Black Ice started two years ago in 2012. It started as a literary magazine to give a voice to marginalized groups on campus and in the greater community. Over the years, we have collected and published many short stories, essays, artwork, and poetry that relates to race, identity, and race relations.

In the past, this magazine has functioned as an outlet for the greater Tacoma community and the University of Puget Sound community to discuss important topics regarding race and systems of oppression in a safe and inclusive space.

It is my hope that this issue will spark dialogue and discussion regarding the issues that are addressed in the magazine and that it will allow voices that are typically underrepresented to be heard.

I would also like to extend a special thank you to everyone who has made this magazine possible. Your continued support allows us to continue producing this magazine.

Danae Smith
Black Student Union President
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A Public Letter to the faculty and administration of the University of Puget Sound

I am writing this letter out of concern. Lately, there has been a lot of talk about increasing the diversity on this campus, but to be honest, I hope that the University of Puget Sound does not see an increase in its enrollment of students of color anywhere in the new future. This is due to the fact that I don’t believe that this campus is fully prepared to support a truly diversified student body.

Before I expand on my concern, it is important to situate myself. I am undocumented. My parents brought me to this country when I was three years old, a decision they made out of pure necessity. They left behind their friends and family, a majority of whom they haven’t seen since. It wasn’t until I was 13 that I started to realize what it meant to be undocumented in this country; how my “illegal” status would affect me, my opportunities and my future. I learned that I wouldn’t be able to get a license; board a plane, travel outside of the U.S. or hold the kind of job I wanted to. I couldn’t do many of the things that my friends did. I was always having to lie when my friends asked why I wasn’t having the same experiences they were. Rather than explaining to them that I couldn’t, I would pretend that I didn’t want those experiences — pretending made things easier for them. I couldn’t explain to people that I was undocumented due to fear of my own deportation or the deportation of my parents.

When the executive order of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals was signed, some of the realities changed. I can drive and travel within the country. I have a social security number, but I still can’t leave the country unless I want to exile myself for the next 10 years. When I got my letter granting me this new status two years ago, my housemates, rather than celebrating with me, became annoyed at all the noise I was making.

Thus, alienation is not a new sentiment in my life, but I have managed. I’ve learned to create a sense of community for myself. Never, however, have I felt as isolated as I have during my time at Puget Sound. This alienation arises from the following:

The university lacks a support system for students of color. This is lacking both within the student body, but most importantly it is lacking within the faculty. It is hard to develop the same kinds of relationships that my classmates have with their professors when they don’t understand my experience, or worse when I don’t feel like I can share my experience with them and/or when I do share with faculty and I am misunderstood altogether by those I hope will be supportive. It is exhausting to have to explain why I didn’t go on study abroad or why I am not applying to international programs. Our professors can be excellent mentors and resources, but how can they mentor students whose experiences they don’t understand and don’t show interest in understanding? We need to acknowledge the fact that if we want a diverse student body then we need to be willing to provide students with an understanding faculty that can truly support and guide them.

When the subject of privilege and race are brought up in the classroom, it is obvious that people become
uncomfortable. Rather than unpacking this discomfort, the discussion will end. When something that I find offensive is said in class, I find myself keeping silent. This silence is not due to my lack of outrage or wanting to speak up. Rather, my silence is a product of my exhaustion and fear. After attempts to talk about whiteness, race, racism as imbricated power structures, there comes the inevitable comment of “not all white people are like that” or worse yet, the eye-rolling. Rather than taking a moment and being introspective about how our privileges may benefit us, we jump on the defensive and no intervention occurs.

I’ve spoken to some professors about how a term like “illegal alien” is dehumanizing. They have implied that I should be the one to speak out in class when the term is used. Furthermore, they have implied that it is my responsibility to call out any other microaggression. Why? To “not silence me or take away my agency.” What they fail to understand - beside the fact that the use of these terms are OUR problem and not just my own - is that on this campus, I’ve never felt safe speaking up. Speaking up results in feeling alienated. As a product of faculty not being willing to advocate on behalf of students during these moments, the burden then falls onto the student. And let me tell you, the burden is enormous.

There is resistance to conversations of race/ethnicity, privilege and power. Often times, we do not engage on these topics due to the discomfort of the majority. In doing so, we are silencing the already isolated and alienated voices on campus. Yes, there are members of our campus community who are willing to engage, but it’s not enough.

The proposed diversity curriculum is a small step in the right direction, but if we want to create an environment in which students of color feel supported, we need to bring diversity to the faculty.

I am leaving UPS angry and disappointed. As things stand now, I will not recommend this university to other undocumented students or students of color. What I have written here is only my own experience but certain aspects of my letter have resonated and continue to resonate with other students. Beyond that, I write this letter in an attempt to bring about change. UPS has enormous potential and I would love to see us all live up to it.

Thank you for your time,
Mariana Molina
An Open Letter to the Honors Program

I think what my friend Mariana Molina indicated in her open letter is right: it would be great if University of Puget Sound had more diversity, but we need to consider the possibility that our campus, our curriculum, and our community are not ready for that diversity. I’m a member of the Otis Chapman Honors Program, and my personal experience in the program has definitely demonstrated that fact. As a woman of color, I frequently felt alienated and dismissed; I feel that the Honors Program’s curriculum, as I experienced it, and the theme it is organized around, is inherently and fundamentally sexist and racist.

The Honors Program curriculum is based around the so-called Classics. We read Homer’s Odyssey, Mandeville’s Travels, James Joyce’s Ulysses, John Locke, Edmund Burke’s Reflections on the Revolution in France. That sort of thing. But one voice dominates the readings, and other voices are conspicuously and painfully silent. Everything I’ve read in my time spent in the Honors Program has been written by a heterosexual white cis-man, with the exception of a book we’ve read by two straight women (which was about a man, Isaac Newton), two excerpts of books by queer authors Judith Butler and Michel Foucault, and one book written by a person of color: Shusaku Endo (The Samurai). Out of the dozens of books I have read during my time in the Honors Program, only a handful has been written from a perspective other than the “norm.”

The current Honors Program’s academic theme is that of the “Self and the Other.” Throughout our time in the program, students explore this single theme through a variety of subjects: English, history, sociology, science... all of the core requirements. This theme, the “Self” looking out onto the “Other,” is studied through the perspectives of the authors we read. Even though the Honors program prides itself on providing many perspectives on a variety of topics, really we just get a single perspective: heterosexual white cis-men. This is a perspective that not all of those enrolled in the Honors program can relate to. When the “Self” is told from this perspective, those of us who don’t fit into that mold—those of us who are not heterosexual, not white, not cis-men (or, god forbid, not any of those things)—are left feeling as the “Other.” As someone who didn’t fit the Honors Program’s mold, I felt alienated by this curriculum. There was no space for me to be the “Self” we were studying because the texts of the “Self” were written from perspectives that I could not even hope to relate to.

Previously the Honors Program had a capstone course that challenged some of these issues by intentionally undermining the “Self and the Other” theme. Students spent their time in the program thinking, “Wow, the Other is so different from the Self” only to have this overturned by the capstone. The capstone’s readings were nearly exclusively classic texts written by non-Westerners, such as the Holy Qur’an; the course demonstrated that the “Other,” while coming from a different perspective, is not completely alien. The capstone created room for a “Self” that encapsulated more identities than just white men; as I understand it, the original capstone course created a “Self” that could simultaneously be the “Other.”

However, by the time I was ready to take the Honors capstone, the professor who taught it had retired and the class had been replaced with a course that was more of the same. Although the course I took included one of the two readings by women in my entire Honors curriculum, at times the concept of the “Self” and “Other” was
literally explained in racial terms. The professor, while giving an explanatory example to help us understand a concept that had been drilled into us from day one, defined the “Self” as white and explained that “Otherness” was what you would feel, as a white person, if you were surrounded by non-white people. As a person of color, I found that explanation alienating, offensive, and hurtful. I, through my non-whiteness, was the “Other,” and I was being taught using examples that I fundamentally could not understand. I can’t relate to how a white person must feel when they are surrounded by people of color, but I have spent my entire time at this school surrounded by white people. I know what it means to feel like the “Other”—alienated, outside, excluded—and here the Honors Program was reminding me, yet again, that I am the “Other.”

I ended that class with mixed feelings. While I felt racially alienated, that course included the only discussion (a single day’s worth) of queer perspectives in my entire Honors Program experience. However, a single discussion is not enough to make up for the errors and painful conservatism I have endured in the program. When I mentioned these concerns in a meeting designed to allow Honors students to suggest changes to the program, I was dismissed and told that since the program was designed to study the West I shouldn’t expect to see racial diversity. This logic is greatly flawed; people of color have existed in West since before the idea of “the West” emerged. Furthermore, women constitute half the population of the West, and yet our voices were ignored by the program. The voices of other marginalized groups, groups who most certainly are part of the “Western experience” were silenced as well. The Honors Program’s curriculum as I experienced it was so concerned with teaching the members a canon of classical western texts that the Honors Program has become outdated. Had I realized I was going to be deprived of so many important perspectives in the classroom, and had I realized that I was going to personally feel so alienated, I never would have joined the Honors Program. The Honors Program is in desperate need of an overhaul if it is going to stay relevant in today’s academic community and serve the needs of this school.

Sincerely,

Jana Cary-Alvarez
By: Faith Matthews
This photo was taken during my internship in Olympia, WA at the State Capitol. I worked as a photography intern for the House and Senate and got to take a lot of cool and interesting shots. This one is my favorite because it taught me the most about being a photographer.

It was during my first days and the first committee meeting that I’d been to. I was sitting about five feet away, off to the right, from the stand where she was testifying and the whole situation was extremely awkward for a number of reasons. First off, I wasn’t comfortable taking portraits. At the time they still felt like an invasion of privacy, especially during this situation where the woman was opening herself up and was vulnerable. She was there to advocate for supporting TANF, Washington state’s welfare program, and was telling her story about not being able to work because of long lasting physical pain and having trouble supporting her son as a single mother on welfare. During her story the room was silent, every movement was noticed and the space was emotionally charged. In that kind of atmosphere it would have been easy to sit back, listen and not disturb anyone, but I was feeling the itch. That itch that was urging me to take the shot. It’s hard to explain why, but there are certain moments that make me want to take a picture. Moments that for some reason I feel need to be captured. Adrenaline kicked in and despite the tears and crowded room I took her picture. Three quick shots and I don’t think I lifted my camera anymore after that.

Afterward I told my boss about the awkwardness of the moment, wondering whether or not it was too much, a moment that I intruded on and he said it was a shot that needed to be taken because it will help tell her story. This photo, that committee meeting, and this woman taught me one of the more important things about photography and being a photographer. Taking portraits allows you to delve into the beauty and magnificent range of emotions that can be felt and seen in humanity and once there you’ll find something that will keep you. Some say that photographs can’t convey the truth. That they’re too influenced by the photographer’s gaze or the subject’s projections distort the image, that they control what you see because they’ll project what they want you to see. I don’t know, but I believe that we’ll all see something different. I saw one thing while looking through the lens. You’ll probably see another thing looking at the image. My hope is that what they felt will be conveyed through the image and speak as much truth as it can.

Here’s a selection of some of the other portraits I took during session.
As it addresses questions of diversity, the university chronically bumps into several problems concerning power, structure and identity. I’d like to discuss some of them.

I’m not going to define “diversity” because I think, locally, we all know what it means, whether each of us supports it or not.

Before I proceed, please know my observations aren’t intended as critiques of any individuals, offices, groups, departments, or programs on campus. Nor do I intend to denigrate or ignore real achievements in diversity here. I’m aware of progress—made and applaud it. So if you read on and feel the urge to say, “But what about [this program, that initiative, or this statistic]?!”—recall that I’m probably aware of what you want to point out and that I may have participated in this or that initiative.

1. Problems of Power and Structure

Power, authority, agency: regarding diversity at UPS, who has these?

The Board of Trustees has the ultimate power. For example, if it wanted to increase the percentage of students and/or faculty of color by X% before year Y, it could demand as much and hold people accountable. If the reaction were “this goal is too specific and too hard,” the Board could say, “Get ‘er done.” If you think this can’t be true, recall that the Board once sold a law school, just like that. And no, my intent isn’t to bring up a touchy subject, just a vivid example. In this case, what’s past is past.

The president, academic dean/V.P., the V.P. of admission, the Dean of Diversity and the deans of professional schools (no matter who serves in these posts) have some authority and agency, but without a sharp message from the Board, they have little institutional reason to act forcefully. They do have negative-power. That is, if a V.P. of admission isn’t especially interested in increasing diversity, he or she doesn’t have to do so, as far as I can tell. The deans of the professional school have no pressure on them to diversify.

Remember: I’m talking about institutional structure here, not about anybody who happens to hold a post now or who has held it. For me, it’s all about the structure and the incentive—or lack thereof—built into the structure.

The faculty—as a whole, by department and program, and individually—has negative power, too. Because of the Faculty Code, the By Laws, and academic custom, it can in effect say “No” to diversity, and it often does so. It controls the curriculum, and although a president or a dean may nix a faculty-appointment (a hiring) or position, this rarely happens. The faculty controls hiring to a large extent.
Depending upon whom is counted (tenure-line v. visiting faculty, etc.), the faculty is somewhere between 80% and 90% White. Quibble all you want; it’s still an overwhelmingly White faculty, and this fact shapes students’ and colleagues’ experiences here. Half the departments/programs are all White. Out of 250+ members of the faculty, two tenure-line professors are Black; two more are not tenure-line. More or less, the same is true for other ethnic groups.

There is no formal, consequential incentive or impetus inducing departments and programs to diversify. No carrot, no stick.

Does all of this mean that the faculty, by and large, opposes diversity or is racist? No. Of course not. However, if certain colleagues or departments/programs oppose diversity (for whatever reason they may give or not give), and if others favor diversification but don’t know how to achieve it, they can maintain the status quo indefinitely, without a second thought. The inertia of negative power is on their side.

Consequently, and for example, one still occasionally hears the ancient, willfully obtuse point of view, “We’re not interested in affirmative action; we’re interested only in quality.” Such a falsely dichotomized view, and others like it, may be uttered confidently and cheerfully on campus, and be greeted with approval—in 2014. It’s a remark straight out of 1973. There’s no use pretending this isn’t where we are at this stage. It is what it is.

True, enriching hiring pools, knowing how to behave when candidates of color visit, and hiring & supporting colleagues of color aren’t easy. But these things aren’t as hard as all that, and such difficulty isn’t the main problem at UPS. For, structurally, the negative power allows faculty to remain oblivious, passive, passive aggressive, uninformed, and actively resistant if it so chooses. It doesn’t have to try. Such power also comes with White Privilege, but that’s another topic.

The faculty has no power to influence the diversity of the student body. I know this fact intimately. Certain members of the faculty may cause a stir, but a stir is easily thwarted, ignored, patronized, handled, punished, and/or waited-out.

The students have the power to cause a stir, and many have done so, courageously, over the years. But as noted, a stir is easily managed, ignored, and/or waited-out. So students have little leverage. Besides, their job is to study and have a life, not to make the university do what needs to be done.

The alumni have the negative power to withhold money. They also have the power to give money to scholarships that support diversity. That’s about the extent of the agency. In addition, what incentive does the majority of the alumni have to call aggressively for diversity? None that I can see—from their point of view, at least.

The Dean of Diversity post has some agency to inform and advocate but no power over the faculty. I don’t know what the structural relationship is between this dean and the V.P. for Enrollment.
Where do these structural problems leave us with regard to diversity? In a word, *stuck.* Look at the university's statement on diversity. It sounds noble, but it's toothless. I'm glad it's there, but it merely decorates the structure. Look at the statistics. Consider the experiences of students and faculty of color. Consider that the diversity statement asserts that the university only *aspire* (rather than *act*) “to increase the diversity of all parts of our University community through commitment to diversity in our recruitment and retention efforts”—2014.

2. Identity

To state the obvious, liberal arts colleges have thus far been a White affair. The reasons for this are multiple, and you can summon them as easily as I. True, there are historically Black liberal arts colleges (to take one potential counter-example), but these were designed after Reconstruction and during Jim Crow day, mainly, and Northern White philanthropists who supported these colleges knew they were supporting a “separate but equal” institution.

UPS has been and is a predominantly White college, obviously—not just statistically but in terms of identity, curriculum, campus cultural assumptions, public relations, and so on. Much of this identity is taken for granted—unless you happen not to be White or are White but have some reason to examine the identity consciously.

Can a college change its fundamental identity? If so, how? The old joke: *with great difficulty,* partly because if one suggests that the college *is* White in important, palpable ways, many people on campus will get angry or defensive, and others will think and possibly even assert, “That is how it should be; we like it the way it is.”

Now, however, the Board of Trustees has formed a committee to look at admission and enrollment, including diversity. Why? I think the main reason is that the pool of prospective students the university has always relied on—middle-class and wealthy White high school graduates—is shrinking. Therefore, why wouldn’t the Trustees address the problem, or at least talk about it? It is now in their fiduciary interest to do so. (As far as I know, there is no such committee with regard to diversifying the faculty.)

But is it too late? I don’t know. If it’s not too late, does the university know how to diversify? I don’t know. The Board, however, is composed of people highly successful in their professions, so we have cause to be hopeful.

3. Aspiring

Since the late 1970s, the university has defined part of its mission as aspiring to become a nationally recognized liberal arts college. In other words, it has aspired to become exclusive, in the sense of being “special” or “distinctive.”

One problem with this mission is that it leaves the college in a perpetual state of wanting to be something else. Another problem is that, by aspiring to become exclusive in one way, a
college can also become exclusive with regard to diversity. More than once, more than 20 times, I have listened to colleagues explain how diversity runs counter to a “quality” student body. Again with the false dichotomy!

Moreover, colleges like UPS have always practiced “affirmative action” of a kind when they take pains to admit relatives of alumni, students with other kinds of connections, and students whose families have great wealth. So the question really isn’t about inclusion or acting affirmatively; it’s about whom to include when you act. Again, this is a structural matter: it has been in the financial interests of the colleges to act affirmatively with regard to certain groups of White students.

Now, as noted, the university is faced with the task of still aspiring to be exclusive while aspiring to be inclusive. Can it do both? I don’t know. Can it examine some potentially discomfiting baggage that has come along with aspiring to be exclusive? Maybe.

4. “Aspiring” and Tacoma

When the university, rather abruptly, decided to change its identity in the late 1970s, it inevitably changed its relationship to Tacoma. Here I remind readers of my second paragraph. I know about the civic-engagement initiative, I know UPS is a big employer, I know that President Thomas is popular, and I know how much faculty, staff, and students volunteer; and so on.

Nonetheless, much of Tacoma, and most people involved in some capacity with diversity in Tacoma, view UPS as projecting a personality that is “above” Tacoma. They get the feeling we think we’re too good for Tacoma. They believe we think that PLU is “the Tacoma college” and that we are the “national” college.

You can rush to defend the university or one of its initiatives all you want, but the perception is there, and as painful as it is to admit, we have earned the reputation. Since the late 1970s, the university has been determined to imitate exclusive colleges in New England, and its being situated in Tacoma doesn’t fit that profile, protests to the contrary notwithstanding.

Now the university has decided to establish a program whereby cohorts of students of color are recruited and retained, with full-ride scholarships (one hopes). There is a program called Act Six in Tacoma that already works with several liberal arts colleges in the region on such a cohort program. It is highly successful. But the university will probably work with a more nationally recognized program (POSSE) that, not coincidentally, works with many liberal arts colleges in New England. In this instance, the tension between “aspiring” and “Tacoma” will be dramatized vividly, and Act Six probably doesn’t stand a chance.

The university will, I presume, “consider” working with Act Six, but that will be the extent of the interest. If the university works with POSSE, will that be the end of the world? Of course not. Things will no doubt turn out well. Nonetheless, people at UPS who have lived in Tacoma a long time and who have worked on diversity will feel the sting and see the pattern. They will see a magnificent “both/and” opportunity lost: the opportunity both to pursue
diversity aggressively, with proper funding, and to change our personality enough cheerfully to work with Tacoma.

5. Conclusion

Can the university address the issues related to power and structure? Probably. Will it do so? Probably not. I don’t mean to sound pessimistic or cynical. I’m just being realistic—for once. What incentive is there to change, from the perspective of the people who can insist on change and from that of the people who don’t want change?

Can the university continue to maintain its “aspire-to” personality but adapt it to diversity and, at long last, to Tacoma? Maybe. Will it do so? This is a tough call. Maybe it will.

Will the predominantly White faculty relinquish negative power with regard to hiring? Here and there, maybe. Every so often. Otherwise, I think one needs to think in terms of decades, not years. I just don’t see the interest, the will, the imagination, the energy, or—from the majority of the faculty’s point of view—the incentive. (No carrot, no stick.) It’s the old story. If the faculty doesn’t have to change, it won’t change. And if the faculty won’t change, retaining students and faculty of color may be difficult.

To those with more hope about these questions than I, I say “thank you.” Look me up and tell me why you have more hope. Be specific. I’ll buy the coffee.
Why?
By: Deron Coffie

Why does my hair need to be touched?

Why am I cute for a black guy?

Why do they keep asking if I’m on the basketball team?

Why is rap the only music I listen to?

Why am I not black on the inside—

Yet the voice of all black people?
This piece was inspired by my childhood, when I grew up hoping to play ball and change the world like Jackie Robinson. I know that I was not unlike many other young boys, aspiring to be great like Jackie was. Here, the boy, wearing Jackie Robinson’s number (42) looks out and sees only a bright future ahead.
There have been many times in my life where I have introduced myself by a fake name out of fear for my own safety. The reaction people have to hearing my name, which is Hebrew, has varied greatly on where I happen to be. My name is Lev Nachman, and this is how I have lived with anti-Semitism.

When people look at me, I am generally perceived as a white cisgender male. I do not deny the unearned advantage this has given me. But there is a large part of me that is invisible until I reveal it: I am Jewish. Even within Judaism, being a cisgender male is a large privilege. But Judaism in and of itself is a very complicated thing. Being Jewish is a race, a culture, a religion, and a lifestyle. To be clear, being Jewish is not merely a religious statement. I myself am atheist, yet being Jewish is still very much a part of my identity. It is an identity that I have spent my entire life struggling with. This is because Jewish people are and have always been an oppressed minority. Jewish oppression is different from many other minorities, because Jews have been assimilated into cultures all around the world. However, I feel most of campus today and society in general hardly see us as oppressed. Quite oppositely, many on campus mistakenly synthesize ‘Jewish’ with ‘privilege.’ This is an assumption that needs to change. Rather, people need to understand and recognize the difficult complexities that come with having a Jewish identity.

I understand the idea of how Jews being a privileged people came to be. Stereotypes of wealth and world domination aside, there are a significant number of Jews in higher education, businesses, and government than many other minorities. In her article, “How Jews Became White,” Karen Brodkin Sacks discussed how Jewish men, because of the post WWII GI Bill, were able to get educated and employed due to affirmative action. Jews were one of the first minorities able to get access to the GI Bill, giving them a large advantage in education and business. Over time, some American Jews have been able to gain from these opportunities. However, this by no means ended Jewish discrimination in America. According to the FBI’s 2012 Hate Crime Statistics report, 62% of religious hate crimes were victims of an offender’s anti-Jewish bias. Also, to put into perspective how many of us are even still around, Jews make up less than .2% of the world’s population.

First, let me dispel the false notions most have about what it is like to be Jewish. Most go straight to the ‘rich and spoiled’ stereotype. Since I am Jewish, I must have come from a rich family and grew up in a rich neighborhood with rich friends and have never faced a struggle in my life. In reality, growing up as a Jew was actually very difficult. I have been physically assaulted because I am Jewish. I was harassed on a daily basis for my culture, often being shamed or ridiculed in public. I’ve had my things vandalized with swastikas. I’ve had to introduce myself by a different name to people because I felt the need to hide the fact that I am Jewish (again, because my name is Hebrew). I had to laugh at holocaust jokes to make friends. I had to be ok with being called ‘Jew’ or ‘kyke.’ I also grew up with middle class divorced parents. So no, it was not the pampered, exotic lifestyle that people seem to think it is.

I do not write about hardships I’ve faced to fish for sympathy. To be honest, I am not unique in this struggle. You could replace ‘Jewish’ with many different minority groups and you could potentially have a fairly similar story of many who grew up in an oppressive environment. However, for a campus that claims to have an open safe space, I have never felt comfortable or safe discussing my struggles. To put it bluntly, I do not feel like my struggle as a Jewish student is welcomed in discussions about oppression. Such a concept to most here is as outdated as the 1940’s, so most are quick to ignore it. I am scared that my experiences will be undervalued and dismissed. I went from
living in a place where I was in fear of people knowing I was Jewish, to living in a place where it seems like no one really cares whether or not someone is Jewish. If anything, being Jewish on this campus is a fad. Many see it as a piece of social capital, like being Jewish makes you ‘cool’ or increases your social status. Because of this, most cannot conceive the idea that there could possibly be negative aspects to being Jewish. In an actual conversation with a friend, I was told “You’re so lucky to be a Jew. I mean really, I should have been a Jew. I’ve got the looks, the style, I just feel like a Jew sometimes, ya know?” (Side note, do not refer to me as ‘a Jew.’ It is offensive.)

These microaggressions hurt me on a daily basis. A common one that I often have to deal with is Holocaust jokes. Even at UPS I have to defend myself as to why I am against Holocaust jokes, as if I need to have a socially acceptable reason. I am against them, not just because I have relatives who died in the Holocaust, but because growing up those kind of oppressive jokes were used against me to ridicule and silence me. It is not just the general student body. Those at UPS who fight for social justice, the ones who are supposed to be the most willing to listen, have also been the ones to shoot me down when I have tried to open up. As a white cisgender straight male who is also an ally to many groups on campus, I understand the importance of letting others speak before me. However, when I had hoped for a turn to speak myself about my own experiences, I have been told that given my social positioning, I could not possibly know what it is like to be oppressed. While I understand why many have this assumption, as a social justice advocate myself, it is frustrating never being given an opportunity to speak.

I must also acknowledge that much of the problem of people not caring about Jews is self-inflicted by UPS’s own Jewish community. Jewish students are heavily disconnected from each other, so there is very little sense of kinsmanship between Jews here. A reason for this could be the heavy divide between the different types (cultural, religious, etc.) of Jewish students on campus. Because of this, we are not able to organize or come together to create the goal of better representation. For better or worse, there are also Jewish students here who did come from privileged Jewish communities. Some of these students often make it difficult for Jews like me to have a Jewish identity at UPS. In my opinion, this is because of the lack of common ground we share. I have faced serious anti-Semitism in the past, while many Jews on campus have not. This has also been a large deterrent for me from opening up to other Jews here, because many of us also seem to perceive Jewish oppression to be a thing of the past. I have also noticed many Jewish students are also extremely lenient towards essentializing and mockery of our Jewish culture. I feel we allow ourselves to be traded around in social circles as ‘that Jew friend’ or we allow our friends to tell Holocaust jokes at our expense. As a community, I think we need to do a better job of coming together and realizing that we cannot allow internalized oppression to take over our Jewish identities.

I do not want this to be taken as me saying Jewish struggles are more important than other minority’s struggles. Jews are not the only minority group on campus whose struggles are not taken seriously. While many organizations on campus work incredibly hard to improve representation, there is still a strong lack of voices of many minority communities on campus. I am also not saying certain voices need to be quieter, because if anything those advocating for equality can and should be louder. What I am saying is that in our fight for representation, we should try better to be more inclusive of whom we are standing up for.
I feel guilt.
Profound guilt sprints through my bloodstream, altering my moods, affecting my every decision, my every thought.
I know I am not supposed to feel guilty.
Guilt is a wasted emotion, my mother always says.
But how can I not?
How can I look at that which I possess, that which I have become, that which I have been granted, not earned, and not wonder why I have it, but my neighbor does not.
While he struggled to pay rent, to feed his mom and his brother, to stay alive in the War Zone, I fell asleep safely and soundly in my warm, middle class life.
My whiteness is not invisible
The layer of white skin I possess does not make me fit in, it has always made me stand out.
His blackness is not invisible
The pigment of darkness he possesses takes away his ability to be everything that I am
His socioeconomic class deems him a criminal, when all he has ever wanted to do is read Read.
Something I have loathed, hated, despised
That is all he has ever wanted
Yet he spends his life in and out of jail, always in danger, simply because he was born into a life he did not ask for
I did not ask for this life
For this skin color, for this privilege
But I have it
And it means I will never truly understand
But it doesn’t mean I can’t be compassionate, it doesn’t mean I have to spend my life behind a picket fence, guarding me from reality, making me the “other” in my city, making me a part of a system that systematically enslaves and discriminates….still.
After 150 years, our world is not color-blind. It is still black versus white.
So what now?
How do I fix it?
Do I blend in to my whiteness, accepting my new life amongst my “people” in my secluded, isolated, privileged college campus, where I am not forced to think of race every day?
Should I be okay with the fact that I am undeniably privileged simply because of the color of my skin?
Or should I feel guilty that many of the things I possess, perhaps even my college education, are products of my whiteness?
The answer is neither
Complacency is unproductive and guilt is a wasted emotion
Instead, I will use my privilege. Grab the abstract concept of my whiteness and use it for my advantage.
I will fight, tirelessly, so that someday, maybe many days in the future, my race will be inconsequential
I will fight so that our prisons are not filled with black and brown Americans who have been put there for un-just reasons.
I will fight so that our justice system is actually that...JUST.
I will fight so that I am never called a “white girl” or a “snowbunny,” so that my race does not define me, nor does it even contribute to my being.
I will fight so that privilege is an idea of a past and race is truly an obsolete construct with no more value.
I am white, but I am conscious.
I am white, but I will never allow that privilege to be wasted.
Concerning Diversity in American Theatre
By: Jenna Gerdsen

90 percent of professional production—stock, to avant-garde, to Broadway—cast with all Caucasians*. 2013 and we can’t see Middle Easterns in Aladdin? White houses, White stories, White faces, White voices—masking and suffocating the screaming color in the world. Miss Saigon still gets a Tony for letting a man put on a face he doesn’t own? They’re all cowards—Cowards who can’t face “complexity” or “complication.” We sit silently in an unwelcoming house watching the Chekhov, Shakespeare, and T. Williams, over and over again. It’s the only story told. That’s all you know. That’s all you want to know. That’s all you see. That’s all you want to see. That’s all you want anybody to see and know. Stow away that overplayed suburb. Show us the damn the sidewalk and the subway. Listen to us, the ones you’ve sidelined and marginalized. We’re coming out of your White shadows. We’re gonna tell a different story. A story where the token Black guy is the main character. Where there is no token anybody. The story that makes you feel guilty about your history. A story about Japanese internment camps. A story about Trayvon Martin. A story about someone other than you. A story that is socially conscious. One that makes you look past your front door. One that addresses face and identity and race and inequity. The one you’ve chosen to silence. The one you’ve been afraid of. Face your fears and face us. Refusing to see us is your only solution? Painting over our color, our history, our voices, our faces. Denying an Asian actor the role he is meant to play. Denying Middle Eastern actors the roles they are meant to play. We’ll teach you about the wrong you’ve done, and the right you can do. You’ll listen to the voices you’ve muted and the faces you wear as a masks. Color those White houses, end this tradition of oppression. It starts with the inside. Open your houses to us. Open your mind. Abandon your generation of ignorance and exclusion. Meet us in the here and now. A time and place that yearns for and demands equality and respect. Let us sit at your table. Let us converse. Let us live together. Let us make this house, a home.

*Disney's Aladdin on Broadway: http://artsincolor.com/2013/10/casting-aladdin-middle-eastern-actors/
I am a lower-middle class, African American woman living in the United States of America. Society is constantly telling me I am one of the most disadvantaged minority groups, with so many aspects working against me. “Gender, race and class are themselves socially constructed” (RCG, 8) in order to maintain a hegemonic rule for the dominant group (GRC, 1-5): upper-middle class, white males. I have been told multiple times about the “social relations between domination and subordination” (GRC, 9). I have been lectured about the inequality among groups, and how some groups are more privileged than others. I see these inequalities daily within all of these groups on a larger scale, particularly in extreme instances regarding police beatings and lawsuits fighting for justice. Yet, I cannot recall a single time where I personally have been singled out and victimized for any of my demographic traits.

I remember when I first learned about my financial circumstances. I was always aware of the fact that my friends had better toys than I did or that their houses had back yards with swimming pools while I lived in a much smaller townhouse. But, other than those subtle differences, I had never been aware of class situations. When I finally did realize that my single parent family was inherently different from my friends, the younger me sobbed in my mom’s arms asking “Are we poor?” Despite my financial hardships growing up (and even today), I still have managed to garner the same opportunities as many of my peers.

I also have a difficult time recalling instances where I was discriminated against based on my skin color. I remember being teased occasionally for my hair in elementary school, but none of the other black kids experienced this teasing (to my knowledge, anyways). As a result of this teasing, I did get my hair permed all throughout high school. It took me a long time to come to terms with my natural hair, but I think that most black women face this struggle in some way or another. I never considered myself to be oppressed during this process.

As a woman, I have never felt personally discriminated against. I went to a private, all-girls’ school that preached female empowerment. I have never experienced being paid less than a male counterpart. I have never been denied the opportunity to vote. I had all the rights that my grandmother fought for and did not consider the idea of being oppressed based upon gender.

But that’s how oppression works now, isn’t it? It’s not the blatant oppression that stares you right in the face, flaunting itself for everyone to see. No. Oppression rears its ugly head in a completely different manner these days. It hides in the shadows and wears a mask of deceit, tricking us all into thinking that it has disappeared indefinitely. The present is better than the past, but that does not mean oppression does not exist anymore. As I have matured, I’ve come to see the subtle, yet systematic oppression that I had not fully comprehended before— this is the oppression that I face on a day-to-day basis.

As someone with lower economic standing, people think of me as a charity case. At an all girls’ school, where most of the girls got BMWs as presents on their 16th birthdays, I was completely ostracized based upon my class. Not only did I clearly have less money than my peers, but also this apparent lack of wealth made my opinions and those of my mother not as
important as everyone else’s. My mom stressed increasing diversity at the school and she was constantly belittled for her efforts. People told her that she was being “stupid” or “unreasonable.” Since we were not paying the full amount of tuition, we were supposed to just be happy that I was accepted to go to school there and not try to influence the environment in any other manner than my basic presence.

As an African American, I have been ambushed by depictions of black women’s hair in the media. I hardly ever see an African American woman with her natural hairstyle, and so many advertisements in between shows concern “eliminating frizz” or straightening hair. Although it is never explicitly stated, it is clear that curly hair equals unacceptable and wavy/straight hair should be strived for. This form of inferential racism or, “apparently naturalized representations” (GRC, 83) concerning race (in this instance, hair textures associated with racial groups) had me questioning whether or not it was appropriate to wear my hair naturally. The notion that curly hair is bad has influenced my life more than I ever thought. I did not think twice about perming my hair a few years ago in order to make it a “good curl” i.e. less kinky. I realize now that I caved to the idea of white beauty. It took me years to come to terms with my own natural hair and even now I sometimes struggle with it, particularly when I see those ads on TV for certain hair straightening products or black women with straight hair in movies.

I realize that I also succumbed to the male-identified (RCG, 153) society that Johnson describes in Race, Class and Gender. Our morals are very much based on masculinity and men. For instance, whenever I buy clothes, I think to myself, “Is this cute? Or slutty?” I thought it was normal, seeing that other women do it as well. These thoughts are strictly based on the way that men will perceive women. Women such as myself hope to avoid the grotesque objectification that occurs on a day-to-day basis that tells women that we are not worth more than objects to be leered at. The objectification that tells us that we are not worthy of respect or consideration. Yet, though we do not want to be labeled a “slut,” we still want to be stylish or appealing. This is not a healthy practice. Why should women be forced to consider what they wear, based on how men will perceive them?

I did not realize the oppression I faced because it had taken on such a subtle form. I unintentionally accepted and agreed to it. I willingly allowed myself to be oppressed. It is so engrained in my everyday lifestyle that for the longest time I assumed it was normal and how everyone is treated and acts. Now I see that this is not the case. Just because this is my lived experience and I am in solidarity with a few others, does not mean that everyone faces these same daily hardships and internal struggles. Yet, I’ve come to realize that I struggle in so many other ways. I fell into a state of internalized oppression, where “a member of the stereotyped group may internalize the stereotypical categories about his or her own group to some degree” (RCG, 125). The oppression I face is different from what my mother faced; my grandmother faced. My opportunities have not been affected by my financial status; I have never been served last at Denny’s; I’ve never had to fight for the right to vote. The oppression I face spurs internal conflict and is not readily apparent.

Works Cited
MY JOURNEY by: Imari Romeo

(I wrote this not only as a reflective writing piece, but also to encourage students to: ask questions; step outside their comfort zone; further learn about the Tacoma community beyond campus; have conversations pertaining to community issues with roommates, floor mates, classmates, advisors, coaches, teachers; and to participate or join a club that may broaden one’s knowledge on social justice issues.)

I was born into a world of injustice; not knowing it would affect me. ME. My life. I didn’t really understand it when I was younger. Justice? What’s that? That word was a foreigner far outside my mind. Now, as a young, female adult, and person of color, I quickly learned that term. Justice encompasses an umbrella of definitions, but to me it simply means equity and fairness for all. I want everyone to have freedom and equal opportunities to pursue their “life of happiness.” I believe a proper education should not be determined by one’s zip code. I believe that the rise of homeless men, women, and children should not occur in such a prominent, wealthy, and resourceful planet. I believe that the increase of mass incarceration (within the U.S.) should not be seen as a profit. I believe in laws such as Stop and Frisk should not exist. I believe that in all these social issues us, as humans, a nation, can overcome these challenges and learn from each other. I believe if we all put efforts towards social justice we will start to become a community in which all are treated equally. I didn’t understand these issues when I was younger. I asked questions to people who did not have answers. It seems almost as if I asked about information that is unexplainable. Responses that I received never satisfied me. I knew there were truthful answers to my questions. It’s just that people do not want to discuss what is wrong because my questions create discomfort. Everything that I believe in became bliss. I remember growing up my mom would hush me when I called out people on their wrongful actions. Now, that I am older, I realize her maternal instinct was to protect me. I was denied my right to knowledge because people are uncomfortable discussing these topics and that there is always a time and a place. I disagree. I decided to investigate what I believe in on my own. I started to become inquisitive like Nancy Drew and Curious George. I knew I was beginning my journey. Lao-Tzu states, “A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.” I began my very first steps within my home, high school, and church community. I volunteered at soup kitchens, and participated in awareness walks. I learned about issues that were not necessarily right in front of me. I was very eager to discuss my knowledge with my family and peers. I would always discuss topics no one else initiated in conversations in classrooms and at home. My life long journey has led me on experiential paths to accomplish my goal to make a difference and create justice for all; regardless of one’s race, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion (and many more definitions that may define an individual). I want to explore several outlets to help me pursue a dream of making changes to our oppressive systems, with the guidance and support of my peers, family and mentors. I want to continue my journey of justice in everything that I do. As an advocate of social justice, I am connected to various youth leaders, community organizations, and resources. This is only the beginning of my thousand mile journey!
With Nelson Mandela’s recent passing, I wanted to do a portrait to commemorate the great leader. Mandela once said, "I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it. The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear." We all have obstacles holding us back in life, but if we stand up for what we are passionate about, we have the power to better ourselves and inspire those around us.
“Decades before radical feminists in the women’s movement urged rape survivors to ‘speak out,’ African-American women’s public protests galvanized local, national, and even international outrage and sparked larger campaigns for racial justice and human dignity” (McGuire xx).

“Walking in Pride and Dignity”
Why Danielle McGuire’s “New History” of the Civil Rights Movement Matters
By: Carol Prince

(Author’s Note: I am finishing writing this piece as I return from the keynote speaker of “Take Back the Night” week, which featured a speak out loud section. I witnessed people in this community testify about their experiences with sexual violence with incredible bravery. Testimony, in this case, is a form of resistance to domination. However, I also observe how the movement to combat sexual violence has involved the whitewashing of “victimhood.” (McGuire) This following piece is pretty “academic,” but I write it mindful, and perpetually in awe of, the women who in some cases risked their lives to testify about the sexual, and racial, violence they survived. I owe my ability to reflect on this history to the women who collected testimonies and wrote them down in the face of danger; the women who have been forgotten in historical memory.)

Studying history means sometimes reading material that completely shatters and reshapes the way I have always understood a particular moment. Over the course of this semester, I have been reading the monograph, At the Dark End of the Street: Black Women, Rape, and Resistance--a New History of the Civil Rights Movement from Rosa Parks to the Rise of Black Power, written by Danielle L. McGuire. This book, I feel, is a transformative history because it unveils truths that have not yet been woven into American popular memory.

History and memory interact through a symbiotic yet precarious relationship. In the introduction to their volume, The Civil Rights Movement in American Memory, Leigh Raiford and Renee Romano discuss what they call “The Struggle Over Memory.” Memory is a central component in collecting academic histories, but also shapes the way “we” as non-historians remember the past.

Many actors have an interest in shaping the memory of the Civil Rights Movement. At the same time, there exists “a consensus memory,” a “dominant narrative of the movement's goals, practices, victories, and, of course, its most lasting legacies” (Raiford and Romano xiv). Consequently, this dominant narrative embeds one version of the past into our collective consciousness. But what kind of movement does this “consensus” construct? Whose struggle does it exclude? As these two authors ask, “What vision of the present does it help legitimate, valorize, or condemn?” (Raiford xv).

McGuire’s At the Dark End of the Street chips away at the dominant memory of the Civil Rights Movement, which has been characterized “as a struggle between black and white men” (McGuire xxx). She reframes this history through adopting the lens of gender and sexual violence. I cannot adequately dissect McGuire’s scholarship in the limited space here. However, the central tenant of her work is that especially between the years 1940 and 1975,
sexual violence and interracial rape “became the crucial battleground upon which African Americans sought to destroy white supremacy” (McGuire xx). This claim not only introduces a new way to conceptualize liberation during this time period, but also unearths and incorporates testimony previously omitted from scholarship on the Black Freedom Struggle.

As McGuire points out, previous scholarship has not focused on sexual violence as a window into the impetus the Civil Rights Movement. Much scholarship focused on the lynching of black men and its connection to anxieties about the intersections of the black male and white female bodies. For example, the murder of Emmett Till and the media coverage that followed is recognized as one act of racial terrorism that catalyzed the movement. However, the reality remains that the rape of black women by white men was a weapon of racial terrorism in this country that catalyzed protest in black communities. McGuire focuses on this silenced reality as the fulcrum of her scholarship with each of her chapters focusing on a different episode of the Civil Rights Movement. She delves into how women, specifically women affected by the pervasive threat of sexual violence, propelled the movements we so often attribute to powerful men.

I think the most salient moment McGuire examines is the characterization of Rosa Parks during the Montgomery Bus Boycott. I do not remember the first time I encountered the ubiquitous Rosa Parks narrative, but I was very young. I remember learning that that she was an elderly woman who refused to give up her seat to a white person on a bus because she was “tired.” Martin Luther King would then sweep in to organize the boycott, creating one of the most seminal moments in early Civil Rights History.

I do not write this to denigrate the work of Martin Luther King. However, as McGuire points out, this narrative of Rosa Parks as well as the Montgomery Bus Boycott is not only oversimplified, but also grossly mischaracterizes who Rosa Parks was. How did this narrative emerge and become so ingrained in our historical memory? McGuire explains this phenomenon through something called “the politics of respectability.”

McGuire undermines and dismantles the consensus narrative. She points out that Rosa Parks was fierce antirape activist “long before she became the patron saint of the bus boycott” (McGuire xvii). During the 1940s, Parks collected the testimonies of women who had been brutally raped by white men. She travelled to some of the most dangerous portions of the Deep South to document these stories as a NAACP investigator. Rosa Parks was a central actor in a movement, just not the movement we have assigned her.

There were women before Rosa Parks, such as Claudette Colvin who was the first person arrested for resisting bus segregation. Because she was pregnant and unmarried, NAACP leaders worried about her ability to adhere to social norms about womanhood during the era. Rosa Parks, conversely, represented and encapsulated the ideals of NAACP leaders. As McGuire notes, “Her conservative, Puritan-like clothing--and her memory of exactly what she wore forty years later--indicated a keen understanding of the importance of the politics of respectability” (McGuire 102). She notes, “Parks was the perfect woman to rally around....from that moment forward, Rosa Parks’ history as an activist and defiant race woman disappeared from public view. Nixon and others promoted her as a model of the
middle-class ideals of ‘chastity, Godliness, family responsibility, and proper womanly conduct and demeanor’” (McGuire 100). Male leaders in the NAACP and SCLC “turned her into the kind of woman she wasn’t: a quiet victim and solemn symbol” (McGuire 107).

What is at stake in how the narrative of the Montgomery Bus Boycott is upheld in American popular memory? How does the way we privilege certain narratives above others or the way we honor the Civil Rights Movement do even more violence onto those who are not remembered in its legacy? This history factors into how we process American national identity.

Throughout her work, McGuire includes multiple testimonies of violence and abuse faced by black women at the hands of white men. McGuire could argue her thesis about the role of violence against black women as a central catalyst in the Civil Rights movement by including far fewer examples than she does. Yet, the sheer multitude of these stories makes her work is not only a work of scholarship, but does the political work of introducing these testimonies into popular memory. As I read this history, I owe not only my ability to study and dissect these words to the women who did the political act of resistance through testimony. As a survivor of sexual violence, I owe but also my ability to “speak out,” as “Women’s Liberation” would later call it, to the legacy and bravery of the women in this history who testified before me. Testimony, in this case, is inherently an act of resistance, and how we conceptualize resistance speaks to something that transcends the Civil Rights Movement. It is inherently linked to power, justice, and memory.
Free
By: Nakisha Renée Jones

Free
Like wind blowing through cherry blossom trees
Tossing leaves across the soil of America
as the ground resonates with the memories of our ancestry.

Whose land is it anyway?
Does it belong to the Natives of the 17th century?
Whose country we stole in the creation of democracy
Does their involuntary defeat depict our hypocrisy?
As we murdered and pillaged and laid our flag on everything?
Does it belong to the Africans of the 18th century?
Our lost brothers and sisters sold into captivity?
Chained to the evil of American slavery
Whose labor and anguish refueled the White Man's economy?
Does it belong to the Japanese of the 20th century?
Who boosted our creation of modern technology?
But battleships and warfare made them our enemy
So we caged them like animals and watched their suffering.

Meanwhile our flag waves in the wind
Obscuring our vision as we pledge allegiance again
“One nation, under God, indivisible...
with liberty and justice for all...”
But what about...?

Freedom

becomes an echoing constant
Bouncing against the walls of my mind
Warring against memories of injustice and bondage
Trying to make sense of the state of our history
As we think about civil rights and peace.

We have laid the foundation for systematic oppression.
But only when the oppressed rise up does “civil rights” become terminology
Our forefathers were too busy enjoying their justice and liberty
To think about mentioning equality and equity
They would rather enslave an entire race than rethink their philosophy.
So now we hang our sins out to dry like Jesus at cavalry
Nailing inhumanity to the cross, crowning him with immorality
   Waiting for his death to claim redemption
   But even his resurrection couldn’t stop our sins
   Stop the need for murder of our uncounted citizens.

   Capital punishment had no comparison
   To the deeds we would do to those deemed less than human.

   Our inalienable rights were pledged to those with
   White skin and blue eyes
Meanwhile our black and brown brothers and sisters met their demise
   As the fight for civil rights was met with despise
   Now victimization spreads through generations
   But we don’t hate whites
   We hate what ain’t right
   Like committing genocide against innocent lives
Thousands of souls in the hands of white men rising to Heaven
   Looking for the solace that earth couldn’t provide
   Waiting to see Jesus and leave the pain behind
   Searching for peace against the bonds of inequality
   Chained to the irrational standards of society
Like slavery was a necessary piece of our developing country.

   But evil has no place in the presence of peaceful humanity
   So as I think about the state of American history
I will bless the ground of my ancestors while my soul remains
   Free
   No longer bound to the past but looking to the future before me
   Free
   Forgiving the deeds of oppressors who didn’t know their true enemy
   Free
   Able to stand against any obstacle that rises before me
   Because life is too precious to be muddled by defeat
   And Jesus died so that we all can have the victory
   — regardless of our systematic suppression of peace
   I’m claiming it —
   FREE!
Untitled by: Tyson West

Welcome to the United Snakes
Land of the thief, home of the slave,
bluesmen singing what it’s like to not be free,
A legacy so ingrained in the way that we think
We no longer need chains to be slaves,
Some people got me questionin’,
They be lying through they teeth, hope you slip up off your path,
Where is the love?
We forget about love up in the ghetto
Man ya gotta have love,
But if you only got love for your own race
Then you only leave space to discriminate
Instead of trying ta teach heads,
And us children can’t escape from the pain
‘cause we’re born with poisonous hatred in our veins,

We gotta start making changes,
the ghetto is what we need to get out of, but
Will you practice what you preach
And would you turn the other cheek?
I don’t switch up, I just laugh,
Unaffected by they threats,
"Learn to see me as a brother instead of 2 distant strangers,"
Time will be served but justice can’t be bought,

Father father father help us
We need some guidance from above,
It’s a thin line between love and hate
Is it really real or is it really fake
At this rate people are bound to get irate,
Madness is what you demonstrate
And that’s exactly how anger works and operates.
Maybe you can hear what I’m talking about
But it’s not what you consume it’s what consumes you,
But there’s real people that do real things,
And I’ll be the quick relief to all your stressing
In the middle of your fire I burn to find the light in the darkness,
Everybody don’t have bling but we all have dreams
So stand up now and face the sun
Won’t hide my tail or turn and run
It’s time to do what must be done
And that’s how it’s supposed to be
How can the Devil take a brother if he’s close to me?
Here is the love,
So goodnight, cruel world, I’ll see you in the morning

Song lyrics borrowed from: Uncle Sam Goddamn by Brother Ali, Where is the Love by Black Eyed Peas, The Show Goes On by Lupe Fiasco, The Man by Aloe Blacc, Changes by 2Pac, Power by Kanye West, Ghetto by Theory Hazit, Mr. by the Crest, Bruise brothers by Blue Scholars