was time to eat. After Grandpa finished putting away the tricycle and washing up for dinner, we would all bow our heads and say grace. Mealtime at my grandparents' place was something I looked forward to because I was always the center of attention no matter what the topic at the table was. On Fridays, of course, I spent every moment that didn't consist of chewing or swallowing providing Grandma with every last detail of what I had seen in the city that afternoon.



79 Cents by Amy Commendador - Photography

their apartment. Grandpa would usually be about halfway down the street behind me and I would call to him merrily, "C'mon Grandpa, dinner's ready!" I would park my tricycle at the bottom of the stairs, knowing that Grandpa would carry it upstairs for me when he got there, and then I'd dash up the flights of stairs without stopping until I reached my Grandma waiting with open arms on the second floor. As soon as I hugged her

Now that I think about it, I can remember how silly it was having Grandma turn to Grandpa every time I said something and asking him, "Is that so, Grandpa?" or "Wow, did that really happen?" and having Grandpa grunt and nod his head in response while trying to swallow. Silly as it was, I loved every second of attention my grandparents offered me and today I seriously doubt that I would have even a drop of patience or un-

derstanding if someone had not once taken the time to be patient and loving with me.

My Grandpa passed away in his sleep in the late spring of 1994. We think he was about ninety or ninety-one years old, but nobody knows for sure because they didn't keep accurate birth records at the turn of the century. All we know is that he was born in nineteen-o-something (before 1910 for sure). Sometimes I think about him and wonder if he's someplace nearby watching me like he always used to. I find it strange that I spent so much time with him, but I feel as though I never really got to know him as well as I could have. I guess because most of our time together was spent just sharing moments and not really talking to each other. Grandpa was very quiet. Even when he was angry it was difficult to tell because he wouldn't say a word about it to anyone.

I'll never forget the time I inadvertently eluded him one day after school. It was the only time I ever remember his being displeased with me and I can recall the details of the incident clearly, as though it were yesterday.

I was in the first grade and he was supposed to meet me at the front gate of the school yard at 2:15 p.m. just like every other day of the week. When the school bell rang, I grabbed my backpack and rushed out the classroom door running as fast as I could to meet him. As usual, he was waiting by the entrance to the school yard, squinting his eyes to keep a lookout for me. I ran right by him shouting excitedly, "Hi Grandpa, let's go before we miss our bus!" and kept on going

without even looking back. I skipped in the direction of the bus stop assuming he was following close behind, but never turned around to check. I ran, skipped, and whistled for many blocks and then I ran some more. Suddenly I felt a cold chill come over me, a kind of emptiness. I stopped in my tracks and turned to look for my grandfather. There was nothing behind me, nothing at all. As far down the sidewalk as I could see, not a single person was present and that's when I panicked. Until that instant, I had never really known what it was like to feel insecure, to be all alone in the world. Whenever I am scared about something, I close my eyes and think about that moment. I see myself looking down that empty street and I can feel an icy hand moving inside my chest, reaching behind my ribs and squeezing my heart in its frozen grip. Fear had finally found me and I was paralyzed, not knowing what to do next.

The first thing I remember doing was calling out to my grandpa in a feeble little voice that was so soft it was more like the mewing of a kitten. When no response came, I decided I had to do something—and fast. Why I didn't just run back to the school yard and look for him is something I'm still not sure of to this day. I do remember hearing my mother's voice in my head saying, "Now Jon-Jon, if you ever get lost in this area or if for some reason nobody comes to get you after school, all you have to do is walk to the fire station and get on any city bus that comes by because the bus will drop you off right at the corner of Grandma's street." Although it sounds like a lot for a small child to remember, you must realize that my mother

thing every single morning as she dropped me off at school. Her efforts paid off too, because remembering her words, I finished walking to the bus stop and caught the bus (miraculously, the driver didn't notice me getting on without paying) all the way to Grandma's house. Once there, I explained to a hysterical, worried old woman what had happened and said that I didn't know what happened to Grandpa. By the time I arrived home, Grandma was too busy rejoicing that I was safe and sound to even bother scolding me for what I had done.

As it turned out, Grandpa's vision was diminishing in his right eye and he didn't see me skip by him that afternoon. Due to his slight loss of hearing, he hadn't heard me pass by him either. When Grandpa called on the telephone and Grandma told him I had arrived safely home, he stopped searching for me and soon came home himself. I was told to apologize to him, though I didn't understand what I had done wrong and, thinking everything was okay, I asked him if we could go for our walk. He said no. Grandpa didn't frown at me, he didn't scold me or spank me or show the slightest sign of discontent. He just said "no" and turned to walk out the door by himself, not bothering to respond to Grandma's pleas for him to come back and rest awhile. I stood there a long time before I realized what I had done. For the first time I had made him angry and I can never forget how horrible I felt watching him walk away down the stairs. Grandma said he just needed to work off some steam, but Grandpa didn't come back until well after supper time. I never ran away from him like that again.

My grandfather was a man of few words but his actions and expressions, his very presence even, spoke for him. Even though he's gone now, I know in my heart that he still watches over me and that some day, I'll see him again.

Grandma is the exact opposite of Grandpa and in many ways she filled the gaps left by his quiet, calm personality. She always wore a smile and had a kind word of encouragement or praise to give. Understanding, comforting, loving, and sympathetic are just a few of her numerous attributes. The thing that really contrasted her with Grandpa, though, was that she was always excited about something. Whether it was something good or something bad, she was always excited and full of energy. I don't mean to tease, but sometimes I get a real kick out of watching her make a gigantic fuss over something as inconsequential as a tiny scratch on my arm. I know she means well, but sometimes I get the impression that making mountains out of molehills has become one of her favorite pastimes. Then again, if Grandma doesn't care about you then who will, right?

I'm glad to say that Grandma is still alive and well. I visit her as often as my busy schedule allows and each time I leave her apartment I glance in the rear view mirror to watch her waving good bye to me. I always toot my horn and stick my arm out the window to wave back and in that instant I imagine her being fifteen years younger, waving a kitchen towel frantically and smiling down at me. Then I look to the street beside me but it remains empty and I always turn the corner feeling as though I just missed

corner feeling as though I just missed Grandpa. If I had looked just one second sooner, I might have seen him standing there.

Any thoughts or mention of my childhood immediately bring to my mind warm, vivid images of my grandparents and the time I spent with them. Many an afternoon I would sit on their front porch steps, eating my beans and watching the mynah birds flocking noisily home to their nests in the giant, yellow-blossomed tree across the way. From my second-story perch I had a clear view of all the mynah birds' activities. With the dedication of a wildlife scientist I would study them every afternoon, observing them flapping and shaking, squawking and scolding, and together participating in what seemed to be one big, orchestrated ruckus that was conducted like a

ritual every day at sunset. As their disharmonious chatter slowly saturated the evening calm, I would sit there with a warm bowl of beans in my lap, my grandparents watching me nearby, and the setting sun's steady gaze upon my back. It was as though the sun's rays were like arms, desperately grabbing at the city, holding on to everything and anything—trying to make those moments last forever. But time knows no patience, for the sun would always slip slowly away below the skyscrapers, behind the distant trees, and finally into the sparkling ocean. Moments like that seemed to prom-

ise that life would always be good and simple.

Wandering back through the years and the memories, I often yearn for a chance to relive those days of childhood splendor. I find myself watching children with a wanton, jealous stare, knowing that I may never



Papaya Tree by Helen N. Abe - Oil

again feel the complacent embrace of a sheltered, carefree existence with no worries, no responsibilities, and no knowledge of how hard life really is. It would be difficult for me to find a greater gift of happiness and total peace of mind.

One day not too many years ago, I was with a few friends having beans and rice at a local drive-in. Some adolescent barbarian passed by our table on his way out and left a good sized sample of what was impairing his ability to swallow comfortably on the ground right in front of our table. It was so big and green, so slimy and full

of bubbles that you just couldn't avoid staring at it for a full second or two. That's just what we all did and it left my friends speechlessly disgusted. All three of them put down their spoons, unable to finish their beans. Being the only individual in our foursome who continued to eat, they all stared at me in disbelief. Although they never said a word, I could read the thoughts in their eyes. They were probably all wondering how I could keep eating after witnessing the birth of the "mother of all loogies." I stared back at them for a few moments and finally asked "What? Didn't your grandpa ever cook beans for you when you were little?" Perplexed, the three of them just shook their heads as they exchanged glances of misunder-

ing. They looked at me expectantly, waiting for an explanation. But I just grinned smugly and continued eating my beans as I thought to myself how lucky I was to have had a Grandpa that cooked the best beans around.

— Jéan V. Lavicka



Abstract by Jonathan Hart - Oil

I have finished reading unit IV, *An Environmental Crisis*, a passage from my textbook, and many memories have come to mind. I remember that when I was just a child we used to visit my grandma who lived in the Taiwan countryside in the summer. At nightfall, my mother used to take my sister, brother, and me outside to look at the moon and stars and listen to the frogs croak and the crickets sing. Sometimes we moved the bench outside under the moon and listened to my father and some of our neighbors tell us ancient Chinese tales. As a story was being told, we would cuddle together, trying to act brave in front of our family and friends and trying not to notice the emptiness and darkness encircling us. We did not have many material possessions, but we could dream about things well beyond anything we could imagine on earth.

I still remember one night when my sister and I were pointing at the moon to show my brother where Tsung-er and Wu kang, two fairies from ancient Chinese stories, were located. Grandma came out from the house and was really shocked, for what we had done was disrespectful to God. She made us kneel down, bow, and tell the moon we were sorry to have pointed at it. Grandma told us we would have to wait and see if the moon gods would forgive us. If the gods were still mad at us, they would come down at midnight and make a little cut on our ears. We really doubted what she had told us would happen, but all night long we could not sleep and kept our eyes on the door, just in case.

At last, when morning came, we touched each other's ears and were so happy that they were still the same. At that time in our lives, the universe was an unfamiliar place, and human life was much simpler.

On July 20, 1969, Apollo 11 landed on the moon and shattered many Chinese dreams. There were no fairies, no mysteries—only rocks and dust. Although it was a big moment in history, when humanity achieved a great milestone, it was also a sad day for man. It was a day when reality overcame our imaginations—when our innocence was lost and we were forced to face the future. It was a future without endless possibilities about our nearest neighbor, because now we knew it was just a big lifeless rock.

Studies report that all the planets we know of in our solar system are similar to the moon in that they can not support carbon-based living, as earth does. Even as we acknowledge this, we still do not take care of the earth, which is a priceless place. I notice that this is true no matter where you live. The countryside becomes smaller and cities keep on expanding. For example, if you revisit some place you have not been for a couple of years, chances are your first impression is one of surprise about how much it has changed. Everywhere there are buildings and houses where once stood trees and forests. Cement and roads reach into the deepest forests and mountains.

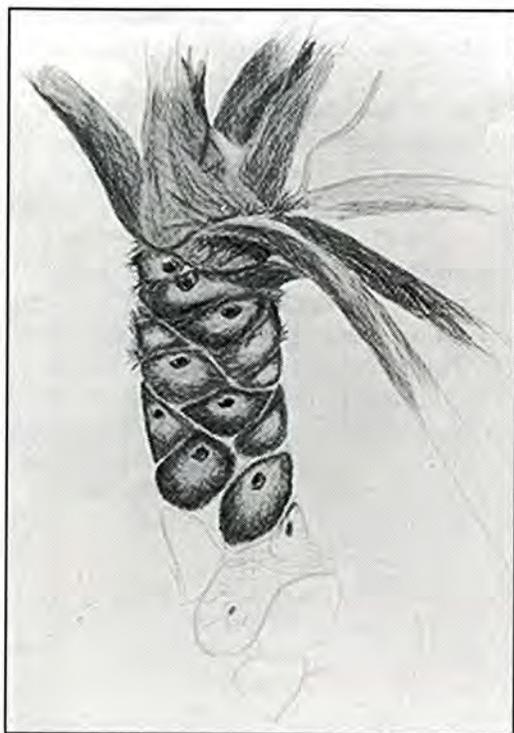
Somewhere, sometime, our life took a dramatic turn and we began to depend on all kinds of machines. For instance, we not only wanted, but we

needed ranges, refrigerators, washers, dryers, and televisions for our homes. When we left our houses we used cars, buses, airplanes, and boats. At work there are all kinds of different office equipment, such as fax machines, copiers, computers, printers, and multi-lined phones. The human body itself seems only a machine used to move around from machine one to machine two, then on to machine three or four. It is scary to imagine what our planet will look like in the future with all these machines. Will we subconsciously train

ourselves to become a machine's slave? Without machines, will we become handicapped? Yes, nothing seems impossible for humans to do. But nothing seems possible to achieve without the help of machines.

Is it all worth it? What have we done to our future generations? Will we become just like the Mayan, Aztec, and Incan civilizations that could not withstand the strain, and became extinct? Do we really have the chance to step back and stem the flow of progress? We shall see.

— (Ruby) Shu Chuang Costea



Texture and Value by Santhana Kaufman - Pencil

China's recorded history has been decorated with the works of many literary geniuses. Among these writers are Chu Yuan and Wang Wei. These men, like many other Chinese writers, creatively recorded the happenings of their times in their poetry. A majority of the poems dealt with nature, as the Chinese believed that nature held the secret to true happiness. This idea is evident in the poetry of both Chu Yuan and Wang Wei. Both men revered and honored nature through their poetry. Although the poets' lives were separated by centuries, there were aspects of their lives that mirrored one another. The poets' one true connection dealt with their ability to create a vivid and colorful painting of nature in their poetry. However, there are also distinctions in the works of Chu Yuan and Wang Wei that can be attributed to their era and life experiences.

Chu Yuan (340-278 BC) has been termed "The Father of Chinese Poetry." He was the chief poet in the *Songs of Chu*. In his youth, Chu Yuan had a decorated official career, serving as a statesman, diplomat, court minister, and at one time the Chu envoy to Chi. However, Chu Yuan paid a high price for success. His jealous colleagues slandered him, causing Chu Yuan to lose favor with the king and be dismissed from office. Chu Yuan was eventually called back to office, only to repeat the cycle of being banished and reinstated several times until he finally entered into self-exile as a result of political failure. He is reported to have taken his life soon after.

Wang Wei (699-759), like Chu Yuan, was a prominent member of the court in his era. This was a period of political unrest, as well as a time when the temples of the Buddhists and Taoists received royal patronage. Wang Wei had great success in his political career and was a student of Buddhist philosophy, which he refers to in his poetry.

Although he was a student of Buddhism, the religion in itself was not the main focus of Wang Wei's poetry. Instead, Wang Wei chose the scenic mountains, the sky at dusk, torrential rains, and other natural images as the center of his poetry. He had the ability to draw colorful and moving pictures of nature with his calligraphy brush. Wang Wei wrote of the aspects of nature that many people took for granted. This is evident in *The Deer Enclosure* (Birch 220-221):

On the lonely mountain
I meet no one, I hear only the echo
of human voices. At an angle the sun's rays
enter the depths of the wood, And shine
upon the green moss.

This poem evokes a sense of peace and quietude. In the midst of this serenity, the sun nourishes the green moss as its rays enter the woods. Although there are no people in sight, some form of life exists on the mountain. In this manner, Wang Wei expresses his fascination with nature. In painting and poetry alike he made more than a record or interpretation of nature; he achieved

perhaps the closest union with the natural world that has ever been expressed (Birch 217).

In comparison to Wang Wei, Chu Yuan's sentiments about nature are also evident in his poems. Chu Yuan's *Nine Songs* eulogizes the spirits of the Lord of the Clouds, the Sun God, the River God, and the Mountain Spirit, to name a few. Also, being an inhabitant of the southern state of Ch'u, Chu Yuan uses the imagery of beautiful flowers in describing nature. While providing a brief autobiography, the poet expresses his intimacy with nature in stanza II of the poem *Encountering Sorrow* (Birch 51-62):

Having from birth this inward beauty,
I added to it fair outward adornment:
I dressed in selinea and shady angelica,
And twined autumn orchids to make a garland.
Swiftly I sped, as in fearful pursuit,
Afraid Time would race on and leave me behind.
In the morning I gathered the angelica on the mountains;
In the evening I plucked the sedges of the islets.

The purity of nature and Chu Yuan's desire to be pure of heart is expressed in this stanza. Having the gift of inward beauty, Chu Yuan adorns himself with a variety of beautiful flowers. He also remains close to nature by gathering the flowers during the day. Throughout this poem Chu Yuan makes many references to nature, comparing men of pure heart with beautiful flowers. Later in the poem, Chu Yuan refers to his slanderous colleagues as dry flowers seeking to fill a perfume bag. He expresses his disappointment in his colleagues by comparing them to flowers that eventually lose their beauty and fragrance. Chu Yuan equates nature with virtue.

There are variations in the manner in which Chu Yuan and Wang Wei approach nature in their poems. Chu Yuan refers to the spirits of nature, dressed in flowers and vines. Natural elements are described as the concoctions of gods in his eulogy to the Mountain Spirit in *Nine Songs*. Possibly, as a result of his disappointments and many uncertainties, Chu Yuan also questions nature. In *Heaven Questioned*, Chu Yuan poses one hundred and seventy-two questions about the unexplainable, such as the creation of the world and the nature of light and darkness (Liu 28):

The beginning of hoary antiquity-
Who was there to tell and transmit it?
Above and below all was shapeless,
What means were used to examine it?

Light and darkness were murky;
Who could have probed them?
Images were formless and profuse;

How could they be recognized?

Bright day and dark night,
 What has time to do with it?
 Thrice the yin and yang have blended;
 Which is origin? Which, mutation?

As in these, the beginning stanzas of *Heaven Questioned*, Chu Yuan questions the Heaven about nature in much of his poetry. In *Encountering Sorrow*, he questions nature about the true beauty of flowers while comparing the flowers to his colleagues in the court. Chu Yuan does not find true contentment in nature, for he constantly questions it as he seeks out answers to the mysteries of nature.

In contrast, Wang Wei chooses to live in and write about the intricacies of nature. Rather than questioning it, Wang Wei records his contentment and fascination with nature. In *Birdsong Brook*, Wang Wei expresses a sense of peace that is evoked by the natural surroundings:

Mind at peace, cassia flowers fall
 Night still, spring mountain empty.
 Moon rising startles mountain birds
 Now and again sing from spring brook.

Like many intellects of his time, Wang Wei found nature to be a retreat from the corruption of the world. Rather than questioning the ways of a corrupt world, he chose to compose works emphasizing the virtues that exist in nature.

The tone of poems can be ascribed to the life experiences of the poet. The treachery of Chu Yuan's colleagues and his political failures contribute to the overall tone of *Encountering Sorrow*. Having lived through constant disappointment, the tone of many of his poems, including *Encountering Sorrow*, is of sadness, confusion, and desperation. By the time this poem was written, Chu Yuan was in a state of desperation. He was bitter about his constant rejection and the slander of his colleagues, despite his undying loyalty to the king. In contrast, Wang Wei's poetry conveys a tone of contentment. His studies in Buddhism helped him to accept the consequences of life, as well as admire the beauty that still remained. However, it should also be noted that, unlike Chu Yuan, Wang Wei's official career was long and uneventful, except for a short period of detention by An Lushan's rebels. Wang Wei's quiet life is reflected in his passive style, while Chu Yuan's unhappy life is echoed in his doubting and questioning style.

In the centuries between their lives, literature underwent several changes that can be noted by paralleling the works of the poets. Chu Yuan's poetry is characterized as lyrical in nature. The rhymed lines are of irregular length and in verse form. Wang Wei's poetry is representative of the bold and illustrious

T'ang poetry at its peak. The splendor and decline of the T'ang period are reflected in his poetry. There is a slight similarity in style as, according to Giles (150), Wang Wei has been accused of loose writing and incongruous imagery. Unlike Chu Yuan, however, Wang Wei applied few words to create natural images. Just as a painter creates his landscape with a few strokes of the brush, so Wang Wei, the poet-painter, produced pictures with few choice expressions (Liu 72).

Chu Yuan and Wang Wei were both influential poets in their eras. Both artists left great impressions of history through their poetry. By observing the works of these poets, it is evident that nature was influential in their poetry. The great sense of loyalty both Chu Yuan and Wang Wei held for their respective emperors may have aided their ability to write so creatively about court life. However, Chu Yuan's checkered career, marked by the slander of his colleagues, may have contributed to his bleak, but eloquent works of literature.

On the other hand, Wang Wei's peaceful life and studies in Buddhism may have formed the background for him to relish nature and emphasize its significance. Chu Yuan's numerous disappointments in life may have led him to question nature in his many poems. Yet, despite his bewilderment, Chu Yuan still desired to be one with nature, as it was seen as the only constant of purity. Wang Wei seemingly attempted to capture all of nature's beauty in his poetry and emphasized the significance of nature. He was also able to savor many facets of nature that most people might overlook. Regardless of their variations in tone and style, Chu Yuan and Wang Wei captured the greatness of nature.

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— Ann Kitagawa

September 17

Drug dealer went to court today
Jury said, "Guilty"
Judge gave sentence,
"20 years imprisonment"
For what?
All he did was collect his pay
For helping people feel good
He picked them up off the ground
He gave them what they wanted,
What they needed
He says it was his service to society
Bringing people up when they're down
Giving them something to help cope
It was more than just pushing dope
What gratitude! Where are they now?
After all he's done to serve mankind,
He's in the slammer serving time.

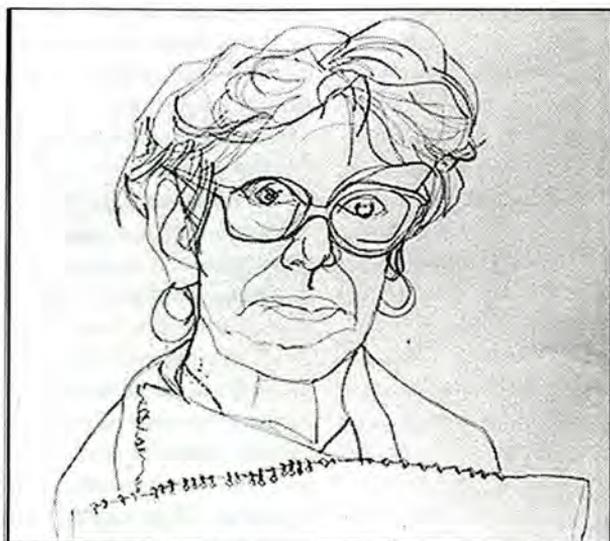
— Anna Marie Rippey
(Courtesy of *Ka Nani*)



Palm in Bloom by Jamie Tran - Pencil

The British Empire was so large at its peak that at any given time the sun was still shining on it. As many of us know through historical studies, this imperialistic giant was perhaps the largest the history of mankind has ever seen. One thing the British spread with colonialism, besides their weapons and ideologies, was the English language. Many say that English came to be the most widely spoken language around

English language may have acquired a negative image. Nonetheless, the use of English has benefits that outweigh its drawbacks. English remains the most used language on the global level. But, many people ask whether or not it should be the language used for global communication. My view is that English is presently the best language to facilitate communication and understanding among people around



Bobbie by Henry Lee - Pencil

the world today because of imperialistic oppression, which resulted in linguistic imperialism. To some degree, this view is true. One way to control a foreign population is to teach them another language and ban them from using their own mother tongue. We can see evidence of this historic phenomenon right here in Hawaii. Unfortunately, we have to face the fact that this has occurred. We can not change our past by turning back time, nor should we attempt it. However, as a result of the British occupation of many regions around the globe, the

the world.

Choosing a language is important because language enables "man to express himself as a result of social and economic conditions in his environment" (Mueller 1973, p. 15). The fact is that humankind's existence depends heavily on it. "[Language] is a badge of group identity, distinctiveness, and solidarity" (Hertzler 1965, p. 173). We can tell a lot by analyzing a single language spoken by one group of people. Linguists can find out about a people's social lifestyle just by listening. As John Gumperz mentioned in his article

in the May issue of *Society* magazine, 1983, "the most pervasive and important source of social background information is language." Language is so powerful that it "can rally support for a national cause that [it] embodies more effectively than any other component of culture" (Hagege 1986, p. 23). It is a political force that can "draw a country apart or, through tolerance of language differences, help unite a nation," such as Switzerland, for example (King 1997, 3). Because language is so significant, it could be a sensitive issue for anyone to choose a single world language and many may object to changes in their language use.

Likewise, I do not propose to change anyone's language or restrict it in any way. I only suggest that the whole world use one common language. English need not take over or make other languages extinct. It will simply be a second language to be used all over the world. After all, we don't have to view English as taking over our own language. We can look at English as being one mixed ball composed of many languages, its heavy borrowing representing a little of everyone (Hertzler, 1965).

On the other hand, while I explain why I believe English should be the main language to bridge all others, I need to acknowledge that there will be very strong resistance to making English the world's number one language. Many will call it Linguistic Imperialism in constant play. A multitude of people (especially those from third world nations) are upset at their treatment and thus will see this as a form of oppression. The dilemma nations' citizens face, specifically during this high technology/high international

interaction era, is that one must learn English to progress in many aspects of one's culture. For example, in Puerto Rico, most people speak Spanish. In addition, they are required to learn English while in grades 1-12. However, a recent movement has urged people to resist this mandate. The people are then faced with making a crucial decision. If they learn English, they risk being viewed as traitors to their Spanish heritage. If they don't accept English as a beneficial resource, they could be denying themselves the opportunity to advance and become competitive on a global scale, to enhance their social status, and not to limit themselves from socio-economic potential (Clachar, 1997). The examples seen in Puerto Rico are also sentiments felt around the world in many countries, particularly in former British territories and colonies.

Many may reject the idea of having English as the worldwide second language for fear of losing their own language and identity and I sympathize with them and believe their fear is legitimate. To prevent any form of linguistic segregation, I agree with the theory that the United Nations should pass a binding international law that would enforce the right to an education that validates one's linguistic and cultural heritage. This law would serve as a counterweight to linguistic dominance within states, should English pose as any threat to a nation's mother tongue (Grundy, 1997).

The UN is comprised of many nations representing numerous languages. For everyone to be able to communicate effectively, they have chosen one language. The use of English within this large political entity

has greatly assisted the whole understanding process. The UN is a microcosm example of what I think should happen on a macrocosm (world) scale. For countries to settle their differences through peaceful dialogue, they need to find a common language. English has been the arrangement. English need not be used within the United Nations alone, but also in bilateral and multilateral talks among national governments and businesses.

Another example is in India, where English is the national language used for administrative purposes (Cheshire, 1991). Prior to the British arrival and occupation, there was not one Indian language that was widely used on the subcontinent to help unify the different regions. As the author Jenny Cheshire put it, "English is the only all-Indian circulation language." The introduction of English had its negative political implications however, it was positive in that it provided a medium for millions to understand each other. After all, it is more practical to learn English than to study everyone else's language. This concept is also economically feasible and less draining on the Indian government.

Much of how the world functions today is due in part to national economies, especially those of Japan, Europe, and the United States. All countries are becoming interdependent economically. We are no doubt experiencing the effects of a shrinking global village. If governments are becoming smaller, yet the populations they serve are increasing along with expanding economies, then English will be in more demand as the means of communication. This situation will create a need for everyone to learn it.

"The supply of a language can be increased by creating possibilities for learning it" (Coulmas 1992, p. 113). This outcome has already begun to happen. The author Florian Coulmas suggests that the connection between an economy and language is so strong it is inseparable. Language was, "on a social level, created and spread in response to communication demands rooted in economic necessities" (Coulmas 1992, p. 215).

This factor is extremely important due to today's rapid advances and competitiveness of our global economies. It is logical to assume that the more trade occurs on the world markets, the more need there is to establish one language to communicate with. During the Age of Discovery, many pidgin and Creole languages developed to help travelers and merchants conduct business. However, times have changed and there is a diminished need to have that many varieties of speech because of technological achievements.

Furthermore, new inventions that sustain our economies are given English names. This is not a coincidence. Many of the scientists and technocrats who produce the new tools have studied English sometime in their careers. English words, in turn, have been absorbed into other languages that did not have such technological terminology to begin with. Joyce Hertzler states, "the language, along with the spreaders of the new technology, must be accepted by those accepting the technology" (Hertzler 1965, p. 205). Perhaps the Malaysian Prime Minister, Mahathir Mohamed, had a vision that, if he did not impose English as that country's leading language for

students to study technology and science courses in, then his people eventually would not be able to compete internationally. To some degree, he was correct. Here we had a leader who wanted his citizens to conform (whether they liked it or not) to a language associated with progress and spoken by the majority of the world's educated. This was the majority rule or democratic concept.

Remaining with the thought of democratic ideals for a moment, some may ask why the world language is not the spoken language of the largest ethnic group in the world. According to my former history professor, Loretta Pang, one out of every four human beings on the face of this planet is Chinese. This would mean we would all have to learn this complex language, which would be too arduous a task. English is preferable as it is already encouraged and taught as a second language in many schools around the world.

However, Linguistic Imperialism may occur again if no one seeks to pass legislation to protect everyone's linguistic (human) rights. I am glad that President Clinton vetoed a bill passed by the House of Representatives in August of 1996 that would have declared English as the national language of the United States. With the stroke of a pen, he helped prevent one form of linguistic oppression, which ultimately would have changed our school's educational systems and funding for bilingual programs.

I am for bilingualism because it helps to enrich our culture. There was a survey conducted that found a link between success and the languages spoken by children. According to Ana

Celia Zantella of Hunter College (1997), "The children who were monolingual in English were less successful academically than the bilinguals." It is important for our schools to make it mandatory to learn second languages, because it will enable us to communicate better with the rest of the world. As the global village becomes more crowded, we have the opportunity to use languages other than English. But, fortunately, we can fall back on English, provided many have learned it already.

Finally, getting to the heart of the matter by comparing the properties and qualities of the English language with some others, English proves to be a more appropriate choice, given the task at hand. English is currently the leading language, read and printed more than any other. English seems to be the great "unifier" in that it is comparatively easy to comprehend. Grammatically, English is simpler in spoken form and easily adaptable to pidgins and Creoles (Hertzer, 1965). Many other languages, such as Chinese, consist of tone variations that can change meanings. Still other languages have no gender differentiation, such as Tagalog. It may be important to use a language with gender distinction when traveling to socially conservative regions. English has this feature, which would make it more appealing to choose as a common language. The conjugations of English are fairly "straightforward and logical as well" (Hertzer 1965, p. 223). Also, English nouns do not have a gender as they do in the French language.

English already has a head start over other languages on the world stage. I think it is performing a superb

job now and there shouldn't be any efforts to change that. It may be too costly to invent a new language for everyone to use in order to satisfy dissenters. The world economy as a whole may not be able to afford such a change. In fact, there have been past efforts to create a language, called Esperanto, which was supposed to be composed of many languages, but this proved to be a failure as only a few million of the world's population speak it. It did not catch on and wasn't popular (Coulmas, 1992). It would be easier to build upon what we already have, English.

To conclude, we can not deny that our fast-paced globalization and expansion of interdependent economies necessitates a common language. English has been at the forefront and should remain so, without hindering or endangering other languages. Sadly, the forced use of English has had many negative effects on other cultures and societies, but I believe there are and will continue to be far more positive results from the use of English in the future. If English is easy to learn, is easily adaptable to already existing pidgins and Creoles, and helps provide understanding among different people, then it is the language that best qualifies. With the growing population of the earth, now at around six billion, the need for a common world language is more than ever evident (Hertzler, 1965).

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I'd always wanted to take Professor Quensell's Botany 130 course. Native Hawaiian flora and fauna have been of interest to me since I moved to the islands over six and a half years ago. Driving around O'ahu is never without new beauty, but when you're able to recognize a plant species, or describe specific wildlife, the trip is that much more enjoyable. Journeys over the Pali have changed forever for me because of this experience. No longer do I hold others in contempt

would not sit well. And besides, my original seminar topic was sugar cane, sugar beets and maple—pretty boring stuff in the final analysis. So with the coaxing of Professor Quensell, and with an insane urge to "teach the children well," I opted to stay my usual course and follow once again that road less traveled.

As the semester progressed, weeks quickly turned into days. Before we could realize the impact of our course load, the first day of presenta-



Still Life by Barbara Ann Ziegler - Multi-Conte-Crayon

for possessing knowledge of this island's tropical scenery. I have learned to recognize some important botanical aspects of the Hawaiian Island chain, and because of this fact, was able to pass on information during this semester's Service Learning project.

While I thought researching a few plant topics and then presenting the information seminar style was taking the easy way out, something inside told me that missing the experience of taking an active role in the learning process of students from Jarrett Intermediate in Palolo Valley, and Kaimuki Intermediate in Kaimuki

tion was upon us. Our small, inexperienced group of three had great difficulty communicating ideas. We knew the easy part would be putting together enough material, and delivering it twice. But time was against us. It was 9:00 a.m. and we needed to be on campus at Palolo by 2:15 p.m. that day. We did gather a few pieces of disorganized information to present to the children. But, it was painfully obvious that our structure was weak. Every form of fear reached out and grabbed my okole. I felt overwhelmed and doomed to fail. But, despite all this, I couldn't let those kids down. Somehow we had to deliver.

Earlier that week I'd taken a trip to the University of Hawai'i's Agriculture Research Station in Waimanalo. I was in search of macadamia nut tree samples. Our first presentation would deal with the botanical aspects of these nuts, along with those of the kukui. Some fresh samples would be an excellent way to show students the simple plant structure. When I arrived at Waimanalo Station in search of my macadamia samples, I figured it would be a piece of cake. I parked the car, walked into the station manager's office, introduced myself, and listened to him tell me I could take as many samples as I needed for the kids' lecture series. Thanking him, I ventured onto the station property to find my samples, but suddenly was struck stupid. I'd grown up in Northern California, the nut capital of the world (no pun intended). Nuts were commonplace in our household growing up, so you'd think I'd be able to distinguish a mac-nut from a walnut with relative ease. Besides, I'm a nutty kinda guy who supposedly has an eye for this stuff. Nuts are nuts, right? Wrong!

All of a sudden the word "macadamia" seemed strangely foreign. So with broken pride, I ask the station manager to locate the nut trees for me and, at this point, the morning took a turn toward hilarity. With a farmer's smile, the manager rose from his desk, walked me gently from his office, and pointed within clear view to hundreds of macadamia. With arms spread wide like Moses receiving the Ten Commandments, he looked at me and said, "Bruddha, you see all those trees there?" And I said, "Well, yeah, ugh..." He continued, "All those trees. All of

them. Hundreds of them. That's all macadamia nut! Okay!?! Got it!?" I guess he could have been a little nicer about it, but at least my trees were identified. I smiled a clueless smile, said "thanks," and let him have his laugh. Talk about humility! I quickly gathered my specimens, and drove back to town.

Our lecture and discussion would focus on the various differences and similarities of nuts and legumes, so kukui and macadamia were chosen because of their connection to Hawaiian culture and lore. Gathering these samples I was able to get a sense of what it may have been like hundreds of years ago to pick kukui, or to have been part of the original macadamia nut plantations. Ancient Hawaiians had many uses for the kukui, but it was primarily used for lamp oil, or simply burned for light. On the other hand, I found out that macadamia nuts have been a stable cash crop in Hawai'i for many years. They're widely recognized as one of the most expensive nuts in the world and are considered one of the tastiest. Although originally from Australia, macadamia grow very well in the Hawaiian climate and, for commercial purposes, have been tagged, "the real Hawaiian nut."

Having plant samples was a good confidence boost. It gave us something tangible to show the kids and I thought that was important. The more show and tell we could do with fresh specimens, the better. I can remember being in grade school and hating the lecture parts of class. I was a touch, feel, see and smell kinda kid and excelled in the classes that used plenty of visual aids, the more the better. It was just a great learning tool, and still is

today.

So now we had our specimens—both kukui and macadamia. But, we still lacked any real game plan. Our group had difficulty in this area. We exchanged phone numbers but never seemed to hook up. We bounced information off each other in class, but never developed any real plan of attack. We never decided how this information was going to be delivered and by whom. It was crunch time and our group had just five hours to put together a lesson plan designed to accommodate 10-15 kids at the intermediate level. What to do! Simple. Tell the others to just be on time, and guarantee them they'll have something to present the kids.

At this point, it was clear we were not functioning well as a group, but I had hoped we could pull it together with a practice presentation in Palolo. Not to exclude the others, but with five hours until show time, I managed to compile enough information for all to participate in the lecture. The kids may have been cheated out of a more informative hour, but the lesson learned was a valuable one for me. We were not ready for that first hour. But somehow we pulled off an enthusiastic lecture based on heavy show and tell, and plenty of simple botanical based questions.

Using an overhead and the fresh specimens, we were able to identify some basic plant structure. We cut open the nuts and let the kids see the protective layers. We explained the importance of each and let them taste various nut samples. (A word of caution: think twice before letting a group of intermediate students eat chocolate covered macadamia nuts midway

through a lecture.) The first lecture went okay, but I knew we could do better. The next week we would be back to teach the students about the Hawaiian ti and hala plants and put together arts and crafts with ti leaves and lauhala. This, I sensed, would be a chore. But Professor Quensell assured me she would provide back-up when it came to explaining the various methods of arts and crafts. Thanks to her guidance we made it through that first lecture with a small feeling of accomplishment. The anxiety had lifted. Now it was time to endure the process.

Spring break came and went like a flash. Once again we were scheduled to lecture at Jarrett Intermediate that first Thursday back to school. We arrived with a bag full of fresh ti leaves provided by a friend in Kane'ohe along with some lauhala and another variety of leaf provided by Professor Quensell to make small angel figurines. The lecture went relatively smoothly and we were more prepared to deliver this time around. We spent less time on the lecture portion and more time involved doing arts and crafts—with incredible results. I learned that most of these kids had grown up with elders who learned to weave and make leis as children. Once again, I was the student and they taught me a few lessons about life growing up in Palolo Valley. It was an intimate time spent with these kids—children of the forgotten valley, as one girl would put it. She said she appreciated our visits to her school because, "we live in Palolo and nobody really knows about us up here... and nobody really cares." While sad and perhaps true, that's not why we

were there. This wasn't another social experiment. It was our intention to leave these kids with a better understanding of some botanical aspects of their island, and I think we did a good job. Through our efforts they developed more respect for the 'aina and, because of this, perhaps, more respect for themselves, their valley, and their way of life.

Our project would move from Palolo to Kaimuki Intermediate. We would deliver the same information to the same number of kids. They came to the lectures ready to learn, eager, and full of questions for both myself and my partner, Kanani Sakai. They seemed motivated to learn and paid close attention during the lecture portion of the classes. And, like their fellow students in Palolo, they had respect for our bringing this material to their school. They talked about the different types of lectures we could bring in the future; we listened and we learned. These kids, much like the ones in Palolo, wanted more of a good thing. This was new and different for them and they clearly wanted to participate more fully in the process.

We spoke to them about macadamia, kukui, ti and lauhala, too. We explained the significance of these plants in today's Hawaiian culture and talked about their importance during ancient Hawaiian times. We brought in bags of ti leaves and lauhala and for arts and crafts at Kaimuki. Professor Quensell was joined by her daughter, Joy, to assist the class in the construction of the various crafts. Kids are natural artists, so with little instruction they were off and running. Joy was an invaluable asset in demonstrating to the kids and me how to

make beautiful haku leis. I made my first haku and presented it to my neighbor for letting us borrow her bundle of dried lauhala. It was a beautiful lei and I felt good giving it to someone so deserving.

The last week of instruction had the kids coming on a field trip to Kapi'olani Community College. We met them in their classroom and walked them up the hill to KCC. Once on campus, Professor Quensell took the kids on a guided tour of the science labs and they were welcomed into an actual Biology lab in progress. They were shown the increased power of modern technology as the instructor demonstrated how to download digital images and text from his office computer onto the computer screen in the lab. The kids seemed impressed and amazed by the usefulness of this equipment. After a short break we walked them back to school, said our good-byes, and our Service Learning project was complete.

The experience was excellent; given the opportunity, I'll do it again. Anyone having doubts about whether or not they may have a career in teaching, or perhaps just want the experience of being in the classroom, should sign up. The kids were quick and responded well to all types of stimuli. They focused well, were attentive, and respected our presence in the classroom. It was the little things that made a big difference. In service to a great bunch of kids, we learned.

— Tom Wade

The internet has provided us with a new way of communicating with each other. June has been thinking about becoming a writer, but is hesitant because of the current controversy over the canon of American literature. The canon, a certain group of writers whose works are featured in most literature textbooks, has come under some serious debate. The issue is whether or not to open up the canon to include writers of minority backgrounds, women, and newer writers. June looks into a chat room for young writers. She logs in and finds a fellow aspiring writer and they decide to enter a private chat room for further discussion of the canon controversy:

Jnbg (19:00 EST) So what do you think about the canon controversy?

SCOO7 (19:02 EST) I only know a little about it—only from what you’ve explained so far.

Jnbg (19:05 EST) Well, I just think that the more recent writers should be featured in lit textbooks. Not just newer ones, but more minorities and women.

SC007 (19:07 EST) You mean for school? High School?

Jnbg (19:10 EST) Yeah, and college, and even younger than that. I think that there should be more “local” writers featured as well. Maybe a select few from each region or even each state. Something like that.

SCOO7 (19:13 EST) Why local? Where are you from?

Jnbg(19:14 EST) Hawai‘i. Why?

SCOO7 (19:16 EST) Just wondering. Hawai‘i, huh? I’m in Ohio. It’s cold here. Wouldn’t mind going to Hawai‘i right now. So, is there some kind of big literature movement going on over there or ?

Jnbg (19:18 EST) I wouldn’t say it’s a literature movement—it’s just that there are some great writers here that I think should be considered for inclusion in the canon. At least have someone represent our unique culture.

SCOO7 (19:21 EST) Yeah, I can understand that you want Hawai‘i to be represented. But, do you think the writers would be able to get in?

Jnbg(19:24 EST) Why not? They’re just as good at writing. Yes, there are a lot of stories that have been published and are pretty good sellers, but they seem to be so “touristy.”

SC007 (19:26 EST) I don’t think the canon will be opened up any time soon. I mean, there are hardly any minorities featured as it is. And besides, I can see them overlooking Hawai‘i as part of America. I can’t even imagine reading something in high school that was written by a Hawaiian.

Jnbg (19:34 EST) Well. It’s not just Hawaiians. The community here is a giant mix of many different ethnicities. Sure, it would be cool to have something by a Hawaiian studied in schools across America—

but I want Hawai'i to be represented in its true form, not stereotyped. Like in this book called the *Best of Bamboo Ridge*—it's a collection of works by writers in Hawai'i. My American Lit. teacher uses it for our text, plus the regular lit book.

SC007 (19:40 EST) Hmm. That's neat. If you guys are using that, then why do you need to make a fuss about the canon?

Jnbg (19:42 EST) Well, I don't want to get all political, but come on... Why do local writers have to be excluded? Why do we have to get a supplemental textbook just to learn about writers from different backgrounds?

SC007 (19:45 EST) *apologizing* I'm sorry. I didn't mean to offend you :(

Jnbg (19:46 EST) No prob. But do you get what I mean? At first, I was hesitant to accept this textbook. I had to question myself. Why would I reject them? Because they're not "American"? But they are. I felt weird and kind of upset at myself for being so discriminatory.

SC007 (19:50 EST) Nah. I bet I would've felt the same way. I'm mixed, but raised here in "white town" and I would probably have a hard time accepting something written by a Chinese person. I mean, a Chinese-American. It's easy to accept something from China like in Chinese literature or history. But, as soon as it's a little American, I would probably think, "Why this?"

Jnbg (19:52 EST) EXACTLY. You're Chinese, huh? I'm Japanese and Scottish. Talk about funky mix.

SC007 (19:54 EST) Well, German and Chinese is funky, too.

Jnbg (19:56 EST) "My dream of America is like 'da bin louh,' with people of all persuasions and tastes sitting down around a common pot—chopsticks and basket scoops here and there, some cooking squid and others beef, some tofu or watercress, all in one broth. Like a stew that really isn't as each one chooses what he wishes to eat, only that the pot and fire are shared along with the good company and the sweet soup spooned out at the end of the meal."

SC007 (20:01 EST) What is that? You write that? I guess that's how you feel about this canon thing, eh?

Jnbg (20:02 EST) Yeah. I guess that sums it up best. That was written by Wing Tek Lum—local writer. I got it from my supplemental text.

SC007 (20:06 EST) You think you can email me that?

Jnbg (20:07 EST) Sure can. Give me your email.

(Edited for privacy)

SC007 (20:08 EST) Ok. So, what do you think about the current canon?

You think it's inadequate? I mean, I've had no problem with the stuff I've studied so far. Or, maybe I just never even thought about why there are only certain writers that we study.

Jnbg (20:13 EST) I don't know if I'd say it's inadequate, but I would say that it's an incomplete collection! Something's missing here. I never really thought about it, either. I didn't realize that I thought like this, until I took this class. It's strange, isn't it? We disregard our own ethnic background in exchange for something so "American." I'm still a little confused. I like the stuff we read in high school. I went to an American school in Japan and that's all we studied. Robert Frost is someone everyone liked. Yet, we never studied anything by Japanese writers.

SC007 (20:14 EST) You were in Japan?

Jnbg (20:15 EST) Yeah, and I have no accent. My English is so good for growing up in Japan, right?

SC007 (20:17 EST) Why—do people say that to you?

Jnbg (20:18 EST) I'm a little off the subject. But, yeah. I hate explaining. Well, back to this canon thing. I remember studying Frost, Whitman, Longfellow, etc. All these dead white guys. Then there was that one woman who seemed to have slipped in there. You know, Emily? You don't see another woman for a long while! Oh. That's right. There's probably a minority woman somewhere. When I think of it, my high school text is a lot like my college one.

SC007 (20:20 EST) Well, I like Frost too. That "*Two Roads*" thing. I'm not into poetry, but that's one poem I can't forget. I like Mark Twain. I don't know if you read it, but I like that one story about the frog.

Jnbg (20:23 EST) I've read it. I like it, too. But now I tend to compare stuff like that to the work of local writers. I've read some pretty neat short stories. You know how there are works by African-Americans about their heritage? Well, there was a story about Japanese-Americans that made me want to learn more about Japanese-Americans—not Japanese. It's a story called "Communion."

SC007 (20:25 EST) Come to think of it, there are hardly works I've read by Chinese-Americans. Well, does Amy Tan count?

Jnbg (20:27 EST) Why not? See... how come you ask that? I'm telling you, it's this conditioning thing. Wow, psych 101. We're brought up thinking that minorities can't write as good. Why wouldn't Tan count? Well, actually, she's in my American Lit. text. Amazing. But, that's because it's in the recent section. I don't mind that. It's not like she's ancient or anything. But you should see this section. It's like they tried to put in one writer for each minority group. It's a

little obvious. I guess it's a start.

SC007 (20:30 EST) *wondering* Yes, it is. But, do you think that it would be a little of a problem to open up the canon? I mean, where do you start to teach these works? From high school? College? It's hard as it is with these new p.c. stories. Can you imagine a childhood with no *Little Red Riding Hood*?

Jnbg (20:34 EST) We can talk about p.c. later. Well, p.c. does affect the canon in a way, I guess. But, I don't want minorities and women included just because it's p.c. It has to be because they're good writers. We aspiring writers need something to look forward to. If I wrote something really good, with good literary merit and only local people read it, I wouldn't mind. But, if I thought about it, I would get mad cuz then it's like I'm being denied my opportunity to share with another community—another audience. If it's that good, why can't I be recognized? I think that whoever decides who belongs in the canon should think about America: The Land of Opportunity. Wait. Scratch that. How 'bout America—an Equal Opportunity Employer?

SC007 (20:37 EST) That's a pretty neat statement. What about language? What if people don't understand what you're trying to say?

Jnbg (20:38 EST) Well, I still have trouble with some local stuff. Pidgin is a little tough. If you didn't know, pidgin is considered the Hawaiian dialect (of English). But, still... Well... I guess you could say, "learn a little"! But, that's a little demanding. I think you don't really have to understand the language so much. I don't and I still can get what they mean. I've read some stuff that's in "Southern Black" language and I understand what they mean. I might take forever to get it, but I will.

SC007 (20:40 EST) You mean like long time ago, right? Or, still today. I see what you mean. Yeah. I can't understand some of it, either... but I get the big picture somehow.

Jnbg (20:49 EST) Can you imagine what the textbooks would be like if it were up to us to determine who belonged to the canon? All of us minorities? It would be some lit. with flavor! :) Maybe high school English classes wouldn't be so boring if we could identify with some of the stuff we read!

SC007 (20:51 EST) It would be neat to see what the new canon would be like. I would suggest the idea of a separate canon, but what for? Wow, you really got me thinking about this subject now! I wonder if it would be considered to be a more well rounded education? It should be!

Jnbg (20:53 EST). Yeah, cool. Well, we've been chatting for a long time. I

don't think this issue will ever be settled. I gotta start on my term paper. You don't mind if I use your input, do ya?

SC007 (20:55 EST) GEEEEZ! Just take my knowledge and wise words! J.J. (^_^) Actually, I'd be honored. You better do a good job, though! I don't want to be in a sorry paper! I hope I helped you a little. Maybe we can chat again soon—about the p.c. children's stories? I could probably use that for my term paper. I still have two weeks before I turn in my "masterpiece."

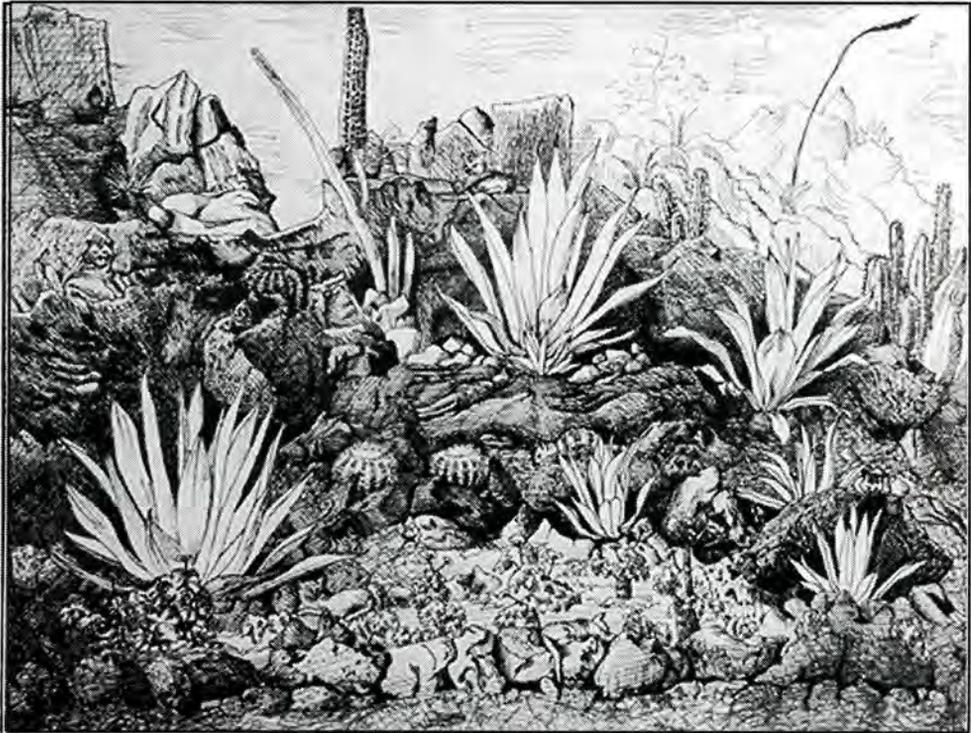
Jnbg (20:58 EST) Sure. Maybe in a few days. Finals week is a killer. Plus my grandma will be flying in from Japan with my mom. Too much STRESS! But, now that I've read some things about Japanese-Americans, I feel like I can really appreciate my grandma. She taught me as much culture as I could take. I better thank her, huh... Well, this is getting too personal. Thanks for the chat!

SC007 (21:01 EST) You know where to find me! Say "hi" to Grandma for me! :)

Jnbg (21:02 EST) Yeah... no prob. G'night! *gone*

SC007 (21:04 EST) Ok, I'm gone too. *gone*

— Monica Munro



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