

The rhetoric of the class has an emerging theme, the journey of chaos to order or harmony. We have studied many ways of how chaos turned into order; the fireflies from Sync are just one example. The light of the fireflies are totally random at first but over a sort period of time the fireflies start to all blink in unison, creating a sense of harmony. The class also follows the journey. Caitlin was perhaps the first to realize this when she wrote “The narrative of our class is the struggle between Order and Chaos, and the various roles played by these two forces in our lives.” This paper will trace the class journey from chaos to order, both in class and on the wiki.

In mythology, chaos is said to be “the nothingness out of which the first objects of existence appeared.” (Chaos Mythology). True to this, in the beginning the class was submerged in chaos and from that chaos we emerged as the cohort we are now. Some of the members of the class enjoyed the chaos of the class and others didn’t understand where they fit into the class. In one of her blogs on the wiki, Caitlin describes how she embraces the chaos: “a conversation with a classmate, a smile from a stranger, a fabulous song or piece of art ... all things that would not exist without glorious, unpredictable people - that I have come to realize that I don't love these things despite the Chaos that brings them into my world, but that I love the Chaos because it brings these things into my world.” Kris on the other hand had a little more trouble with the chaos of the class, in one of his blogs he wrote “On any ordinary basis, I wouldn't have had a problem with jumping right into the chaos and voicing my opinion about this or that, but this time I didn't know how to jump in or contribute aside from my mere interjections of realistic pessimism.” The chaos of the class left him feeling a little confused he wanted to participate but was not sure how.

Another aspect of chaos that the class and the wiki followed can be taken from a quote by M.C. Escher, "Chaos is multiplicity without rhythm." The wiki represented the multiplicity without rhythm in the beginning, new pages were sprouting everywhere and none of the pages were connected to each other. Everyone started their own home page and it took the class a while before we started tagging and linking our pages together. Since there was not much linking on the wiki, there was no order that comes along with repetition. Chaos theory states that "the behavior of chaotic systems appears to be random; because of an exponential growth of errors in the initial conditions however there are no random elements involved" (Chaos theory, Wikipedia). The wiki followed this aspect of a chaotic system as well; there was an exponential growth of pages which made the space seem very random. However, the class was not behaving randomly. The chaos of the class and the wiki was just part of the process.

Trey introduced new ideas to the class; things, like the wiki, some of us never heard of. We had to learn to think outside of the box in order to use these aspects of the class. By the second week Brian came up with a good analogy in regards to dealing with the chaos of the class, he did not directly apply it to the class but it fit well. Brian wrote "I trudge on with my toolkit of presuppositions until I encounter a roadblock ... at which point I reach into my toolkit and pull out the presupposition(s) necessary to effect a way around or over or under or through" it and as a class we dug into our academic tool kits and tried to traverse the wiki and the chaos of the class. For some of us it was harder than others; for some of the class we did not have the tools needed to work on the wiki, I know I didn't. As Brian calls it, it was a "blessing disguised as a curse." It was necessary for "a good samaritan with a different toolkit [to] offer me a way out," in our class that good samaritan was Trey. He offered us tool after tool and explanation after explanation until we were able to traverse the wiki on our own. And although we have new

tools in our tool kit to traverse the class and the wiki, the class was still turbulent about these things.

I wanted to sample from the wiki and the literature about this topic of turbulence, but it was slim-pickins. There were a few things I could have used, but just not enough to satisfy my needs for the project. In light of this, I chose, instead, to write my own definition of the word (the stage), and also write about my own view of the progression of the class through this stage in retrospect (sorta).

****What is turbulence**** you ask? Well silly, it is obviously when your airplane gets all wobbly and makes your stomach feel like you are on a roller coaster and could puke up your airplane peanuts at any minute! I think that is a pretty darn good explanation for turbulence, but it doesn't exactly fit into this project, now does it? Maybe my good buddy, Merriam-Webster can lend me a hand here, M-W told me just the other day that turbulence is, "the quality or state of being turbulent: as a: great commotion or agitation <emotional turbulence> b: irregular atmospheric motion especially when characterized by up-and-down currents c: departure in a fluid from a smooth flow." These definitions are all fine and good, but I chose to tweak or "trope" their definitions and make an operational definition that is even more specific to our project and the course.

****Turbulence – A transition stage to understanding; beginning the transformation from chaos to order and rhythm.**** To put it in a way that relates to the path of the class directly, it is the idea that our analytical minds need to create their own structure and order from the chaos to attain understanding and be able to progress in the course. This "turbulence" is the time of

aggression and frustration that comes from trying to individually structure the perceived chaos. I would place this stage at about the second week of the course. The first week is always a little confusing, and the second week was when we seemed to try and look past the chaos to some semblance of order (a tiny white light at the end of a very long tunnel). More specifically, I believe this stage to be when people started asking Trey what he expected of them, what this assignment or that assignment was about, and when people started getting into quarrels over the specifics and structure of the class.

Everyone seemed to move through this course of **chaos → turbulence → rhythm →harmony** at his or her own rate. Some people had a rhythm and an understanding of the class in the first week, while others were still turbulent, or perceiving chaos. Some of us, even now may still be turbulent trying to create a structure in our minds as to what the class should be. But I guess this makes sense, because if everyone went through this transition at the same pace, then it wouldn't be very turbulent now would it?

Now that the semester is nearing it's close, I believe that most all of us have moved on from the stage of turbulence to rhythm or harmony. Yet even though the stage was marked with a negative vibe, I still believe it to be a good and necessary stage to understanding and being able to fully appreciate the course. To any of you who may still be in this stage, I hope that you will be able to look back at the course after it is finished and have a little more closure about it in retrospect. I for one believe that I took a rather long time going from turbulence to rhythm. I am (I have learned) a structured person, and I feel comfortable in an environment where I can have set guidelines and know where I stand in the ranks. Once I was able to liberate myself from my turbulent state in the course and think outside the cube, I feel like I was really able to enjoy all of

our blogs and prompts and posts. Looking back through my (and other's) weekly wiki posts, I was able to see this pattern of chaos to turbulence to rhythm emerging. Pretty cool.

Harmony seems to be order. It is not. It is perfect alignment of that initial chaos. Yesterday in contemporary literature class we were discussing the difference between high art and low art. It was brought up that all great literature seems ambiguous; it operates on multiple levels at the same time. In one reading of *Moby Dick*, the work might be a Marxist critique on the state of the decline of capitalism. On another reading it might seem that the text actually references repressed homosexuality. Art that has harmony becomes all things at all times. A Nirvana can write a song that upon first listen brims with anger or the party mentality, can evoke a mosh pity as well as tears at feeling along or at feeling that something has been lost. It can express apathy in a song that artist has clearly put his entire self into, the bloody on the fret board. Notorious B.I.G. can write rap songs about being untouchable and at the same time express grave weakness, "The weak and the strong, who got it going on? You're dead wrong."

On another level order is chaos. It has just been magnified to the proper level into which a pattern has appeared. Life sometimes seems disorientating and like as if it can seem to have no meaning. However, on the level of the atom, certain patterns appear constant. Then upon refocusing the atom itself is chaos. This holds constant for the order of sound. A single note sounds like perfection, however upon a different level it is the resonation of multiple levels of sound and eventually patterns of tracking each of those sounds fall apart. Rivers Cuomo keeps trying to analyze what makes a song popular via studying nirvana, the beatles, green day, and other bands that achieve popularity through songs that touch chords in people. The longer he does this, the worse and worse Weezer albums sound. Mozart's compositions do not operate as

strongly on defined patterns as many other popular composers in many aspects. Yet he is regarded, by many, to be the greatest composer to have lived.

Harmony holds aesthetic perfect between chaos and order as well as all opposing forces. Buddhist teaching states that “Form is Emptiness and Emptiness is Form”, and at the same time “Emptiness is Emptiness and Form is Form”. These two seeming self exclusive things exist completely at the same time. This is called The Dharma Door of Non-Duality, in it this are opposite and the same, one cannot exist without the other, because one is the other. Bringing up a personal experience, I went to Catholic Mass for the first time in about four years. There is a part to the liturgy of the Eucharist where the Priest changes bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ. This is known as transubstantiation. In Catholic Dogma, as opposed to many if not all Protestant sects, this actually takes place. It is not symbolism for something, or does not mean it changes in a spiritual way. It IS the body and blood of Christ. When it was occurring, I completely realized that it was true. Not now, and not often, but at the time I had complete faith I KNEW it was the body and blood of Christ. At the same time, I knew that it was scientifically impossible and if I were to test it, Bread and Wine would be in the container. I held two opposing thoughts to be completely true at the same time. This is an aspect of harmony as well as a type of religious experience.

Through my portion of the project I will magnify, or pull back from, chaos, to show harmony. It is always there at given levels. In one panel I will present a scene of chaos, and then show an aspect of the scene that has perfect harmony. In another panel I will have a story that on one level of reading presents war as justifiable and with another finds it odious. In a third panel I juxtapose religious beliefs with those of each other and of science in an ordered collage, to show how each opposing idea remains in perfect harmony with the others. The last scene I

will show a musical note in the center on a staff. I will then show notes that ascend from it, via a cycle of fifths, fourths, how it plays a part as a root note in various modes. Then on the other side I will break the note apart showing how its reverberation is contained between the harmonics of other notes. On both sides every note is being played at once, do you hear it?

OHHHHHMMMMMMM

All of these aspects of rhythm are various riffs on the same bass-line. That bass-line is the pedantic debates of the classroom, the way our week impacts our perception of any given assignment, the beliefs we came into the class with, the beliefs we leave the class with, our judgements on ourselves, our judgements on the other students, and the value we place on learning versus grades or experience. The semester simultaneously could be represented as the frisbee languidly floating through the air and the clatter of two students violently crashing into one another as they dive for it. As we try to make sense out of what the class was about, we were able to call into question the purpose of life. I, for one, have realized it is best to dance through the cacophony of informational overload, and stare at a single aspect, a single lotus blossom of sound, of the fray, then see the entire imbrication functions, the note placed properly in the larger symphony.