

Brendan Fay

Prof. McClellan

CAL 105

11/15/2012

Interesting Thoughts Provoked By My Experience of Hurricane Sandy

I personally have always found hurricanes to be exciting events. While it may sound bad, I have been waiting for a good storm to come by the East Coast for quite some time. Needless to say, Hurricane Sandy delivered, but not without the expected consequences of such a storm. Widespread flooding and power outages damaged the Northeast, and the hurricane caused billions of dollars in damage. The physical effects of the storm were clear to everyone, but more thought provoking ideas tend to slip past the general public's notice. Ideas such as society's dependence on power, the context of our lives when compared to the past, and the potential usefulness of a hurricane occurring were made apparent to me by reflecting on my experiences during the storm. In light of such a terrible disaster, it is important to be able to take a step back and think critically about what has happened.

The most eventful part of my hurricane experience was when the power went out, which occurred towards the end of the storm on Monday night. At that time, I had a decent number of my friends in my room, with all of us using our laptops and all of our favorite electronic equipment. Naturally, we were disappointed by the blackout, so we decided to take up another friend's suggestion of trying an old fashioned game of Dungeons & Dragons. Considering the circumstances, I decided to give it a shot; we honestly enjoyed it far more than we expected, and we even got more people to play the following night. As a group, we were perfectly capable of entertaining ourselves. Only during the next few days did I discover how much of our student

body seemed to depend on electricity. With the offer of free electricity to Stevens students, the EAS building was packed to the brim, and hardly a single outlet was left unused. Other than charging devices for emergency needs, did the entire student body need to be using the internet at all times? As my group of friends discovered, there were plenty of things to do without power, but nearly everyone opted to browse the internet as per usual. Has society advanced so far as to not be able to live in comfort without electricity? Would the Class of 2016 be able to survive a hundred years ago without all of today's conveniences? The fact that our students decided to endure overcrowding to do the same thing they have done for months, or otherwise risk sitting aimlessly in the dorms, seriously concerns me.

Without most of the amenities provided by electricity, society seemed to be slowly falling apart. As I heard more and more about extended blackouts, looting, and endless lines at gas stations, I wondered why there was such confusion over power outages. It is indeed important to run heaters and refrigerators for comfort and health reasons, but to my knowledge, not one person suffered greatly from not having power. Humanity has survived for thousands of years, and it is only recently that the modern lifestyle came to be. I think that our society is ignorant of how humans have advanced technologically to the point that they are at today. Much like it is important to know the context of a reading, it is imperative that humanity is aware of its own context, in terms of where we are in the universe. We have forgotten our place in the context of humanity's existence: we came from animals living on a planet, and have lived simply for millennia, but we choose to use advancements to improve the quality of our lives. If modern technology were to suddenly disappear much like it did in the hurricane, we should refer back to life before technology, not run around in a blind panic. I wonder if we have been so removed

from more traditional ways of life that we may no longer be capable of returning to simpler times.

Although the hurricane is a terrible disaster, the event should not be forgotten and discarded as simply another storm. Such an occurrence has immense utility in that it can bring a number of issues to light, especially concerning the distribution and use of electricity in this case, and these issues should be addressed. While blackouts may be inevitable, the public should be more informed about what to do during such a situation, and how to act to reduce the overall confusion. I hope that after experiencing the hurricane, people will be more likely to remain calm throughout disasters and work towards helping one another. During my time in Hoboken right after the storm, the people on the streets looked as though they were lost and unsure of what to do next. If millions of others indeed acted similarly throughout the area, then mass hysteria may have had the opportunity to erupt in a short time. I worry about the world as a whole if a truly remarkable disaster were to occur, as my observations have shown me that people tend to intensify the severity of crises. Natural disasters are not just events in which your possessions get destroyed, as most people would think, but rather they are opportunities to assess your place on this planet in relation to nature and humanity. Experiencing something like Hurricane Sandy is extremely useful intellectually, as living through stressful times can offer the most invaluable knowledge available.

Frankie Guarini

Professor McClellan

CAL 105

November 15th, 2012

CAL 105: Sandy 101

Two days before Hurricane Sandy had touched down on the East Coast, I had packed my clothes, laptop, and other items for a somewhat reluctant three-day visit home. After all, most of my friends were staying on campus during the hurricane's wrath, and I thought the "Survivor-like" atmosphere would be exciting to be a part of. Last hurricane, Irene, the area in which I live, Bayonne, New Jersey, had been nearly one-hundred percent untouched—no loss of power or downed trees whatsoever (excluding branches and such). Because my home is situated on what is best described as a cliff, the water more than 50 feet away from the pavement of my dead end street, and because the much-hyped Hurricane Irene was a "flop" in my neighborhood, I mentally disregarded Hurricane Sandy. Of course, at 9:00 PM on Monday, October 29th, *very* much to my chagrin, my cocky, "I'm untouchable" demeanor was proven wrong. Thus, my initial three-day visit home had three days added to it, electricity subtracted from it, and the last thing going through my mind during that time was how Sandy and its consequences related to CAL 105.

When the power went out on Monday, I was laying in my bed watching T.V. My reaction was not one of panic or concern; it was actually quite indifferent. As much as I am a technology aficionado, I am equally as much "old school," able to recognize the addictive properties of modern technology and to do without it for some time. At first,

my 10-year old cousin who was staying with us was a bit disappointed at the lack of cable television, Internet connection, and consistent cellular service; and it made sense. Growing up in a world where technology was a universal standard, she had an implicit need for it. However, when Monopoly was brought out, illuminated by small LEDs and flashlights, and I finally taught her how to play for the first time, the need for technology vanished. Instead, it was replaced by the need for food and heat.

As the days progressed, and food was obtained from a generator-powered grocery store, each night became a multi-hour “family game night.” Whether it were consecutive games of Monopoly or kicking a soccer ball in the backyard with my little cousin, or a game of seven-card Rummy with my grandmother, the cold, power-less nights became needed time away from the responsibilities of life and the distractions of technology; I was able to bond with my family. Despite the circumstances, the overall attitude of the house during the power outage was ironically upbeat and stress-free. However, on the night of Saturday, November 3rd, as I was looking outside our sliding glass door at our near-30 foot tree looming over the garage in the backyard, I heard a low buzzing sound: the refrigerator. With the sudden burst of electricity into our household, I saw a very shocking response from my cousin that was perpetuated throughout our entire block: uncontrollable joy.

I will be the first to admit that I was happy to have the power back on, but the odd amount of happiness that seemed to emanate from everyone was strange. Perhaps they were cheering for the heat and ability to store food, but I perceived the happiness as a result of technological withdrawal; but to be fair, we were able to utilize the cars’ batteries to charge our devices if needed, so there was not exactly a withdrawal. All in

all, when the immediate consequences of Sandy on my neighborhood were lessened I was able to see just how badly this storm had affected our East Coast, especially those places literally on the shore. Having a small condo in Seaside Heights, the sight of roller coasters, restaurants, and other attractions completely decimated was a bit jarring. Even more jarring were the countless people with actually nothing left, no figurative tinge whatsoever.

Upon returning to class on Wednesday, November 7th, having just voted for the first time with my grandmother the day before, an activity that seemed almost insignificant in the wake of Sandy, the past nine days were put into perspective. The first class of that day was fittingly CAL 105. Unlike the rest of my professors that day, Professor McClellan engaged each of us to share our experience briefly and began to try to ask us how Sandy might relate to history as a field of study. With our class' usual silence, the relation immediately clicked in my mind, as I raised my hand and said: "Each of our accounts of Sandy helps to contribute to a universal perspective of it." Now this is not about my class participation, but when we were assigned this essay, I suddenly realized that there actually was a lot within my experience of Hurricane Sandy related to CAL 105.

Other than history, which became self-evident that Wednesday, I discovered some interesting philosophical ideas, albeit non-related to the specifics of the CAL curriculum, such as technological dependence and the question of what "true happiness" is. The two aforementioned ideas came to me almost violently when I noticed how some people reacted to not having technology for a little more than a week and their responses after it was restored. Easily evident of technological dependence, this behavior also made me

question what some people consider to produce happiness. I realized during the time I spent affected by Sandy that the true happiness I valued did not run on electricity but blood and oxygen. It is a cliché, but realizing how much my family means to me once again was the best outcome of Sandy and will hopefully help me treat them as well as I value them. Overall, I definitely do not regret my visit home that weekend, now appreciating my time spent during Sandy in more ways than one.

Frankie Guarini

Professor McClellan

CAL 105

November 15th, 2012

CAL 105: Sandy 101

Two days before Hurricane Sandy had touched down on the East Coast, I had packed my clothes, laptop, and other items for a somewhat reluctant three-day visit home. After all, most of my friends were staying on campus during the hurricane's wrath, and I thought the "Survivor-like" atmosphere would be exciting to be a part of. Last hurricane, Irene, the area in which I live, Bayonne, New Jersey, had been nearly one-hundred percent untouched—no loss of power or downed trees whatsoever (excluding branches and such). Because my home is situated on what is best described as a cliff, the water more than 50 feet away from the pavement of my dead end street, and because the much-hyped Hurricane Irene was a "flop" in my neighborhood, I mentally disregarded Hurricane Sandy. Of course, at 9:00 PM on Monday, October 29th, *very* much to my chagrin, my cocky, "I'm untouchable" demeanor was proven wrong.

When the power went out on Monday, I was laying in my bed watching T.V. My reaction was not one of panic or concern; it was actually quite indifferent. As much as I am a technology aficionado, I am equally as much "old school," able to recognize the addictive properties of modern technology and to do without it for some time. At first, my 10-year old cousin who was staying with us was a bit disappointed at the lack of Internet and such. But as the days progressed, and food was obtained from a generator-powered grocery store, each night became a multi-hour "family game night." Whether it

was consecutive games of Monopoly or seven-card Rummy with my grandmother, the cold, power-less nights became needed time away from the responsibilities of life and the distractions of technology; I was able to bond with my family.

However, on Saturday, November 3rd, as I gazed out our kitchen window, I heard the low buzz of the refrigerator. With the sudden burst of electricity into our household, I saw a very shocking response from my cousin that was perpetuated throughout our entire block: uncontrollable joy; I also saw just how terrible Sandy was, now that the power was restored. Seeing roller coasters and other attractions near Seaside Heights completely destroyed, a place I was just at not even one year ago, was jarring, to say the least. Upon returning to class on Wednesday, November 7th, the past nine days were put into perspective. The first class of that day was fittingly CAL 105 and our task was to simply share our experience with Sandy; then we were asked if that exercise pertained to history. Right there, it immediately “clicked” in my mind: history was just created—and we were its primary sources.

Other than history, which became self-evident that Wednesday, I discovered some interesting philosophical ideas: technological dependence and the question of what “true happiness” is. The two aforementioned ideas came to me almost violently when I noticed how some people reacted to not having technology for a little more than a week, and their responses after it was restored. Easily evident of technological dependence, this behavior also made me question what some people consider capable of producing happiness. I realized during the time I spent affected by Sandy that the true happiness I valued did not run on electricity but blood and oxygen. It is a cliché, but realizing how much my family

did mean to me was the best outcome of Sandy and will hopefully help me treat them as well as I value them. Overall, I definitely do not regret my visit home that weekend,

Gearht VanVoorhis

CAL-105

McClellan

15 November 2012

The Storm

October 29, 2012. The hurricane hits mainland New York and New Jersey. At night, the winds become wicked and the trees are marionettes dancing to the strings of the wind. Later, approximately ten-thirty at night, the black plague spreads across the East Coast plunging the world into darkness; the power would not be restored for a long time coming. Upon waking up on Tuesday, I realize the tragedy.

Tuesday is the day of truth. I crawl out of my hole to find the world turned upside-down. Leaves, twigs, and branches are strewn along the ground. The tragedy of witnessing what has become of the beautiful campus is shocking. I feel as though I am standing in a post-apocalyptic world. One tree, not a far walk from my dorm, was completely uprooted the night before. Seeing the one fallen tree lying there, makes it seem like the tree could be related to Jesus and his crucifixion. Possibly, the one tree took the brunt of the storm to protect the rest of the trees and limit the damage to them, as Jesus died to save mankind. I continue my walk to the dining hall.

That day, as usual, food is served at Pierce. However, unlike any other day, the food is limited and each student must wait on line to be handed a meal. There are no choices as to what one can eat; you eat it whether you like it or not. It makes me feel as though I am in a soup kitchen waiting to get my meal. Back in high school, I spent a few summers volunteering at

Roxbury Social Services where I would help the needy citizens get their food, clothes, and other items. Now, I feel the irony as currently I am the one being served. The glimmering hope for everyone is the EAS building.

Stevens is running a generator at the EAS building. The building stands as the only place on campus with power. Students from all different dorms crowd the halls of EAS to charge their devices, study, talk, and play games with one another. It stands as the safe-haven for us as though it is an air-raid shelter during World War II. I find it amazing though, that in all the time humans have had electricity, we still have yet to find a way that will allow us to never lose power, even in the wake of a terrible storm. I go back to my cave that night and sit in the dark with my friends for a while before falling asleep.

Each day passes similarly: go to Pierce, go to EAS, and sit in the dark. On Wednesday, I go with two of my friends to the shower in our dorm. It is complete and utter darkness except for the glow of my desk lamp which I place in the shower. Despite the darkness, the three of us take our showers and start singing out loud. One can always make the best of a bad situation. As for Thursday, my friends and I carry my TV and their Wii to EAS. We plug the TV into the wall in the hallway and play video games for a couple hours. This is probably the highlight of the whole week. Friday night, I go to my friend's house and stay until Saturday afternoon. By then, power is back at Stevens. It seems like all the things we normally take for granted, become our existence.

People always take things for granted. One does not know what he has until he has lost it. One week without power seems like an eternity without life. The world revolves around electricity, electronic devices and the infinite enjoyments they create. However, the world does

not seem to be able to exist without them, even for a short time. The interim after the storm in which there was no power shows that humans need to fix this. Ideally, people should be able to use electricity on a normal basis (as they do), but they should also be able to function completely fine without power. Another ideal situation would be for people to find a way to never lose power. Following either idealism, people would never have to go through the tragedy of losing a great part of their life simply because they lose power. The only problem is that these are idealisms and, as idealisms, they will most likely never work out in the real world. Nonetheless, even if we cannot attain either of these conditions, we should strive to get as close to these conditions as we possibly can. Then, and only then, the aftermath of storms will have limited effect on society.

Kayla Mallay

Professor McClellan

CAL 105

15 November 2012

Hurricane Sandy Reflection

Hurricane Sandy caused devastation to many areas that could take months, maybe even years, to repair. The storm completely destroyed some lives and has forced people to rebuild from the ground up. Being one of the very few people to stay on campus I was able to see the damage caused to Hoboken as well as New York City. My perspective of the storm was very different from that of students who were able to return home before or after the storm.

During Hurricane Sandy, while staying on campus, I had very restricted contact with my parents and anyone else from home. Being from Long Island, I was very worried about the water affecting my home but my main concern was for the home and lives of my grandparents who live on Long Beach Island in New York. While they are only twenty minutes from my home, they are seven houses away from the ocean, along with the home of my best friend. The day before the storm I spoke to my mother on the phone. She had informed me that my grandparents had made the decision to stay at their home instead of staying with my family. They chose to stay so they could maintain any damage their home might face, which may include flooding, fallen trees, or any other hazards; but they had not anticipated the storm that would hit Long Beach Island. Finally after two days, I was able to get in contact with my mom for a few minutes. She had told me that halfway through the storm she attempted to take the twenty minute trip to Long Beach Island to pick up my grandparents because she had not heard from

them and was concerned. She made it halfway to the bridge and realized that the areas in the towns between our house and my grandparents' were completely flooded and there was no way to get to them.

When hearing this I was very concerned that my grandparents were trapped in their home or even worse. When I was finally able to get in contact with people from home, I was able to speak to my best friend about what was happening at home. She shared that Long Beach Island was destroyed, the boardwalk was completely ripped up, the stores on most of the streets were completely flooded, there was no electricity and the plumbing system was a problem. This only made me more nervous because we were still unable to get in contact with my grandparents. My mother had already reported that my grandparents were not heard from to the police but never received a response.

Eventually my mom was able to contact my grandparents and although their home had flooded a little, both of them were perfectly fine. This terrible experience made me really think about how much I value my family and that family should come first. It also emphasized the reliance that we all place on technology. Two of the major ways of communicating in the aftermath was on Facebook or text messages, that is, when service was available. One of the positive aspects of this was directly related to Long Beach Island. A Facebook group was created to keep people updated and acted as a way to get in contact with residents for those who could not reach their families. Also request to have someone check their home and make sure that they were okay were common. This was incredibly helpful because people away from home were able to learn the status of their families stuck in this disaster, which was extremely relieving for most.

I am very grateful because my family, home and friends were all okay in this storm. Although this storm caused minor inconveniences for my family, it destroyed the lives of others and I wish them

the best. I hope to be able to help and contribute to these destroyed areas. I realized that although a lot of emphasis is put on material things, the important thing is friends and family.

Nabilah Zamani

Prof. McClellan

CAL-105 B

11/15/2012

My Experience of Hurricane Sandy from the Point of View of CAL 105

I have never experienced natural disaster first hand in my entire life. Living in a country where its climate has always been hot and humid throughout the year, when Sandy hit Hoboken, I was definitely terrified. I was in the closet when the power suddenly went off that afternoon. Feeling petrified, I went out to see what were my housemates doing. Soon after, piles of emails and text messages from Stevens Alerts system and Stevens Housing came in, telling us all to stay calm together. That night, my housemates and I slept together in our sleeping bags at the living room. We watched from the window the trees shaking vigorously like they were about to come out from their roots and the water rushing in, flooding the first floor of our building in split second.

One of the reasons why I chose to further my studies at Stevens was because I was confident that Hoboken would not have much natural disaster as like elsewhere. Hurricane Sandy has caused much damage including in Hoboken. The first few days after the water has receded, I went out of the apartment with my housemates to see the aftermath of Sandy. It was heartbreaking to see a destructed side of Hoboken. It felt like I was in a ghost town. It was completely dark and dull that it felt like I was in one of the movies on alien attack or the world ending. It was amazing to think that it was all fun and great before it happened, with the lights on the streets and people walking around with their dogs, all taken away in just one night. In my opinion, technically we are responsible for the destruction. Globalization and development have somewhat affected the ecosystem and caused the mother nature to be imbalanced. Through the reading in CAL105, I have seen major differences back in the early days and today. Even though it is not specified, the nature has changed throughout the years to give ways for

skyscrapers. We are the generation that is responsible for the collateral damage that we did. Hence, we have to pay the consequences.

Honesty and trust definitely play major role at times of hardship. I learned that it is true that you can never trust completely what is written in the newspaper or as stated in the media. During the chaotic hour, we were still able to receive calls and text messages. There were reporters calling in all the way from Malaysia, trying to get the inside scoop of what was happening to the students at Stevens. I found that what was printed in the newspaper was manipulated to make a dramatic impact to readers that everyone here was in a terrible situation. Little details like what we had for our dinner were twisted to make it as if we were in a lot of trouble. I concluded from there, whatever articles or statements that we come across next should never be judged from the first look. Dig further to find the truth, from different points of view to avoid being misled.

Before Sandy, I have never thought that electricity was important in everyday life. Of course I went through everyday chores just like everyone else which requires the use of electricity. But I have never thought that it was that significant. From charging appliances to boiling water, these tasks that are being done every single day need electricity. It was a hell for me when the power supply was cut off. Even taking shower was a hassle without the hot water. The challenges that I had to go through to live my usual life without power made me think that I should appreciate life more. I should not be complaining that I have nothing to do when the power was cut off. There are people elsewhere that suffer with far more greater consequences in everyday life. Some people struggle to just get a five minute break to meet ends meet. Hence, I learned that I should make my time to the fullest when I had it in my hand.

I used up most of my time without the electricity creating little craft sticks in dresses. At that moment, when all I had were candles to light up the room, I felt blessed and thankful for still being able

to see. Darkness does not stop the blind all these while. So why should I complain about it. In my opinion, everyone should be more thankful and appreciative in life. Without these sorts of disasters, we would be blinded by the world, and we would never have thought about the good things we have every day. We should try living for a day without any technology and electricity to realize that we have had so much around us. Socrates did not know that he was going to be punished for advising people. Be grateful and live life to the fullest, you will never know what is going to happen tomorrow.