

Creative Expression Through Psychology and Humanities

A Narrative for Zac Zilz

Johnston Center for Integrative Studies

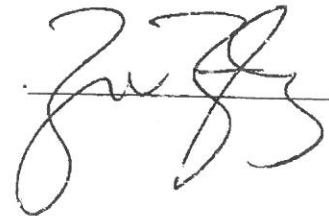
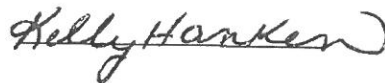
University of Redlands

Graduation: Spring 2015

Advisor: Kelly Hankin

Director of Johnston: Kelly Hankin

Student: Zac Zilz



On top of an intense fervor for learning all that I could, I was also fed up by the social structure of this university after living on the third floor of Williams. I was truly blessed, as we all are, by Malik's presence in that time in my life and equally graced by the infinitely spiritual aura that my friend Winter Mason possesses. If it weren't for their open-minded kindness and fun-loving attitude, which I gravitated towards within the first few weeks of school, I wouldn't have been welcomed so warmly into the Johnston community. Through their friendship and connection I was able to make that first scary step as a C.A.S. student into the walls of Bekins and Holt. From there it was love at first sight. Fond memories of Fritz and Frizbee's epic room in Bekins basement keep me happy as I leave this place. From the initial blessings to the introduction into the Johnston way of life, came an almost solidifying achievement, guaranteeing my future acceptance into this glorious community, a friendship with Ellie Douglas and Virginia. I remember the confused delight I would get when I would see Ellie dodging through a crowd of people to come say hello to me and make sure I had someone to talk to or meet; Johnston parties were scary for a lonely freshman. I met Virginia in a class a semester later and when I found out they were close friends I made a point to constantly feed off their positive spirit and learn from them as much as I could.

There were a lot of people amongst my first Johnston experiences that had that effect on me, Bill McDonald was one of them despite the cliché. Looking back at my freshman year the memory comes to me easily, still a C.A.S. student I yearned to dodge the community service requirement that everyone had during may term. Through an invaluable piece of advice given to me by Tony Mueller, I was told that if I was hoping to be a Johnston student next year I could obviously ditch the CSAC requirement and get a head start in the world of the Buffalo in one fell

used the spirit of Jan Tilten's Hip Hop and Racial Politics class to create HCAT. HCAT started because of a class that I was not even a part of, but when students started to rap themselves, in an effort to fulfill some project requirement, I weaseled my way into the mix for fun. From there I hit the ground running and have never stopped writing and keeping my eyes on musical success. With moments like Buffest that sophomore year, where we performed as a group, I was able to fuel my ambition and the fond memories keep me happy in this time of reconciliation and transition.

Luckily I had some beautiful memories in this invigorating time that were more academically based as I experienced an initial transition in itself when I completed my Contract review. However, numerous Johnston academics, which admire the center's intuitive and nuanced approach to schooling, never get the chance to fully immerse themselves into the community. As I said, I internally transferred after my contract was approved, but it was Ralph Angel's class on Journal writing that initiated me into the community. In the class I was lucky to have chosen somewhat randomly, I got the opportunity to freely express myself through any medium of art amongst the equally open-minded and confused gaze of Mr. Angel. I took the class with fellow Johnstonians, many of their names constantly echo throughout these halls in conversation or folklore; students and friends like Jasmine, Ellie, Phil, Anna Davidson, Nolan, Vinny, Veigh, Joseph Taylor and Naomi. There I was graciously given an opportunity to be myself outside the context of a party or a passing conversation. This is how I thrived as a community member, because I often had trouble as a young college man, coming from the strange competitive social world of C.A.S, to shed an egotistical exoskeleton when it came to initially making friends. A class context motivated me to achieve and prove to the teacher that I was an intellectual and in turn I proved to important members of the community who I really

I kicked Junior years ass, took Psychology classes that I stood out in as an achiever, took a class with Kathy Ogren, previous Johnston director, and stood out as a passionate and expressive leader, I took creative writing classes and developed a meaningful relationship with an instructor who I was going abroad with. It was an interesting contrast to my sophomore year, I excelled so much in the classroom junior year, and while I did well to situate myself in school the year prior, my heart and soul, through the love of this community, grew so much when I was a sophomore. I was lucky, because I was riding on that growth and love that I felt sophomore year to get me through the stress of social struggles stacked on top of academic challenges as life continued on. I was banking too much on the joy I spread the year before that my behavior and relationships as a junior were sacrificed and I began ignoring things and sweeping them under the rug; things like making amends with a roommate that didn't work out, or taking responsibility for my own tendencies to lash out in anger; all things I needed to reconcile, and gladly I did, but I had to grow as a person more before that.

My second cross-cultural experience, may of my junior year, contributed so much to my growth as an academic as well as a person. I was given writing exercises and assignments throughout the literary tour of Europe that fine-tuned both my senses and my ability and desire to put it all on the page. Leslie Brody's instruction and level of understanding was paramount to my success abroad in Austria, Germany, and Prague; setting out on this journey I thought I could conquer the world, and that nothing could go wrong, but I was in for an awful surprise. Amongst manageable stress, induced by jetlag and culture shock, I was catapulted into a pit of despair within the first few days of the first week outside of the U.S. when my roommate's best friend from home committed suicide. I had never met this young man, though missed the chance coincidentally once, but he was someone I'd known well as a promising musician and a potential

vulnerable; once that balance was reached my ability to adventure into every crevice of central Europe grew exponentially. So once again I was on top of the world and felt like I could conquer any obstacle in my path; and then summer came along, “the last summer before graduating and entering ‘the real world.’” This meant getting a real job, fortunately with real pay, but also real lessons, about what it feels like to work a strange job 40-50 hours a week. I had a few positions at an event center, some as a set-up attendant, “pawn” type position, some as a bored concierge, either way it was not very invigorating and showed me a dull glimpse into the meaning of conformity within this monetary world. I went into my senior year with hopes that words, words like this, poetic words, musical words, critical ideas, would keep me as far away from that world in a consistent manner; in other words I had my eyes on the prize, but it was, and still is, very far away.

My goal is to grow, with patience, into the person I was meant to be, to reach my full potential; I constantly strive to use the diligent and intellectual effort that I put into what I find meaningful to push me forward and raise me up above the expectations of me, that a society I disagree with possesses. My goal is to learn and mature through the lessons this ambitious state of mind teaches me so I can then, later in life, look back and examine my experience with a deflated ego, with hopes to help others reach their potential in healthy, loving way. I am thinking these ambitious and grandiose thoughts, because they also possess ambiguity, they symbolize the unknown, the beginning of a journey into freedom rather than an end to a journey that will beget another similar path. More specifically, many students graduate university knowing what they want to do and having knowledge that contributes to an idea for the future; yes I have collected beautiful amounts of intellectual ideas and achieved so much growth in this educational experience, but I have come to an end in this journey with the belief that I do not know what it is

Spring 2014

CRWR-305 01 Poetry Workshop III (4)
ENGL-351 01 Studies in Post-Colonialism (4)
JNST-000K 01 Jazz and Blues Literature (4)
PSYC-343 01 Educational Psychology (4)
WGST-220 01 Comparative Feminisms (3)

May 2014

CRWR-310 01 TRVL: Foreign Correspondence (3)

Fall 2014

CRWR-307 01 Fiction Workshop III (4)
JNST-000E 01 The Body In Theory (4)
PSYC-440 01 Counseling (4)
SOAN-321 01 Gender and Emotion (4)

Spring 2015

CRWR-312 01 The Redlands Review (4)
ENGL-309 01 Writing in the Public Sphere (3)
JNST-000I 01 Narratives of Addiction (4)
PSYC-344 01 Abnormal Psychology (4)

May 2015

JNST-000F 01 Depicting the Marginal Self (3)

Courses By Discipline

Depth

Creative Expression: 38 Credits

CRWR 107 01 Fiction Workshop 1 (4) G. Bills
CRWR-105 01 Poetry Workshop 1 (4) J. Manesiotis
CRWR-310 01 Sem: The Art of the Journal (4) R. Angel
CRWR-104 02 Non-Fiction Workshop I (4) A. Slaughter
JNST-077 38 IS: How Hip Hop Happens (3) K. Hankin (Partner: H. Bratton)
CRWR-204 01 Non-Fiction Workshop II (4) L. Brody
CRWR-305 01 Poetry Workshop III (4) R. Angel
CRWR-310 01 TRVL: Foreign Correspondence (3) L. Brody
CRWR-307 01 Fiction Workshop III (4) P. Geary
CRWR-312 01 The Redlands Review (4) A. Slaughter

Psychology: 20 Credits

PSYC-100 05 Intro. to Psychology (4) J. Hehman
PSYC-252 02 Culture & Human Behavior (4) S. Goldstein
PSYC-343 01 Educational Psychology (4) M. Dolan
PSYC-440 01 Counseling (4) F. Rabinowitz
PSYC-344 01 Abnormal Psychology (4) C. Ko