

Melting Faces,



not the Planet.

An out of the ordinary fusion of theatre and rock 'n roll
that follows a young man 's journey through
love, friendship, disappointment, hope
and... Climate Change?

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Abstract

Climate change is a complex scientific issue with information disseminated from a variety of sources, including the scientific community, politicians, and the media. The resulting convoluted messaging leads to public skepticism and disengagement from the issue. In response to this disengagement, my project is designed to reconnect people emotionally with this very serious problem. Specifically, I wrote “Melting Faces, not the Planet,” as ‘an out of the ordinary fusion of theatre and rock ‘n roll that follows a young man’s journey through love, friendship, disappointment, hope and... climate change?’ To create this musical, I studied risk communication and entertainment-education methodology to identify the practices that effectively communicate climate risks, educate, and ultimately, entertain audiences. I also attended meetings with student drama organizations, like the Undergraduate Theatre Society, and the Swimming Ophelia Ensemble, to gather a production team of fellow students. Using this alternative approach, I hope the musical will engage new audiences, provoke critical thought about climate change, and inspire ordinary people to become personal and public advocates for a better future.

Introduction

Today, we the people inhabiting this shared planet, emitted 9.75 million tons of carbon dioxide (CO₂) into the atmosphere. On May 9th, 2013, CO₂ levels reached 400 parts per million, a concentration Earth has not experienced for over 3 to 5 million years (Jenkins). Although there is a clear connection between CO₂ levels and temperature, sea level, ocean acidity, storm frequency and strength, drought and species extinction, we have an unnerving capacity to ignore it. In addition to knowing the effects of growing levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, we know the causes of this rising number, yet it largely remains in our minds as simply a “number.” We have successfully quantified the human effect on the atmosphere but have failed to truly relate it to the quality of our environment, livelihoods, and most importantly, future. The UN International Panel on Climate Change concludes that “most of the observed increase in global average temperatures since the mid-20th century is very likely due to the observed increase in anthropogenic (produced by humans) greenhouse gas emissions” (IPCC). Clearly, climate change may be the biggest crisis the modern world will face, yet human behavior continues to push it to further extremes.

As an undergraduate at the University of Washington, I dedicated a large amount of time learning about the causes and effects of climate change in order to stop people from worsening the situation. I joined environmental groups, like EcoReps and Earth Club and advocated for UW to divest

from direct fossil fuel investments in their portfolios. I watched provocative documentaries, attended discussions, read science literature and news, and attended several UW lectures about climate change. In addition, a sizeable number of my classes focused on climate change with an emphasis on potential solutions. My job at the Environmental Stewardship & Sustainability office focused on solutions as well. For example, I created and coordinated the organization EcoReps, with the mission to elicit sustainable behaviors through peer-to-peer motivation and education. In my quest to understand the anthropogenic, or human-related, underpinnings of climate change, I noticed that the aforementioned avenues of communication primarily functioned to educate an already interested audience. The people I encountered were already engaged in learning more about climate change and its surrounding issues. It became clear the movement was lacking a hook, or something that drew new people in. As I reflected on these things, three questions came to mind. These questions shaped both the process and final product associated with this senior project. They are:

1. Why does the disconnect still exist between climate science and our actions?
2. What would it take to draw in a disinterested person?
3. What engaged and entertained primarily, yet informed the audience of serious issues at the same time?

In an attempt to answer these questions, I searched the web for the fusion of entertainment and climate change without much luck. There were a handful of songs expressing environmental concern with opinion pieces rating them from the most to least 'cringe-worthy'. I found children's entertainment songs, music videos with grainy pictures and slideshow text, and hypocritical celebrities telling their fans to "go green." These attempts seemed half-hearted at best and certainly did not accomplish the objective to draw new audiences into the climate change conversation and movement. As a result, there are efforts from the scientific community, especially NASA, to collaborate with the entertainment industry to educate people through everyday entertainment. A quote that I feel particularly suits this plea from scientists is from environmentalist Bill McKibben. He asks, "Where are the books? The poems? The plays? The goddamn operas?"

An answer to Mr. McKibben's rhetorical question began to form after I attended an original student production of a rock musical about finding the meaning of life. It was hilarious, engaging, entertaining and left me wanting more. Personally, it left me wanting two things. First and foremost, I wanted the show to continue. I wanted to watch it again, and for them to produce another. I absolutely did not want the story, the characters, and the music to suddenly stop. I was hooked. The second

“more” I wanted was *meaning*. Although the show had me laughing, thinking, and thoroughly engaged, I saw potential in the form of the musical to argue something important, through the powerful fusion of storytelling and poignant music.

With my head in the clouds, still dazed from the grandeur of the show, I began to see from a new perspective. From the clouds, I saw my experience with climate change form into a puzzle missing a critical piece. When I looked in my hand, I saw a shape that resembled the missing piece. What a mighty shape it was! It was a hook, an attention grabbing rock musical that promised to draw new audiences into the climate change discussion. I hailed this newfound puzzle piece that was full of meaning and potential, buzzing with an aura not belonging to me, and I bowed down to place it, completing the monumental puzzle. I felt the Earth quake, it was an excited shake, signifying that the puzzle was finally complete. Shocked, I peered at the newly formed message in the clouds, and read, “Melting Faces, not the Planet. With this realization, my rock musical was born. (*Cue epic bass, enter ridiculous shredding guitars. Lights, Audience, Dancing.*) In the following sections, I describe the literature and theory that support this endeavor and describe the project and its future direction.

Literature Review

My first question, Why does the disconnect still exist between climate science and our actions?, can be answered in many ways, including but not limited to, informational bias in the news, corporate funded climate science, political affiliations, religious beliefs, personal values, and the indirect causality between humans and climate change. I focus most on the indirect causality. What I mean by this is that there is an unseen relationship between our actions and the effects on climate. In other words, there is no direct possibility of “seeing is believing” with climate change. For example, emissions from driving contribute to climate change which is causing sea levels to rise. The reason we know this is occurring is because of careful scientific observations, measurements, and calculations, but the average person would not see these changes as a part of daily life. This is where the difficulty lies. According to Susanne Moser, “direct experience and immediate demands trump vicarious experience or abstract data almost every time” (34). It is a complex scientific issue involving the general public who does not implicitly understand climate change and has immediate personal needs that are more important to them.

This information led me to examine two effective methods of communicating climate risks to educate the public and promote sustainable behaviors: environmental risk communication and

entertainment-education. These areas of study provided crucial insight into my second and third questions: What would it take to draw in a disinterested person? What engaged and entertained primarily, yet informed the audience of serious issues at the same time?

Environmental Risk Communication:

The National Research Council defined risk communication as "an interactive process of exchange of information and opinion among individuals, groups, and institutions" (Committee on Risk Perception and Communication 1). An important, but largely unexamined focus in risk communication is the role of emotions. Evidence suggests that emotions like fear, hope, excitement or sadness can stimulate further rational processing of scientific data. Roeser, explains that although emotions are important determinants in risk perception, they "are generally excluded from communication and political decision making about risky technologies and climate change" (1033). Currently, scientists tend to only use rational appeals in communicating risk because of the ethical debate about using emotions in important decision making. Moser draws attention to this ethical dilemma with a cautionary tone by saying, a "[message's] emotional impact on the audience must be considered carefully as it can be far stronger than the impact of words alone" (40). Roeser asserts that emotions don't have to be used for manipulative purposes, "rather, they should be seriously addressed in order to trigger reflection" (1037). Research conducted by Anneloes Meijnders et al., concluded that "moderate-fear induction increased systematic processing in participants whose initial level of concern was low, but not in participants whose initial level of concern was high" (963). For an unconcerned audience, it might be very useful to use song lyrics and dialogue that elicit fear in order to prompt further critical thought. In understanding that emotions can affect information processing, we must also understand how people react to new and alarming information. Moser warns that "messages that increase worry, concern, or even fear, for example, must be accompanied by information that allows audiences to translate their feelings into remedial action" (Moser 40). In response to fear evoking material, Roeser agrees, claiming "hope is needed; for example, through vivid concrete examples," (1038). There is an important balance between thought-provoking emotional material and opportunities for people to become involved, because if one is too heavily weighted an audience may either feel without option or unconvinced.

Further argument for emotional connection in climate change posits that rational claims are not enough. Moser explains that "how individuals see themselves, their roles and actions, their rights and responsibilities fitting into the larger social and ecological whole are some of the 'moral uncertainties' that can perplex people" (36). Personally, I try to live a low impact lifestyle that is to my knowledge,

considered eco-friendly. I shop at the farmers market, recycle, compost, reuse, make concerted efforts to reduce energy and water consumption and rarely eat meat. If everyone in the world lived my relatively eco-friendly lifestyle, we would still require two Earths' worth of resources. Even knowing this, I feel as if I am doing the best I can within my ability especially compared to others. To this, Roeser might respond that "rationality can actually corrupt our appropriate moral emotions," (1036). My lifestyle serves as a good example. I have pro-environmental attitudes and I understand that my lifestyle contributes to further climate change, but I continue to live this way because I am doing more than many others are. It is easy to believe that any more change on my part will not amount to much on a larger scale. Although I am already concerned about the environment, this is a case where rational information might have overwhelmed me with the idea that further pro-environmental efforts would be fruitless (Roeser 1036).

In this case, as Meijnders stated, fear will not be as effective a tool because I have existing high levels of concern about climate change. There may still be room for an emotional appeal, however. Roeser posits that "sympathetic emotions can help to correct egoistic rational judgments" (1036) similar to the rationalization I highlighted above. Moser sees the need to "help people navigate these complexities and jointly develop compelling narratives that allow people to see their place in the context of humanity's and the Earth's common fate" (36). One possible way to do this is "presenting information in a way that appeals to emotions such as feelings of justice and sympathy for victims of climate change, in present and future generations" (Roeser 1038). By sharing stories of those that are already feeling the effects of climate change, and connecting their story to ours, there is potential to connect our emotions to our rational understanding of climate change. To approach using emotional appeals for climate change, I first wanted to identify other risks that were communicated using alternative approaches. In the process, I learned about entertainment-education which I describe in the following section.

Entertainment-Education:

Michael Papa defines entertainment-education (E-E) as "the process of purposely designing and implementing a media message to both entertain and educate, in order to increase audience members' knowledge about an educational issue, create favorable attitudes, shift social norms, and change overt behavior" (185). After learning the importance of emotion in communication, I explored E-E methodology to understand how information can effectively be delivered within the "compelling narrative" that Moser calls for. There have been many examples of E-E positively effecting audience

behaviors especially in television and radio soap operas. More recently, there have been examples of plays that positively impacted attitudes related to prevention of substance abuse, sexual assault, and HIV/AIDS (Heide 224). Through a combination of promoting dialogue and using social-cognitive theory, I began to understand how I might use this information in a musical format.

Dialogue

Dialogue between characters is a central component of plays and musicals. Within that dialogue, dissent between character viewpoints leads to “a greater likelihood of reaching high quality decisions” on part of the audience (Papa 190). In my rock musical, each character represents a different understanding about climate change and solutions, and through dialogue they debate the pros and cons of each. Although there is dissent in the dialogue, one viewpoint is not necessarily better than others. Papa’s work underscored the need for “partners in dialogue... to shift away from winning and losing and being and identity to becoming and difference” (190). This is very important for climate solutions because any actions recommended and/or taken to mitigate or adapt to climate change are largely based on predicted effects. Climate change is an imminent threat, meaning that many of the actions taken to prevent it from worsening will be anticipatory and preventative to an extent. Because the future is uncertain, many different viewpoints must be seriously considered, and respected equally. Although uncertainty exists, it is not a reason to stall action as Moser explains. She states that, “in contrast, recognizing that uncertainties imply that a problem can turn out either less or more severe than assumed, some scientists have called for an acceleration of action in light of the potentially catastrophic underestimation of risk” (Moser 35). At this point, even if we do not yet know the exact effects of our actions, we know what is better and what is worse for climate change.

Social-Cognitive Theory

To emphasize the actions that promote a climate stable future, the story will use social-cognitive theory. Social-cognitive theory is “the most prominent underpinning of entertainment-education” (Heide 226). It “postulates that characters who model behaviors that are rewarded create outcome expectancies that motivate viewers to engage in similar behaviors, whereas characters who are punished will influence viewers to avoid such behaviors. A third type of character, the transitional model, moves from adverse styles of behavior to positive ones” (Heide 226). In a play or musical, a character’s beliefs and values are defined through dialogue. These values lead each character to a specific outcome. From social-cognitive theory we understand that audience members model behaviors

learned from character outcomes, i.e. copy the good guy and avoid the bad guy. By using E-E this way, “it can influence audience members’ awareness, attitudes and behavior towards a socially desirable end,” as well as “serve as a social mobilizer, an advocate or agenda-setter, influencing public and policy initiatives in a socially desirable direction” (Papa 189). Knowing this potential, I studied how to craft the right messages within the story.

Crafting Normative Messages

Robert Cialdini, a prominent psychologist and professor emeritus, wrote about crafting messages to motivate people towards pro-environmental behaviors. He distinguished between “injunctive norms (involving perceptions of which behaviors are typically approved or disapproved) and descriptive norms (involving perceptions of which behaviors are typically performed),” stating that “both kinds motivate human action; people tend to do what is socially approved as well as what is popular” (105). But these norms are often used in a way that inadvertently motivates the wrong behavior. To avoid this mishap, Cialdini advocates a merging of the norms. He explains that, “the wisdom of setting these two kinds of motivations in line with (rather than in opposition to) one another within a communication has direct implications for the development of pro-environmental messages” (Cialdini 105). In the musical, I will avoid using an injunctive norm in opposition to a descriptive one. To illustrate this point, I turn to myself as an example. Instead of saying, “Joshua, eating meat contributes to climate change (injunctive), don’t be another carnivore (descriptive),” I would say, “Eating meat contributes to climate change (injunctive), eat veggies like everyone else (descriptive).” By putting the two norms in line with each other, I attempt to “avoid the tendency to send the normatively muddled message that a targeted activity is socially disapproved but widespread” (Cialdini 109).

Reviewing Other Musicals

As a next step, I examined musicals with social themes to understand how they presented and dealt with issues. In particular, I focused on a musical titled “Guys and Does,” a hunting parody of Guys and Dolls. This work measured attitudes towards hunting before and after the musical. Following social-cognitive theory, the show contained characters who modeled differing positions toward hunting (Heide). The protagonist, treated the animals he hunted with respect and valued the tradition of hunting. The antagonist, on the other hand, killed animals purely for sport. In the end, the protagonist was rewarded and the antagonist was punished. Through the analysis of a pre- and post-survey, Heide found an increase in approval toward hunting (228). Within the shift in attitudes, Heide distinguished

how emotion affected attitude. Heide explains that “compared to those who had only positive emotions [during the performance], participants who reported complex emotional responses were significantly more likely to be absorbed in the performance, inhabit the world of the performers, be provoked or challenged, have stronger emotional response to the performance, feel uplifted and inspired by the performance, feel a sense of belongingness or connectedness with the rest of the audience, be left with new insight or perspective, and anticipate a lasting impression from the performance” (230). This supports Roeser and Meijnders’ argument that emotions can lead to further critical thought on a topic.

Heide draws from other works to further defend this claim. He states that “Kincaid (2002) suggested that emotion both drives the action of the dramatic characters and, through audience empathy, becomes ‘the motivational force that induces members of the audience to reconceptualize the central problem depicted in the drama and to resolve it in a similar manner in their own lives’” (qtd. by Heide 150). As Moser mentioned before, the use of a compelling narrative is an important tool in providing personal context for a particular topic. In this fashion, using narrative in a musical has the potential to positively change attitudes towards climate action. Heide built upon the narrative, adding that because “music affects mood, attention, recall, and attitudes (e.g., Alpert & Alpert, 1990; Kellaris, Cox, & Cox, 1993), musical theater might enhance the influence of its nonmusical counterpart, as well as having greater drawing power. Bandura (2004) argued that emotive music adds dramatic intensity and increases attentional involvement in entertainment-education, leading to greater impact” (qtd. by Heide 231). The potential for musicals and attitude change was very successful for Heide, and functions as an example and inspiration for this project.

Considering the Audience:

As a final step before writing my rock musical, I identified my potential audience. Because the musical draws from my own experience with climate change, my initial thoughts for the audience were youth from 16 to 24. After a conversation with the Seattle Office of Arts & Culture, I narrowed down the audience to college students. The reason for this is mostly due to location restrictions. Getting a space for a play is very costly and must be done six months to a year ahead of schedule. The UW, on the other hand, often provides space for students for free. Although I will no longer be a UW student, through a drama club called Swimming Ophelia Ensemble, I can maintain connections with students who might be interested in producing the musical with me.

From here, I did more research to understand the audience. The organization Earth Justice conducted research to segment Americans into beliefs related to the environment. They found eight subgroups, four of which involved youth. They labeled these groups Materialists, Fatalists, Driven Independents, and Idealists. The majority of Materialists are under college age, and the Fatalists are generally low-income urbanites (Pike et al. 10). Although a smaller proportion of the two attend college, they still hold values that might be prevalent for college students. Pike describes these youth thusly: “Apathetic, materialistic and fatalistic, the majority of young American adults have values that reflect a lack of concern for their own lives, let alone others or the planet—ecological fatalism is a top value for the two youngest groups, the Materialists and the Fatalists” (7). To combat this, bringing diversity to the stage with urban youth or featuring young celebrities can be particularly effective for the groups (Pike 10). Pike describes Idealists as young, active, independent thinkers who “are cynical about government, business and the mainstream media. They hold ecological values twice as strongly as the average person” (7). According to Pike, they also have a great deal of influence over their peers, due in large part to their familiarity with online communities. The Driven Independents are young professionals who do not necessarily oppose environmental progress as long as it does not impede the further economic progress. Again, according to Pike, equating “going green” with success is the best way to influence this group.

Obviously, not all beliefs fit into the abovementioned categories. There are also a plethora of beliefs that can affect anyone’s behavior, regardless of group association. One of the beliefs that can be a barrier to change is environmental elitism. Pike explains that “people see environmentalists as saints sacrificing all self-interest which creates an unattainable standard that people perceive so they quit before they start” (12). Another barrier–belief highlighted by Pike is that “going green” is perceived to be too expensive and time consuming (12). In the musical, concrete examples that do not require significant self-sacrifice, time, or money will be highlighted.

Methodology

‘Melting Faces, not the Planet’ weaves story and music to illuminate two parallel tales – the quest to understand climate change, and the turbulent journey of young love. Thompkins reminds us that “stories give meaning to the human experience, and they are a powerful way of knowing and learning” (316). Stories can draw us in and transport us to another world. Through them, we can sympathize with characters and reflect on how we might be perpetuating their problems. According to

Beethoven, “music is the mediator between the spiritual and the sensual life.” It has the potential to connect people to what they cannot see. In this methodology section, I present the basic elements of my story which are setting, cast of characters, plot, point of view, and theme. These elements form the foundation for the play that will be written as a result of this senior project. Then, I present two songs that represent the type and body of music introduced through this play.

Setting

This play takes place in present time. It occurs at the University of Freedom, a large university campus located somewhere in the United States. Specifically, the play takes place in a C.O.A.L. dormitory, in the Environment 101 classroom, in the university president’s office, and the farm cooperative house. The play takes place over the course of the introductory fall semester/quarter.

Cast of Characters

Using social-cognitive theory from entertainment-education methodology, I created characters that represent different views on the environment. The main character, Trey, is the transitional protagonist. At first he does not have a stance on climate change, but throughout the course of the story, he becomes very passionate about solving climate change. Two characters that are good friends with Trey, River and Olive, both have different pro-environmental views on climate change. River believes in political action, both through creating and advocating for new school and government policies, and protesting environmental degradation resulting in climate change. Olive practices self-sustainability with the help of urban farming and believes in building social support systems in the event that broken systems eventually collapse, we have models and supports to build from. Bo, on the other hand, is the antagonist who supports big oil and is a classical economist tried and true. CiCi’s role weds both storylines. On the surface level, she is Trey’s love interest, but as the musical unfolds, her deeper and more complex character unfolds. Building from the success of ‘Guys and Does,’ this musical will use the same character reward/punishment outcome to increase approval of pro-environmental attitudes. Characters with pro-environmental attitudes are rewarded and those with anti-environmental attitudes are punished. The details of this will be further explained in the plot section. I now turn to a more detailed description of each character.

Primary Characters

Trey. Trey is nineteen-years-old and always sees the mason jar half full. He has always had a positive outlook on life, but has recently been confronted with information about the planet that has

upset his balance. The things he learned in class and from his friends inspired lifestyle changes to be a more active and engaged citizen. Trey recycles, composts, turns of the sink while he brushes his teeth, grows spinach and herbs on his dormitory windowsill, bikes to school and work (even in the rain), wears ratty used clothes, and refuses to drive because he can't stomach the damage it does to the planet. He is a dreamer, a person of passion, who expects a lot out of life and love. He chases after love, but it seems to slip out of his grasp, just out of reach. Until he meets CiCi...

CiCi. CiCi is a senior at the University of Freedom. She has dark brown hair and intense green eyes. She is elusive and a little "too cool for school." She is reluctant to commit to love, and prefers to flirt with it on the edges, always keeping one foot out the door. But there is more to her than meets the eye. Her true identity is loving and soft, but the façade is kept toward those who want to change who she is. She is deeply misunderstood, and everyone always thinks they know who she is before they've met her.

Bo. Bo is the university's main economics professor as well as a Big Oil executive on the side. He believes in the free market, and understands climate change through this lens. He believes that oil is the life blood of the world and that it makes everyone's life better. The work he does fuels progress, and without him the world would be a darker place. He is also in love with CiCi, but for alternative motives. He touts her like a prize, and showers her with gifts and a lavish lifestyle. The attention he gives to her would make it difficult for anyone to leave him. But luckily for Trey, she did leave him. For how long this time, is the real question.

Secondary Characters

Gnat. Gnat is Trey's roommate and best friend. Gnat is majoring in economics, and is easily persuaded by his professor Bo. He is a constant climate change skeptic throughout the play, fueling intense debates while also providing valid arguments. His persistent skepticism begins to fade as his illusion of Bo unravels and he sees the true face of Big Oil.

Olive. Olive is an introverted cutie pie that might have a bit of a crush on Trey. She shares Environment 101 with him, and takes every opportunity she can to spend time with him. Eventually his attempts to ignore her turn her interest towards Gnat. Although at first they do not seem to a good match, their relationship grows, and together they learn more about themselves and climate change. Her interest in valuing nature and common goods like air and water, push Gnat to explore economic theory that values the three P's: Person, Planet, and Profit.

River. River is a driven and vocal idealist. He values action highly as he comes from a well-off and complacent family who was never driven to social and environmental activism. To top it off, his family never really understood, or cared enough to listen to his beliefs. He was always written-off as a little excited, and easy to impress. From this dynamic, he derived his intense, focused, and aggressive social characteristics. He believes in active protest to let the people's voice be heard. He understands that the government is turning into an oligarchy, run by money and minority. He thinks political activism and policy change can change the way we interact with climate change more positively by ending oil subsidies, sharing wealth, and shaping green values.

Professor Prophet. Professor Prophet is a pessimistic old man, who is seeing everything he loves being destroyed. A lifetime of study and exploration of the world's diversity has given him a new perspective on modern society. To Professor Prophet, we are doomed. Our lack of values drive us to destroy this planet, and soon each other. He believes that the world is burning, and there is nothing we can do.

Green Officer. Mary B. Green is COAL Hall's very own Green Officer. It is her duty to encourage all of her "rezzies" to take that one step further, and make COAL Hall a green hall. Her upbeat personality and whimsical attitude clash with the seemingly threatening "advice" she gives to each resident. After even a brief encounter with Mary, anyone will "want" to go green. The reputation of her all-knowing and forever watching eye forewarns residents that even inside their own walls they are not safe.

President Pushova. President Pushova is, well... just that. A pushover. He is the president of the University of Freedom, but makes decisions that put security ahead of freedoms. He is easily convinced by Bo, a "good friend," that security comes with sacrifice, but if it is the students he wants to protect, he must provide them with the most security. At the objection of the students, President Pushova decides to move ahead on many decisions, especially relating to Bo.

Plot

'Melting Faces, not the Planet' follows a college freshman's epic journey through turbulent young love, budding friendships, self-exploration, and the startling discovery of climate change. Nineteen-year-old Trey finally left the monotony of small town living to embark on his first year at the University of Freedom. When Trey first sets eyes on CiCi, he knows that she's the one. After Trey's desperate but unsuccessful attempts to hang out with her, he learns that CiCi has a secret; she's no normal girl, in fact she isn't really even a girl! She's climate change and she's defensive, reticent,

resilient, yet altogether powerless against the will of other people's actions. In order to earn her trust, Trey embarks on a quest to discover who and what CiCi really is. With help from his new friends River and Olive, Trey learns more about CiCi (climate change) and how others are fighting to lower their and others' impact on CiCi. In a battle with time, Trey must convince CiCi that she can be her own person before her ex-boyfriend Bo (Big Oil) steals her away. This rock musical contains three main acts which are explained next.

Three Main Acts

Act 1: The Beginning. The play begins with Trey moving into his new room in Certified Organic and Living (C.O.A.L.) Hall, a dormitory at the University of Freedom. Apart from the off-putting odor of hordes of young men packed in a concrete box, you can almost taste the freedom in the air. After meeting his roommate Gnat, he rushes to his first class with a girl that lives on the same floor, Olive. When they arrive, they are greeted by a slightly agitated old gentleman, Professor Prophet, the instructor of Environment 101: the Human Revolt and Death of Mother Nature. Professor Prophet begins his first lecture on climate change and about halfway through starts to lose his calm, but Trey, being the young man he is, is already distracted by the mysterious beauty across the room. As Professor Prophet becomes increasingly hysterical, Trey's gawking is interrupted by a scream:

*"The world as we know it is going to end
Gorging on black ichor we so desperately imbibe
Finish the lifeblood and raise what remains
Ever consuming, forever dooming!*

*Vats of oil and tar leaving a scar
Tainting pure lands leaving them raw
Burn, burn, burn what we've cut from the skin
The world is fuming, we can't stop consuming!*

*Shadows bleed through drawn lines, and ooze to seed
Raise black blossoms, and spread disease
Fondle the untouched, taint the sacred
Forever dooming, the world is fuming!"*

After the class and professor break out into this sinister song about climate change, Trey is visibly shaken. To boot, his mysterious fair maiden has disappeared! Following Meijnder's argument that fear appeals provoke further critical thought, Trey and Olive discuss the lecture on their walk to the dorm. Although their discussion was ripe with opinions, neither knew exactly what to do. Using Roeser's advice to provide concrete examples after fear appeals, the confusion is resolved when a bright and cheery (yet terrifyingly persistent and hilariously forceful) residential Green Officer, Mary B. Green, stops by Trey and Gnat's room. Known for their use of crafting Cialdini worthy normative messages and pro-environmental behavior, Green Officers are very effective communicators and advocates for dorm residents going green. From the stack of informative posters, verbal "advice" (read: threats), and promise of prizes left by Mary B. Green, Trey begins his journey toward sustainability with little help from Gnat. Trey starts to recycle, compost, take shorter showers, turn off electronics, and to the annoyance of his fellow dormmates, stops flushing after he pees. But even with these considerable changes in his lifestyle, it somehow doesn't seem to be enough. Although he recognizes this discrepancy, he's checked off each box on the going green poster and feels temporarily satisfied. But this lack of depth and exploration is reflected in his one-sided relationship with the mysterious girl CiCi.

The night before their next Environment 101 class, River and Olive come over to discuss climate change and their newfound knowledge. River shares about an activist group on campus, and Olive shares about the farm community. The two are very excited to be a part of such active and welcoming communities. Gnat, although excited about the prospect of protesting and urban farming, is constantly fueling debate over whether their actions to prevent further climate change are necessary. Gnat quotes his economics professor Bo, and when he does his voice is dubbed with Bo's voice as the lights dim. Gnat/Bo proclaim, "You see, going green is for those who are economically suited to do so. It's just a personal choice, but when it comes down to it, climate change won't be an issue. As resources like oil dwindle, they will become more expensive and the market will respond by turning toward inexpensive renewables. So don't waste your time or money worryin'." Throughout their discussion, Olive noticeably develops a bit of a crush on Trey, but he responds sheepishly trying to ignore any advances; his passion for CiCi is already consuming his every thought.

The next morning before class, Gnat and Trey devise a plan for Trey to talk with CiCi. His plan is to arrive at class early so he can wait until CiCi arrives to sit next to her. The complication is that he can't walk with River or Olive, because they will want to sit next to him, severely limiting his options for seating and also playing it cool; they already know too much. A few minutes before class, Olive and River knock on the door to grab Trey. Before they do, Gnat alerts Trey who scrambles out the first floor

window to carry out the plan. As Trey hides by the entrance to class, he watches Olive and River enter. Eventually CiCi saunters over, casually walking past the open door. Trey, surprised, catches up to ask where she is going. She responds that everyone knows that "introductory crap" and she is skipping. He decides to skip his first class follow her out the other side. With an air of over-confidence that hides her nervousness, CiCi takes Trey to her favorite spots around the beautiful campus. Trey can't believe his luck, and has fallen hard while CiCi maintains a forcedly aloof attitude. They share their histories and their dreams. At one point, CiCi almost divulges her darkest secret but stops herself. Eventually, CiCi hesitantly receives a kiss from Trey. Stars, whirlwinds, and music parade around Trey's thoughts after his first kiss. Yes, that's right ladies and gentlemen, his *first kiss*. Things are looking up for Trey. He shares his streak of strike-outs with other girls with the audience. He is on cloud nine, thinking about CiCi, but she doesn't go to class, or answer her phone, and she hardly respond to his incessant texts! Gnat, out of a sense of friendly obligation, reads over Trey's desperate texts and tries to decipher what CiCi might have meant in her dwindling responses. Without much insight, Gnat mentions they should start a band, "because chicks dig dudes in bands." They begin to imagine playing in a rock band and in the middle of air jamming, River and Olive interrupt to ask if they want to go to a real rock show. Excitedly, Trey agrees to attend his first house party! Gnat confidently talks about all the beautiful college girls that will be there as Trey self-consciously wonders aloud if CiCi will be there. Olive is hurt by the comment, but still hopeful.

They arrive to an awesome house party with a rockin' house band. And to top it all off, CiCi came! Trey excitedly points her out to Gnat, whose jaw drops. When Trey looks back over, he notices that she came in with another guy. A man in fact... tall, handsome, strong. A man's man. Gnat, with his jaw still dropped, points out that the man is his economics professor, Bo. In shock, Trey musters all his courage to confront this sight he's seen. He asks: "How could you do this to me? I thought you liked me! We had such a great time, and I felt like we really connected, plus we kissed!!" He comes off as a little over attached. CiCi responds in a way Trey never expected. "What? You followed me around campus and then kissed me. You sent me a thousand texts. You're desperate for me and you don't even know who I am." She pushes him out of the way and moves toward the stage, grabs the mic, and introduces her band: CiCi and the Unnatural Disasters. Her song, "I Don't Give a Damn if You Know Who I Am," reveals her true identity: climate change. That's right, she's no normal girl, not even a girl in fact, nope, she's climate change and she's tired of everyone pushing her around.

Act 2: The Middle. After the party, Trey tries to recover from the revelation and CiCi's symbolic exit. To understand who and what CiCi really is, he begins to dig deeper into understanding climate

change and respective solutions. He reflects on the disconnect between his actions and their consequences but struggles to follow his actions any further than the concrete box he is living in. Energy seems to flow freely, but where from? Garbage, recycling, and compost are neatly disposed of, but where do they end up? The water flows clean, but where is it taken from and who is affected by its loss? His questions are largely unanswered, so he journeys outside of COAL Hall to answer them.

In his quest, he finds out that River and Olive have become very active in combating climate change. Each has found communities that suit their personalities and values, and help define their beliefs surrounding climate solutions. River joined a group of active students who are working to get the university to divest from fossil fuels. He answers Trey's question that much of the energy comes from burning fossil fuels. Fossil fuels are one of the cheapest forms of energy and that is why it is used, but its costs don't take into account any social or environmental damages. Fossil fuels like coal are linked to cancer, asthma, and birth defects and are the biggest contributors to climate change. River is working with this group of students to revoke the social license of fossil fuel companies so they no longer are able to profit off of the destruction of public goods like air and our common future. By divesting from fossil fuels, he hopes this will prompt more investment in renewable energies and encourage more energy efficiency. River believes that changing one policy can affect 6 billion people's lives. His beliefs in active participation in government and aggressive non-violent protesting inspire Trey to take further measures to participate in the climate movement. Trey joins a sit in at the university president's office to further protest fossil fuel investments. Most of the students are arrested, and when they are detained, Bo walks past the group. He proceeds to meet with President Pushova about the risks surrounding divestment. Bo convinces Pushova that divestment will weaken the investment portfolios, and negatively affect the students, their most important stakeholders! After his encounter with the fuzz, Trey wants to try something a little more tame and let River handle the protesting.

He joins Olive at the urban farmhouse, with a group of passionate and eccentric students. Olive believes in individualistic action. She is trying to reduce her impact and set an example for anyone else that is interested. She believes that the current system is broken, but as Professor Prophet said, "there's nothing we can do." Instead of trying to change the system like River, she is trying to build support systems for the imminent collapse. She believes there is an upside to the down, and that we can rebuild a local, community oriented society based on love, sharing, and respect for people and the Earth. The farm's intentional community feels unshakable to Trey, and he feels warm and welcome in this new space. The farmers teach him how to plant and harvest, and bake a pizza and a pie with all fresh produce from the farm. It couldn't be more utopian. But it is soon brought to their attention that

a pipeline is going to be built and they will reconstruct the farmhouse as an oil refinery. Through River, they find out who is up to this all. Bo!

Bo is at the heart of all of their problems. He is wrecking the chance of a positive future by squashing any idealism or countermovements before they begin. As his anger builds, Trey realizes what must be done. He must convince CiCi to join their side! He must empower her to make her own decisions, and stop being puppeted by Bo! Trey writes her the ultimate song expressing his regret for being so misinformed about who she really was, begging her to come back. Worried about truly opening up to someone, she hesitantly agrees to meet with him and he explains to her that he understands her now, and she should leave Bo. They sing a duet called “Wanting to Love,” a heart wrenching young lovers ballad about hesitation and fear in the climate of love.

Act 3: The End. Bo’s callous and reckless behaviors that profit off of the characters’ lives, passions, and future, drive Trey, River, and Olive to fight back. With the power learned from each community, they interrupt Bo’s schmoozing President Pushova and the Board of Regents at a fancy dinner. CiCi is being exhibited like a trophy to show the decision makers that there is nothing to be worried about concerning fossil fuel use. With the support of Trey, River, and Olive, CiCi musters up as much courage to fight back and to pursue who she wants to be. Together, they reveal Bo’s true identity and motives to the president and Board of Regents. Finally, the president fires Bo and stands up to his middle name, President Nota Pushova. The farm is saved, and the University of Freedom no longer supports investing in big oil, but CiCi left with Bo.

The groups come together at the farmhouse to celebrate the victory. The bittersweet ending weighs heavy on Trey as he tries to celebrate with the vivacious and animated crowd. That is, until CiCi enters the door, and this time, without Bo. The ending follows the social-cognitive theory and rewards the persistent, passionate, and caring group of students with pro-environmental attitudes. Both Olive and River win their battles and are celebrated by their friends, while Trey learns about climate change and successfully wins CiCi’s trust shown by her arriving at the celebration. On the other hand, the musical punishes the self-interested, profiteering anti-environmental character Bo, who loses the girl and is fired from his position.

Point of View

This play presents the perspective of multiple characters, but is told primarily through the thoughts of the main character, Trey. Occasionally, the musical will be narrated by a member of the live rock band during scenes to quickly advance the story and inform the audience.

Theme

In this tale, young love is inextricably tied to climate change. To love, you must understand both yourself and your lover. When you first start to fall, you may not quite know who you are falling for. Parts of their character remain a mystery and only time and experience will reveal their intricacies. In these discoveries, you may find conflict. Revelations are not always positive, sometimes you find that you've fallen in love with a lie - a lie that you created from naivety and expectations. And when this lie unravels, you must confront the new person standing in front of you. This person is no longer a man or a woman, a name or a character. They are not static; rather, they are dynamic. They are influenced by your decisions, actions, judgments, and respond to each individually. To embark on a journey of love is to get so close to someone that you see how he or she works. You understand influences and reactions, and you care about each. Climate change is no different from a boy, a girl, a man, or a woman. It is affected by our every action and reacts differently to each. Care toward it will result in decreased fear and anger, and provocations will further inflame it. We must re-imagine our relationship with climate change, and develop a tender and nurturing attitude towards it. It is something we love, and it is something that is dangerous. We must protect it before it is lost in the hands of manipulators, perpetrators, and the uninformed. Together, we must win the love of climate change. Three central themes emerged in this love story. I explain each in turn.

Central Story

First: Fear, confusion, and misdirection. The introduction to climate change is laden with fear, as are CiCi's emotions towards opening up with Trey. In fear, we try to figure out what we are fearful of in order to prevent feeling these emotions. Trey begins his quest toward sustainability, and CiCi flirts with the idea of opening up to Trey. But confusion promptly follows. The rock musical highlights confusion about what to do, in terms of the sustainable path, and relationships. Neither are clear. Like love, solutions to climate change are complex and oftentimes, elusive. But we know it is a worthwhile endeavor, so we pursue it. Sometimes we start in the wrong direction, but we are on the right track. Lessons learned do not stop us, but push us further in the right direction.

Second: Persistence and Perseverance. The characters have learned the true identity of CiCi. Trey realizes his misdirection, and begins to dig deeper into understanding climate change. Trey, Olive, and River discover Bo's plots that attack their lifestyles and values. Although Bo has the upper hand, eventually their passion and drive oust his plans and revoke his social license at the university. A part of

the persistence is the pursuit of knowledge and understanding. In order to effect change, we must understand motives, issues, and people. By knowing these, Trey, River, and Olive are able to defend their values and defend CiCi from further manipulation.

Third: Action, purpose, and reward. A leader is a person who is willing to act before others. The problem may be apparent, but it takes a leader to make it public and it takes action to solve it. Initially,, many of the values held by Trey, River, and Olive were untested. Through conversation, characters were able to share and shape their opinions and defend arguments, but they never expected to defend their lifestyles. Bo gave them purpose in the sense that he attacked their values, and if they did not stand up to defend them, their values would lose. Other values would take their place as culturally superior. As a result of their actions, our protagonists were rewarded. The farm was saved, and the university divested. And of course, Trey got the girl.

Writing the Music

Within the script, I've identified spots where there will be songs to emphasize and dramatize particular events and decisions. I will provide three examples. The first song marks the introduction of climate change to Trey titled, "Beginning with the End." The second, "I Don't Give a Damn if You Know Who I Am," is a song that reveals CiCi's true identity backed by her band, CiCi and her Unnatural Disasters. The third song plays during the final battle between Bo and Trey. The first song starts after Trey's professor of Environment 101: the Human Revolt and the Death of Mother Nature begins to prophesize about the coming end. After delivering scientific information about climate change, he begins to extrapolate and claims that the world as we know it is coming to an end. From here, Trey notices his actions contribute to climate change and begins to behave in a more sustainable fashion. But we know he is still far from it. This is reflected in his relationship with CiCi, which culminates in an epic rock song crying out for freedom of her own choices and for people to realize how their actions can affect another person. Last but not least is the climactic song narrating the fight for CiCi's love between Bo and Trey.

To write these, I am working with my friends that I have jammed with for the past year. I begin by introducing the story surrounding the song and the particular emotions that it should express. From there I show them what I've been working on, and together we build it into a full song. Often, what I wrote functions as a skeleton that changes as we work together and emphasize certain parts, create new parts, and drop others. The first song, I emphasized fear and hysteria using a fuzzy bass, falsetto

singing and a floating chorus. The second features a powerful female vocalist with the stern and angry tone battling for freedom of identity and equality. The last will be riddled with face melting solos as Bo and Trey battle till the end.

Results

Here is an example of the script for 'Melting Faces, not the Planet.' The work above is carefully translated into the script below. Other sections are partially written, but do not yet connect with each other. Also, the URL below links to a song sketch recorded to give readers a sense of the feeling, tone, and sound of the musical.

Script

Setting: Environment 101: the Human Revolt and Death of Mother Nature.

Prof. Professor: Welcome everyone to Environment 101: the Human Revolt and Death of Mother Nature. My name is John Prophet, and I will be your professor this quarter. This is Jane Disciple, the TA for the class. Today, we embark on a journey to understand our relationship to the environment. By the end of this course, you will understand the various ways we approach and interact with the environment, whether it be deeply connected or abusive.

We will begin with the present, and from there turn backwards to examine the path that brought us here. Today, we live in the Anthropocene. We've left the age of stability in which humans thrived and flourished by gorging on the ichor of the Earth that we release as a flatulent byproduct of our unbridled desires!

(Snickers from the class)

Prof. Prophet: Ahh.. Of course. I forget that some of you still have an emotional intelligence of a 5 year old.. Well. Where did I leave of? Hmm (*grunts*).. As I was saying, we live in a world where we've changed the chemical composition of the atmosphere at an unprecedented rate. We have done in 100 years, what normally takes tens of thousands of years. Daily, we emit 9.75 million tons of carbon dioxide (CO₂) into the atmosphere. Although a small portion of that CO₂ is absorbed by plants, it either remains in the atmosphere or is absorbed in the ocean - acidifying and killing sea life. Yearly emissions are predicted to rise as the amount of CO₂ and other greenhouse gases affect our delicate climate. The concentration of CO₂ surpassed the benchmark safety level of 350 parts per million of CO₂ and in May 2013 reached 400 parts per million, a concentration Earth has not experienced for over 3 to 5 million years. But, I speak in numbers. Does anyone know what these numbers mean?

Olive: (shyly raises hand) Uh, rising temperature?

Prof. Prophet: Humm.. (*mumbles in agreement*) Anyone else?

Mysterious girl: *(raises hand halfway and answers in a bored tone, assuming everyone already knew this)* Rising sea levels, increasing ocean acidity, increasing risk of mass species extinction, increasing frequency and strength of natural disasters, and increasing risk of droughts and flooding.

Prof. Prophet: Ah.. Yes yes.. Now we've moved from numbers to empty words.. But what does it really mean? *(silence)*

Well, as you can tell, we have successfully quantified the human effect on the atmosphere but have failed to truly relate it to the quality of our environment, our livelihoods, and most importantly, our future. You see, climate change isn't a number, or a word. No, climate change is tangible. It's right here in front of us.

Trey zones out as he begins looking around the class. He checks the clock, twiddles his pencil, and looks to his left and does a double take. HOLY SHIT! Trey and Prof. Prophet begin to speak in tandem.

Trey: woah... who is that girl?

Prof. Prophet: It is a violent reaction to the gross misconduct of man.

Trey stumbles out of his chair and shuffles to the Mysterious Girl.

Prof. Prophet: It is growing, it is materializing, and it is embodied in the way we treat each other. We gawk at its ever increasing size as if we do not understand what is causing it! It is our shadow that follows our every step, slowly outgrowing its form, plotting to consume us as we consume the life from our planet.

The Mysterious Girl, stands as a guitar starts playing a rock infused tango riff in a minor key. The way she carries herself mimics Prof. Prophet speech. Her movements circle and outgrow Trey's mesmerized form. Hunched with his head tilted up, Trey continues to gawk.

Prof. Prophet: Yes you see, because there is a natural cycle to this all. A circular pattern. *(Music stops. Dramatic pause)*. Revenge!

Lights turn off and the song "Beginning with the End" starts. A chorus begins singing, and when the light turns on, Trey finds himself standing alone facing Prof. Prophet dressed in apocalyptic cult garb with the class singing by his side.

Prof. Prophet:

"And the world as we know it is coming to an end!
Gorging on the ichor we so desperately slake
Finish the lifeblood and raise what remains
Ever consuming, forever dooming!

Vats of oil and tar leaving a scar
Tainting pure lands leaving them raw
Burn, burn what we've cut from the skin
The world is fuming, we can't stop consuming!

Shadows bleed through drawn lines, and ooze to seed

Raise black blossoms, and spread disease
Fondle the untouched, taint the sacred
Forever dooming, the world is fuming!"

Lights are back on. Prof. Prophet is dressed again in shirt and tie, and the students are back again in their chairs.. All but one.

Trey: *(startled and bemused he looks around, eventually looking to the empty seat where the Mysterious Girl sat. He says to himself)* Where'd she go?

Class begins to pack up to leave. Olive calls out to Trey:

Olive: Hey Trey! *(waves)* You coming?

Trey: Oh yeah, sorry. Man... what the hell was that? That guy is crazy!

Olive: I don't think so. I think he's got a point, ya know? We never really connect with the repercussions to our actions. We're always a few steps removed.. Sometimes it doesn't even feel like it'll affect us.

River: Hey! Are you guys heading to.. Certified Organic and Living Hall? Man... that's a ridiculous name.

Olive: Yeah. How'd you know?

River: I saw you walking from there.

Olive: Are you in Environment 101 as well?

River: Yes! Was that a phenomenal lecture or what?!

Trey: Seriously? I thought it was terrifying! Seems to me the guy has a few.. marbles.. lost..? Or whatever that saying is.

River: No *(shakes head)*. His passion, his emotion, that's what we need! We need a leader that's able to provoke environmental morals. We need the connection! He was right on man..
(Olive nods in agreement while Trey tries to comprehend)

Trey: Environmental morals? What do you mean?

River: Connecting your actions to environmental repercussions passed the numbers, you know? Like if you burn a gallon of gas, you would understand the process it took to get to you as a consumer. First they had to drill it either by ocean drilling, tar sands, fracking, and even normal drilling. That involves destroying some part of the environment by spilling, releasing toxic chemicals, polluting water systems. Overall it ruins peoples livelihoods and the environment. But all you see is \$4 dollars a gallon! Whoof *(exasperated relief)*! Damn! Gets me worked up every time!

Trey: Yeah.. That's pretty cool.

Olive: *(corrects him)* Super cool!

They arrive at C.O.A.L. Hall and part ways. Trey enters his room, and collapses on his bed.

Gnat: How was ur first class buddy?

Trey: Intense.

Gnat: Oh yeah?

Trey: Yeah.. Apparently we're fucked and there's nothing we can do.

Gnat: That sounds pretty intense.

Trey: *(sits up)* But holy shit! I think I'm in love.

Gnat: Woah.. Pull those reigns in pony...

Trey: *(confused look at remark)* Anyway, I didn't talk to her or anything. But I saw her across the room. She was so.. Incredibly *(shaking his hands in excitement)*... HOT! Like physically hot. Like if I touched her I might melt. She just had this fire in her eyes. And this hair that could've been made from the pelts of tiny baby extinct animals...

Gnat: Sounds terrifying... why didn't you talk to this hot mess?

Trey: She was out of there before I knew it.. All I saw was a smoking trail out the door. I gotta talk to her... but how... it's going to be impossible.

Gnat: Alright, let's think this out. She's in your class, but she leaves early. Why don't you try talking to her before?

Trey: *(jumps out of bed)* GENIUS! HOLY SHIT YOU ARE A GENIUS! *(runs to Gnat and hugs him)*

Song

My Name is Climate Change:

<https://soundcloud.com/cowgijos/my-name-is-climate-change-1>

Next Steps

This endeavor is much more complex than I imagined it would be when I first embarked on it. I am incredibly grateful for all the support from my CEP community as well as faculty and staff that allowed me to choose such a personal and creative project. Without the encouragement from CEP, I this project would have died a dream; instead, it has turned into something larger than I could have imagined. Through it, I have been able to explore my interest in communicating climate change, a risk

that greatly worries me and something I don't think we are taking seriously enough, as well as my interests in music and theatre. The word that embodies my present space is Momentum. Although I have only finished step one, this experience has given me the energy and momentum to continue working on the script and music, and eventually practice and perform it.

Finishing the Script

As you can tell, the script is not finished and will not be for some time. This was a much more difficult process than I expected. In my literature review, I neglected a large part of this project: the actual process of writing a rock musical script! Instead, I focused mostly on communicating risk through entertainment, as that is also a very important subject for the project. As I continue my work on the script, I will study other scripts, watch and review musicals, and read books that provide guidance for script writing. The inspiration and knowledge from these sources will help me fill the plot holes, polish what is already written, and create an altogether better written musical. As well, I am currently speaking with current and graduated UW drama students to share the script with and garner interest in producing the musical.

Writing the Songs

At present, I have identified a few songs that will play during critical moments. Some are already close to finished, while others are still percolating in the general idea stage. Over the summer, I will practice with my friends and work these ideas out. The band will include Derek (drummer), Joel (lead guitar), myself (vocals and rhythm guitar), Benjamin (bass), Chance (keyboard and synthesizer), and Daniel (vocals and slide guitar).

Practicing the Musical

When the script is finished, and the music is working, I will begin the search for the cast and crew with the help of the theatre groups I reached out to (Swimming Ophelia Ensemble and the Undergraduate Theatre Society). An important part of this is securing a location where we can practice the musical on a regular basis. Luckily, both of the groups have connections to space at the UW, so if they are interested in producing the musical with me, it should not be difficult. During practice, we will also search for a space to perform.

Performing the Musical

Most likely we will use a UW space because it is free of charge, while most other theatres require rent. Friends, family, students, faculty, staff, and community members would be invited using a combination of social media and physical posters. During the first performances, I will invite theatre professionals in hopes that they take interest in the musical. If so, it might be possible to bring the climate change themed rock musical to a larger audience. Often, if a producer does take interest, they will recast, direct, and produce the musical using their resources. If this did happen, I would hope to still be connected to the project and watch it take flight!

Community Outreach

In my literature review, I quoted both Moser and Roeser who expressed the need for concrete examples and actions that can be taken if any fear, concern or worry is expressed in a message. Because those emotions are an inherent part of the nature of climate change, I plan to invite communities working to fight climate change to host booths and speak with audience members before and after the musical. Although the musical will address possible actions to take, I would like to take it one step further by bringing the real action to the play. Currently, I would like to invite UW environmental organizations like EcoReps and Divest UW, and Seattle organizations like Seattle Tilth, Forterra, and Nature Consortium, all of which provide important environmental information and volunteer activities. If the musical really does inspire the audience, I hope they take the time to connect with the efforts already occurring city- and nationwide.

Implications

If the musical becomes even minutely popular, then the goal would be accomplished. In my abstract I stated, "I hope the musical will engage new audiences, provoke critical thought about climate change, and inspire ordinary people to become personal and public advocates for a better future." If this occurs, then I will consider my project a success. This project could strengthen the body of examples of alternative communication of climate change. After my Senior Project Night presentation a reviewer offered to connect me to Susanne Moser, who I cited in my literature review. Based on her and others' interest in alternative communication avenues, I would like to share this project and possibly build upon it. Connecting with communications professionals might provide an opportunity to discover further potential of this musical or of musicals in general.

Conclusion

A parable is a rhetorical form of story “distinguished by a challenge to the existent moral order and by an urgent call for action” (Hope 37). It provides the audience with an ethical or moral choice. “The parable is unfinished and mysterious; it invites the audiences to participate in questioning the meaning of the human condition with an emphasis on what is good, and offers choices to audiences who must decide what is the right thing to do” (Hope 38). Irreparability is the inability to repair a problem. “The locus of the irreparable is a way of organizing our perceptions of a situation involving decision or action; its use calls attention to the unique and precarious nature of some object or state of affairs, and stresses the timeliness of our relationship to it” (Hope 38). In this case the environment is the irreparable and the parable is the story in which our actions dictate the stark outcomes of Earth and society. Hope explains that “parables offer no middle ground where one can almost succeed or not really fail. The consequences are dramatic and irreversible” (39). This form can be very effective to draw the attention necessary to the current dilemma. Moser states that “if the climate and environment do not yet clearly enough signal to the lay eye that the Earth and humanity are faced with a momentous challenge, socially constructed ‘signals’ could stand in to provide the relevant information and ‘early warning’ system” (35). A parable can act as a sign to tell audiences and the public that our actions can and must change, or else a poor future lies in wait.

Within ‘Melting Faces, not the Planet’ is a parable of irreparability. The parable of human actions on the delicate climate, coincides with a more immediate parable of making the right choices to win the love of CiCi. We are facing a challenge larger than any challenge we’ve faced yet, but we are not yet looking it in the eyes. This musical challenges our complacency, ignorance, and fear and offers two options: losing the battle of climate change (CiCi) to big oil (Bo), or create a future that doesn’t impact the climate and allows it to regularize. On the one hand, if we continue with business as usual (Bo), we face a predicted six or more degrees Celsius rise in temperature leading to a world where, as Professor Kevin Anderson determined, “a globally organized community cannot exist” (qtd. by Roberts) and the damage cannot be reversed. On the other hand, we can change and strive maintain the threshold of a two degree Celsius rise in temperature (an already “too high to be safe and too low to be possible” estimate) to prevent systemic collapse of natural systems and human systems. We are stuck between a rock and a hard place, but the hard place might be habitable, albeit hard, while the rock very while might crush us. If we continue to live our current lifestyles, the future will be decided for our offspring, plants, animals and insects, and that is a future I refuse to allow.

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