



Manhattan College

MERGING DISCIPLINES AND DECONSTRUCTING THE SELF:  
THE EFFECTS OF PSYCHOSIS ON IDENTITY

A Project Presented in Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the  
2017 SQIP Conference

by

Gregory Inzinna

with

Nuwan Jayawickreme, Ph.D

Maeve Adams, Ph.D

November 18, 2016

## Table of Contents

1. Who was Pasquale Muccigrosso?.....	3
2. My Grandfather: A man defined by “The Incident”.....	10
3. The Freedom Manifesto: Liberating Identity.....	18
4. Campaigning Alone: Social Deficits in Schizophrenia.....	39
5. Applying Freedom to Therapy.....	43
6. Freeing an Enslaved Identity.....	47
7. Determining One’s Own Identity: Is it possible?.....	52
8. Constructing the Narrative Self.....	57
9. An Identity Crisis: Losing Episodic Memory.....	67
10. Dying: Does it end the story?.....	72
11. Life in the Face of Death.....	77
12. Implications and Future Research: The Meaning of This Story.....	86
Works Cited.....	91

# 1. Who was Pasquale Muccigrosso?

My grandfather, Pasquale Muccigrosso, was what medical practitioners would call a “problem patient” (Lorber, 1975). Having been diagnosed with schizophrenia at the age of 28, he submitted to his treatment mostly willingly, but an enormous archive of materials produced by him--art, creative writing, collage, and several manifestos among other productions--and saved by my grandmother demonstrate his objection, perhaps futile but no less strident, to what he clearly saw as the dehumanizing “rationalization, standardization, and depersonalization” (Lorber, 1975, 213) imposed on him by the medical establishment. In one of his works, revealingly titled *Medical Slavery*, my grandfather explicitly rejects the term “schizophrenia,” defining it as a “buzzword that means 1000 things and in result means nothing.” Much of his creative output was, as I will show, committed to just this kind of terminological resistance--an effort to redefine concepts associated with his illness and, more broadly, with the way the culture and society, as he saw them, impose normative identity categories on all humans that restrict their self-expression. My grandfather saw a relationship between these two problems: the act of diagnosis that imposes an inflexible medical conception of health and well-being and the ways in which the wider world we live in conditions our lives through the imposition of normative conceptions of selfhood, sociability, sexuality, gender, authority, intelligence, mortality, and freedom. My purpose in retrieving this archive is manifold. I wish to retell the story of my grandfather through his eyes--through the archive he produced as an objection to his diagnosis--but not simply for the sake of capturing something his family lost when he died in November of 2008. Rather, I wish to retell his story because the resistance he staged not just to *his* diagnosis, but to diagnosis in general, has much to tell us about the way that we try to

understand a life like his--a life that, without the archive, might simply seem plagued by mental illness.

My grandfather's archive, as I will argue in what follows, suggests several questions that are of importance to scholars, medical practitioners, patients and the friends and families of those who receive diagnoses of mental illness like my grandfather. These questions have as much to do with the way we think about mental illness and its diagnosis as the entry point to treatment as they do with the way we think about identity: the way we seek to understand a life as a complex of a human's internal self identity and externally perceived identity, as completely and accurately as our language will allow. As my grandfather's archive attests, words matter and so do the stories we construct out of them in order to make ourselves intelligible, as well as diagnosable, to others.

As noted earlier, in "Medical Slavery," my grandfather attempted to change definitions of the words used to describe mental illness in order to change the story told by them. In this section about clinical definitions, a subsection of his magnum opus *The Freedom Manifesto*, he argued that his diagnosis constrained the complexity of his identity. He writes that it caused him to be dismissed from intellectual discussions both because the drugs were "tranquilizers...thought prisons" and because it caused others to perceive him as intellectually incapable. His friends, family, and coworkers saw schizophrenia as abnormal and, thus, interpreted his intellectual abilities through this lens of abnormality. He said that people presumed that he has "bizarre thoughts," probably referring to the auditory and visual hallucinations associated with schizophrenia. The behavior caused by these hallucinations lead people to think that he is "crazy" because they do not see and hear that which he does. To combat this abnormal behavior,

he wrote, “Shrinks give tranquilizers to keep you calm and give you good thoughts (?) and correct your chemical imbalances (?).” He believes that his medication diminished his intellectual abilities for the sake of reducing his abnormal qualities. In truth, the drugs meant to reduce hallucinations and delusions might have actually slowed his thinking and processing speed. Since he took many antipsychotic drugs, his experience can be explained by tardive dyskinesia: long-term neuroleptic medication (meant to reduce nerve function) causing involuntary, delayed movements of facial extremities (Bakker, 2006). The presence of reduced nerve function, in turn, might have caused his thought processes to be slower as well, resulting in a tranquilized feeling. In any case, trapped between negative perceptions of his illness and the treatments meant to reduce the very symptoms causing this perception, he describes that it feels like he cannot refuse treatment or he will be kept in the hospital for most of his life.

My grandfather specifically opposed the labels imposed on him by his diagnosis when he addresses a problem with self definition imposed by psychological terminology. He began medical slavery with his definition of schizophrenia as a “buzzword” and proceeded to redefine other terms. Thusly, he defined terms associated with schizophrenia: according to him, paranoia is normal suspicion, manic depression is natural ups and downs, and depression is natural sadness. In each of these instances, he attempts to exemplify the mundane nature of behaviors commonly associated with mental illness. Keeping in mind that he called schizophrenia a buzzword, I think that he implied that people understand schizophrenia and other mental illnesses in so many different ways that there are too many interpretations of the word for there to be a common meaning. This would mean that, because one person’s idea of schizophrenia is not the same as another’s, you cannot refer to schizophrenia when communicating to others

without being misunderstood. He explained that, although the experience of schizophrenia might vary from person to person, we all experience symptoms of mental illness, at least to some degree. He said that paranoia is normal by pointing out that “everyone with a lock on their door is suspicious.” Putting a lock on your door means that you are suspicious that your house might be broken into. By normalizing these otherwise abnormal terms, it seems like my grandfather attempted to change the way people think about schizophrenia and, in turn, about himself. He did not try to exclude his diagnosis from the narrative of his life. Rather, since we use diagnoses to give us direct insight into the stories of others’ lives, he tried to alter the definition of his diagnosis in order to resist the life narrative suggested by schizophrenia.

If we understand the story of his life through the lens of psychology’s diagnosis of his condition, the archive of documents that he wrote, including “Medical Slavery,” might be interpreted as symptoms of his illness. Schizophrenia occurs when a chemical imbalance in the brain causes an individual to hallucinate, have impeded emotional experiences and delusional thoughts, and have less connection with the reality of everyone else (Kring et al., 2013). For these symptoms to constitute the clinical definition of schizophrenia, a certain number of them must persist for at least six months, as mandated by the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM)--the lexicon of psychologists. The takeaway message of the narrative suggested by this definition is simple: People who have schizophrenia live very different lives from the rest of us because they are so mentally disconnected from the world in which we live. My grandfather’s contestation of the definition of schizophrenia, then, suggests that he did not want to be singled out or excluded because of his illness. The fact that he contested the definition, however, reveals a problem with the way we tell stories.

For, when giving an account one's own life narrative, if the individual must put up a fight to tell the story his own way, is the power of storytelling really in the hands of the narrator? If it is not, whose hands is it in? Perhaps, the definitions and categories of people into which we group ourselves do not do what they are supposed to, that is, make it easier for us to understand each other's condition by allowing us to assume certain qualities of people based on knowledge of their assigned social groups, such as gender, race, and socioeconomic status. Categorizations, however, are not always an accurate way of representing someone. For instance, if we view an individual through the lens of her womanhood and we perceive women in general as emotionally weaker than men, an employer might choose a male employee over a female. If the emotional weakness is rather seen as a strong ability to be sensitive to the feelings of others, the employer might be more likely to hire the woman. In this way, are the terms that we define in order to portray ourselves accurately capturing who we are? Or, because of their variety of possible interpretations, are they acting counterproductively by limiting the amount of ways we can be understood? Though, with psychology, we might explain the story of my grandfather's resistance to his diagnosis as symptom of his illness--denial--this story told by psychological analysis is limited to assessing his symptoms and does not give room for him to tell his own story. This analysis is commonly conducted in the form of a case study, the therapeutic method of a therapist treating an individual patient and tracking his or her progress. The case study is a written and verbally understood account of a patient that offers a way of understanding the detailed and meaningful story of patients' lives. Since the method follows the guidelines of psychological science, the therapy session is structured by the therapist (Yin, 2014). This is to say that the therapist asks certain questions to guide the conversation in a way that might reveal

something meaningful about the patient's life. For instance, the therapist might not care how good the patient's new haircut looks, but if the patient has had a hard time communicating with his father, the therapist might find it relevant that the patient went to get the haircut with his father. In the session, the therapist asks the patient to talk about certain aspects of their lives that might shed light on problems the patient has been facing. In this way, the therapist influences what is being said by guiding the conversation to what he might consider relevant. However, therapy styles vary and there are many instances where the session is highly guided by the patient. Regardless, the therapist must exercise some kind of scientific method and, therefore, must have some kind of influence on the direction of the conversation. The therapist might then apply psychological theories and their own therapy style to help the patient deal with the problems that come up in conversation. The case study allows the patient to vocalize problems that might have been too difficult to talk about outside of the therapy session. Yet, because the telling of the story is guided by the therapist, the story does not necessarily represent the way that the patient would want the story to represent him or herself. My grandfather's case leads us to believe that his resistance is merely denial, an assessment which he clearly resisted through the archive. This means that he was faced with a clear, restricted choice to either accept his condition or refuse it.

My grandfather's contestation has broad and meaningful implications for the way clinicians assess and treat patients, work currently being done in narrative medicine. Rita Charon, in her *Narrative Medicine: A Model for Empathy, Reflection, Profession and Trust*, believes that narrative medicine is a treatment method that incorporates people's stories into the diagnostic process. By telling their stories to the doctors, the patient builds trust with the people



taking care of him or her. Without narrative knowledge “the patient might not tell the whole story [to the physician], might not ask the most frightening questions, and might not feel heard” (Charon, 1899). If a doctor is unaware of a serious medical condition, for instance, treatment could interact negatively with this condition and hurt the patient. Even more, letting an ailment go untreated could leave the patient suffering and unaware of the cause. By adding the understanding of an individual offered by narrative medicine to psychological diagnosis, we can interpret my grandfather’s contestation--what psychology alone might interpret as symptomatic--as meaningful resistance.

I intend to explore what happens when we do not restrict someone’s story, when we intently listen to his stories despite any pre-existing knowledge we may infer about him from the broad groups under which he is categorized. I am going to tell a series of my grandfather’s stories that I encountered through the artifacts he left behind and the experiences he shared with my grandmother. Some of his stories and ideas do not fit perfectly together so I will not be able to paint a coherent picture of him, permissibly so, because none of us are coherent pictures. His narration and contestation of the ways he was defined will not only reveal problems with how we tell stories, but it will lead to new ways of understanding each others’ lives in a way that reaches deeper than the information gained about a person from a case study and has more influence on a person’s identity than the type of storytelling involved with narrative medicine. Although the picture I paint of him might not be coherent, I intend to offer an interpretation of his archive that creates a kind of coherence that he did not have in his life, a different kind of coherence than a simple diagnosis. His resistance to the narrative associated with this diagnosis will be shown through the archive.

## 2. My Grandfather: A man defined by “The Incident”

By his mid 40s, my grandfather had been diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia for 10 years and, according to my grandmother, had lived a relatively normal life. However, over the past few years, his paranoia had become an increasingly influential force on his thought processes. This paranoia could come in many different forms and usually only lasted for brief moments, so he did not think much of it. As these moments increased in frequency, he noticed that they tended to be centered around a fear that people were watching him. He did not know why he was afraid, but every now and then, in the middle of his daily activities, he would get a sense that someone was over his shoulder, watching and in some way out to get him. These brief moments would pass, but as they increased in duration and frequency over time, it became difficult for him to convince himself that he was not being watched. Resistance to this idea only lasted for so long. The thoughts from his paranoia began to build up into longer lasting, broader, and more potent beliefs: I am under the watchful eyes of some other who wants to harm me, to take something from me. Imagine how taxing it would be to maintain a paranoid belief like this. If you did not want to be stolen from, you would have to be constantly on guard. What would you do if the intensity and frequency of these beliefs became too overwhelming for you to handle with the coping mechanisms you had used before?

When he felt the worst stress from his paranoid beliefs, my grandfather's family was there to support him, each in their own way. He loved his family of four: his teenage daughter Marie, his 10 year old son John, and his wife, his high school sweetheart, Dottie. My mother would spend hours listening to him rant about how she should make sure to maintain ownership of her ideas, explaining to her why he would use copyrights for most of his writings. He even

enrolled her in typing lessons so she could learn how to turn her ideas into something tangible, something onto which she could physically hold. Although she was a teenager at the time and had a lot of her own issues to talk about, she says that he only spoke about himself and did not care to listen. My uncle was his young boy whom he loved to spoil, even as he got older, with gifts and special trips to amusement parks. Finally, my grandmother held everything together, making money when he could not work, getting him out of trouble when he would always find a way into it, and playing his role in the family when he was too preoccupied to do so. They were a strong backbone for him to rely on when times got tough. Unlike others, they seemed to understand his struggle.

They had been able to help him through so much, but there was something going on in his mind that he could not bear to talk to them about. Over the past few years, his paranoid mind had gone through the list of things that he could possibly fear being taken from him; it eventually brewed up a thought about his family that he could not shake, persisting, invading his internal voice: People are out to take my family, make them suffer, and kill them. For him to now face this paranoid belief concerning his family, who had supported him through his struggle with all other paranoid beliefs, the challenge ahead of him was daunting. How could he save them from forces from which he did not even know how to save himself?

When recounting this story to me, my grandmother mentioned that he was constantly preoccupied, sometimes staring blankly at a wall in the middle of conversations and then snapping back in confusion. Through her descriptions of his behavior, it became clear to me that the dilemma he faced concerning the safety his family was relentless and, at times, was all he could think about. During instances when he would otherwise have some clarity to

function--teaching his elementary school students, taking his son fishing, even being intimate with his wife--he was too preoccupied with fear to function. My grandmother told me that he vented to her about an instance when he was driving to work and a paranoid thought that someone was in the back seat distracted him, and made him get into a major car accident. These constant moments of paranoia tired him out and left him with less energy to handle the larger dilemma he faced of protecting his family, contemplating the consequences of acting on his fear for his family or letting it be. The debate came to, what he considered to be, the only logical conclusion: I must save my family from the people who are out to get them by first killing them myself. I will not let them suffer and, with me, they will die with dignity.

My grandfather knew the negative consequences of killing his family. These consequences, the logical reality of committing such an act, the thought of actively being a part of losing the ones you love, were his weapons to fight this paranoid belief. These weapons drew the battle out for years--from when my grandmother initially learned that he was concerned for their safety to now when he would leave the house when he thought he might harm them--but as the struggle got more intense, he was beginning to lose. Being constantly reminded of the devastating fate of his family, he could not go much longer without doing something to protect them.

In November of 1975, as recollected by my grandmother, during a Thursday evening, my grandfather sat at his kitchen table grading his students' papers while his kids watched TV and his wife made dinner. Sweat dripped down his face as he could no longer bear the thought of what would happen if his family was taken from him. Standing up and slamming his hands on the table in frustration, he ran over to and tackled my grandmother to the floor and, with an ice

pick that had taken from the counter, stabbed her in the lung. She was badly hurt, but before he could take the final blow, in a moment of clarity, my grandmother was able to get through to him, begging him to recall that at least some part of him did not want her to die. So he stopped what he was doing, dropped the pick to the ground, and his limp body fell off of her. Soon after, when the police came the house where he had stabbed her, they asked my grandmother if she wanted to send him to jail for the punishment of his actions or to the hospital for treatment of his illness. She sent him to the hospital because she believed, as she had when she stopped him from stabbing her, that the man she fell in love with was not the same man who tried to kill her, even though they shared the same body, even though a piece of the man in that body chose to kill her.

When my grandmother told me about this night, which she refers to as “the incident,” I felt mixed emotions. On one level, I love my grandmother and he tried to kill her, so I am angry at him and sympathetic for her. Yet, I’ve had that same affection, as I have for her, for him all my life and I understand the circumstances, as he viewed them, that led him to stab her, so I do not feel comfortable blaming him entirely for what he did. In his mind, he actually saved her and, thus, clearly cared for her in the same way that I do. To help me work through this dilemma, I consider the actions of my grandmother. Even though she was the person who was most directly hurt by my grandfather, from the choice she made to send him to the hospital that night to every other situation during which he pushed her away, she remained his biggest champion. How could I hold his actions against him if she, of all people, was able to mentally separate the illness from the man and forgive him?

My grandmother knew my grandfather so well before the illness that she was able to separate him from the schizophrenia. Thus, she was able to see his negative behavior, his

symptoms, as a result of the illness alone. Seeing how much she loved him, I believe that she wanted to continue to love him so she separated these pieces of him so that she could rationalize in her own mind why she was treating a man, who had just tried to kill her, with sympathy. Because I have read what he wrote and heard stories about who he was before the illness, I too can separate the illness from who he was. I know that he acted with good intentions--he wanted to save his family. Admittedly, explaining what he did that night in terms of his good intentions and illness are my own ways of understanding his seemingly terrible actions. I feel like if I do not explain his actions in this way, I will not do justice for him, I will not capture how good of a person he was. However, I realize that my need to give him justice comes from my love for him, which could cloud an objective and accurate telling of his story. I could be too hesitant to tell it like it is, to lay out his actions plainly so that people might see that he was a bad man because he did such a horrific thing. I also recognize that the only reason I am even searching for deeper understanding of his actions in the first place is because I am his grandson and I love him. Can I paint an accurate picture of my grandfather or am I too emotionally involved, too focused on justifying his behavior, to tell his story? More broadly, how can seemingly unforgivable actions of the neurologically impaired be understood by their loved ones and the world around them?

If telling his story, for the sake of providing an understanding of my grandfather's behavior, relies on my ability to give unadulterated details of his life, can I even capture his identity in the way that my grandmother and I have done--separating the illness from the man--or would doing so leave his depiction incomplete? In order to separate out the illness, I see his actions as symptoms of something external to who he was. However, from the beginning when the voices and thoughts would only occur a few times per week, their frequency accelerated to

the point where they matched the frequency of his own thoughts. In moments like “the incident,” the voices and thoughts dominated his mind. At what point do these voices and thoughts become enough of a powerful influence for us to consider them a permanent part of who he is, rendering the illness and the man inseparable? In this way, my grandfather’s story allows us an opportunity to address this broader question concerning identity.

Answering this question brings us to an examination of how the development of his schizophrenia caused significant emotional and personal changes, particularly changes to his understanding of himself and to the ways in which others viewed him--fundamental changes to his identity. There are several types of change that humans can go through, but they are all caused by either external stimuli or internal development. Externally induced change can be characterized by daily events that affect how someone thinks. While some change is like this and moves inward from the external--meeting someone causes you to fall in love--a change due to mental illness, in particular, occurs from the internal and moves to the external. With schizophrenia, chemical imbalances in the brain cause an individual to hallucinate (typically visually and auditorily) and enter a state of psychosis where they might not be able to distinguish the delusional reality made by their hallucinations from the reality of everyone else. This internal change shows itself externally by causing the individual to exhibit, to put it simply, abnormal social behavior--in my grandfather’s case, the attempt to murder his family. The question is not whether or not internal or external change occurred--it did. Rather, I want to know if he was, or was even able to be, the same person that he was during the early adult part of his life after the illness took effect and caused internal change. Could he incorporate the internal changes into who he was or did they alter him too completely? I am interested in how much and how quickly

changes to one's identity can take place, before the person is too different from who he was, for us to be able to recognize that person now with the idea of who he was. Is there even a limit to the speed and level of change, or can physically constant aspects of ourselves like bodies tie us permanently to our identities and their recognizability? When changes add up to be more than the substance of the original person--whatever features and characteristics made that person recognizable, who he was, his identity--is a new person formed? If so, who is this new person what happens to the person that existed before? If my grandfather was an entirely new person who committed the murder, was he, as this new person, fully responsible for his actions and, then, does the person he used to be remain innocent? The answer to this question is vital to defining who he was. It could have implications for the way even my grandmother and I understand him.

Regardless of what we might determine of his identity, the story of "the incident" is easily interpreted as a horrific account of an attempted murder, by a man with schizophrenia, of his own family. If this is the common interpretation, my grandfather might be seen as in a negative light and his actions seen as symptomatic of his illness. Since many of his friends and family shunned him after "the incident," it is clear that those around him shared this negative interpretation. After hearing the reasons behind his seemingly wrong actions, however, it is not as simple to determine that he did something worthy of this negative judgement. Rather, he was trying to save his family--an honorable act. If the story, then, is interpreted as a man's heroic attempt to save his family, it is possible to see what he did in a positive light. In this way, by showing how schizophrenia specifically manifested itself in his life--altering reality to pose him



with an internal dilemma that had no good option--accounts like “the incident” have larger implications for our current understandings of storytelling and identity.

Earlier, I asked if the power of storytelling is really in the hands of the narrator. If the power of telling the story of “the incident” was in my grandfather’s hands, he probably would have described that he chose the lesser of two evils, depicting himself as a good man. Without the details of his dilemma, just knowing the actions and behaviors he exhibited, it is easy to differ from my grandfather’s possible description of himself and see him as a bad man, a man who stabbed his wife. If it is likely that understandings of my grandfather depend on how much and what information is included in his story, I believe that it is important to ask specific questions about why he did what he did, beyond the incomplete explanation that he did so because of his schizophrenia. This explanation implies that schizophrenia caused him to become a bad man. Rather, the understanding of the illness on a personal level, offering more than the definition of the diagnosis alone, shows that he did the best with the obstacle he faced because of his schizophrenia.

In order to understand my grandfather’s story through the lens of both his diagnosis and his personal experiences with the symptoms, we need what narrative medicine refers to as “narrative knowledge” (Charon, 1898). This narrative knowledge constitutes the details of his stories, the reasons behind his actions, that reveal how the definition of schizophrenia fits into his life; it brings us to a true understanding of his identity, that is, to a definition of his condition, whether it be his diagnosis, his story, or his general state of being, that he would not resist. Therefore, by listening to his stories, in a way, we are contesting his diagnosis and the perceptions that came from it in a similar way and with the same spirit that he contested it.

### 3. *The Freedom Manifesto: Liberating Identity*

Any insane coward that uses any authority in any area (Religion, Politics, Education, Psychiatry, Government, Economics) to convince you that you must let him control your thoughts and actions (natural behavior), is trying to make you his slave. A slave is less than human. Just learn to be yourself. You have a right to your own bodies.

-Pasquale Muccigrosso, *The Freedom Manifesto*

My grandfather, Pasquale Muccigrosso, in the mid '80s, began a campaign to be president of the United States. His platform was outlined in *The Freedom Manifesto*, a 200 page collection of his ideas for changing the future. The manifesto consists of many smaller works, which focus on defining several types of slavery: legal, liberal, conservative, military, medical, educational, media, economic, religious, sexual, and political. These sections worked to break down popular definitions of each topic--religion, politics, education, psychiatry, government, and economics. For instance, sexual slavery explained that human sexuality has been enslaved, or repressed, by the fear we have of negative judgements for being too sexually explicit. To counter this enslavement, he suggested that we fulfill our desires and take control of our own bodies. After the first half of *The Freedom Manifesto*, which worked to redefine terms and reveal the way he thinks each should fit into our lives, the second half included copies of letters that are responses to his manifesto from presidents, senators, and governors from across the United States. Some of the letters responded thoughtfully and specifically to the issues brought up in the piece, but many of them read like formal and generic letters. Either way, he did not explain why

the letters are included in the manifesto, but they clearly have some significance to the piece because they take up so much real estate.

Since he placed these letters in the second half of the manifesto, almost like a reference section of a book, maybe the letters are meant to legitimize and strengthen his arguments by showing people that respectable men have read and responded well to his ideas. It would make sense that my grandfather would have felt that he needed to validate his ideas because people tended to dismiss what he had to say because he was a schizophrenic. This is a sad truth. He was once a very well respected man whose ideas were praised--he got his MBA at the Stern School of Business, and was a leader in the National Guard, and a teacher. When people began to see him not as those things, but as a person diagnosed with schizophrenia, he lost much of the respect that those positions came with.

I cannot imagine if I lost the intellectual respect of my peers. Having to validate myself after I had worked so hard to achieve great successes would feel demeaning. Further, after putting forth half a life's worth of effort building intellectual respect for myself, I do not know if I would have it in me to start rebuilding that respect in the way that my grandfather tried to with these letters in the back of the manifesto. What would it mean for me if I gave up, if I settled to be not intellectually respected? Since I have carved out a large part of my life to include areas where I have intellectual respect, I would then be losing large parts of my life, of myself. I would not want to lose this and my grandfather's act of not giving up means that his desire to reestablish his intellectual respect was more powerful than the amount he felt it was demeaning to do so. Our desire to reestablish who we were once perceived to be suggests that there are certain aspects of our perceived selves that we are vehemently not willing to give up.

In order to understand why we hold onto these aspects, let us look at what it might have looked like for my grandfather not to have the intellectual respect he held onto. For one, he would not be able to participate in the intellectual conversations, of which he was once a part, because people would not care about his opinions. People generally perceive the opinions of those diagnosed with schizophrenia to be the narrow product of mental illness. Additionally, he was not able to hold the same high level business jobs that he once held when people valued the things he had to say. In his office, people would trust his opinion on what small business would be good to invest in. People would benefit from his valuable advice. Without the intellectual respect, overall, there was a void in the piece of himself that felt valued.

In another piece from *The Freedom Manifesto*, “Invitation,” my grandfather made it clear that he was concerned with the value of his thoughts. “Invitation” was the first page of some versions of *The Freedom Manifesto* (there were multiple versions of *The Freedom Manifesto* that varied in organization and style but remained similar in content); it was an “invitation” for people to buy some of his pieces of art. In big bold letters at the top of the page, he seemed to preface the pricing and descriptions of the works with a definition: “Value = Rare - Unique - Beautiful.” This equation seems to work as a justification for the prices of his art. He understood that people might not see the monetary value of his work, but hoped that people will see his paintings as rare, unique and beautiful. After listing some of his family’s occupations, he said that he is “devoting his time to painting and writing,” offering the rights to *The Freedom Manifesto* for \$200,000. In the next paragraph, he described his style as impressionistic with unique uses of bright, fluorescent colors. He has also determined the best way to use these colors--by using “10 spray coats of varnish” the artwork can be made permanent. In the third

paragraph, he explained that he painted “‘Eve’ of biblical tradition” for his son’s 26th birthday. This reference made me wonder why my uncle did not still have the painting himself. Whatever the reason, in “Invitation” the painting was on sale from my grandfather for \$60,000. With this, he offered some other paintings for free with purchase, ending by putting “The Balloons” and “The Black Balloon” (Figure 1) up for sale as well. At the bottom of the page, he put a postscript message offering a dealer commission, royalties, and a “Davinci style profit package” that includes all the artworks “in one wrapper” for mass production at a price of \$600,000 with 5% royalties.



*Figure 1.* “The Black Balloon” (left) was an oil on canvas painted by my grandfather in 1983. Years later he revised the painting with a black marker. The revised version (right) reveals the chaotic nature of his thoughts due to his mental illness.

With this valuation, it is clear that he not only saw value in his work, but that he also felt like he needed to explain and justify the price by equating monetary value to the factors that make it worth the money. Since selling the paintings required others to see their worth, he needed to explain their value because they did not see it on their own. Speaking to this lack of appeal, the paintings did not sell; they all currently sit in my grandmother's closet collecting dust. Consequently, given his lack of success combined with the idea that he was losing his valuable intellectual qualities and respect, it is very possible that he felt worthless. After spending so much time and effort producing these works, which he tried to sell for both his financial needs and his need to feel intellectually respected, he might have concluded that people no longer valued that which his mind had to offer, that the ideas and thoughts he shared did not influence others. Although occasionally feeling worthless is healthy and natural for those of us who do not suffer from mental illness, it could have had profound impacts on him due to his schizophrenia.

If my grandfather did not see himself as having value to society, a resultant feeling of worthlessness could have impacted his self esteem. Psychologists understand self esteem as people's emotional assessment of their ability to interact with each other and the world. Thusly, people with low self esteem might lack confidence when interacting with others (Kernis, 2003). In contrast, as noted by Baumeister and colleagues (2003), "People with high self esteem claim to be successful, attractive, and wonderful in many respects" (p. 8). My grandfather could not claim to have been seen by others as exhibiting these qualities because he was not successful in his painting business. Those who have low levels of self esteem not only have negative attitudes toward themselves, but also toward the circumstances and situations they are faced with. After failing to achieve something, low self esteem makes it harder to bounce back and try again

because it reduces the amount someone feels that he or she is worth in a given situation (Baumeister et al., 2003). Perhaps lack of worth was an aspect of why my grandfather struggled so intensely with his illness.

Furthermore, low levels of self esteem impact those with schizophrenia in different and sometimes more severe ways than they impact other people. For instance, when Karakaş and colleagues (2016) studied the impact of internalized stigma--an individual's perception of normative, usually negative, attitudes toward him or her--on the self esteem of individuals suffering from schizophrenia, they found that internalized stigma, commonly associated with schizophrenia, decreases self esteem. Low self esteem, in turn, is associated with experiential avoidance, that is, attempting to not partake in activities which have previously shown to be unpleasant or cause discomfort (Udachina, 2014). The idea is that individuals avoid these unpleasant experiences so that they do not have to feel the stress and anxiety with which they associate those experiences. Experiential avoidance, however, has long term negative effects because it leads people into habits that seem helpful but do not treat the underlying issue (Hayes, 1996). For example, especially for individuals suffering from schizophrenia, relevant experiential avoidance would include avoiding thoughts or behaviors that cause unwanted thinking patterns and cognitive symptoms. The avoidance behavior does not stop the hallucinations and delusions in the long run because the individual still has schizophrenia. Thus, avoidance behavior is futile and tends to end in the individual having to deal with the problem in a more tired and defeated state than he or she was before the avoidance. Even more, experiential avoidance and low self esteem have been demonstrated to cause paranoid thinking, typically associated with schizophrenia. The idea is that increased stress from the attempt to avoid unpleasant thoughts

about the self causes persecutory delusions, which are a major negative symptom of schizophrenia (Udachina, 2014).

Considering that feeling worthless may have impacted him in such a negative way, let us reconsider why my grandfather might have held on so tightly to his intellectual respect. In the middle of his life, as his schizophrenia progressed and showed more outwardly through behavioral signs, he was faced with the new and unusual challenge of redefining himself as a man with schizophrenia. When he came to a realization that this redefinition inherently included losing core qualities of his identity, such as his intellectual respect and sense of worth, he wrote “Invitation” and put the political letters in back of *The Freedom Manifesto* in order to hold onto that which he was losing. Unfortunately, since the views of others and the progression of his illness were out of his control, there was nothing he could do to hold onto his former identity. As I reflect on this new understanding of his writings, I pity him for going through such a traumatic upheaval of selfhood. I think about him as the loving and devoted father who raised my mother, the charismatic college kid (like myself) who wooed my grandmother, and the innocent little boy who was born with a genetic defect that would one day reveal itself as schizophrenia. I do not claim to know how my grandfather must have felt in this stage of his life, but I can imagine that if it feels like the world is against you due to stigmatic attitudes, your world is spinning out of control from a loss of identity, and you cannot do anything right, lowering your levels of self-esteem, you would hold onto your strengths of intellect and self-worth, and hope for the best.

Despite the fact that, in the scope of his life, he was unsuccessful in maintaining his intellectual respect and sense of worth, perhaps just the act of trying to hold onto these aspects



was enough to help him cope with schizophrenia; it might have allowed him to exercise agency, or control, over his life. It is worth remembering that agency is something apparent in several parts of my grandfather's archive, including where I began this essay, in his refusal to accept diagnosis because it seemed to strip him of agency in defining the terms that defined him so rigidly and damningly. Agency is the sense of control that we have over our own actions. A sense of agency is when we can distinguish the events that are caused by us from the events that are caused by other people or the natural world (Jeannerod, 2002). For example, if you flush a toilet, being aware that your movements and actions are the reason the toilet is flushed is a sense of agency. Given its banality, most people might take agency for granted, but people who suffer from schizophrenia struggle with this ability to feel in control of their own volitions (Frith, 1992). Those suffering from schizophrenia, in particular, lose agency over their thoughts, which means that some of their thought-based behaviors are products of illness-related “imaginary speech” (Gerrans, 2015); they struggle to tell apart their own thoughts from thoughts symptomatic of their illness. For my grandfather, when paranoid thoughts and beliefs invaded his mind and led him to action, it would have been hard for him to see those actions as being caused by himself because the illness played a major role. By including the letters from politicians and writing “Invitation” to combat the loss of his intellectual respect, my grandfather was engaging in behaviors of which he was in control. He marked everything he wrote with multiple copyrights and notices to confirm that they were his doing. Perhaps, in this way and without even knowing it, he was maintaining a sense of agency that he otherwise would have lost to his schizophrenia.

In addition to establishing agency, my grandfather used art therapy to cope with the stresses of schizophrenia. Introduced to him as a therapeutic treatment in the early stages of his illness, art therapy became a tool that he would continue to use throughout his life. When the symptoms of schizophrenia progressed to a certain level of severity, he immersed himself in painting and began offering art lessons. His business card is about the size of a credit card and, in handwritten black letters, says “Eric~ Custom Art” across the top. My grandmother told me that he worked under the pseudonym “Eric,” otherwise I would have had no idea it was him. Three objects take up most of the room - strawberries, blueberries, and a butterfly and underneath, “FREE ART LESSONS,” is written across the bottom, followed by his phone number. It is clear that art therapy was useful for him, but why would he give away free art lessons? What was in it for him?

Unlike many of his products, my grandfather did not attempt to sell his artistic abilities. We might see his lessons, then, as an act of altruism, but we must first consider what else he might have been getting out of it. Perhaps, like his attempts to gain intellectual respect, this too was a way for him to establish a sense of agency. For instance, working in the field of art, an industry far different from the higher education and business fields in which he was previously involved, could have been a way to change others’ perceptions of him. People could see him less as a serious authority figure and more as a creative equal. If we keep in mind that he was struggling to maintain control of his life, maybe directly controlling the ways others perceived him was another way of establishing a sense of agency in his life. In fact, changing his name was probably the most literal way this could have been done.

We know that my grandfather wanted others to grant him intellectual respect, but why did he want the recognition of others in the first place? This question might also speak to a broader question about humanity--that is, why are we so obsessed with what others think? A core theme throughout my grandfather's works, thus far, has been an obsession with the ways others think, specifically, the desire to change the way others think of him. My grandfather looked toward others to define his intellect. Why would he look externally to define that which is so internal? In other words, why do I need others to see me as smart if I believe that I am smart? Why is my belief in myself not enough? Perhaps it is hard to believe in something that others do not simply because it is not something that we as humans are used to doing. Throughout our lives we are used to receiving the input of others before making decisions. This allows us to thoroughly think things through, a benefit highlighted by the popular adage: two heads are better than one. Multiple perspectives provide room for one to see something that others missed. If someone is too emotionally involved in something, an external perspective could offer clarity to the situation. None of these benefits, however, are necessary for defining the self. Is there a benefit of relying on others' perspectives to define yourself? The benefit of not relying on the thoughts of others to define ourselves is clear: You have the ultimate power to choose who you want to be. Leaving parts of yourself to be defined by others makes your identity too fragile, too easily influenced by others to represent accurately who you are.

Given that we still care what others think of us, despite the possible benefits of not letting others influence our identity, there must be some reason humans are prone to care what others think of them. Evolutionary theorists suggest that this tendency was naturally selected too because it increased group survival abilities (Cronk, 2016). Humans developed social learning as

a mode of communicating the ways to perform certain skills. For example, if a young child sees an adult peel a banana, that child could learn how to do it himself and, thus, gain a survival skill. Over time, people who were better at imitating these useful skills survived more frequently and passed down their good social learning genes onto their offspring, while those who were not as good at social learning reproduced less frequently (McElreath et al., 2008). After years of going through this process, humans developed their ability to learn skills from observing others, a major reason why we evolved such large brains. Social cognitive theory explains the phenomenon that portions of our knowledge acquisition can be directly related to observing others within the context of social interactions (Bandura, 2001). The theory asserts that when people observe someone, especially someone they consider to have good survival abilities, performing a behavior and see the consequences of that behavior, they remember the sequence of events and use this information to guide their own subsequent behaviors if they desire to achieve the same consequences (Bandura, 1986). This theory specifies how we learn in social contexts. We do not simply learn new behaviors by trying them out and either succeeding or failing, but rather, we carefully watch what others do and assess whether or not we would like to experience the outcomes they experienced. It supports the idea that humans have evolved to be social creatures.

Through evolution, traits that promote socialization, such as cooperation and communication skills, have been naturally selected because they promote the survival of the species (McElreath et al., 2008). For instance, if a group of early hunter-gatherer humans were trying to kill a boar for food, their ability to communicate with each other could determine if they actually catch the boar. Their individual physicality and intelligence could be up to par, but if

they cannot communicate a plan among each other, which requires collaboration and communication, they are less likely to be able to execute a hunt. Furthermore, humans who could empathize with and understand how others feel were able to communicate and, thus, hunt better. Humans have moved on from these primitive times, but empathizing for the sake of communication can still be seen in our everyday lives. Communication is not only important during the hunt, but it is also important during the things that we do to function in modern day society, such as working for money and dating. For instance, if you are upset about something and trying to complete a task at work, one of your co-workers might recognize that your body language is slouched and you have a frown on your face. His ability to empathize with you could lead him to inquire into what might be bothering you. This interaction could result in better communication between the two of you because he would be informed of your current state of mind. If your mood is causing you to become preoccupied, your co-worker's ability to empathize might bring him to an understanding that he should slow down and repeat some of the ideas he is explaining to you because you are distracted. Thusly, empathy improves one's ability to communicate and share ideas.

Being that sociality is evolutionarily ingrained in us, it is no surprise that we care what others think of us. If we are aware that we are able to think about the way others feel via our capacity for empathy, then we know that we are constantly being perceived by others. We might care about the way someone perceives us because that might in turn affect the way he or she empathizes and communicates with us. In the example I used earlier of someone being upset at work, there is a possibility that that person did not want to be perceived as upset. Perhaps he thought that being upset was a sign of weakness and wanted the co-worker to view him as a

strong individual. The number of different situations like this that occur throughout our lives is immeasurable, but throughout all possible scenarios we understand that others have the capacity to have different beliefs, thoughts, and desires than we have, also known as the “theory of mind” (Premack, 1978). What allows us to bridge the gap between our differences is communicating how we want others to see us. For instance, consider that profession is an important aspect of identity. Being an artist versus a lawyer might cause you to be treated with more kindness and happiness because your profession involves less stress and negativity. However, if you want to be treated with more respect and seriousness, being a lawyer might be the way to go. I am not saying that we have total control, if any, of the way people perceive us, but because we go through the act of perceiving others ourselves in order to communicate, I think that people are inclined to care about the way others perceive them. This desired perception, regardless how much it reflects who we are internally, reflects aspects of the self in that it reveals how the self wants to be seen. In my grandfather’s case, although he may have known for himself that he was an intelligent individual, perhaps he wanted others to perceive him as intelligent because he wanted to be treated as an intelligent individual. Maybe that treatment affects who we are just as much as our internal understanding of who we are. If he knew he was an intelligent man but everyone treated him like he was a crazy man with schizophrenia, which depiction is most reflective of who he is? In our social world, the latter defines him and it would be difficult for one man to keep telling himself he was one thing if the world around him kept constantly telling him that he was another.

*The Freedom Manifesto* both literally and thematically brings together many of his artifacts under the idea that my grandfather desired to create a level of broad social change. His

care for others' opinions shows that he acknowledges that external perceptions are a large piece of internal identity, explaining his attempt to change external perceptions of himself with the letters and "Invitation" in order to allow himself to believe he was still intellectual. He desired to change the perception of mental illness, as noted in "Medical Slavery" not only for him, but rather for all those suffering from mental illness. In a way, he tried to free mentally ill people from what he feels are inaccurate perceptions of mental illness. These perceptions can limit the amount of possible ways others can see them and, thus, limit the amount of ways they can see themselves, limiting their identity. In other words, others' perceptions have the power to restrict the way we live our lives and, thus, diminish our freedom to tell our story. Race and inequality, as I will mention next, are prevalent examples of how our stories can be constructed. When people are born into unfair circumstances such as poverty or are subject to racial discrimination, they have fewer opportunities to do what they want than others. In this way, race and inequality limit the possible things we can achieve and, therefore, make it difficult for people to tell their stories the way they want them to be told. Overall, granting people the freedom to be who they want to be was my grandfather's goal. In order to achieve this, there would need to be grand social change. This might be why *The Freedom Manifesto* is such a large scale project. He knew that such dramatic social change would require an equally dramatic manifesto.

If *The Freedom Manifesto* worked to grant people the freedom to live their own lives without interference, running for president with his own party--The Freedom Party--was what my grandfather called "The Freedom Movement." His role in this revolution was to lead people out of ignorance and into the freedom of having rights and exercising them. This means that he wanted people not to rely on others to determine how they should live their own lives. One might

argue that this contradicts what he did with his own life by using the letters in *The Freedom Manifesto* to reestablish others' respect for his intellect. However, he may have needed to reestablish his perceived intellect in order to spread his ideas in the first place. If he could not share these ideas with others, he would not have been able to create the large social movement he seemed to want. Thus, he might have sacrificed his own independence--not allowing others to determine how to live his life--by caring if people saw him as intelligent in order to start a movement that teaches others how to control their own minds and bodies, and live independently. Since spreading his word meant that he was unable to live his own life without the interference of others, his campaign shows that he wanted others to have freedom even if he could not achieve it himself.

If he knowingly sacrificed his own independence in order to promote the independence of others, his efforts are not only noble, but they show that he was genuinely trying to achieve the goals he set forth in his campaign. It reveals that he was not trying to become president for the glory, money, or anything aside from helping people. This is an important feature because being president is the ultimate public service job. We want leaders that will have the interests of the people in mind before their own because more people will benefit if politicians have a selfless disposition. My grandfather's sacrifice adds more specificity to this understanding of an ideal politician. Not only does he want to represent people's needs, but the idea that he desired to help others to the extent that it prevented him from achieving that freedom himself shows powerful selflessness and empathy. Maybe this is the type of politician that he wanted to be, or maybe he did not even try to be that way. Would the latter make us less impressed by his efforts, or would it bring us to a new understanding of him as a naturally good person? Regardless, his campaign



reminds us that we should be thinking of the ways politicians should be. The motivations behind their actions can be just as revealing of their character as their actions themselves. If a politician lowers taxes for a certain group, this could help that group and the politician might be seen in a positive light by said group. However, if a report reveals that the group promised the politician money in exchange for their tax break, the politician's actions are not right because they reflect his own interests and not the interests of the governed. In contrast to this idea of a corrupt politician as the champion of the people, the leader of the "The Freedom Movement," my grandfather called himself "The Flaming Eagle." I am not sure what he meant to imply with this name, but the image suggested by it is that of a true patriot. If the animal represents the bald eagle, a strong symbol of the United States, perhaps he wanted to set himself in contrast to corrupt politicians, who certainly would not have enough political zeal for to be on fire.

In addition to sacrificing his own independence, my grandfather's commitment to promoting the independence of others is evident in the time and effort he spent on his campaign. Part of what took a substantial amount of his energy was his "Freedom Song." In every *Freedom Manifesto* he would include a one-page sheet music for "The Freedom Song." On the page, there are only 3 lines of actual musical notes written out, with the rest of the music lines empty. Below the musical notes, there is one chorus of the song written out and between the following empty lines there are 3 verses--each compressed into a space between the empty lines. The musical notes on the top lines are written in sharpie marker so they are hard to make out. The first line of the chorus starts the song off with a simple message, "Let there be freedom for you and freedom for me; Let there be freedom for all in this whole society." Next, the first verse gives some instruction about how to achieve this freedom. After a note that clarifies that the words should be

recited to music, he says, “Now it’s not time to dream but time to do. Close the slums and feed the bums.” This line suggests that the way for people to achieve universal freedom is to bring the poor out of poverty. The second verse adds that this freedom is not only meant to bring the poor to equality, he says, “Makin’ mountains and makin’ toys...jobs for whites...jobs for browns.” This message of equality asserts that job selection should not be influenced by someone’s race. He compares living in a world with inequality and racism to a nightmare. By having more to eat and better conditions to live in, he thinks that people will have more pride. At the bottom of “The Freedom Song,” my grandfather notes that there are favorable comments from President Reagan and Senator Kennedy (of the two, only Reagan commented specifically on the song). He claims his copyright and offers people to use it as long as it is for “any non-profit reason and for wide distribution.” After that, clarifies by saying that people can use it for profit purposes as long as they contact him and get permission first. These copyrights of works and ideas are a prominent presence throughout *The Freedom Manifesto*.

My grandfather, in “The Freedom Song” and throughout *The Freedom Manifesto*, sought to give people the tools to live more independent lives, tools that would allow them to tell their own stories their own ways. Part of this mission was to give people financial independence. The idea of financial equality is based in people’s perceptions of others’ socioeconomic status, that is, the perception of others’ levels of income, education, and occupation. When these levels are generally similar among most people in a society, there is financial equality. In most societies, however, there is financial inequality because of numerous factors that lead people down different paths in life of varying socioeconomic statuses. There are forms of government, such as socialism, which try to bring about financial equality through redistribution of wealth so that all

people can have a generally good quality of life, similar to the idea of lifting people out of poverty that my grandfather suggests. Certain forms of redistribution of wealth include taxing people with higher socioeconomic status more so that the people with low socioeconomic status can be given tax breaks and receive financial benefits from the government. I believe that problems of this model arise when race becomes a component of financial equality. Since the United States is a diverse country and race has historically correlated with socioeconomic status--blacks and latinos experiencing higher levels of poverty than whites--there are opportunities for people to attribute others' socioeconomic status race to their. Resultantly, when certain groups are given financial benefits more than others, they can attribute receiving or not receiving these benefits to their race. Problems arise when people perceive another group to be getting more benefits than their own. A white person, for instance, might think that it is unfair that a black person is getting money at their expense. The issue is not that people do not want to be treated unfairly, it is that they tend to see unfairness when the system leans in favor of people not like themselves, in this case, due to race. This is the idea behind relative deprivation, a social science theory that people tend to see themselves and their social groups as deprived of resources and see other groups as more well off (Walker, 2002). If everyone was the same race, when people see others getting benefits, they might not wonder why their group is being taken away from when another group is being given to; they might see the system on a more individual level and want to simply help those who have less for the sake of financial equality.

Regardless of the ways that financial inequality exists in society and the strategies my grandfather would use to reduce it, my grandfather's commitment to helping people live independent lives is clearly evident. He worked to reduce the amount that people feel trapped by

definitions imposed upon them by society. These definitions were the different types of slavery--Religious, Political, Educational, Psychiatric, Governmental, Economical--that he spoke against. If someone felt defined by the fact that they were born into a poor family or for whatever reason found themselves impoverished, he did not want people to have to be defined by the condition they were currently in.

Through *The Freedom Manifesto*, being liberated from these definitions was, according to my grandfather, freedom. He thought that the definitions limited the possible ways he could describe himself. Thus, this freedom focused around putting the power of storytelling back in the hands of the narrator. Since *The Freedom Manifesto* included all of the materials that he wanted his campaign to address, he mass produced and distributed *The Freedom Manifesto* to spread his ideas. Spending massive amounts of money on paper and ink, he would print out thousands of copies of the approximately 100 page document (the size of it varied over the years as he revised). Some of these copies would go in local grocery stores and coffee shops, some would be handed out to people on the street, others would be mailed out to random towns and cities across the country.

My grandmother said that he would spend hours at the dining room table going through the phone book and marking these letters. I came across one of these letters that was unopened (Figure 2.)--it is an odd thing to find an unopened envelope that is so old because, usually, even envelopes that do not make it to their intended



Figure 2. The letter with which he sent *The Freedom Manifesto* had a condom and a cassette tape of "The Freedom Song"

recipients end up crossing paths with a curious person who opens it. The envelope seemed to have originally been beige, but the dirt it has accumulated over the years has made material the color of wet sand on the beach. The envelope was closed with a thick piece of packing tape that wrapped around from the back of the envelope. There is messy writing all over the front, like someone wrote down quick notes that only the writer can read, which is ironic for writing on an envelope because it is inherently meant to be read by others. This scribble is legible enough for me to discern that there is the normal information of name and address, and some notes seeming to wish the reader good fortune. In bolder type than the other writing, “The Freedom Song” is written in all caps and stands out, seeming to be the only indication of what actually might be inside. It appears that my grandfather was sending this letter to Mr. O’Brians, the then-Secretary of the FBI.

As I was looking through the contents, I noticed that the stamp on the outside of the envelope was a picture of his face. It was odd but I had not noticed it because it seemed so small and insignificant--about a quarter of the size of a normal one. There is a black and white portrait of my grandfather in a tank top on the front of the stamp. The background is an old fashioned window curtain, and because of that, it seems like the picture was taken professionally. His expression is intense, eyes so wide that it seems like they are popping out of his face, which is mostly covered up between his thick glasses and untamed beard.

I was curious to see if there were more of these unique stamps as I could not imagine why he would have made only one of them. After some digging through his documents, I found what I was looking for--probably around 100 stamps, twice as many of beaming eyes staring back at you together, since they are attached in one big sheet (Figure 3.). Although I have separately seen



both portraits of my grandfather and stamps, I have never before seen a combination of his portrait and stamps. Why would he spend the extra time and money to put his face on a stamp when he could have easily just used regular stamps? Knowing about my grandfather's fears of identity theft, the stamps could have been a way to further secure his intellectual possession of his work. This makes even more sense when the copyrights he got for *The Freedom Manifesto* and many of the works inside the envelope are taken into consideration. Furthermore, considering that he was trying to change

*Figure 3. A sheet of stamps with a photograph of my grandfather*

perceptions of identity, the stamps could

have been a clear way for him to solidify his identity. With them, he makes a claim that his intellectual material is not only his, but it is a profound part of who he is. By literally integrating his own face with each copy of *The Freedom Manifesto*, he makes it apparent that his ideas are unnegotiably part of his identity and, thus, his story. Perhaps, by sending it out with *The Freedom Manifesto*, he is giving an example to others of what it looks like for someone to take control of their identity.

## 4. Campaigning Alone: Social Deficits in Schizophrenia

It is clear that my grandfather wanted to carry out his presidential campaign on a large scale simply by the structure of a campaign, that is, to persuade the entire country to vote you into office. In order to accomplish such a feat, you might expect that someone assemble a team of people to help him or her. Politicians running for presidency today have millions of people supporting them before they even run for office. Why, then, did my grandfather campaign by himself? It could have been that he was unable to get anyone to work with him due to his illness. Maybe the illness and the stigma associated with it, which turned his friends and family away, made it hard for him to seem appealing to work with. Perhaps, however, he chose not to have a partner. Either way, we can better understand why he did not have a partner by examining social relationships in schizophrenia research.

Jill Hooley has been researching social development and schizophrenia for years. It is a common and well known fact that people with schizophrenia have social deficits, but, in a paper published in 2010, she sought out to specify which areas of social development in particular are affected. One of the areas that she found most impeded was that of problem solving. In particular, she found that it is harder for schizophrenics to “conceptualize and generate effective solutions” (Hooley, 2010) in order to solve hypothetical interpersonal problems. Additionally, they are less able to pick up on social cues than other people. If someone is hinting at something either verbally or nonverbally, it takes them longer to pick up on the gesture. This speaks to their emotional deficits as well. They can experience a full range of emotion but it is harder for schizophrenics to perceive other’s emotions. All these deficits culminate in the way they detract from an individual’s, who is afflicted with schizophrenia, social communication skills by

challenging him or her socially when it comes to “relating to and understanding the social world...[which] limits the extent to which they can develop supportive interpersonal relationships (Hooley, 241). These deficits might have affected my grandfather and, in turn, could have been the reason he did not have a partner in his project.

Although social deficits from schizophrenia might have been the reason why my grandfather worked without a partner, this does not rule out the possibility that he chose to work alone. Since he was so passionate about being successful in his campaign, if he thought that having a partner would have benefitted him, he may have forced himself to find a way to maintain an interpersonal relationship, doing whatever it takes to win. Furthermore, there is no evidence that he even tried to have a partner. This suggests that he had some apprehension to getting a partner in the first place. Consider that, from interacting with people for his whole life and losing relationships when he developed schizophrenia, he knew that he was not strong with social interactions and that a working relationship would, therefore, not be very productive. He would have realized that less productive social interactions would be worse for his campaign than simply working alone. Because he was so passionate about his work, I would not put it past him to make this sacrifice, to do whatever it takes, even if it meant doing it alone.

If my grandfather chose not to engage in social interactions because of his illness, his decision could add some nuance to Hooley’s research on social deficits in schizophrenia. She suggests that, because of the social deficits they have, schizophrenics do not engage in as many interpersonal relationships as others. She presents the idea of social deficits in a way that leads us to believe that those with schizophrenia try to have relationships but, because it is too hard for them, fail to get what they want. I believe, however, that this message is a misrepresentation of



the way these social deficits actually apply and fit into the life of those with schizophrenia; it is incomplete. While social deficits may make it harder for people to maintain relationships, it does not mean that in every area of a socially inhibited person's life where there is a lack of social relationships that this lacking is a direct result of the social deficit. For my grandfather, interpersonal relationships were strained with his wife and immediate family, but were maintained nonetheless. Further, though he lost most of his friendships around the onset of his illness, a steady few friends cycled in and out of his life for many years. My grandmother says that he struggled to keep relationships for the first few years that he was dealing with the symptoms that affected his relationships, but that he got used to this structure and did not try overtly hard to build new or maintain old relationships for the rest of his life. With this and considering that he did not overtly try not to have a partner in his campaign, his attitude toward relationships suggests that he gave up trying to have relationships in the way that he did before the illness. Thus, the reason he did not have many interpersonal relationships was not because it was difficult for him to maintain any, but rather because social deficits made it harder for him to maintain relationships and diminished his drive to do so in the long term. This expands Hooley's claim about social deficits by highlighting that they not only exist but that they can apply in specific ways to the lives of those with schizophrenia--after trying to maintain relationships for extended periods of their life, social deficits lessen their drive to maintain and create social relationships, thus, causing them to have fewer interpersonal relationships. Perhaps, though, he simply lost his desire for relationships because his illness stripped him of his capacity for this. I am not able to conclusively determine the reason he did it alone because, as one might first resort to in understanding why people do things, I cannot ask him why he did what he did because he is

dead. We can only base our knowledge of him on that which we can see, that is, his thoughts through his writings and his behaviors through the stories about him.

## 5. Applying Freedom to Therapy

Part of the story my grandfather was telling about freedom relates specifically to the way his schizophrenia was treated. He applied the freedom that he wanted all people to have in their own lives (not limited by race or inequality) to the treatment of his schizophrenia in his “Common Sense Therapy.” He did not want his mind and identity, or the minds and identities of others being treated, to be restricted by the therapeutic techniques that were meant to make them better. He believed that therapy should allow people exercise their minds rather than be dulled by medications, first noted in “Medical Slavery.” He defines common sense as the ability to understand patients with basic knowledge that most of us already have. By common sense, he is highlighting that an interaction with a therapist is still, more than anything, an interaction with two humans and should be treated as such. This means that, if the patient is frustrated and needs to vent, the therapist needs to simply listen, as in an everyday human interaction, rather than distract himself with theories or focus on what he is going to say next. In turn, therapists should use their own reaction and personal advice to inform the therapy. Although he does not refer specifically to other types of therapy, it is clear that he denounces other forms of therapy. He might not want to recommend other types of therapy because he did not have good experiences with some of them, such as the ones he is referring to when he talks about “shrinks” in “Medical Slavery.” He begins by stating that people live stressful lives that cause them to feel unfulfilled and not achieve their goals. The idea behind his “common sense” approach is that each person needs something different, which can only truly be determined through common sense. He describes this common sense therapist as having many of the positive qualities that a conventional therapist should have--empathy, sincerity, and conversationality--but the one

positive trait that stands out is its use of common sense. With this, a therapist would not have to be a licensed person, but rather would need the “good” traits of a therapist and would have to gain his or her skills through practice. This is to keep the therapist from being misled by trying to fit his patient into some preexisting diagnosis. He ends with an ad for the therapy by asking if anyone reading is interested in becoming a therapist.

The “Common Sense Therapy” never became practiced, but his theory of having more personalized therapy with less drugs points to recent schizophrenia research that argues for treatments not focused on medications. Mueser and colleagues (2013) suggest that schizophrenia is not a “strictly biological disease with an invariably downward trajectory” (Mueser, 476). They say that patients should not spend their lives trying to get rid of their mental illness, but rather should focus on gaining the best strategies to live their lives with the mental illness. Not only can spending all of your time subduing that which is so integrated into your psyche be an uphill battle, it is not realistic to be fighting an illness for a lifetime. The authors’ recovery model of therapy, therefore, aims to give patients “a meaningful and valued life rather than recovery from disease and the absence of symptoms” (Mueser, 468). The treatment focuses on the individual needs and desires of the person and not the diagnosis; it requires peer support, therapy in patients natural environments, social skills training, and many other types of therapies that help people realistically live in society. One of the most practical forms of therapy is supported employment, in which the patient is trained and assisted in getting competitive jobs. Showing patients how to live in society even gives them confidence and boosts their self esteem, which reduces stress. This aspect alone has positive implications because mentally ill people find it easier to cope with their illnesses if they are under less stress.

Under this recovery model, the patient guides the therapy. This strengthens their sense of agency and allows the therapy to be more customized, both of which improve patient outcomes. Patients influencing the type of therapy and mindset of the therapist is the ultimate way to customize treatment. Since my grandfather's model for therapy comes directly from himself, perhaps that model would have worked better for him than any therapy he could have been prescribed. It would have probably worked better than the therapy that he was receiving because the experiences he had caused him to completely turn away from it. Electroshock therapy was traumatic for him and he felt that all the medication he received took away aspects of his mind that he valued without reducing his paranoid symptoms. It is important to note that there is no empirical evidence for electroshock therapy as an effective treatment of schizophrenia. Regardless of how effective his therapists thought their treatments were, the outcome of their therapy was worse than if he had not gone at all. Future research should expand the level of customization of the recovery model and explore patient-guided therapies for mentally ill patients.

I am impressed that my grandfather had the clarity during his illness to see valid possible avenues for its treatment. Typically, people who are afflicted by an illness are too personally involved to make accurate assessments of the illness as a whole, in the way it affects most people, because their emotions cause them to only see their own experiences. Despite this, my grandfather was able to propose a way of thinking about therapy that is gaining traction in the modern scientific world. This is hard enough as it is for contemporary scientists to do, let alone for a lay man whose scientific era was far behind ours in its understanding of schizophrenia. In terms of the progression of his illness, his ability to make such a relevant claim about therapy

means that his intellectual abilities were very intact when he was writing *The Freedom Manifesto* and running his campaign. This is not to say that his mind was not affected by schizophrenia at this time. At a time when his friends and family were pushing him out of their lives because they thought he was crazy and there was no hope that he would ever return to be the smart young man he once was, I find it incredible that he was able to produce something like “Common Sense Therapy” that not only represents his intellect but also shows his ability to care for the treatment of others. In this way, I am also impressed by his drive to grant others freedom. He did not experience the benefits of the treatment for which he advocated and he did not experience the unlimited freedom of identity and storytelling for which he fought. *The Freedom Manifesto*, his life’s work, then, represents a struggle to give others that which he could never achieve, that which was limited for himself by those very others.

## 6. Freeing an Enslaved Identity

One second you are reading about therapy, the next you are reading about politics, that is the spontaneous nature and structure of *The Freedom Manifesto*. In the late '80s, he wrote a letter to the "Democrat State Committee," announcing that he was running for President of the United States. He explains that he represents freedom as opposed to the "slavery" of people caused by establishment politics. If he wins the candidacy for the democratic party, he claims, "the government" will give him a "free grant of \$40 million to run to election day." He would try to make the democratic party the true "freedom party" as compared to the republican party, which he refers to directly as "the slave party." His tone is one of realistic optimism, knowing that he will probably not be able to win from the start, but understanding that he has a chance on the second or third ballots. At the bottom of the page, underneath the typed text of the document, he signs his name and his nickname, "The Flaming Eagle." He writes his telephone number and provides a good time to call, "9-10pm EST." Now, that is either a really short time period during the evening or he meant to be available for the whole day. It could be an hour late in the evening, but knowing my grandfather, I assume that he wouldn't want to miss an opportunity to gain someone's support simply because he was not available.

My grandmother was a Catholic school principal at the time he began his campaign. She was always busy, the primary source of income for the family, and thought that he was wasting so much of their financial resources and time away on his campaign. They were already in financial trouble because he lost his job as a business executive. He became a teacher and made substantially less money. During this job change, he was in and out of the hospital frequently enough for his schizophrenia to cause a steady flow of medical bills. The campaign added even

more stress to this tough situation. He spent money on envelopes, paper, printing, stamps, and copyrights so that he could send thousands of letters out to promote his ideas, and keep people from stealing them. Writing and sending large documents like the *Freedom Manifesto* took more time than he had to fulfill all the roles in his life--father, teacher, husband, friend, and brother. In addition to finances, his family was becoming emotionally exhausted, needing him to focus on their needs and not just on what they saw as only his own interests. Many of their family and friends thought that his was a fringe campaign, a joke. This brought further embarrassment on his immediate family who had already learned to be shameful of their close relationship with a paranoid schizophrenic.

Although Dottie, Marie, and John's interpretation of his potential political career came from a first hand perspective, theirs is bound to and limited by its context--what psychologists would view as an emotionally disrupted and unbalanced family dynamic. Therefore, their interpretation of what his writings and campaign mean is altered by the negative way it affected each of them, a same dynamic that may even explain why no one took his theory of "Common Sense Therapy" seriously. For example, had my grandmother not felt financially strained, she might not have seen his campaign as something that was taking resources away from her. Taking away this negative aspect could have allowed her the space to see the positives and benefits of a campaign. Even if these benefits had nothing to do with her, maybe she would have been able to see how it was affecting her husband positively, who was doing something he liked and was passionate about. And his passion for politics was self evident--he took stances on issues, articulated them to no end, and worked tirelessly to see them come into fruition.



My grandfather's political passion, epitomized in *The Freedom Manifesto*, focused on changing the status quo of the different types of slavery that he defines. He sought to explain the way people currently, and mistakenly, understand the nature of their own freedom and choices. For example, as previously noted in "Medical Slavery," his explanation of people's misunderstood ownership of sidewalks and homes works to show people the error of the way they think about ownership, or lack thereof. By pointing out that people do not own things in instances when they think they do, he identified one of the areas of enslavement that people are unaware of--banks owning people's property. The concept of ownership was a key idea in his discussion of slavery: in economic slavery he talked about big banks owning the wealth; in educational slavery he said that the government decides what we learn and, therefore, own people's intelligence; in media slavery he called out news articles for not reporting all the facts, just the ones that help the people who enslave stay in power.

Importantly, he did not tell people how he believes they should think after telling them how not to think. He simply wanted to break current misunderstandings and, in the case of ownership, to show people that they do not own things that they tend to think they own. Leaving out a prescriptive message was probably no mistake: on one level, it makes his message simple and hard to argue with. It is simple because he only made one claim, that is, people do not own certain things which they think they own. It is hard to argue with because he did not state any opinion about what people should do concerning their misunderstood ownership; he pointed out a fact that when people pay taxes to the government or mortgages to banks, they are allowed to use those things but they do not technically own them. Simplicity and a strong message were also qualities he would have needed if he wanted to spread his message on the large scale, as

indicated by how much he attempted to distribute it. On another level, concerning ownership, leaving out a prescriptive message allows people space to choose how to think and act on their own. Allowing for people to choose what they think the right course of action should be grants them freedom to choose, or free will. Since medical slavery and the other forms of slavery deal with identifying problematic definitions and breaking down the ways people understand constructs like ownership and mental-wellness, the manifesto aimed to give people the tools to free themselves from their own thinking patterns, the tool of knowledge.

By knowing more about the words and concepts we use to describe each other, my grandfather's idea was that the narrator would have more freedom to tell his own story, to depict his life the way he wants. Questioning our language allows us to clarify our words so that the listener and the speaker have the same understanding of what is said. For instance, if my grandfather wanted to maintain his intellectual respect, the way those listening to his story understand and define schizophrenia would greatly impact their evaluation of his plea. If they see schizophrenia through, what my grandfather would have considered, incomplete psychological definitions, they might then see his intellect as inferior to those without mental illness. Since the takeaway message of the psychological definition is that those afflicted with schizophrenia are generally abnormal, a lens of abnormality is easily applied to his intelligence--rendering his intellect not worthy of the respect of those who seem to exhibit normal or average intelligence. As we saw in "Common Sense Therapy," my grandfather attempted to incorporate the individual experience into the definition of each person's mental illness. By exemplifying his thinking and reasoning abilities in *The Freedom Manifesto*, reinforcing his intellectual respect with the letters from politicians, and denouncing our tendency to understand those with mental illness through

broad psychological terms, he pleaded for others to understand his specific case in order to see that the intellectual abnormality that might exist in some individuals suffering from schizophrenia did not apply to him.

Thusly, he worked to gain control of telling his story by explaining the ways schizophrenia affected his life--clarifying the words around his illness to exclude losing intellect from his perceived symptoms. In this way, the benefits of adopting a language that is flexible and incorporates individual experience are twofold: It (1) allows the person self-narrating to explain who he is without feeling confined by pre-existing terminology and (2) grants those listening an opportunity to objectively understand the speaker as the person he says he is. It is important to note that blindly trusting the speaker's depiction of himself is not what I am advocating for. Rather, I am suggesting that allowing the power of self-narration to be in the hands of the individual in question, forges a space for better storytelling and better listening. The result of this improved communication can, in turn, improve the way our identities are understood by both ourselves and others. It allows us to feel in control, a sense of agency, of who we are in the eyes of ourselves and of others. With this control, we may get to know ourselves better by experiencing the freedom of choosing our own identities.

## 7. Determining One's Own Identity: Is it possible?

If my grandfather's goal was to both influence people by breaking down the ways they currently think and maintain their free will to think what they want to think by limiting his prescriptive writing, did he achieve his goal by providing factual and objective information? Further analysis might suggest that he did not. He provided a mixture of influence and objective reasoning because his writing varies throughout each section, sometimes including strong amounts of prescriptive writing. But is it even possible for someone to write without influencing how the reader should now think after they read? Can writing solely perform the task that it appears my grandfather set out to do--to solely break people's patterns of thought? If writing does not influence the reader, would said reader then have the free will to choose how to think?

In order to address whether or not my grandfather was able to leave his reader uninfluenced enough to choose a new way of thinking, we must first understand the nature of free will, the freedom to choose. Roy Baumeister (2008) writes in his *Free Will in Scientific Psychology* that psychologists have not typically liked to address the concept of free will because they say it is unscientific. This accusation comes from the fact that science is focused on causality and there is "no way to explain a free action causally" (Baumeister, 2008, 15). The argument is based in the deterministic idea that every event was caused by other events and there is no way to prove that there is a definite cause for free will. Here, determinism means that nothing that happens is in our control because it is caused by the world around us. In response, Baumeister argues that determinism itself is unproven and does not reflect our everyday experiences, during which people make choices, exhibiting control, that sometimes have profound impacts on our lives. This experience is more concretely grounded in real life than the

theory of determinism. Our ability to choose can also have specifically positive impacts on our lives. For example, being able to choose in some situations reduces our levels of stress. If you feel like you have to do something, or your options are limited, you might feel forced into a decision that you do not want to make. There is also an evolutionary component to free will that is based in the idea that evolution favors processes that help animals pursue their goals. Humans who, for instance, wanted to build a family were more motivated to attain survival resources because they had reasons to survive other than just for the sake of it.

As I noted in the previous section, the freedom to choose one's own identity might be the result of altering the way we hear each other's stories. This freedom, however, is contingent on the idea that we have the ability to make choices. Baumeister's argument, thus, supports this claim by supporting the notion of free will. Despite this, he does not mean to say that free will is absolute. He asserts that "some acts are freer than others" (15) because self control and rational intelligent choice can vary. By this, he means that the level of how much we can restrain ourselves in a social context, in which we are strongly influenced by others, and of our reasoning power varies across situations. In particular, studies show that our ability to exhibit self control and restraint diminishes after each time it is used within a given period (Vohs et al., 2006). For example, if someone had to restrain his impulse to go to a party and instead do his homework, as he is doing his homework he is less likely to be able to resist watching TV than if he did not already turn down the opportunity to go to a party. In this way, our self control and ability to make choices that we want to make diminishes as we use it. In this way, my grandfather might have allowed his reader free will because he does not require him to use any restraint or self control throughout the reading. By simply stating what he thought was wrong with terms and

ideas without deciding what he thinks the reader should think after he decides that it is wrong, the reader does not have to exhibit any self control in either buying into or rejecting my grandfather's ideas. For my grandfather, this would have meant that his work reflected what he was trying to do in the larger picture of his project, that is, to free people from that which limits the way they tell their story and, thus, their identity.

If free will is a component of identity, the idea that free will can be influenced by social context suggests that there is a piece of our identities that is outside of our control. Though we have determined that the social construction of identity exists, this social environment seems to be more than just the roles and relationships--friends, family, and romantic partners. We even belong to groups with which we identify and grow close bonds (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), but we cannot escape the fact that neither we nor these people in our social environment had anything significant to do with its construction. A baseball player might be so good that he changes the rules of baseball, but he cannot have a profound impact on the game because, as a social construct, it existed long before him and will exist long after him. Furthermore, this social environment that we are born into is the place where the limitations of identity and storytelling stem from. We are born into the language we use to communicate. My grandfather, then, was working to change something deeply ingrained in us. The social environment where our identities are constructed is larger than any individual person. Further, it is out of the control of all the people who are currently alive because there is a much greater amount of dead individuals who influenced the social environment, over time, to be what it is today. In this way, my grandfather's argument that some language limits people's possible identities suggests that identity is confined by something more powerful than the ability to listen to or hear a story.

In *Giving an Account of Oneself*, Judith Butler asserts that norms can facilitate this limitation. Her moral philosophy concerning norms states that our interactions exist in a broad social world that has always preceded us and will go on far after we die. Norms constitute the rubric against which we define ourselves. Thusly, we craft ourselves in relation to everyone else because “[the other] governs the scene of recognition” (Butler, 23). This normative platform comes from the *ethos* of cultures combined with the morality they suggest. Our western culture is, for example, heteronormative. That is, we tend to see heterosexuality as normal and everything else, in relation to it, as abnormal. It is problematic that, with our sense of morality, we equate normal and abnormal with right and wrong. This moral view leads to violence when it makes people feel excluded. If a homosexual couple is not able to get married or, more broadly, if they are constantly reminded of how their sexuality is different from the norm, they are excluded even if they do not feel like they are directly oppressed. The oppressed face a decision to either conform to the norms or to not conform to them (like my grandfather) and tell a story about why the norms are wrong. In this way, we actually recognize a norm when we see its oppression. As the oppressed figure out how they are going to respond to their oppression, Butler writes, “It sets the stage for the subject’s self crafting, which always takes place in relation to an imposed set of norms” (p. 19). Butler’s theory of subject formation - the way each of us develop who we are - suggests that as a “relational being, one whose early and primary relations are not available to conscious knowledge,” humans are “opaque to [themselves]” (Butler, 20). Here we are asked to think reflexively about ourselves in order to give an account of ourselves and describe ourselves with language--similar to the norms that existed before us--that “are not of our making” (Butler, 21). When asked to describe yourself, you do not necessarily capture accurately

who you are because your choice of words and ideas are limited to those that exist in your language. Further, this language was not even made by you or others in any intentional way. With this and the norms we construct ourselves against, the process of self definition is something that we are largely unaware of, it is difficult for us to understand ourselves--who we are and why we are that way.

By granting people the freedom to not define themselves against these norms, specifically norms of mental well-being, and by redefining the context of morality (being abnormal is not wrong if the only thing you are supposed to be is yourself), my grandfather attempted to affect people in a profound and specific way. Throughout the descriptions of the types of slavery, showing people that they are being negatively limited by their current misunderstandings of certain aspects of things like ownership, my grandfather shows that he cared how others thought. In respect to Butler's theory, caring how his illness was perceived shows that schizophrenia was a part of his identity as he constructed himself in relation to norms. Where psychological definitions caused him to be perceived as abnormal, Butler's interpretation of norms concerning mental-wellness suggests that he was the oppressed, faced with a decision to accept or deny this state of oppression. As I have mentioned before in regards to psychological definitions, my grandfather clearly fought this state of oppression through the archive. His fight was intense and lasted throughout his life but, considering Butler's explanation of the powerful normative basis for oppression, it is apparent that his struggle was partly due to the immense forces in his way--forces impeding him from telling his own story in his own way.



## 8. Constructing the Narrative Self

Despite the impeding forces he faced when trying to grasp the power of telling his own story, my grandfather fought tirelessly with *The Freedom Manifesto*. His immense effort is simply evident in his literal treatment of the manifesto--sending it out to as many people as possible--and in the nature of a political campaign, focused around changing the current state of affairs for all people. Though his goals might be clear, his reasons for wanting to grant people this freedom, specifically at this particular time in his life, are not as cut and dry. His passion and commitment to his campaign were evident, but there are no signs of a desire to change the status quo before this. Why did he feel the need to affect people so suddenly? Even the type of thought patterns and behavior--writing about political ideas such as inequality, speaking against social constructs like slavery, showing deep concern for how others think--that he exhibits in his campaign writings are not seen before. From the eloquent and descriptive writing seen during his college years in the short non-fiction story "And the Lord Came By" to his creative science projects as a teacher seen in "To be or not to be a mushroom," he does not exhibit the same passion for influencing people that we see in him during the political campaign of his 40s. In "And the Lord Came By," he told the story of a young boy who died at the pool where he was lifeguarding. Although he mentioned the way others reacted differently from him (futilely trying to save the boy instead of contemplating his death), he did not try to change the way the others handled the situation. In his science project, he took a survey of people's opinions of mushrooms. Despite his astonishment that nobody knew a mushroom is a fungus, he reserved himself to only make an observation of their knowledge and not try to change it. Thus, committing his life to influencing the way people think with politics was a drastic change. If this is an accurate

description of the shift that took place in his behaviors and thoughts, why was he trying so hard to do it at this particular point in his life? Looking at the events in his life does not provide an adequate explanation for it because there were no prominent events that occurred simultaneously. The campaign, therefore, represents a shift in the way he thought and behaved in a way that cannot be explained through a clear cause and effect relationship - an external event causing an internal change.

If the shift to a political life did not come from an outside source, it may have come from within. This would mean that the source of internal change was himself, as my grandfather's self existed before and after the shift. His psychotic break in 1975--the incident--could represent part of this internal shift. Even if this event does not fully explain or characterize the overall shift that was going on during the middle adult stage of his life, it demonstrates a complicated relationship between his thoughts and his behaviors. For instance, let us examine how we might understand the thought process behind his behaviors during "the incident." Remember that this event was preceded by years of paranoid thoughts about himself and his family. Over time, the thoughts eventually developed into a specific fear that his family's life was in danger and lead him to believe that he would have to do something drastic to save them. Keeping this thought process in mind when looking at his attempt to save his family by murdering them, we are not that surprised by his actions because we understand, on some level, that which was going through his mind to lead up to such action. Whereas, if we did not understand the underlying thought process, we might be more startled to see a man, who had never exhibited any violence toward his family before, attempting to murder violently his wife and children. His thoughts and behaviors were

not matching up. Thoughts were not necessarily translating into actions and his behaviors did not even necessarily reflect what he thought.

In order to understand the interwoven relationship between his thoughts and his feelings that may have informed his seemingly abrupt shift to a life of politics, we could turn to current understandings of this relationship and its implications. Psychologists study the relationships between thoughts and behaviors via the Affect, Behavior, and Cognition (ABC) model of psychology. When your girlfriend dumps you for another man, the sad feeling you get is an affect. Moments like this evoke emotional reactions and cause feelings, or affects. Since there are so many situations and contexts that make us feel, we understand affects as sometimes a combination of emotions, moods, states of feeling (i.e.; sadness), feelings, or preferences (Ortony et al., 2005). Cognitions can be simply understood as thoughts--an idea about what we should do with our friends today, remembering to bring a jacket when we see it's raining out. The cognitive process, however, encompasses many areas: memory, problem solving, representations, attention, expectations, interpretations, knowledge, and beliefs (Cervone, 2004). Behavior is how the mental processes of affects and cognitions manifest themselves to become palpable, something you can see happening in front of your eyes (Shweder, 1999). The process from an affect to a cognition to a behavior demonstrates itself throughout our lives. For example, when I go outside and it is raining, I get a feeling of unpleasant wetness and coldness, which leads me to think that I might get sick if I am wet and feeling like this. The idea that I might get sick from being wet might lead me to an action that lessens the wetness. Thusly, I might go back into my house and put on a rain coat. Notably, this process does not need to happen in this order.

Cognitions might lead to feelings. If I think that I always disappoint my father, I might then feel sad and worthless, which might or might not lead to a behavior.

My grandfather's shift to politics, a behavior, could be explained through this relationship between thoughts and behaviors--the thought that people were being enslaved by their government could have enraged him and led him to attempt to change this with a life of politics. However, this explanation still does not answer why this shift happened exactly in this point of his life. His thoughts on slavery were in depth and well developed, seemingly over a long period of time. They incorporate a myriad of experiences throughout his life. The timespan of his thoughts suggest that he had been contemplating the thoughts in *The Freedom Manifesto* for a substantial period of his life. Thusly, a shift in cognitions probably did not cause the shift to politics. Feelings could have something to do with it, but we do not have any reliable ways of assessing how he felt at that time. By reading his materials, we have some insight into his thoughts and, by hearing stories about him, we have an understanding of his behaviors, but it is difficult to learn how someone is feeling without talking to him and directly asking him about it. Furthermore, his schizophrenia complicates our understanding of the way his thoughts and behaviors interacted because it is difficult to differentiate between the thoughts and behaviors that were resultant from the illness and the ones that were not. A thought that otherwise would have been explained by a feeling might, due to his illness, have been caused by a hallucination. For instance, he could have thought in a paranoid way due to a hallucination constantly telling him that he should be worried. Whereas, for someone without schizophrenia, in order to think in a paranoid way, he might need to develop a feeling of fear first and, if there is no external reason to develop fear, the person would likely not develop paranoid thought patterns. In this way, his

illness may have caused him to jump the step of feeling before thinking. He did not have to feel like someone was watching him by experiencing a stalker at some point in his life, he simply could have been told to think that there are people stalking you.

Therefore, in order to gain some clarity with respect to understanding the relationship between his thoughts and behaviors, I believe that we need to explore aspects of my grandfather's life that may have been influencing both his thoughts and behaviors, and the constant interaction between the two. Furthermore, considering that the shift he experienced was internal--not correlated with any significant external life events--we should examine that which we can be sure was (1) internal, (2) existed before and after the shift, and (3) changed, at least to some degree, at the time of the shift. Thusly, we may look to an examination of the self because it meets all 3 of these requirements. The self is always changing because it is always being influenced. This influence does not have to be from the external; rather, simply spending time thinking alone with your thoughts can alter the way the self is organized. Contemplating the importance of your job contrasted with the stress it causes your intimate relationships could cause you to reorganize your priorities. In this way, because the mind never really stops thinking, the self can change simply with time. Since the self can exhibit natural change over time, especially during middle adulthood, something psychologists refer to as self development, examining my grandfather's life through the lens of self development could reveal the reasons behind his actions.

According to Dan P. McAdams (2013), a researcher of narrative psychology, self development is a constant factor in life because the self develops and changes over time as a person ages. McAdams' "actor, agent, and author" model of selfhood development breaks down

life into 3 parts which influence and overlap with each other to varying degrees at different stages of life. The first stage, the actor, consists of someone distinguishing himself with simple traits and characteristics during childhood. Next, during adolescence and early adulthood, a sense of agency and control is added to the “actor” to develop goals based on the previously formed interests. The third layer is added during adulthood when one finally places meaning to the journey of his life by piecing events together into a story. This requires one looking back at his life and making sense of how the separate events have contributed to his identity, who he saw himself as and who others perceived him to be. McAdams argues that the goal of this story is to add meaning and purpose to one’s life by giving it temporal continuity. The result is a narrative identity formed from “the reconstructed past, experienced present, and imagined future” (McAdams, 2013).

My grandfather’s political career, as it occurred in middle adulthood, can be analyzed with the lens of the “author” stage of McAdams’ model. As earlier noted, my grandfather’s goal in his 40s was to influence the way people think by suddenly dedicating his life to politics. The reasons for this shift were unclear. Consider, however, that McAdams’ “author” stage, where people entering the middle adult phase of their life are trying to add meaning to it by creating a life narrative, reflects what was going on for my grandfather when he decided to begin his campaign. This would have meant that he examined all the events in his life and felt an urge to string them together into a meaningful story.

From certain aspects of the campaign and *Freedom Manifesto*, it seems like he was trying to do exactly that and form a meaningful story geared to change the way people thought about issues he had formed strong stances on earlier in life. For instance, in the *Freedom Manifesto*, he

did not mention any other research or people who have written about the problems that he addresses. This implies that when he raised issues, they come from personal experience. In documents like “Medical Slavery,” in which he commented on psychiatrists, saying that their meds are “tranquilizers...thought prisons,” there is clear influence of his past experiences. Letters written well before “Medical Slavery” even explain how he did not like to take his medication because he felt that it limited his personality. In a letter to his district attorney’s office, he complained about the negative side effects of the drugs and makes a case for his doctors to be arrested on charges of malpractice. He created instructive stories--examples of situations others might experience--with accounts like this one in “Medical Slavery.” The stories had a specific meaning and purpose, in that they worked to influence people’s thoughts so they would gain an understanding that helped them avoid the same negative experience that he went through. The spontaneity of my grandfather’s campaign, therefore, can be explained with McAdams’ model. The self development that he was going through when he entered his middle adult phase of life could have influenced the way he began to see his negative experiences, not as static events that are bound to the past, but as dynamic ideas that could be used for good.

We can use McAdams’ model to help us see that my grandfather’s political campaign occurred when it did because he was entering a phase in his life during which he would want to give it meaning and purpose. While this is true, the model does not specify the nature of this meaning. It implies that the meaning will come from the story, but does not explain why the story creates meaning other than saying that it helps the individual form a narrative identity. This narrative identity is different from the identity to which my grandfather referred--an identity that is determined by the way someone exists in the present moment. This identity is communicated

to each other through the process of telling stories. By contrast, narrative identity suggests that these stories are an intrinsic part of identity. An individual's identity, like a story he might tell, needs some kind of meaning in order to be worthwhile.

The meaning that my grandfather finds in his story specifically comes from its attempt to influence people. He works to give meaning to his past by teaching lessons that allow people to avoid learning the hard way. Without this gift of knowledge, there would be no *Freedom Manifesto*. Thus, my grandfather's work suggests that the meaning which forms a narrative identity, in McAdams' model, comes from the story's ability to influence others. People in middle adulthood want to affect others with the knowledge they have gained thus far in their lives. In this way, McAdams' model of selfhood development is not only confirmed in my grandfather's case, but it is also expanded by it. If a story's meaning comes from its ability to influence other people, then a large piece of our identities comes from the way we influence others. Since my grandfather chose to influence others by granting them freedom to be who they want to be, the freedom of his identity from limiting and oppressive forces is contingent on his ability to influence others. Narrative identity, then, implies that the stories formed in these interactions worked to shape not only who he was perceived to be, but also how he saw himself. Although he did not have much success influencing people, his persistence reflects how narrative identity might have caused him to see himself--a man whose intellectual respect and, thus, identity were unjustly stripped away, forcing him retrieve it with that very ability, that is, his intellect.

McAdams' theory is applicable to every stage of life, but we focused on the middle-adulthood phase because that is where the archive brought us. When imagining who my



grandfather was, however, it is important to keep in mind that my grandfather probably developed the narrative identity when he did as a result of a lifelong developmental process. He may have developed like most people who, when they are young, spend their time learning from others and learning for themselves by trying things out and seeing how they work. A child splashes the water and is amazed at the ripples that his tiny hand made; he can be mesmerized by this phenomenon for hours. As people age, they take in more and more experiences of their own and, one day, they find themselves in a position where they are not the ones being taught by their interactions with the world and people, but rather they are sharing their experiences and stories with other people so that they do not have to learn everything on their own. Many people take pride in their ability to share useful information. Even if they were not good at it the first time, the ability to share knowledge about an experience shows that they learned something from it. McAdams acknowledges that people enjoy telling these stories, but my grandfather specifies that the story only matters to people if it actually does what it is are meant to do: Help people live their lives.

Keeping in mind my grandfather's possible path of selfhood development, we can explore different ways that people influence each other in this search to establish a meaningful self. His method of helping people with their lives focused specifically around breaking down the way they think about ideas like the notion of slavery and modes of ownership. However, there are many other ways to influence people. Persuading, helping, coercing, and hurting are just a few ways that we influence each other in our daily lives (Hoveland et al., 1953). Other methods of influence could prove to be more or less effective in establishing meaning. For McAdams, finding new ways to establish meaning could change the direction of his research, leading him to

exploratory experiments testing the effectiveness of different strategies of influence. These findings could then expand his theory to perhaps specify when different methods of influence are used in the different stages of the “author” stage of selfhood development.

## 9. An Identity Crisis: Losing Episodic Memory

Though my grandfather was able to reestablish a narrative identity in certain areas, aspects of his schizophrenia could have contributed to the overall breakdown of his identity. While he focused on politics, other aspects of his life suffered. He was unable to form a narrative identity for both himself as a politician and for himself as a father and husband. There was only room for one, and he chose to be a politician. In order to better understand why he made, what might seem to be, a decision that hurt his beloved family, we must take into consideration the way that schizophrenia might have been affecting his identity.

Shaun Gallagher (2000) has examined a distinction that researchers have been making between the narrative self and the minimal self. The narrative self, similar to narrative identity, is the way that a person understands his or her life's story and how he or she currently exists in it. Narrative self includes "memories of the past and intentions toward the future" (Gallagher, 15). The minimal self, also known as the core self, is a primitive version of the complex self we think of ourselves as; it is who you are in the exact moment and does not have any temporal continuity. These core aspects of the self "are being constantly interpreted by the narrative process" (Gallagher, 20). We know that minimal and narrative self neurological processes overlap in sensory cortices, but we do not fully understand the interaction between the two.

Out of the two forms of self, the narrative self is the one that would have had the greatest importance for my grandfather because it would have allowed him to gain some self-agency--an ability that my grandfather, whose schizophrenia caused him to lose control of what his mind thinks and of what voices roll through his head, would have valued. Agency is complicated in schizophrenia because ownership of the action could belong to the person or the voices in his

head. Gallagher suggests that schizophrenia further complicates the formation of a narrative identity because impairments in episodic memory--knowledge of specific events that make up the self--could have caused breaks in self continuity--the act of creating a story of the self as it exists over time. Noting that those with schizophrenia have a high chance of experiencing this impairment, he says that “episodic memory, which is necessary for the construction of the narrative self, is subject to constant remodeling...the registration of episodic memory as ‘my’ memory of ‘myself’ is necessary” (Gallagher, 20). Without episodic memory, you would still know your personal qualities that give you identity, but you would not remember the experiences that caused them to exist in the first place. In my grandfather’s case, he could have remembered that he cared for his family, but he might not have been able to fully recall that they stuck by him through the hardest times. With this simple example, it is easy to see how memories and feelings can be confused and misrepresented.

This lack of episodic memory could have disrupted his mental organization to the point that he knew who he was and had the memory of the things he had done in his life, but was unable to remember how these aspects connected. Since episodic memory refers to the events that happen in one’s life, it is vital for the formation of a story of that life. Some events do not matter in the big picture, but others influence us throughout our lives. These influential events across time help us form stories about our current state of being. For example, someone might tell the story of how they became a pilot. It could include the relevant events leading up to his desire to become a pilot, some memories he made on his journey to become a pilot, and the way those events fit into the chronological story of his whole life. Without episodic memory, you would not be able to remember these events well enough to tell a story with them about yourself.

Imagine not knowing why you are the way you are. It would be like waking up one day, thinking about and planning your tasks, and realizing that you have no idea why you are doing any of those things or how those tasks became things that you have to do. You might know that you currently are a lawyer who goes to his office every weekday, and you might even know that you do this because you need money to take care of your family who you love and understand, but you might not remember what events lead you to falling in love with your wife. The feeling of love could still be there in all its intensity and realness, but without the memory of that summer night and the unforgettable smile she made when you told her that stupid joke that only she would find funny, your love of her would feel empty.

Perhaps his struggle with episodic memory and narrative identity formation explains why he put forth so much effort into his political campaign. It could have been, in his mind, the only way to establish a narrative identity, something that has meaning over time. If so, consider that that the campaign for freedom was meant to give meaning to his life, to take the negative and trapped experiences he remembered about his treatments--the draining medications and forced inpatient therapy mentioned in "Medical Slavery," the electroshock therapy he received at early onset of the illness, the lack of therapy options that caused him to form his own "Common Sense Therapy"--and use that knowledge to change the way people in similar situations are treated in the future. For a man whose self continuity, episodic memory, and narrative identity were compromised, writing down ideas and affecting people through his work could have been a way to make more concrete and permanent pieces of himself that he thought he might lose as the illness progressed. For even after he could not function due to the illness or death, the changes he

wanted to institute had the potential for achieving the continuity--consistent existence in time--that he was unable to gain.

Although his use of political writing to help form continuity in his life may have come out of the necessity caused by his schizophrenia, McAdams and Gallagher make it clear that gaining continuity is not just a difficult task for mentally ill people. Forming a narrative identity is a complex, lifelong, and difficult task. McAdams' time frame for the formation of a narrative identity is reflective of this challenge because, compared to the actor and the agent, the author can take a lifetime to write a cohesive narrative. The first two stages of development--the actor and agent--happen during childhood and adolescence, while a narrative identity is formed from adulthood until death. Narrative identity is so difficult to form that it is common for people to feel like their stories are not over when they face death, like they have not lived their life fully enough yet to feel like the meaning of their story is where they want it to be.

For people who feel that their story is unfinished when they die, psychologists do not have much to say; they do not study what happens to a life that ends unfulfilled or to narrative identity after someone dies. Psychology provides useful information for the living, even coping strategies for those about to die and grieving processes for the people they leave behind, but it does not aim to help anyone after death. Its understanding of narrative identity and the meaning built over a lifetime ends with death. There is no further contemplation of what one's life means after it is over.

But how can an entire life's worth of meaningful stories and narrative identity simply cease to exist? When faced with the death of others, especially of loved ones, the living are left with the products--memories, artifacts, stories--that were left behind and carry on past death.

These products remind us of the dead because they were formed with and by them. Why do we not simply forget about the individual? Examining that which keeps us holding onto the memories of the dead might reveal whether or not death is absolute, marking the end of all aspects of ourselves. Our desire to interact with the dead suggests that there is some kind of existence beyond death. If there is, how can we expect to capture the identity and tell the story of an individual without including the pieces of his story that occur after death?

## 10. Dying: Does it end the story?

Perhaps, we must move beyond psychology in order to explore the meaning of life after death. For as long as we have had sentience, humans have philosophized the abstract concept of the afterlife. It is our awareness that we are alive and exist in the world, which we interact with through our senses, our consciousness, that gives us the capacity to contemplate the meaning of life. This thought exercise requires people to be aware of their own existence in time so that they can understand that the world existed before and will exist after them; it allows people to think about how and why their own lives fit into a universe that is so temporally infinite. We exercise awareness in this way so much more than any other being that we humans are largely characterized by our drive and ability to conceptualize life.

Hannah Arendt was a theorist who sought to shed light on our awareness that we are alive in an unchanging world by analyzing the nature of politics and human activity. By contemplating philosophical and moral concepts, she is able to discuss more than psychological analysis of the living and can address what it means to be human. In her *The Human Condition*, Arendt is concerned with “general condition of human existence” (Arendt, 8): the fact that all of us are born and all of us die. Men are “conditioned beings because everything they come in contact with turns immediately into a condition of their existence” (Arendt, 9). Arendt asserts that the world will not be the same after your individual existence because you interacted with it, affected it, and the existence or state of something somewhere owes itself to you. For instance, if you break a rock, the pebbles that it forms would not exist without you. Since all humans share the quality of being unique--everyone in the past, present, and future is different--and have an ability



to affect the world in permanent ways, the world is constantly being interacted with and changed by humanity.

Although there are unintentional ways we automatically affect the world in which we live, humans also intentionally affect the world. Arendt asserts that we affect the world in ways that can sometimes leave permanent “human markers” (Arendt, 9). Through this permanence, in a way, we attempt to live forever by creating material objects and written ideas that exist more concretely in the world than we do. We produce “works and deeds and words,” so that, “[us] mortals could find their place in the cosmos where everything is immortal except themselves” (Arendt, 19). When we write a book or do something that others see and remember, we are potentially creating things, ideas and actions, whose effects will exist after we die. The idea is that these things have the “ability to leave nonperishable traces behind” (Arendt, 20). If the things we create can exist beyond death, then, we gain some immortality with it because those things can be traced back to their origin, where we created them, “The philosopher's experience of the eternal...can occur only outside the realm of human affairs...[and] if to die is the same as ‘to cease to be among men,’ [the] experience of the eternal is a kind of death” (Arendt, 20). Since the physical world around us, space itself even, existed long before us and will continue to exist long after us, the only way we can make a permanent mark on this world is to create things by interacting with pieces of the world itself. For the sake of our immortality, we can only hope that these pieces remain changed so that they continue to reflect our existence.

Arendt then claims that the mere desire to be immortal is how we as humans have separated ourselves from animals, which are too concerned with their daily survival to contemplate life after death. We are masters of our own survival and do not have to waste our

time worrying about our survival in *survival of the fittest* way that animals do. For humans, “only the best...[those] who ‘prefer immortal fame to mortal things,’ are really human” (Arendt, 19). That is why we write things down--not for the future of ourselves, but for the future of humankind, who we have no and will never have any knowledge of. Thus, it is a challenging notion that we are defined as humans prominently by both the fact that we die and that we desire to live forever. Not only do we face the challenge of creating a story over the course of our lives, but we also must grapple with the fact that at the end of each story we all die. As I asked earlier when we left our discussion of psychology and moved to philosophy, are we also then to accept that our stories and what they mean die along with us? If the story continues to be told and changed by interacting with people in the future, no. This interaction allows ideas to be thought about for as long as there are people who are interested in and able to think about them; in a way it makes it possible for our ideas to last past our death, gaining a kind of immortality. If our ideas are immortal, then, can we be in some way immortal? Arendt says, “Contemplation is the word given to the experience of the eternal” (Arendt, 20).

If my grandfather was looking to build a meaningful life narrative in a way that his schizophrenia would not allow, the question of whether or not he was successful is both simple and complex. On one hand, with Arendt’s notion of immortality through contemplation, he was successful because we are discussing his writings currently. Even if only through me, his thoughts went on past his life to interact with the world. Because his existence altered who I am, and I have an impact on other people, my grandfather has had an indirect influence on all the people I have influenced. The wave of influence continues outward like the ripple effect when something falls into still water. On the other hand, the reason he wanted to establish a meaningful

life in the first place is because the diagnosis of schizophrenia dismantled his self continuity. Since he never reestablished a sense of continuity and rebuilt relationships, it is difficult to see success. As Arendt discusses, someone can reach a level of immortality if his ideas continue to be thought about and, by doing this, my grandfather could have actually grasped immortality through the things he produced. The implications of reaching immortality would be tremendous: after all the obstacles he faced due to his mental illness, many having to do with the ways people saw him as abnormal, a person diagnosed with schizophrenia would have earned the defining trait of what it means to be human, despite the dehumanizing consequences of that diagnosis.

But was this kind of immortality something he would have even wanted? Considering all the aspects of the world - types of slavery, treatment of the mentally ill, understandings of sex and religion - with which he clearly had problems and disagreed, would he have wanted his ideas to exist in that kind of place? Since he wanted to change the conditions of our world with his campaign, perhaps immortality would only be satisfying to him if his ideas that live on change people in the way he initially intended them to. As with McAdams' narrative identity, he wanted to give meaning to his life with the condition that this meaning affect the way people think. This meaning and immortality, to him, would only be relevant if they mattered enough to other people for them to change themselves. I understand why he would only want to be remembered if his remembered ideas actively influence the issues he addressed. People who are passionate about being remembered are usually equally as passionate about the way they are remembered. They might want their immortality to actually resemble the work they did to become immortal. Considering that immortality might not always be desirable, Arendt's notion of immortality as an absolute goal of humanity might need more clarity. Humans are not just defined by their desire to

be immortal but also by their desire to affect others with what they have learned from their own experiences. Thus, I believe that humans can be characterized not only by their desire to be remembered in eternity but by doing this through building meaningfully influential stories with their lives which teach others the lessons that they learned.

## 11. Life in the Face of Death

From early on, over a decade before he was diagnosed with schizophrenia, my grandfather seemed to be preoccupied with people who were facing death. As a college student he wrote an entry called “And the Lord Came By” in the school’s journal, *The Holy Cross Purple*. In the beginning of this descriptive story, he set the scene: he and his friends are going out to an island for a vacation weekend, the seagulls flying overhead and waves crashing into the shore. On a normal day, this beach would rest his mind from the stresses of his life at home, “only myself, the wind, and the sea.” However, this isolation only gave him the freedom to think about a boy who recently drowned in the pool where he was a lifeguard, something that he would not normally think about back home in the busy city. He made a point to repeat that these thoughts come from the isolation of there just being “myself, the wind, and the sea.” The night sky around him was ominous and the docked boats in the shadows looked like “black sea monsters.” As he stood on the beach during this quiet night, he kept reliving the moment of the child dying. After pausing his stressful thoughts with a quick anecdote about how the guards would “hunt” the mosquitos and reminiscing about “some of the prettiest counselors I have ever seen,” he decided to dive into the story of how the child drowned. On a hot summer’s day, a lifeguard named Pete noticed a child floating face down in a restricted part of the pool. Pete apparently moved so fast to the scene that “he didn’t notice the number of people he had knocked over” on his way. In a heart-pounding description, he explained how the startled lifeguards struggled to get the boy to breathe with rescue breaths. Although he had a pulse, it was getting weaker by the second. When the doctors came and gave the boy a shot of adrenaline, there was no reaction so they all thought the boy would die. Most of the first responders gave up at this

point, “but Pete would not give up.” Pete hooked the boy up to new machines, but his efforts were futile. At the end, there was a mixture of blood, sweat, and “a tear or two” all over the boy and Pete. Through all the commotion of people frantically running around and Pete trying everything he could think of, my grandfather accepted the hard truth that the boy was dead and decided to focus his efforts on getting the boy a priest. Since the boy was Jewish though, they ended up getting a rabbi. Suddenly, my grandfather snapped out of his flashback. In this moment, he realized that he should have baptized the child because this would have, in a way, saved him. “It happened so quickly and was so final.”

This story shows that my grandfather was troubled by the notion of death from an early age. Since he cannot stop thinking about the dead child, even in the place where he feels the most peace, the boy’s death clearly disturbed him. Perhaps, he looked to religion to save the boy because, in his eyes, baptism could be the difference between going to heaven or hell. Regardless, from this story, it is clear that he believed that there is life after death. His resistance to the young boy dying without an opportunity to become eternal indicates that he valued the idea of life after death. In respect to Arendt’s idea that contemplation allows for the eternal, maybe my grandfather allowed the boy to live in eternity by writing about him. Since his story is still being told and interpreted, the memory of the boy might live on. The power of storytelling, however, cannot possibly be in the hands of the boy because he died before he could tell his story. Because my grandfather is the one who wrote his story down, it seems as though the narration of the boy is under his authority. Despite the fact that my grandfather is dead, as long as the written account remains, he will essentially remain telling the boy’s story.

Later in his life, in a section of *The Freedom Manifesto* titled “The Creation Sermon and Escort Service List,” my grandfather addressed again this dilemma of life faced with death. The sermon and list were meant to allow people to fulfill their desires and, thus, decrease “divorce, rape, and cheating.” Underneath the words “ESCORTS MAKE BIG MONEY! BIG MONEY!” three columns with about 8 phone numbers each break up the page. I assume they are the phone numbers of the escorts to which he is referring people. Below this is the “Bishop’s Sermon” about creation and life. It is brief but he tried to get across the idea that man’s “greatest power is to create life,” and that we do not understand “birth, growth, or the soul (spirit).” This notion of reproduction and new life is juxtaposed with a contemplation of death. He asked if all beings that reproduce, human and nonhuman, go to their own heavens or if they are all grouped in the same heaven when they die. In the middle of the page, he said that the “compilation” of the materials will be sent to anyone who pays him a monthly donation, and then lists his address. This also includes a monthly blessing, below which he said, “Actions speak louder than words...sexual ritual (any kind) is the supreme prayer to the great God.”

If this document was not raunchy enough with a list of prostitutes, he made it so with that last line about sexual rituals. And somehow he expected this to be “for daily distribution.” These ideas would leave people speechless if they saw them being passed out next to newspapers or the like. They probably wouldn’t understand what he was saying, or even give themselves a chance to. However, if we get past the initial shock that a piece like this might bring us, we can see that he raises powerful questions about the persistence of life, through reproduction, in the face of death. He says that we do not understand the reality of the soul and we really do not. We do not know if and how the soul exists during life, let alone after death. Unlike the unspoken way

he resisted death in “And the Lord Came By,” here he articulated a way that death can be combatted, that is, by making new life. Reproducing is one of the primary biological functions of any organism because it promotes the future of life. Since God created life in the first place, perhaps sex is a prayer, according to my grandfather, and reproducing continues that which God started--creating life.

My grandfather’s more nuanced approach in “The Creation Sermon and Escort Service List” to handling situations when life is faced with death was based in a fuller understanding of what life is, how it is based in reproduction and creation, and thus, of what it could possibly mean to save life, or at least to help it persist. Contrarily, if sex is so closely linked to life, then it is equally connected to death. As Arendt pointed out, each life that is put together will eventually fall apart. Everything that lives also dies. Without life there could be no death and without death there could be no life, at least as we know it, because we would no longer need to or have the resources to reproduce - there would be too many people. Despite the necessity of both death and reproduction, people do not see each in the same light. People tend to fear death and desire sex, equating death with sadness and sex with pleasure. How then can we better understand the relationship between reproduction and death as it exists in people’s lives? Further, how can we have the freedom to determine our own identities if such important aspects of ourselves--who we are when we die and the sexuality we exhibit when we are alive--cannot be engaged with each other?

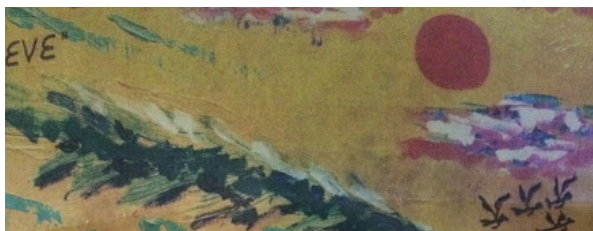
Psychologist Jamie Goldenberg (2005) in her article *The Body Stripped Down: An Existential Account of the Threat Posed by the Physical Body*, explores problems that arise from the interaction between sex and death in our lives. She poses the idea that people tend to deny



themselves physical pleasures and repress their sexuality because “existential concerns associated with human awareness that the physical body is the vehicle through which life passes unto death...present a threat [of mortality] that humans can defend against by raising themselves above mere animal (and thus mortal) existence” (Goldenberg, 2005). Here, the interconnectedness between life and death come into play and affects the way people interact during reproduction. In other words, if you wish to be in the mood for sex, contemplating death is going to pose some challenges. Terror management theory (Greenberg et al., 1986) says that this awareness of death is unconscious and, thus, is difficult to manage. In response to this fear, also unconsciously, people have become obsessed with the notion of living after death.

Similar to Arendt, Goldenberg highlights that fear of death is how people are reminded of their similarity to animals, in that, all animals can die. Thus, our mortality reminds us that we are in an ongoing fight to give meaning to our lives by influencing the world. Unlike my grandfather for whom reproduction was the way for him to understand, explain, and see life in the face of death, Goldenberg shows us that reproduction can also remind us of death by reminding us of our physical, mortal bodies. If sex is both a way to see life in death and a reminder that death exists all around us, can reproduction add any meaning to our narrative lives or does this paradox render its net worth to zero?

Regardless of whether or not it added meaning to his life, my grandfather seemed to be interested in sex, in an unapologetically raw fashion. Throughout his life, he went through phases where he would embrace his inner artist (sometimes quite literally with a pseudonym for his artist self). Many of the paintings he created during these times depicted nudity in a very bold sense. In his “Eve” (Figure 4.), he approached a taboo by combining open sexuality and religion.



The base coat on the canvas was the color of the sunset that has a deep orangey yellow light. The images on top of this background take a large amount of space and draw attention. Large blotches of brush strokes make up clouds. There is a deep orange sun in the top right--a perfect circle. The clouds near the sun are red, blue, and white. Although none of the color blotches mix, the clouds put me in an awe similar to when I see the beauty of a real sunset, during which the clouds have perfectly blended colors. Directly underneath these clouds, a small flock of birds flies toward the edge of the painting. They seem to be far away from the front of the painting because they are only depicted as black silhouettes. The cloud furthest from the sun and closest to the viewer is darker, consisting of dark blue, green, and white blotches. This sky is a beautiful sunset.

*Figure 4.* In 1993, my grandfather painted this oil on canvas that he called "Eve"

Below the sky, a perky apple sits amongst the grass. Tens of small blotches--red, black, green, white--come together to make this grass. With the red, it seems like the grass is reflecting much of the sunset's light. The apple is perfectly symmetrical with a small bottom and wide, juicy top. It is only a tinge more red than the setting sun. Two leaves remain sprouting from the top and, between them, a thick stem stands erect. Among this picturesque and seemingly innocent scene, to the left of the apple, going almost surprisingly unnoticed, a pair of breasts point to the ground. They seem pointed because they are so straight and unnatural, appearing to be disembodied. They have a pink outline and are mostly dark, as they exist in the shadow of the sun. The nipples are large and stiff, and reflect the red of the sunset like the grass.

Once I noticed the breasts, as opposed to the innocent and simple image of an apple in a field, the piece took on a sexual tone. Since the breasts sit on the side of the painting, they do not

jump out as the focal point of the piece. Rather, it seems like the focal point should be the apple, which sits in the middle of the painting, that probably represents the forbidden fruit that Eve ate in the Old Testament. Adam told Eve that God did not want them to eat any fruit from the specific tree where the forbidden fruit, like the apple, grew. As is a common phenomenon when someone is told not to do something, this act of telling Eve not to eat the fruit could have tempted her to do so. In the Bible, this temptation is represented by the devil who persuades Eve to eat the forbidden fruit and commit the first sin of humanity by disobeying God. The story of Eve is also part of the story of creation.

If Eve's is a story of creation, it is possible that with the painting "Eve" my grandfather incorporated her breasts to symbolize reproduction. This would mean that not only sexuality, as noted in the "Creation Sermon and Escort Service List," was a means of facing death but, more specifically, the power of sexuality to end in reproduction is a way to combat the fear of death with life. Breasts can be seen sexually, as an erotic component to sex as a pleasurable activity rather than merely a means to reproduce. Breasts are also a sign of young life. When breasts have enlarged nipples, like the ones in the painting, a mother probably recently had a child, so that she can easily feed her baby. The breasts could reinforce the connection between sexuality, reproduction, and life. Sexuality is where creation and life begins. This piece is about sexuality, reproduction, and creation rather than death. Unlike the "Creation Sermon and Escort Service List," and "And the Lord Came By," "Eve" is a painting about life and the necessary way sexuality is part of life.

In "And the Lord Came By," my grandfather took a dead boy's story and gave it meaning by incorporating it into his own life. Their stories will be forever intertwined because one will

always be the boy who died and the other will always be the man who told the boy's story. In this way, their identities are also enmeshed. Although telling his story gave the dead boy some level of immortality, this does not address how the living deal with the notion of their own eventual death. Since my grandfather was obsessed with changing the dialogue around mental illness and identity, intrinsic in his fear of death was probably a fear that one day death would render him unable to do this meaningful work, to tell his story. The urgency with which he made *The Freedom Manifesto*, then, suggests that he wanted to make sure that he could reach his goals, finish telling the story, before he died. Quite possibly, however, in middle adulthood, he saw a more imminent death--the death of his intellectual abilities due to schizophrenia. Despite the fact that he wanted others to respect his intellect, it is possible that consistent doubt surrounding his intellect took a toll, making him consider that he might not be always able to think intellectually. This would explain why he committed so decisively to a narrative identity as a politician. His roles as a family man and friend took a backseat to his political career. Since he did not feel like he had much time, he had to pick one identity and develop it as much as he could.

Sexual paintings like this made people like my grandmother cringe. She and the family would hide any of his paintings that exposed what they deemed too much skin. They did not think that the level of sexuality was appropriate, especially around their family. This did not stop my grandfather though and, perhaps, for good reason. He seemed to want people to act more sexually because, as was a common theme in the letters he wrote, he said that people are afraid to act sexually. He seemed to fantasize about having sex with women, sometimes offering himself up to them after mentioning that he has a wife. In one letter he made the case that he should be allowed to cheat on his wife because, he claims, Moses had over 500 wives.

Throughout my grandfather's documents that deal with sexuality, it becomes apparent that he wanted to experience more sexuality than he was able to. His erotic tone in "Eve" and the "Creation Sermon and Escort Service List" reinforce this idea that he wanted to combat thoughts of death with the sexuality of life. His inability to participate in this sexuality, however, reveals another way his identity and story were limited, for he would have wanted more sex, more connection with other humans, to be part of his life. His sexual frustrations caused him to take on a prescriptive tone that people should be more sexual. Perhaps, he thought that if his change works and people will generally be more sexual, he will be included in the expanded version of sexuality.

Similar to the way he wanted to break free from the repressive norms surrounding mental well-being, my grandfather used "Eve" and the "Creation Sermon and Escort Service List" to normalize sexuality and free our natural sexual urges from being oppressed. Throughout all his works, he tried to break down norms that repress our natural states of being. He wanted people to have the freedom to live their own lives, to express themselves in an unlimited amount of ways. With this freedom, people can tell a story about themselves that truly represents who they are.

## 12. Implications & Future Research: The Meaning of This Story

I began this project with an unconventionally simple, yet innately human, desire to better understand my family roots, particularly, those that connect me to my grandfather. Additionally, as an undergraduate studying psychology, I wanted to understand how a mental illness like my grandfather's schizophrenia could impact one's sense of self. Combining my interests, I sought to learn about my deceased grandfather. Since I was born toward the end of his life, at which point his paranoid schizophrenia had largely hijacked his mind, I remember him as a deranged grandfather—quacking like duck, drawing on everything he owned, wearing heavy jackets in the summer. As I grew into adulthood, I began to question those memories, realizing that I only knew him at a stage in his illness that did not reflect the person he was throughout most of his life. Feeding my curiosity, the artifacts he left behind and the stories my grandmother had to tell presented me an opportunity to study my grandfather, to enhance a personal relationship, and to explore my interest in researching mental illness.

Like his friends and family, I judged my grandfather harshly when I first heard the story of “the incident.” It was only by reflecting on my grandmother's forgiving response to his actions--attempting to murder her--that I was willing to seek further understanding of his condition. The way I and those around him initially judged “the incident,” dismissing him as a bad man, strengthened the repressive norms and stigmas that surround schizophrenia--limiting his possible identities and forms of selfhood. In order to protect his identity from being limited to the negative forms that these norms suggested, he contested their source, his diagnosis of schizophrenia, by retelling his story and creating new selves: a politician, an artist, a bishop, a writer, and a therapist. Understanding how and why he forged these alternative identities reveals

how we might attempt to make sense of the complexity of the lives of those struggling with mental illness; it suggests that people with mental illness might want to be understood differently and that they care enough about changing others' perceptions of themselves that they are willing to redefine their own selfhood. If we acknowledge their intense urge to not be defined by their mental illness, we might be encouraged to fight our tendency to see people through the lens of their afflictions and be pushed to inquire into the ways that they would each prefer to be perceived. Though there are no guidelines for conducting this dynamic interaction of self definition, the idea that the self is defined by an individual and those around him or her makes it apparent that the self is a part of something larger than itself. If defining selfhood is a process that takes input from multiple sources, selfhood seems to be something much more interactive with the world than we might previously have thought, more interactive than current psychological theories of selfhood development might have taken into account. Applied to current theories of self development, which claim that people attempt to give meaning to their lives by creating a life narrative, it is clear that the meaning of a story is not implicit in the story itself. Rather, since a story is the medium through which the dynamic interaction of self definition takes place, the meaning of a story comes from the way it interacts with others. Thusly, through stories—telling others our stories, integrating others into our stories, and listening to others' stories—we are shaped in a process of self definition that occurs throughout our lives as our stories become more complex, changing us and those around us.

The way my grandfather's many dynamic identities interacted with the world is captured in his artifacts. At the forefront, his *Freedom Manifesto* contains his core philosophies and represents a large portion of his life's work, that is, to influence people's lives as a politician.

Other artifacts like his paintings show that he wanted to connect with others as an artist. Some of his artifacts and the identities they represent can be seen as symptoms of his illness, leading us to believe that they were coping mechanisms (e.g., through art he gained a sense of agency). In contrast, contemporary research suggests that his multiple identities might have been a result of the stage in life that he was in and not a response to his schizophrenia. This view suggests that the identities helped shape his own and others' perception of him as a man with a meaningful story, a narrative identity. For instance, his attempt to create an alternative form of therapy might have been a way to give meaning to his own unsavory experiences with therapy for his schizophrenia. Perhaps, by developing a form of therapy that helps improve the lives of others in a similar situation, the meaningful story he attempted to create was that of a man who used his own negative experiences to help others. In this way, his negative experiences could be seen as something positive in the long run.

Although others' perceptions and his own understanding of this narrative identity might have differed drastically, there is no doubt that these artifacts, the evidence of that which he accomplished throughout his life, are vital to understanding Pasquale Muccigrosso. Given that most of his family and friends, let alone doctors and caretakers, did not know or care to know about these important aspects of his identity, I wonder how they could accurately know what he needed from them or what they could expect from him. My grandfather's experiences and current research in the field of narrative medicine suggest that this narrative knowledge is necessary for caring for patients most effectively. For, how can physicians and medical practitioners hope to provide effective and holistic care for someone who they do not know in the vital way that we now know my grandfather? I believe that this lack of understanding impedes



the doctor-patient relationship, rendering such a complex relationship to a simple idea: A healing physician trying to fix a broken patient.

In contrast to this limited relationship, research today in narrative medicine and the psychological study of schizophrenia suggests that physicians and experts will continue to give improper treatment and care to patients with life-long mental illnesses, like schizophrenia, if they keep solely focusing on helping the patient to fix or get rid of the disease, implying that a life can only be enjoyed despite a mental illness rather than alongside it. My grandfather's therapy model, like the recovery model (Mueser, 2013), suggests that therapy should focus on the best ways to help an individual practically live with schizophrenia. This would require a physician not only knowing the general problems associated with schizophrenia, but it would also require an understanding of the ways schizophrenia impacts a specific life. If the best way for the physician to gain this understanding is through storytelling, the act of telling a story and the way medical practitioners listen to a story are two vital parts of the process. Since the therapeutic process must be based in sound science, I believe that researchers must develop some kind of robust and standardized guide to storytelling so that it can be integrated into the science of therapy, so that the methodologies can be developed and tested over time into something that can powerfully impact the lives of the neurologically impaired.

For my grandfather, the ability to tell his own story and to have it be heard objectively was not only necessary for the treatment of his schizophrenia but also what he thought was necessary for people to exercise the basic human right of freedom. The power to tell one's own story might not be possible in the same way that it might not be possible for someone to hear a story with complete objectivity. There will always be pieces of information that are

misinterpreted because communication is not a perfect form of transferring ideas from one person to another. The fact that this process happens is out of anyone's control, but the way one chooses to integrate the communicated pieces of him or herself into the self that he or she presents to the world is where true individuality and freedom are formed.

## Works Cited

- Arendt, H. (1958). *The Human Condition*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago.
- Bandura, A. (2001). Social cognitive theory of mass communication. *Media Effects: Advances in Theory and Research*, 3(3), 265-299. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1207/S1532785XMEP0303\\_03](http://dx.doi.org/10.1207/S1532785XMEP0303_03)
- Bandura, A. (1986). *Social Foundations of Thought and Action: A Social Cognitive Theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Baumeister, R. (2008). Free Will in Scientific Psychology. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 3(1), 14-19. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40212223>
- Baumeister, R., Campbell, J., Krueger, J., & Vohs, K. (2003). Does High Self-Esteem Cause Better Performance, Interpersonal Success, Happiness, or Healthier Lifestyles? *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, 4(1), 1-44. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40062291>
- Butler, J. (2005). *Giving an Account of Oneself*. New York, NY: Fordham UP.
- Cervone, D. (2004). The Architecture of Personality. *Psychological Review*, 111(1), 183-204. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0033-295X.111.1.183>
- Charon, R. (2001) A Model for Empathy, Reflection, Profession and Trust. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 286(15), 1897-1902.
- Cronk, L. (2016). Culture's Influence on Behavior: Steps Toward a Theory. *Evolutionary Behavioral Sciences*. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/ebs0000069>
- Frank, D. M., & Davidson, L. (2014). The central role of self-esteem for persons with psychosis. *The Humanistic Psychologist*, 42(1), 24-34. doi:10.1080/08873267.2013.771531
- Frith, C. D. (1992). *The cognitive neuropsychology of schizophrenia*. Hove, UK: Psychology

Press

Gerrans, P. (2015). The feeling of thinking: Sense of agency in delusions of thought insertion.

*Psychology Of Consciousness: Theory, Research, And Practice*, 2(3), 291-300.

doi:10.1037/cns0000060

Goldenberg, J. (2005). The Body Stripped down: An Existential Account of the Threat Posed by

the Physical Body. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 14(4), 224-228.

Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20183029>

Greenberg, J., Pyszczynski, T. & Solomon, S. (1986). *The causes and consequences of a need*

*for self-esteem: A terror management theory*. New York, NY: Springer-Verlag.

Hayes, S., Wilson, K. (1996). Experiential Avoidance and Behavioral Disorders: A Functional

Dimensional Approach to Diagnosis and Treatment. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical*

*Psychology*, 64(6), 1152-1168. Retrieved from

[https://www.actmindfully.com.au/upimages/experiential\\_avoidance.pdf](https://www.actmindfully.com.au/upimages/experiential_avoidance.pdf)

Hooley, J. (2010). Social Factors in Schizophrenia. *Current Directions in Psychological*

*Science*, 19(4), 238-242. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41038577>

Hovland, Carl I., Janis, Irving L., Kelley, Harold H. (1953). Communication and persuasion;

psychological studies of opinion change. New Haven, CT, US: Yale University Press.

Jeannerod, M. (2002). The mechanism of self-recognition in humans. *Behavioral Brain*

*Research*, 142, 1-15.

Karakaş, S. A., Okanlı, A., & Yılmaz, E. (2016). The effect of internalized stigma on the self

esteem in patients with schizophrenia. *Archives Of Psychiatric Nursing*, doi:10.1016/

j.apnu.2016.02.006

- Kernis, M. (2003). Toward a Conceptualization of Optimal Self-Esteem. *Psychological Inquiry*, 14(1), 1-26. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1449033>
- McAdams, D. (2013). The Psychological Self as Actor, Agent, and Author. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 8(3), 272–295. Retrieved from <http://www.pps.sagepub.com>
- McElreath, R., & Strimling, P. (2008). When natural selection favors imitation of parents. *Current Anthropology*, 49(2), 307-316. doi:10.1086/524364
- Ortony, A., Norman D., & Revelle, W. (2005). Affect and Proto-Affect in Effective Functioning. In J. M. Fellous & M. A. Arbib (Eds.), *Who Needs Emotions? The brain meets the robot* (173-202). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Premack, D. G., Woodruff, G. (1978). Does the chimpanzee have a theory of mind?. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 1(4): 515–526. doi:10.1017/S0140525X00076512.
- Shweder, R. A. (1999) Psychology: Humans Really Are Different. *Science*, 283(5403), 798-99. doi:10.1126/science.283.5403.798.
- Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (1979). An integrative theory of intergroup conflict. *The social psychology of intergroup relations?* Retrieved from [https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Jonathan\\_Turner4/publication/226768898\\_An\\_Integrative\\_Theory\\_of\\_Intergroup\\_Conflict/links/568b161508ae051f9afa8d50.pdf](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Jonathan_Turner4/publication/226768898_An_Integrative_Theory_of_Intergroup_Conflict/links/568b161508ae051f9afa8d50.pdf)
- Vohs, K.D., Baumeister, R.F., Nelson, N.M. Rwan, C.D., Twenge, J.M., Shmeichel, B.J., & Tice, D.M. (2006). *Making choices impairs subsequent self-control: A limited resource account of decision making, self-regulation, and active initiative*. Manuscript submitted for publication.
- Walker, I., and Smith, H. (2002). *Relative Deprivation: Specification, Development, and*

*Integration*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Yin, Robert K. (1994). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.