

Purposeful Prettiness

"COME INTO MY HE(ART)."

IT'S NOT THAT EARLY ON A THURSDAY MORNING, AND NOTHING SPECTACULAR HAS HAPPENED FOR ME TO WRITE THIS. NO EMOTIONAL EPIPHANY OR RANDOM REACTION HAS INSPIRED THIS PIECE. IT'S SIMPLY WANTS TO BE.

THE SUBTLE EXISTENCE OF AN OPPRESSED TEXT IS WHAT I'M BUSY MAKING.

A PASSAGE THAT IS BORNE FROM ME USING A PEN AS A WHIP.

WORDS ARE NOT INNOCENT, AND MINE DEFINITELY WANT TO BE...

BUT THERE IS HARDLY EVEN A FLUTTERING OF WINGS IN THE AIR TO SPEAK OF THIS AFFAIR.

I HAVE MY SOUL UP-PINNED TO PLINTHS AND WALLS WITH PRESTIK.

TODAY MY FAMILY AND FRIENDS WILL DISTURB THE AIR WITH THEIR FLUTTERS.

THEY WILL BLUR THE EDGES OF MY PERCEPTION AND BEAR THE WHIP OF MY WORDS ON THEIR BACKS.

TODAY I SHOW THE SMALL DISTURBING OF MY SOUL EDGES OF SERENE POOLS MUDDIED SWIFTLY BY ERRATIC HANDS.

TODAY I WILL WHISPER FROM AFAR OF HOW DELICATE BEING IS...

I WILL WATCH AND BITE MY TONGUE TO HOLD MY FRAGILE SELF STEADY THIS WAY UP.

TODAY I HAVE HUNG ALL THE CREATIONS OF MY HANDS AND SOUL UP ON THE WALL.

AND NOW I ADDRESS YOU DIRECTLY.

COME INTO MY HE(ART.)

ARIEL

TAVERNER

Purposeful Prettiness
Conversions of Chaos and Order
by Ariel Taverner

INDEX

- Thank You Letters.(3-5)
- Conceptual Framework.(6-7)
- Poetry Petal Page Anthology.(8-11)
- Reductive Carving Bonsai Project.
(12-16)
- Chaos Drawings Project.(17-21)
- Miscellaneous Fun Stuff.
- Additional Fun Stuff.
- Whatever, It's My Catalogue.



To my Father and Stepmother

To my Father and Patron of my Exhibition. I Love you. Unconditionally. Without your parenting and stoic financial support, this exhibition would not have been possible. To me, my Art is like breathing. Without it I do not feel as alive. You may have given me life on this earth, but to continue to allow me the space to live and be alive is where the value of your patronage truly lies for me. Your relentless resolve to the value of human life and relational connection manifests as your Art. Every successful surgery, every life saved, sings a soliloquy of untold artistry that no conceptual metaphors could match in potency or tangibility. The human life is the ultimate artwork... and each you save is allowed the chance to be alive again. You are an paragon of beautiful Masculinity in a desolate landscape. Thank you for giving me everything you have. Look Father, I am a man now.

To my Stepmother and her endless patience. I Love you. For who you are, who you are to my father and who you are to me. I find I share an incredibly witty and well honed sense of humour with you. ;) I also really enjoy the refuge that is your company and competence. I'm very grateful for the parenting roles you've voluntarily taken upon your own shoulders even when I acted more child than adult about it... Your emotional intelligence is often a breath of fresh air because feeling understood is truly rare. I admire your presence as a Mother and I'm very excited to see your wonderful children grow into even more amazing people. But above all else, just remember.... Blue Cheese has Mould in it....

To my Mother and Stepfather

To My Mother, the benefactor of my compassion. I Love You. Unconditionally. You taught me how to Love, how to care and be kind, to always respect and honour cleaning and security staff. You taught me how to feel so deeply that only those who can hold an Ocean can hold us. You taught me that Life is best lived deeply, richly with wild abandon or practiced precision. But to the utmost. And I speak now as my own Man: I am not willing to dampen the intensity by which I experience life for something as measly as comfort. I am a Storm... and you have taught me to Love myself lest I render myself unable to love or be loved. You taught me, and rightfully remind to this day, that it's all about Love. And I Love you for that. Look Mother, I am a man now. I shall take your Love with me and gift it to everyone I meet.

To my Stepfather, the Man who saved my Mother. I do not ever try to describe you to my friends... there is an indescribable stillness and strength to you that can only be felt in your presence. You are a teacher of unmatched patience and belief in your students. Your compassion is still and innocuous like a mountain. I Love you for the Man that you are, The Man that you are to my Mother and for everything you've taught me. For the endless willingness to sacrifice your own comfort for the sake of your newly adopted step-children. You are an admirable man.

To Johan Els.

To my Closest Friend, Human Litmus Test and Fine Arts Confidant. If I didn't have you in my life I would probably have to make peace with the fact that nobody else truly understands The Artist part of me. Your patience for me and endless Love is blatantly evident. Thank you for being the only one brave enough to stand up for me when the class turned on me. I appreciate how you consider me in your own specialised ways. I love that we can share so many passions and obsessions but still be entirely distinct in aesthetic preferences and styles. When it comes to the Ganja Babes, you are by far the best of us. Thank you for your presence and interaction with my body of work this year. Helping me remember that it is MY exhibition and it was never FOR the lecturers or Michaelis. I love you bro, Unconditionally. You will always have a space in my heart, life, house and familv.



To Uncle Charlie and Professor Duncan, The backbone of sculptural productional at Michaelis

Thank you Uncle Charles. I have come to Love and respect you as a Technician, Leader and a Teacher. Over 80% of the valuable skills I learnt here I learnt from yourself and Duncan. I find that any drop of Humanity squeezed through the bureaucratic cracks of an institution to be of extreme value. However, your company is a whole fucken ocean of compassionate and unbreakable Humanity. A fond shoutout to the early morning kak-praat sessions, koggeling Mark and basically just laughing- the only viable excuse for missing prime working hours. Shoutout to the extended conversations we've had about common decency and respecting others. Shoutout to all the artworks you've made that students have put their names on. But above all- Thank You. Without you I would not have survived the stress, nor would I have completed an exhibition.

Thank you Professor Duncan. The only Phd in talking Bullcrap on Michaelis. While it may have always been Bullcrap, it was always Bullcrap of the highest quality and order. Duncan, you have a lust for life. You live with the explicit intent of enjoying your life. Taking pride and purpose in being a Man, Father, Teacher, Leader, Partner and human shines from you and positively affects the people around you. Thank you for your help with my body of work this year, none of it would be possible without your empathy and sympathy in an un-empathic and unsympathetic institution. Thank you for being there for all the students and not allowing your humanity to ever fade. So nou Duncan, laat ek vir jou vra: Wat dink jy daar van?

To Johann Van Der Schijff

To my Supervisor. Thank you for your presence and input into my work this year. I appreciate all the times you've respected my agency enough to disagree with me and the constant urging to work harder. While we do not see eye-to-eye on many issues I still fundamentally respect you and your work. I am grateful for having the opportunity to pick your brain for a year and soak in your experiences. I am sincerely grateful for the extra miles you went for your supervisor group and the constant care and guidance you express.

To Jane Alexander

I can count at least two or three times I've broken down crying in your office. Each time you patiently listened, waited for the flood to ease up, then delivered compassion and humanity in truly Mother-like proportions. Less so for your input into my work than your emotional presence and emotional maturity I want to honour and thank you. You have an incredible talent for holding a safe emotional space. Thank you for being there at those times.

To Melvin Pather

I sincerely cannot wait for the day you're HOD.

Not only will a qualified educational professional be able to affect the teaching structure and syllabus at Michaelis, but an exceptional teacher and artist will step into a role where they can affect institution-wide change. Thank you for the training me on the laser cutter and helping me actualise the Petal Poetry Anthology. Thank you for the chats on the syllabus and the nature of teaching itself.



Conceptual Framework

“Our evolved perceptual systems transform the interconnected, complex multilevel world that we inhabit not so much into things per se as into useful things - or their nemeses, things that get in the way. [Tools and obstacles.] This is the necessary, practical reduction of the world. This is the simplification of the near-infinite complexity of things through the narrow specification of our purpose” (Peterson, 2018:182).

Without this we would be overwhelmed and would not be able to act. We do not interact with this world as if it is a world of things that exists. Rather we interact with that which is seen as desirable or useful, tools or obstacles. Which is to say that the necessary reduction of reality serves the purpose of perceiving meaning directly onto objects, and others. “We see floors, to walk on, and doors, to duck through, and chairs, to sit on.....The world reveals itself to us as something to utilise and something to navigate through [something to relate to] - not as something that merely is” (Peterson, 2018:182). What then is the purpose of Art? We do not see multiple dead trees shaped into geometric patterns and fastened strategically. We see a chair. Because we need to sit... but why does this “radical, functional, unconscious simplification” of the world need Art? If what we perceive is determined by what we need, what is it we see in Art? How is it we relate ourselves to Art?

We are beings defined in relationship to others and otherness. We are ourselves because other things are not ourselves. We perceive reality in relation to what we need, in relation to how we can interact with or relate our goals to that reality. We define ourselves even in relation to our goals or purpose. “If you do not know someone’s purpose, you do not know their sense of identity” (Kashdan, T 2017). Therefore, a change in the perceived reality, a change to the perceiving reality, or a change to the act of perceiving all constitutes as the ever-moving flux of defining the self in relationship to non-self, and in definition to tools and otherness. The act of moving forward towards a goal is the act of defining oneself. With the nebulous metaphor of a flipping coin I can illustrate this. Both sides can only exist independently in definition due to being in contradictory relationship with the other side of the coin. Both are individualistic, separate from the other but simultaneously one and the same. The spinning of the coin serves to metaphorize the relationship of identity being in constant negotiation with not only the Self (the one side of the coin), but also every other thing that could possibly exist (the other side). It metaphorizes how identity is in constant relationship to define itself; with literally everything else. Or, as Alan Watts puts it: “the relationship of self to other is the complete realization that loving yourself is impossible without loving everything that is defined as other than yourself” (Brainy Quote, 2010).

Therefore, to hate or love the other is to hate or love a part of the self in relation to that other. In this sense, Ubuntu ngumuntu ngabantu is a philosophy that encourages interconnectedness and simultaneously touches on the great phenomenological perceptual experience of conscious observation. Ubuntu means we are in an anxious flux of needing to be defined by the act of being in relationship, in tandem, with any given thing. Art happens to be included in the category of ‘any given thing’. In this way: I offer myself and my viewers the opportunity to define themselves in relation to my Art. To define themselves in relation to whatever my art may prompt within them, whatever my art comes to represent. Finally, it can be seen that my professional practice acts as a metaphorical fusion of Purpose and the phenomenological perceptual experience of conscious observation. It is with this framework that I so boldly jump into doing whatever the hell I want, trusting that it has value.

This body of work represents the Artist's internal desire to rebel against conceptual and ideological zeitgeists dominating Michaelis while simultaneously making use of the epistemological methodologies taught by said academy to conceptually reinforce his practice. With little attention paid to zeitgeists such as materiality, or a cohesive visual language, any and all projects endeavoured by the artist are pursued for two purposes: I think it'll be pretty and it gives me a sense of Purpose.

It can be seen that all projects and manifestations of my work do not represent either Chaos or Order singularly, but rather the relationships of one state with the other in the act of moving together through existence. It is a dance between Chaos and Order, where shifting definitions, shifting states symbolize the physical energy shared and highlighted by the co-creation of dancing. How it is the act of dancing, artist with object or viewer with artwork, that defines the spectacle we deem worthy of attention. That we deem pretty.



Petal Page Poetry Anthology

"DAUGHTER OF THE MOON."

DO YOU THINK SHE THINKS OF ME
ALL AWKWARDLY NERVOUS OF INTIMACY
BUT SO DESPERATE IT MUST BE OBVIOUS
THAT I SINCERELY WANT TO EARN HER TRUST

THAT MY HEART AND BODY CRAVE A TOUCH
A TOUCH OF FAIRY DUST, A TOUCH OF MUST!
A SENSE OF URGENCY I SHOULDN'T CROSS OR STOP
BUT FUCK, LOSS HAS MADE ME CAUTIOUS OF MUCH.

BUT TRUST ROX, I'VE CARRIED A CROSS
I'VE CONQUERED MANY A LOSS
I'VE BECOME A MAN, I'VE FORMED A STAND
I'M FORLORN AND I'M FUCKING GRAND

I REDEFINE THE WORD MAN
AND, NOT TO BE COY, BUT
I NEED A WARRIOR WOMAN'S HAND
NOT JUST ANY QUEEN WILL DO, NOW THAT'S THE TRUTH

NOT JUST ANY WOMAN DESERVES TO BE POETRY BUT YOU DO
NOT JUST ANY WOMAN HAS THE VIBE OF THE MOON
BUT, TRULY YOURS IS A SILVERY CROON
STRENGTH AND DEPTH OF EYES
IRIDESCENT IN THE GLOOM
WELLS DRAWING DEPTHS FROM YOUR MIND
YOUR BODY'S YOUR OWN BUT I STILL SWOON
HOPE ME SAYING THAT'S OKAY WITH YOU
SEE, I WOULDN'T WANT TO OFFEND A DAUGHTER OF THE MOON

DAMN, DAME OF THE MOON
WOULDN'T YOU KNOW IT
I REALLY LIKE YOU

The Flower Petal book project probably carries the most dizzying array of back and forth conversions. Starting as chaotic and undifferentiated nutrients and minerals, the ordered flower was plucked back into Chaos when picked. The flowers were then re-ordered into flat dehydrated petals by pressing them in old Books weighed down by Lithography Limestone stones (Fig. 9). Each flower, moisture dependant, had to be pressed and dried up to 4 consecutive cycles before being sufficiently ordered (Fig. 5). Close attention had to be paid so that rot did not set in and push the pages so far into chaos that they could not be used. If successfully kept from rot, the flowers were then Ordered further in the act of gluing the petals together to form pages (Fig. 7). Once stuck, dried and flattened

again the ordered matrix was finally ready for chaos to be applied to it. Laser cutting my own poetry onto these pages literally eviscerated the plant material, burning it back into undifferentiated, smoky chaos (Fig. 8). The Chaos on the ordered pages will once again be ultimately Ordered as they are bound into a book. An Anthology of poetry on flower petals.



WE, YOU AND I,
 ARE PRACTICED IN WEAVING MEANING
 INTO OUR LIVES VIA TRAGEDY.
 IT IS ALMOST FORGOTTEN, ABSENT
 MINUTED...
 OR PURPOSEFULLY AVOIDED
 HOW WE HURT TO FEEL CONSEQUENCE.
 I KNOW, MY DEAR, BUT I'M NOT INTER-
 ESTED IN THAT OLD GAME.

WE, YOU AND I, ARE ETERNAL.
 UNPRACTICED IN THE SWAY OF EACH
 DAY'S GRACE
 IT IS ANCIENT, FORGOTTEN...
 OR PURPOSEFULLY AVOIDED
 HOW WE RUN FROM ALIGNMENT.
 I KNOW, MY DEAR, I KNOW.

I HAVE LOST A THIEF IN THE NIGHT
 WHO I LONG FOR, DAY AND NIGHT.

THE ALMOST DELIGHTFULLY VIOLENT SMELL OF A HEAVY
 YELLED THUNDER STORM SUMMONS, FROM AN UNUSUALLY
 WILLING PARTICIPANT, MOMENTS OF A SMALL BOY WHO
 USED TO BE WOKEN UP BY THE ROARING OF MOTHER
 NATURE, RELEASING HIS FURY. THIS BOY WHO IS ME,
 WOULD WAKE UP IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT (FOR IT
 WILL ALWAYS BE THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT WHEN ONE
 WAKES UP), CRAWL ACROSS HIS BED AND HAUL HIM-
 SELF ONTO THE TINY WINDOW SILL TO REACH OUT
 BETWEEN THE SHARP EDGES OF THE WAGGED GLASS.
 THE WINDOW OF HIS ROOM WAS BROKEN, AND FEEL A
 LAMP OF THE STORM LIGHTING UP HIS ROOM.

"I'M A KENNELING IS SACRED"
 "I'M A KENNELING IS SACRED"
 "I'M A KENNELING IS SACRED"
 "I'M A KENNELING IS SACRED"
 "I'M A KENNELING IS SACRED"
 "I'M A KENNELING IS SACRED"
 "I'M A KENNELING IS SACRED"
 "I'M A KENNELING IS SACRED"
 "I'M A KENNELING IS SACRED"
 "I'M A KENNELING IS SACRED"

DAAR IS HONDER RONDOM
 MY HART

DAAR IS HONDER RONDOM MY HART
 EN HONDER E, WAT HULLE REDD
 OER.

GLIMLAG SOOS 'N OU VRIENDIN.

DAAR IS DRAAKE OP ONS DAK
 EN SKAAMTE WAT ONS VOETE
 SOOS 'N SENEDE VRIJ REDDER.

WANNEER WOEDE WORTEL'S GROE
 VERLOK EK MY ASEM. DIE
 KRAAK SOOS 'N NUWE PASSE
 TRAAN.

WANNEER DIE WIND WOEDEND WAA
 VERLOOR EK MY WORTEL'S



Reductive Carving Bonsai Project.

Chaotic, undifferentiated minerals and nutrients were ordered into the Life of an Acacia tree on Hiddingh campus.

After dozens of years growing, ordering chaos further, the Tree was trimmed and two logs were plunged back into the Chaos of death. (Fig. 1-2) Those undifferentiated logs, left to the chaos of decomposition, have been appropriated to be re-ordered back into a representation of a tree. (Fig. 3-4) The act of carving itself representing the multiple conversions of Chaos and Order, as well as the act of constantly defining myself in relationship to otherness.

I chose to represent a Bonsai in an attempt to attach the original state of the medium – being a tree - to the representational artistic object. Sculpted bronze fungal pads will be attached to the carvings. Bronze has an intensely pretty visual quality but also undergoes multiple conversions of Chaos and Order in the smelting and casting







*"Some Witty Title that will make you
Laugh."*



"Some Witty Title that will make you Cry."



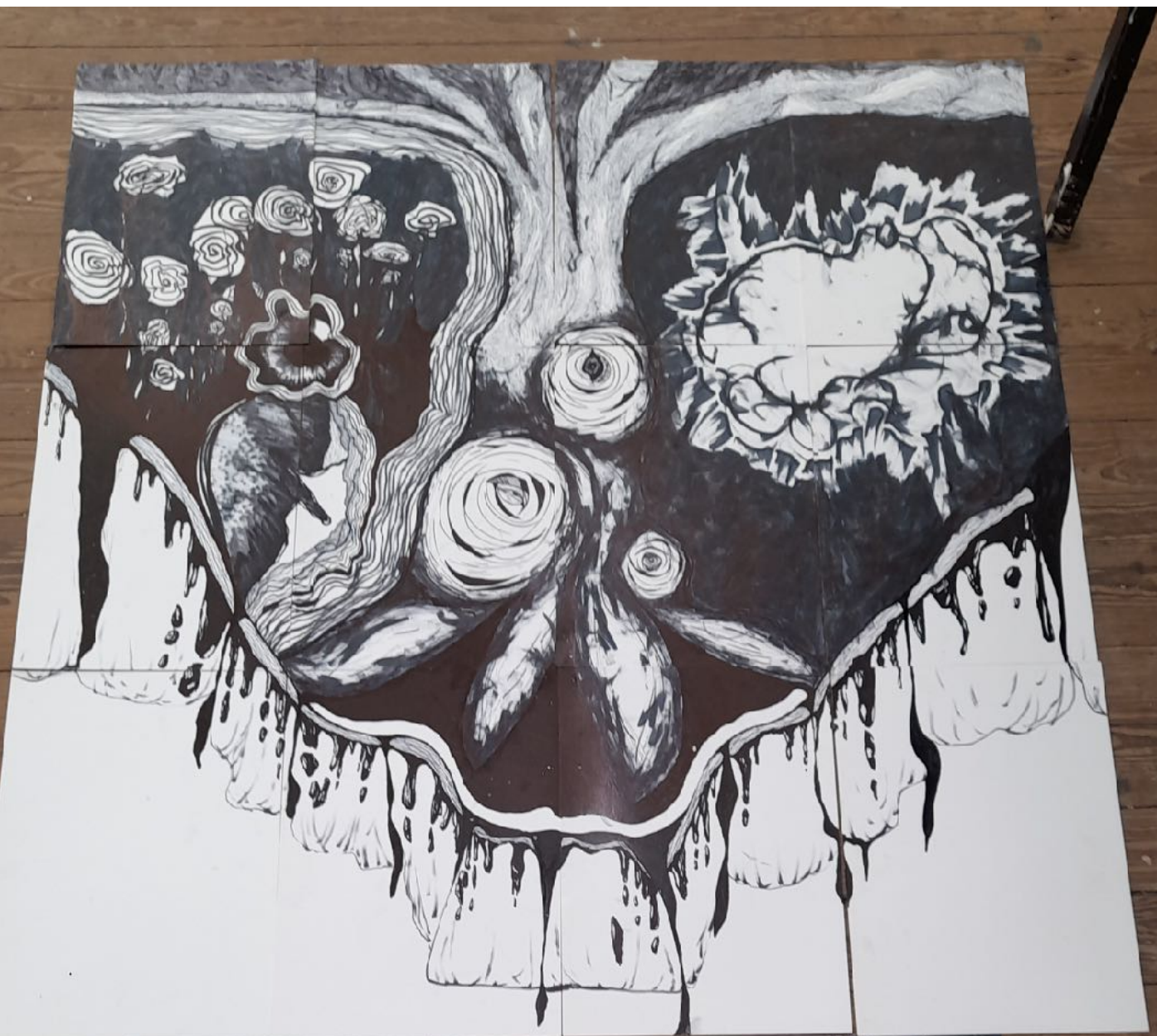
Chaos Drawings



The Chaos Drawings project was an opportunity to structure a framework for converting Chaos into the most literal level of professional practice. I chose paper with a smooth glossy surface and limited myself to only using black. These limitations were intended to potentiate a more intuitive and imprecise style of mark making on the paper, potentiating mistakes. The tough to control gliding ink on the temporarily hydro-phobic paper act as frameworks to convert undifferentiated unconscious intuitions into surrealist drawings. The chaotic subconscious is ordered into the surrealist representation (Fig. 11-12). The project initially started with singular drawings on singular pages (Fig. 13) but the production scale gradually expanded to produce composite images on multiple pages (Fig. 10). The fact that the drawings are cut up in segments symbolizes the multiple conversions the ideas are undergoing as I Art away. Being quick to achieve its final form this project acted as the spine of my professional practice, focusing on a quantity style of production so as to facilitate the framework further. The drawings are to be exhibited in a way that claustrophobically overwhelms the viewer's eye and sense of atmosphere; mimicking a final conversion to chaos in curatorial strategies.









LOOK MOM I'M AN ARTIST!!! HUR DEE DURRR DEE DUURR!!!



BIBLIOGRAPHY.

- Brainy Quotes. 2000. *Alan Watts Quotes*. August 1970. Available: https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/alan_watts_252991 [7 October, 2021].
- Howes, L. 2020. *Jordan Peterson on Discovering your Purpose & Meaning* [Video file]. Available: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_MqZ5rRHE8E&t=2s [8 October, 2021].
- Kashdan, T. 2017. *Todd Kashdan: Both Purpose and Intense Sexual Pleasure alleviate social anxiety* [Video file]. Available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M1IFjxTUfio> [10 October, 2021].
- Kashdan, T. 2017. *Todd Kashdan: "Critical tests of a Purpose in Life"* [Video file]. Available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wVdqouODQMk> [10 October, 2021].
- Nayna, M. 2018. *The Grievance Studies Affair – REVEALED*” [Video file]. Available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kVk9a5Jcd1k> [20 October, 2021].
- Peterson, Jordan B. 2018. *12 Rules for Life: An Antidote to Chaos*. Toronto: Random House Canada.
- Peterson, J. B. 2018. *Dr Jordan B Peterson on Femsplainers*. [Video file]. Available: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hKUffHXOb8U&t=358s> [9 October, 2021].

