

THE VOICE

MAGAZINE

Vol 20 Iss 25 2012-06-29

Counting the Hours

Time for a change

Music of Words

Patchen comes alive

Un-original Sin

Self-plagiarism

Plus:

*Maghreb Voices
From Where I Sit
and much more!*



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

We love to hear from you! Send your questions and
comments to voice@voicemagazine.org, and please
indicate if we may publish your letter.



STUDY SPACE

Maxie van Roye



Hour by Hour

Does it ever seem as though the secrets of life can be narrowed down to a formula? Success is 99 per cent perspiration. Eating right plus getting exercise makes you lose weight. Do this, get that.

It sounds reasonable, right? If you don't put in the time, you can't expect to get results. And yet it's missing something significant, and that omission might affect your productivity at home, work, and school.

At the risk of harping on a truism, quality wins out over quantity every single time.

Recently I came across a fascinating *Harvard Business Review* [piece](#) that applied the quality vs. quantity question to an area that needs it badly: the workplace. As the article notes, the current model of employment presumes that your worth as an employee is determined by your hours; after all, that's what your wage is usually based upon. But the author suggests that this is deeply flawed.

Not to say that your boss doesn't want top-notch work. But inevitably, when managers equate work with time, they lose the soul behind the effort, destroying the creative spark and consequently, productivity: "By focusing on hours worked instead of results produced, they let professionals avoid answering the most critical question: 'Am I currently using my time in the best possible way?'" This makes professional employees, the article claims, learn to "use their time inefficiently."

When we re-enter the educational world from the workforce, it's hard not to carry with us these hardwired concepts, ill-suited as they may be to personal or professional studies. Because just as more hours spent at work don't necessarily equal excellent product, neither do more hours spent studying.

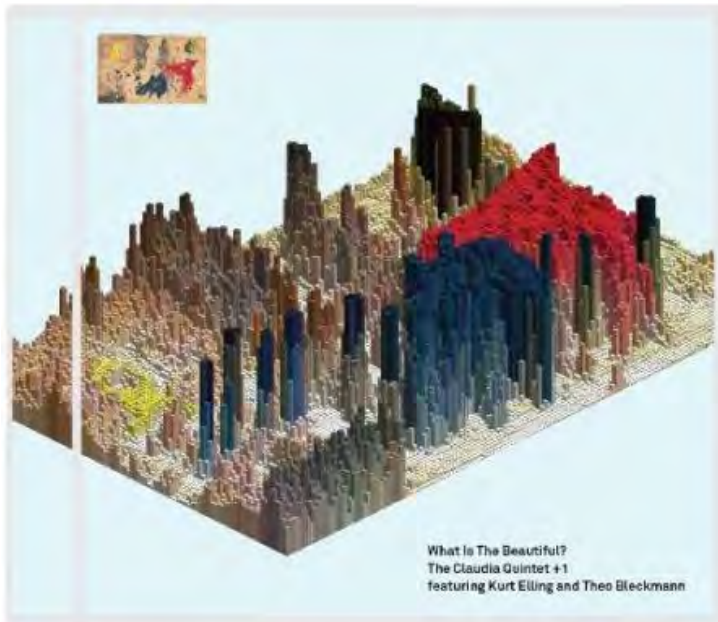
Frequently students follow a strict schedule: two hours to study, then a break. Another hour, another few minutes to relax. This places the focus on hours spent studying, which is good in one way, but it also means that we will never ask ourselves whether we're using those hours well.

We always manage to fill up the time we have, whether it's many hours or just 20 minutes. If we've got all the time in the world to finish a task—or even just half a day—chances are we'll take that time. But if we focus on end product over hours, it's likely that we'll work faster—and better.

Time is precious. Let's use it well.

GREGOR'S BED

Wanda Waterman



Recent Discoveries From the Realm of the Experimental and Avant-Garde

Album: *What Is The Beautiful?* (Cuneiform Records 2011)

Artists: The Claudia Quintet + 1 (John Hollenbeck, drums; Drew Gress, bass; Matt Moran, vibraphone; Ted Reichman, accordion; Chris Speed, clarinet and tenor sax; Matt Mitchell, piano)

The Thoughtful Beatnik's Chamber Jazz and Spoken Word Ensemble

You're in a coffeehouse in L.A. in the late 1950s. It's dark, and there are candles on the rickety

round wooden tables. The place smells of coffee and lemon oil. A poet in black-framed glasses mounts the stage, poem in hand. He's joined by a handful of jazz musicians. They start up, tripping out notes redolent of Coltrane, Coleman, and Davis. Your heart swells with the sweet elation of freedom communicated by the clarinet and drum kit.

The tracks on *What Is The Beautiful?* are extremely evocative of this segue in American cultural history. The brilliant poetry of Kenneth Patchen arrived simultaneously with the beat generation—and now his poetry recalls the era without being beat poetry per se (his spoken word experiments actually inspired beat poetry performances). The music of New York's Claudia Quintet, though nodding to late '50s free jazz, is a new mode of free jazz that carries with it whiffs of the serious avant-garde.

The album was recorded live, so we can aurally witness the symbiosis among the players. There's a startling degree of originality and intuitive responsiveness among the musicians, who are also highly aware of the words spoken and the intonations used by the speakers. But none of it feels studied; the band delivers refreshing summer showers of exquisite tones, coming in slow pulses like waves.

To mark the late Patchen's 100th birthday in 2011, the University of Rochester commissioned the Claudia Quintet, led by percussionist John Hollenbeck, to set some of Patchen's poems to new music.

Performing poetry to musical accompaniment is tricky; it either comes together or it doesn't, and no amount of deliberate preparation can steer a bad project straight or derail a solid one. When I fulfilled one of my bucket list items by assembling a group of jazz musicians for a spoken word event, we were all amazed at how we quickly and easily it came together. We tried to repeat the process the following year with a different set of poems and music, and the whole thing fell flat.

You just can't call it. So if the Claudia Quintet has any ambitions of doing more Patchen in a similar vein, I would urge them to think again, because the odds of putting together an album this phenomenal are not likely repeatable.

Two of the most important male singers in improvised music, Kurt Elling and Theo Bleckmann, lend their subtly exquisite talents to the album. Each singer brings out different aspects of Patchen's art: Theo channels the refined elegance ("Beautiful You Are"), while Kurt portrays the rough and crude realism that refuses to take itself seriously (for example, his great working-class accent on "Job").

Patchen's unusual combination of concrete and metaphysical poetry moves you from space to space, examining and questioning each conceptual locale. In the avant-garde tradition (if we're permitted to embrace such an oxymoron), Kenneth Patchen's poetry is still ahead of the times. So is the music of the Claudia Quintet.

I love how they got their name. A cute, vivacious girl named Claudia approached them after a gig, gushing about how great they were and swearing she was going to come see them everywhere they played. They never saw her again, but from time to time they would claim they had, bolstering their occasionally buffeted egos by pretending that Claudia was still gaga over their music. Claudia was at once the symbol of avant-garde music's limited appeal and the promise that deserved adulation was just around the corner. I can't think of a better person for whom to name an avant-garde jazz band.

"The narrowing line.

Walking on the burning ground.

The ledges of stone.

Owlfish wading near the horizon.

Unrest in the outer districts.

Pause."

from the poem "What Is The Beautiful?" by Kenneth Patchen

Wanda also penned the poems for the artist book *They Tell My Tale to Children Now to Help Them to be Good*, a collection of meditations on fairy tales, illustrated by artist Susan Malmstrom

DID YOU KNOW?

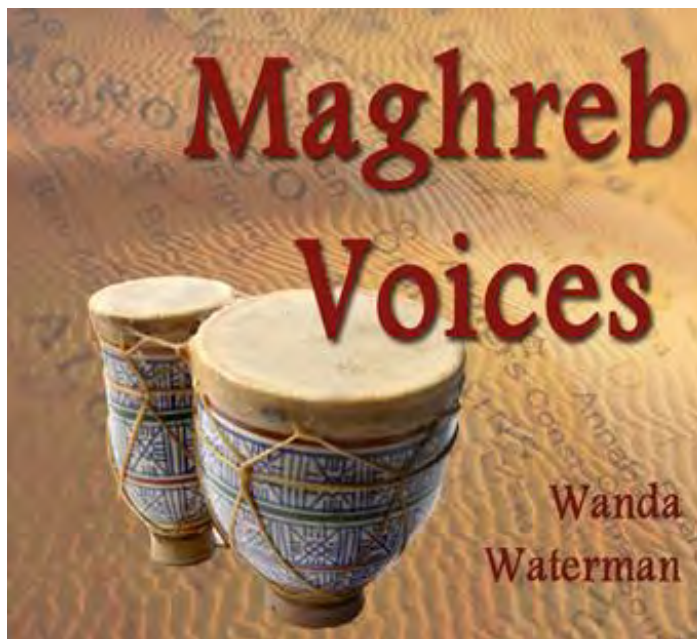


This month, thousands of AU graduates crossed the stage to receive their diplomas during the University's annual Convocation ceremonies in Athabasca, Alberta.

Yet not all graduates, families, and friends were able to attend the ceremonies. If you or a friend missed the event—or you want a preview of what your own graduation will look like someday—you can still catch all the excitement [here](#), as part of AU's live webcast of the Convocation ceremonies.

Coverage includes all three days of events: addresses, speeches, presentation of degrees, and more. Videos can be freely accessed via Adobe Flash or Windows Media Player.

Convocation Online



Alternative Music in Cairo

"The new world is as yet behind the veil of destiny.

In my eyes, however, its dawn has been unveiled."

Allama Muhammad Iqbal

Marching to the Beat of a Different *Derbouka*

Noor Noor broke three drumsticks playing in Tahrir Square during the protests last year. And by "playing," I mean he was motivating other musicians in a marathon of skin-pounding he calls "freedom beats," designed to sustain the enthusiasm of the protestors for as long as possible. He kept right on smiling despite the pain in his hands.

Noor drums in a number of bands in Cairo, including El-Zabalee. I'm amazed at the similarities between this band and my favourite Brazilian group, Conjunto Roque Moreira. For one thing, they both make many of their instruments from recycled materials. For another, they eschew the aping of externally imposed commercial superstars in favour of the music of their own region. They value innovation over imitation, originality over conformity, and freedom over safety.

I'm also amazed at the similarities between the changes in the music economy being made in Egypt and those emerging in Canada; a tremendous amount of cleverness is now being channelled into rejecting the conventional star-maker machinery that rarely succeeds in promoting cultural development. Musicians themselves are coming up with ways in which they and their fellow musicians can make at least a modest living, as opposed to a system in which a chosen few get all the golden stars.

The models are different, based on the exigencies of the moment and the cultural and societal contexts, but the will is there to forge a new world of music. It may be less sensational, but it is more innovative and truer to the real needs of real artists, whose most urgent desire tends to be to continue to do what they love.

What role does the Egyptian Revolution play in all of this?

The musicians' commitment to freedom is nothing new. Although media reports have suggested that the revolution changed the way musicians thought about music and encouraged alternative forms and political subjects, the opposite is true. In fact, alternative forms, a love of freedom, and political lyrics predated the revolution by decades and provided the cultural impetus to launch it and keep it alive.

The difference now is that the audience for such music has expanded greatly as media coverage of alternative bands and performers has become more common and enthusiastic. Those who wish to support homegrown music and creative freedom aren't weirdoes and saboteurs anymore—they're the

trendsetters. There are fewer, if any, repercussions for singing openly about the need for justice and equality or for criticizing the establishment.

The new Cairo music scene showcases local musical traditions that blend in foreign genres. One example is *mahragan* (“festival music”), which is also called *electro-sha’bi*. *Sha’bi* originated in Algeria and developed separate traditions all over North Africa. It’s popular at weddings, with its hard, driving rhythms and ecstatic and loud delivery. This tradition is always in flux, and international elements are constantly being added to it, lending it vibrancy and relevance.

Taqwacore, the name for Muslim punk, originally had a presence all over the world (including North America). Now it’s faded a little into the background, but this tends to happen when societies open up and become more democratic (punk in the US had its heyday during the Reagan years).

*“If I can't dance to it,
it's not my revolution.”*

Emma Goldman

Since 2006 the annual SOS Music Festival, the brainchild of Cairo jazz guitarist Ousso, has been providing free admission to audiences of 15,000 for eight hours of superlative performances by acts carefully chosen for their willingness to keep it real. Because the musicians are there to promote themselves and each other, they share resources like equipment and technical skills and services. Homegrown acts play alongside bands from other Middle Eastern countries, and reggae, rock, and jazz are was right up there with *rai* and *sha’bi*.

The new music horizon is no bed of roses. There is still uncertainty and a lack of resources, along with the perennial temptation to sell out. Worse, there is no music education in public schools, even though it’s been proven that arts education enhances academic performance in all areas. There’s also a lack of infrastructure to support alternative music. But judging by the ingenuity demonstrated by dedicated music activists, this is all changing.

Cairo’s Alternative Acts: A Sampling

These are just a few musicians and bands to check out on YouTube:

Lel Wa Ain (jazz fusion, eclectic)

Arabian Knightz (hip-hop; their popular song “Sisters” talks about women’s rights)

Eftekasat (jazz fusion)

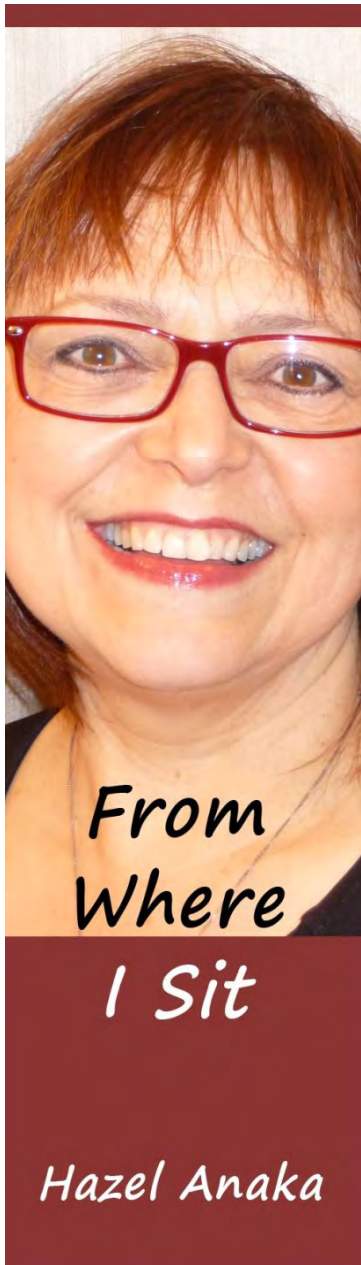
Cairokee (Cairo karaoke—“sing along with Cairo”)

Tamany Fil Meya (the band name means “eight per cent”; they play *sha’bi* combined with other genres)

Wust El Balad (rock, alternative)

Maryam Saleh (versatile songstress with a passionate delivery)

DJ Amr Ha Ha & Sadat (hip-hop)



You Deserve It

Canada Day marks the official start of vacation season in our fair land. By then, the kids are out of school and the weather is friendly from coast to coast. If you have an employer, you've selected your time off based on seniority or whether you're the boss's pet. If you're a farmer, spraying is done and haying hasn't started. Git while you can.

Whether we embark on a grand trip to parts unknown or sprinkle day trips throughout July and August is largely a question of the time and money at our disposal. Plans may require a travel agent and currency exchange. Or it may mean calling your mother to get the phone number of the cousin twice removed who happens to have a lakefront property. Wouldn't it be nice for your family of six to finally meet Joe?

Then again, *you* may be the proud owner of a beautiful recreational property and dread the annual influx of people you hardly know (and others you wish you didn't). Here are some sure-fire deterrents to those who would overstay their welcome: make sure the beds are small, with mattresses a decade or two past their best-before date. If you've got a sofa bed, better still. You'll want to make sure the mattress is puny so that the springs and metal cross pieces can dig more deeply into soft flesh.

Be sure to do a lot of moaning and complaining about food prices in your locale as you prepare a meal. Begin the cleanup of counter and table fast, before someone manages to snag seconds. Suggest eating out; hope the guests pick up the tab.

Spend all your time together talking about yourself. Don't initiate any conversation that takes the spotlight off you. If someone dares change the focus from you and yours, steer them right back; this is your home turf, after all. Be sure to repeat as many of your stories/opinions/complaints as you can. In case the dullards missed it the first three times.

Don't show any affection for or pride in your community. Point out the shortcomings often and loudly. Diss the shopkeepers. Complain about services and amenities. Invite your guests to come back again real soon.

Regardless of where your travel plans take you this summer, have fun and stay safe. Be sure to take a break from the daily grind; you deserve it, from where I sit.

Hazel Anaka's first novel is *Lucky Dog*. Visit her [website](#) for more information or follow her on Twitter @anakawrites.

AROUND AU

Karl Low



New Branding for AU: Athabasca University's brand matters to us students, as it is part of how employers will see us once we graduate. But did you know that AU is currently rebranding itself?

Only after scouring recent posts at AU Landing did I find an explanation. According to the Landing site, "Brand is not simply our logo. Brand is about character, associations, values, thoughts, feelings, and perceptions. However, an important component of our methodology for branding and positioning Athabasca University is the testing of AU brand logo concepts."

The branding committee has found a number of core dimensions that they want people to associate with AU: concepts such as innovative, accessible, flexible, employing a caring approach and a welcoming environment, and pioneering the future of learning, to name a few. The two logos that they are currently considering to represent these things are both stylized shields.

They do not explain on the site how a shield is intended to suggest accessibility or flexibility, or how technology as old as a shield suggests a focus on the future. Fortunately, until June 30 you have the opportunity to take a short survey on these branding ideas and make your views known. I took the survey myself and strongly encourage you to do so as well; how employers will someday view your degree may soon change in a way you might not expect.

A short introductory video for the survey can be found [here](#), with the survey itself available [here](#). If you want more information on the whole process, or to expand your personal views, you can also go to the AU Landing page [here](#) and read what other faculty and students have said.

Fun & Games on Video: Curious to see some of the research being done in the AU School of Computing and Information Sciences? You will need to make an account, but once you do you'll have access to almost [200 videos](#) created by graduate students and faculty at AU.

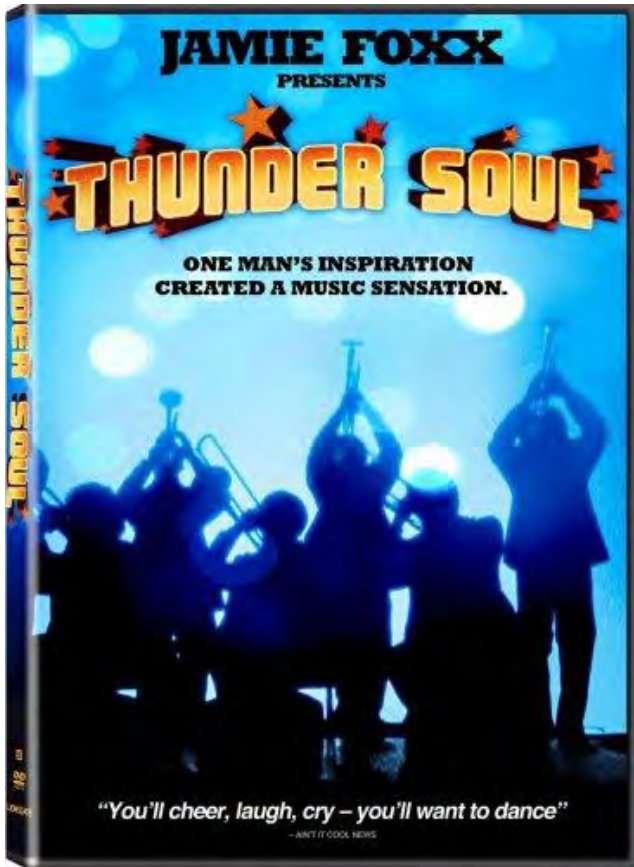
Most of these clips seem to be test videos for the graduate students, but in the Education and Instructional channel you can find some interesting research projects, such as a Massively Multiplayer Online Game developed to help teach students a programming language. Another interesting project is a trading card game that is being developed not to teach any topics itself, but so that the cards can be used as rewards and incentives for students reaching learning goals.

Perhaps one of the most fascinating projects I found was one called Pecunia. Pecunia is a virtual world that teaches students finance by giving them a virtual life and providing realistic ways to earn money as well as real-life punishments—like boredom waiting in a hospital if they do not keep themselves healthy by purchasing food and shelter, for example.

While no *World of Warcraft* or *Magic: the Gathering*, these projects are amusing, if not inspiring, and speak to the creativity and innovation present in the AU community

THE MINDFUL BARD

Wanda Waterman



Books, Music, and Film to Wake Up Your Muse and Help You Change the World

Film: *Thunder Soul* (Roadside Attractions 2011)

Director: Mark Landsman

Cast: Conrad O. Johnson, Jr., Conrad O. Johnson, Sr., Craig Baldwin, Craig Green, Bruce Middleton, Timothy Thompson, Gerald Calhoun, Gwen Walker, Kirbyjon Caldwell, Martha Samson, Gaila Mitchell

Genre: Music Documentary

"I gave them pride. I gave them honor. I gave them exceptional thoughts . . . But we had to work. It didn't come natural."

Conrad O. Johnson, founder of Thunder Soul

A Studied Manifestation of Unconditional Joy

In some of the old film clips in this movie it really is wonderful to see the young Thunder Soul musicians gliding through European streets in their afros and bell-bottoms, followed by clusters of adoring hippies. These kids, whose destinies had dictated falling through economic cracks and smashing up against societal obstacles, were now elevated to a position of grandeur—and it looked good on 'em.

In the early 1970s, Conrad O. Johnson—"Prof" to his students—got the urge to try to turn a high school band into a professional stage band. Why? That's just the kind of guy Prof was: motivated, proud, resilient, and bodacious. Would that every artist could have a mentor like him, for it would mean no more dull or mediocre performances.

The Kashmere High School Stage Band of Kashmere, Texas was made up of young amateurs, but this was no deterrent to their creating incredible jazz, funk, and rhythm and blues. Nor was the fact that they were black musicians in the '70s; surprisingly, racism wasn't the thing that posed the ultimate threat to the band's survival.

Poor access to economic and academic resources didn't stop them either, at least not at first. In fact, the elements that saved these young people from the tragic lives that mainstream society had determined for them were elements within their own community, resources that only other African Americans could provide.

Shockingly, the biggest threat to the band's survival was not economics or prejudice, but rather the narrow ideas of what constituted education.

The high school's previous administration was so delighted to have such a great group bringing acclaim to their school and community that they did everything they could to further the band's mission. But then a new principal arrived on the scene. He thought of music education as a pointless luxury and seemed to feel that if the Kashmere Stage Band was all that, they should be footing their own bills. They hung on for a while, swallowing the slights and paying their own expenses, but after only a few years the Thunder Soul project came to an end.

But it left an amazing legacy, not just of great recordings but also a shining example of what was possible. Under Prof's guidance, Thunder Soul showed the life-changing value of artistic discipline; no one could observe the development of these young people and claim that music education had no intellectual or social value.

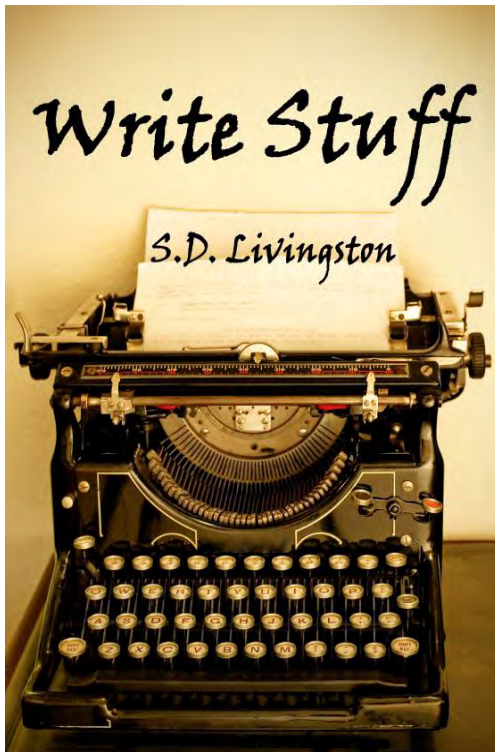
"Thunder Soul showed the life-changing value of artistic discipline; no one could observe the development of these young people and claim that music education had no intellectual or social value."

When the Thunder Soul alumni were beginning rehearsals for their comeback performance (inspiring snippets of which are available on YouTube), they received the news that Prof had just suffered a heart attack. Far from slumping and pining for their beloved leader, the band played better than ever, blasting ecstatic tones into the air in jubilant defiance of their own sadness.

Thunder Soul manifests five of the Mindful Bard's criteria for films well worth seeing: 1) it is authentic, original, and delightful; 2) it provides respite from a sick and cruel world, a respite enabling me to renew myself for a return to mindful artistic endeavour; 3) it is about attainment of the true self; 4) it inspires an awareness of the sanctity of creation, and 5) it makes me want to be a better artist.

"Should we not be putting all our emphasis on reading, writing, and math? The "back-to-basics curricula", while it has merit, ignores the most urgent void in our present system—absence of self-discipline. The arts, inspiring—indeed requiring—self-discipline, may be more "basic" to our nation's survival than traditional credit courses. Presently we are spending 29 times more on science than on the arts, and the result so far is worldwide intellectual embarrassment."

Paul Harvey



Not-So-Original Sin

There's a fundamental rule that every student and writer should know: Thou shalt not plagiarize. In plain terms, don't pretend that somebody else's work is your own. But what if the words you're copying *are* your own, but you've already used them somewhere else before? It's a problem that hit *The New Yorker* recently—and it's one that doesn't have an easy answer.

The commotion started June 19 in a [blog post](#) about Jonah Lehrer, a writer with a successful career and a brand new staff gig at *The New Yorker*. The blog post came from Jim Romanesko, a media critic, who noted that Lehrer was recycling content he had previously sold to publications like the *Wall Street Journal*.

A little digging by Romanesko and others revealed that it wasn't the first time Lehrer had resold his work. This Poynter [article](#) includes links to 13 other occasions on which Lehrer recycled his words, major ideas, or both.

There are obvious issues with this, mainly because publications are usually paying for, and entitled to get, original content. When magazines and newspapers negotiate payment for original material but get content that's already been published, it's not only a moral issue but a legal one.

But there's also an enormous grey area here in the moral obligation Lehrer has to his readers. That same Poynter article notes that, when readers approach Lehrer's work, there is an "unspoken contract: You devote some of your precious time, he'll take you and a few thousand others to a new intellectual space." One can assume, then, that this premise holds true for all writers, not just Lehrer. And if that's the case, why doesn't it apply to other fields where we pay to be enlightened or entertained?

Take Jerry Seinfeld, for example, or Jeff Foxworthy. Both these comedians have worked stand-up circuits for decades. They've sold out live shows, put that same material on CDs and DVDs, and had various TV specials and sitcoms. Yet there's no guarantee that if you shell out a substantial amount of money for a ticket, you're going to hear new material. More often than not, those live shows and CDs comprise reprocessed ideas and lines you've heard before. There might be new material sprinkled in with them or there might not be, but there's certainly no outcry about it.

And if you want to keep the debate to the intellectual sphere, does every single one of Stephen Hawking's books and lectures consist of entirely new content, without a single passage or idea reused? It's also not unusual to find bloggers compiling several years' worth of their most popular posts and selling them in book form. It's a growing trend, and one that's seeing a lot of people gladly pay for recycled content.

One way of looking at it is to ask whether this is comparable to buying a new release by your favourite author and finding out that half the book consists of passages used in her other books. One might argue

that, since books always carry new titles (except revised editions, of course), we can safely assume that they contain all-new material. But comedy and lecture tours are often billed under unique names as well, and much of the material, either ideas or specific words, has been used before.

The only time an audience can expect completely fresh material is when a lecture or comedic performance is advertised as “All-new material!” Conversely, we never see those words on the front of a newspaper or magazine. There does, indeed, seem to be an assumption that the written word will always be original, whereas the opposite rule applies to spoken content—even when we’re paying hefty ticket prices, far more than we’d spend on a magazine.

Now there’s an idea for energetic authors: take their article content and turn it into a stand-up tour. I can practically see the promotional line now: “You Know You’re a Redneck Physicist When . . .”

*S.D. Livingston is the author of several books, including the new suspense novel *Kings of Providence*. Visit her [website](#) for information on her writing (and for more musings on the literary world!).*

CLICK OF THE WRIST

Summer Vacation

The long weekend’s ahead. Got vacation plans, or are you kicking back locally this year? Whether you stay or go, here are some holiday tips and stories—some good, some bad—to entertain you, inspire you, or scare you off vacations for good.

Worst Vacations

Gawker.com held a contest for readers’ worst vacation experiences. From tornados to shootouts to IBS attacks, these vacation horror stories give the Griswolds’ experiences a run for their money.

Go Prepared

Sure, you might not be mistakenly diagnosed with cancer while on vacation, but “minor” problems can crop up for any travellers. From losing your passport to getting trapped by bad weather, here are some common issues—and *Marie Claire*’s advice on how to deal with them.

Enriching Vacations

Sometimes a vacation turns out better if you go with slightly different expectations. Here, NPR’s *Talk of the Nation* discusses the so-called enriching vacations—skill-learning or volunteering trips, for example—and how they can transform a plain old summer experience into something amazing.

Aftermath

So you had the vacation from hell—or something didn’t go as planned. Check out this resource on how to prepare your complaint (and determine to whom you should direct it).



INTERNATIONAL NEWS DESK



At Home: Get Your Goat

Does your lawn need help? Forget the expensive riding mower or the pesticide-laden weed killer. Your solution could be as simple as a pair of goats.

As the *Toronto Sun* [reports](#), a golf course near Barrie, Ontario, “could possibly be the first course in Canada to put four-legged grounds keepers on staff.”

The golf course, whose innovative approach to lawn care includes two six-month-old goats, is “[attempting] to reduce the pesticide and herbicide load that almost all golf courses experience.” Because of the course’s proximity to wildlife, its owners are particularly concerned with keeping harmful substances out of the area.

The goats eat the weeds’ flowers, later moving on to the rest of the “weeds that crowd the cart path.”

Course superintendent Chris Gulliver says that the idea evolved from the practices of other countries: “If you look back old school in Scotland where golf originated, it was goats and sheep that kept most of those golf courses trimmed and weed-free,” he told reporters.

The plan raised some eyebrows, but it makes sense “from a monetary side,” too, Gulliver told reporters, adding that the “cost of these two goats is equivalent to about one carton of herbicide.”

Around the World: Play Ball

Things can get crazy at Little League games, no doubt. Coaches heckle umpires. Parents yell at coaches. Dust and dirt are everywhere. It’s no secret that many league policies could use an overhaul, too. But one spectator is taking her reaction too far: she’s suing an 11-year-old player for a throw that went awry.

As the *Huffington Post* [reports](#), New Jersey resident Elizabeth Lloyd was attending a Little League game, sitting at a picnic table next to the field. The kids were getting ready for the game, and catcher Matthew Migliaccio was in the bullpen “warming up a pitcher.”

One of Matthew’s return throws overshot the pitcher and hit Lloyd in the face. She sustained injuries and is demanding \$150,000 in medical expenses and more for “pain and suffering.” Her claim: that the “errant throw was intentional and reckless” and “assaulted and battered” her.

Meanwhile, her lawsuit has sparked an outrage. Anthony Pagano, Matthew’s attorney, told reporters that “it’s disgusting that you have people suing an 11-year-old kid for overthrowing his pitcher in the bullpen.”

After all, kids aren’t professionals and “Little League players aren’t always accurate in their throws.”

AUSU UPDATE



AU Students urge candidates to improve university funding

AU students are concerned about the financial health of Athabasca University and the effect of recent news stories on the reputation of the AUSU membership.

A recent CBC report notes that in recent years the university has made a series of reserve draws to cover budget shortfalls, draining the once \$30-million reserve fund.

Tuition and fees at AU, meanwhile, continue to increase despite the concerns of AUSU that education is becoming increasingly unaffordable in Alberta.

“I’m very concerned about AU’s financial situation,” says AUSU President Bethany Tynes. “AU is increasing student fees, observing hiring freezes, denying sabbaticals, delaying projects, and downsizing their offices due to a lack of available funds. We don’t want to see the quality of our education diminish.”

“At the same time,” Tynes continues, “I am confused by AU Board Chair Barry Walker’s comment to the CBC that AU is ‘in a very sound financial position,’ as the concerns we’ve noted do not support the notion that we’re financially sound.”

Chronic underfunding of public post-secondary education is a factor in AU’s financial stress. AU students have lobbied Alberta in recent years to address the shortfall; our members call on the candidates in Alberta’s provincial election to make post-secondary funding a priority in their platforms and to ensure that all Alberta universities are funded equally and sufficiently. Public post-secondary institutions need a reliable, predictable funding model that provides sufficient base operating funds to support a world-class education.

Athabasca University Students' Union is the largest students' union in Alberta, representing nearly 40,000 undergraduates annually.

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