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## **“Who are you?” Posters Intended to Stir Thought**

**By Andrew Thompson**

Is anger a suppressed or silenced emotion on Haverford’s campus? That is the question Jules Burnstein ’09 is attempting to answer with the “Who are you?” posters she placed in various high-profile locations on campus, including in the first floor of the Campus Center, Lunt basement, some bathrooms in Stokes, and near various carrels in Magill, Zubrow Commons, and other locations in the Integrated National Science Center.

The posters themselves are very simple in design. They ask three questions: Who are you? What are you angry about? What are you going to do about it? There is a pen attached to each one, and wide expanse of space under each question to write a response.

“They’re part of a semester-long project I’m doing for an English class,” said Burnstein. The course, “Arts of the Possible: Literature and Social Justice Movements,” is taught by Haverford Assistant Professor of English Theresa Tensuan.

“[In the class,] we look at literature and art by social justice activists,” Burnstein said. “[It is common for] art to break a silence.”

Burnstein said that although anger seems to come out on the GO! Boards, “On this campus, [I feel] there is no real place for outrage... Is there a silence? Where is it?”

Burnstein explained that she was thinking about doing her project on prisons, but wanted to do something closer to home.

“I was inspired by the graffiti on some of the carrels in Magill... I was writing a paper and saw there was anger there,” she said.

Several students that were interviewed did not know about the posters at all. When asked whether or not he thought anger was suppressed on campus, James Lee ’12 said, “That’s true everywhere, not just Haverford. It’s also normal.”

Sarina Schwartz ’11 did know about the posters.

“People everywhere, not just at Haverford, suppress anger,” she said.

Kevin Thornton ’12 said he was indifferent towards the posters.

“Anger probably is suppressed [on campus]. But people express themselves in different ways, whether it’s talking, punching bags, whatever,” he said.

A Haverford sophomore who wished to remain anonymous said, “I feel like people feel they have to be politically correct. In classes where a professor asks a controversial question, there’s an awkward silence. People can’t fully express themselves.”

“[The posters are] interesting,” said Jen Zelnick ’12. “I don’t know if they’re productive, but they get you thinking about things.”

“I think what people write on them is funny,” said Marcus Williams ’12. “There’s one that says, ‘Who are you? Your Mom. What are you angry about? Your grades!’”

When told about the project and why Burnstein put them up, Williams continued, “Unfortunately, people write mostly stupid stuff. It doesn’t look like [the responses] will help her that much with the project.”

Burnstein had no idea what to expect from the responses.

“I love hearing the voices of my classmates. There’s lots of creativity there,” she said.

She discovered that the nature of the responses was different depending on the location of the poster.

“In a more private space, such as a bathroom, the responses are more serious and less satirical,” Burnstein said.

Burnstein has not yet decided what her project was going to end up as, but she has thought about “doing something visible with all the posters on campus.” However, she said that she didn’t necessarily want the posters to have a lasting effect.

“I want people to think of anger as a legitimate emotion. There’s a lot of energy that can be used productively,” she explained. “The whole point is to make anger something to think about.”

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