

**Unhappy Solutions: Enduring the Cycle of Institutional Violence
From 1972 to the Bi-Co Strike**

Kylie Woo

Submitted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Bachelor of Arts in
Philosophy

First Reader: Professor Qrescent Mali Mason
Second Reader: Professor Jerry Miller

Haverford College Department of Philosophy 7 May 2021

Abstract

Walter Benjamin highlights two kinds of violence, mythic and divine, in his *Critique of Violence*, which sets up a foundation to further explore how linear temporality affects our recognition of violence. Looking at the insurmountable violence that people of color have endured over the past year, from COVID-19 Asian hate-crimes to the murders of Black, unarmed men and women, this thesis explores how we recognize and solve violence according to a linear temporality. However, I argue that this systemic and institutional violence is actually a cycle that must be solved with non-linear solutions, since violence can only recognize itself, an idea stemming from Frantz Fanon. Inspired by Sarah Ahmed, I argue that unhappiness is a non-linear solution that might help to recognize violence as a cycle, therefore alleviate it accordingly. The Bi-Co Strike serves as a personal and philosophical example of how institutional violence is a cycle, as the 1972 Strike at Haverford College highlights the repetitive nature of violence demonstrating that linear solutions do not work. This thesis is an acknowledgement of my own frustration, confusion, and complicity in orienting myself towards the future and towards happiness. This thesis is not a critique of the legal system and the violence that we have endured over the past year, but is a critique of our orientation towards order, towards clarity, to change, and (un)happiness.

Acknowledgements

My first shout out goes to Professor Qrescent Mali Mason who has guided me, pushed me, and laughed with me during this process. Thank you for your philosophy, your words, your critiques, your questions (and not answers). You have taught me so much. Thank you for being you.

I would like to thank Professor Jerry Miller for indulging me with his secrets about the classroom and pushing me out of my comfort zone. Thank you for your words and your wisdom.

This project would not have been even conceived if I did not stumble upon Professor Joel Yurdin's intro class my freshman year. Your warm welcome to philosophy, your guidance, and your belief in me has helped me grow as an academic and achieve something that once seemed so ancient and untouchable. Thank you Joel for your continuous support and kindness.

I am incredibly lucky to have two roommates to listen to me ramble each time I talk about philosophy. Thank you for listening to me and being the best friends in college I had always hoped to have. And, to my Hell Family, thank you for always reminding me that my hell weeks will always end in flower days. Thank you for supporting and loving me during some of the hardest moments of my life.

A very special thank you to my mom and dad who have always stood by my side, given me so many wonderful opportunities, and continue to show me unconditional love. I love you!

Lastly, I want to acknowledge the woman I am writing this thesis to. To the girl who had no idea what philosophy was and couldn't ever imagine writing a thesis. You did it!

This thesis is dedicated to #18. I love you forever, and I miss you.

Table of Contents

I.	Introduction.....	4
II.	First Recognition: Walter Benjamin’s Mythic & Divine Violence.....	6
	A. Critique of Benjamin’s Violence.....	9
III.	Linear Temporality.....	10
	A. Linear Institutions.....	12
	B. The Bi-Co Strike Part I: When We Think It’s Linear.....	13
IV.	The Cycle of Violence.....	18
	A. 1972 Strike- Nothing New.....	18
	B. The Bi-Co Strike Part II: Cycle of Violence.....	19
V.	The Tension, The Snaps, The Violence, Oh My!.....	23
VI.	Non-Linear Solutions.....	26
	A. Violence Only Knows Violence.....	27
	B. Critique of the Self.....	29
	C. Unhappiness, The Good Life.	30
VII.	Conclusion.....	33

Introduction

Three years ago, I was asked my first ever philosophical question: ‘What makes you happy?’¹ A seemingly simple answer really, yet philosophers have written thousands of pages arguing this idea. How to achieve ‘the good life?’ How does one be happy in the right way? Studying philosophy, I thought I had at least some of it figured out, balancing morality with pleasure. I became committed to happiness. A little over a year ago, the ways I had found happiness had been interrupted by violence.

When the Corona Virus hit America, Asian-Americans were attacked and blamed for spreading the “Chinese virus.”² Shortly after starting quarantine, Ahmaud Arbery, a Black man, was murdered while jogging in a neighborhood. Then, George Floyd, another Black man, was murdered on the street by police. I could continue listing these acts of violence, as so many more people have violently died by the hands of the state, but we have already been traumatized enough. The point is that this violence replaced my happiness with frustration and anger.

Furthering the interruption to my happiness, Bryn Mawr and Haverford Colleges both held a student-lead Strike that lasted about three weeks in the Fall 2020 semester. It was a period where BIPOC³ students discussed their experiences of discrimination on campus where students did not participate in extracurricular activities, attend class, whether online or virtual, and found other ways to eat that did not rely on the labor of the dining hall staff. The goal of the Strike was to upset how the institutions functioned as they relied heavily on BIPOC and FGLI⁴ labor without recognition or compensation. The objective was to be disruptive- and it was. The Strike exposed the unhappiness that these institutions were causing and forced students to realize that

¹ Ever so thankful to Professor Yurdin for introducing me to the world of philosophy.

² As so eloquently named by former President Donald Trump.

³ Black, Indigenous, and People of Color

⁴ First Generation Low Income

their happiness might be at the disposal of their peers'. The Bi-Co Strike revealed the institutional violence that BIPOC students have been enduring for years.

These events have motivated me to explore the relationship between violence and temporality in an institution. Specifically, the Bi-Co Strike presents an opportunity to philosophically examine the institutional violence and solutions that had impacted my happiness, my peers, and my college. Witnessing violence that I have read about in history books, it has frustrated me that we continue to demand the same solutions in the same ways. The Bi-Co Strike is not the first student-lead strike against administration, as Black and Puerto Rican students led a Strike in 1972 at Haverford College. In this parallel, it seems to be the case that institutional violence can operate in a cyclical pattern even though our institutions and life are structured around a linearity. This cycle of institutional violence continues because we have misrecognized it as a linear phenomena that is resolved with linear-based solutions, such as substitution of power and using the past to make decisions in the future. In being frustrated with my own complicity in this cycle, I argue that institutional violence needs to be recognized as cyclical, then solved with non-linear solutions. Learning from myself, I propose remaining unhappy, as unhappiness allows us to pause in time and address the cause of the unhappiness, whereas happiness preserves linearity and the institution that produces violence. Recognizing that violence is not linear will allow us to realize that we need to reevaluate our orientation towards the future and happiness, our conceptions of violence, and how we demand there be change. It is essential that we make this conceptual adjustment to avoid further enduring of violence, burn-out, and prolonging the time for transformation.

Beginning with a broad account of the relationship between the law and violence, I use Walter Benjamin's *Critique of Violence* to establish a foundation to distinguish between

law-preserving and law-destroying violence. Benjamin's critique is a starting point as he does not discuss how temporality affects these kinds of violence. After this explanation, I move on to explain linear temporality, its role in legal systems, and how this influences our conception of violence. To demonstrate the relationship between violence and time, I explain the Bi-Co Strike in terms of a linearity, how we understand violence to operate, and how we have attempted to alleviate this violence. To illustrate that this linear conception is misunderstood, I explain the concerns, demands, and solutions of the 1972 Strike at Haverford College, comparing it with how we *ought* to understand the Bi-Co Strike, as part of a cycle. Subsequently, I explain where our misrecognition of violence occurs, that we only recognize it when there are "snaps," or grand moments of uncovering this violence. In order to eradicate this cycle of violence, I turn to Frantz Fanon who highlights how violence can only recognize violence, proposing that we stop invoking non-violent solutions in *The Wretched of the Earth*. Finally, inspired by Sara Ahmed in, *Promise of Happiness*, I encourage committing to unhappiness, to start a non-linear reform of the self in order to make institutional transformation.

The First Recognition: Walter Benjamin's Mythic & Divine Violence

In *Critique Of Violence*, Walter Benjamin aims to answer if violence is ever justifiable to transcend injustices.⁵ He acknowledges that violence can be necessary to end other kinds of violence, but that violence is dependent on using conditions that we want to eradicate. When violence is used for a justified means, does that mean its (violent) end is also justified? Benjamin examines the relationship between law, justice, and violence, but he never proposes a solution to this paradox. Despite the lack of resolution, Benjamin defines two ways that violence in law can

⁵ Walter, Benjamin, Bullock, Marcus Paul, William Michael, Eiland Jennings, and Howard. "Critique of Violence." In *Selected Writings*, v. 1. 1913-1926, 236-252. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1996. 236.

operate, namely “mythic” and “divine violence.” The distinction between mythic and divine violence is important as it exposes how we aim to eradicate violence by making justified legal changes, but never achieving divine violence. Benjamin’s account of violence presents a framework that can be expanded upon as he does not include the role temporality in this paradox. Before expanding on his critique, it's necessary to understand Benjamin’s concepts of mythic and divine violence.

The first way that Benjamin explains violence is what he terms “mythic violence.” Mythic violence is a kind of violence that can be seen and enacted by people as well as the legal system. According to Benjamin, this violence operates outside of and within the legal system in order to keep its citizens controlled by the law while continuing the existence of the system. When violence operates outside of the legal system Benjamin terms it the “lawmaking” function of mythic violence. “[T]hat violence, when not in the hands of the law, threatens [the law] not by the ends that it may pursue but by its mere existence outside the law.”⁶ This kind of violence functions when individuals utilize violence to make their own law and order, rather than working in accordance with the legal system. Strikers and protestors are actors of lawmaking violence as they utilize violence for their individual ends, as opposed to legal ends. Strikers produce violence, in the eyes of the law, because they work against the system in order to make changes within the system. Albeit this violence operates outside of the system, according to Benjamin it is still restricted by the state to a degree. The legal system regains complete power when a new law is created or a law is changed, hence the name lawmaking.⁷ This results in the violence being brought back to function inside the legal system as something has been altered. When violence operates within the legal system, Benjamin describes this as “law-preserving.”⁸ This function

⁶ Benjamin. “Critique of Violence.” 239.

⁷ Benjamin. “Critique of Violence.” 241.

⁸ Benjamin. “Critique of Violence.” 242.

aims to preserve the laws and the performing of the legal system so it can remain in control. Law-preserving strives to keep non-legal actors, like strikers, from using violence outside of the legal system so the legal system is not undermined. "This legal system tries to erect, in all areas where individual ends could be usefully pursued by violence, legal ends that can be realized only by legal powers."⁹ The law-preserving function wants to maintain its power by only allowing changes to be made by a legal order. This enables violence to operate within the system, being controlled. These two functions are able to be actualized because they are means-to-ends. They each work to fulfill some kind of end, whether individual or legal, which results in preserving the legal system and its functions.

Benjamin contrasts mythic violence with divine violence. Divine violence is a law-destroying power, thus its end is also its mean. It is not exercised for the sake for something else because its purpose is its end.¹⁰ Unlike mythic violence that preserves and performs its function, divine violence can never be actualized because that would be its destruction. According to Benjamin, it must never be decided when to implement this type of divine violence, as it would just result in becoming mythic violence. He contrasts the two demonstrating that divine violence is a superior kind of violence, "If [mythic violence] sets boundaries, the [divine violence] boundlessly destroys them; if mythic violence brings at once guilt and retribution, divine violence only expiates; if the former is bloody, the latter is lethal without spilling blood."¹¹ Divine violence resembles the kind of violence that is needed to eradicate violence from a system and serve justice. It is a revolutionary violence in the sense that it reaches beyond the legal system in order to destroy the violence that operates within and outside of it.

⁹ Benjamin. "Critique of Violence." 238.

¹⁰ Benjamin. "Critique of Violence." 248.

¹¹ Benjamin. "Critique of Violence." 249.

Albeit, divine violence is never actualized, but is always an invisible coming.¹² Benjamin does not explain when or how divine violence can be achieved, though he believes it is necessary for transcendence.

Critique of Benjamin's Violence

Benjamin explains that mythic violence is a means-to-ends whereas divine violence is neither a means nor an end. Their distinction lies in the idea that mythic violence furthers the existence of a legal system whereas divine violence destroys it. Specifically, Benjamin highlights how mythic violence does not actually allow there to be transformation within the legal system as it is always operating to be in control and remain in power. Benjamin states, "Justice is the principle of all divine endmaking, power the principle of all mythic lawmaking."¹³ This distinction of violence is essential because it explains one relationship between violence and a legal system. Situating his account in actual law and violence, it seems to be the case that each time we try to make systemic changes to reduce the inequality, the racism, and the white supremacy, we invoke mythic violence rather than divine violence, only preserving the system, never destroying it. Notwithstanding, what Benjamin does not expound is why we fail to make systemic changes, why we continue to miss the law-destroying power. His account cannot do this as he does not discuss how temporality might affect this relationship, a crucial aspect that needs to be explored. I want to expand on Benjamin's critique to demonstrate how temporality plays a crucial role in how we recognize violence. When these two phenomena, violence and temporality, are put together, in the context of a legal system, it becomes clear that our misrecognitions of violence do not allow us to create the institutional changes that are necessary for the eradication of this kind of violence. The next part explores how temporality affects our

¹² Benjamin. "Critique of Violence." 250.

¹³ Benjamin. "Critique of Violence." 248.

conceptions of violence. I first explain the features of linear temporality, then I explain how this linearity structures our systems and institutions. This introduction to temporality explains what we believe to happen when we alleviate violence according to a legal system, but what I argue is that there exists a misrecognition of violence.

Linear Temporality

To understand how we see violence as linear, it's important to first understand how temporality is conceptualized as linear. Linear temporality dominates our comprehension of time because it naturally demands singularity, meaning that the amount of time that exists becomes simplified to singular moments on a straight line, or a *timeline*.¹⁴ This straight line stretches from one beginning point and continues only moving in one direction, which is forwards towards the end point. As a result of this singular line, time is able to be broken down even further into three distinguishing sects: past, present, and future. The past, the present, and the future are all integral to linear temporality because they keep any event occurring to the single plane and on the one line that only moves in one direction.¹⁵ Linear time makes it easy to set boundaries and organize how society operates because it is so straightforward and simple. There is always progression away from the past. Although linear temporality is not designed to allow us to go back to the past, it does invite us to use the past as a reference for the future.

We can see this framework of linearity in our legal systems and educational institutions, especially when the aim is to get rid of violence, in which we solve for happiness, a kind of non-violence. Nobles-Schiff present the idea that written laws and statutes within the legal system are continuously constructed in order to be improved, although it exists prior to the

¹⁴ Greenhouse, Carol J. "Just in Time: Temporality and the Cultural Legitimation of Law." *The Yale Law Journal* 98, no. 8, 1631-651.1989. 1636.

¹⁵ Khan, L. Ali. "Temporality of Law." Khan, A.. "Temporality of Law." *McGeorge Law Review* 40 (4). 2008.61.

decisions that establish it.¹⁶ Written laws do not operate for the present, although they operate *in* the present. It is assumed that their existence will create a better future by having fixed some of the issues that the absence of this law created.¹⁷ With the creation of the new law, or an improvement in one from the past, the future is decidedly better because progress has been made. The way in which the law accomplishes this is by drawing on the past to create the law in the present, which is then used for and in the future. Nobles-Schiff state, “The legal system draws communications from the past (its memory) into its current operations (its present) to provide normative expectations as to how law will be decided in the future (its present future).”¹⁸ A decision on the law is being made in the present for something that is going to exist in a future time. The linear conception of time lets one to believe that the future is predictable or knowable.¹⁹ We know that this is not entirely true, nevertheless we continue to look to the past to dictate what we should and should not do in the future. This is important because it affects how the legal system makes amends for the ways that violence was produced by its presence, or the lack of it. Since we are neither able to go back on the timeline nor see the future, we employ the past to guide our decisions to ensure that the future will not have these same violences. Therefore, progress and the future end up hand-in-hand and being seen as reciprocal. Every time that a new law, statute, or policy is implemented, we believe that progress has been made because we no longer operate as we did in the past. And, progress has been made because we have moved from a past point to a new point on the timeline. We discern that our progress is constant progression, always moving forwards, inevitably improvement. Accordingly, this implies that when a solution does not entirely eradicate the problem, we view the problem as

¹⁶ Nobles, Richard, Schiff, David. “Luhmann: Law, Justice and Time.” *Int J Semiot Law* 12:251-340.326-240.2013. 331.

¹⁷ Nobles-Schiff. “Luhmann: Law, Justice and Time.” 339.

¹⁸ Nobles-Schiff. “Luhmann: Law, Justice and Time.” 332.

¹⁹ McNeilly, K. “Are Rights Out of Time? International Human Rights Law, Temporality, and Radical Social Change.” *Social and Legal Studies*, 28(6). 2019.4.

new, or that there exists a new deviation from the line that we currently are on. Though we recognize that this problem may be similar to previous ones, we aim to solve it as different solely because we exist on a different point on the timeline.

This conception of temporality not only affects how the legal system recognizes the violence that was produced, but also how to solve to ensure that the violence does not occur again. Since the legal system has to work according to a linear temporality, as well as according to its own temporality, the legal system assumes violence is also linear and aims to alleviate it in a linear fashion. One could call this a redemptive way of the law operating; the legal system redeems itself in trying to repair the violence that it produced by preparing for a happier, more non-violent future. When it has established a different statute suggesting progress and change, there is the notion that the past has been fixed and we should be happier now that we have solved the old problem. The legal system makes amends for the violence it has produced by implementing, but it has not eradicated the violence. In doing this, the legal system not only maintains happiness for those not affected by this law, but most importantly it remains stable and in control. Already, we see how Benjamin's lawmaking function is affected by temporality. The legal system preserves the linearity of itself and of temporality. The solutions that it produces and suggests operate on the same linear framework that it does. Therefore, in solving for a linear solution, the problem, the violence is also thought to be linear.

Linear Institutions

This aspect of temporality and how it shapes the legal framework is quite important because it affects how we understand and handle this kind of systemic violence aforementioned. Bryn Mawr and Haverford Colleges are great examples of how violence is assumed to be linear. Though these colleges are not exactly the legal system that Benjamin refers to, they are very

similar to a legal system due to their linear structure, specific environments, the established rules and procedures, and the hierarchical structure of power. Educational institutions, like Haverford and Bryn Mawr, have an administration that can parallel the government as they implement policies demanded by their students. Additionally, educational institutions have discriminated against people of color, as well as the LGBTQAI+ community, just as the law has, and continues to do. Therefore, to expand on Benjamin's account, these educational institutions act as a subset of the legal system that Benjamin was describing. To demonstrate the misconception that violence is linear, I explain how we believe the Bi-Co Strike to have absolved violence to create a better future.

The Bi-Co Strike Part I: When We Think It's Linear

In late October 2020, an email was sent from President Wendy Raymond “imploring” students to “temper that impulse” to not attend protests in wake of Walter Wallace Jr, a Black man who was violently murdered when police fired multiple, fatal shots when he did not comply. According to his family, his mother was trying to deescalate the situation because he suffered from mental illness.²⁰ President Raymond wrote, “joining a protest off campus not only would not bring Walter Wallace back: it could play into the hands of those who might seek to sow division and conflict especially in vulnerable communities.”²¹ This email is a prime example of the kind of erasure that Black students had been experiencing. In addition to this email, other harmful conditions, like the centering of white-voices and the lack of diversity of staff and students, further marginalized BIPOC students while the colleges simultaneously utilized and

²⁰ Romo, Vanessa. “Philadelphia Police Release 'Traumatic' Bodycam Video Of Walter Wallace Jr. Shooting.” NPR. NPR, November 5, 2020. <https://www.npr.org/2020/11/04/931598467/philadelphia-police-release-traumatic-bodycam-video-of-walter-wallace-jr-shootin>.

²¹ Raymond, Wendy, Bylander, Joyce. Letter to Haverford College Students. *Message from President Raymond and Dean Bylander*, October 28, 2020. To see the full email, click [here](#).

depended on the labor of these same students. Infuriated and disturbed by the email, strike organizers²² confronted administrators who had failed to actively be anti-racist and failed provide an adequate response to an action plan that was provided in an open letter over the summer written by BSRFI.²³ Students on both campuses no longer had the tolerance to accept the erasure of the Black community and marginalization of BIPOC students.

The beginning of the Strike began just hours after this email. The goal of the Strike was to disrupt how the institution functioned because it relied heavily on BIPOC and FGLI students while continuing to center white voices and privilege. Strike organizers encouraged other students to stand in solidarity with their BIPOC peers by not participating in extracurricular activities, going to classes, whether online or virtual, and not eating in the dining halls. The message was to be disruptive; to strike how the college functions in order to establish institutional change. The end goal was to transform the conditions that BIPOC students were living in, or what I name Condition X. In Condition X, the violence that is being produced by the institution is creating a detrimental learning and living environment for students. Condition X represents the violence that students were enduring, from the past, just until the beginning of the Strike.

The Strike indicates that Condition X is in the past because the problems in Condition X have *already* been endured by students, and are going to be solved in the present *during* the Strike. We have moved from one point in time, from the harmful living conditions and President Raymond's email, to the present, in which students are disrupting. Condition X moves forward in time becoming what I label as STRIKE. This is the moment of the sit-in, the protest along

²² Specifically, credit of organizing and mobilizing to: Black Students Refusing Further Inaction (BSRFI), Woman of Color House, Black Student League (BSL), Alliance of Latin American Students (ALAS), Student Workers Organizing Labor (SWOL), Students for Abolition, Liberation, and Transformation (SALT), and Athletes of Color Coalition (AOCC).

²³ Strike Collective. Haverford College Strike, 2021. <https://www.hc-strike.com/>.

Lancaster Avenue, not attending virtual or in-person classes, and halting extracurriculars. Being in the midst of this Strike creates a limbo position between Condition X and the future. It is the present in which someone decides if and what changes will be made, which is achieved by referencing the past in order to end the Strike so a better future can be created. It was also a time where strike-organizers and administrators met to discuss the changes that students wanted to see, including a new DEI Officer, specifically a person of color, a better framework to deal and hold problematic professors accountable, plus ten more demands.²⁴ During this period, other students met with their respective departments, clubs, or teams to discuss how an institutional change can be made to continue anti-racist work once the Strike was over. STRIKE is the point on the timeline that is situated before the transition of Condition X to Condition Z. STRIKE positions us in a present moment, distinguishing the past from the future.

Both Condition X and STRIKE can be marked on our timeline as the past and the present respectively. It follows that the future is what comes immediately after STRIKE, or what I identify as Condition Z. Condition Z began when the strike-organizers decided that the Strike was finished as a majority of the demands were met and a considerable impact was made on campus. We now exist in a different time where the problems in Condition X should no longer be endured by students because individuals decided to force the institution to change. Condition Z is the point in time where there should be a difference in conditions that students, specifically FGLI and BIPOC students live in, as proved by the demands being met. In Condition Z, a new way of living has started to be implemented as policies have been created, therefore we progress forward. We move on to the future with the belief that Condition Z is better than Condition X because we have recognized the violence and where it stems from, and we have created measures

²⁴ Strike Collective. "Demands." Haverford College Strike, 2021. <https://www.hc-strike.com/>. Click [here](#) to see the full list of demands.

to alleviate it. The future represents the expectation that this violence will not exist. Condition Z represents progress, it represents change, it represents moving from the past to the future. We will continue to move forward from this point with less of this violence.

Progressing from Condition X to Condition Z as a result of STRIKE is how we perceive making strides in positive institutional change. We move from one condition of violence, to a period of discussing solutions to eradicate this violence, to a new time without this violence. This linear movement from the past to the future is how we conceptualize violence and alleviate it. Since we have literally progressed from the past, we do not think of Condition X as the same problem that Black students faced in the 1920's where they were not allowed to be admitted to these institutions.²⁵ Rather, Condition X is recognized as a newer problem; a new violence that stems from lack of action on the part of administrators. It is an institutional violence not because of who is or is not accepted anymore, but because of the deficiency of support and equal treatment of certain students on campus. The Strike was to illuminate the recent problems that students were experiencing and propose a new solution to them. Likewise, these solutions are different from the ones in the past because the violences are not the exact same. We have moved forward to a new time that will be better than Condition X.

Importantly, it is clear how during the Strike, the past was used in the present to determine the conditions for the future. In this way of solving to eradicate this violence, it is clear that we continue to look forward to a better, less violent future. The problems of the past are in *the past*, they remain there and are expected to not be endured in the future. When solving to expel this institutional violence, we first recognize violence as linear, as a new problem

²⁵Enid Cook was the first Black Woman to graduate from Bryn Mawr College in 1931. However, she was forced to live off-campus and faced incredible amounts of racism and discrimination during her time at Bryn Mawr. Pusey, Grace, "Enid Cook, 1927-1931: Bryn Mawr's First Black Graduate." Black at Bryn Mawr, February 9, 2015. <https://blackatbrynmawr.blogs.brynmawr.edu/2015/02/09/enid-cook-first-black-graduate/#:~:text=Enid%20Cook%20was%20the%20first.degree%20from%20Bryn%20Mawr%20College.>

because we have progressed from the past. Then, when we find solutions to eliminate this violence, we focus on what did not previously work. Typically, these solutions are non-violent, peaceful, and happy. They do not enact or advocate for more violence, but aim to create a more pleasant condition. Finally, we acknowledge and applaud how much progress has been made thanks to the new laws and policies that have been put in place in order to get rid of the systemic violence.

Unfortunately, we have continued to witness this institutional violence over and over and over. If what we have achieved is Benjamin's law-destroying power, if we truly have resolved the problems in Condition X, then why do they keep appearing? Why do we keep enduring? When examining the Bi-Co Strike, it might appear that the Strike was solely influenced by the protests that were occurring all over the nation in solidarity with BLM (during a pandemic) or that the strike was an isolated “incident” where liberal students were feeling too controlled by their institution. While the protests this summer definitely provided ideas, courage, and support, when we look back on the timeline we can see that almost the same exact thing happened at Haverford in the 1971-72 academic year. The Strike was not sudden and it did not stem just from the recent murder, it is something that “Black students have been fighting for 48 years.”²⁶ Students have been fighting this institutional violence for years because it is continuously misrecognized as linear. The reason that we have been so frustrated with institutional change is not because change has yet to occur, but because we have been alleviating violence with linear solutions. When we explore beyond Benjamin’s distinction of violence and ask why we can never achieve divine violence, we can see all the repetitions of violence, the protests, the demands, and the changes.

²⁶ Mondress, Maxwell. “At the Second Sit-In: Reminders of Haverford's Broken Promises, Optimism for the Future.” The Clerk, November 8, 2020.
<http://haverfordclerk.com/at-the-second-sit-in-reminders-of-haverfords-broken-promises-optimism-for-the-future/>.

When we remove a linear perspective, it becomes clear that violence does not operate in a linear fashion, but that it cycles.

The Cycle of Violence

1972 Strike- Nothing New

In 1972, BSL representative Ghebre Mehreteab, announced that Black students were suspending participation in campus activities and would be silently picketing the institutional racism of Haverford College.²⁷ Black students had been frustrated by the lack of diversity and support for minorities, specifically disturbed by how the college was handling minority students who were struggling academically. To create change in how non-white students were supported by the college, BSL members staged sit-ins and created “Several Concerns: or a Bill of Facts” that was submitted to faculty and administration, questioning the ways that Haverford is committed to diversity and inclusion.²⁸ Puerto Rican Students later joined this protest, and together a total of twelve “symbolic gestures of good intent” were proposed along with a deadline for the college to achieve these gestures. The goal of this strike was to highlight the ways that the college was alienating and treating Black and Puerto Rican students. A concern reads, “what changes in the basic structure of the institution have to be made to insure the survival and nourishment of those whose group differs from the dominant or white bourgeois group?”²⁹ In a response to these gestures and the concerns, President Coleman’s responded with “Response to Specific Concerns,” which did not address the structural problems, but “qualified and conditioned the responses to specific concerns for a number of reasons.”³⁰ Coleman explained why these problems occurred, being a less than adequate response to the gestures. Few

²⁷Strike Collective. 1972 Event- Final Protest Timeline. Google Docs, November, 2021. https://drive.google.com/file/d/1IZBFaUHWxu_CEGkllksh-oErB7ZesWd7/view.

²⁸ Strike Collective. 1972 Event- Final Protest Timeline. 2021.

²⁹ Strike Collective. 1972 Event- Final Protest Timeline. 2021.

³⁰ Strike Collective. 1972 Event- Final Protest Timeline. 2021.

of the gestures were met: there was a reallocation of money, a new pre-college summer program for minority students, and few faculty of color were hired.³¹

When looking at the 1972 Strike, it is discernible that the concerns and gestures parallel the concerns raised by students in the Bi-Co Strike. When we observe these similarities as well as how the concerns are handled and what solutions are put in effect, the cyclical pattern becomes evident. These repetitions imply that this violence is not linear, because in linearity this problem would not be presenting itself in the same way, but that violence operates as a cycle. In order to explain the cycle of violence, I want to start back at Condition X.

The Bi-Co Strike Part II: Cycle of Violence

The first step in recognizing that this kind of violence is cyclical is understanding that Condition X does not represent new problems. Condition X represents the institutional violence that generations of students have been enduring. The Bi-Co not actively working on diversity is neither a “new problem” nor is it an event that recently arose in response to an isolated incident that occurred in West Philadelphia. This is the kind of violence that has been lingering and affecting students all around campus for decades. One could assume that it is mere coincidence that two strikes happened at Haverford, believing that violence is still linear. However, the similarities between the demands, concerns, and solutions from the 1972 Strike to the Bi-Co Strike are almost the same. This exhibits how the structure has not been altered, but has preserved itself, thus so too is violence. One example of this violence is the policing of BIPOC students on campus. In the 1970’s, Campus Safety Officers and white students would ask Black and Puerto Rican students to present their Student Cards to prove they belonged to these

³¹ Firke, Mar. “Haverford College Black Students' League's Campaign to Eradicate Institutionalized Racism 1972.” The Global Nonviolent Action Database. Swarthmore College. February 2, 2014. <https://nvdatabase.swarthmore.edu/content/haverford-college-black-students-leagues-campaign-eradicate-institutionalized-racism-1972>.

communities, what is known as “carding.”³² Recently, this kind of policing has increased as Bryn Mawr and Haverford campuses have both been closed to visitors due to COVID-19. Students on both campuses have reported that they are being surveyed and questioned more than their white peers.³³ Another example is the bigotry and lack of diversity on athletic teams. In 1971, a Haverford Coach was accused of being discriminatory towards his Black athletes in which they threatened to boycott competition if he did not change his behavior. In 2014, two Bryn Mawr students, one a soccer player, hung a Confederate flag in their dorm and drew a line on the floor which represented the Mason-Dixon line.³⁴ These actions caused some teammates to quit as they felt unsafe. Students from the Tri-Co³⁵ stood in protest with signs about this overtly racist behavior and how the college dealt with these students as they faced no consequences for their racist actions.

When the history of the Bi-Co is looked at with an open lens as to how these ‘incidents’ transpired over the years, it becomes apparent that it is an institutional violence that BIPOC students have *been* enduring for decades. Unlike linear violence, this Condition X does not represent new problems, but the same problems that have resurfaced time and time again. These incidents not only represent what has been reported and discussed campus-wide, but they represent how these violences are not new or different. To recognize violence in this way is the first part of the cycle; recognition that there has been a condition that people are living in that is violent, and that this violence has been witnessed before.

³² Firke. “Haverford College Black Students' League's Campaign to Eradicate Institutionalized Racism 1972.” 2014.

³³ I do not have factual data on this due to confidentiality and fear of further policing from students. However, this information comes from listening to students who came forward during both Strikes to share their experiences with Campus Safety.

³⁴ Zipp, Bobby. “Bryn Mawr Campus Roiled by Confederate Flag, Mason-Dixon Line in Dormitory.” The Phoenix, September 25, 2014.

<https://swarthmorephoenix.com/2014/09/25/bryn-mawr-campus-roiled-by-confederate-flag-mason-dixon-line-in-dormitory/>.

³⁵Tri-College Consortium: Bryn Mawr, Haverford, and Swarthmore Colleges.

The next part of the cycle is when the violence operates in the hands of individuals outside of the system, what Benjamin described as the lawmaking function of mythic violence, but what I've named as STRIKE. In order to disrupt the system and demand that there be transformation to Condition X, this next part of the cycle consists of the ways that people require change. It is the part of the cycle when someone decides if, when, and what changes will be made in order to end the strike. STRIKE for Bi-Co students was a period of about three weeks where a majority of the normal routine of the college was completely interrupted. STRIKE was a limbo. We waited for administrators to properly respond to demands, if they could not, they were asked to resign. We waited for the instructions directing us where to be next, what posts to look at, and what teach-ins would be happening. It was a stressful time with a great deal of uncertainty, with newly discovered distrust in peers and professors, and not knowing when the disruption to normal life would end. It was a time where the happiness of the entire student body was interrupted.

When we recognize that this institutional violence is not new, it becomes evident that in most cases, the goal is not to end the violence being produced by the system, but to restore the power and control in the institution *in order to* end the striking. When we recognize violence as linear, we use the past in the present for the future. This is how we envision ending STRIKE. Contrarily, when we recognize violence as a cycle, it becomes clear that the solutions are rather an attempt at ending the violence that operates outside of the system instead of actually ending the structure that first produces this violence. The 1972 Strike demonstrates this because we can see that there were little additions to solve *all* of the problems, rather than altering the structure itself. Now, observing the recurring violences, it is apparent that the solutions were not in favor

of making institutional transformations, but preserving the institution. Understanding the way that Condition X and STRIKE operate in a cycle, we now turn to the solutions, or Condition Z.

In the linear way that we recognize and solve to alleviate violence, we envision that Condition Z is this new time that differs from Condition X because of the changes that were made. In linearity, Condition Z represents progress from the past. However, the Bi-Co Strike demonstrates that Condition Z is not a new condition, but is a repetition of Condition X that appears in a different year. Condition Z in the 1972 Strike did not eradicate the violence that Black and Puerto Rican students were enduring. It only shifted how the violence was being produced, which is demonstrated by the demands and the concerns of current students. The Condition Z in 1972 became 2020's Condition X. This violence does not operate in a perfect cycle where the end-point will become the exact starting point, or vice versa. It is a continuous existence of institutional violence over time. This cycle occurs because Condition Z will alleviate violence for a while, it will provide solace, it will prove to be a better condition than Condition X. However, since it was a response to the students demands and not truly a systemic change, Condition Z will become Condition X: harmful, inadequate, violent. It is possible that in a few years the work achieved during the Bi-Co Strike that progressed us to Condition Z will become another Condition X. The high drive and motivation for diversity work will slowly start to dwindle. Departments will stop meeting about creating a more anti-racist framework, administration will change not hire more professors of color, athletic recruitment will run out of funding for free prospect and clinic days. Of course, this is not to confuse the dwindling down of work to achieving equity, but to highlight how the cyclical nature of the violence operates.

As a result of institutions, the legal system, and life being structured on a linear temporality, the solutions that we find to alleviate violence are also based in linearity.

Frustratingly, this entails that we will arrive back to the similar condition as a result of these linear solutions. The beginning of the problem must not be thought of as a new condition or a new problem that has yet to be solved. This problem must be realized as an existing violence that has never been fully eradicated because the solutions to it have only solved it for one period of time; they have not changed the system. We can reference Benjamin here to understand that the lawmaking function was invoked when students both in 1972 and 2020 demanded changes be made. The college responded, but it was in a way that used the past for the future and solved for happiness, rather than destroying the harms. The institution thus regained control over the violence and was able to preserve itself, therefore, preserve where the violence is produced. The violence repeats over and over, just in different generations.

The similarities in conditions and harms on the campuses in addition to the lack of transformation from the first strike to the second demonstrate how we try to solve according to a linear model which does not alleviate the institutional violence. We see that though we have progressed in time and in diversity, the real institutional change has not; the violence has not been absolved. There is still violence that is being produced even when certain developments do happen. The linear conception of violence has to be replaced with recognizing this violence as cyclical. The next part will explain how and why we see this violence only at certain times, believing that violence is linear.

The Tension, The Snaps, The Violence, Oh My!

When a linear solution is put in place, for example a new DEI Officer and a modified DEI policy, we believe that the violence is reduced because changes have been made. We think that violence has subsided because we no longer see it; the protests have stopped. We think we have moved on to Condition Z, the future. Despite these new modifications, the violence of the

cycle starts to rise again because they are not adequate solutions to the systemic violence as they did not transform the system, but preserved it. They are linear solutions aiming towards the future when the problem is cyclical. When the problems are discussed and brought up, there is irritation; we have already progressed in time, so we should not be dealing with this same violence. The questions are asked: Why are they protesting *again*? We already created a new policy, why are they complaining, what is the issue? As if it is new. Moreover, there is also exhaustion; why are we still suffering when we have worked so hard to not be harmed? A few adjustments are made, and we move on to the future. Although the system and the violence has been preserved, these adjustments will fall apart because they are trying to alleviate something in a way that it does not recognize: a cycle of violence cannot recognize a linear solution.

The linear solutions for a cyclical problem create a tension because linearity does not end the cycle. We only recognize that there is an “underlying” tension when something grand happens, such as strikes or protests. We only recognize violence when there is a “snap.” These snaps seem like singular moments of violence that we can place on the timeline, when they actually indicate Condition Z becoming Condition X due to the linear solutions. To understand what this tension might look like, I turn to Sarah Ahmed who describes the feminist snap in *Living A Feminist Life* to explain how these breaking points are understood and produced by institutions like Haverford and Bryn Mawr College.

“A snap sounds like the start of something, a transformation of something; it is how a twig might end up broken in two pieces. A snap might even seem like a violent moment; the unbecoming of something. But a snap would only be the beginning insofar as we did not notice the pressure on the twig.”³⁶ The snap is thought of as the beginning of new violence in this new time. It is thought of as the moment of exposure in which there is a reaction to the violence being

³⁶Ahmed, Sara. *Living a Feminist Life*. Duke University Press, 2017.188-189.

produced at a specific point. Wherever the snap on the timeline, we believe *that* place to be the origin of the violence. *That* violence needs to be expelled in order to move forward. We view President Raymond's email as the spark that forced students to snap. We see the Bi-Co Strike as the violence produced from the snap. We see the murder of George Floyd as as the moment that caused people to snap and "riot." The 1972 Strike represents another snap. All these snaps seem reactionary, impulsive, even violent. What we fail to realize is how the violence has been there, been with us, since the last time we moved forward, or even the time before it. The snap is not new, it is not the beginning.

In linear time, progression is the aim. We continue wanting to move forward away from the past violence (look, see, we have made *so* much progress!). The snap is thought of the moment in which there is the violence because we believe that, "to expose violence is to become the origin of violence."³⁷ In a linear perspective, we identify the snap as uncovering the problem and the violence. We recognize violence as linear because we do not see the smaller "snaps," the tension that has been accumulating for years. Alternatively, Ahmed states, "If a snap seems sharp of sudden, it might be because we do not experience the slower time of bearing or of holding up; the time in which we can bear the pressure, the time it has taken for things not to break."³⁸ Thus, the snap is not the beginning or reaction to the violence, but it is the breaking point of the linear solutions and cyclical violence. What Ahmed clarifies is that the pressure, the tension, is only noticed by those who bear and endure it. The snap is a snap to those who have *not* been suffering. The violence is only recognized when there is a huge moment of pause for unhappiness. The snap is only witnessed when the happiness and peace of the institution is disrupted. Instead of viewing the snap as the moment of uncovering violence, as Condition X,

³⁷ Ahmed. *Living a Feminist Life*. 205.

³⁸ Ahmed. *Living a Feminist Life*. 189.

the snap should be seen as the moment where Condition Z becomes like Condition X. “If pressure is an action, snap is the reaction. Pressure is hard to notice unless you are under that pressure.”³⁹ Ahmed states that the snap should be thought of as the reaction of the violence that is being endured rather than the point of violence itself. The snap occurs when people can no longer endure. It is the point when the linear solutions are no longer adequate. These moments are the release of all the tension that has been building, but has not been seen. The snap is the moment when the violence is too much to bear because the solutions were aimed towards preserving the institutions and restoring the disrupted happiness.

The “snap” is important because it represents how the linear recognition and solving of violence is in a tension with the cycle of violence. It is a word to represent the strikes and protests if we were to mark this on the timeline. When looking at the snaps, violence appears to be linear. However, Ahmed encourages us to look beyond the snap as the origin of the violence, but recognize it as the point where one can no longer endure. The snap should be understood as the moment when the linear solutions are too much to bear because the violence is still being produced. The snap is not the strike. The snap illuminates the cycle of violence. We must learn from the snaps.

Non-Linear Solutions

Thus far, I have shown that we recognize and solve violence based on a linear framework, but that institutional violence operates in a cycle and should be solved accordingly. The cycle of the violence in the Bi-Co can be traced back to at least 1972, but that is definitely not the beginning of this violence. Likewise, it is clear that the ways we have tried to solve institutional violence have allowed this cycle to continue by preserving the institution that produces the violence. The solutions have been in order to end the disruption to the system,

³⁹Ahmed. *Living a Feminist Life*. 189.

progress to a better future, and are happy, non-violent solutions. I have been confused as to why there is still so much violence being produced despite instrumental reforms. How many changes and what kinds of changes will finally be enough to curb this violence that has been produced for decades? I have been confused as to why we continue to enact the same kind of framework and solving, when we keep coming back to the same problems, the same violence. Why do we keep enduring and exhausting the same ways of solving? And in this frustration, I look to Frantz Fanon who proposes a solution to ending colonial violence that can serve as an alternative framework for how we solve institutional violence that is not based in a linearity or peace.

Violence Only Knows Violence

In *The Wretched of the Earth*, Frantz Fanon explores different dimensions of colonization and decolonization. His account of violence demonstrates how violence is a transcending liberation not just for oppressed people, but for oppressive and violent societal structures as well. In the first section, “On Violence,” Fanon explains the role that violence plays in both colonization and decolonization, explaining that both are inherently violent processes. Colonization started out as a violent encounter which then imposed destructive structures on native peoples. In order to purge people of this violent encounter and process, decolonization thus must also be violent.

Decolonization, according to Fanon, is not just the process of removing colonial rule in which people are freed, but it is a process in which enslaved people are liberated in such a way that there is a restoration of native identity and an eradication of colonial rule and colonial-imposed white-identity.⁴⁰ The colonial identity is a violent one as it destroyed the native’s humanity. To shed it entirely, the violent identity must be met with a violent opposition.

⁴⁰ Fanon, Frantz, et al. *The Wretched of the Earth*. London: Penguin, [2001] 1965. 72.

Fanon states, “colonialism is not a machine capable of thinking, a body endowed with reason. It is naked violence and only gives in when confronted with violence.”⁴¹ Violence can only recognize itself. To restore one’s identity, violence must meet violence; in its own recognition, the colonial violence will cease to exist. Likewise, to get rid of the colonial structure, one must not merely “substitute” one kind of man for another, all traces of colonialism must be eradicated.⁴² A substitution of who is in control, would neither transform the structure of society nor would it be a true end to the violence that is inherent to colonialism. In addition, Fanon states, “Nonviolence is an attempt to settle the colonial problem around the negotiating table before the irreparable is done, before any bloodshed or regrettable act is committed.”⁴³ It might seem unethical to draw bloodshed, but what is crucial to understand is that any solution that is not violent will require a *compromise*, and compromising with the colonizer will not eradicate the colonial system.⁴⁴

Understanding Fanon’s view and using it as a framework to the violence that we see being produced from systems that have colonial backgrounds, it should be clear that the ways in which we have tried to eradicate violence have not been done this way. Fanon argues that violence only knows itself, thus the only thing that can actually confront it is to have violence recognize itself. What we have been doing is solving violence as if it is linear and alleviating institutional violence with something it does not recognize. We can see this with the removal of President Raymond as Chief CDO Officer who was replaced by Linda Strong-Leek in the Bi-Co Strike. This substitution highlights just one of the ways that the structure was not transformed,

⁴¹ Fanon. *The Wretched of the Earth*. 23

⁴² Fanon. *The Wretched of the Earth*. 72.

⁴³ Fanon. *The Wretched of the Earth*. 23.

⁴⁴ It is essential to understand Fanon’s theory, violence met with violence, without a moral evaluation; whether violence is justifiable or morally wrong. This can be a point of tension, discussing violence without morality, that, but I believe focusing on this aspect completely misses what Fanon is arguing. Fanon’s theory is much more philosophically nuanced than deciding if violence is the ‘right answer.’

but modified to be preserved. We merely substitute one solution for all the problems and continue doing this as problems are viewed as new or different. In our linear society, we think that one implies the other, getting rid of the traces of violence *is* change. Nonetheless, the kind of transformation that is necessary is to have violence to recognize itself by pausing and not looking towards the future.

Critique of the Self

What has been so confusing and so difficult in my understanding is that the way we have resolved violent problems *feel good*. Attending demonstrations and protests have felt like I was making a *good impact* and confronting the perpetrators of violence. Having productive conversations with people where they learn have *made me happy*. At the same time, I have wondered when these ‘activist’ actions will no longer be necessary for transformation. I have been frustrated that the violences my grandparents bore are still violences that I can endure. I have been angry with the insurmountable amounts of violence that my friends have suffered. I have been confused as to why there is still so much violence being produced despite making instrumental reforms. I have become exhausted and numb; and it's only been a few years. I have felt good, angry, sad, confused, and frustrated. When will we be happy? And in asking this question, I have understood that I am frustrated with myself.

The day that the Haverford strike-organizers announced that the Strike was over, I was happy. I think there were a great deal of other students who shared this happiness as well. The announcement was a moment of relief, of accomplishment, or returning back to normalcy- but a *better* normal. It signaled that change had been made, that the institution *will* be better. Life was allowed to return to what it was: classes, sports, work. The end of the disruption was a moment of happiness. In the future, there would be less enduring and more happiness. We could all be

happy now. This happiness is why I am angry with myself. I am angry for being happy that the Strike was over because of the institutional change that was achieved during the two-week period. I applauded my peers for their incredible courage, organization, and mobilization. I was looking forward to the future, to the time where there would be less violence for my peers. I was happy that we could *move on*. We used the past in the present to make a better and less violent future. And we did that by momentary unhappiness. Rather than having been happy in that moment, I wished that I had taken advice from Sara Ahmed and remained unhappy.

Unhappiness, The Good Life.

In *Promise of Happiness*, Sara Ahmed analyzes how happiness implies a future of change, and usually one that is in accordance with a linear structure. Her account of un/happiness has shown that being happy may not have been and may not be the best solution to cyclical violence. Ahmed argues that happiness and pleasure are feelings that we turn towards to avoid displeasure. Happiness becomes a moral orientation that works to keep an individual toward the good and progressing towards the future, reinforcing linearity. Ahmed writes:

The affirmative turn creates a distinction between good and bad feelings that presumes bad feelings are backward and conservative and good feelings are forward and progressive. Bad feelings are seen as oriented towards the past, as a kind of stubbornness that “stops” the subject from embracing the future. Good feelings are associated with moving up, as creating the very promise of a future. The assumption that good feelings are open and bad feelings are closed allows historical forms of injustice to disappear by reading them as a form of melancholia (as if you hold on to something that is already gone). These histories have not gone: we would be letting go of that which persists in the present. To let go would be to keep those histories present.⁴⁵

She highlights how unhappiness is contrary to linearity as these feelings limit progress. If we are to move forward on this timeline, then we must remain happy. Happiness in turn becomes a non-violent solution to the violences that we see: when there is happiness, the problem has been

⁴⁵ Ahmed, Sara. *The Promise of Happiness*. Duke University Press, 2010. 217.

solved. In addition to unhappiness being opposed to linearity, Ahmed also illuminates how unhappiness is a threat to the happiness.⁴⁶ “The points that accumulate as lines can be performatives: a point on a line can be a demand to stay in line. To deviate from the line is to be threatened with unhappiness.”⁴⁷ Being unhappy when changes are made and time progresses is seen as a threat to the happiness of others and a deviation from the good life. Therefore, the solutions we have enacted to end violence have been oriented towards the future, emphasizing happiness. Happiness is an orientation, is linear, and a solution to avoid violence in the future.

In lieu of understanding unhappiness as a threat, Ahmed proposes that “We would understand unhappiness not as the failure to be happy and thus as causing yet more unhappiness, but a refusal, a claim, a protest, or even just some ordinary thing, a texture of a life being lived.”⁴⁸ Ahmed understands unhappiness not as a solution to violence, but as a way to expose the root of unhappiness. She argues that not being happy can open up so much more for us to actually make change.⁴⁹ Unhappiness forces us to take a pause; feel the feelings of the present; acknowledge the violence without having to move forward. Even though we are no longer in STRIKE, we can continue to be unhappy and cause unhappiness if it will bring institutional reforms. When we remain unhappy, we do not move forward towards progression, we don't even move at all, we remain; we remain unhappy and uncomfortable and in the moment. We are not able to prepare for the future by using the past. Instead, unhappiness fixes us in time; it is above and beyond the cycle and the timeline as this orientation is a stasis. By protecting happiness, Ahmed argues that we are compromising rather than transforming because in protecting happiness we protect the institution that creates the violence and the unhappiness.

⁴⁶ Ahmed. *The Promise of Happiness*. 59.

⁴⁷ Ahmed. *The Promise of Happiness*. 91.

⁴⁸ Ahmed. *Living a Feminist Life*. 58.

⁴⁹ Ahmed. *The Promise of Happiness*. 80.

We can return to Ahmed's "snap," those who uncover where the violence is, the ones who point out the unhappiness. In the Bi-Co Strike, the students, and more specifically strike-organizers, could be thought of as the problem. Those who did not participate in the Strike felt that it was the fault of the strike-organizers for causing the unhappiness and the stress. We can see how some students perceived the "snap" to be the sit-in and striking; how the violence was uncovered, is exactly where the violence was placed. The strike-organizers were placed at the moment of the "snap" uncovering the unhappiness that was felt by the marginalized people, on campus. The students exposing their unhappiness was seen as threatening the happiness of the entire study body. And it did. A lot of students, including myself, not just the ones who disagreed, were unhappy. "When a snap is registered as the origin of violence, the one who snaps is deemed violent."⁵⁰ But we must refuse this narrative. We will not be happy, just so you can be happy, while we endure. We will be happy to cause unhappiness to cause transformation.

This orientation towards unhappiness must be extinguished because it is misunderstanding and wrongly providing solutions to the violence that is being produced. Ahmed's commitment to unhappiness might be extremely uncomfortable because it is not an institutional change, it is a change that begins with the self. As I confessed, I was happy when the Strike ended because I had believed that it meant that a majority of the institutional issues and violences against my peers would cease. The moment the Strike was over I was happy because the other moments of unhappiness were over. I knew there would be unhappiness to come, but I was oriented towards happiness, towards achieving and finding happiness. Thinking of Ahmed's commitment to being unhappy until there is no more marginalization, my reaction had misrecognized the violence and the solution. The first way to pause and refuse the linear notions of progress in happiness begins with myself, not Haverford or Bryn Mawr. Committing

⁵⁰Ahmed. *Living a Feminist Life*. 189.

to unhappiness is a decision we can each make ourselves, and is one I think a lot of us may be unfamiliar with, especially those who study philosophy. Instead of aiming for the good life or the highest good, we are the ones choosing not to be happy, not to adapt, not to achieve that good life because it will have accounts of violence. We need to not just look at the snap, the strike, and the seeable violence, we have to first turn to oneself to incite institutional change.

Conclusion

I began this thesis by describing my own happiness and what I felt was an interruption to it. I had once been under the philosophical understanding that happiness means the good life, but after having reexamined institutional violence I have learned that happiness can be an orientation towards false progress. Happiness can preserve the institutions that produce violence.

I have argued that this institutional violence is not like the other structures and phenomena in our life, that this violence is not linear. Institutional violence operates in a cycle, as the violence continues to be repeated. The 1972 Strike at Haverford College highlights the repetitive nature of violence, as the Bi-Co Strike demands and concerns were parallel to those we had already dealt with. To end the cycle of violence, we must find non-linear solutions so violence can meet itself. Unhappiness is a non-linear solution that might help to recognize violence as a cycle. These two Strikes demonstrate that linear solutions do not work to eradicate institutional violence. The continual violence that students have witnessed have not been isolated incidents that can be solved by using the past for the future. The violence presents and re-presents itself in the same kind of cycle that it has for decades- and we have to start recognizing this pattern. Though our institutions and our lives are based on a linear time, this institutional violence is not, and we cannot continue to alleviate it with unrecognizable, linear

solutions. What is at stake is continuing this process of linear solutions for cyclical violence that will prolong the frustration, exhaustion, and transformation.

This thesis is not a critique, an evaluation, or a solution. Rather it is an exploration of the confusion that law, violence, and temporality present. It is an exploration of how I have been tricked as a moral being in this society to search for happiness and the future, as if these are solutions to institutional violence. It is a guidance through how we have oriented ourselves in a linear way, and to show how this orientation has not been a sufficient way to solve this cyclical institutional violence. This is not a critique of the legal system, of the violence that we have so much endured over the past year, of the violence we continue to endure. It is a proposal to pause; in the confusion and in unhappiness. It is a proposal to not shy away from violence but learn to understand it in ways that we have only so rarely done. It is a push to actually acknowledge our complicity in violence, in producing violence, in our lack of awareness of our complicity in violence. As Ahmed writes, “Unhappiness is pushed to the margins, which means certain bodies are pushed to the margins, in order that the unhappiness that is assumed to reside within these bodies does not threaten the happiness that has been given.”⁵¹ We must recognize where and when we are happy, in which ways do we promote happiness, and how unhappiness is not a failure, but the beginning of reform. In understanding that violence operates in a cycle and it has not and will not be solved by linear solutions, we can commit to being unhappy to having violence to recognize itself and end the cycle of institutional violence. However, the questions remain: how do we invoke the law-destroying powers that Benjamin believes can transcend a legal system? Might unhappiness be this invisible pause that can begin this law-destroying process? One way to discover these answers is to start thinking about unhappiness as a way to achieve the good life. I am happy to be, and to cause, unhappiness.

⁵¹ Ahmed. *The Promise of Happiness*. 98.

Bibliography

- Ahmed, Sara. *The Promise of Happiness*. Duke University Press, 2010.
- Ahmed, Sara. *Living a Feminist Life*. Duke University Press, 2017.
- Birmingham, Peg. "On Violence, Politics, and the Law." *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 24, no. 1:1-20.2010.
- Cane, Peter. "MORALITY, LAW AND CONFLICTING REASONS FOR ACTION." *The Cambridge Law Journal* 71, no. 1: 59-85. 2012.
- Fanon, Frantz, et al. *The Wretched of the Earth*. London: Penguin, [2001] 1965.
- Frazer, Elizabeth, Hutchings, Kimberly. "On Politics and Violence: Arendt Contra Fanon." *Contemporary Political Theory* 7 (1) (02): 90-108. 2008.
- Firke, Mar. "Haverford College Black Students' League's Campaign to Eradicate Institutionalized Racism 1972." The Global Nonviolent Action Database. Swarthmore College. February 2, 2014.
<https://nvdatabase.swarthmore.edu/content/haverford-college-black-students-leagues-campaign-eradicate-institutionalized-racism-1972>.
- Greenhouse, Carol J. "Just in Time: Temporality and the Cultural Legitimation of Law." *The Yale Law Journal* 98, no. 8, 1631-651.1989.
- Guzmán, Luis. "Benjamin's Divine Violence: Unjustifiable Justice." *The New Centennial Review*, Vol. 14, No. 2, Law and Violence, pp. 49-64. Michigan State University. 2014.
- Halberstam, Judith. *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives*, New York University Press, 2005.
- Hart, H. L. A. *The Concept of Law*. Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2012.
- Khan, L. Ali. "Temporality of Law." Khan, A.. "Temporality of Law." *McGeorge Law Review* 40 (4). 2008.
- Mondress, Maxwell. "At the Second Sit-In: Reminders of Haverford's Broken Promises, Optimism for the Future." *The Clerk*, November 8, 2020.
<http://haverfordclerk.com/at-the-second-sit-in-reminders-of-haverfords-broken-promises-optimism-for-the-future/>.

Nobles, Richard, Schiff, David. "Luhmann: Law, Justice and Time." *Int J Semiot Law* 12:251-340. 326- 240. 2013.

McNeilly, K. "Are Rights Out of Time? International Human Rights Law, Temporality, and Radical Social Change." *Social and Legal Studies*, 28(6). 2019.

Pusey, Grace, "Enid Cook, 1927-1931: Bryn Mawr's First Black Graduate." *Black at Bryn Mawr*, February 9, 2015.

<https://blackatbrynmawr.blogs.brynmawr.edu/2015/02/09/enid-cook-first-black-graduate/#:~:text=Enid%20Cook%20was%20the%20first,degree%20from%20Bryn%20Mawr%20College.>

Raymond, Wendy, Bylander, Joyce. Letter to Haverford College Students. *Message from President Raymond and Dean Bylander*, October 28, 2020.

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1cS2tpRJe5ZXuZwM1HOS1O7f22zHaKzwS1H1z0osm4Kc/edit?usp=sharing>

Rae, Gavin. "Critiquing Violence: Benjamin on Law and the Divine." In *Critiquing Sovereign Violence: Law, Biopolitics, Bio-Juridicalism*, 23-45. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019.

Romo, Vanessa. "Philadelphia Police Release 'Traumatic' Bodycam Video Of Walter Wallace Jr. Shooting." NPR. NPR, November 5, 2020.

<https://www.npr.org/2020/11/04/931598467/philadelphia-police-release-traumatic-bodycam-video-of-walter-wallace-jr-shootin.>

Strike Collective. 1972 Event- Final Protest Timeline. Google Docs, November, 2021.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1IZBFaUHWxu_CEGkllksh-oErB7ZesWd7/view.

Strike Collective. Haverford College Strike, 2021. <https://www.hc-strike.com/>.

Strike Collective. "Demands." Haverford College Strike, 2021.

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1u3kg_XDs5ZHH4ma_hL0rlEn5SrQdfbHT9tRh8UE1zcY/edit?usp=sharing

Walter, Benjamin, Bullock, Marcus Paul, William Michael, Eiland Jennings, and Howard. "Critique of Violence." In *Selected Writings, v. 1. 1913-1926*, 236-252. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1996.

Zipp, Bobby. "Bryn Mawr Campus Roiled by Confederate Flag, Mason-Dixon Line in Dormitory." *The Phoenix*, September 25, 2014.

<https://swarthmorephoenix.com/2014/09/25/bryn-mawr-campus-roiled-by-confederate-flag-mason-dixon-line-in-dormitory/>.