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UNIVERSITY ON WATCH

CRISIS IN THE ACADEMY

J PETERS

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FOREWORD

WHAT AN ENORMOUS TASK! LIKE a beautiful painting the frame's job is to ensure the painting emphasizes its vivid colors' and honors the artist's intent throughout its journey. We really don't know transparency is until reading *University on Watch: Crisis in the academy* by J. Peters. Peters story is as transparent as it is honest.

Honest, open and full of brave admissions of fear, doubt, desperation and hope. 10 years ago J. Peters was a college student experiencing a crisis that many students today encounter all too often in academia. Indeed, too many scholars in their own campus departments are demoralized and collapse due to lack of person centered outreach and support. The very dreams of people with disabilities as well as other people experiencing non academic issues interfering with their education are often unsupported and go without access to the servivces and very help they need to be successful in their education.

But despite all the barriers and unsupportive individuals in J. Peters' academic setting as well as his new unrecognized and untreated diagnosis of schizophrenia disorder the author achieved what he set out to accomplish: dismantling the true cancer of academia. This is what Peter's calls: the "academic hemorrhage", instilling the very courage he so passionately wanted to find in academia he infused back into the very language of his life and others.

Today, J. Peters is a Clinical Licensed Social Worker and a University professor. In his work as my fieldwork instructor he has taken a stand for the mental health community and students who experience these

commonalities and other mental health diagnoses throughout their academic journey.

J. Peters has shown his peers, students, and individuals in the mental health field with his book and experiences throughout recovery that you can rise up from anything. You can completely recreate yourself. Nothing is permanent. You're not stuck. You have choices. You can think new thoughts. You can learn something new. You can create new habits. All that matters is that you decide TODAY and never look back.

"The world breaks everyone and some are strong at the broken places" Ernest Hemingway

By Karlem Landaeta, BSW

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INTRODUCTION

SOMETIMES, A SCHOOL CRISIS ERUPTS on a college campus unexpectedly. Other times, there is a slow build up of tension before the crescendo, and that crescendo can be violence, hate speech, or any number of incidents. Ten years ago in New London University, I was a student in crisis. Although I was only slightly in-tune with the momentum of chaos and cause for concern, I was adamant about reaching someone, some department office on campus, the school staff, or even a community member or public official in the city of Liberty in upstate New York to intervene in department affairs and the admissions process of the English graduate school at New London University. I fully believed if I found the right party that had a vested interest in my well-being, I would have been admitted to the English graduate program. Whether it is true or not has been lost to history and will remain contested as long as my relationship with language persists.

On a more global level, students in circumstances similar to what I went through ten years ago are sometimes pitted against the powers that be and boxed into a corner when their status as a student becomes compromised. In many circumstances, students on academic probation, or those who are still in the midst of an ongoing crisis, are targets for extreme punitive measures by campus offices and their academic programs. In many cases, the students who are considered problematic are encouraged—similar to an uncomfortable work environment—to leave on their own regard or remain and be forced to face extreme sanctions on their freedoms and liberties.

I chose to stay and carry on as a student at SUS New London. This is that story. *University on Watch* was written ten years after I put SUS New London “on notice,” indicating my intentions to both continue on as a student while signaling my need for immediate assistance and intervention from someone who could help with my deteriorating situation as a student and mental health condition. As the book unfolds, neither intervention nor my own will to fight on would help me in my effort to overcome the obstacles I faced as I tried to fight my way to continue my education and move on to higher learning.

The very same passion that set the stage for *University on Watch* calls upon all people to truly look inward, face those times when the plausible seems impossible, and realize the dangers of life that can interfere with our ability to live our lives freely. Until a time when the unrecognizable solutions of your life reveal themselves clearly and without restriction, *University on Watch* will signal the need for further clarification of your life, its goals, and the freedom for people to choose will over reality, making the impossible become possible.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

SIMILAR TO KARL MARX'S DIALECTIC, my appreciations are twofold: I would like to thank both my parents, Jane and Frank, for their caregiving, nurturing, and unconditional support throughout my recovery from schizophrenia. From my initial diagnosis, to each and every hospitalization, their support has been critical in my recovery throughout my convalescence. Their help has not only allowed me to go on and re-claim my identity and worth, but also enabled me to live as independently as possible regardless of the setbacks I have encountered throughout my ongoing illness.

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ONE LAST TOAST WITH MY FRIENDS

My diagnosis concerns social-epistemic discourses engaging amid “this cluster of uses, the aesthetic {...} variously identified with irrationality, illusion, fantasy, myth, sensual seduction, the imposition of will, and inhumane indifference to ethical, religious, or cognitive considerations” (1992).

J Peters (2008) Contesting Admission

BIRDS WERE CHIRPING, THE SUN was out, and I was in the heyday of my young adulthood. On the exterior, I had above-average looks, more than enough friends, and a supportive family. Rocking out, jamming, and head bopping to Stevie Nicks and Fleetwood Mac, I was either driving around listening to music or partying with my friends. At face value, I was your average SUS New London student. Inside, I couldn't have been more miserable. I had recently dropped out of college and was working at a Nissan car dealership selling cars for a living. Little did I know what the next six months would bring as I dove head first into what was the most transformative summer I have ever had in New London—or at any other time in my twenty years of life. “Cheers!” I said. I still remember giving a toast with Kim and Patrick, my two friends that had made it up to New London before our other friends arrived, bringing with them a few shots of cheap Vodka and a full bottle of sleeping pills. After every successive shot of liquor, I snuck off into the bathroom to swallow another dozen

or so sleeping meds. Noticing my behavior was increasingly bizarre and erratic, my friend, Kim, went into the bathroom and found an empty bottle of generic sleeping medication I had used and forgotten on the counter. Maybe I can say this was because I had just broken up with my girlfriend, my first real relationship in college. I really should be very cautious when I say “real.” Nothing was real about this relationship. Sure, we were intimate and connected emotionally, but the entire affair was as difficult as it was psychologically rife with abuse, anger, and resentment of each other and our behavior. By the time the relationship ended, I was ridden with emotional pain and was tormenting myself over the mistakes I had made throughout. My goal was to exact one last vengeful blow to her, and this was my plan of doing just that.

Soon after, Kim came back from the bathroom with my empty bottle of pills in hand. I flatly denied taking them. Before I could protest, the effects of the medication were already beginning to take control. Immediately, I was rushed into Patrick’s car. Soon after, I found myself in the emergency room at Burgdorf Hospital. I began to stumble around in the emergency room and finally collapsed on the floor.

MINI M&MS AND EXPLANATIONS

BURGDORF HOSPITAL WAS BUZZING THAT night. Kim and Patrick, my high command as I like to think of them, were quick to press the triage nurse to transfer me into a hospital bed from the ER waiting room. I was laying down on the floor of the ER with a nurse rushing over to take my vital signs. The last thing I remember before completing losing consciousness was staring at my vital signs on the monitor and watching my blood pressure and heart rate decrease and then decrease further and then everything fades. I remember that I finally passed out to the thought that this would be the last moment of my life and also the most painful. There were too many toxins in my body. I needed to be charcoaled. If I didn't get immediate medical attention, my organs would completely shut down. I suppose now, reflecting back on that nightmare, that I should not have pressed my luck wishing for worse. I woke up next to my ex at my bedside, a catheter in my penis, and my parents by the foot of my bed. I am not sure what was more painful to deal with, looking at my parents' disappointed faces that their son was in the hospital again for attempted suicide, sitting next to a girl I had just broken up with the night before, or having a tube inserted into my privates.

Thankfully, when I did come around, I noticed that Kim was outside my room. My parents went outside to greet him, thank him, and—so I assume—look for comfort. When my ex saw Kim outside with my parents, she joined them. I was left alone with the nurse who was playing around with the tube in my mouth—she told me she was

going to remove the tube, a process I thought to be harmless until I realized it was connected to the catheter.

Hearing me scream, everyone looked into my room but quickly turned back to their conversations. My parents then walked into my room and told me that I was on my own now, that this was the last time they would come to New London for a psychiatric emergency. I was in too much pain to really respond or understand their feelings at the time, but I told them I understood. They left to go back home that same night while I was still in the hospital. My ex went home shortly after them with Kim, and I was left alone with my thoughts.

The following morning, the nurse and social worker came into my room and explained my status. I told them I wanted to be discharged immediately, but the social worker said she had to give me a brief psychiatric evaluation before I could leave to ensure my safety. I agreed to one because I was no stranger to psychiatry and those evaluations, and, after all, being evaluated was my ticket to getting discharged from the hospital and going back home to my friends.

I told the social worker that I had simply mixed up the sleeping pills with a container of mini M&Ms. For the first time since high school, I passed a psychiatric evaluation. If I hadn't tried to kill myself, I would have been impressed with my performance during the evaluation.

Despite running a slight fever, I discharged myself against the doctor's advice under the guise that I would see a therapist on an outpatient basis.

FROM STUDENT TO CAR SALESMAN

MY EX WHEELED ME OUT of the hospital and into my Toyota Camry. We drove off listening to her music, but I was quick to put my mixtape back into the CD player. The entire ride home I was in a depressed state. Feeling a number of different emotions—guilt, shame, sadness, anxiety—I went upstairs to bed the minute I got back into my apartment. I lay in my bed for days. Back then, filled at all times and ready to go at a puff's notice, I kept a vaporizer with the best pot available in the southern tier of New York by my bedside. I vaped for days on end before finally realizing it was time to part ways with my ex forever and begin the healing process. She was toxic, and I needed to start making decisions that would impact my health in a positive and nurturing way. I needed to be able to love again, and having her at my bedside was just not working for either of us. I'll never forget the words of my ex when I dropped her off at her place on the campus of New London University for the last time: "You really are crazy, Jacques." Then, we parted ways. All of my friends who were away for winter break were starting to trickle in for the semester. Jonas and McDaggot joined Kim, Patrick, and me in the house where we all lived. And they were all upset with my behavior, but what else, I thought, is new? I would like to think that over the course of our college careers, they would eventually forget about my foolish behavior, but I knew I would be just as foolish for believing that. There was no question it was time to find a job and be productive again. So I

cruised the parkway for sales jobs. I had just made a lot of money working for Sears the previous year, selling large appliances. I figured it was time to step up my game and go bigger. Much, much bigger. I would sell cars.

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RUNNING LATE, WEARING THE SAME clothes for two weeks on end, slightly unkempt, and hypomanic, I held down a job for a little while. I never sold one car. Every day, I would come into the sales office and gaze at the sales board where every salesman was listed along with the number of cars he or she sold that month. Next to my name was a big “0” for the tenure of my career as a salesman. But it wasn’t my inability to sell a car that lost me that job. Instead, it was reenacting Hitler’s last days in his bunker for the sales manager using figurines I picked up at the local Michael’s store. I found myself at an exit interview not too shortly after being hired only a week earlier. Without a job, doing an overabundance of cocaine, and thinking about my good friends, most of whom were getting ready for graduation, I began to get nervous. Two weeks before my friend’s commencement, I went home to make the most important decision I have ever made.

I still remember knocking on my parent’s door back in Wales when I told them I had something urgent to discuss. After realizing the only way I would start feeling better about my life was to take matters into my own hands, I talked about my decision to begin summer school and finally graduate from SUS New London. Before leaving for home, I spoke with an academic advisor and came to the conclusion that if I completed a full summer session, I could graduate with the last of my friends in one academic year. The plan was to live with my friends Patrick and Kim, again, my personal high command. In plain English, these were the two friends who kept me safe in times of uncertainty. I would graduate successfully with them at my side. My

parents didn't agree at first, or even during the second appeal to them, but they folded in the end. To this day, I will never forget telling my mom to sign next to her credit card account number for the billing and payment for the summer session credits. I wasn't totally shocked they hesitated to send me back to New London after everything, but I was surprised that I was able to convince them to do just that. With payment for the summer credits in hand, I raced back to New London University just in time to watch my friends graduate and leave. The people I had spent my last three years with were all leaving, except for Patrick and Kim.

As the house began to empty, Patrick, Kim, and myself went to look for a new place to live, something smaller and that would accommodate just the three of us. Eventually finding a new apartment on Seminary Avenue on the west side of Liberty, we began the moving process quickly, despite not having electricity or hot water in our new place. I told Patrick I just wanted to get out of the old house and leave my memories behind. Thankfully, he agreed.

Joining us in the apartment for the summer was Cynthia, Patrick's girlfriend. She decided to spend the summer in Liberty with Patrick before graduating in the fall. Admittedly, having a female presence in the apartment instead of an all-male household gave me a feeling of family. Quite frankly, I needed that feeling after watching my parents leave me in the hospital bed and having all my other close friends jet off after graduating.

THE THERAPIST ON RECORD

ALTHOUGH MY THERAPIST WAS IN Liberty, I would journey home for medication from my psychiatrist or hold our appointments over the phone. Sitting and smoking pot, watching episodes of daytime television—usually *Matlock*—my sessions with this psychiatrist were useless. The psychiatrist's name was Dr. S, and he was referred to me by my father, who also met with him. My therapist, however, resided on the west side of Liberty. He was a local social worker, mild-mannered and equally ineffective as my psychiatrist. Thornton was just another therapist in the long line of psychotherapists I've had since I reached adolescence. Thornton wasn't exactly a well-researched option, which might have led to how little he could help me: prior to my first appointment, I was racing through the local phone book after being discharged from Burgdorf Hospital, knowing it was a part of my discharge plan to get connected with a therapist after my suicide attempt a month earlier. The usual visit to my therapist consisted of first smoking some pot, getting a sandwich or a light lunch, and then heading over to Thornton's office. His office was on the top floor of a small professional building, and it looked more like a residence converted over to commercial use. But I couldn't complain—he helped me get discharged from Burgdorf Hospital, in a roundabout sort of way. To pay for my treatments, my parents would send Thornton checks in the mail. Thornton was never shy about reminding me or letting me know when my parents were late on a check or payment for services rendered. I tried not to let this aspect of his treatment bother me, but his behavior should have been a giant warning bell for the later

phases of my treatment with him. Thornton, both as a social worker and as a clinician, let me down time and again throughout the ordeal with my mental health condition. In a review of the timeline from his initial assessment after my discharge from Burgdorf to the time my symptoms became active, his focus of treatment was so narrow it consistently missed my problems and, even worse, left me in the lurch when I really needed the help. Reviewing Thornton's clinical records, there is little documentation on symptom management and/or goals related to mapping the markers for improvement in my condition. There is also little evidence of collaboration with my prescriber, Dr. S, or any linkage to my school to discuss or monitor how events unfolding at the university were impacting my mental health. Obviously, this was a huge gap in his ability as a therapist to assess my mental status outside of the office. When a person is becoming increasingly unstable, it is vital to know how he or she is doing on a moment-by-moment basis. This is how a therapist plans for relapse and monitors further decompensation. More importantly, a review of Thornton's records reveals little to no assessment of risk, danger to self, or danger to others. While as a patient I make my own choices and must own them, the therapist must also use his or her judgment and insight to educate the patient on the implications of his actions and the risk that he or she runs when making possible life choices instead of just telling him: "Jacques, your nails appear to be very dirty." What a wonderful assessment. In a school setting and in my home life, both of which I was completely isolated in, there needed to be a greater amount of day-to-day knowledge of my behaviors and activities given the profound risk I was exposing myself to at the university and in the community. Without this information, a therapist is without the scope of the chance a person has of relapsing or decompensating.

FROM LAW TO ENGLISH MAJOR

NOBODY BACK THEN, LEAST OF all me, was thinking about decompensation. I was more medically and psychiatrically compliant than ever. Before every class, I would take a dosage of medication and found myself participating in class like never before. I began to socialize with my fellow classmates more, perhaps because most of my friends graduated or because of the effect of the medication, or maybe because the therapy was actually starting to help. I do know, however, that the quality of my work improved exponentially, and I went from a student who had withdrawn from the university from acute depression to one who was seemingly fully recovered.

I received high marks that summer and began to make preparations for another successful fall semester, and it was in that summer I met Dr. G. This was when I truly fell in love with English class. To this day, I remember those English classes, especially Dr. G's literature class. All my applications to law school were in the mail. I should have been content with my goals, but I wasn't. In fact, for someone who was so close to graduating, I wasn't looking forward to the future. My connections with the English department were steadily developing, and I was beginning to get my second wind at the university, specifically within the English department.

Each day that passed meant further entrenchment in the English department. I had more students, adjuncts, and professor friends than I could count. Walking down the hallway corridor in the department, I would be stopped by either a professor or a friend in a class of mine.

I felt connected to the department in an integral and intimate way, and I didn't want to leave to go to law school anymore.

Slowly, my goals reorganized. I became so reinvested with the English department that I realized New London University was my home. So, I knew what I had to do: I would apply to the English graduate school and hopefully teach a discussion section of a large lecture class. Preferably, I would teach English 310: Literary Theory and Criticism, my favorite and most beloved section in the English curriculum. Additionally, I would ask my professor who taught Literature of the Americas if I could be his teacher's assistant in the class he was teaching the following semester.

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MAJOR STATEMENTS

C LIMBING TO THE APEX OF the academy, I walked with a book called *Major Statements* in those days. I was excelling in class, honing my rhetoric, and learning ever more advanced ways of speaking, writing and meaning making.

Major statements was a book of essays. They were profound moments in literary theory. Each essay included a new term and introduced a new theory to the canon of Literary Criticism. I held the book close to my heart. I carried it to signal my pending contribution to literary theory.

I was about to make my major statement. I didn't know yet how, or what, but I was ready. I felt it was time to move on in my education and begin graduate school. I needed to take my place among the rhetoric scholars of the university and create new language.

I was more than excited, I was happy, and ready to take on something new, something intellectual, and leave behind the misery and sorrow which was so pervasive in my undergraduate education.

THE PLAN

THE NEXT STEP WAS OBVIOUS. I went immediately to the graduate director's office and spoke with her secretary to talk to the director. The secretary didn't immediately take to the idea of letting me see the director, but I pressed for it. Soon enough, I was walking into the director's—Dr. Harris—office and was urging her to have a seat and hear me out. I proceeded to walk her through my plan.

I explained that although I had applied to law school, I had come to realize that my place should be as a student in New London's Ph.D. program. When asked why I would want to begin such a long and tedious process, I told her that I was an academic at heart and longed to teach Literary Theory and Criticism with the same veracity that my lecturers had shown me.

But I was one semester away from graduating, seventeen credits shy from being in a position to apply to graduate school. And I didn't want to wait until the following fall to enter graduate school. I was hungry for advancement. That was when I began to walk the director through how I would get into graduate school...and fast.

I told Dr. Harris I would do the impossible if she agreed to put me into her program: I would take the seventeen credits that I needed to enter graduate school over the winter break. After agreeing to my plan, I walked out of the director's office and casually said it would be a pleasure to work with her in the future. Knowing full well that I had a challenge ahead of me, I went to the library to make my action plan.

According to university policy, the maximum amount of credits that you can take at one time is four. However, there is no limit to the number of courses you can take online. The only problem would be if the courses did not transfer back into New London, but I cross-checked the plan with the transfer coordinator in the advising office, and he approved the plan.

Immediately, I phoned my parents and told them what I wanted to do. They were—at best—cautiously hesitant but nevertheless gave me the approval I needed to move forward economically. I began to register across the SUS (State University System) unilaterally for winter session courses. In total, I was registered for nineteen credits at six different universities.

By this point, Patrick was already preparing to move out. By the time the first course began, he was packing for his new life in Harlem. But I was too busy setting up my online accounts with the universities to pay attention to his final days at our apartment on Seminary Avenue. I suppose that my confidence in my plan gave me what I needed to temporarily bypass my friend's approval, something I had always needed before.

The days went by slowly. Dozens of times a day, I would go online to check the status of my graduate school application to see if there was an admission decision. To make the time go by, I would go on long car rides where I had no particular destination or business. Driving hours at a time, I waited.

Winter was beginning to set in, and my first online course started at Mount Vernon. As I logged on to the university's webpage to begin the course, I received an email from the graduate school at New London. I had been declined for graduate study in the English program. Patrick called from his room, saying he was leaving for Harlem. Instead of focusing on his departure, I asked him a series of questions about my denial. Realizing that he had to leave, I wished him well and went back to my computer. But I panicked.

I wrote an email to Dr. Harris asking for an explanation for the denial. I told her my winter courses had already started and went on to explain that my plan was already in progress and that I was puzzled

about the change in her decision. The email I wrote was long, but her response was brief.

According to Dr. Harris, she had not yet seen my transcript when we had met, nor my grades from the current semester. She bluntly informed me not to contact the department any further. The department, however, still answered to me. There was no way I was going to let her or any admissions committee take away my dream of continuing my education in the English department.

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WINTER SESSION

I break from Derrida in the realm of American Studies by simply contesting the notion that superabundance constitutes a specific imperative to manifest discourse. In this vein, I must also examine the implications of reifying a supplement to language under the banner of freeplay. In fact, I will argue this so-called agent of language opens a space for language and danger to interact

J Peters (2008) Contesting Admission

IMMEDIATELY AFTER CHRISTMAS, WINTER SESSION began. The most difficult part of completing courses at so many universities was figuring out their online system. I was keeping track of multiple passwords, logins, and learning for the first time how to navigate a online course and how to interact with students and faculty online for the first time.

Slowly, I began to gain access to each course. I printed six syllabus and began mapping out a path to completing these courses. I just spent a whole lot of money paying for each of the courses, and I had committed to keeping up my end of the bargain I made with Dr. Harris.

To read all the course materials, including textbooks and other required readings for the winter courses, I went ahead and created an apparatus to do so. Setting up a rotating table size lazy Susan-like device to read up to six books simultaneously, I created my own solutions to make up for lack of time on my side to complete the assignments on time.

I was awake for days on end. Despite my planning and review of the deadlines, It seemed as if each every hour another assignment was due. From my waking hour, to 11:59 pm midnight, when the days coursework was due, I was awake. Days seemed to collide into each other. I needed to stay focused, alert, and awake enough to get my work done.

This is when my dependence on stimulants began. I kept a clipboard on the wall of our common room with the times of each successive dosages. Sometimes I forgot to write down a dosing administration, and I would remember after ingesting the medication, just to spit it out on the floor and re ingest it when I was running out of medication.

I was lonely. The entire campus was empty and it seemed I was totally isolated and alone in my march to nineteen credits. I became good friends with the gas station people at the 24 hour station. The manager there even invited me to her house for New Year's so I had someone to celebrate the holiday.

Too busy with my courses to party or take a break with the station manager, I continued my semester in my apartment by myself, using eye lubricant to keep my eyeballs moistened enough to keep open for extended periods of time to keep working.

THE BREAK DURING THE WINTER

I provide historical scholarship to call upon the archeological records “individuals health, and possibly life, are at risk” (Foucault M., The Care of The Self- The Historiography of Sexuality Volume III, 1986) to parliament and the office of rhetoric. I term the concern for me as the precept for exclusion, restriction, and rejection from further scholarship in the English language.

J Peters (2008) Contesting Admission

I NEEDED A BREAK FROM STUDYING in that a nightmarish winter session and the lack of sleep that came with it. The plan was to meet my friends for a weekend of fun and excitement away from it all in Atlantic City, New Jersey. We had all been there before, so there was going to nothing out of the ordinary about this trip, except for the level of rejuvenation I both needed and was expecting. I did not expect what was to come three short days later. The trip began like any other I had taken with friends from school. This time, though, I was carrying a briefcase with my laptop, a banker's box filled with textbooks, and a lazy Susan filled with pills and drugs. Indeed, moments after planning the get-away, I was already realizing that the task of completing my winter session without getting some work done on the trip would be impossible. So along for the ride was a thousand dollars' worth of various textbooks, from English composition to disability studies, all of them packed in the back of my Toyota Camry, the first car I had ever

owned. To be honest, I don't remember much of the trip. I am told by friends they had a good time. My experience—or at least from what I remember—is very different. My memory begins in the hotel room the morning I left for home. I was screaming on the phone away from my friends so that they wouldn't hear what I was saying—I was on the phone with my insurance company, saying, "What do you mean I don't have theft!" This was moments after I had just returned from the parking lot of the hotel where I thought I had parked my car. But the car wasn't there. And I wasn't really looking in a parking lot, *per se*. It seems I had brazenly parked my car by the lobby entrance in the drop-off passenger area zone where people idle while they drop off luggage or pick up their family after check-out or registration. It wasn't a parking lot of any kind. After just a few moments of searching for the car, I gave up. I knew better than to look for a car that I knew had been stolen. Back in my room, I was seething and screaming at and demanding a replacement vehicle or money to compensate for my loss. But there was no compensation, no help from my insurance company of any kind. It also seems that my insurance company doesn't replace cars stolen because of noncompliance to prescription medication, 72-hour binders, and first episode psychosis. So with my books under one arm and my pills—or what was left of them—in the other, I took the bus home. The bus didn't quite get me home—there was no direct line from Atlantic City to my place back in New London or in the suburbs of New York City where my parents lived. The bus pulled into the New York City Port Authority three hours after leaving Atlantic City, and I was set on never letting anything like this happen again and to get another vehicle as fast as possible. So I did what any self-respecting person would do who just had their car stolen: I went to Toyota of Manhattan to purchase a vehicle. After hours of looking at cars and working with the sales manager, I got a deal that required a thousand dollar down payment on a new Toyota Corolla. But I only had two hundred dollars, which is all I had left after a weekend of partying. I didn't know what to do. I didn't have enough money, so I slept on the floor of the dealership to try to buy myself some time to think of a plan. By the time the salesmen said, "Mr. Peters, this is a car dealership. You can't sleep on the showroom floor," I knew the

trip to Atlantic City was finally over. Five years later, I got a call from an impound lot in Atlantic City. It seems the car wasn't stolen: it was towed. I had only misplaced it. Shortly after my arrival in Atlantic City, the car was already on the way to the impound lot that would be its home for five years. When I went down to visit the car, the trunk was a time capsule from five years before. Still in the cup holder was my drink from the ride down to the hotel. That sure was like no trip before.

authorHOUSE®

IS ISLIP BURNING?

“freeplay is not a vehicle to inaugurate freedoms but merely fashion new forms of power to subvert rule and reconfigure the nature in which authority exercises itself upon the population”

J Peters (2008) Contesting Admission

MCDAGGOT, WHO CAME FROM THE Long Island town of Islip, was the mouthpiece of the group. In those days, I called him Longshanks, the same despotic king who reigned over England many years ago. McDaggot spoke for everyone but himself. Although he always had something to say, he stood for nothing. Yet we were good friends. But as much trust as I once had in him, it was all lost. This was a huge blow. In one giant pathetic attempt to check in on my safety, something spearheaded by McDaggot himself, I was left totally abandoned and left to my decompensating condition completely alone. One faithful day, my friends came up to New London. They joined up with Kim, who had recently ejected me from our home. McDaggot, along with Kim, it seemed, came to me just to send emails. Instead of venturing to the other side of town where I was residing in fear with Dr. H. Alas, instead of helping, I received an email from McDaggot ranting about the rent I owed to my friends on Seminary Avenue. I would hazard to say here that the failure was McDaggot, and the unholy alliance between himself and the people residing at Seminary Avenue. The email went on about small claims court, suggesting we all appear there and settle our differences. It seemed more about money than concern over my health and mental health status. That whole

charade masquerading as concern was the greatest act of cowardice I've ever seen. McDaggot knew me the best. In the end, it seemed, he knew nothing. All of our conversations seemed to be forgotten in the wake of my supposed transgressions. Still, I didn't get it. My behavior was always a problem. Was it that much different now? Why the concern? To the best of my knowledge, I hadn't harmed myself or anyone lately. McDaggot seemed to take it upon himself to take a moral high ground that left me totally puzzled and ostracized from everyone. There was no olive branch extended, just anger, judgment, and callous disregard for my feelings. In the end, McDaggot would stop at nothing to belittle, critique, and pretend to care about my situation. The truth was that he couldn't care less. The narrative he was painting sowed my fate for years to come. I would come to understand this pattern of behavior as nothing more than man's inhumanity to man. He was a turncoat, and ultimately, life turned on him, too. McDaggot went on to become a secretary.

THE LIST

The department list was more than deliberate; I point towards the final item to “determine if he is safe to continue as a student” (New London University, 2008) to open a space for this self-reflexive research report underwriting my recent scholarship.

J Peters (2008) Contesting Admission

AFTER A SERIES OF EMAILS fired back and forth between myself, the university, the office of the ombudsman, university affairs, the English department, and God only knew who else, a list of concerns was drafted, and I was called into the university counseling center for a mandatory psychiatric assessment to “determine if I was safe to continue as a student,” per the language of the concerns listed and written by the Assistant Dean of New London University. I was communicating so much with the school’s many offices and personnel, and I was angry. Although I couldn’t have helped coming off as bizarre because of my active and evolving psychiatric condition, I could have put a stop to—or at least slowed down—the outflux of non-stop emails demanding irrational changes in university procedure related to my application, re-application, and status with the graduate school. Indeed, the emails were one after another, but the email that struck me as the most threatening and scary to school staff was one I sent to the university provost. It was one morning when I sent that email called, “Putting the University on Notice.” What I had said and what I had meant were all very different. What I meant by putting the

UNIVERSITY ON WATCH

university on watch was simply that I wanted the staff to be aware of my intentions to re-apply to its graduate school and that I was feeling a certain way about the events that had previously unfolded in the English department. The department, though, took it in an entirely different way.

authorHOUSE®

NO PURPOSE

The juridical powers present in the Royal county Court system signal the departmental crisis necessitating my arrest because I have “no purpose” (The People of New the State of New York VS. Jacques, 2008) to study in the humanities.

J Peters (2008) Contesting Admission

THE NEXT EMAIL I SENT was to the academic advising office, asking who called my parents' home expressing concern for my safety, my behavior, and the communication unfolding in the school. The office denied calling my family. To this day, I am not certain who contacted my family expressing concern on my behalf. Whomever this person was, I wish I could meet with them and shake their hand to express my gratitude. After I began posting flyers throughout the library and adjacent building, statements from the school staff regarding the restrictions placed on my presence and ability to walk into department offices came from the university. After a series of mishandled conversations with the university ombudsman, the negotiated terms of my ongoing presence and status as a student would restrict me from walking into the graduate school's office in the English department. Specifically, I wasn't allowed to speak with the graduate office secretary, Josephine, and any staff. Not coincidentally, this Josephine was the same person who ultimately picked up the phone and called the police to have me arrested for violating the terms of the agreement.

THE BARRACKS

*I simplify judiciously unfamiliar signs forming the
regency period pleasuring England to both register cosign
apprehend departmental eruptions as meaning “that
must be resisted and defended at all costs” (1992)*

J Peters (2008) Contesting Admission

THERE I WAS, CHAINED TO a pole in the police barracks of SUS New London like an animal. It all happened so fast. Just an hour prior to my arrest, I was registering for classes or, at least, trying to do so. You have to understand that I was in a very difficult position. I was restricted from going to the English graduate school. But to register for classes, I had to go into the heart of darkness: directly into the restricted area. That’s exactly what I did. One morning, close to the deadline for course registration, I went into the department office and crossed into the graduate school’s portion, where one area was dedicated to undergraduate students and the other to the English graduate school. Passing by the secretary, I noticed she picked up the phone. “I need the police,” she said. I panicked—as anyone would do—and ran out of the office. Before I knew it, I was surrounded by New London police requesting my identification. Thinking nothing would come of it, I handed it to them. They informed me that I was under arrest and proceeded to handcuff me in the hallway of the library tower. Walking me out of the library in handcuffs and putting me in the police vehicle, I began to tear up. By the time I reached the police barracks, I was crying uncontrollably. Before I knew it, I was

handcuffed to a pole in the station and being interrogated. Chained to a pole, the police continued their questioning. All I could do was cry. I was eventually released on my own recognizance, terrified of the university and confused. I didn't know who I could trust. I felt like I had completely lost control: control of myself, the department, my plan, and my life. This was the lowest I remember feeling since I was surrounded by friends and family and ex after attempting suicide.

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THE KNOCK HEARD AROUND NEW LONDON

“As Jacques would put it ‘the knock heard around New London’ occurred at the exact same time as the demonstration that rocked Vestal last week as the students protested...”

J. Peters (2008) Contesting Admission

AS DARK AND SEEMINGLY BLEAK as these days were, moments of hope in my cause shined through specter of looming defeat. I was invited to a friend's home shortly after my arrest on campus. The student who invited me to her home was a classmate who was following my evolving story.

She told me she was writing a story for her journalism class and wanted to feature me in the narrative. She has heard I was arrested the same day as the march on Vestal Parkway in which students were also arrested for unrelated reasons to my one-man protest in the English department office.

The title of her article: “Can there ever be too much of a good thing?”. The story she painted in her article was of a student so invested in his work and yet so misunderstood by school staff was a paradox unlike any other, and so profoundly unacceptable in a school setting. She gestured towards my passion, my tuition, and right to be attended to as a student regardless of my haughtiness and arrogance in the classroom.

The article cited the “knock heard around New London” or the moment I knocked on the graduate schools office and was met with punitive retaliation from the department as they called the police. This was an extended metaphor gesturing to the shots heard around the world during the American revolution when the red coats fired on the American colonists during the emerging revolution. The article was deeply touching, and spoke to my love of king George, but also, rebellion and active protest of the powers at play in the university system.

Her school assignment for journalism, thanks to Dr.H, was published in a local newspaper. I had hoped it would serve to enlighten the public and community about my situation. Public opinion it seemed, was beginning to turn against me. I felt like a marked man. Waiting for the inevitable demise of my situation, and the beginning of the end of my battle with the university, Contesting Admission.

THE DOCTORAL GUARD

The split occurs in the history of the English language during the Regency period; division between unreason and reason, the point of departure from Play to Dangerous in language.

J Peters (2008) Contesting Admission

I WAS DETERMINED TO FIGHT ON and knew I needed support. That was when I took an old idea from my earlier days in college and retooled it to address my new situation. Back during the glory days of my undergraduate experience, I made polo shirts for my friends, each with a hand stitched insignia to represent our little clique.

To accomplish this, I had an artist draw up a logo, and I took the digital image, and worked with a local uniform store in the community to make about a dozen uniforms for myself and my friends. All of my friends seemed to love the shirts, some still have them to this day, as a remember of the more carefree days of our youth and college experience.

I fully believed I needed to please the people around me, the staff, my class friends, community members, anyone who would rally around me to support my education and plan to become a doctoral student. I called this new band of supporters, "the doctoral Guard" and so the new division of my army of academics and allies across academe would be known moving forward. This new Guard would be outfitted with the best uniforms and be a step up from the polo shirts I had made years ago.

I paid thousands of dollars to make this new uniform for my standing reserve, the doctoral Guard. Each uniform had an insignia, and a ranking, composed of real military stripes, and two lightning bolts on the neck collar gesturing to the speed and mystique of the SS and higher level Nazi party members. SS uniforms stood apart from the general army during the Second World War, and my doctoral Guard would be the shiny example of power on campus.

My hope was the doctoral Guard would not only shield me from further mishaps on campus, but also re galvanize my support base on campus, before my situation became unmanageable. Indeed, at night, emails would go out greeting random friends, faculty and otherwise as my doctoral guard, making requests and soliciting advice on my situation on campus.

When the order of uniforms was finally completed, I was hard pressed to find someone to wear them. Along with the uniform order, was a special outfit designed just for me. It was a jacket with my name and "PhD" sewn into the lining. The lining had a break away vest with the insignia on it. In all, over twenty uniforms were made, full body, with matching pants, and all the trimmings.

KING GEORGE III AND FORGIVENESS

I hope to demonstrate meta-language during the Regency Period achieves authorial voice in discourse at the very moment it becomes dangerous to speak of American studies in the realm of reason. To be clearer, discourse departs from reason to unreason at the moment the English colonies transform into the American nation. This essay seeks to highlight the metaphysical phenomena surrounding the birth of the English regent.

J Peters (2008) Contesting Admission

THESE WERE THE DARK DAYS, and I needed to regain my sense of control. I had just been arrested, chained to a pole, and suffered a major defeat with my friends. Public opinion had turned against me, and I needed to retreat from my offensive at the university and from contesting my admission. These were some of my most tormented days before my mental health disorder was treated and formally recognized. During this time, I wrote about the similarities between myself and King George III in the sections of Contesting Admission that I was working on. Indeed, my inner dialogue, which was growing louder, filled with thoughts subsumed by voices, were centered around my struggle living among peers that believed I was ill and people who rejected me similar to King George's rejection by America during its revolution. If the implications of this period in history aren't clear enough in terms of mental hygiene law and the precedent set by the Regency Bill, then let the king's act of forgiveness

signal to the Western world, the UK, and United States another lesson: whether you are a monarch, a family member, or friend, mental illness may necessitate we forgive ourselves—or the world—when we lose our capacity to see things for what they really are. Where would we be without this personal vindication device to both create an opportunity to understand the world differently and revitalize and heal our wounds from emotional distress and bitterness? Indeed, King George III may have lost the war, but he set the stage for a new standard in personal growth and transformation. My situation called for an immediate course correction and reimagining, similar to the king. However, the events unfolding at the university seemed to have an inertia of their own. As much as I needed to pull back, I also needed to respond to the events that already occurred before my situation decompensated further and all hope was lost. Revolution was still in the air. The very same day as my arrest, there was a march on Liberty Parkway, the major thoroughfare of Liberty where the New London campus is located. The protestors marched, calling for immediate reform. Many of the protestors were also arrested the same day I was taken into custody by Liberty police, except for radically different and completely unrelated reasons.

MEETING THE CHAIR

My aim is to demonstrate the site of linguistic production during the Regency period, through various mechanisms informing power-relations in the royal family re-configured a new powerful meta-language in the hands of authority to constitute the need of new king, the so-called regent to supplement an existing ruler

J Peters (2008) Contesting Admission

MY PARENTS EVENTUALLY DECIDED TO meet with Dr. Harris directly in a last-ditch effort to put an end to this entire situation before things truly flew out of our hands. As you might imagine, our plan to meet with the English department chair was an unusual occurrence on campus. Parents rarely meet with their son's or daughter's professors, let alone the department chair. This was out of the ordinary . . . by a good mile. But what else was new about my situation, I thought? The strategy was to ask the chair to not have me go through mandatory psychiatric evaluation. My parents made the case that I was being treated for my psychiatric condition and was poised to graduate shortly. And because of how close I as to graduating, I shouldn't have to go through another ordeal, especially after the arrest. The chair refused to listen to my parents. Instead, the chair said, "Jacques isn't as good a student as he makes himself out to be." Stepping back from it all, I can understand why Dr. Harris said that. He wanted to make the case—or build the narrative—that my perception wasn't congruent with reality. He really wasn't out to bash my scholarship. At the time, I thought he was, given the nature

and context of my delusion, but the fact of the matter was that he was trying to show that I was mentally ill. I still remember my parents coming back from the meeting and telling me what happened. I fixated firmly on his critique of my scholarship to date. Instead of planning for the evaluation, which was just a few hours later, I was obsessing about Dr. Harris. When I walked into the evaluation, I was already perseverating about the department. But that didn't seem to matter.

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THE EVALUATION

"I only have one language; it is not mine" (e.g. Derrida, 1998) elaborates on the metaphysical nature of American Studies' material problem.

J Peters (2008) Contesting Admission

LISTENING TO THE SONG "GO Your Own Way" with headphones on and walking across campus, I marched into the counseling center for my evaluation like a modern-day Julius Cesar of Academe crossing the figurative Rubicon into Rome. Similar to Julius Cesar, my fate, too, would be marked by my behavior that day in front of the psychologists. The staff at the New London Counseling Center sat me down in a small room. I remember the psychologist. She was very nice and non-threatening, and I actually enjoyed speaking with her and answering her questions. She seemed to just want to know why I was asked to speak with her. I explained to her, in no uncertain terms, why I was being evaluated. She asked me point blank, "So what happened, Jacques?" I responded, "Well, it wasn't one incident. It was a series of incidents." And we went on from there. I explained to her that it wasn't just one precipitating incident that led us to where we all were today. No, it was many mishandled incidents that brought about this evaluation and the situation in the department that seemed to unravel more and more by the day. I passed the evaluation. To this day, I am not sure if this was a good thing.

DAD'S ADVICE

WITHOUT A DOUBT, THE BEST piece of advice about my unfolding situation came after my evaluation from my dad. He said to me, “Stay low and keep moving.” I was a few months away from graduation and was being pushed out of the university by the English department. At least, they tried to push me out. My entire strategy up until this point was to make waves until someone responded. Well, the entire university was now on watch. I was on everyone’s radar, and it was not working out for me. I needed some privacy or, at least, some distance between myself, the university, and anyone in a position to force my withdrawal from classes. His advice was on point. Although I took it to an unhealthy extreme, it was nevertheless good advice. With the exception of attending class, I almost pulled a one-eighty, disappearing from the university’s radar—and everyone’s radar—altogether. This is when I truly became isolated. To be fair, it wasn’t all my doing. My isolation and social withdrawal had a lot to do with my constrained financial situation, for example, for gas and extended trips out of the county. I was walking a lot more to and from places and staying very, very local. I remember walking around the neighborhood those days, feeling connected to the community—for a little while at least. I didn’t see or hear from friends very often. I remembered thinking to myself, “Well, this is my new life.” I was ready to fully embrace starting over. I had already committed so much time and energy to this plan, so why not follow it through to the end? I played out scenarios in my head of what my plan would look like. The visualization pleased me enough not to go running back home.

BODY ODOR AND THEORIES OF HYGIENE

Medicine as a “programme of hygiene as a regime of health for populations” (Foucault, 1972–1977) remarks upon both invisible and visible acts to discontinue the studies of this student.

J. Peters (2008) Contesting Admission

OF ALL THE REPORTED CONCERNS that bothered me the most, either in single reports or a group of them (to this day I do not know which is the case), was the list of grievances about my hygiene. Although people with a mental illness are cited for their uncleanliness, I was still able to—and enjoyed—bathing at this point in my downward turn. Back then, during a particularly hot summer, I was working as a gardener for a doctor in the community to make money, given the fact that I was cut-off from student loans because of my status as a non-matriculated graduate student. Because I wasn't driving anymore because of a shortage of gas money, I kept my car parked by my house without gas and was taking the bus to and from school and work. I would imagine that there were days when I had an odor, in addition to the scent of nicotine, that mixed in with the existing sweat from the hot sun. Whatever the reason, it was apparently noticeable enough to raise concern from the school. The day before my evaluation, I went to the mall and got a pedicure. I am still not certain why my hygiene was so alarming or whether I was just alarming on my own—it is not clear given the language from the

university. Later on, my hygiene did suffer, but this was during the final throes of my time in the community before I was hospitalized and experienced difficulties with bathing. The list of concerns cites events that unfolded from the perspective of the university, communications from the school and myself, and the school's informal and—later on—formal assessment of my mental health. Limited and riddled with biases and stigmatized theories on how a person's mental health condition would be portrayed if they were in crisis, there are many items on this list that are speculative and even misrepresentative of what was happening in my life.

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THE EYE PATCH

THE LATEST IN WHAT SEEMED like a barrage of totally unexpected and unwelcome occurrences emerged from a trip to New Jersey. I desperately wanted to visit my friends who had just graduated. There was so much to tell them, and they needed to hear what was happening at school. I drove down to New York City, but the trip took longer than expected. I must have been very distracted or made too many stops along the way because by the time I had reached NYC, eight hours has elapsed on what should have been a three-hour car ride. When I finally called my friend Patrick to explain I had arrived late, he politely asked me not to come by his place because it was almost bedtime. I was angry. I needed to speak with my friends. After all, I had just driven all day and was now three hours away from home. By this time, it was late, and I was getting weary driving around aimlessly looking for a safe spot to rest. I found myself in New Jersey. I was running out of gas and needed to fill up before the drive back home. I found myself in the city of Patterson. I pulled off Interstate 80 and began looking for a gas station, but I couldn't find anything right off the highway. After getting nervous I would run out of gas, I began calling out my passenger car window to a few people walking on the street if they knew where a gas station was. The people on the street approached my car from the passenger side. They reached in through the window and grabbed my wallet that I had been leaving out on the seat. After driving all day and not making any progress connecting with friends, I had enough. I got out of the car and asked the two people for my wallet back. I woke up the emergency room

surrounded again by family. Although I don't remember my behavior in the emergency room, my parents do, and I am told I was rude and condescending to the doctor. When I got back to my car after being discharged from the emergency room, I noticed that cables were dangling loosely from the dashboard—they must have tried to hotwire the car but failed. That was one small piece of luck I had that night. I drove back to New London that night with a black eye. Returning to school with an eye patch raised some questions. Nobody, including the staff, seemed to care or listen to the details of my story. They didn't care what really happened, that I was car-jacked in Patterson, New Jersey when I pulled off the highway to get gas. They only heard I was in an off-campus altercation, so this too was documented on the list of concerns for my life.

VOICES OF FOUCAULT

*The caesura (Greek: split) is a split in the genesis of knowledge to this date. The items I mobilize to familiarize the reader with this warehouse of unknown is “the reference to the interiority of intention” (Foucault M., *The Archeology of Knowledge & The Discourse on Language*, 1972) to supplant existing Rhetorical theory.*

J. Peters (2008) Contesting Admission

FOR A SEMINAR ON INTERPRETATION, I was asked to write down on a piece of scrap paper three things I cannot live without. At that time, I was floridly psychotic, self-referential, tangential, and totally detached from what was happening to me, around me, and despite me. On the paper, I wrote down three things: (1) Ensure, (2) Education, and (3) Language. I choose Ensure—and the other two words—for their complex and profound importance in my life, as well as for their multiplicity of meanings. Because of my symptoms, I was in basic survival mode. My body was crying out that I needed to focus on my most basic needs if I wanted to survive and continue to follow my dreams. That is where the Ensure drink comes into play, and my familiarity with basic, artificial nutrition has a rich past.

My grandmother had passed away years ago. Yet I still remember the various life-sustaining and life-preserving measures our family took to keep her alive and ensure her health and vitality. My family ordered cartons and trays of Ensure for her. For over a decade, they arrived at my grandmother's apartment.

I am no stranger to artificial nutrition—whether in the oncology unit or nursing homes—and how to keep the body alive through any means necessary. This is something I have been exposed and seen as a profound ethical dilemma. I continue to question it for my own personal end-of-life plans, including capacity issues, my own situation, and my history with losing the ability to care for myself legally. Knowing how I have lost capacity once before and how I was told I might not ever get it back, the associated thoughts and feelings of being totally powerless to make decisions on my own behalf were as devastating as they were frightening. The feeling of not being in control was something that I have always feared. Many people fear this as well but are never put in a place where, physiologically, they are not able to control themselves.

MANIFEST LANE PARK

I must pass through the concept of Play traversed in Structure, Sign, and Play as a mechanism to supplement the finitude of language.

I will gesture to the notes in Derrida's margins re-working the content of Levi-Strauss "The point being that this word, both in English and French, means 'to supply a deficiency,' on the one hand, and 'to supply something additional,' on the other" (e.g., Derrida 1950). Beyond the definition of Play, Derrida provides the moment in which this slippage in language becomes a danger to society.

J.Peters (2008) Contesting Admission

SEARCHING FOR ANSWERS AND BECOMING increasingly agitated on an everyday basis, I would drive to self-soothe myself and unwind after spending fifteen-hour days on campus working on my manuscript, Contesting Admission. During that time, I spent most of my days in the library in between classes, doing research for my paper and being overloaded with too many courses. Knowing that my friends were no longer available to whisk me away to Atlantic City for a weekend, I was forced to scale back on my recreation time or, at least, how I went about distancing myself from all of the madness on campus. I still very much needed to escape and preserve what was left of my own serenity. I had a momentum I needed to maintain to keep up with my courses, my evolving paper, research, and new life as a non-matriculated graduate student. So I drove, sometimes thinking of it as patrolling. I really got to know the outlying community. I figured back then that because I would be completing a Ph.D. program in the

southern tier, it was time to get to know the community. One such voyage was a trip to Manifest Lane Park that I will never forget . I had just completed six hours of road time, driving deep into Pennsylvania. I was driving aimlessly but generally following a blue route. In case you aren't familiar with the PA department of transportation, depending on your direction and heading, there are designated blue routes and red routes along certain interstates. At that time, I was caught up in sending out status messages. Facebook was becoming very popular, and the rise of the "status," along with my obsession of my student status, coincided and intensified my growing delusional system of how I could signal my general state and condition to my peers. I was also hyper-sexual then, so I chose exit 69 to get off the highway and find shelter. Exit 69 was also "The Colonies," which meshed well with my other obsession: King George III. After getting off the highway, I drove around the surrounding community and found a small park: Manifest Lane. Pulling up to it, I realized this was the perfect place to rest, take pictures, and figure out a plan. I got out of the car and began arranging signs in my car. These weren't signs or signals that made sense or would gain the attention needed to really help my situation. Instead, I placed coins, papers, and other office supplies in different positions to signal to the world that I was here, ready to interact, watch and observe, and was fully aware of the world around me. The truth was that I was so confused, disconnected, and out of it, so much so that I was walking around a closed park that was hundreds of miles away from safety and all without a plausible explanation. I walked around the park for a while, eventually realizing I needed to rest. Then, I drove to a nearby hotel. I pulled up to a giant sign that read "REGISTRATION," and I thought something seemed right about staying at this hotel. My ideas of references and circumstantial thinking we're so intense that almost everything seemed like it had hidden meaning. Checking in, I heard a noise from a balcony in the lobby. I thought it was the FBI or government following my travels and conducting their investigation on my loitering charge and abuse from the English department. That was when icons, religion, and history all collided. I began to hear, think about, and approach the world based on how these new and emerging delusions—they pulled me into a distorted reality. So to cope with the

added thoughts and my even louder mind, I used the bathtub to cool down my body and slow down my thoughts. That was the last time I took any medication. All I had left was random pills, and they were all strewn about my bag and the car's floor. As soon as the voices softened, I slept, waking up to a new world—one for my eyes only—for this living nightmare was only beginning to fully form.

In the morning, feeling generally rested, I drove back to New London. I had taken what was left of my medication and felt a little better. Well, enough to drive at least, and that is exactly what I did by heading back to Liberty along a blue route, signaling my safety and a successful trip.

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THE OTHER DOCTOR AND HER YARD

I WAS YOUNG MAN WHEN ALL of this happened, and I used every and any survival method I could think of to stay alive, healthy, and seemingly able to take care of myself. All the while, I was told I was losing my ability to make rational judgment calls and that I was increasingly using bad decision-making skills. Back then, I heard these behaviors as life choices. I ignored these very loud warning sirens. This should have signaled to me that there was a serious problem. But I was a young adult. I had just learned how to live on my own in the community as an adult and function at the level of a college student in upstate New York. Yet something was happening to me that was turning back the hands of time—at least developmentally and in terms of my own capacity to self-manage, exercise sound judgment, and be rational about my living situation and life circumstances. My situation was becoming more and more serious. I knew that if I was to survive on my own, I would have to be more resourceful and clever about managing my money, conserving food and energy, and living completely independent. I was preparing to live a new lifestyle. In doing so, I began working for a medical doctor, whom I was referred to by Dr. H because he knew I needed the money to support my graduate education. When I first pulled up to the doctor's home, I was still driving. But gas money was becoming increasingly hard to come by, so when I met this doctor, I must have appeared as extremely desperate. The doctor seemed nice enough when we first met. Living on the other side of New London, she was older, unmarried, and had a large yard.

Every day, I would head over to her yard after class and begin work there. That work usually began with a tour of my assigned duties. The doctor would lead me around her yard, and we would go over what needed to be done. The work was hard labor, of which I was not accustomed to because I was an academic and a privileged young man from Wales County. The doctor knew very little about my background, it seemed. She spoke down to me as if I was a day laborer. Most of the time, she seemed unhappy with what I did. There was usually some weed I didn't pull out of the ground or some task that was left unfinished and needed more work. When I finally ran out of money for regular gas and couldn't drive there, the doctor commented, "So the only thing wrong with your car is you don't have enough money for gas. I have a hard time believing that, Jacques." This is why I knew she wasn't totally aware of my situation. The last day I remember working for her, I was in her basement mopping the floor. The floor didn't seem dirty, and I couldn't figure out why I she had asked to mop a clean floor in her basement. But I did my best, which it turned out, wasn't good enough. Via Dr. H, I was asked politely not to come back to work.

ARTIFICIAL NUTRITION

ON ACCOUNT OF MY RAPIDLY dwindling resources, I began to progressively stockpile Ensure, along with other artificial nutrition drinks, snacks, medications, (even gasoline), and, eventually, sugar to keep the heart pumping. I lost weight for an extended period of time because of my limited access to the local soup kitchen and from a lack of available affordable transportation. So I began asking friends to bring me packages of fresh groceries from week to week. My situation got so bad that toward the end of May, I was eating leftover meals from the common fridge. I had no idea whose meals they were or their freshness and didn't really care it was obvious things were going missing. Eventually, the owner would begin to point fingers at the person he thought was eating his leftovers. But that was a minor infraction in the litany of boundary transgressions, threatening gestures, non-verbal articulations, and unrecognizable signs I would point to when making a point or trying to broadcast my thoughts to my peers at school, at home, or when driving. Ensure became a more and more friendly visitor in my fridge. I'd stockpiled everything that could potentially be depleted. I knew full well that I may not have another opportunity to get these supplies. I would simply have to do without it to continue on with my struggle and work cross-purposes with the university. Of which I refused to accept graduation and move on with my life unless the school overturned its rejection of my application to its English graduate school.

LANGUAGE ON NOTICE: WRITING AND MEANING MAKING

I HAVE ALWAYS GONE THROUGH PHASES of how I use language and words. For a little while, depending on a few parameters, I would reuse, recycle, and try to insert the same word over and over again into my conversations. Partly as a linguistic self-exercise and partly neurosis, the next phase in my life was beginning to manifest. Out of this formula for thinking about language came a new expression: language on notice. Similar to putting the university on watch, as if putting a great event in history on watch, so too did I try to put language itself on notice. For me, all of this translated into appearing at court for my loitering charge and answering the complaint. In 2008, I wanted to put the world on notice. From institutions like SUS New London to the court system to the mental health system and to every long-standing counter-discourse coming my way, I wanted the world to know I was not giving up. Flamboyant, grandiose, and very much passionate about my righteous path ahead, I would press on, however long it took, fighting with whatever means I had to complete until final victory. I believed the court system would see it my way. On the way to the courthouse, after my initial arrest, Dr. H and myself took different vehicles there. She followed me from behind the entire ride to the courthouse. This was no easy feat because I didn't drive directly there. No, instead, I made it known to the community what I was doing in another desperate attempt to rally support to my cause. I drove around and around and around. Dr. H followed me every step

of way, no matter how off course I was or how seemingly bizarre I was acting. I still remember circling around Royal Developmental RCC to rally their support for what I envisioned as “progress” and a good outcome for that day’s legal proceeding.

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META-POWER AND TRANSFORMATION

*American scholarship roots conceptual indoctrination in emancipation;
I decree the English system of signification arranges regency period(s)
hazardously cosign willfully in the term I dispense: (meta-power).*

J. Peters (2008) Contesting Admission

META-POWER, A TERM I USE often in Contesting Admission, is a concept that exists only in the metaphysical world in which communication and language operate. Surrounding what I thought was the birth of my new word, the first and ultimate signified a cognitive distortion that got terribly out of hand. I fully believed that in the same way meta-power would disrupt, alter, and reverse the circumstances of my reality in 2008, my new word would change the English language forever. Language on notice comes with a connotation, implying that language is the object and my word is the subject. This meant that language itself has no choice about the matter. Some people might call this my intellectual rape of the system of signification. As if, without consent, the imposition of my will to change meaning from within and carve out my own space as I choose and see fit is domineering, oppressive, and repressive to those who are the object of the gaze. For these people, I can only say I had no choice about the matter. When it's a choice between recovery or falling victim to schizophrenia, I choose creating a reality in which I could not only survive but rather thrive through the most radical determination of

the self, a triumph over the limits of the mind and illness. Therefore, like the phoenix image I signaled to before, my body and language were not only bound together, but reborn together, joined at the very root of meaning making and perception. Like all living and evolving beings, language has no limits. And like all creatures bound by ethics, I have a duty to liberate my fellow man from inhumanity thrust on him by his fellow man. This means that my decision to inject language with my own ethos must be free of pathos or any pathology that aims to restrict meaning and the very demise of language. In many ways, I am freeing people from the possibilities and risk of exposure to those who wield words and rhetoric for evil and cross-purposes of freedom, liberty, and the pursuit of higher knowledge and meaning making. It begins by flattening the very structure of the English language and lowering it to the ground floor of the masses. Everyone will have access to it. Restrictions, transgressions, and offenses are all obsolete in the face of a new chain of being for all men willing to follow freedom to the gates of tomorrow, and crimes against humanity and yesterday's evils are never forgotten by those bringing about this new freedom to all people. Writing provides this universal access to language and with it comes perhaps not a new word, but new meaning. Every author has a new interpretive eye. Every blog post is an addendum on how to proceed with interacting and negotiating health, healing, and mental health practices. Writing is the content, the audience, the object of new and limitless perspectives, ethics, cultural considerations, and every intersection of mental health with the world of the living. We all want to be reborn at some point in our lives. Whether it be out of necessity or a healthy, creative junction in your life, you too can discover the art and science of writing on mental health. Whether from the social work perspective, medical, psychological, peer, or anyone who has intersected with the mental health field and its practice in the provision of care, there is no mechanism with greater possibilities to recreate your future than writing and meaning making through language. My education was something that I considered to be above reproach. It was indefensibly pure in nature, both noble and regal. The highest gift I could give my school was to continue on with my academic affairs. This deepness of my belief in education still echoed

in the chamber halls and libraries I passed through: those same halls where I would hang up signs, making myself out to be a victim of political academic games and unfair practices of higher education. The extreme nature of the victimization inflicted upon me by the English department went deep into the psychological wellspring of crimes that persisted to continue. They'd continued without retribution, the intervention of the law, or mediation by a party at the university or by friends and relatives. Collateral intervention and treatment could have put everything into a more accurate or relative perspective. If they had been applied in a non-judgmental way to my situation, this might have helped in finding treatment for me sooner before my psychosis was in full bloom. Instead, the very language I was seeking—the completion of my unpolished rhetoric and years spent learning about how words work—would also fail me. I lost contact with my friends, and my high command collapsed. My apartment mate imparted his last words of wisdom on my situation. He spoke to my parents, who came up to support the evaluation process. His words landed on deaf ears. Whatever he told my parents I dismissed out of paranoia and out of anger that our relationship had fallen apart at the very moment I needed help. One night, while I was on my computer, I thought I had discovered that my apartment mate was on my account and impersonating me in talks with my other friends. I was furious. I walked into the common room, picked up a chair, and threw it against his wall, yelling, "Coward!" Given that the situation in the apartment had unraveled so much, I went home to visit my parents. This would be the last time I was in my family's home until my future discharge from the hospital. I remember being so manic that I took frequent showers, and in the process of trying to self-soothe, I broke the hand bar in the shower when getting up. After I got out of the shower, my parents told me my apartment mate had called them. He told them he was afraid of me. He felt I might poison him or just plain hurt him in an uncontrolled rage. I was even more furious and, soon, depressed. I listened to music all night about abandonment and loss and connection, playing Fleetwood Mac's "The Chain" ad infinitum.

THE STRATEGIST

My career at SUS New London suggests “this possibility for mutual understanding and agreement” to prevent even “the ordinary use of the English language” (Reisch, 2005) and admission into the English graduate program.

J. Peters (2008) Contesting Admission

THERE IS VERY LITTLE I or anyone else knows about the life—or even whereabouts—of Dr. H today. I can only speak about what happened ten years ago. And very little information, even from back then, explains how Dr. H became so involved in my circle of friends and family, academic life, and ultimate demise. I met Dr. H in a class called Voices of Foucault, a graduate seminar in philosophy, interpretation, and culture I was taking through the PIC department. I was banned from taking any graduate classes in the English department, so I looked elsewhere for courses, and I had found the perfect class in Voices of Foucault. The class was taught by Dr. Russ, a distinguished professor of philosophy. The course was a survey of all of Foucault’s books, lectures, and writings. After the restriction was placed on my registration file, I made my decision to go ahead and register for this class anyway. The very first day, I arrived early, and inside the classroom was one woman with a “Think New London” pin on her lapel. By the time classes began in the spring semester, when Voices of Foucault started, I was already hearing voices and was extremely paranoid. When I met Dr. H for the very first time, she introduced herself to me as a student sitting in on one of

Dr. Russ' classes. I asked her if she meant "auditing," a method where students could review coursework before a dissertation defense or to avoid academic probation in other circumstances. I introduced myself to Dr. H as a non-matriculated graduate student, and those words were enough to spark our conversation and set the trajectory for a series of bizarre circumstances that took place for the rest of the semester and my undergraduate experience in college. The first bizarre occurrence was that very day at the conclusion of the first day of class with Dr. Russ. Dr. H and I went outside during break to smoke and began to launch into the real reasons we were in the class. I confessed to Dr. H that I was restricted from taking graduate courses in English, so I wanted to take a course with a familiar professor in another department. I explained to her about the staff and key players from the English department and how I wasn't on good terms with many of them, including the graduate school director and Dr. Harris. During the same conversation, after dropping so many names and allegiances, Dr. H confessed to me she was vaguely familiar with my story because she had mutual friends with some of the faculty members of the English department. I was intrigued by this: with my restriction, I couldn't even physically come near the same faculty members Dr. H was friendly with outside the context of the university. The confession went deeper, though. Dr. H was not a student. She was a terminated faculty member of the school of management. Later that night, I talked on the phone with some friends about my experience. It seemed as if my friends were very familiar with this terminated faculty member, and they warned me point blank about her, using not so subtle language to stay away. But I wasn't listening to anyone's advice at this point in my illness—not my friends and certainly not the English department and faculty. Something made Dr. H's advice so different than what I had heard from everyone I had known previously. I was under the delusion that Dr. H was a liaison from the university, and I fully believed that just by the attention Dr. H gave by listening to my situation that she was somehow in my life to help negotiate a peaceful solution and resolution to either the loitering charge I had gotten from the department or overturning the admission decision altogether.

CAMPUS RECEPTION

AT THE VERY END OF my tenure as an undergraduate student, I attended a reception on campus where I participated in honoring faculty members who were dedicated to people with disabilities. In my entire time as a student, I had never had a disability or a documented disorder, but in May of that spring, I was not only receiving assistance through the disabilities office on campus, but I was also speaking at their ceremony and reception for graduating students. The story of how I became connected with disabilities services and the event that transpired at the end of the semester is one of deception, intrigue, respect, and courage for both the faculty and students taking part in the event. This story begins during course registration six months earlier. I had just run into a professor I had taken a course with in my very first semester at New London. Her name was Dr. D, and she both respected my work and had vanished from my radar for two years until that final semester. When we ran into each other in the department, we talked about this loss of connection, our finding each other again, and the timeliness of it all that we could bookend my experience in the English department with her courses. Indeed, Dr. D suggested that upon matriculation to the graduate program, I should take her course and finish out undergraduate school with her, the same staff member I had begun my path with in medieval literature years back. But when I received notice that I was rejected from the program, I needed to change my courses, reregister for some, and deregister from others because of my changing status as a student and the restriction placed on my course selection. Dr. D was fairly understanding of my

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fallout from the graduate school and the initial events that unfolded around the miscommunication of my intentions to reapply to the program and how to proceed with my undergraduate–graduate status conflict as a result of being ready to graduate but still taking courses as an non-matriculated graduate student. Because of all this confusion, Dr. D suggested I speak with the disabilities department and explain to them my confusion and ask for guidance on how to proceed. So I contacted the disabilities department. I was interviewed, and along with being provided access to a library carousel, which is a story for another day, I was provided with documentation and a plan to handle moving forward with my graduate studies. Unfortunately, I did not follow the plan. In fact, I made it more complicated by making other plans and problem solving issues in the department without creating more. By mid-semester, I was very paranoid and becoming delusional. Dr. D gave a seminar in the library where a speaker was presenting a paper. I found the whole affair very adversarial and found many things to be more and more against me, especially when attached to university affairs. I observed in the speaking event that the author was going through what seemed like an interrogation from the audience, and a series of hostile criticisms on the author's merit, validity, and value of his scholarship were thrown at him. When I explained how I perceived the event, Dr. D laughed and said, "It was just a friendly academic conversation." I couldn't have disagreed more with Dr. D. And as time unfolded and a larger term paper came due, I realized I was in no shape to write a paper for a graduate seminar unless I was more focused and devoting my energy to coursework, not fighting windmills across the academy. So I agreed to withdraw from Dr. D's class. I didn't see much of Dr. D after I withdrew from the class, but her legacy that semester was firmly intact. I was a self-identifying student with disabilities: specifically, a psychiatric disability. The office had all my medical information, and I signed forms to release everything to the school. This was a big mistake—my medical information was used to mount the argument that I was unfit to continue as a student because my current behavior, given my medical history, signaled to staff that I might also be sick. I had the opportunity to honor three people who were important to my success—albeit ultimate

demise—with coursework, campus life, and any access issue I had with campus services because of my disability. I chose to take the time to honor these people because in that last semester, I had fewer than few allies, and the ones who were there mattered very much to me in terms of keeping my hope alive that I would resolve the graduate school issues, my loitering charge, and all the problems created as a result of responding to the admission decision so reactively and without thinking about the long-term effect my behavior on campus would have on my health. These people mattered so much to me that I wrote a little blurb for each honoree. The first person I honored was the department secretary of the English undergraduate department. Susan was always very friendly, respectful, and concerned with my happiness, even in the final throws the semester. She was always supportive, even when she couldn't directly change the political climate in the department, and she was helpful in helping me with the restrictions that limited my ability to visit the department office in person. For the later phases of the semester, I was only communicating with Susan via email, largely because I wasn't allowed in the office without the police being called. Susan was always there to help, even when I wasn't present. The second faculty member I honored was Dr. W. Dr. W offered counseling to me as a friend and as a former professor who had taught my Shakespeare class. I visited Dr. W as much as possible, updating her regularly on the events unfolding around me, and she would offer her feedback in the most reassuring yet critical manner as possible to both soothe my anger and offer an alternative perspective. Dr. W was the only staff member to recommend me to the graduate school in English. To this day, I have her recommendation saved and reflect on this recommendation, looking at my standing as a student in “reality” versus the delusion I had created. Reading her recommendation and knowing she stood courageously in the face of the department and beside her student when she knew the outcome would be catastrophic—or at least a giant nuisance—is heartening. Dr. W did her very best to make sure the fallout didn't hurt me or jeopardize my work as student. The final faculty member I honored was Dr. G, my professor in English for several courses during the summer of 2008. He believed in my passion, my skill, and my dedication to learning. He

was also a friend to me when I began to unravel. He never judged the changes in my personality, speech, or behavior. Indeed, when I was with Dr. G, it felt like old times on campus, even when the department was becoming unhinged. Dr. G was authentic, and I learned more about being an academic who has heart and integrity when being with him instead of being the elitist scholar that I had been before meeting him. I never felt dismayed, disillusioned, or without hope when I was in the presence of Dr. D. To this day, I keep tabs on his whereabouts and his journey through the chronicles of higher education, wishing him all the best and more.

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THE NEW HIGH COMMAND

SOMEWHERE AROUND THE TIME I began running out of medication, I began hearing voices. My body was riddled with involuntary spasms and tremors. I went looking for any and all kinds of medication I could find to ensure I would continue as a student in the pursuit of higher education. That was when I noticed the signs were changing. Words were taking on double, sometimes triple, meanings. I was unable to read or speak coherently. I'd get tongue-tied when trying to utter a phrase, common expression, or any colloquialism generally assumed to have a particular meaning. I wanted to challenge everything, everyone, and all meanings to destabilize and create a new, altogether different, language. I'd get confused when communicating with people and reading directions—even simple hand gestures that everyone knows became a source of bewilderment. I was losing speech at a fairly substantial rate. I knew I would have to begin planning my responses, greetings, and salutations with my new limited capacity. This was difficult, especially because some pieces of language were becoming unclear or wholly useless at different rates. The act of trying to implement basic interactions or sustain situationally inappropriate language increasingly became a struggle. For example, I wasn't able to speak with my professor directly. Yet I had to communicate with him for class each week when we met face to face. Therefore, I began bowing instead of saying hello or goodbye and would make any gesture instead of orally contributing, something which only built the tension between myself and the staff I was supposed to keep at a distance.

I began stealing medication at my apartment. I'd search through the drawers of my housemates and swallow unknown pills that weren't prescribed for me—I was hearing very commanding voices to keep taking more medication, all of the medication. Otherwise, I would have to begin fortifying my home against Liberty police. I believed they were broadcasting these messages on the telephone poles from speakers—they speakers blasted out that the police would enter my home, with force, if I did not do one thing or another. I refused to listen. Not because I knew they were just voices, but because I knew the voices were all the self-doubt, negativity, and shame I had experienced. I felt determined not to let them follow or consume me. I believed that if I continued on and lived a normal life, this would involve adjusting to my newfound stiffness, a condition that would later blossom into catatonia and other physical complaints. It was becoming increasingly difficult to move around and ambulate without confusion and extreme agitation.

THE CIA AND BELGIUM GOVERNMENT

DR. H WITNESSED FIRSTHAND MY descent. To this day, her interventions and the bizarre circumstances I would find myself in later on in the semester are puzzling. Before long, I found myself spending more and more time with Dr. H. Dinners, theatre, events on campus, and local activism projects absorbed most of our time together. Indeed, when the situation in my apartment required me to make a quick exit and get out, I moved in with Dr. H. Together, we lived in a large Victorian house on the other side of the city. I remember observing how much additional police activity there was on this new side of town, and she remarked, “How exciting!” Although I wasn’t as initially agitated in this new house as the old one, I only managed to slow down the progression of the psychosis by moving into this calmer environment. One night, we went to a fine arts movie in a theater downtown. I had only a few dollars left to my name, and no plan was in place to gain more funds to continue the lifestyle I had been accustomed to for so long. There was a tip jar in the theater and a sign to tip generously because it would go to a raffle where one person would gain special housing or some sort of benefit. I put all my money in the jar and wrote down my name, email, and what was required to enter—that turned out to be the night that I drained all of my remaining funds. I only tipped such a large amount because I thought the theater was creating a special fund for my problem matriculating into the graduate program. I was deeply wrong and was flamboyant with manic energy when I stepped inside

to watch the movie. I was bowing up and down and waving to the audience to thank them for helping me with my problems on campus. Another night, Dr. H took me for a walk around the block after I had screamed about how Dr. Harris should be in jail and my ongoing issues with the department. Dr. H took me to a closed store. She knew the owner, so we went inside to commensurate. The odd thing was that Dr. H spent most of the conversation tearful and crying. I was too disoriented to get a good read of the conversation—I was so distracted and unable to focus that, without putting too much thought into it, I was sure that the crying was her feeling sad about my situation and there being no clear resolution. To this day, I don't know why she was crying. All I know is that it was one bizarre situation after another until I found myself at a restaurant where Dr. H had a free voucher for a meal because the restaurant hadn't had its grand opening yet and was training its staff that evening. But given I didn't have any money, I thought the restaurant had to be owned by the federal government, CIA, or FBI, who were supplying me with a means to pay for food because I couldn't get any more student loans given my status with the university. Toward the end of the semester when I had to find a job to survive without loans, Dr. H connected me with a medical doctor who was experiencing some physical issues. The doctor needed yard work done outside her home and cleaning done inside. The doctor didn't believe me when I said I took the bus to her because I didn't have gas money. By the time I was working for the doctor, I was already talking the bus, had no money for gas, and was under the supervision of a medical doctor, a doctor of strategy, my own clinical staff, and my primary care physicians. When my friends tried to tell me there was an issue with my mental health, I laughed because I was being supervised by so many professionals who couldn't detect anything wrong with me. The only thing wrong was everything else in my life: my environment, the people around me, and the unfortunate—not to mention bizarre—circumstances I kept getting myself into. In the end, the paper Dr. H coached me to write, Contesting Admission, was the biggest legacy of her bad advice given throughout that spring semester. Dr. H watched me stay up day and night and write that paper ad infinitum for a purpose that was irrational and for a reason

that wasn't important in the grand scheme of things. Indeed, the spotlight was already on me, and the paper did little to organize my thoughts or come up with a more rational and valid plan for pursuing graduate school. The paper's legacy, while not wholly responsible for my loitering and arrest on campus, did play a self-soothing role, allowing me to process the loitering charge through research, distraction, and artistic expression. This was her strategy. Dr. H, after all, was a professor of strategic management. Ultimately, she managed my friendships, my relationships with my family, and all other aspects of my personal life when I was in the hospital. My mail, while I was still living somewhat independently, was written "care of- or- C/O" Dr. H. As my relationships, ability to care for myself, and behavior all unraveled, Dr. H was at the forefront of my psychotic episode. After almost knifing her tires with her own cutlery a few moments before I was taken to the hospital by the police, I hid her laptop in a van. In the end, I was frightened, too, of Dr. H, my strategist. There came a time when I believed she was a spy from Belgium working with the CIA and FBI to make sure I was registered for the witness protection program to escape from the abusive English department. To this day, I still haven't put all the pieces together on how Dr. H became such a major player in my life, going from a total stranger to becoming a total stranger again. I hear, though, that she is residing in a new city these days. I wonder how much has really changed, if I knew anything at all about her, and what she is really like without cognitive distortions to make things even more confusing.

THE COMMUNITY GARDEN

LIFE WAS BECOMING MORE AND more confusing. And yet, sometimes, it all seemed to make perfect sense. Dr. H asked me one morning if I was interested in helping the local community. Pine Street was located on what most of the population of Liberty would consider to be “the other side of the tracks.” In plain English, it was the resource-deprived sector of Liberty. The community needed help, and I wanted to assist. After all, I was in the midst of an ethical and moral battle of wills with the university, and this fight extended to all areas of my life. I told Dr. H that I wanted to help, and she handed me a basket of plant bulbs. After giving me this large basket of bulbs, she walked me down Pine Street. We waved at people on their porches, smiling at them as we passed by—I am assuming—to signal our positive intentions to the local community. We arrived at a small patch of land that was riddled with some rocks and dirt—it looked nothing like a garden. She said to me, “This will need some work, but you, Jacques, are just the person to do it.” I agreed, and in my downtime, or whenever I could spare a moment from writing, I would head to the community garden to plant bulbs. I believed then I was building a community. Every so often, when I would become upset or forlorn, Dr. H would ask if I had been to the garden to plant bulbs. This was a healthy practice for a while, until, eventually, I lost sight of its importance for my health and why I was planting seeds in a garden. One morning, after a long night of writing, I placed the latest version of Contesting Admission on Dr. H’s placemat on the dinner table. On top of it, I

put a bulb to signal I had finally discovered the root of power and had made progress in my paper that evening. After this display, the garden, it's worth, and the community became a very strange and unforgiving place.

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PASS THE BILL

THE CLIMATE IN LIBERTY WAS getting more and more extreme, otherworldly, and ripe for change. I really needed things to change at this point. I knew eventually the tide of politics would turn against me on campus, so I had to act quickly. My work on Contesting Admission went into high gear. I worked endlessly and relentlessly on the manuscript. The paper was my last hope to overturning the admission decision and moving forward with my education.

I was running out of money, supplies, gasoline, and everything needed to carry on affairs independently and living as a non matriculated graduate student with no funding or plan. I knew if I didn't mobilize everything I had left, for one last fulcrum to launch my education forward, I would be in serious distress. It was time to rally everyone left in my corner, the doctoral guard, and whatever family or friends were still believed in me to carry on as a student in New London.

I began sending the manuscript out to friends, family, and anyone who would read it. Most people didn't respond to my emails and inquiries about the paper. This was my bill. This was my own modern day regency bill for the English department at BU. Once published, the bill would provide and justify my admission to the graduate program. Throughout the paper, meta-power, the word I dispensed to alter and change the course of events at the college would enter into language itself at the university and change the course of meaning making in the academy forever.

The bill was circulated far and wide. I sent the bill out in emails, with a subject line "PASS the BILL", with the paper attached to everyone in my network. Convinced I was at the precipice of a new era, I was generally excited and happy to experience the momentum and shift from deployment of my new word into university affairs, specifically, the English department. Not getting anywhere with the bill's passage, or confirmation of its acceptance into a literary journal, I looked for answers elsewhere.

authorHOUSE®

ONE LAST TRIP HOME

WITH THE LAST OF MY money in my pocket, I was driving down Interstate 81 through Pennsylvania to see McDaggot for his birthday. I brought a change of clothing with me and a bottle of Cabo Wabo tequila as a gift for McDaggot. After all, I needed to make a good impression because I had recently found out that McDaggot would be living with Cynthia and Patrick in a few months, and I knew my behavior would be reported back to them. I even took preemptive measures. Before leaving, I texted Cynthia with a new phone I had purchased just one hour before leaving so that she would be aware of my presence in the city. If I ever was to exile Patrick and expose his oppressive behavior that was aggravating my friendship with Cynthia, I needed to make sure the last of my money was well spent by making sure I could communicate with her throughout the following summer after graduation. I made sure all of the complaints the English department voiced about my behavior and appearance were rendered moot. Looking at my general appearance driving down, you would have seen a properly groomed young man, not the alarming, uncleanly person the English department described to the dean of students. When I entered the state of New Jersey after crossing out of Pennsylvania, I took another dose of stimulants. I needed to stay focused and alert because I was driving without insurance. As my car sped along the roadway, racing ever closer to New York City, I felt my veins beginning to tense up. This was nothing unusual because I had taken another dose of stimulants and that kind of sensation usually followed downing those pills. Looking around the sides of the

highway, I began to see the outer cities of New Jersey that surround Manhattan. But this was not the only place I was looking. Gazing down at my arms, feeling a rude presence in my veins, I noticed that my arteries were beginning to pop out of my skin. Trying to merely brush off the crisis by performing a tense-relieving back arch to get the blood flowing through my body in a more productive way, I began to swerve. Without insurance, and merely a few miles from Manhattan and approaching the George Washington Bridge, I could not stop the tremors in my arms. The body tremors felt like a metal rod trying to make its way through my circulatory system. I had no choice but to pull over in Jersey.

After parking my car, I reached over to the backseat to take out my Ensure and the rest of my liquid nutrition that I had purchased with a bad check. If the Ensure would not stop the tremors, what else would? I walked around the streets of Fort Lee, waving my arms and drinking liquid nutrition to try to get the blood flowing through my system and stop the pain. Flailing my arms and drinking the usual beverage of choice of an ailing elderly individual, I finally got in touch with my friends. But the kind of contact I made wasn't through the phone or in person: it was in my head. I didn't have to utter a word to make contact. For the first time since I said goodbye to my friend Jonas before he left for home after graduation, I heard his voice. I realized that a local friend in New London must have put a speaker under the seats of my car and sewn a radio transmitter into the seats. After further investigation, I realized it was a two-way radio, and I found myself laughing and conversing with Jonas like we did long ago.

Even Cynthia had a transmitter hooked up so that I could continue talking while driving to Brooklyn. By the time I got there, Cynthia, McDaggot, and my psychiatrist, Dr. S, were all on the radio, transmitting to me through my car. I have to admit, I began to feel a little foolish spending my last few dollars on a phone when I had been given this new apparatus to use.

Admittedly, I am not that different from most people when it comes to most things. The more toys to play with, the better time I will have. Thus, I found myself talking to Dr. S through the equipment in my car and starting a conversation, only to pick up the phone and

finish the conversation on that device. Knowing that my friends were with me now was all I needed to continue on through the George Washington Bridge into Manhattan. There is no feeling like it knowing that everyone is looking after you and wishing the best for you. I had that now. Looking into my rearview mirror, I saw an ambulance that Dr. H had sent to follow me into the city and make sure I was medically taken care of. I smiled back at the truck, knowing that I both did not need its assistance and that Dr. H was caring enough to look after me despite that fact that I was so far from New London.

Racing up FDR drive toward the Brooklyn Bridge, I began to flash my hazard lights. I needed to signal to the borough that I was approaching and that I had good intentions. Looking to my right and left in the neighboring lanes, I noticed other cars flashing their hazards, signaling to me their appreciation of my good-willed gesture toward the city. I arrived in Brooklyn to see my friend waiting for me on the street by his apartment. I brought my laptop and books with me into his place, and we put on a movie: *The Madness of King George*. I gave him the tequila, and we began to take shots until drunk. Cynthia texted me and said she might come to Brooklyn at the end of the night Cynthia never arrived. I began to call her, and she picked up the phone informing me that she would not come to McDaggot's apartment because I didn't like Patrick. Realizing I had no option but to let Patrick come to the apartment with her, I folded and told her that he was welcome. But Cynthia never arrived. Instead, she texted me that she would have breakfast with me in the morning and that I would see her then.

I had to prepare for Cynthia, but I could not do so with McDaggot around watching me. I told him that I would be back in the morning and departed for Rockland County, New York, which is well north of the city. There, I parked on the side of a road and slept for a few hours while cars passed by my parked vehicle. In the morning, I drove back down to Manhattan and waited for her to call me, but she never did. I was not puzzled or confused. No, I was angry. I had slept all night in a car away from my friend that I was visiting only to be ignored the following day. I quickly called McDaggot and told him I would be arriving shortly in Brooklyn. He was waiting outside his apartment

again when I showed up. We went to eat at a burger restaurant and decided to go back to his apartment to drink some more.

While drinking, Cynthia messaged McDaggot and suggested we go look at the ships that had come in for fleet week. She also told him that Patrick and she would be by later to look at apartments. And that only meant I had to keep McDaggot busy until the two of them arrived.

So we drove around the island of Manhattan looking for ships. Finding no ships, the hours passing by, we headed back to Brooklyn. McDaggot told me to stay in his apartment until he got back home and that Cynthia and Patrick were outside waiting for him. I had thought both Cynthia and Patrick would come up to the apartment. Before I had time to get angry, I started hearing laughter in the hallways. Laughter, as they say, is contagious, so I was content listening to music on my computer in McDaggot's apartment and waiting for him to return. The noise outside the apartment continued for over an hour. With what began as a nice distraction soon became an irritation simply because the voice reminded me of—if not actually being—the voice of Cynthia. I wanted to prepare for her arrival. I found a pair of scissors in McDaggot's apartment and began cutting my hair, strands dropping all over the bathroom. I wanted to look as sharp as I did the day before when I thought we would finally meet. The voices outside the apartment got louder, and I finally walked outside the apartment to see who was making the noise. I found myself locked out and wandering the streets of Brooklyn for about thirty minutes until I went back to McDaggot's apartment and pressed the doorbell. Surprisingly, I got a response and was let in. McDaggot was home.

I walked up to the apartment and knocked on the door. McDaggot let me in quickly but was talking to someone who was in the apartment. He was talking to Patrick. When the door opened fully, I saw Patrick and Cynthia sitting on McDaggot's sofa. Cynthia did not look at me but said "hello." Patrick asked me how I was doing. McDaggot asked why I had left the apartment. It was the reception I was hoping for, that never happened, unilaterally.

Asking Patrick if he wanted some tequila and trying to begin a conversation with Cynthia, I quickly came to the conclusion that Patrick was not as domineering as I had been led to believe by the

casual comments Cynthia had mentioned to me earlier in the year and repeated every so often. At that very moment, when I realized I had been deceived, McDaggot began to shout at me while walking out of his restroom. He asked me if I had cut my hair and why I had left my garbage all over his bathroom. I realized then that it was my time to leave the apartment and go home to Wales and see my family.

I offered Cynthia and Patrick a ride back to Harlem, which was met with some resistance before they finally accepted. After dropping them off, I drove north to Wales to see my family. Of course, with my parents so upset with me, and I insisted on meeting at a neutral location: my brother's house. I arrived to see the whole family already sitting down to dinner.

My mom did not look at me once during the meal. My dad glanced in my general direction but looked depressed. My brother, though doing his best to make conversation, generally spoke about himself and not about anyone else there—he did not talk about my upcoming publication, Contesting Admission, my second attempt at going to graduate school, or any of the research I was conducting at New London. No, instead, he talked about his civil service job and nobody else. The meal was short. But my mother's words to me at the end of the meal were even shorter: "Here," she said. She handed me a fist full of cashed bonds and money. I took the money and said goodbye to my family and began driving north back to Liberty.

SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY AND THE UNIVERSITY

CROSSING INTO ROYAL COUNTY IN what was my last successful trip out of the state, my vehicle was immediately pulled over by a state trooper. The state trooper insisted that a car had been reported as weaving in and out of traffic in the vicinity where I was driving. Although he didn't issue me a ticket, he followed me all the way to my exit in Downtown Liberty. After returning home, Dr. H suggested I go with her friend whom I had never met to a bar and relax. I accepted the offer because I had money and nobody to spend it with. After spending the last semester too poor to drive a car or pay for gas, this was a welcomed change. However, walking to the bar with her friend, I began to feel the tremors return once more. That's when I started flailing my limbs to get the blood flowing in them. Her friend nervously asked me what was wrong. I insisted that I needed a drink and that we should hurry to another bar. The response to my suggestion was poor, at best. Her friend began to walk away from me, and when I raised my voice to rein her back in, she picked up her pace and went in the opposite direction. So I began to walk back to my house. I needed rest. Walking inside, I noticed that all the furniture had been moved around. Shrugging it off momentarily, I walked into my room and lay down feeling the tremors wax and wane as the minutes passed. It was then when I started hearing a loud metallic chirping from the telephone poles outside my room. The chirping began to transform into something more like a hammer banging on a metal plate. I began to twist and turn in bed and cover my ears with a pillow,

but I couldn't muffle the noise. The hammering grew louder, and my neck stiffened. I stood up in the middle of the room to look outside at the telephone poles but could not find the source of the noise. That was when I figured out the banging must be coming from inside the house. However, I encountered a problem when I went to look for the noise: my range of motion. I could not turn my neck or move my body in any direction. Motionless, and beginning to feel the tremors return, I could only listen to the banging, which I now could hear was coming from upstairs and was now accompanied by footsteps. Momentarily, I loosened up and began to walk toward my mattress. Knowing I would just fall asleep and not figure out what was happening if I slept on the mattress in my room, I carried it outside and lay it outside my room. Then, I began to hear more footsteps upstairs and the clicking of a typewriter. Puzzled by all the activity at four a.m., I went up the flight of stairs to the second floor where I saw a light on in Dr. H's room, but there was nobody inside from what I could see. Trying to peek inside but to no avail, I heard the typewriter continue clacking on non-stop. I walked back downstairs and into my room and sat on the floor where my bed used to lay. The tremors began to surge through my forearms, so I decided that a cold shower would settle my system. As I walked to the shower, I heard more footsteps but ignored them. I jumped into the shower and blasted myself with cold water. Once again, momentarily, the tremors waned, and I flipped the lever in the tub to take a bath. I sat down and began cooling off. Dipping my head back, I looked up at the ceiling. That was when I heard talking coming from above. I had located the noise. Now, fully convinced that the banging noise was coming from upstairs, I listened. My friend from my earlier days in college began talking to me through the ceiling. Slightly irritated that I always was speaking to her through some other device and not face to face, I say and listened, not wanting to speak. She told me that the reason why all the furniture was moved around after my return to New London for the summer was that New City University had partnered with New London University for a television show that centered on my life as a non-matriculated graduate student. Apparently, the show was a partnership between the English department in New London and the School Psychology Department at New City University. Upon hearing

her explain the details surrounding it, the voice of a friend began to tell me that filming had already begun and that I should act natural but play for the cameras, which were everywhere. He also went on to reveal that the noises I had been hearing—the hammer banging—was actually cameras being drilled into the walls for filming purposes. Relieved that the commotion wasn't something serious I relaxed in the tub and smiled for the cameras.

authorHOUSE®

THE QUEEN AND HER BABY

My future at New London University rests in the vast web meta-power; I suggest is an academic hemorrhage "on theoretical phases" (Foucault M., The Archeology of Knowledge & The Discourse on Language, 1972) in the larger realm of higher education.

J. Peters (2008) Contesting Admission

LYING BACK IN THE BATHTUB, smiling, giggling, and feeling moments of extreme happiness followed by extreme paranoia, the chair of the English department began to discuss the meaning of language with me, and I began to speak out loud, talking at the ceiling and debating his every point. The graduate director chimed in just to thank me for my work in the department and for being the inspiration to create this television show. I felt vindicated. The English department was working with me again, and I was working with my college friend on a fascinating project. My friend told me that our ratings were higher than New City University had anticipated and that we would be going national very soon. I was thrilled, relieved that my work on Contesting Admission had produced something significant in the academic world. I got out of the shower and walked back into my room, continuing the dialogue until the end of the program. When the show ended for the night, Cynthia wished me goodnight, and like a recording coming to an end, her voice dissipated, repeating the words goodnight until there was no noise at all. But the typewriter continued to click away. Obviously, it was Dr. H writing new material for her next program, but I was preoccupied with it. In fact, I listened to the

typewriter so intently that I began to hear another recording play. This time, the recording came from the bedroom directly on top of mine, and it was my neighbor speaking. My neighbor gave another explanation of the noises I was hearing upstairs, and his explanation was completely different and more convincing: I was living in a CIA owned and operated house. I soon learned that Dr. H was working for the witness protection program and that I had been taken into the household because I was being abused by my family, my friends, and the English department. In fact, the CIA said that I was not really speaking to Cynthia before in the bathroom. No, instead, I was listening to a CIA training exercise that would prepare me for life in the witness protection program—I was merely becoming acquainted with their equipment. The recording coming from upstairs told me that if I continued to speak to my friends, my family, or anyone else, I would continue to have tremors. In fact, the tremors were punishment for continuing to be in contact with anyone I knew. The recording went on and off all night. Sometimes, I would call out for my mother or Cynthia or Dr. H, but for doing so, I would just receive an extremely painful barrage of tremors. This went on all night into the morning hours when the vent in my room began to vibrate and the tremors became so overwhelming that I broke into tears. At daybreak, the recordings stopped. I put on a fresh set of clothing and moved my bed back into my room. However, I was not surprised when the recordings began again. This time, however, the recordings from the CIA were talking to my friend. The witness protection program told her that I was going into the CIA and that she could be my wife if she left everyone behind and moved with me. The CIA then told me to get ready for my wife and prepare my room for the marriage ceremony. I was so relieved that this seemingly never-ending conspiracy was coming to an end that I raced upstairs and pressed my ear against the door, listening into the bedroom that was over mine. I heard the CIA tell my friend that she had to leave everyone, and she began crying, saying that she didn't want to. They continued to fight on, and every so often, the government operative would call my friend stupid and unwilling to cooperate. I became irritated by both my friend's unwillingness to leave her world behind and join the witness protection

program and by the CIA for calling her stupid and childish. I went back downstairs to my room. That was when a new recording played. This time it was the CIA explaining that I had listened to another training video. Now, Cynthia was in jail for victimizing me, along with my family and all of my friends. The witness protection program then began to punish me with more tremors, which became so overpowering that I had to strip down naked. At that moment, my friend began to speak to me through the vent. She told me there was a bomb in the house and that she was going to detonate it, and when she did, all of the recordings would end, along with the show. Before I could take in the gravity of what she was saying, I heard a countdown timer. I quickly covered myself in a blanket and, naked, ran outside. When the timer finally reached zero, there was no explosion, no noise. Except, the tremors reemerged—those wouldn't end. I walked back into the house and got dressed. I summoned the strength to go on my computer and tried to go about my day as usual. I thought about how it was quite the television show being produced here in Liberty. But before I could believe I that was truly making television history, I was asked by the CIA to go outside the house and start walking down my street. The tremors began again, as I was told that for believing a training recording and speaking to my friend, the CIA had begun to tune me into a live trial where all of my friends, family, and fellow colleagues in the English department were being judged. After each individual was questioned on the witness stand, I heard a summary verdict and the slam of the jail cell doors. I believed that if I listened to the CIA and joined their program that I could move on with my life. So I got into my car and began driving around. The CIA told me that if I flashed my hazards on and off, I would be giving the federal government acknowledgment of my safety in the witness protection program. So I drove all around town, flashing oncoming cars with my lights until finally running out of gas a few houses away from my home. When I arrived back home, yet another recording played. Apparently, Dr. H was a double agent in the CIA and was from Belgium—it was my duty to the federal government to banish her from the witness protection program safe haven. Going inside the house, I asked Dr. H for her phone and dialed 911. The phone did not dial the emergency number.

Instead, the screen read, "Dr. Cloud." The recordings told me that this was the code word for the transfer of power from one witness protection house commander to another and meant she would soon be expelled from the house. After I dialed the number, she looked at the phone and said, "Okay Jacques." According to the recording, this meant that I would now have possession over all her things, including the phone she had given me, everything in her room, and all of her food, which I needed because of my dwindling supplies. Immediately after she handed me the phone, she left the house and drove off. I sauntered about the house triumphantly and heard megaphones outside proclaiming that I now had full authority over the household. I went to the refrigerator and began eating Dr. H's food, afterwards leaving the containers outside on the porch to signal to the community that I was in control and healthy. Going into my room, I set up my command post. I knew that the community needed subtle signals that enabled a peaceful transition of power— if not, Dr. H's return might be in the cards. Thus, I took a queen from the chess set and put it in the window to show the need for an heir to the throne. I also positioned two limes, a symbol for ovaries, showing the need to birth a child to rule as my successor. Then, the recording began. However, this time, they were the screams of Dr. H, telling me how she would return to her command. I quickly took out the batteries to her laptop and her phone so that she would not be able to contact the house. At that point, more megaphones blasted outside, telling me to let the professor back into her home or else the City of Liberty would use force. The voices were those of the police. I panicked and lit a cigarette and sat in a chair in the living room where I could monitor each entrance and exit. To my surprise, I heard the back door open with the jingle of keys and Dr. H walked into the house. She stood close to me, putting with her hand on her bag, indicating she had a weapon. I watched her closely and finally took her laptop outside and hid it in a moving van. But before leaving the house, I put a knife in my pocket. More recordings announced that the home had once again changed powers, and the voice encouraged me to demobilize her vehicle with my knife. I instead walked to my car and put the weapon on my windshield. Next, I walked over to the neighbors who were using the moving van, which now hid

Dr. H's laptop, and asked them to hide the body, which was me referring to getting Dr. H out of the house in a non-violent manner. With no response besides confusion and no safe passage in my home, I needed to relax.

So I went over to my car, where I had stashed my pills and tried to open the doors but couldn't. I had locked myself out of my car. All of the sudden, I heard instructions from the CIA to pick up a large rock and smash the windows to my car. After breaking into my car, I climbed in and swallowed a few pills and lit a cigarette. More instructions encouraged me to show everyone I was normal, so I took the rock and smashed the other front window to give the impression of continuity. Sitting in the car, I began to hear more police activity but this time could see police lights.

CAR WINDOWS AND MEDICATION

I GOT OUT OF THE CAR and walked over to the police officer who was speaking with my neighbor, the one who I had asked to hide the body. The police officer questioned if the car with broken windows was mine and why had they been broken. I told the officer on duty that I could not get in contact with a locksmith. The officer gave disappointed look and asked me to put my hands behind my back before proceeding to cuff me. In handcuffs, the officer gently assisted me into her vehicle and drove away from the CIA house where Dr. H was casually sweeping up the broken glass from my vehicle. Ultimately, despite having all three items on my list—(1) Ensure, (2) Education, and (3) Language—I was unable to survive without intervention from the authorities. Moments after I lost all control of my body, I heard voices that resembled a bomb's timer ticking away. A countdown came, and I was sure it would result in an explosion. Running out of my house, naked and totally paralyzed with fear, I ran into the local police who were investigating the broken windows in my car.

It seemed that in my confusion, I had thrown a giant rock through my car window. According to a retelling of the story and written documentation of my alleged description of the events, I had crawled through the broken window before taking the same rock and throwing it through the window on the other side of the car. All this was done, apparently, to make the glass appear even. Anything for the semblance of normality. Anything to ensure education and the pursuit of my dream: to be a language expert. In the end, the very language that I

used to survive had turned on me. Language became so inaccessible and ineffective that I eventually needed help. When I got into the police car, I looked at the monitor, which read “suspicious signs.” I knew then, as I know today, to be very suspicious of anything that comes without an explanation or a plausible, rational solution.

authorHOUSE®

SUSPICIOUS SIGNS

My health status to continue on as a student and proceed into graduate study speaks to the utterances within the Medical Dictionary in 1743 by Robert James and the evolution of madness. (Peters 2008) Contesting Admission

THERE I WAS IN THE back of a police vehicle, peering into the front part of the cab and looking at the computer screen between the driver and his partner. The screen read, “suspicious signs.” At least, that’s what my mind saw. I suspect I read suspicious signs from the computer screen because these particular signs are ruptures in language. According to the literary theorist Derrida, these signs signal new meaning in the system of signification. Thus, according to the police’s computer, I was creating language in this new season of Contesting Admission. I looked at the sign of the building they had brought me to. I had been here before. One year earlier, when feeling suicidal, I took myself to Liberty General Hospital for an evaluation. I was told it was the only place where I could see a doctor in less than six months. Back then, when I came after feeling suicidal, I went to psychiatric triage in the emergency room, was given some soda, and sent home shortly after seeing a clerk. Now, I saw the sign again. Bold letters read, “Psychiatric Emergency Room (ER).” Of course, still in handcuffs and under police supervision, I backed away from the receptionist. A few people were watching television, and they glanced up briefly. I compulsively said, “Josephine . . . Josephine . . .” a few times before sitting down. The police officer told me to calm down,

but I wasn't out of control at the moment. I was just incoherent. The receptionist called me over to the desk and asked a few questions: my name, my phone number, an emergency contact, and if this was my first time in the emergency room. I answered back, "Josephine, Josephine, Josephine," the name of staff member from the English department from the previous semester who had called the police. Within five minutes of this questioning, I was given an ID bracelet and asked to follow a nurse behind the triage area into the emergency room proper. Once again, just like the year before, I was asked my choice of beverage. I asked for ginger ale and smiled graciously. After about five minutes, I was asked to walk down a long corridor with mirrors affixed to the ceilings so that the guards could see past the corners in case of any danger to their clients. Then, I was asked to wait in a room until an evaluator could see me. With the cup of ginger ale in my hand, I peered out of the room to see another room housing a guard. Walking down to him, I stopped and looked in, and he asked me to get back into my room. I did just that. Turning around, I noticed another set of doors in the opposite direction and heard my friends through those doors. Very plainly, I heard the voices say, "We are still filming your movie. This is the final scene. Everyone is here for your big finish." I was ecstatic. My movie was finally coming to an end. We could all be together again—my family, my friends, people from past and present would all be united once more. I kept inching out into the hallway to see if I could make out any movement past the door where my loved ones waited. The guard, now irritated, asked me to get back into my room. Feeling on top of the world, with a blockbuster Hollywood movie on its way, I became defiant. "No, I'm staying here," I said. Saying this, I crushed my soda cup in my hand to show my control over the situation. That was when the guard and two other men he summoned at the last second tackled me. I fell, and they injected me with a shot. I woke the next day in a hospital room outfitted for two people. I looked to my right, and there was a middle-aged Chinese man laying perfectly still. I tried to get more sleep, but I couldn't. Instead, I gazed at the man for a few hours before the mental health workers assigned to my room called me in for breakfast. The unit at Liberty General Hospital was set up much like any other hospital. There was one long hallway

where the patient's rooms were located. Perpendicular to the hallway was the nurses' station, medication room, and—farther down—a lounge, the offices, and the dining room. Right next to the nurses' station was the Quiet Room, the place where patients went when they couldn't behave. Outside the dining area, a meal cart was parked and waited. We had to go up to the cart and say our name, and we would be given the tray of food. That first morning, I grabbed my tray and sat down at an empty table. I was not hungry, just poking at my food. Pushing a walker, a middle-aged woman inched by me, crying, white powder crusted around her mouth. I lost what little appetite I had. It was then that I met Elizabeth. She sat down next to me and started talking about God and the devil. Not fully aware of my new surroundings yet, I stood up and walked away saying, "I'm going to disengage." However, with my fondness for eccentric personalities, I came back to the table periodically, only to say I was going to disengage when the conversation became too stressful. In my mind, I was in an FBI or CIA laboratory working in tandem with SUS New London to monitor my behavior and report the results to the army, which was interested in my stamina training from excessive stimulant usage. Because there were no stimulants in the hospital, I figured I had to be quick before I lost my concentration or else I would fail the tests. In the hospital, I patrolled the hallways, most of the time goose-stepping and holding my chin in the air like an old-world dictator. The unit had to know I was in control, which I was sure would be conveyed by my behavior. I knew that I was being observed, but I had no idea how many people were watching and how much they could see. That was when I found the video cameras at the nurses' station—they could see the entire unit. Without saying so—because people were listening everywhere—I simply pointed to my eyes and then to the cameras to make it known that I was aware I was being watched.

MEMORIAL 5

FOR THE DURATION OF MY length of stay on Memorial 5, the unit in LGH in which I was being hospitalized, was rife with confusion, mania, and worsening psychosis symptoms. Most of the time I was on the unit, I was too manic to participate in any therapy groups meaningfully. During most groups I would only be able to tolerate at up to ten minutes of interaction with the therapist, and my peers on the unit before I became too agitated.

One group session, according to a review of my records from LGH, Memorial 5, Clinical notes, I had requested to listen to Stevie Nicks, and proceeded to dance around for the duration of the group. During another session, when presented with an picture of an island, we were all asked to complete the picture with ourselves in the image, along with all our family and friends. Upon review of my group materials, I had drawn a circle in the middle of the paper, with no other friends or family indicated on the piece of construction paper I was provided for the group work. A tandem note from the clinical staff suggested this pointed towards my strained relationships with my family and friends at the time.

My relationships were strained, to put it lightly. While my parents visited every week, I spent very little time with them. I could barely communicate, and I could see the hurt and impact of my illness on my family. They looked tired, upset, hurt, and confused. One such instance that was particularly difficult for all of us was a family meeting held with the social worker. The meeting devolved very quickly, and the clinical notes indicate I was rude, and sarcastic throughout the session,

throwing insults and allegations of abuse at my parents, suggesting it was their fault I was in the hospital. These were trying times for my parents, and very unproductive on a clinical level in terms of my treatment progress.

Dr. H would visit from time to time, and this would only spark more confusion on my part and the clinical staff. I still believed Dr. H, my strategist, could both sign me out of the hospital given her status as a doctor, and her role in this entire affair, which I without question considered to be staged by her, collaborators from the CIA, and Witness Protection program. Dr. H would sit with me in a small visitor room. I still remember requesting she gain access to my computer in the community, and “put language on notice”, signaling my safety and will to continue on with Contesting Admission, and fight on until the end. In the end, her presence wasn’t helpful, and according to the notes from clinical staff, they had begun to suspect she enabled and prolonged by access to treatment when I truly needed help.

One day on Memorial 5, I called Mc. Daggot, to wish him a happy birthday. I had no idea where, or why I was where I was, on the unit, but somehow, I was still able to piece together it was my friends birthday. When we spoke on the phone I was still extremely suspicious of him, his intentions, and even more uncertain about the future of our relationship. But we spoke on the phone, quite often, and this was the beginning of what would be a long road ahead of reestablishing my relationships with my friends. I suspect the first few calls very little language was exchanged, given the status of my speech, and guarded stance with my friends.

I was “blocked”, or “guarded”, according to the staff on the unit. I requested my treatment plans, and records, daily. I wanted to know what people were writing about me, my status, and hoped the records would explain what was happening to me and what was in store for the future. I reviewed these records while on the unit and experienced very little insight from them. Years later, I would go back and request my records again, gaining much more insight from the entire experience. This was not only helpful in filling in gaps in my memory but establish a new language to talk about what I was experiencing, both back then, and today.

The final night I was at Liberty General Hospital, I heard screaming all night long from Elizabeth, who was in the room next to me. She was carrying on like a child, with screams resembling those of a baby's. I kept pressing the button next to my bed to summon the staff, but nobody arrived until the next morning. Given the sleep deprivation and my compromised mental status, I was delirious at this point. By the time the staff was in my room to address the situation, I was feeling so nauseous from the noise that I leaned over and vomited on the social worker and lunged toward the psychiatrist for help I was immediately placed in a quiet room. About an hour later, the doctor came into my room and told me that I would be transferred to another hospital and that I would be staying there for a very long time. ®

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THE VISITORS

ALTHOUGH I NEVER SAW PATRICK again, two familiar faces made an appearance at my next stop in the local mental health system in Royal county . During my tenure in the state hospital, two friends came to visit me. Jonas and Kim appeared through the peep-hole of my unit door one day. The nurse in charge of the unit approached me and asked me if I was comfortable with my friends visiting. I asked her, “Why?” The nurse advised me that my chart said I was on bad terms with my friends and asked me if it would interrupt my recovery. I told her it wouldn’t. In fact, I was calling my friends every day. Very few of them were picking up the phone. Two, however, took it upon themselves to come visit me in the hospital. One of them was Kim and the other Jonas. I’d lived with Jonas for most of my time in Liberty. He had lived in each of the houses we stayed at during our time on the west side. Jonas was a good friend. Probably the best. Honest, authentic, and genuine, Jonas never betrayed anyone in his life. This was very different from my other friends, especially Kim, who was standing with him at the gate of the unit. We went into a special visiting area monitored by a guard. They asked me questions about how I was feeling and what had happened. Kim was snickering most of the time while trying to reinforce his behavior and justify his actions in the previous semester. I was too sick to really notice then. Jonas, on the other hand, was very supportive and adamant that I would get through it. Those words carried me through my recovery. I remember looking at his badge—it read, “visitor.” One day, I hoped to see him in the community, out and about without guards present or the requirement of wearing a badge to identify himself.

GREATER LIBERTY HOSPITAL CENTER

My work suggests scientists “find from experiments and day-day observations that one the other must have the same cause” to reify medical science’s “new” ethical perception (Foucault M., 1965).

J. Peters (2008) Contesting Admission

I CALLED HOME EVERY DAY. I called my friends, family, and anyone who would listen. Very few did. Most people let my calls go to voicemail. Others blocked my number from the hospital. It was very sad for me. I was locked away, totally isolated, and trying to reach out to anyone and everyone. Few people cared enough to check in, while others pretended as if I had never existed.

The first few days in Greater Liberty Hospital Center were the most disorienting and distressing. I recall moving around the furniture in my room a lot. I was trying to cover holes or markings in the wall which I believed were cameras peering in at me in the room. For most of the first few weeks in the state hospital, I had a one to one aide, sitting in front of my room, by the entrance. As time unfolded, I gained more privileges on the unit, but it would take a long time before my condition improved.

I remember going into the locked down courtyard for exercise. I walked up to the chain link fence, looking through the holes in the metal to the rest of the state hospital campus. One day, while standing by the fence, a security guard walked up to me, and began to speak to

him. But instead of using words, I began to recite my social security number over, and over again until he walked away from me. Most of my conversations with other staff went poorly and was extremely unproductive. I was fixated most the time on how to leave the confines of the unit and be released from the hospital, discharged immediately, or as fast as possible. I inquired daily with staff, as soon as my speech regained some meaning and able to communicate at a basic level: "how I do I get discharged?"

I was told to needed to write a note to the charge nurse, requesting my discharge, and have the message delivered to the Executive Director of the facility at the time, whom was the only person who could go over the head, and the medical advice of my psychiatrist on the unit. And so I did, I wrote notes every hour to the executive director, notifying my charge nurse I had another message to send relentlessly. Eventually, the note sending began to ease up, but not before I met with my lawyer, who I had requested to meet with from Mental Hygiene Legal Services, the people which defend and litigate for people whom are hospitalized and are seeking counsel, need to address legal issues as a result of their mental illness, future discharge, or pending release from the hospital.

My psychiatrist told my parents: "I had no chance" of being discharged given the seriousness of my condition. The request for discharge went nowhere, and I was pressured by my treatment team to stop the legal process. It was explained to me, this would only work against me, and defer my treatment in the hospital, and extend my length of stay, the very thing I was fighting against. This was another difficult blow to my self-esteem. I was stuck, more than ever. A few months prior I was in a holding pattern, but now, I was truly stuck, confined, and subject to the most severe restrictions in the state mental health system. Eventually, my symptoms began to deactivate, and I found some relief.

There was no such comfort or relief at mealtime. In fact, one such patient, an elderly woman ready to be transferred to the geriatric ward was so upset with her food she did a running dash at someone else's bowl of soup, and kept running, ultimately, to be tackled by the guards or technicians. I was never that bold. I engaged in trading. Which,

when discovered by the staff, usually left me in dining isolation at my own table to curb the behavior.

Trading is when you have an extra drink or side dish, or just a particular food you don't want to eat, and trade it with someone at your dining table willing to accept it in exchange for something else. Seems innocuous right? I couldn't have been more wrong. Trading landed me in isolation in the dining room every time. If caught trading, a person would be immediately put on restriction and put at a table to eat by his or herself.

In the summer of 2008, mid-July, I was preparing for discharge from Liberty State Psychiatric Center. Of course, readiness for discharge from a state hospital by no means signals the completion of the healing process, but it did set the stage for what would become a decade of recovery. In July of 2008, my psychosis was beginning to lift, and the mania was controlled or, at least, in partial remission. On a personal level, I was ready to pick up the pieces from where I left off. And this meant transitioning to back home in Wales. With all these fragmented plans falling apart, I moved forward with my discharge back to my hometown. This seemed like the most problem-free plan to date, and it certainly would be the most beneficial for me to recuperate in my parents' home, far away from the madness of the earlier year. I was skeptical, though, given the state of relations between my family and myself at the time. A year of paranoia, fear, and irrationality had gotten the better of me and tarnished my relationship with my parents. Given that I had no other real choice for surviving given my shaky mental status, I agreed to this plan. On the day of my discharge, I was sitting in the treatment mall—as it is called in the state psychiatric centers—where everyone goes for therapy and other programs during the day time. That day, I had no further treatment at the hospital. Instead, I waited for my family to pick me up. Before leaving the hospital, I signed my discharge plan and was given five dollars, the standard for people leaving the hospital and starting their lives over again. The doors to the treatment mall opened, and I was like a prisoner being released from the state jailhouse. I walked through the doors, past security, and continued walking outside to the car. There was no ceremony upon release, no ritual to complete, just a

self-directed motion to the parking lot and ultimately “down the hill” as it was called by the locals. During these early moments, I didn’t know what to expect regarding my risk of relapse or the success of transitioning back home to Wales. It was a subdued trip back home but a joyous one all the same. When you first get released from a hospital like that, the first impulse is not to party—it is to enjoy the delights of serenity and peace in the littlest things. When you are tired and battered from spending six months locked away, your effort goes into surviving the moment and feeling okay enough. Upon arriving home, I picked up the mail and found my degree from New London. I had graduated. Now, all my energy could be invested in the healing process and moving forward with a new plan. It was now time to figure things out, something I had not had an opportunity to do since before my hospitalization when I was a prisoner of my thoughts. No longer a prisoner, now fully aware of the dangers of leaving my illness to its own devices, I followed the plan given to me by the social worker in Liberty State Hospital Center and began a partial hospitalization program a few towns over from my parents’ home. This program ultimately paved the way for my return to outpatient mental health and my ten-year journey ahead.

ON TRIAL

AFTER MY DISCHARGE, I HAD to make an appearance at the Royal county court. The appearance was to answer for my loitering charge when I was arrested by SU police and occurred exactly one week from getting discharged from the state hospital. I was still shaky and riddled with side effects from the medication, and yet I was there, on trial for loitering on campus, the same campus I was enrolled in as a student. The whole situation seemed bizarre, unnecessary, and altogether cruel. A few days before my appearance, I phoned the department and left a voicemail with the department chair, Dr. Harris, pleading for him to drop the charges. I explained to him that I had since graduated and had no intentions of returning to campus. There was no follow up by the department or Dr. Harris. Then, I proceeded to write a letter, also pleading for him to drop the charges. But this was to no avail. I had to go back up to Liberty. I was recuperating at my parents' home in Wales, taking medication, resting, and trying to put the pieces of my life back together. Going up to New London to fight old battles seemed like a giant waste of emotional energy and dangerous—what if it stirred something dormant, something I had been holding back all this time? My parents drove me up to the courthouse. We all sat down and met with the assistant district attorney. The first thing he uttered was, "So I guess we are going to trial." I was shocked. However, part of me wanted to go to trial for a few reasons. One was that in my previous mental state, I had thought there already had been a trial. Now that I had the opportunity to go a real trail, I thought it was the best way to get at what actually

happened. Also, I wanted a resolution. Vindication. A trial seemed like the right way to do just that. I was a different person than the man I was prior to my hospitalization. I still remember taking pictures in front of the courthouse when I first answered my loitering charge six months earlier. Posing in front of Dr. H's camera, and taking pictures prior to my arraignment, the climate after my hospitalization and my demeanor were totally different. I just wasn't the same.

But there was no trial. I was offered a plea bargain. The terms were that if I did not commit any crimes for six months, the charge would be dropped. My parents counseled me to take the plea bargain. Begrudgingly, I agreed. To this day, I regret doing so.

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WAR WEARY

TO PAY FOR TREATMENT, MY dad worked as a part-time security guard into his seventies. For my parents, working to support my mental health treatment wasn't a question—it was a priority. This speed, savvy, and importance placed on unconditional support, regardless of my circumstances, was the rallying cry of my parents throughout my recovery, even when I fought them on it. But my parents always knew better than whatever the illness had me say or believe. And when I was three hours away from home in a state hospital, not around the block anymore, my parents were weekly visitors. Every weekend, instead of enjoying their golden years, my parents would drive three hours each way just to make sure my treatment and health were being attended to. Even when I wouldn't participate in family meetings or wouldn't agree to move back home upon discharge (I was preoccupied with moving into an adult home), on the day I was released, it was my parents who were waiting for me outside of the unit with a bag of Burger King and my favorite iced coffee. As one therapist said to me, "Your parents really stepped up, Jacques." Well, they stepped up again and again. When I came home from the hospital in upstate New York, my family administered medication, cooked meals, helped me do laundry, and aided me in everything else I wasn't able to complete on my own just yet. From transportation to the clinic where I would get weekly injections to therapy appointments when I was too sedated to drive, my parents were no strangers to starting over, moving forward, and being okay with both the setbacks and difficult times in my recovery. And when

the most difficult times were over and I wanted to pursue life again and go back to school, my parents were supportive of me chasing my dreams and facing my demons head-on. My parents are the reason I was able to find meaning in life again, and they are the reason I support my clients. We all need people to cheer us on, no matter what the circumstances are. Support from one or two people goes a long way when there is no one in our corner. There is no question that family participation in a person's mental health treatment is beneficial and critical to manage the long-standing problems that surface during a person's recovery from a mental health disorder. This message was communicated to my parents when I was an adolescent receiving my first in-patient treatment. Since my first hospitalization at an adolescent, to my state-level hospitalization as a young adult, and every treatment in between, my parents have been vested in my mental health treatment.

My family has witnessed the impact of family support before and lack of it within our own familial history. Both my uncle and my aunt suffered from Schizophrenia. I never met my uncle face to face. I only spoke with him once on the phone. I remember him apologizing to me that he couldn't come to our home to visit and meet me. I only lived twenty minutes away from him. So I could never figure it out. I remember going to clean out his room after he died in the hospital from a non-life threatening illness that went untreated, which I could also never figure out. It wasn't until much later on, when I became a social worker, and visited his apartment building with the ACT (Assertive Community Treatment Team) I was working for at the time, did I realize why he died so prematurely.

Living in a apartment treatment building, or adult home, my uncle, akin to many people with serious mental illness living in treatment facilities in the community, post deinstitutionalization, are overcrowded, underfunded, poorly managed, and neglectful in their practices. Many people go without the adequate supervision they require or need to truly live in the community and retain some independence. My uncle's fate was no different than a large segment of the community carrying a severe and chronic mental health condition.

My parents, all too familiar with my uncle's fate, and my aunts, which was very similar, were determined not to let their son live the same life, cut short, and eclipsed by the disorder. Since my diagnosis of schizophrenia my parents have been relentless in this regard, and for these reasons, which, are very personal, but nationally and internationally important to everyone who is underserved by their mental health system, and at risk of early medical problems, and other medical co-morbidities gone untreated from maltreatment and neglect.

This is why after ten years of recovery my parents continue to support my writing on mental health, and understand how this act of writing on mental health, spreading awareness to others through blogging, and learning self-management skills is used by people carrying a diagnosis to self-soothe, and also as technique to diffuse and disrupt their new or active symptoms. For a decade now, my parents have read every blog I've posted, and support blogging as a tested and effective weapon in the battle against chronic mental health disorders.

MY NEW PURPOSE

Outmoded predicaments now are “medical-case history” (Foucault M., The Archeology of Knowledge & The Discourse on Language, 1972)

J. Peters (2008) Contesting Admission

CONCERNED MOSTLY WITH MY WRITING and salvaging my collateral contacts from the chaos of mania, delusions, and distortions a year earlier, I once again began to reorganize my thoughts and life. I needed to figure out what happened—I wanted to see how and why I had collapsed with such rigor in New London. The doctors had their own clinical picture and narrative I was supposed to understand and gain insight from into my “illness,” but that explanation was inaccessible given my unfamiliarity with mental health. Regardless, I intended to figure out what had happened. I rarely heard from Dr. H during my recovery. Most of my messages, emails, and phone calls were either ignored or sent to voicemail. She seemed to care very little about the status of my health or general welfare after I was discharged from the state hospital. Perhaps it was because my writing and level of language had diminished as a direct result of taking medication—and lots of it—during the early phases of healing. Or maybe she was just relieved I was under someone else’s supervision after failing to help me succeed in New London. I needed help, though, in finding out where I went astray. The first helping hand came from my therapist at my outpatient program when I returned home from New London. A year passed before I attained enough insight from my therapy sessions to begin putting together a roadmap for my recovery. The first year of

healing was spent mostly sleeping and getting to therapy appointments and injection administrations to manage my new mental health diagnosis. Given the level of sedation from a combination and oral and intramuscular injections, there wasn't a whole lot of energy left over for other things. I was on half a dozen medications, all of them sedating. Most of them caused side effects, one of which I experienced often: restless leg syndrome. The irony of it all was if I didn't rest enough, I wanted to get up and keep moving because of the medication. There was a pill too for that, but I rarely took it and believed, as I always have, in the strength of will over our reality or life circumstances. My will and drive to learn never faltered, even during my recovery. I still wanted to return to school and continue my education. I also knew I didn't have the same stamina for a long-term program just yet. This time, I paced myself and enrolled in online education to get situated back to the idea of learning, reading, and writing. After a year of therapy, injections, and life with a mental health disorder, I decided it was time to begin classroom learning again. Given my run-in with the law and loitering charge because of succumbing to my illness in New London, I enrolled in a paralegal degree program at the local community college. This was progress—I was out of my apartment, in the classroom again, somewhat independent for the duration of a school day, and immersed in an environment with other people and students. Among the people at Wales Community College, I would lay the foundation for future learning and set goals for myself that would support the process. Although I didn't enjoy the material, I loved being back in the classroom again. More importantly, I had access to all the benefits of being enrolled in college and the space to walk around and get comfortable with thinking on my own once more. After a year of being voluntarily confined to my home, I enjoyed the outdoor campus and the ability to access my thoughts in an environment conducive to learning and education-related goals. Feeling more motivated and excited about a burgeoning future, I increased my time spent socializing with peers, academics, and members of the community. I knew full well that I needed to rally people around me. In the same manner, I believed I rallied a university's student body and faculty in my one-man war against a language department. I would go ahead and martyr my own recovery and triumphant return to academia

for one last tour of duty in New London. It wasn't long into my certificate program that I realized the next step was to return to New London for graduate school. I knew I could never return to the English department, and believing in the idea of redefining myself, I chose the profession that helped guide me during those early moments in my recovery: social work. I also knew that if I was to model good health and healing and build upon a foundation of rationality and insight into behavior, there was no better way to lose the confidence of my peers who stood by me than returning to the same department that tried to destroy me. A career in social work seemed to be just the right fit. The application process went smoothly, and without incident, I was admitted back into New London University. Finally admitted as a graduate student, I took one last risk. I went back to the English department and spoke with Dr. G. After looking at Dr. G through my own eyes, not through the eyes of my disorder, I saw the true impact of my behavior on the department. Dr. G told me about the aftermath of my undergraduate experience. In the following year, another student succumbed to his own demons. I was told that many faculty members believed that the mishandling of my mental health affairs allowed the department to learn a great lesson. To this day, it is widely believed that the other student who fought his own battle with mental illness only made it because of what the school learned from my situation—indeed, the school intervened successfully and was able to truly help this person succeed. I went up early to New London, eager to begin again. The final evening before classes began, though, I was T-boned on a highway in Liberty, New York. The first few hours in the emergency room was a sad constellation of irrational beliefs that I could first walk and, next, take care of myself after suffering from a broken pelvis. I spent a few weeks in the hospital after the accident and was discharged back home afterward with home care—my father—who would be living with me for the better half of the first fall semester. With my father sleeping on the floor and me paralyzed in the adjacent bed from back pain, pelvic pain, and a few broken ribs, we once again embraced recovery and walked the path of healing. One week later, I returned to the classroom in a wheelchair, nevertheless excited to begin graduate school in social work.

NEW VISTAS

SINCE GRADE SCHOOL, I HAVE had an affinity for language, words, and how to use rhetoric to capture the imagination and wonder of my audience. Words move nations to war and create peace between bitter, long-standing enemies or wayward friends realizing their inherent but too often ignored commonalities. When used to convey meaning, rhetoric is the most powerful metaphysical device known to our interpersonal world. Indeed, all of us are bound in language. I am a believer in the power of language, whether it stems from some psychological bend on how I can better understand my place and relationship with the world or my long-standing goal to create a new word in the English language. Simply put, I've always had a fond relationship with language and how words work. My dream, at first, was to become an English professor. But like the transformative power of language, my path also evolved, and from idealizing the most platonic dream of professing English, my path opened up a new space for meaning to manifest, creating a window from which I could gaze upon fields to harvest, not just for my own reaping, but for the world. When my schizophrenia symptoms became unmanageable, I lost not only my inner voice, but also my capacity to use language effectively and convey my thoughts in a manner that was meaningful enough for others to understand. They call it "word salad" or sometimes "soup." Depending on how language is used, there are different words that can capture what is happening to a person's speech when a psychosis worsens and symptoms become active. For me, this was one of the most difficult aspects of my recovery. Not only had I lost a personal

battle of entering a graduate language program because of my illness, but that illness had in turn seemingly disabled my core passions, perhaps life's dream of professing rhetoric in academia. But battles give way to new vistas. The very frontier of our dreams inspires us through imagery and imagination to see beyond our current realities. For me, this meant understanding my life's circumstances had changed. Writing—and all writing on and of the self—not only serves to define and articulate our limitations, but also to redefine how we intend to develop our strengths, not just dwell on our weaknesses. Although my loss of language was acute and temporary, it would be a slow uphill battle before my years of learned knowledge would return to me. Ultimately, it was the power of dreams, of writing, which transformed my reality into something more and created a new way of understanding the world so that I could heal and grow stronger. My recovery was more than just reversing damage to the body. Instead, like a phoenix, through the art of writing, my transformation not only allowed me to heal, but to redefine and expand the very limits of my dream, setting the stage for how I understood my relationship with language and words. My dream to become an English professor has since eclipsed. From the shadows of that distant dream, life, being, and transformation have created a whole new meaning and use for my relationship with language. Thus, my dream has turned my passion into a living reality and my new relationship with language on its head. Through writing, all my impairments in speech, avoidance of phrases, conveyance, delivery, and choice of words are a part of a grand network of communication in which writing and reflective writing posits a more profound understanding of not only my health, but also how to treat anyone's mental health condition. Now transformed, my dream is as real and important to me as the first moment I set out years ago in a world of language and people who want to turn their dreams into a reality. This dream and my reality are not only bound up in my values as a linguist, but they instead rest in the fundamental ethics I cherish as a writer on mental health and higher education. In rhetoric, meaning making—communication's most platonic form—there is, I believe, the most powerful mechanism to transform. Even during my most symptomatic days, I wrote a paper on transformative

pathways on the evolution of power to wield language to manifest both good and evil in the world: to create and to destroy, to heal and to recover people from their most tormented realities. Just as I have the power to transform my dreams and language, others too have the choice to move forward with their healing and recovery. Will you choose to heal or choose a life of pain and mental despair? Believe in your dreams, and your power to be the person you can be through the transformative nature of healing and recovery will be realized.

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