

the perspective

A PUBLICATION OF THE TRUMAN STATE UNIVERSITY WRITING CENTER

Tuesday,
April 6,

It's

Let's get polemical.

in this issue...

p.1
Editor's Column -
Springtime Polemics

p.2
Ty Fagan Parodies
Pound

p.3
• **Todd Ruecker's**
Travels, pt. 2
• **Haiku by Talia**
Linneman

p.4
Consultant Fun Facts
Mystery Match!

p.5
Point/Counterpoint:
Celebrity Obsession

p.6
What's Hot,
What's Not

by Ty Fagan
Well, my friends, once again spring is bustin' out all over. This time of year represents rebirth, redemption, and the revival of hopes. A perfect example: last issue, still in the frosty grip of winter, this very editor cynically referred to the St. Louis Blues' all-but-nonexistent playoff chances. That was then.

This is now. Spring is here, the roses are in bloom, the trees are bringing forth fruit, and the Blues are bound for the playoffs. Most likely, they'll get bounced in the first round; but that's not what matters. What matters is that they're getting a *second chance*. And that's exactly the uplifting, optimistic spirit in which I welcome you to this issue. Now let's fight!

Ha ha. Seriously, this issue if the *Perspective* seems to unwittingly taken on the theme of opposition and conflict. Many of the pieces herein feature head-to-head conflict, pitting consultant against consultant, consultant against prize-winning poet, hot against not, and of course reader against boredom.

All this agonism is, I think, to be celebrated. It reflects the passion that courses through the veins of those who call the Writing Center home: we have principles, and they are worth fighting for.

Look to the Greeks: constantly competing in art, music, naked sports, and killing one another, they still stand as one of the greatest civilizations ever to press olives.

And remember what Heraclitus, everybody's favorite pre-Socratic philosopher/misanthrope, who said, "War is the father of all." Then again, he never lived under a Bush Administration. Otherwise he might have said, "War is the father's policy. And the son's."

But enough of my political polemics; I want to



Ty Fagan
(gratuitous mugshot)

give you a quick glimpse of the fireworks that lurk within these pages.

On page 2, I tackle the jolly poet Ezra Pound, re-interpreting Pound's famous "Usura" canto to better reflect our more modest contemporary times.

On page 5, we have a *Perspective* first: a point-counterpoint. This issue's *matchup* features consultants Kim Zamastil and Kamiah Walker facing off over the blistering hot issue of pop star obsession: is it a good thing, or no? YOU decide, after watching them duke it out on page 5. Watch the sparks fly as these

rapier-witted pen-pugilists pummel each other with forensic fury.

Then, on page 6, we have the second installment of the *Perspective's* What's Hot, What's Not. Once again, we at the *Perspective* will sort out the things that exert a suction-like grip on our hearts and minds from those things that just plain suck.

But hold! All is not fire and brimstone in this issue. If you're repulsed by the *Perspective's* level of violence, rhetorical though it be, we still have some treats for your mind.

On page 3, Todd Ruecker gives you the second half of his stream-of-consciousness travelogue from the Mediterranean paradise of Santorini. Also on page 3, Talia Linneman has submitted three wonderfully lyrical haiku penned during a staff meeting, which capture in crystalline relief the moods and moments of early Thursday mornings. And on page 4, we have fun for the kids. See if you can match up the wacky facts with the corresponding consultants in our Mystery Match!

With all this fantastic content and fresh authorship, there's no reason you should be sitting there reading my blather. Get outside and frolic through the pages of the *Perspective*!

Aspiring consultant parodist tackles Ezra Pound's 'Usura' canto

If you've ever taken a class dealing with American or British Modernist poetry, or even if you haven't, you might be familiar with Ezra Pound's Canto XLV, otherwise known as the 'Usura' canto. If so, you already know that the poem is an Old Testament-style diatribe against the practice of usury. The Canto works by anthropomorphizing 'usura' into some kind of horrible monster, guilty of some truly horrendous acts. The poem also includes a list of some of Pound's favorite pieces of art and craftsmanship, pointing out that none of them would have been possible had society been in the grip of 'usura.' I have always been stunned by the raw anger Pound injected into this poem; but like much of Pound's work, it's a bit difficult for a contemporary reader to access. Hence this 21st-century interpretation of Canto XLV, to better reflect the humbler grotesqueries of our time. I have tried to stay true to Pound's form, and so I print both poems side by side, so the reader can have the pleasing experience of seeing precisely where I have sought to make Pound relevant to today's

With *Usura*

With usura hath no man a house of good stone
 each block cut smooth and well fitting
 that design might cover their face,
 with usura
 hath no man a painted paradise on his church wall
harpes et luz
 or where virgin receiveth message
 and halo projects from incision,
 with usura
 seeth no man Gonzaga his heirs and his concubines
 no picture is made to endure nor to live with
 but it is made to sell and sell quickly
 with usura, sin against nature,
 is thy bread ever more of stale rags
 is thy bread dry as paper,
 with no mountain wheat, no strong flour
 with usura the line grows thick
 with usura is no clear demarcation
 and no man can find site for his dwelling.
 Stone cutter is kept from his stone
 weaver is kept from his loom
 WITH USURA
 wool comes not to market
 sheep bringeth no grain with usura
 Usura is a murrain, usura
 bluntheth the needle in the the maid's hand
 and stoppeth the spinner's cunning. Pietro Lombardo
 came not by usura
 Duccio came not by usura
 nor Pier della Francesca; Zuan Bellin' not by usura
 nor was "La Callunia" painted.
 Came not by usura Angelico; came not Ambrogio Praedis,
 Came no church of cut stone signed: *Adamo me fecit*.
 Not by usura St. Trophime
 Not by usura Saint Hilaire,
 Usura rusteth the chisel
 It rusteth the craft and the craftsman
 It gnaweth the thread in the loom
 None learneth to weave gold in her pattern;
 Azure hath a canker by usura; cramoisi is unbroidered
 Emerald findeth no Memling
 Usura slayeth the child in the womb
 It stayeth the young man's courting
 It hath brought palsey to bed, lyeth
 between the young bride and her bridegroom
 CONTRA NATURAM
 They have brought whores for Eleusis
 Corpses are set to banquet
 at behest of usura.

Usury: *A charge for the use of purchasing power, levied without regard to production; often without regard to the possibilities of production. (Hence the failure of the Medici bank)*

With *Usura*

With usura hath no man a decent La-Z-Boy
 Each chair with leather and built-in massage,
 that vibrations might sooth their lumbar regions,
 with usura
 hath no man *The Big Lebowski* in his DVD collection,
 or *Fear And Loathing*
 or the *Rocky* where Apollo Creed dies
 and Stallone fights the big Russian guy,
 with usura
 seeth no man Richard Pryor's standup,
 no pants are made to wear forever
 but they are made to wrinkle and lose buttons quickly
 with usura, sin against nature,
 are thy meals ever more bland and tasteless
 are thy meals stale and boring,
 with no Sunny D, no Hot Pocket.
 with usura the waistline grows huge
 with usura is no clear cable reception
 and no man can find the remote.
 Fry cook is kept from his fries
 clown is kept from his tiny car
 WITH USURA
 John Belushi appeareth not on your screen
 None listen to Motorhead with usura
 Usura is a total jerk-off, usura
 refuseth to refill the toilet paper
 and driveth ten miles under the speed limit. Sir Mix-A-Lot
 came not by usura
 Otis Redding came not by usura
 nor Homer Simpson; Dave Chappelle not by usura
 nor was Mr. Miyagi's fence painted.
 Came not by usura Led Zeppelin; came not Marvin Gaye,
 Came no 8x10 glossy signed: *Best wishes -- Gene Simmons*.
 Not by usura Cosmo Kramer
 Not by usura George Costanza,
 Usura sendeth me stupid forwards
 It putteth me on hold and sayeth "nuke-ya-ler"
 It poureth sugar in my gas tank
 None learneth the "got your nose" trick;
 My car has a mysterious dent by usura; snooze button is
 jammed,
 Elmo findeth no Mr. Hooper
 Usura weareth way too much cologne
 It telleth jokes wrong
 It cheweth with its mouth open, and getteth all mad
 Because I fooled around with its cousin
 I DIDN'T KNOW THAT WAS HER
 They have taped over *Charles in Charge*
 Conservatives are elected President
 at behest of usura.

*This is all true...but screw it. I've got a money mayday.
 Check into Cash, here I come.
 (Ch-ch-check into cash.)*

p.2
 Ty Fagan
 Parodies
 Pound

Todd Ruecker's Travels in Santorini, Part 2

(continued from last issue)

"What a meal. The wine wasn't bad either. At least something good came from that girl."

"Yes, you are good cook."

"Thank you. I do what I can. I'm tired, I think I'll go to bed."

"So early? Its only eight."

"I'm tired and my throat hurts. I'm ready for bed."

Good night. *Kaleneekta* in Greek."

What a nice time, I'm so glad that I'm not stuck here alone. And I finally ate. Mental note: BRING MORE FOOD ON THE FERRY. Even though we aren't in the best location, the room is nice. I bet the balcony is great for the sunrise. But that famous sunset? On the OTHER SIDE of the island. Oh well, I'll see it in a few days. Ahh, there's my journal. I have plenty to write about. I'll be able to write all sorts... A hair in the bed? Oh, no big deal, hairs fall out when making up a bed. Oh, another one. Another, another, another, another, ANOTHER! Yellow? Why isn't the pillowcase white? Just what I need. I just want to sleep. Stupid, stupid STUPID! I should have listened to *Lonely Planet*. Being on the wrong side of the island is one thing, but dirty sheets? I'd gladly pay more just to have clean sheets. Dirty sheets aren't quite the adventure I



A Santorinian café in the northern city of Oia (photo by Corie Hufford)

p.3
Todd's
Travels,
cont.

Talia's
Haiku

want. I'll go find the girl and demand clean sheets. Is that too much to ask? Where's my sandals? This floor probably hasn't been cleaned for ages. It's definitely dark out here. Oh wait, I have no idea where she went.

"Hello? Hello?"

How will she respond? Five Euros, clean sheets. Or sorry, no sheets. She has my money and knows I have no way out of here. It's not worth looking for her. She'll just give me some excuse.

"What are you doing?"

What are they doing? Why are they out here talking? They seem upset. Looks like some romantic troubles. Never mind that, I need

hairless sheets.

"Are your sheets clean? Mine have hair all over them. And the pillowcase is yellow."

"Mine are dirty too. But I have sleeping bag. They're not too dirty. You can have one."

"Thanks, anything will help."

A little better. Just shake it off. At least it won't have hairs. Back to the cave of dirty sheets. Why didn't I take the bus? I spent hours reading that guide. Ask to see a map they say. Some people will tell you their place is in Fira when it is miles outside of town. Bargain in the off-season. At least I bargained. Her smile was irresistible. She seemed nice, innocent and so desperate. Charity case? Or did I just want a free ride and a cheap room? Ok, fold the sheet like a sleeping bag. Cleanest one I got. Next time I travel, I'm bringing my own sheet. No problem then. But now it is a problem. Keep my clothes on for protection; I'll burn them before I'm out of here. Avoid any skin diseases. That would be a fitting end to this. Ok, I just want to sleep. Put the sheet over the yellow pillowcase. Yes, minimize contact. Ok, now don't move too much or you will move the sheet. Sleep is good. Wait, I don't trust that girl, she probably has a key. I'll put my backpack in front of the door. If she tries to sneak in, I'll hear it.

Why can't I trust her? She's just desperate for money, but I do feel sorry for her. But should I support lying?

What a day. Santorini definitely hasn't lived up to my expectations yet. But can it really live up to the descriptions I read and heard: "...the most spectacular of all the Greek islands" and "the most beautiful place in the world?" A bit unrealistic to demand that. But this whole time at Roberto's is interesting. Hell at times, but interesting. It's not the picture perfect vacation, but those can be boring anyways. Friends at home get sick of "Oh it was fabulous" all the time and it just makes them jealous. You can only talk so much about perfect vacation experiences: "I saw this, this, this, this." I'm really seeing life in the off-season. Her family is just trying to make a few bucks to scrimp through the lean times. Am I just here to take nice pictures or do I want to experience Greece, good and bad? Besides, I have several more days to explore the island. Don't judge the whole time here when it has just begun. Tomorrow I can just lounge by the beach, recover from my sore throat, and on Friday I can....

3 Meeting Haiku

by Talia Linneman

minutes, agenda,
sweet pound cake on doilies
side comments abound

Aw, Dominic sleeps
But see, subtle pen movement--
he takes the minutes.

TurnItIn / Insight
where is respect for students?
damned institution

fun facts mystery match game

Those of you wrinkled enough to remember last spring may recall doing something like this before, and that it was a wonderful opportunity to find out some strange and disturbing things about your coworkers. But, seasoned vets, many of this year's rookies are still riddles shrink-wrapped in enigmas to us, and we may be such to them. So in the spirit of fun and sociality, we offer this year's Fun Facts Mystery Match! The rules are simple: match the name to the corresponding fun fact. If you're looking for answers, you'll find none here. The whole point is that you ask your fellow consultants, and

Before 8 th grade, I went to more than 6 schools.	Stephanie Malin
I might have a third eye somewhere on my body	Ty Fagan
I went paragliding and snowshoe-ing in Switzerland all in the same day.	Michelle Meinkoth
Since I grew up outside Chicago, when my father was little he was babysat by Bob Newhart (the old guy from the <u>Bob Newhart Show</u>)	Sean Cooper
I'd been photographed in more than 100 castles by the time I was 5.	Diane Gollaher
I got the nickname "Benjamin Franklin" in 5 th grade, not because of my inventive mind, nor my penchant for flying kites, but because of my so-called large and bulbous nose.	Tricia Palombo
Gradeschool kids are so mean.	Talia Linneman
For about 4 days of spring break (this year) I sported a "dirty 'stache," which, in turn, made me look like a dirty, dirty man.	Dom Scalise
I have seen Dolly Parton live in concert.	Kamiah Walker
I had chosen my major by the time I was 12 years old.	Jon Spader
I once (accidentally) did a belly flop off the high dive at the local pool.	Laura Frick
I have lived in a foster home.	Becca Renaud
I turn[ed] 21 before a lot of juniors. April 5 th !!	Kim Zamastil
I have bellydanced in Athens.	

**p.4
Fun
Facts
Mystery
Match**

DO YOU SEE WHAT HAPPENS, LARRY?

Hey there! You may have noticed something different about this perspective--we're getting some serious contributions from consultants who are not technically on the *Perspective* staff. This makes the *Perspective* staff very happy, and more importantly, it makes for a better publication for you guys and gals. I think you'll agree this ish has benefited immensely from freelance contributions, so why not submit something for next issue? With your help, we can make this a publication by the people, of the people, for the people, yadda yadda yadda. ideas, words, and images to this humble newsletter. Email stuff to

Point-counterpoint: consultants clash on celebrity obsessions

Point - kim zamastil

I pity people without an obsession, especially one that centers on a tacky celebrity.

I will be the first to admit that I am indeed obsessed with Clay Aiken, as I was with *NSYNC two years ago (and I would be today if the members were still together and not *disgusting!*) Although at times I have been embarrassed by it, I have never been ashamed. Clay has brought me much joy.

When I mention Clay many people snicker. These holier-than-thou, I'll-judge-others-less-sophisticated-tastes, things-pop-culture-deems-cool-aren't-really-cool-because-only-things-pretentious-society-deems-cool-like-Bob-Dylan-are-actually-cool people tick me off. They just

don't understand the joy that comes from unrestrained obsession.

In the midst of my stressful weeks, *American Idol* is an oasis of escapist bliss. Especially last year when My Clay was competing, each episode was the highlight of my week. Perhaps you consider that sad, but it makes me happy.

To me, the people who can freely admit that they like uncool things are the people who are able to embrace who they are. Just think about how content Ty is when he talks about his video games and Quentin Tarantino films. That's freedom.

At midnight on Tuesday, October 14, 2003, I was at Wal-

Mart ready to buy Clay's debut album the moment it was released. After I got it, I was ecstatic. The feeling was better than anything a chemical substance could produce. It was unadulterated joy.

The great thing about pop culture obsessions is that there is always something new and exciting happening with them: a new album, an appearance at an awards show, the announcement of a tour, the release of a new movie. There's a surprise on MSN Entertainment every day! What could be more exciting?

I wish I could bottle the giddiness I felt when I saw Clay Aiken in concert and share it with all of you. Perhaps then

Counterpoint - kamiah

p.5
Point-Counterpoint:
Celebrity Obsessions

Whatever Kim says, disregard it. Let me tell you a little bit more about this girl: our freshman year, she and some other girls from our hall (wahoo, 1st floor Blanton!) *dressed up as *NSYNC* for Halloween.

Yes, they penciled in facial hair with eyeliner and somehow found clothes to make them look like over-privileged,

under-talented pretty boys. Just wait, though, because it gets better: they *choreographed a dance routine* based on some Saturday Night Live *NSYNC skit (ask Kim for more details), and then *videotaped it*. Although Kim denies it to this day, I'm pretty sure that they actually mailed the tape to *NSYNC. Who does things like that? That's right – lonely, pop icon obsessed freshmen girls who live in the "nunnery."

Kim has a new obsession now, as I'm sure

we're all aware: Clay Aiken. Granted, I missed the whole American Idol craze because I was in Europe (not to be an elitist, Euro-centric kind of girl – it's just true).

Maybe I don't fully comprehend the wonder that is Clay, but I'm betting it's just another of Kim's crazy konnections to the pop world. Where do these obsessions lead? To plastering her walls with pictures of said obsession, all ripped from girly teen magazines (don't deny it, Kim)? To wasted hours spent watching every TV appearance of the pop idol of the year, including random and scary Japanese talk show performances? To calling in old favors from an old friend to cover her hours at the WC so that she can go see Clay in concert?

I see no end to these pop obsessions of Kim's – but I do foresee a fun and easy

Back by imaginary popular demand, here is the second installment of the *Perspective's* feature: What's Hot, and What's Not.

CATEGORY	THE HOT	THE NOT
Sport	 Hockey	 The Atlanta Braves
Dance Move	The Running Man	The Cabbage Patch
Huge-Toothed Celebrity	 Gary Busey	 Tony Robbins
Euphemism for Death	"He went to his great reward."	"He kicked his oxygen habit."
Government Agency	The Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration	The California Prune Board
One-Liner from Loathsome TV Show, Guaranteed to Be Used Out of Context By People Who Think They're Funny	 The Donald	 Oprah Winfrey
Baseball Team	<i>The Perspective</i>	All other teams, ever
Writing Center Publication		All other publications, ever