

# **CITY TECH WRITER**

**Volume 14 2019**

**Outstanding Student Writing  
From All Disciplines**

**Lucas Kwong & Mark Noonan  
Editors**

Cover by Odalys Punch

Art Director: Lloyd Carr

### About the Cover:

This cover piece for *City Tech Writer* was inspired by the decorated initials found in the old illuminated manuscripts for religious texts and the drafts for the Gutenberg Bible. The marriage between imagery and words has a rich history and I wanted to portray that concept in my design. When books were starting to be made in Europe, they were commissioned by nobles and royalty, as they were the only people who were literate. The mass populace was told writing and reading were for the privileged and that owning books was for the rich. This design pays homage to how far we are coming as a society in providing opportunities for education and literacy to all. This design was made as a tribute to both the beauty of art in writing and the beauty of writing and reading texts, which can be one day appreciated by all.

— Odalys Punch

New York City College of Technology  
City University of New York

# Preface

Welcome to *City Tech Writer*, Volume 14. As the new editors of this journal, we're thrilled to present a tour through our students' personal experiences, intellectual adventures, and creative experiments. Throughout, you'll note a desire to forge connections between subjects, time periods, regions, and methods of achieving social justice. The link between math and fashion comes to the fore; the humble potato journeys from the 1500's to the present day; a one-act play explores the familial ties linking China and America; and hip-hop joins forces with social media to empower the youth of #Blacklivesmatter. Several English students incisively analyze a play (*Angels in America*), explore a period (the Harlem Renaissance), and compare a classic film (*Casablanca*) to its lesser known original source. Creative works also thread together mundane acts such as working or strolling down a street, turning everyday life into poetry.

We'd like to thank the faculty throughout the College who submitted outstanding writing from their courses; Professor Peter Fikaris, whose communication design students created an array of inventive cover art; and Odalys Punch, whose inkwell of inspiration graces this volume's cover. We'd also like to thank Julia Jordan and William Lupurena, along with students of the Faculty Commons Design Team, Anmol Kaur, Jeremy Renner, and Hoa Vu, who designed posters for *City Tech Writer's* call for submissions.

Our gratitude also extends to Professor Lloyd Carr, the journal's Art Director, who once again oversaw the graphics on the cover, and to Bill Linet of United Publishing Group, who produced the volume with skill and care. Purchasing Agent Marcella Lee and Administrative Coordinator Chioma Okoye deserve thanks for their logistical guidance. President Russell Hotzler, Provost Bonne August, Associate Provost Pamela Brown, Dean Justin Vazquez-Poritz, and Dr. Stephen Soiffer have all provided affirmation and precious resources: *merci*. A special thanks goes to the President's Executive Assistant Marilyn Morrison and Shani Tait-Santana, Assistant to the President. Thanks also to English Department Chair Nina Bannett for her support and assistance. We'd also like to thank Julie Bradford, William Lupurena, Lu Xue, and Julia Jordan in Faculty Commons for helping with the distribution of the volume. We are grateful to English Department Office Assistants Lily Lam and Selima-Nijah McMillan for being so generous with their time.

A big thank you goes to former editors Suzanne Miller and Megan Behrent, for their vision in helming past volumes, and for lending invaluable insight and advice as we took the reins for the present one. Finally, as always, we wish to thank Professor Jane Mushabac, who founded the journal in 2006, and created a much-needed platform for City Tech's outstanding student writers.

Lucas Kwong and Mark Noonan  
Editors



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# Las Mañanitas

Alex Garcia

Sadness flew in the air inside my home; the time had arrived to say our goodbyes. The two-month visit of my grandparents had finally come to an end. Today was the last day before tomorrow's departure. Therefore, we figured, why not spend it the best way possible? With the annual Mexico Independence Day festival underway at Fifth Avenue, we decided to go. What I didn't know at the time was that attending this festival would be one of the best decisions I ever made, a decision that helped me find a new part of myself.

As we walked past each stand, gazing through what the people had to offer, my grandpa suddenly tugged my sleeve. The great force of his tug emitted an excitement similar to when a kid drags their mother back to the toy aisle, after just skipping it. My grandpa is no longer physically stable, and the sudden act of such force was surprising enough for me to stop and turn around to figure out what had caught his attention. Standing to the left was a group of mariachis playing classical Mexican songs. "That's exactly how I met your grandma. Always asking me to play her a song," my grandpa said, making me tilt my head to him in a confused manner. As far as I knew, he never once laid a finger on a guitar. But according to him, he's known how to play since the age of 14. With the remaining money he had since arriving in New York, he purchased a guitar from the stand: a dark brown classical guitar, tinted with red throughout the outline, and equipped with clear nylon strings. The bridge was shaped in a sharp curve. A large rose flowed down the guitar's neck, with an Aztec symbol imprinted on the odd frets, and a rosette pattern that especially stood out. The guitar screamed Mexico all over it, and considering that that is his home country, I didn't blame him for choosing this particular one.

My grandfather wrapped the strap of the guitar around my shoulder, and we both decided to find a quieter place, since the bass from the speakers blew out loud waves, making it nearly impossible for us to communicate. Additionally, the large mob was trapped in between the stands, as people pushed against each other with little to no space in between. It felt similar to a maze, since the remaining of my family members had unknowingly disappeared deeper inside, without any knowledge of leaving us behind.

Minutes later, we found ourselves sitting down on the old wooden benches that stood on the highest hill of Sunset Park. From this spot, the park gave us the best possible view of the city, from the bright blue Freedom Tower reflecting the sun's radiant smile, to the needle sharp Empire State Building nursing the people of New York. Sunset Park always has had something to offer to everybody. It's a fast-growing neighborhood that is finally getting the recognition it deserves, and will always welcome newcomers—newcomers such as my grandpa, who, I knew, had already grown to like the neighborhood. Instead of feeling homesick, he felt home. The large Latin population in this town really helped him to become comfortable almost instantly. And the large Mexican festival standing in front of us definitely made him feel more at home.

"Well, what are you waiting for? Play it," my grandpa joked, as I had the guitar sitting on my lap.

"I don't even know where to begin," I replied, adjusting the guitar as if I was about to play.

"Doesn't matter, try it," he insisted, while reaching into his pocket and taking out a pick for me to use. Without thinking, I shrugged my shoulders, took the pick, then strummed the guitar once. Immediately, a loud screeching sound emerged, almost as if it had become alive, and begged to not be strummed again. My grandpa chuckled as I handed him the pick instead, followed by the guitar. "Watch and learn," he said. He lifted up the guitar using his lap, and then began playing "Las Mañanitas," a Mexican version of the

“Happy Birthday” song. Despite his age, his fingers worked smoothly across the neck of the guitar. With a steady pace, he strummed the strings up and down. I froze as I watched him change to different chords, studying how his fingers pressed against the strings. The rest was the guitar’s magic. After the song was over, he handed the guitar back to me. “Your turn,” he smiled, as I grabbed the guitar with uncertainty and prepared myself. Before I could continue, he stopped me and told me to place my fingers in a strange position. Then, from that position to another unknown one, he taught me to strum down gently each time. Little did I know he was teaching me the basic chords that most songs include: the G, C, A, E and D chords. Learning these five simple chords was as simple as learning alphabet letters as a child, but as difficult as beginning to write them on paper.

The daytime sky began to go dim. Still, I was there in the same position, learning these five basic chords. I felt an aching pain on my left fingers, as if I’d been using them to collect cactuses. The strings were unforgiving as well; each time I pressed down, it felt like a blade cutting each of my fingers open even more. But with the support of my grandpa, and a few breaks in between, I continued to practice. Soon, I had gotten comfortable to the five chords, now able to play a simple melody pattern using what I had just been taught. Afterwards, he introduced me to guitar tabs, which were way easier than playing chords. I asked why he didn’t just teach me this from the start, and his reply was, “Just to see you struggle.” Once I learned the basics of tabs, he began teaching me the intro to “Las Mañanitas.” Even though it was simple, the transition from fret to fret was harder to do than say. With no clue as to how my grandpa managed to stay patient through the lesson, I only learned to play the first thirty seconds of the entire two-minute song.

As I played the intro, I saw the look on my grandpa’s face, smiling as he applauded. “Don’t worry, I know you’ll learn the rest soon enough. Just make sure to know how to play the entire song, for when I do come back, you’ll play it for my birthday.” I laughed, and nodded as I handed the guitar back. However, he refused to grab it. At this point, I was confused and insisted that he played again. “No, no,” he said. “It’s yours. Take it home with you, I have plenty back home. Consider it a present from me to you for your birthday.” Lost for words, I struggled to even say thank you. I was upset that that night would be his last day in New York, but honored that he spent half the day with me. Remembering that tomorrow he was set to leave, I knew I was going to miss him now more than ever. Inside, I felt like a hypocrite, because throughout the two months he had been here, this was the most time I’d ever spent time with him. My grandpa noticed the depressed look on my face, then grabbed the guitar and began to play a happier song named “La Bamba.”

This very moment felt like a movie, as if this entire time there was just a crew of cameramen hiding behind the bushes. The setting encouraged this idea; it was now darker, the tall buildings in the city now shining brighter than anything else in the park. I’d been living in Sunset Park my entire life, and never had I had this type of moment. Even if I didn’t have a picture to remember this day by, I knew I would capture this moment always in my mind. Even after the next day, when he went back to Mexico, I continued practicing the same song he taught me until I learned it. Because of him, I’m happy when people try new things and are encouraged to continue if they have a passion for it. Because of my grandpa, I found a new hobby that has followed me till this day.

# Counterparts

## Jessica Alort

It is September of 2012, the beginning of a new school year, and my son Zuriel is going to pre-K in a Catholic school in Sunset Park, a low-income neighborhood in Brooklyn. My husband and I have heard that public schools in this zone are bad, and because we want my son to have a good education, we have decided to send him to Saint Agatha Catholic School. My husband is making a tremendous sacrifice to send him there by paying almost 500 dollars a month. The school is located in an old brick building painted in ivory; adjacent to the school is the rectory and the church. The church is big, and the windows are tinted in different colors. The walls are decorated with religious statues, and the altar is just a table covered with a long white fabric with a Bible on top, but underneath it is always decorated with colorful flowers like chrysanthemums, daisies, carnations, and red and white roses. The school is old and sometimes cold. The heat is not strong enough to keep such an old big building warm. Chairs and tables are very old-fashioned. It seems that the school hasn't replaced them in decades; I have the same impression about the teachers. The only young teacher in the building is Ms. De Vilio, the pre-K teacher. I couldn't be happier to see my son going to her class.

Catholic schools require parents to volunteer twenty hours a year or pay a service fee, so I decided to volunteer to save that money. By June of 2013, I have completed many more than twenty hours. By now, I know everybody in the school and everybody knows me. School is over, and my husband and I are still thinking that the Catholic school is the best choice for my son.

It is July 2013 and I am cooking at home when the phone rings. Lisa, one of the school's administrators, calls to ask me if I want to work as a Kindergarten teacher's aide the following school year in exchange for Zuriel's tuition.

"That's fantastic, Lisa, of course I accept!"

This will give me the opportunity not only to be close to my kids but also to learn the language, since I speak very little English. All the English background I have is from two months I spent in London and a few months of English classes in the American Language Communication Center (ALCC), an English school in Manhattan.

I come from a working-class family in Peru. In March of 1998, I left the nest to go to Switzerland to learn French and make some money to pay for my college education, because my parents couldn't finance the expenses. I first planned to stay there only two years, but things didn't go as planned. I ended up living in Switzerland for almost eight years.

Back in 2002, while I was living in Switzerland, I decided to go to London because I wanted to learn English. English is very important, and sooner or later, I was going to need it to pursue my education. I saved some money, paid for my English school and housing for two months, and bought my airplane ticket to London. I got to know the city very well since I stayed there for two months doing nothing else but studying English and being a tourist. I had a good time getting to know all the museums, Big Ben, Buckingham Palace, Camden Place, and many other places. After completing my language adventure in London, I went back to Switzerland to return to my job in the cafeteria of a gym in Lausanne.

In December 2003, I came to the United States to visit Pedro, one of my best friends from Peru. We both come from the same neighborhood in Callao, and we were very close until I left my country. I learned he had traveled to the United States, and in those days our ways of communication were limited. Facebook wasn't invented yet, and email was still something difficult for us since we didn't grow up immersed in this technology. I finally got in contact with him after almost fifteen years. We stayed in touch almost every week until he invited me to visit New York—all expenses paid. This sounded good. I planned my vacation for that year and came to New York.

My visit only lasted twelve days, but those twelve days were enough to change the course of my life. We fell in love, and for two years I traveled back and forth between Switzerland and the United States. Then in March of 2005, I decided to move permanently to the United States. I was excited to start a new life in Ozone Park, Brooklyn, and I wanted to learn more English.

In September of that year, I found out I was expecting my first child. Zuriel was born in July of 2006, so I quit school and moved with my husband to a bigger apartment. Since then, I've been dedicated to taking care of my family.

It is September 2013, the first day of school. Today is not only my son's first day in Kindergarten and my chance to work in his class, but also the day that my daughter starts pre-K in Ms. De Vilio's class. After the bell rings and all the students are escorted to their classrooms, I run to the office to receive instructions for the day. Mrs. Oliva, the secretary, says, "Go to Mrs. Serrano's class. She is waiting for you."

I have been in this room several times, but I have never seen the classroom in detail. Everything in the classroom is colorful—chairs, tables, even the foam mat. The walls have plenty of charts: ABC's, numbers, upper and lower cases, animals, shapes, and colors. There is also a little room that the teacher keeps closed during the day. The classroom is divided into two parts by several bookshelves. Mr. Serrano gave the bookshelves to his wife about a year ago when his company refurnished his office. One side of the room is designated for tables, chairs, lunch boxes, coats, book packs, and books. On the other side is Mrs. Serrano's desk, and the foam mat seating area is meant for the morning's teaching routine where the kids learn the months of the year, days of the week, numbers, and sight words from the smartboard. My desk is in the middle of the room by the windows between the two divisions.

I know Mrs. Serrano is from Trinidad and that her parents brought her to the United States when she was ten. Parents at school think she is from the Dominican Republic, maybe because people like to make assumptions depending on the color of your skin.

Mrs. Serrano has a very strong personality and wants everything to be perfect. Every year the school prepares a Christmas show. This is an opportunity for families to see their kids perform and for the school to raise some money. Mrs. Serrano is responsible for producing the show. She collects all the information concerning the show, such as exactly what the kids are going to perform, and insists that every teacher make sure that the lyrics are "clean" (no bad words). She also makes the rehearsal schedule, requiring everybody to arrive to rehearsal at the exact time.

She then chooses a teacher to be responsible for the scenography. This year it's Mr. Wang, but because he is new and doesn't know what the stage should look like, he asks me for help. He knows I like to decorate. When Mrs. Serrano finds out, she intervenes. "That's not your job," she says to me. "Let him do what he needs to do."

I sometimes don't like the way she talks to me or the way she looks at people. The first week, she asked me, "Do you understand what I'm saying?"

"Sure, I may not talk too much, but I listen and understand what you say."

She then made a face. Maybe she assumed that I didn't talk much because I didn't understand English.

It is December and almost all my work for the year is done. I have created a morning routine for the kids, from putting their stuff away, to choosing three kids per week to give out the coloring books, to taking them in small groups to the restrooms. I have cut templates for the year and separated them by month. I have opened the useless closet and transformed it into the new lunch box and coat room organized by names, and I have even changed the layout of the classroom. We are no longer divided by the old metal bookshelves.

I have tried my best to do a good job, and Mrs. Serrano seems to appreciate it. She even makes a comment about how organized, clean, and open the classroom looks. I take that as a compliment, but she is still reluctant to become my friend. I don't expect that; I'm there to do my job.

Sometimes, the atmosphere is tense between Mrs. Serrano and me because we disagree on certain things. One day we got a new student, a little girl from China. The school is located in the Chinese neighborhood of Sunset Park. I know that the Chinese kids who come to this school often are born in the United States but are sent to China when they are around two years old to live with their grandparents. Then they return to the United States to start Kindergarten. There are two reasons for this: first, the kids are sent to China because their parents can't take care of them and childcare in New York City is too expensive. The parents send their children to live with the grandparents while they make some money and get financially ready to support their kids when they come back to start Kindergarten. Additionally, the parents know that the best way to create a strong bond between their children and their language and culture is by sending them to live in China.

As a parent, I cannot begin to imagine the pain of being separated from my kids.

This girl is one of several students who don't speak English in class. The fact that some of her students don't speak English well irritates Mrs. Serrano, because she can't keep up with her teaching. She sometimes gives up on these kids because there is no way for her to communicate with them, but I know what it is to be misunderstood due to language differences. I have experienced this terrible feeling when I went to Switzerland and didn't speak French and when I went to London and didn't speak English. Being an immigrant myself, I empathize with these kids. I can't understand why she can't feel some empathy with them, since she is also an immigrant. This might come from the fact that she comes from another English-speaking country and didn't have to confront those language challenges.

I propose making a group with the kids who don't speak English and teaching them to read as I did with my daughter. Surprisingly, she accepts, but not for long. After a few weeks, she abruptly decides to stop the help I was giving to the kids. When I ask her why she doesn't want me to continue, as the kids are doing better in school, she again says to me in an arrogant fashion, "I will not argue with you."

This is the second time she has treated me like nothing. I can't accept this anymore, so I leave the classroom and go to the kitchen where I find Mr. Carlos and Mr. David, the two school custodians. When I start crying, they know that something is going on.

"Why does she have to be so mean?" I ask. "She doesn't appreciate what I do. I don't get well paid for what I'm doing, and I'm still doing my best."

"Be patient my dear. She's a good person, but she's sometimes possessed by her bad temper." Mr. David starts laughing, and so do I. After I drink a coffee, I go back to the classroom.

It is February and Mrs. Serrano will be out of school for a couple of weeks while she recovers from surgery. Mr. Wang will substitute for her, but Mr. Wang is the computer teacher. He is young, and he doesn't know anything about kindergarteners.

I end up leading the class for two weeks, and Mr. Wang is my assistant. I know the routine, but cutting paper, putting kids' folders in their backpacks, and taking them to the restroom is something he has probably never done before. Not knowing the kids' names makes all this more complicated for him.

After Mrs. Serrano is back on her duties, she lets me know how grateful she is that I took care of her class. She is now treating me in a different way. She asks me how I feel, how my weekend was, and what my summer plans are. I believe this is her way of showing appreciation.

At the end of February, she asks me a question. "Have you ever had Zuriel tested for problems with attention?"

"No, never. Should I?"

I can tell from the way she asks me this question that she is concerned about Zuriel and feels that something may not be right.

"Have you noticed he is always looking out the window?"

"I have noticed he gets distracted, but this could be true of any kid of his age."

How could she know something is wrong with my kid? I'm supposed to know better; I'm the mother! I know my son has some speech delays, but I never imagined confronting a situation like my son needing to be tested for learning issues. I must call the pediatrician; he should know better.

On the day of the appointment, Dr. Carvin asks me questions about Zuriel. "Does Zuriel take a lot of time to finish his homework?" "Does he constantly repeat the same question?" "Does he make careless mistakes or speak nonsense?" I respond "yes" to all his questions.

What does this mean?

Dr. Carvin tells me that my son could have ADHD, but he would like to refer me to a specialist, Dr. Hassan, a neurologist who specializes in kids with ADHD. All of this is new for me. I heard about ADHD, or attention deficit disorder, a few years ago, but I believed that only excessively active kids could have ADHD. My son is completely the opposite; I would describe him as a daydreamer.

Dr. Hassan asks me the same questions Dr. Carvin asked me a few days before and a few others. After I answer all his questions, he is ready to give me the diagnosis. "Yes, Zuriel has ADHD, but the inattentive type." This means that Zuriel is unable to focus for a long period of time, and he is unable to stay on or easily move from one task to another. This can affect his grades, or worse, his self-esteem.

What type of diagnosis is this? In the appointment he never turns to look at my son or examine him at any moment.

He explains to me the medications that are available on the market and prescribes one of these to Zuriel. I take the prescription even though I want to keep my son away from those medications and schedule an appointment for a follow-up.

The next day I tell Mrs. Serrano what the doctor has confirmed. "He has ADHD," I say. I'm so sad wondering if my son will be OK.

"He will be OK," Mrs. Serrano reassures me. How could she be so sure? "I know what you're going through." It turns out her son has ADHD. She has done her best to make him succeed, but it is hard work.

It is April and Zuriel is taking medication every day before going to school. I have done a lot of research, and this seems to be the only solution. Mrs. Serrano doesn't agree with me. She doesn't like to see Zuriel so quiet. Neither do I, but I'm giving it a try. She allows me to have some one-on-one time with Zuriel during classwork. I'm doing my best, but nothing has changed. He is still inattentive, so I decide to take him off medication.

Mrs. Serrano recommends that I take Zuriel to see a specialist at St. John's University in Queens, where she took her son many years ago to be diagnosed. I hesitate because I can't handle more bad news. We'll see next year.

By May, Mrs. Serrano is friendlier. She sincerely appreciates my work in her classroom; she lets me know that I am doing a good job, and she tells me she is happy that I will work in her classroom next year. By the end of the month, we start having more personal conversations. I know more about her family and she knows more about mine.

It is June, graduation day, and the children are moving up to first grade well-prepared. The kids who speak Chinese are doing better. Mrs. Serrano and I have overcome our differences for the sake of the kids in kindergarten. We have made a good team. We are now planning things for next year. I truly appreciate all I have learned from her, from our conversations, and from our arguments also. We have found we have more things in common than differences. She is a dedicated mother and a disciplined person, and so am I. I learned that she is not arrogant; she is exquisite, and sometimes very intense. She has taught me a lot in 160 days. We have had to see each other every day, Monday to Friday, from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. We think it would be a good idea to get together over the summer, since she has free time: school is over, her husband is at work, and her kids are with their friends. Our relationship has changed for the good; we have created a bond, and I can call this "friendship." I can't wait to see what next year will bring us.

# Usage of Mathematics in Fashion Design

## Arsha Attique

Fashion design is a new term for a process that has existed for centuries, the development of clothing. History shows various steps and processes used to design garments worn then and now. With time, the structure of garments, and specific practices of the process, have included and excluded many forms. One thing that has always remained constant, however, is the use of mathematics, which helps execute the garment's desired form and structure.

Designers often use geometric form to create a shape or graphic pattern. One of the most critical parts of the fashion design is the shape, whether it is the geometric shapes used to produce the look or the final product. "A shape is a standard or universally recognized spatial form like a circle or a triangle that helps the viewer identify various objects" (Bell and Ternus, 2015, 61). The most widely used geometric forms are round and oval since it represents a whole form; however, designs are constructed in complex ways to create unique designs. In literal terms, the final look may be constructed with the use of ovals, circles, triangles, quadrilaterals or other shapes in complex ways. Body shapes, such as hourglass or pear shapes, are used to experiment with specific garment styles, which may accentuate specific features. With the help of these forms, the garments appear to give the illusion of complex designs otherwise difficult to achieve.

Moreover, fashion designers must initially find the correct measurements to achieve the desired look with the right proportions, defined as "the relationship between apparent size, mass, scale, or optical weight of two or more objects" (Bell and Ternus, 57). Designers want to make sure that the final look will slip on to the wearer without any complications. "Proportion is the relationship between apparent size, mass, scale, or optical weight of two or more objects" (Bell and Ternus, 2015, 57). In fashion design, paying attention to the proportion means that once the garment's look is completed, it will still measure to the wanted scale. It is crucial for the garment to stay in its correct size, since, according to Bell and Ternuss, "size is all about proportion, ration, mass, or scale" (62).

Patterns, which create illusions or symbolism, also play an important role in clothing. Patterns can be "nature, man-made objects, imagination, [or] symbolism" (Rigdon). In the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the exhibition *Heavenly Bodies* consisted of "fashion and the Catholic imagination" embodied with religious motifs: cross signs, holy pictures, saints, mosaics. For many religious designs, the use of lines is prominent. "Lines guide the eyes to a feature or linear element that sets a mood. Long horizontal lines can suggest calm and stability, for example. Jagged lines can convey a sense of excitement and movement" (Bell and Ternus, 59).

Fashion designers also experiment with symmetry and asymmetry. Symmetry is when one part or half of an object is precisely the same as the other(s), producing a mirror-like reflection. In contrast, asymmetry means that one part or half is not the same as the other(s). The garment itself could be symmetrical or asymmetrical, with the lengths and cuts on one half being similar to, or different from, the other half.

However, there can be times when the garment is symmetrical or asymmetrical, but the shapes, patterns, lines, and other elements being used will be or not be the same. Asymmetry could be what is used or where the designs in the garment are positioned.

Finally, fashion designers use math to find out how much content is needed for the desired look. The designer might be looking for the right amount of fabric, since an inappropriate amount might make the garment look ill-fitted, shorter or longer than desired. The designer might need to know how much thread is required, and how many beads, sequins, or embellishment will be used to fill up the desired areas. Quantity is just as significant as quality.

Historically, social hierarchy may have played a significant role in determining when and how math was used in fashion. Before the Industrial Age, the upper social class would wear many layers of garments for one look, whereas the lower social class had limited quantity and quality of clothing. However, post-Industrial Age machinery and technology helped mass-produce clothing. Today, fashion designing massively relies on the use of math. The use of geometric forms, units of conversion, and other areas of math help today's artists to visualize a 2D sketch and transform it into a 3D sculpted look. Those pursuing a degree and career in fashion design are required to take mathematics to gain an understanding of sketch-to-structure form.

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# The Right to Health Care

Carol Lee

Maintaining a hale and hearty lifestyle can be difficult but achievable. However, many individuals fail to obtain a healthy lifestyle because of one reason: the inaccessibility of quality health care, made worse by exorbitant fees and strenuous approval process. The right to health care would provide protection for all individuals and ensure a basic, yet vital, aspect of survival.

As Atul Gawande writes, in 1813, Congress approved and passed the Vaccine Act, through which “a National Vaccine Agent was appointed to maintain stocks of vaccine and supply it to any American who requested it. The government was soon providing free vaccine for tens of thousands of people each year” (14). According to PBS, new medical procedures and services were introduced to American health care in the 20th century. The 70,000 doctors present within the country began performing “.... [surgeries which were] now common, especially for removing tumors, infected tonsils, appendectomies and gynecological operations. Doctors [were] no longer expected to provide free services to all hospital patients” (1). However, while the Social Security Act was passed in the 1930s, it excluded health care. Many Americans pressured “.... the Roosevelt Administration [for health insurance], but politics [began] to be influenced by internal government conflicts over priorities. Against the advice of insurance professionals, Blue Cross [began] offering private coverage for hospital care in dozens of states” (“PBS- Healthcare Crisis: Healthcare Timeline”). Since the 1950s, Americans who are financially eligible have been able to purchase private insurance, and those who need welfare services have been able to use it. As the number of full-time doctors increased from 55% to 69% in 1960, President Lyndon Johnson introduced and enacted both Medicare and Medicaid (“PBS- Healthcare Crisis: Healthcare Timeline” 1). By 1970, healthcare costs inflated, “.... partially due to unexpectedly high Medicare expenditures, rapid inflation in the economy, expansion of hospital expenses and profits, and changes in medical care including greater use of technology, medications, and conservative approaches to treatment” (“PBS- Healthcare Crisis: Healthcare Timeline” 1).

However, in 1986, “Congress passed the Emergency Medical Treatment and Active Labor Act (EMTALA) .... which established criteria for emergency services and criteria for safe transfer of patients between hospitals,” (“Patients’ Rights” 1). With the enactment of the EMTALA, all hospitals had to provide medical attention and treatment to patients until they were ready for discharge. It also ensured that physicians and hospitals would follow the EMTALA because “[both physicians and hospitals] [could] be penalized up to \$50,000 for each knowing violation of the law,” (“Patients’ Rights” 1). The cost of health care rose again in 1990; however, this time, it did so “at double the rate of inflation,” (“PBS- Healthcare Crisis: Healthcare Timeline” 1). Americans pushed for reform within the healthcare system, but healthcare reform legislations failed to pass. In 2013, Gawande points out, “the Affordable Care Act was passed to serve a similar purpose [to the 1813 Vaccine Act]: to provide all Americans with access to the life-preserving breakthrough of our generation” (14). However, as the prices of medical treatment and health insurance continue to rise in 2019, it’s evident that the right to healthcare is not a universal, or in this case, national, belief.

Opponents of the right of healthcare claim that it is a concept that “doesn’t just pop into existence. It stems from individuals’ intellectual achievements and productive abilities” (Dunn 2). Adding on to this claim, opponents believe that all doctors and individuals working within the medical field spend years in school becoming certified medical professionals. Therefore, they deserve to be compensated rightfully,

justifying the costly price tag of medical treatment. However, regardless of compensation issues, or the fact that the "... 45 million Americans without health insurance [are young and in good health]," health insurance, or even basic health, is a human right (Tanner 1). The United Nations Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights states, "Health is a fundamental human right indispensable for the exercise of other human rights. Every human being is entitled to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health conducive to living a life in dignity" (Gostin 2). In other words, the right to health has no exceptions, nor does it have any limitations.

Viewing health insurance and basic healthcare as an entitlement strictly for those who are financially stable enough to afford it not only damages the public health of individuals, but also damages the economic well-being of the country. Many people do not see the importance in accessibility to healthcare, and often overlook this matter. "Those without insurance do not receive preventive care, seeking treatment only when they fall ill, often times in the most costly of venues—the emergency room. As all physicians know, prophylaxis is generally cheaper, and virtually always more effective, than treatment. This is why [individuals are] vaccinated[d] ... against infectious diseases, for example" (Turka and Caplan 1). Adding on to the costly visits to the emergency room, typically speaking, most patients in those venues are unable to pay off the costly treatment. "Needless emergency room visits made by the ill who have no other way to obtain health care tax an already overstrained system. Thus, the price of 50 million uninsured is crowded emergency rooms (making it difficult for hospital staff to deal with 'real' emergencies); poor health indices; too many preventable deaths; and, among developed nations, higher morbidity and mortality, especially among children and the mentally ill" (Turka and Caplan 1). The consequences that uninsured individuals face are detrimental and aren't only limited to them; ultimately, the issues that they face end up affecting society and the general public.

Although most hospitals and medical providers seek to provide medical care to individuals who are not in full health, many health insurance providers seem to object to it. By making the fees and rates of health insurance costly, health insurance companies show lack of concern for the well-being of individuals, and interest only in financial gain. Maria Dutton, a forty-seven-year-old woman, can attest to this statement. She was "diagnosed with chronic fatigue syndrome and depression. She became addicted to opioids prescribed for her joint pains and was started on methadone .... doctors figured out what the problem was: sarcoidosis, an inflammatory condition that produces hardened nodules in organs throughout the body. The doctors gave her medication, and the nodules shrank away" (Gawande 2). Dutton stated that the health insurance covered by her husband's employer "paid out two hundred thousand dollars. But [she and her husband] paid out, too ... the Duttons' annual costs reached fifteen thousand dollars ... Then one day in 2001 [Maria's husband, Joe] fell down two flights of stairs, resulting in a severe concussion.... Given the health-care costs and his loss of income, the couple ran out of money" (Gawande 2). Maria and Joe Dutton's unfortunate encounter with the healthcare system proves that, although healthcare is present within the United States, it doesn't cater to everyone's medical and financial needs.

Increased access to health care would do more than addressing financial costs. Gawande writes, "Medical discoveries have enabled the average American to live eighty years or longer, and with a higher quality of life than ever before. Achieving this requires access not only to emergency care but also, crucially, to routine care" (12). Widening the accessibility of healthcare would also lengthen the lifespan of all individuals. As more individuals find cures to their medical complications, the quicker they can resolve the problem and assist others who are in the same situation as them. In addition, the quicker a cure is discovered, the easier it is to identify and hopefully prevent the same complication from taking place. Accessibility to healthcare is not only a benefit to those who are seeking medical attention. By teaching those in and out of the medical field how to treat medical dilemmas, it is a benefit to everyone, including future generations that will come.

Although past administrations have strived to make healthcare accessible, healthcare still depends heavily on one's "job, state, age, income, marital status, gender, and medical history, not to mention [their] ability to read fine print" (Gawande 14). As Robertson writes, "Both the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments from the Constitution '.... protect against deprivation of life.... or liberty without process of law.' The Supreme Court has a long tradition of using those clauses to protect activities deemed fundamental to a person's life or identity. It has held that decisions of whether to bear or beget children, to marry, to raise a family, to refuse essential medical treatment, or to live with extended family members are so fundamental that they can only be restricted only upon a showing of compelling need. But life itself and some minimum degree of health and functional ability are necessary for the exercise of any protected right" (Robertson 2). If the United States follows the Amendments so strictly when it comes to policies such as freedom of speech, why is there a hindrance when it comes to healthcare access – especially since denial of healthcare access is equivalent to depriving one of their life and liberty?

The government has the resources available to improve the healthcare system within the United States. For example, taxes would help America collectively pay the financial burden of emergency room visits. However, in order to better the state of our nation and economy, the entire country must come together and push for a change. If people want to live longer and lengthen their lifespan, they should speak up and pressure the government into promoting the right to health. This would require the government to ensure "health care, sanitation, safe food and drinking water, and other underlying conditions for population health. The United States.... violates the right to health not because it spends too little on healthcare and public health, but because its resources are inequitably distributed" (Gostin 3). If both citizens and the government aren't actively advocating for proper healthcare, then there won't ever be healthcare access or let alone treatment. Individuals should pressure the government into allocating a greater portion of tax dollars into health systems. By doing so, the population health of the United States "such as infant death rates, excess morbidity, and premature mortality" would improve immensely (Gostin 3).

The only way in which the United States can recognize the right to health care is through the power of the people. Everyone must speak up regarding the access and the right to health care. The right to healthcare should be viewed as equally important as the right to education. While many only seek medical attention when they are in trouble, healthcare is what helps guarantee the survival of all individuals. Without it, there is no way that anyone in the United States or in the world, can live.

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# The Place Where I Live

## Khutija Awan

My home falls at the very border of Kensington and Midwood. I spend the majority of my time in or around Coney Island Avenue (between Newkirk Avenue and Avenue H) because that is where my favorite grocery stores, restaurants and physician's office are located. This neighborhood has a reputation for being one of the most culturally diverse areas in the city. According to Census data, 46% of Kensington residents were born outside the United States, comprising one of the largest populations of Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Jewish, Mexican and Caribbean communities ("City Data Kensington Profile"). The cultural diversity can easily be seen in the variety of restaurants running up and down Coney Island Avenue. It is a place unlike any other.

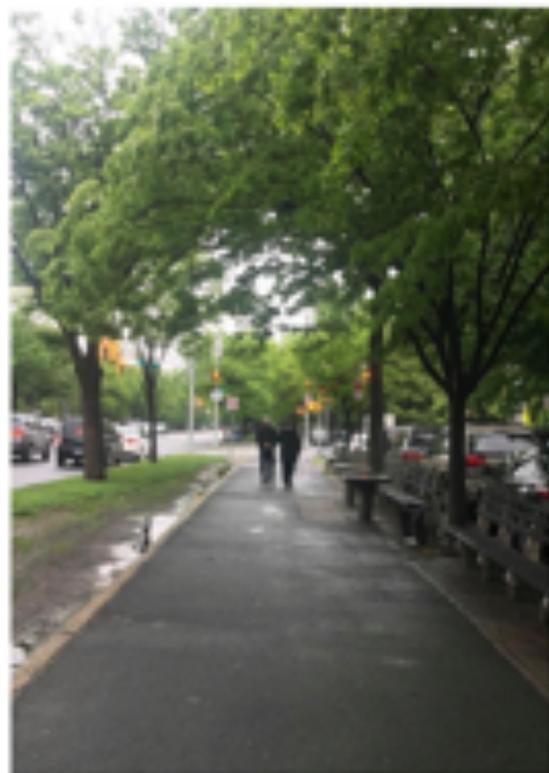
Life here is booming with sights, smells and hordes of colorful people. Strolling through Kensington, one may stumble upon the elderly dressed in rich furs, the young in ripped jeans and shirts (the trendy fashion), very loud conversations in person or over the phone, and busy adults briskly jumping from store to store. Residential buildings here vary, from detached and semi-detached Victorian homes and brick row houses on quiet shaded streets, to large pre-war brick apartment buildings lining Ocean Parkway. In



Ocean Parkway in Winter  
(photo taken by author)

addition to quality housing, the transportation here is also impressive, especially with the recent subway renovations. My neighborhood is perfect for someone who does not want to go far from home. There is Shop Rite, a pharmacy, a grocery store, a bank, a tailor, a pizzeria, a salon, a post office, a library, and a variety of Pakistani restaurants. Across the street from where I live is an elementary school with middle schools nearby. There are no high schools in my area, but with the help of F train, you can easily get to Midwood and Brooklyn Tech. Overall, my neighborhood has everything anyone could ever need in life within walking distance, which makes life very comfortable and convenient.

Whenever I think of leaving this place, I become emotional, since this is my hometown. I went to school here and have made so many friends. We usually meet up over the weekend and have lunch at the famous Pakistani restaurant Lahori Chilli. Other than this, my favorite meal is falafel on pita from Gyro King, which is simply the best. In summers, especially on Eid, my family arranges a barbecue party at Prospect Park, inviting all family members and friends. Every evening, I go for a walk on Ocean Parkway, which is nicely set up with benches, tables, cycling and walking areas shaded with trees.



Ocean Parkway in Spring  
(photo taken by author)

The place where I live, also known as "Little Pakistan," is the largest Pakistani community in New York City. They have settled on the stretch of one dozen blocks on Coney Island Avenue (between Church Avenue and Avenue H). It is almost entirely comprised of Pakistani immigrants and Americans of Pakistani descents, mostly the children of immigrants. Pakistani, from all over New York, come here for shopping and also for dining. One can easily find all sorts of grocery items, such as halal meat, as well as shop for Pakistani dresses. Every year, Eid and Pakistan's Independence Day are celebrated here. A live concert takes place here along with food stalls and dresses are put up on sale. Besides this, COPO (Council of People's Organization) has been established, which works for the people of the community. Living in such an area feels good: everyone around speaks and understands your language, and you can enjoy halal food at your doorstep.

In "New York 1936," Ralph Ellison writes, "I preferred to live where people spoke my own version of the American language, and where misreading of tone or gesture was less likely to ignite lethal conflict" (19). In the same way, I feel more relaxed when I am around people of my language and cultural background. It feels like home when I walk up to someone and we discuss different matters.

As much as I love my neighborhood, it has its flaws. Personally, I have noticed a decline in the cleanliness of the area. Kensington has become a little louder and dirtier,

while the openness of people in the area has diminished from what I remember in my childhood. Indeed, wherever one dwells, there are a few drawbacks as well, but if we work together to try to fix them, it may be possible to improve them. More and more hands will join together to make a better community. We should neither coerce nor deride our neighbors, but instead ask them to seek changes guided by our amiable behavior. Taken all in all, my neighborhood is a special place to live.

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# The Men's Collared Shirt

## Eleazer Espinosa

If one garment had to best represent the image of a man, it would be the shirt; more specifically, the collared shirt. In its lowly beginnings, the shirt was considered an undergarment (Flusser, 2002). These underclothes initially served to keep sweat away from the outer garments while protecting the body from the coarse outerwear materials. Most underclothing was made of linen, and was therefore referred to as "linens." However, over time, these "linens" would metamorphose into the collared shirt that we know today. The collared shirt is the culmination of many fashions being improved on.

The two men's shirts I will compare are King Louis XIV's ruffled shirt and UNTUCKit's white modern oxford. Though they are extremely different, both are versions of the collared shirt. By comparing the two, we can see how men's collared shirts have transformed in appearance and function. The difference in materials, production, and availability are also noteworthy aspects. We will start with the ruffled chemise, and end with the modern oxford.

Imagine walking upon the Palace of Versailles. As you look everywhere, you see statues made of marble, gold leaves at every turn, and paintings and tapestries adorning the walls: a perfect marriage of design and opulence. As you enter further, you are overwhelmed by the hustle and bustle. Noble men walk about discussing matters, servants run their errands and tend to their tasks, rich bourgeois women huddle and chat about the latest news and trends. The Palace is alive. There is one thing you notice above all: the fashion. Everyone is wearing the finest of threads. As you enter the innermost part of the palace, you stumble upon the royal court, with the Sun King in attendance. Here, the fashion is most concentrated. Upon further examination, you can't help but notice King Louis XIV's attire. He is wearing the most luxurious Ruffled dress shirt you have ever laid your eyes on. Made from the finest silks of Lyon, this shirt is truly the epitome of lavishness. You can sense and feel him from this shirt alone.

The Ruffled shirt was more avant-garde than a typical linen/muslin shirt. A play on the shirt and cravat, the Ruffled shirt was the choice for King Louis XIV. It was worn mostly by the rich nobles and bourgeoisie, functioning as a class and status symbol for the latter: because the Bourgeoisie made fashion an everyday aspect of their lives, dressing the part and keeping up appearances was part of the game. This was also a limited choice due to not much variation in men's tops at the time, though camisoles were also an option (Waugh, 1968). Aesthetics was the driver for wearing such elaborate dress.

For this shirt, only the finest silks from Lyon were used. Luxurious, comfortable, lustrous, and the most absorbent of fabrics (equal to wool), silk provided the best fabric for drape and the best fabric for color. It was therefore a very important textile to France, especially for the city of Lyon. Louis XI began establishing silk manufacturing in Lyon in 1466. Two Italian men caught wind, and moved to Lyon to invest/turn profit on the new silk market, opening schools to teach young French girls how to weave silk. As the industry began to grow, the King of France at the time, Francois I, named Lyon the monopoly of manufacturing silk for the country. Therefore, Lyon became the capital of silk in France, the city through which all imported silk from other countries had to first pass (Walters). By 1620, there were more than 10,000 silk looms in Lyon, and the technology of weaving silk flourished. However, this did not last for long, as the ending reign of Louis XIV brought poverty and war to Lyon (Walters).

Now, imagine taking a train to Wall Street. As you get out of the station, it becomes clear to you what a different world it is. Tall buildings of concrete and steel loom over you. You can feel the productivity in the air. Of course, that's not what grabs your attention; the fashion does. You notice everyone dressed formally and in business attire. These "power suits" do not stand alone. They all require the simple, yet elegant, collared shirt. The shirt gives variation and distinction to the suit. It comes in many different materials, but you notice cotton first and foremost. It can be complemented with a tie or left relaxed without one. Rather than the suit wearing the shirt, the shirt wears the suit.

The men's collared shirt has undergone many changes through the years. The modern oxford is currently the "go-to/staple" shirt of the modern man. It can be dressed up or dressed down. UNTUCKit is a unique company that has helped blur the lines between formal and informal shirts, creating a line of men's collared shirts that are made to be untucked. UNTUCKit conducted a survey of 500 men, revealing 90 percent of respondents owned only one or two shirts, with the correct length to be properly worn untucked (Kane, 2017). These modern oxfords are an equal mix style and comfort. Because of this, the UNTUCKit's White Oxford Collared Shirt functionality is varied. Long gone are the days of starched shirts; cotton has become the material of choice.

Two machines are responsible for the success of cotton and modern shirts: the cotton gin and the sewing machine. The cotton gin, invented by Eli Whitney, made picking and sorting cotton much more efficient and effective. The sewing machine made piecing together fabrics much easier and faster. Combined, they helped to accelerate the boom of cotton and the modern shirt. One of the most important textile fibers in the world, cotton accounts for about 25 percent of total world fiber use (USDA, 2017), with the United States the leading exporter. Cotton is soft, absorbent and breathable, durable and inexpensive. The fiber is so versatile that it can be woven or knitted into a bunch of different fabrics like corduroy, chambray, lace and velour. It is also easy to dye, plays nice with other fabrics, and is easier to wash and care for than other fabrics. Thus, it has become a staple fiber in all of our wardrobes.

In the recent decades, but above all in the current one, men's fashion has seen an explosion in creativity. Though men's fashion/clothing has always been very simple, we are now in a time where so many more options are available. While men's fashion has historically tended to be bland and conservative, today, we are no longer bound to limited style or colors. Instead, the fashion industry is experimenting and breaking down structured views.

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# You're a Blessing

Quamel Watson

*(This essay won the first place Walter-Scanlon Creative Non-Fiction Award, for the 2018 Literary Arts Festival Writing Competition at City Tech.)*

On a summer day in the Fort Greene projects of Brooklyn where I'm from, I was sitting with a friend in my mother's home talking about school shopping. I wanted some more clothes, since that fall was my first year of high school. So, I called my grandmother to ask her for 500 dollars. She told me she'd give it to me on one condition. I had to look after my great grandmother, who had recently moved in with my grandmother. I agreed to it. For me, it was a win-win to get some money just for babysitting.

I'm going to give you a little history about where this all took place. My grandmother lives in the Van Dyke Apartments in Brownsville. As you walk up to this huge building, you see reddish, brownish bricks. On the side of the building, you see a parking lot, and to your left, you see a red sign that says, "Welcome to New York City Housing Authority Brownsville." You then walk up to these big silver doors, and once you enter, you see big red elevators that take you from the first to the thirteenth floor. Once you enter, you are also usually hit with the smell of urine, like hot garbage on a summer day. When you get to the seventh floor, there's a long hallway, sometimes creepy with flickering lights, and silent at times. Other times, there's a lot of noise and it's full of drama.

Once you get to my grandmother's door, you enter and hear the bell chimes on the door. To the right, you see paper towels, Ensures, adult diapers and juices, all stacked from the bottom of the floor to the top of the ceiling—all the things my great grandmother needed. Further in, you see three couches, a fish tank, a huge flat screen TV, a kitchen table, and plants everywhere. In the living room, you see two Degrees from New York City College of Technology—one for my great grandmother and one for my grandmother. (They both graduated from there, along with my mom.) You feel like you are in a Betty Boop convention. I mean dolls, statues, candles, clothing and even computer covers. Besides the fact that Ms. Boop was everywhere, there were little knick-knacks all over the place of Disney characters—Bugs Bunny, Daffy, Popeye, Porky the Pig, Pluto, Snoopy, Lola, and Garfield. These childlike things filled the room with color and life.

Even though the apartment was full of life, there also was a feeling of this kind of happy sadness. It came from knowing that my great grandmother was, by the grace of God, still here, but also knowing that she had been diagnosed with dementia.

When the day came for me to look after my great grandmother, I wasn't nervous at all. This is my family, so taking care of her should be no biggie. But when my grandmother started telling me about some of the things to look out for, my nerves started kicking in, and boy I could feel myself sweating. She told me, "Monkey, you must pay attention. Make sure if she gets up from her bed, she doesn't hurt herself and check on her throughout the night."

"Monkey" is the nickname my grandmother and I have for each other after an asthma attack almost killed me as a kid and left me very skinny. At the time, I was walking like a little monkey, she says.

"Monkey," I ask, "what if she gets up and has to use the bathroom?" My grandmother replies that she shouldn't need to since she used the bathroom before she went to bed. Then I ask the question I should've asked from the beginning, "Monkey, what does MAMA have?"

“Dementia,” she says. “This makes her go back into a childlike state of mind.” I just stared at her and didn’t really understand.

That first night was fine; she slept through the night, and I felt good knowing she was safe. After that, my grandmother asked me to watch her if she had an event to go to or just needed someone she trusted. No problem for me, I said, because for the couple of times I looked after my great grandmother, there weren’t any problems. I remember on a certain night it was raining and I was watching TV. As she slept and after her home attendant left is where the bonding started.

We would put newspaper on the floor, so if she got up from her bed, we could hear her through the night. This particular night she got up and I’m thinking it was just that. I remember my grandmother saying, “If she gets up, just put her back to bed. She does it all the time and will go back to sleep.”

Well I looked back there to see what was happening. “Oh my God,” is all I could say. There was shit everywhere! On the floors, walls, her bed, and all over her nightgown. The first thing that came to mind was, what am I going to do?

I ran to my cell phone and was about to call my grandma. Then something or some voice came over me and I heard something like God himself say, “She cleaned your crap when you were a child; now it’s time for you to pay back your dues.”

So, I got the gloves and told her it was going to be OK as I cleaned everything off the floor and walls, and changed her sheets, and got her another gown. I took a deep breath and went to the bathroom. I placed her on the toilet while I cleaned up the mess. I turned on the shower and placed her in it, then sat her on the handicap stool, which had four steel legs and a gray seat with back support, so she wouldn’t fall over. She sat down and I started washing her off; I did not look at her with anger or embarrassment. In my mind, at that moment, she was just like a baby that made a mistake; you have to smile and say it’s OK.

After I got her dried up dressed in clean clothes, I put on her baby powder and her Victoria’s Secret (Love Spell) fragrance. “I smell good,” she said and we both chuckled. I laid her down in her bed and sat in the corner in the big green chair in her room until she fell asleep. That night this was my biggest responsibility yet, and I didn’t need any help with her.

My grandmother returned and I told her what had happened. She got really silent and tears filled her eyes. “Monks, I thank you so much. You’re a blessing and I now know you can handle her.” A warm feeling came over me as I hugged my grandmother and smiled.

I saw my great-grandmother way more after that, close to every two weeks. Now I’m talking to her way more and showing her pictures. She would remember some things, but mostly she would ramble and just go back to her childhood. Great-grandmother comes from Galveston, Texas, and is from a large family—eleven brothers, two of whom were stillborn, and one sister. She would say things like, “Tell Frankie I said to go get the ball.” Frankie is one of her twelve siblings, the only one who is still alive.

We would spend a whole lot of time looking at pictures that would trigger memories, like the picture of uncle Frank when he was a young boy in the army. I can see the USA flag in the background and a muscular man in a black uniform with patches over it. She just came out of nowhere and said, “Frankie’s coming home for a visit.”

“Oh he is,” I would say. “Are you happy?”

“Oh yeah,” she said and laid back in her chair. Just like that her mind went somewhere else.

It was amazing to me how her brain worked. One minute she can tell you a whole story, and then it’s like a light switch goes off, and she’s back in the past saying she must go pick up her children, who are in their 50s by now, from school. (One daughter has even passed away.) At first, it would get me a little upset, but after a while I learned dementia is not curable, so I should take my time with her and get used to it. Then I learned to follow her lead and either piggyback off of what she was talking about or ask her certain questions that wouldn’t over work her mind.

I learned all about her food and medicines. One time I even stopped the home attendant from giving her the wrong medicine that the pharmacy had given her by mistake. I yell, “Noooooooooooooooooooo, do those look like the same pills she takes every day?” The home attendant looked at me like I had a bug on my face. “The pills she takes are all white,” I said. “Do those look all white?”

“Oh my God,” she replied. “I didn’t even see that.”

I shook my head and called my grandmother to tell her the situation. She reassured me she would get to the bottom of it. I said to myself, Thank God I was here.

Our bond got so close that I would go to my grandmother’s house just to see her. I would even make up excuses to my friends to hang out with her. I was excited to learn more about her and some of her great old times in Texas. It was like I was back in the 1930s and could see their house and smell the fresh chocolate cookies her mom would make. I could also see her pain when she talked about the flood that washed away our family’s first home in Galveston, which we still have because her father rebuilt it. We lost a lot of family. I could feel the pain in her story like I was there myself, and a chill came over my body.

I loved her stories and our time together. Our bond got stronger, and my grandmother would call me and say, “The home attendant said she is looking for you.” My great-grandmother would call me “the boy” because she couldn’t remember my name. I thought that I couldn’t cure her, but as long as she remembered something about me, I did my job and I knew I made some type of connection.

Over the course of our time together, I started to notice changes in her body, her speech, her eating and just her everyday habits. I could see she wasn’t swallowing her food anymore and that her weight had gone down. She couldn’t really talk anymore and was wheelchair bound. It was like she was a whole other person now. Between the disease and her medicine, she was zombie-like, and made me think how fast things can change.

We shared a bond till she passed in 2016. Even after her death I learned that she taught me way more than I could imagine, such as patience. I remember before I would see younger people walk through the door before an elderly person and not even hold the door. I would see them on the bus and not even get up, just curse and be flat-out disrespectful. Now I hold the doors for my elders, whether they’re taking their time or just walking slowly.

I learned to have great respect for home attendants, because they take care of other people’s family members. They put up with a lot of feisty attitudes and misunderstood people.

I also have come to realize that society has a long way to go since we see more and more cases of people with dementia or mental illness. We may never know what will happen to us, but I know that the bond you build with family is priceless, a spirit like a song that touches you. I see now that life doesn’t owe you anything, or care how cute you are, or how smart. But what you put out, you will get back. Finally, I learned that you must respect all your elders. I mean that they have knowledge and can help you understand the world better.

# The Dangers of Overprescribing Children

Nicole Marie Afriat

There is an issue that I feel very passionately about: children getting diagnosed with disorders at a young age and being prescribed “heavy” medications by their doctors. One example that is commonly seen is children being diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, also known as ADHD, and then being prescribed medications such as Ritalin, or Adderall. It is my belief that giving these medications to children can lead to even bigger issues, such as addiction, when they get older. I have witnessed this issue in my own home. For as long as I can remember, my brother was always being prescribed medications. When we were very little, the doctors told my mother that he had “extreme attention deficit hyperactivity disorder,” and right away prescribed him Ritalin. After the Ritalin, they prescribed him Adderall. After my brother took the Adderall for some time, the doctors said that my brother had anxiety, so on top of the Adderall, they prescribed him an anti-anxiety medication. The doctors started my brother on this ridiculous cycle at such a young age, which I believe only taught him that the answer to any discomfort could be found in a pill.

As the years went on, it was clear that the only coping skills my brother really had were drugs. Soon enough, he began self-medicating with street drugs, and ultimately gained an out-of-control addiction. Even when he made attempts to get clean and sober, the first thing the doctors did was write more prescriptions, which continued his pattern of using drugs, whether they be pharmaceutical or street drugs, to feel normal. Sadly, on June 1st, 2018, my brother lost his battle with addiction at the age of 29. Since his passing, I have done a lot of reflecting on what went wrong and how things could have been different. While there were a few contributing factors, the quick diagnosis and over-prescribing of prescriptions by doctors when he was a child stuck out to me a lot.

While my family has experienced something so terrible, I know that I am not alone. Unfortunately, a large number of people become addicted to these prescription medications at a very young age. The *New York Times* article “Generation Adderall,” by Casey Schwartz, does a great job showing how easily someone can become addicted to Adderall, and how this “study drug” is taking over our generation. In 1990 the number of children on stimulants was 600,000, but by 2013, the number of children on stimulants was 3.5 million, with that number only continuing to increase (54). The article goes on to describe the author’s experience and feelings while taking Adderall, and how difficult it was for her to come off of the drug. If this is a college student’s experience, I just cannot imagine giving this drug to children. Another article that I read called “Drugging of the American Boy” by Ryan D’Agostino speaks about the over-diagnosing of ADHD in children. Something that I found frightening was that, in order for a doctor to give a true diagnosis of ADHD, the process should take days, or even weeks. During this process, that doctor has to interview and observe the child, interview the child’s parents, and receive reports from the child’s school. However, a study done by the American Academy of Pediatrics shows that one third of the visits last less than ten minutes (Hallon). Some people may begin to wonder if this over diagnosis of ADHD has anything to do with the money that is being made by prescribing this medication. Maybe it is just easier to prescribe the medication, so that parents can see immediate results. However, misdiagnosing children with ADHD could not only mask the true condition that a child may be suffering from, but also cause abuse of the medications, as seen in the *New York Times* article “A.D.H.D. Seen in 11% of US Children as Diagnoses Rise.”

With all of that being said, it is very clear that there is an over-diagnosis of ADHD that I believe needs to be addressed. However, there are children out there who truly do suffer from ADHD, so this can be a little bit tricky. Like my mother, many parents are unaware of the dangers of these medications, and that there is a problem with doctors over-diagnosing children with ADHD. Since this issue is so important to me and affects so many people, I would like this issue to be brought to the attention of the schools. If possible, I believe meetings with all of the school’s staff, and the parents of the students, should be held to discuss the importance of being aware of ADHD, the signs to look for if their child may have ADHD, and all of the various options of treating ADHD. I would also discuss the issues associated with over-diagnosing children, and the harm that

can come from giving children medications, such as Adderall. I would recommend leaving parents with a letter that they could either hold onto for their own reference, or that they could pass along to their friends and members of their community. I feel that going directly to the parents, rather than doctors, could be more effective, because many doctors are already aware of the problem, whereas parents just trust the word of their doctor. Below is the letter that I would write to the parents/community:

*To Parents and Members of the Community,*

*I am writing this letter to raise awareness of children being over-diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, also known as ADHD, is a disorder that causes children to be hyperactive, not able to focus or sit still, and to act impulsively. According to the CDC, about 11% of children between the ages of 4 to 17 have been diagnosed with this disorder, but while the exact number is not known, many of these cases are misdiagnosed and children have been prescribed heavy medications for a disorder that they do not have ("Attention-Deficit / Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)"). If you believe your child may have ADHD, please be aware that this cannot be determined by a quick doctor visit. Your child has to go through an extensive evaluation; reports from his/her school should be submitted, and the parents should be interviewed as well. Please also keep in mind that doctors prescribe medications such as Adderall, which can have a great impact on your child. For example, Adderall can cause your child to have sleep problems, decreased appetite, and some children have even developed tics. Adderall can also be addictive and dangerous if it is abused. If your child does receive a diagnosis of ADHD, it is extremely important that you look out other options before going straight to stimulant medications. Some alternatives for treating ADHD, or helping relieve some of its symptoms, are: exercise, omega 3 supplements, and a change in diet, which should all be done while receiving some form of counseling or therapy. Unfortunately, many children do suffer from this disorder, and do require medication, but I hope my letter to you has given you a little bit more information, and has intrigued you to do more research on the subject before putting your child on medication. I hope you spread this information as well, so that more parents can see that there is an issue with children being over-diagnosed, and to know that drugs are not their only option to treat ADHD.*

*Sincerely,*

*Nicole Apriet*

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# Shakespeare on Social Media

Steven Ng

*(Note from Professor Miller: For this assignment, students examined Shakespeare's Othello by tracing the individual journeys of the central characters as they move through the play. As part of the project, students imagined that the characters had access to social media, and determined which platforms each character would be most inclined to use. Students then created an online presence—for the characters.)*

Imagine if William Shakespeare's *Othello* had characters possessing social media. Iago, a cunning man, would probably use Tumblr as his journal: he would never write down any of his plans on a physical piece of paper, or he would risk the book being discovered by the other characters. However, his primary form of social media would be Twitter. Iago would be able to convey his schemes to Roderigo via Twitter, all the while playing his part, like a puppeteer controlling the marionettes in the palm of his hand.

On the other hand, Othello and Desdemona would, in all probability, use Skype and Facebook, respectively. These two characters were a part of a military family, with Othello being a popular general and Desdemona being his civilian spouse. If we take modern-day military families as an example, we would find that Othello, being in an active combat scenario, would never have the time to waste on social media platforms. Having said that, I think Othello would use Skype when the opportunity presented itself to see his wife in person, even if through a plastic screen. Through Skype, he could show her the environment, his current conditions, and his well-being. Despite being a general, Othello still ran the risk of being slain for being the commander of the Venetian army. Just from seeing his wife's face, hearing her voice, and being reminded of the home he had left behind, Othello would be inspired to great lengths to return to the person he profoundly loved. Additionally, he would also get to spend time telling his tales to his beloved wife, which were the main reason she fell for him in the first place. When Othello was finished with his romantic Skype session with Desdemona, he would use the social media platform with his men and trusted friends as well.

Desdemona's preference for Facebook comes from the fact that, unlike her husband, she may have had much more time to use this social media platform. After completing her daily rituals and Skype sessions, Desdemona would use Facebook to retell Othello's adventures. Once finished, she would have the option to show the stories to close friends, and possibly make them jealous of her marriage to such a great man. Furthermore, she could post her current status, and follow a "Venetian Army" Facebook groups.

Following his alliance with Roderigo, Iago would friend him on Twitter and set up a private chat with him. Iago tweets, "This shalt beest our primary source of communication. I'll alloweth thee knoweth if 't be true i needeth thy help. I'll eke alloweth thee knoweth what i has't done to Othello" and explains that "If 't be true thee ev'r receiveth hath caught, fondid this" to Roderigo. Sometime later, Iago tweets at his Twitter buddy, informing him that "Cassio, Desdemona and Othello art within the palm of mine own handeth. Waiteth a few did bite m're mine own cousin, ev'rything is proceeding as i has't did plan. The daws shall nev'r knoweth what shall hitteth those folk". Iago then persuades the recently promoted lieutenant Cassio to drink some alcohol, which results in his fall from grace and his rank being stripped from him. Using this momentum, Iago capitalizes on it, directing Cassio towards Desdemona. Shortly thereafter, he gets Othello on board, telling the Moor that his wife has been dishonest with him. Alas, all good things for Iago must come to an end. His last tweet with Roderigo: "Fucking trait'r. If 't be true thee gaveth me m're timeth,

i wouldst has't given thee desdemona by anon, but thee just hadst to beest the impatient typeth of guy. I'll meeteth thee in hell," before deleting his Twitter account out of rage. His last thoughts would how everything was in the palm of his hand and it was exceedingly executed, but now it was all ruined.

After his conversation with Brabantio, Desdemona, and the Venetian senate, Othello would immediately get on a handheld device and search to see if there is any internet access in the area. Finding reception, he launches Skype and instantly calls his parents. It would be one of the routine things he would be asked to do, since his parents do not physically see their son as much anymore. Othello might be a great commander, but they are still worried sick about him, constantly wondering if he has met his end on the battlefield. It is always when they see his smiling face that they know he is still alive and well. They discuss the usual topics, such as where Othello was and if he has been taking good care of himself these past few months. The conversation only changes when they speak about his love life. They know how crazily in love their son was with Desdemona, as he would always speak about her whenever the opportunity presented itself. This time around, Othello speaks about the confrontation that he had earlier with his father-in-law, and how he grew to become more attached to Desdemona after she defended him against her own father. Even though Brabantio has given him unsettling advice concerning Desdemona's loyalty, Othello's parents state that marriage has its own hurdles and he should concentrate on making his wife happy. Later, Othello launches Skype and calls his longtime friend and subordinate, Iago. Instead of giving the guidance that Othello wishes to hear, Iago responds in a cold but in an extremely blunt fashion, stating that Cassio and Desdemona were probably having a relationship behind Othello's back. Othello enlists Iago's assistance to get back at both Cassio and Desdemona, ends the Skype call, and storms off into the night. At a much later time, Othello launches Skype, perhaps for the final time, and contacts his parents to discuss what has been happening. Straightaway, his parents realize that their son is distraught, calling Desdemona a whore, blaming Cassio for his wife's unfaithfulness, and recruiting Iago. Frightened by their son's change, they attempt to convince their son to back away from this dark path. Regrettably, it falls on deaf ears. Filled with nothing but rage and jealousy, Othello cuts the Skype call. Later that night, he goes to where Desdemona slept and moved to suffocate her, forever sealing his fate.

It was a typical day for Desdemona. Being the wife of a distinguished general meant that she did not get the chance to see her husband often, but that was a worthy sacrifice. As such, she regularly goes on Facebook whenever she is finished with her house chores and whatever business she needed to attend. Just recently, she had the extraordinary fortune of seeing her husband and had the honor of defending him against her own father. Afterward, Desdemona updated her Facebook status to "I hath met mine own husband the present day and combated 'gainst mine own fath'r fr that gent. T'wast w'rth it, nay questions hath asked. At which hour I did see that gent, I hath fallen in love with that gent all ov'r again." At the conclusion of the handkerchief fiasco, Desdemona promptly goes on Facebook and updates her status: 'I'm in earnest confused. Wherefore hast Othello lash'd out at me in such a mann'r? Though tis partially mine own fault fr not knowing wh're the handk'rchief is, that gent hadst nay right to treateth me in such a way!" Before her untimely death, somehow she updates her Facebook status for the very last time. She posts that "I still loveth thee othello. Nay matt'r how harsh thee treateth me those past few days, i still seeth within thee the sir yond i hath fallen in loveth with all those years ago. I just desire with this, whatev'r sins i may has't embrac'd myself to earneth thy ire, is finally remedi'd. Farewell, mine own loveth and godspeed."

# A Letter to the Young and Different

Timothy Aaron Medina

“Donde tu vas?” says my Titi with a Puerto Rican accent.

“A fuera?” She points quickly towards our land outside her window.

“Sí Titi, voy a salir.” Walking closer to the sound of rushing hot water, my culture reminds me to ask for a “bendicion” when kissing my elders.

I’ll even wait patiently for a response ...

“Bendicion, Titi!”

“Blessing, Aunty.” The sounds of dishes in the sink are louder than me, it seems...

“Titi!”

“Ah?”

“Dije bendicion.”

“Aiii!” Quickly turning off the water, she dries her hands on the kitchen towel hanging on the fridge door by the sink, then:

Arms wide and heart open, Titi walks towards me, excited to squeeze me tightly with her arms.

“MMMMM! Tan bello!”

First pressing her head on my chest, then grabbing my forehead,

too fast for me to think, she gifts me with a big kiss to protect my crown.

The sound of her kiss makes me laugh. “AHHH! Dios de bendiga, mi amor.”

“Adios, Titi!”

“Adios, Nene, diviértete a salvo!”

“Sí Titi! Adios!”

Okay, I’m outside, now what do I do again? Oh yeah, Titi said,

“Nombre cada roca;

Saluda a cada árbol;

No estabas aquí antes que ellos.”

“Name every rock, greet every tree, you weren’t here before them.”

Walking through the green grove forest in Puerto Rico I go;

Don’t stop feeling, say the sharp blades of grass touching my ankles;

Surroundings can tickle an emotion;

Giving a smile back leaves keys to lessons.

“When seasons are dry, ask for water, if the rain doesn’t come, let it be, but still grow.”

Two birds stop in front of me;

“Don’t just call people your friend;

Following others can lead to dead ends.”

Flying away as they sing,

“Stay a child and say what you want from within.”

I don’t want to walk in my chancletas any more ...

Feeling my soles squishing from ground to feet;

“Don’t try to let yourself become solid,

Clay too needs to be accepting;

Mimic earth and expand.”

More green appears;  
A tree stays still, and may seem as though it has disappeared;  
“Branches holding dear to what grows;  
But dead leaves fall, it’s time to let worries go.”

Ready to sip from the fresh water river;  
Water moving slow enough for hands to bowl my thirst at the creek.  
“How can a problem be fixed?”

Every blade of grass, bird, tree and river in its place;  
Still standing on my land without chancas;  
Learning to listen, as I step towards my calling;  
Keeping sound advice around my neck;  
The creator beautifies my life.

I am a Taíno, taught to  
“Practice, practice even after discovering what is hidden.”  
Keep vulnerable to inner-self;  
Even if skeptical and entirely unsure,  
my life teachers tell me,  
“Get ready to unlearn, keep your surroundings around you, hold onto this power to discern.”

# Pastry Student

## Sizhen Ivy Chen

Let the dishes air dry upside down next to the sink instead of using brown papers to dry them because it's such a waste.

Always keep the mops off the floor after using them, or your kitchen will get points off when the Health Department people come.

When you are in a rush for blooming gelatins, you can use cold water instead of iced water.

Don't freeze gelatin products for too long; otherwise, they will lose their shapes after you defrost them.

You need to be careful when you register for the interdisciplinary class; make sure that the course number is exactly the same one as the one on the City Tech General Education website.

This is why I don't use the convection oven for baking a cake.

In the winter, it is better to use sulfate-free, glycerin-packed shampoo to avoid frizzy hair.

Exercise at least once a week to keep your body always energetic in the kitchen.

How is your new job?

This is how to spread cake batter on large sheet pans.

This is how to build a square entremet cake without a cake mold.

This is how to do the service.

This is how to make macaroon shells with the beautiful feet.

This is how to build a gingerbread house that has a stove and ice on the cave formed by melted water.

This is how to build croquembouche.

This is the perfect texture you are looking for when you are churning a batch of ice-cream.

You should never decorate a cake with any type of tails because they cannot stay in the fridge and stay dry.

My new job is not as great as I expected.

When you are cooking sugar, make sure that you have water, an oil-free brush, and a sugar thermometer right next to the pot.

This is how to write on a cake with chocolate.

This is how to avoid sexual harassment in kitchens.

When you feel like you want to leave the kitchen because of a chef's rudeness, if you still need to work there, you need to suck it up.

Working in a kitchen that you don't like for six months is long enough.

# The Caged Bird Prevails

## Stephon Hobson

My name is Stephon Hobson and adversity is the backbone that keeps me upright. Adversity comes in the form of my community: specifically, the imprisonment, drugs, and lack of education that minority communities face. I strive to challenge these stigmas. I've been faced with the reality of incarceration, but that only helped me blossom into my true self. I believe my identity has helped mold and prepare me for my journey to college success. Over time, my passion for both reading and research, my environment, and my introspection have helped me develop the tools needed to pursue higher education at City Tech.

My passion for reading came at a time when I didn't know how to read at all. I was 14 years old, in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade, and one of the only students who couldn't read a Harry Potter book. I avoided reading aloud, as I feared my reading tribulations would be comical to my peers and shameful to my teachers. I struggled with words that were unfamiliar and was intrigued by the mystery behind them. I had found something that I was compelled to learn. Once tired of being insecure of my lack of reading skills, I promised myself that this was something I would conquer. It was the end of 8<sup>th</sup> grade and I vowed not to enter high school with deficiencies that would prevent my education. I began utilizing what I had learned in school: using context clues, summarizing main ideas, and writing down words that were peculiar to me. These newly-developed skills helped me find characteristics in books that I started applying to myself. Books like *Man Child in the Promised Land* by Claude Brown helped me understand the environment I was living in and how to extricate myself from it. The book speaks about a troubled kid named Sonny who fell victim to poverty and violence of his community. With positive influence, he realized that his negative ways wouldn't produce the outcome that he desired. He took advantage of his mentor's advice to educate himself, and later utilized it to his benefit.

In a lot of ways, this was relevant to my life. I struggled with the influence of gangs and that led me to being incarcerated for three years. The prison environment was a challenge for me. I had to adjust to the conditions, violence, and the burden of being away from my family. I adapted to these changes with negative behavior. However, I realized I wanted more for myself, so I adjusted by dedicating myself to my studies and this steered me in a new direction. This transition relates to the experience of Bilal Rahmani in his essay "Chronicles of a Once-Pessimistic College Freshman," when he steps out of his comfort zone and decides to engage in a different perspective. Both Sonny's epiphany to devote his life to higher learning and Rahmani's humility to accept new points of view are the maps I use to follow a new way of life.

With paramedics, my first career interest, I began expanding and applying my education to seek a career that would help me reach my full intellectual capacity. Helping people is a part of my character, so doing something with a purpose was essential to me. I researched every aspect about what comes with the job. A lot of it consists of struggles, ranging from erratic patients to death. However, I didn't let that deter me. I started EMT-Paramedic school but eventually dropped out due to the challenge of trying to maintain a full time job, provide for myself, and attend school.

I was 20 years old and felt like my life clock was ticking. This brought me back to the drawing board, with the science of the human body my new infatuation. The exposure I received from EMT-Paramedic school helped me shift my direction to the medical field. I recall my EMT professor telling me that Paramedics isn't a career to pursue. It is nonstop stress and mostly consists of non-emergency calls. These non-emergency calls are usually for drunk patients and many EMTs sadly consider the profession an

expensive cab service. EMTs presume their work to be dreadful and perform their duties with no enthusiasm. This ultimately leads to tragedies, such as during Hurricane Harvey in Houston, when emergency responders were overwhelmed. I believe all emergency responders have good intentions, but I remember my professor advised me to do something with a purpose, go to college and become a nurse. Those words stayed with me and I've been in a passionate pursuit to become a nurse ever since.

Ultimately, I believe that all things are destined. If not for the negative influences of my initial environment, I wouldn't have the tools to think outside my community. Without the books I read, I wouldn't know other people's methods of motivation to overcome obstacles. Without my EMT professor's advice, I wouldn't know what it's like to dream bigger. This is what led me to Jay Street, and I believe all the tools that I acquired from different places along my journey have equipped me to succeed.

# Significance of Conducting Routine Head & Neck Examinations

Rokia Barak

Head and neck examinations conducted by dental health care providers present essential information regarding a patient's health status. They offer a screening tool to determine and locate any notable or suspicious findings and contributes to providing comprehensive patient care.

An extra-oral (EO) examination consists of a visual and physical examination of the patient's appearance and head and neck anatomy. The dental health care provider begins this assessment simply by viewing the patient's overall appearance. Certain clues can give away important information regarding the patient's health status: facial symmetry, hair loss, difference in pupil size, lesions, scars, abnormal swelling, and many more. It is always useful to include a patient's input during these examinations to receive important information regarding clinical findings. This can include detecting a bruise on their cheek, which could have been from a recent fall, or something more severe, like redness and swelling on the face, especially if the patient reports it as painful and uncomfortable. Documenting significant findings and referring them to their dentist and/or physician is the ethical obligation of any dental hygienist, and within our scope of preventative care.

Throughout our bodies, we have small bean-shaped glands that are part of our immune system. They act as filters, trapping viruses, bacteria, and other invaders to defend against any potential infection. When they do enlarge, it is often in relation to an infection or possible cancer diagnosis (Bailey). The lymph nodes of the head and neck region should be examined through visual inspection and palpation to note size, consistency, tenderness, and mobility of any suspicious lesion. This includes palpation of the occipital, pre-auricular, post-auricular, submental, submandibular, supraclavicular, cervical nodes anterior and posterior to the sternocleidomastoid muscle (Burgess). Although health care providers may be conducting these examinations, it is important that those providers have their anatomy and palpation techniques correct to ensure accuracy. Correct palpation technique consists of a circular motion, using fingertips to compress against underlying structures. "Walking" or "dancing" of the fingertips results in unsuccessful detection and missed abnormalities.

Along with palpating the lymph nodes of the head and neck, it is also important that health care providers examine the temporomandibular joint and thyroid gland. The temporomandibular joint (TMJ) can be examined by placing the fingertips at the joint and asking the patient to open and close several times, then moving the mandible from one side to the other. Some notable findings include abnormal popping or clicking sounds, asymmetrical movements, limited range of movement, grating sensations when patient is opening and closing, and pain or tenderness (Burkhart).

Temporomandibular disorders (TMD) cause pain in the oral-facial region and could lead to patients missing their dental appointments, out of fear of keeping their mouths open for an extended period, which causes further discomfort. Population-based studies show that TMD affects 10 - 15% of adults, but only 5% seek treatment (Gauer and Smedey). It is important as a dental health care provider that we ensure that patients are comfortable during their appointments and seek treatment when needed.

The thyroid gland produces, stores, and releases hormones into the bloodstream, which then distributes those hormones into the body's cells. The thyroid gland normally cannot be seen or palpated,

unless there is an enlargement which may appear as a bulge or swelling. Regular examinations should be conducted because the thyroid gland can become associated with enlargement conditions, from a goiter to life-threatening thyroid cancer. Early detection and referral is an ethical obligation of health care providers, ensure patients' safety and health. The thyroid gland can be examined by displacing the trachea with your left hand to the right. Using your right-hand, place it between the Adam's apple and the sternomastoid muscle. Then, while resting your fingers, ask the patient to swallow. The gland should move up and down beneath your fingers and not be palpable. Repeat with the left lobe ("Technique").

### Case Study

During my second semester at New York City College of Technology Dental Hygiene Program, one of my first patients was a 19-year-old female Asian, whose country origin was Afghanistan. As a student currently learning, I did not initially feel the patient's thyroid gland, but when a dental hygiene instructor checked, it was noted that her thyroid gland (left lobe) was palpable. There was no visible enlargement noticed upon visual inspection. We also had the dentist on the clinic floor examine it and he also felt it. The patient then reported that her mother had thyroid problems in the past, for which the mother was treated and for which she took medication.

The patient also mentioned that she had gone to another dental hygiene student as a patient in another institute a few months earlier. The student had also palpated it, but dismissed the case and stated that "it was probably was nothing." My instructor and I referred the patient to her physician, and after a couple weeks, the patient contacted me to inform me that she had been diagnosed with a tumor. Her physician asked her why she did not come to have this evaluated the first time it was noticed, and in hindsight, the patient agreed that she should have. The patient waited six weeks for the physician's visit after her family had badgered her to schedule an appointment.

### Thyroid Cancer

According to the National Cancer Institute, there are over 56,000 new cases of thyroid cancer in the U.S. each year (Clayman, "Thyroid Cancer"). There are benign thyroid tumors and malignant thyroid tumors, which both consist of the thyroid gland enlarging. Benign tumors are those that have enlargement but do not continue to grow or spread to the rest of the body, and many times can be left alone. Malignant tumors are more dangerous since they can spread to other parts of the body. There are 5 types of thyroid cancers that a person can acquire (Types of Thyroid Cancer"). The most common type is papillary carcinoma, which develops from the follicular cells and grows slowly. Although it is asymptomatic, it can be detected by a solid, irregular mass seen or examined in the neck (Clayman, "Papillary Thyroid Cancer"). The second most common type of thyroid cancer is follicular carcinoma, mainly seen in patients with insufficient iodine intake. The third type is called hurthle cell carcinoma, and it is a subtype of follicular carcinoma. However, unlike follicular carcinoma, hurthle cell carcinoma can recur either back in the neck or spread to the lungs or bone (Norman). The fourth type of thyroid cancer is a very aggressive one that develops from C cells, which are neuroendocrine cells in the thyroid whose primary function is to secrete calcitonin: medullary thyroid carcinoma. The spread to lymph nodes and other organs is more common in this type than the other types; instead of normal thyroid hormones, affected cells release high levels of calcitonin and carcinoembryonic antigen ("Types of Thyroid Cancer"). The fifth and least common type of thyroid cancer a person can acquire is anaplastic carcinoma, which is also very aggressive and can metastasize quickly. It has a low treatment/cure rate and most patients do not live after a year of being diagnosed (Norman).

## Conclusion

The experience of a hands-on situation has been an eye-opener. Being a dental hygiene student can be stressful and overwhelming, especially when it comes to studying all the information for practical and clinical examinations. I learned how to conduct an extra oral and intra oral (EO/IO) head & neck examination during my first semester in the Dental Hygiene Program. Although I initially incorrectly performed the examination, I learned that my hand/finger placement for this anatomical location was too high on the neck area. I have realized how important this examination and proper palpation technique is in protecting our patient's health. Conducting an EO/IO examination on our patients is simple and takes a few minutes, yet can save a patient's life. It is our duty as dental health care providers to provide a thorough examination using our learned knowledge, which should form a routine part of each patient's dental visit.

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# Writing from the CUNY Language Immersion Program (CLIP)

## The Message

Ahmed Farag Arabi

The commuter trains in Egypt are always overcrowded. People hang out of the doors and windows. Sometimes they sacrifice their lives. I saw someone die once. He jumped from the sidewalk into the train and missed the door. His body was cut into pieces. Then, I remembered Eman, my 6-year-old cousin, whose name means “faith.” The brain cancer had come without any warning. She had chemotherapy and died after two years. After being in New York City only a few weeks, these were my thoughts as I stood on that subway platform, feeling scared and alone.

That night I had a dream. It was snowing heavily, which made walking difficult. Suddenly, Eman appeared. She began to run effortlessly towards me to play hide-and-seek, our favorite game. She hid behind a tree and I surprised her. “I found you,” I said. With closed eyes, she laughed, and hugged me for a long time. I cried on her shoulder, because I knew I was only dreaming. When my alarm rang, I woke up, wondering if I had received a message from God—Eman’s joyful laughter. Could it be that Eman had told me that the pain that I had already experienced, and the future obstacles I would encounter, would strengthen instead of weaken me?

## They Still Call Her Mom

Omid Rashidi

We returned to Afghanistan, to our village the Taliban controlled. All the schools were closed. Every girl was at home doing house work and the boys were playing soccer in the streets. My mother, the daughter of a senator, understood our people’s problems. When she saw the situation, she started to cry and said to my father, “I can’t understand how these children will have a future without education. I have to teach these children.” My father supported my mother and said, “We also have a lot of space in our house for a school.”

My mother and father spoke to the parents in our village; my mother spoke to the mothers, and my father went to the masjid, the mosque, and spoke to the fathers. All the parents in the village did want us to

start a school in our home. Even though everyone was nervous about the Taliban's response, they were ready to take the risk because they saw how their children were wasting their lives, and they felt it was a good time to try. "If the Taliban's response is negative, we will all speak to the Taliban," an old man from our village said.

My mother, father, older sister, and cousin taught math, religion, history, writing and reading. I was 12 years old, and one of the students, too. I had lived in Pakistan and studied English, so I taught the students the little English I knew. During the first month, almost 300 girls and boys came to study; during the lunch, boys played soccer and girls played volleyball in the garden instead of the streets. Everyone was happy, but still worried about the Taliban. Would they close our school or arrest my mother and father?

One day a Taliban sent a letter to my father, not my mother, because they wouldn't speak to a woman or write a letter to a woman. "We know you have a school in your home. We will not close your school if you do not teach anything negative about the Taliban." My mother responded, "I don't teach our students anything negative about the Taliban. Your sister and brother attend our school. You can ask them what we teach. If you can't think about the other students, please think about their education." The Taliban didn't answer her, which we thought was a good sign. For one year, we taught the students at our tuition free school. Eventually UNICEF not only started to support our school, but also it started another school in a village close to ours.

After the Taliban left Afghanistan, a new government began. Schools for girls and boys were allowed to open all over the country. All the young people my family had taught went to the newly opened high school outside our village. Even today, when these young people visit our home, they still call my mother "Mom."

## Everlasting Red

### Xue Lin

I had a friend named Social Dysfunction. She convinced me that since I was quiet, I was inferior, which meant I should never speak to anyone. One day, on my way home from elementary school, I was crying because my grandfather was in the hospital. A girl from school walked up to me because she saw I was sad. I ignored her, but she didn't go away. When we arrived at my home, my mother invited her inside to eat snacks. They talked. I was silent. That night, my mother sat on my bed and said, "You aren't alone now, Xue, you have a friend." I didn't know why I felt tears in my eyes. The next day, the girl introduced me to her other girl friends. They talked and talked. They didn't seem to mind that I didn't. Every day we walked home, linking our arms together. I was always in the middle. I felt guilty because I still hadn't really accepted them.

My teacher invited me to read an essay I had written in front of our 4th grade class. Fear quickly surrounded me. The next day, I locked myself in my bedroom. When I returned to school, the girls told me they had seen my name on the blackboard, which meant I had to present the essay. They were happy for me, but quickly noticed my eyes looked blank. "We can help you practice," they said. "We understand you

because we're friends, right?" Their words felt like seeds in my heart that started to grow. "Should I accept them now?" I asked myself. Every day they came to my home after school and I practiced reading my essay. I started with one word, then one sentence, then paragraphs. No matter what I said, they smiled like the sunshine.

The day of my presentation had arrived. I stood on the stage with my head lowered, breathing rapidly. I could feel everyone watching me. One voice in my head told me, "Get off the stage. You don't belong here." Another voice told me, "You have friends. They have tried to help you, so read your essay to them." These two voices fought each other until I was almost crying, but luckily I heard my teacher introduce me. I peeked at the audience. I saw my friends wearing red clothes, my favorite color. They all smiled up at me, and at that moment I knew which voice would win. I presented my essay to my friends. When I finished, as I heard the applause, tears fell from my heart.

## Bad News

### Kamil Narel

Up to the age of 17, I didn't think about my health. Then, in November 2010, I started to feel stomach pain, dizziness and muscle pain. At first, I thought that I had food poisoning, but the pain lasted for over two weeks. Finally, I went to see my doctor. The doctor suspected something serious and sent me to the hospital. He also said that I had to be careful about what I ate because my diet could affect my health.

I had to stay in the hospital for testing. It turned out that I had severe anemia, and needed a blood transfusion. The transfusion process was very slow. I had to lie in bed for many hours. After two days, I felt better, so the doctors ordered more tests, a gastroscopy, and a colonoscopy. The gastroscopy did not show anything, but the colonoscopy showed that I had ulcers on my small intestine. The doctors suspected Crohn's Disease, but to be certain, they biopsied my intestine and sent samples to the laboratory. I was hoping that they would be mistaken. Unfortunately, after two weeks, the diagnosis of Crohn's Disease was confirmed.

My next step was to determine my treatment plan, which we hoped would prevent the progression of the disease. The doctor prescribed a lot of medicine, and I was told that I would have to take it for the rest of my life. The doctor suggested that I see a dietician, who would compose a new diet for me to help me control my disease. The dietician said that I had to change my eating habits. I had to start eating smaller portions, but more often. In this way, my intestines would be less burdened. I also had to stop eating fried and fatty foods. Instead, I had to eat more food rich in micro and macro nutrients like iron and vitamin D3.

The first month was hard because I preferred meat to vegetables. Most of the dishes I had eaten previously were fried or braised. I had to start eating meals that were steamed or boiled. The worst thing about the diet was the frequency of my meals. I had to find time for eating, shopping, and preparing meals during my busy day. I prepared most of them by myself, but when I had a long day, my family helped me, especially my mom. After a month on my new regimen, I started to learn how to organize my day, to have time for my duties and for entertainment. Thanks to the medicine, and my new diet, I started to feel better.

My stomach pains were less frequent and less intense, and the dizziness never came back. I felt stronger and more vital.

If I had not started to care about my health, the whole story could have ended in a more dramatic way. Thanks to my doctor and my dietician, I learned that I should take my health seriously all the time, not only when I am feeling ill. Now, I am starting to experiment with my diet. I prepare new dishes with new ingredients. I have to always remember which products help my health and which ones can cause me pain.

## How I Started Programming

### Robert

Before my Uncle Ruslan in Belarus spoke with me, I didn't understand why programming was interesting. My uncle helped me to see that the programming world was vast and fascinating. He worked in a huge programming company, received a great salary, and loved his job. My uncle suggested that I study the field that had worked out so well for him.

My first year of college was very hard because I had never studied programming before. For me, it was like studying a new language. In class, I didn't understand the teachers at all. Every homework assignment that the teachers gave us was enormously difficult for me. At the end of the first semester, I had not turned in many assignments and quizzes. But my programming teachers gave me a chance to try to do better the following year.

My second year of college started out better than the first one because we studied databases, a topic I found to be easy. My first individual project was called "Database for Organizing Basketball Teams." I didn't create a lot of action in this program because it was only my first project. It consisted of ways to add a database, navigate information, delete from the database, and change the database. When I presented my work, the teachers gave me a high score. I was very proud of myself.

My final year of college was more interesting than any of the previous ones because I had to go for an internship. In this program, I learned how to write a test for a program. My practice took only half of my final year. During the other half, I had to write a thesis. Actually, I didn't know what I wanted to write. I chose to create a "Copy Print Room" program for my college. It is just a place where students can copy some materials for college. I created a program for the Copy Print Room, which helped organized all the processes there. Two of the processes my program organized determined how many students printed their copies and how much they paid for them. My program also tracked how much money the copy print room took in during the month, and how much paper was used. I earned a high score for this project.

College taught me to appreciate the many challenges and rewards of computer programming. Now, when I finally find a solution to a programming problem, I am filled with joy and the desire to delve more deeply into my programming knowledge.

# Brothers

Anon

*Setting:* It is 1970, taking place in Guangdong province in an upscale teahouse. The walls, doors, floors and chairs are wooden with a rich lacquered gloss. The brown tea set is not eye catching but there can be no mistake of its great value. The tablecloth is colorfully embroidered with a vestige of nature, a testimony of its artisanship. Outside, a river runs with the essence of nature flowing through it.

*(Lao Tong enters, looking unsure of himself. Lao Sun is already sitting. A fruit has been prepared, though this is only a morning tea occasion.)*

Lao Sun: Lao Tong long time no see! How have you been?

Lao Tong: Lao Sun! You've finally come back to our homeland.

Lao Sun: Don't be like that. Let bygones be bygones. How's your family?

Lao Tong: Thanks to your support my family's been getting by.

Lao Sun: If you need anything just speak, I'll be happy to help.

Lao Tong: You're just bragging how well you've got it made in America.

Lao Sun: What are you talking about? It is my sons that does all the hard work.

Lao Tong: Ah yes, my sons work with apples, while your prodigious sons work in Apple making tons of money living it up large.

Lao Sun: Of course! Their parents were professors, don't you know? Of course they would be successful.

Lao Tong: Shame. The same can't be said about their backyards.

Lao Sun: *(sigh)* But they have no luck with their partners. Both are divorced. At least the firewood kindled before getting snuffed out.

Lao Tong: Yes, you have two wonderful grandchildren from your sons. A boy and a girl. That's good.

*(They both laugh. The characters for a boy and a girl, when combined, creates the auspicious word "good" in Chinese.)*

Lao Tong: My sons are little more than hard workers who spend their time on the farm or in the factory doing hard work, just like their father. How can they compare to yours?

Lao Sun: Oh, don't be like that. All you have to do is come to America with me. I'll sponsor you.

Lao Tong: And what? In my old age what can I do?

Lao Sun: Think of your sons, at least they can work at restaurants like I did when I first came over to America. The pay is good and the work while hard, at least you don't get treated like an ox.

Lao Tong: (*lung his tongue*) So they can abandon their pride as a Tang person the way you did? What are we not tarty enough that you would rather eat the vinegar of westerners? (*To eat vinegar means to be jealous.*) Do you even know what it means to be a Han Zi? (*A Han Zi is like a scholarly knight. A respectable man similar to the title of "Sir."*) You've exchanged hanfu for western clothing. (*Hanfu are traditional wear for Chinese people during the Han dynasty. Suits in Chinese literally mean western clothing.*) Han Jian! (*Han Jian means traitor.*)

(*Other patrons are starting*)

Lao Sun: (*rially apart*) If I had not left Canto back then, you would still be in Shenzhen raising pigs.

Lao Tong: I would rather be raising stupid pigs than betray our thousand years of history by working with ghosts. (*Ghosts are another way to refer to Europeans*)

Lao Sun: I have not betrayed what it means to be a Han Zi. Just doing what I needed to do to survive. They were killing professors back then.

Lao Tong: You should have repented and submitted to the authorities. I would have vouched for you.

Lao Sun: Vouch for me? With your status? Did you think you were Mao's brother? What good would your words do?

Lao Tong: They would not have hurt you. China needed chemists and physicists like you and your wife.

Lao Sun: No, they killed Shen in my department. Zhi is loosely related to the royal family. We had no choice but to run.

Lao Tong: You abandoned the Middle Kingdom(*China*) to preserve your pride. You've abandoned the heavens, the earth, and your ancestors. Han Zi! You're no different than those ahas dogs. (*Ahas refer to Indian policemen during the colonial era.*) Whatever the ghost says you would nod your head and say yes. Even when they ask you to wear a green hat. (*To wear a green hat means to be a cuckold.*) Hell, you might as well make your sons wear the green hat.

Lao Sun: You should not speak of my wife nor my sons like that.

Lao Tong: Or what? You would no longer support my family? What would that matter in the long run? So I can watch from the heavens for your descendants to murder my descendants?

Lao Sun: Have you gone mad? Though far apart we're still related by blood. Why would those of the same blood fight each other?

Lao Tong: For money. For women. For power. Can you promise me that when the westerners go to war against the Middle Kingdom, your descendants would not support the war effort? What did you think the British did to the Indians? They sent the ahas to police their own people and turned a blind eye when the Westerners raped their own mothers. Those who resisted were executed.

Lao Sun: Lao Tong! My family would have been executed if I had not deserted the National Army because of your ties to the Communist Party. Later my family would have been executed because of my job as a professor and my wife's ties to the royal family. By our own people. Do you not see that I had to leave? Even though I have left, I have not forgotten my homeland. Since you cannot see reason you old coot, I'll leave.

(*Picks up a tea cup*)

Like our bond of brotherhood all those years ago, this toast I drink to honor that bond. When you calm down, contact me again. *(Drinks from the cup and tears it down, shattering it. Places a large number of bills on the table.)*

Lao Tong: Why would I ever talk to a Han Zi like you if not for my children?

Lao Sun: You will talk to me again when you've calmed down when you get lonely in your old age. That I'm sure.

*(Lao Sun exits.)*

Lao Tong: *(Yells)* I'm perfectly happy with my farm, you hear?

*(In a few years, Lao Tong and Lao Sun would have their economic situation reversed. Lao Sun's sons have lost their jobs due to the 2008 recession while Lao Tong's sons now own a factory due to Lao Sun's support. However, Lao Tong and his sons are still uneducated while Lao Sun's sons are highly educated.)*

# Seeing Mathematics as a Physics Major

Ana Maria Delgado

Mathematics is an area where the content's relevancy reveals itself with time. After all, the way we're taught mathematics can seem the opposite of how we're taught other subjects. Traditionally, we first learn computational techniques, then, maybe even years later, we learn theory and application. This is why when most people think of math, they think only of computation. We can easily see the relevancy of arithmetic in our daily activities involving basic operations: counting money, taking measurements, sharing a pizza. It's safe to say there is a consensus around its use in our mundane tasks. But what happens when we are instead confronted with more abstract ideas?

In the summer of 2018, I took Introduction to Linear Algebra. At the time, the level of my math education went up to Calculus II. As an early physics major with only classical mechanics under my belt, I found calculus to make sense. Dealing with rates of change and finding areas over surfaces, or under curves, were skills that directly bridged the two subjects. Therefore, in the first couple of weeks of linear algebra, all I wanted to do was to apply the techniques of solving linear equations to something physical. That's what I had been used to, and what I had come to expect. However, this was not the case. While at first I experienced, let's say, a mild frustration, I came to realize the benefit of being stretched outside of my awareness of mathematics.

Our professor implemented instruction that supported our understanding of the world of linear algebra, outside straightforward computation. We completed projects utilizing mathematical software that produced visualizations of linear systems. We used these visualizations to consider what it meant for a system to be linearly dependent or independent, as well as to support our comprehension of span and subspaces. We also watched *Flatland: The Movie*, adapted from the novel by Edwin A. Abbott. We were asked to ponder spatial dimensions beyond our own 3-dimensional world, just as the characters in the film and book were presented with dimensions beyond their own. Although it was difficult to visualize hypercubes, hyperplanes, etc., we were able to reason about their characteristics based on mathematics. By this point in the course, I was intrigued by the concepts themselves and was less demanding of real-world application.

In order to supplement our growth as mathematicians, our professor encouraged us to attend events in the city, or to visit the National Museum of Mathematics, MoMath. I visited the museum on one of our days off from class. Everything in the museum was interactive, of course, and to my recollection, I didn't need paper and pencil for any of the exhibits. The activities I took part in at the museum were not directly related to linear algebra; I manipulated a track in order to explore acceleration, I entered "mazes" where one had to follow specific patterns in order to exit, I rode a tricycle with square "wheels" on a floor made of rounded beams, creating a smooth ride. Yes, I had fun. But more pertinently, these activities reinforced the idea that our common perception of mathematics is limiting.

As I've continued in my physics courses, I've now encountered topics where the skill set of linear algebra applies. In Introduction to Quantum Mechanics, for example, we employ linear operators and commutators on wavefunctions in order to determine eigenfunctions and eigenvalues. We have also touched on matrix representations of operators, specifically, on how to express the raising power operator of the harmonic oscillator in matrix form. While the procedures we utilize are not the same as the ones from linear algebra, exposure to the concepts has been extremely beneficial. It's provided me with a foundation on how to think about what I'm learning. Just like hypercubes, it's difficult to visualize the superposition of stationary states of a wavefunction, for example. However, by applying mathematics, we can "observe" some of its

characteristics. Mathematics isn't just the act of crunching numbers, it's a tool for seeing beyond what our eyes allow.

By pushing outside of our comfort zones and contemplating abstract concepts, we can begin to expand our understanding of mathematics. This serves to prepare us for those moments when we are presented with new topics as we progress in our areas of interest. I look forward to more challenges as I continue to grow at New York City College of Technology, in an environment that is conducive to learning, research and cutting-edge application.

# What Happened to Me

Mikhail Iliatov

*(This essay uses an offensive slur to illustrate the importance of being educated about anti-Semitism.)*

I don't feel that what happened to me was spectacular or overly tragic. The incident changed my life gradually, not instantaneously, as part of a larger set of events one encounters while growing up.

It was summer. One evening I came home after playing outside. My friends and I had been having lots of fun, and it was time to share with family. My grandparents were in the kitchen. I walked in and told a joke I found amusing. I don't remember the details, but I thought it was hilarious, and it was about a *Kike*.

My joke was met with deafening silence. Grandmother looked at grandfather, at me, then asked: "Do you know who *kikes* are?" Apprehensively, I tried to come up with a list: a man who is greedy, stupid, ugly, with a hooked nose, bulging eyes, etc.—the exhaustive array of stereotypes. There followed another exchange of glances, another moment of silence. My grandmother spoke calmly. "A *kike* is what bad people call the Jews. Your grandparents are Jews, your parents are Jews. You are a Jew. Is it fair to describe us with the words you just used?" In that instant, I wanted to disappear. I barely held my tears and repeated: "I am sorry. I didn't know."

I was only seven and hadn't known what the word *kike* meant. A flood of shame and helplessness overcame me as my "hilarious" joke took a new meaning. My funny good friends were no longer funny nor good. Life became twisted and complicated. It is still hard to pinpoint the emotion I was left with. Confusion? Embarrassment? Guilt? Self-pity? Dejection? After that day, being a Jew turned into a curious insignia. It was to be carried and, depending on the circumstances, concealed or purposefully displayed. In hostile situations, in large groups, among strangers, being a Jew had to be hidden. There was anxiety: "Is anybody going to say *the word*? What should I do if they say it? Would I have to expose myself? Might somebody expose me? What would the rest of the group say? How would I confront the offender? Would anyone take my side? Would I feel guilty if I pretended that *the word* didn't apply to me?" On some occasions, I had to announce being a Jew, to implicitly ask others to refrain from anti-Semitism. Other times, it was a cautious test of ground for friendship: "I am a Jew. Do you have problems with that? Will you make jokes about Jews? If not, can we be friends?"

As I grew older, my circle of friends changed. It became easier to find support and like-mindedness. "Wearing the insignia" acquired another function, an opportunity to challenge perceived adversaries: "We are Jewish. Do you have problems with that? Do you want to fight?" Of course, the incident didn't ruin my bond with grandparents. I doubt if anybody in the family remembers it now. Nevertheless, an extravagant tree of confusion sprouted from that one stupid joke—the uncertainty that has followed me for a long time. Suspicion of unfamiliar (or, for that matter, familiar) people was firmly planted in my mind.

My daughter is nine years old. Seeing her playing with friends and classmates, I realize that they don't notice each other's family backgrounds, skin colors, nationalities, or ethnicities. They see each other as nothing else but kids: arms, legs, bodies, heads. Sometimes I think about a day when somebody might share a "funny" joke with the group, and I will have to act to help the innocence survive.

# A 'Sneetch' of a Thing

Jillian Carey

*The Sneetch* is about a race of creatures with only one slight, outward, difference amongst them: some have stars on their bellies and some do not. The elitist Star-Belly Sneetches ostracize the Plain-Belly Sneetches, excluding them from all of their social interactions. The Plain-Belly Sneetches are in a perpetual blue funk about being subjected to poor treatment—that is, until Sylvester McMonkey McBean shows up. He takes advantage of their insecurities, finding a solution to their perceived problem ... for a fee, of course. The Plain-Belly Sneetches enter the machine McBean constructs and come out with stars on their bellies. While they are ecstatic, this thoroughly displeases the original Star-Belly Sneetches. They want to be outwardly different as a way to signify their "superiority." Again, McBean "comes to the rescue" and creates a Star-off machine to satisfy that need. McBean continues to take advantage of all of the Sneetches and repeats this cycle until there's no more money to get, and the Sneetches don't remember who was what. He departs thinking he won and that Sneetches will never learn their lesson, when, in reality, it's the Sneetches who come out on top. They come to the realization that no Sneetch is better than the other.

Dr. Seuss's children's story, *The Sneetch*, is a parable for social discrimination, whether based on religion, race, sexuality, class or disability, which has run rampant throughout history. The humor and symbolism used in the story convey that underlying meaning. While the list of various prejudices is quite expansive, Dr. Seuss's choice of his primary symbol, the star, clearly relates to Anti-Semitism. Jewish people were stigmatized with yellow stars by the Nazis as a means of identification and persecution. Dr. Seuss writes, "Those stars weren't so big. They weren't so small/You might think such a thing wouldn't matter at all." At the same time, Dr. Seuss exercises the joy in the autonomy of imagination while shining a light on a serious issue in society. The use of humor aids in showing the inanity of judging others based on their appearance, rather than their character. Even Seuss's choice to rhyme "stars" with "thars" emphasizes that playfulness.

I empathize with both the Plain-Belly and Star-Belly children. Children tend to adopt their parents' way of thinking, through no fault of their own. Having been a live-in nanny, and partly growing up in the South, I've heard things expelled from a small child's mouth that should never be uttered. One specific instance was a toddler screaming obscenities and racial slurs at me because I happened to have been listening to rap music. The Star-Belly children don't know there is anything wrong with segregating the Plain-Belly children. They don't have malicious intent; yet lack of intent doesn't make it feel any better for the ones being discriminated against. When I was a child, I was ridiculed and excluded constantly for being a white, short-haired, chubby, late-developing girl. I would never even attempt to compare my own experiences with the systematic racism that continues to plague our world. However, I do know how it feels to be left out because of the way I look.

"You only could play if your bellies had stars/And the Plain-Belly children had none upon thars." People crave being accepted; they crave equality, yet some still have a tendency to judge others based on outward appearances, differences they can't or don't want to try to relate to. The Sneetches have vices much like our own and their successes are ones we'd hope to accomplish: "That day, all the Sneetches forgot about stars and whether/They had one, or not, upon thars."

# Reforming Mandatory Minimum Sentencing Laws: An End to Mass Incarceration in the United States

Afua Aziza Williams

Consider this: you have a friend who is about to get evicted from his apartment. You invite him to stay in an unoccupied bedroom in your home, until he gets off his feet. You know your friend has had dealings with drugs; however, you trust him enough not to bring that issue into your home. One day you leave home and that friend invites someone into your home, unknowingly to you, to purchase drugs. That person happens to be a confidential informant of the Police Department. Upon searching your home, they find 650 grams of cocaine and other drug paraphernalia. You derived knowledge of the drugs, but you were still held accountable. Now, you are subject to be sentenced for a crime that carries a minimum sentence of five years in prison without parole, a crime you did not commit. How would you feel?

This is a story similar to that of Tracy Cowan. She was sentenced to 20 to 40 years for over 650 grams of cocaine and other drugs that belonged to her ex-boyfriend, whom she had allowed to stay temporarily in her home according to Families Against Mandatory Minimums. She was a first-time offender who had no knowledge of drugs being in her home, and had a successful career in childcare.

PBS.org defines a mandatory minimum sentence as “a minimum number of years that must be served when a person is convicted of a particular crime.” Mandatory minimum sentencing laws are one of the main contributors to mass incarceration in the United States. According to Matt Ferner, “the United States is today the world’s number one jailer with about 25 percent of the world’s prisoners and is home to only 5 percent of the world’s population” (1).

In order to end mass incarceration in the United States of America, we must reform mandatory minimum sentencing laws. While mandatory minimums were originally imposed to deter crime, evidence shows that their effects have been marginal. If they really were a deterrent, prison populations would not have grown a whopping 220 percent between 1980 and 2014 (Ferner 2). As of September 2016, 55.7 percent of federal inmates are offenders convicted of an offense carrying a mandatory minimum. As noted by the United States Sentencing Commission, it is clear that mandatory minimums have a severe impact on the size and composition of the federal prison population, and this comes at the expense of taxpayers (“An Overview of Mandatory Minimum Penalties in the Federal Criminal Justice System” Sections 4 and 5). According to Ferner, it costs \$31,000 per year per prisoner, a total of roughly \$80 billion per year (2).

Mandatory minimums treat violent career criminals in the same way they treat both non-violent first-time offenders and even the innocent, who often refuse plea deals in hopes of acquittal. They are unfair and unjust: a majority of the time, low-level offenders get longer sentences than high-level offenders. There are also many racial and social disparities. Money shapes the outcomes of most trials, with poorer persons often being unable to afford to proper defense. According to [Connectusfund.org](http://Connectusfund.org), drug use is one of the most common crimes that carry mandatory minimum sentences; however, harsher penalties are handed down for African Americans convicted of drug use than white people convicted of the same crime. Also, in one of its key findings, the United States Sentencing Commission reported that 40.4% of offenders convicted of a crime carrying a mandatory minimum sentence were Hispanic (“An Overview of Mandatory Minimum Penalties in the Federal Criminal Justice System” Sections 4 and 5). Mandatory minimums also strip judges of their judicial authority to use discretion in sentencing (“Mandatory Minimums and Sentencing Reform”).

The initial intention of the American justice system was to be a system where criminals were subject to rehabilitative discipline, where they would be educated about how to reintegrate themselves into society and avoid relapsing into criminal behavior. In 1973, however, incarceration rates began to significantly increase with the proposed War on Drugs and the passing of the Anti-Drug Bill by Congress in 1986 and the introduction of mandatory minimums (Jacobin). Today, the United States is a carceral state.

Supporters of minimum sentencing laws may argue that they eliminate personal bias from all involved parties, and that they encourage protection of society for longer periods of time ("11 Mandatory Minimum Sentences Pros and Cons"). Nonetheless, the United States Criminal Justice System should strive to be a system where the punishment is proportional to the crime rather than seeking the harshest penalty. It should be one that seeks to decrease recidivism, which in turn decreases incarceration rates. Take Norway, whose system was once penal. Today, they boast a prison system with expressly rehabilitative aims, and seek not only to punish but also to restore prisoners to society. Many of their prisons have no walls, and their bedrooms (not cells) have windows. The rate of recidivism in Norway is one of the world's lowest (20 percent) and their incarceration rate is 75 per 10000 people according to the United States Department of State Bureau of Diplomatic Security.

Let us band together and fight for mandatory minimum sentencing law reform. The Families Against Minimum Sentences (FAMM) have started a petition on [Change.org](http://Change.org). There is power in numbers, and we all have a voice.

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# 24-Hour Shift

## Micole Lynch

I'm sitting on the hospital bed looking at my son, Naseem, with tears in my eyes. All I have prayed for was an easier life for him, and I feel like I have failed him because his father left me with no money, no food, and no credit.

At the age of 27, I was a single mother of a new born baby. I had to resign from my job because I was sick for the entire nine months of my pregnancy. By then Naseem's dad had moved on to a new woman, and I decided to move back to my mother's house.

After being discharged from the hospital, I looked for a job and returned to school to get my GED. After doing my research, I found Best Life Home Care, a company affiliated with 1199. This union is one of the best; it provides free education and helps students with financial aid for college. This was the break I was looking for to make that change in my life. Immediately, I called, got an interview, and here I am.

Best Life Home Care provides home health aides to assist seniors and advocate for patients who can't verbally explain themselves. Everyone is required to wear a uniform because it looks professional and people will take you seriously. Every year we are required to do twelve hours in-service for the Department of Health. We have to do intense training for four weeks with a registered nurse and graduate with a certification from the Department of Health before they actually put us on a case. All aides must take an annual drug test, get vaccinated with MMR, and have a flu shot.

December 1, 2013 was my first official day working for the company. They gave me a 24-hour shift and the patient's name and address. The night before, I looked up the address on google map to see which trains and buses I would have to take, and then I ironed my mint green scrubs and went to bed. All I knew about this patient was that her husband had died and she lived alone. I was relieved because working with patients who live with family members is stressful. In most cases, family members have a bad habit of giving aides extra work, and if the aides don't comply, they make up lies and have the aides removed from the case. I arrived one hour before my shift started that morning in order to let the previous aide show me around and tell me a little more about the patient.

At 8:00 a.m. on the dot, I rang the doorbell for the aide to let me in, showed her my I.D., and introduced myself. Then I followed her inside the apartment.

As I walked in on the green vinyl floor, I could smell the moth balls and see the cracked paint all over the dining room. Then I looked over to the left side and saw this old lady sitting on her navy blue velvet chair. She had brunette hair with white roots and her blue beady eyes were looking at the news on her 32-inch flat screen television.

After I introduced myself and showed her my job ID, she gazed up at me with a wry smile. "Welcome to my home. My name is Mrs. Roslyn."

The aide then asked me to follow her into the bedroom so that we could go over the job duties. I learned that Mrs. Roslyn loved having her apartment kept clean, having her meals on time, and being given a shower every other day. After the aide explained everything, it was time for her to clock out and for me to clock in. My shift finally began.

Mrs. Roslyn was very inquisitive. She wanted to know where I was from and if I was married with children. After I answered all her questions, she decided to tell me an anecdote about how she met her husband. At the age of twenty, she attended a military dance in Brooklyn. According to Mrs. Roslyn, back in the days of 1948, that was the popular way that most women met their husbands. That night her cousin Mary came and told her that they were going to the military dance. Mrs. Roslyn said she never liked going to those dances because she was shy and too scared to talk to the soldiers.

“Why were you scared?” I asked Mrs. Roslyn.

“Because I thought all military men were aggressive and if I married one of them, he might go to war and never come back home,” she replied sadly.

When they arrived to the military dance, Mrs. Roslyn continued, everyone was dancing or chatting with each other, and right away her cousin, Mary, left to mingle with some soldier she met from a previous party. Mrs. Roslyn said she just stood there feeling the vibes of the party.

Four glasses of wine later, this man came over and started talking about a song that was playing. “After two minutes, he asked me if I wanted to dance.”

“What did you say?”

“I said yes, of course,” Mrs. Roslyn happily replied.

Then we both laughed and she continued the story, telling me how handsome he was, how neat he looked in his military uniform. Mrs. Roslyn told me they danced all night and after the party was over, he walked her to the train with her cousin and they exchanged numbers. Mrs. Roslyn said they dated for three months and got married in a year’s time.

We spoke so much that we didn’t realize it was almost lunch time. I took out her plan of care to see about her diet. The plan of care is a breakdown of the duties the aides perform, patient emergency contacts, and a restriction list of foods. Also the plan of care tells us about the patient’s mental status and what meds they are allergic to.

At noon, I made my famous roast chicken, with vegetables and mashed potatoes. I set up the adjustable table in the living room so that Mrs. Roslyn could watch her shows and eat at the same time. While she was having lunch, I cleaned up the kitchen. After she finished eating, I reminded her to take her medicine. Mrs. Roslyn had so many colorful pills; they looked like candy, Skittles. As I stood there watching Mrs. Roslyn taking all her colorful pills so delicately, I wondered, “Is this going to be my life someday? Will I get an aide to treat me with kindness?”

Then the phone rang and snapped me back to reality. Mrs. Roslyn picked up and started talking to her cousin Mary.

Around 2:00 p.m., Mrs. Roslyn had a light snack of tea and graham crackers, while watching her favorite soap opera, *General Hospital*. At this time, the apartment went into complete silence because she didn’t want to miss any part of the story.

After her snack time, Mrs. Roslyn told me the physical therapist left some daily exercises in a folder on the dresser in the bedroom. The aides must read and follow instructions and supervise Mrs. Roslyn when she does them. The exercises for that day were for her legs. She had to hold onto a chair and kick one leg out to the side and bring it back to center. This leg exercise had to be done ten times with both legs in order to help her with balancing the body.

For most of the afternoon Mrs. Roslyn entertained herself by watching TV and playing “Words with Friends” on her I-pad. I used this time to organize her bed—remove the blankets and sheets—so she wouldn’t have to do this later on.

As the sun began to set, I realized Mrs. Roslyn was dozing on and off.

“What would you like me to make for your dinner?” I asked her softly.

“A honey turkey sandwich with mustard and a glass of ginger ale, please.”

“OK,” I replied.

By 7:00 p.m., Mrs. Roslyn finished her dinner and wanted to get ready for bed. I escorted her into the bathroom that smelled like Clorox and Dove soap. With a white washcloth, I washed her body thoroughly with soap and warm water. After drying her, I put on her pajamas and followed her into the bedroom. It was very old-fashioned with white walls and an old black wooden bedroom set. The floor was covered in an orange colored carpet, which looked like it was from the 1960s, with black tracks from Mrs. Roslyn’s walker. After I helped Mrs. Roslyn into bed, she would read her books until she fell asleep.

Later that night, around 9:30, I heard the neighbors screaming in the hallway. When I looked through the peephole, I saw the lady from apartment 1F physically fighting with her boyfriend. The boyfriend was kicking her in her stomach. I was scared, so I took out my phone and dialed 911.

Ten minutes later, I saw red and blue lights flashing against the cracked painted wall in the dining room. Then I looked out the peephole again and saw the neighbor’s boyfriend in handcuffs being escorted out of the building by a police officer. I felt good to know I had saved someone’s life.

After that drama, I immediately checked on my patient and told her what had happened.

“I’m not surprised,” Mrs. Roslyn said. “That young couple in 1F is always fighting.” She didn’t say more. I could tell she was embarrassed because I was a stranger who had to witness something she had to live with all the time.

By 10:00 p.m., I checked on Mrs. Roslyn again, and she was fast asleep. I finally had something to eat. I was tired, and my body was aching; all I wanted to do was to take a shower and sleep.

The next morning, I got up by 6:00 and waited until Mrs. Roslyn called me to help her out of bed to take a shower. While I was helping her dress, Mrs. Roslyn told me not to worry about breakfast because she was going out with her cousin that morning.

To be candid, I really thought she was going to be a tough cookie because of the way she looked at me in our first greeting and how specifically she wanted everything done. But in the end, she was a sweetheart and shared some interesting stories, like how she met her husband. How exciting it was for me to learn some history about how women met their husbands in 1948. How very proud I felt to know I probably saved that lady from 1F whose boyfriend was beating on her. Before coming to work with Mrs. Roslyn, I felt like a failure, but after my shift I felt courageous and wanted.

By 8:59 a.m., the aide rang the doorbell for me to buzz her in and I clocked out, saying goodbye to Mrs. Roslyn.

# #BlackLivesMatter and Empowering African-American Youth

Ariana Brown

“The world will see you the way you see you. And treat you the way you treat yourself” (Beyonce). This quote may be just two sentences, but it speaks volumes about Black youth in the era of the movement Black Lives Matter. As Darryl Wellington writes, “Black Lives Matter is an organization (singular) founded in 2013 shortly after George Zimmerman was acquitted in the killing of Trayvon Martin. Black Lives Matter soon found that its social media and twitter hashtag resonated” around world (22). The youths who support and participate in this movement have used it to educate themselves, express and love themselves, and stand up for themselves.

In order for this generation to make a difference, they must first start with understanding why and what they are fighting against. Therefore, one way the youth educates itself is by schooling. In “Liberation Through Education,” Professor Danielle Wallace explains the need to educate her students (African-American as well as others) on the history leading up to today’s movement, through “discussions about social stratification, institutional racism, economics, and criminal justice” (30). Meanwhile, Autumn Arnett shows another example of how Black youth educate themselves. Schools like Macalester College are implementing ways to help students process, express, and cope with the events of social injustice that have unfolded across the country (8). Duchess Harris, a professor at Macalester, assisted Abdo Press to produce a Black Lives Matter textbook. “This book, which covers a three-year history from Trayvon Martin to Freddie Gray, is primarily geared towards 6th-12th graders, though Harris said she believes ‘this is a useful tool for many age groups’ ” (Arnett 8). Open-minded teachers using these new textbooks will enlighten young people about the world around them, and therefore help them aid the generation after them. When people educate themselves on matters that directly affect them, they search for outlets to vent their sorrow and/or anger. Education leads one to express what they have learned, either just for themselves or for others to see.

Within the movement, some individuals use music to vent about injustice, express pain, and transmit knowledge of their environment. In “Hip Hop Literacies and Globalization of Black Popular Culture,” Richardson and Pough explain how Afro-American youth express themselves through hip-hop—positively and negatively—and how this builds identity and self confidence, which empower those whose society makes it difficult to possess such things. “[Hip hop’s] culture codes [include] making something out of nothing, being authentic, leaving one’s mark on the world, having aspirations, having self-confidence” (129). Within the movement, music is used to express the individuals’ sorrows and dreams within an oppressive society. Not only does the music help to cope, it also allows others to hear the artists’ pain. This empowers them with the ability to speak up against current events, embracing their pain to make something positive out of something negative.

Outlets such as music are only one means of building confidence, however. In “Towards a Model of Positive Youth Development Specific to Girls of Color: Perspectives on Development, Resilience, and Empowerment,” Clonan-Ray explains that girls of color can maintain a positive self-image through “looking critically at the ways in which one’s ethnic group is portrayed in society and resisting the negative images of the group to which one belongs” (108).

An example of resisting negative images can be found at the protest march that took place on the night of April 30th, 2015, when “hundreds of people marched from Union Square ... in response to the death of Freddie Gray, a Black man who suffered fatal injuries while in the custody of Baltimore police” (Jackson and MacMillan 1). Protests and rallies are still done in response to social injustice, just as the Black Panthers had done in the past. Today’s generation takes stands for the minority that cannot stand up for themselves, did not get a chance to, or was harmed for doing so, just as leaders in the past had done.

However, one way the youth of Black Lives Matter differ from past protesters is their ability to utilize social media, which increases the advantage of power in numbers. Darryl Wellington writes about how the youths in charge of the movement have used “‘Facebook activism’ [to] effectively organize thousands of marches in protest against systemic racism and injustice in law enforcement” (22). Today’s Black youth follow the lead of past attempts to stand up to injustice; however, social media includes so many online participants that it is nearly impossible to monitor them all.

Social media also allows Black youth to empower themselves online when going out and physically protesting is an obstacle. During the Freddy Gray protest, “Police pinned many protesters on the ground and arrested dozens ... More than 100 people were arrested” (Jackson and MacMillan 1). With all the backlash from police that happens when one speaks up about injustice, it is understandable that some youths are afraid and deterred from physically fighting. However, social media offers an outlet to fight the silence of injustice with words.

Though times are a bit different today than they were 50 or so years ago, African Americans still face injustice in the form of laws, unspoken regulations, and poor treatment. Black youth have been influenced to educate themselves, express themselves, and stand up for themselves by the Black Lives Matter movement. Educating the youth through schooling helps develop a mindset for future generations. Education also leads to one wanting to express his or her pain and knowledge. This expression then leads to self-confidence and standing up against the oppressor. This process empowers the African-American youth with knowledge and the will to fight. With the youth being enlightened, and having outlets to express themselves, they will do everything in their power to make a change where the past has failed to.

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# Artsy Fine Dining for Midtown Suits and Millennials

Ellyn Melissa Valdellon

It is often said that a diner's last bite at a restaurant, commonly a sweet or dessert, determines that person's judgement of a restaurant's food, and is the freshest memory of his or her dining experience. Fortunately, that is not the case at The Modern at MoMA. My last bite was a dark chocolate truffle, dusted with powdered sugar, filled with the most horrific, cold, watery caramel sauce I have ever experienced. There were two chocolate truffles presented to me, and I just happened to save the worst for last: a truly disappointing last bite that also made me feel guilty, since I had twice met pastry chef Jibo Kim, first when he so kindly brought a dessert to my table, and again during my quick "tour" of the kitchen. Despite this, however, the Modern excels at being the contemporary American restaurant it aspires to be, a fact that shines through the food, décor, and dining room staff.

The Modern had been on my restaurant bucket list for a couple of years. I could never quite pinpoint why. Was it the food? Décor? Menu? The fact that it was a fancy restaurant in a museum that I had never been to? Instagram? To this day, I still do not know. But I have always wondered when I would finally have a chance to visit. I had made the decision to dine at this restaurant instead of Le Bernardin, another restaurant on my bucket list, despite the dinner menu being eight dollars more expensive. As a lover of seafood, I knew that I would never be able to make a decision for any course at Le Bernardin, so I knew The Modern would be the better option this time. I have also previously dined at Daniel, and was curious about the difference between French fine dining and contemporary American cuisine.

The Modern is conveniently located near the 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue/53<sup>rd</sup> Street station, with an entrance outside right next to MoMA. I chose to go through this entrance so that I would be able to see it unaffected by its museum neighbor's decoration. Upon entry, I felt as if I was about to enter a fashion show. Bright white lights above and beside me, polished black tile floor below, upbeat music from the museum faint in my ears, a fashionable young woman in front of me walking through the second door, not holding the door for a second. Ah yes, elitist midtown Fifth Avenue, here I am! I continued my way to the maitre d', who greeted me enthusiastically, and offered to take my coat. I was then led to my table by another young lady, not as enthusiastic in demeanor as the maitre d' but still pleasant. On the way to my table, I observed a sea of people dressed in dark clothes, probably the after-work crowd, in the Bar Room, the Modern's more casual dining setting that offers an a la carte menu. The host and maitre d' would easily pass as one of them, as they too, wore simple black attire. This pattern of black and white kept reminding me that I was indeed in midtown Manhattan. This was emphasized even further in the dining room, where most guests are invited to sit in black desk chairs—just without the wheels. Fortunately, my dining setting was less corporate, and more spacious, since I was dining solo. My host kindly invited me to sit down on a black leather seat with a dark

blue square cushion. She accommodated my request to sit next to the window overlooking the museum sculpture garden: finally, a real indicator that I was in a fine dining restaurant. She then awkwardly proceeded to pull out the white tablecloth covered oval table, so that I could enter the bench. After I sat down, she then, even more awkwardly, pushed the table back in, forever trapping me at my table. I thought, “This is it. No getting up, no bathroom breaks. The experience is about to begin.”

In addition to having a nice view of the sculpture garden, my seat in the dining room gave me the best view of the whole dining room. I was peacefully secluded in my own corner, admiring the decorative cherry blossom trees displayed at each of the three server stations at the center of the room. It was a nice break from the almost drab black and white, dark color scheme that the restaurant and all its patrons had somehow coordinated with each other. (I had joined the black clothes club, too, just in case). Across from me on the table, one candle and a single checker lily made up my date for the evening. Before having another interaction with anyone else, I had some time to take in the sights and sounds of The Modern’s dining room. Other diners were either in groups or on dates. Group tables, situated in the middle of the dining room, were mostly surrounded by older diners, while tables for two and singles, around the perimeter, were mostly younger- looking guests. I was the only one sitting alone. It was loud, but not so much that I felt like I was lost in a crowd. I felt calm in my little corner by the window, observing the staff, listening to the fashion show/shopping music playing in the museum next door.

After several minutes of people watching, I was finally greeted by the Captain. He said good evening, made room for an unusually long pause after I replied, and handed me a menu. The whole process of him greeting me and handing me the menu seemed unnecessarily long, but I guess this was a part of the service. He proceeded to acknowledge the requests I had made on my reservation—pescatarian, no alcohol—and offered me non-alcoholic cocktails, which my college student self sadly declined. After this, he filled my water glass, and left me to make my selections from each course and do more people watching. The entrée was a simple choice for me, because there was only one fish option, which was slow cooked sea bass with celtuce ribbons and horseradish. The others were not so easy, but I was intent on trying new foods free of alcohol and red meat. For the cold appetizer, I decided on the tuna tartare marinated in dashi vinaigrette. I have only ever eaten and prepared hot foods with dashi, so this made me curious. For the warm appetizer, I had cauliflower roasted in crab butter. I wanted to know how well the chefs could make this vegetable the star of the dish, because American cuisine often focuses on meat as the main focus of a plate. For dessert, the apple crème fraîche with sage ice cream. Although I am not a fan of apples or apple flavored anything, I found this to be the most creative, seasonal, and interesting of the other desserts, which were more on the traditional side (chocolate mousse, Mont blanc, bread pudding). After what seemed like much more than enough time to choose, the captain finally came to take my order, and assured me that the chefs would be informed about my pescatarian and non-alcoholic requests.

Shortly after, the meal commenced with the amuse bouche: a celeriac tasting, presented to me by a different dining room Captain, assisted by one of the food runners. The Captain was very enthusiastic in his greeting and presentation, and his attitude was contagious. I watched in anticipation as he laid down a matte white mini platform, with a mini tart sitting atop, and a cone shaped cup filled with some black powder onto the blue and white preset plate. He then presented it as a mini cheddar cheese tart with fresh celeriac, which was to be eaten after the celeriac soup, which was accented with black truffle powder. As he poured, the

black truffle powder dispersed throughout the soup, and towards the end of the pour, the most vibrant color of green I had ever seen rose to the surface, adding a beautiful, fresh contrast to the creamy white celeriac soup. It reminded me of spring, even though celeriac and the whole menu was still focused on winter. I was so in awe that I forgot to ask what the green liquid was. It was clear, but too dark to be olive oil. He then explained in a calming British accent that I should wait a few moments for the flavors to marry, and that it was to be drunk like tea, and then followed by the tart. It feels weird to have other people to tell you how to eat, but I followed his instructions.

Shortly after the plates were cleared, the main food runner that was serving me brought out my bread and butter plate and appetizer silverware. The butter plate was formed in a ring, decorated with meticulously picked leaves of different herbs, such as rosemary, thyme, and chervil, and sprinkled with salt. I opted for multigrain and caraway bread, after which the cold appetizer arrived, tartare of tuna with dashi flavored vinaigrette. Unlike traditional tartare, this dish lacked a breaded or crunchy vehicle. Instead, very thinly sliced, translucent discs of daikon radish topped green and red jewels underneath. Before leaving, the food runner made sure to inform me that there was no alcohol in this dish. I then lifted a piece of daikon to reveal the tartare, studded with refreshing diced citrus supremes and parsley. The dashi flavor was prominent, but not overly fishy, and the bursts of citrus were enjoyable. The slight bitterness of the daikon was a nice addition, to balance all the flavors. The serving size was a little disappointing, considering the price of the whole meal, but it was delicious and a well-thought-out dish. After I finished eating, my food runner, who I was assuming to be the equivalent of a back server, cleared the table except for the bread and butter plates and water glass, swiftly crumbed the table and put down the silverware for the next course, the hot appetizer.

The cauliflower roasted with crab butter was my favorite dish of the night. The plate boasted a brilliant and simple gold and white color scheme, garnished with golden toasted sliced almonds and fresh tarragon leaves being the finishing pop of green. While the cauliflower was roasted to unreal golden perfection, with a strong brown butter flavor, the crab did not shine through. This was a bit of a letdown, because I was expecting that they would utilize the delicious crab fat. They could have elevated the crab flavor in this dish, and perhaps didn't because consuming crab fat in American cuisine is uncommon. Still, the beauty of the presentation was captivating and made me ease up on the criticism. I cleaned the plate, mopping up every bit of buttery goodness with pieces of cauliflower and also using it to breathe life back into my now cold and tough caraway bread. I made sure to make my last bite one with the flavors of the main dish in front of me. After clearing the dish, the main food runner did not crumb the table, but did repoint it for the entrée. This part of the service seemed rushed but did not take away from me enjoying the experience.

For the entrée, the food runner put the plate in front of me and took a deep breath, as if she was about to give a very important speech, automatically telling me she was nervous. Maybe a new server? She then explained each component of the plate—the sea bass, celuce ribbons, grated horseradish, horseradish cream—and cautiously poured a “minestrone broth” into the shallow bowl, taking care not to drown the horseradish cream. The first thought that popped into my mind? This is not minestrone broth; it's basically a cream soup! So far, only one dish I had tasted so far did not have copious amounts of dairy products. And, I had chosen the crème fraîche and ice cream for dessert. Oops. I was, however, excited for the horseradish,

which I anticipated to be a nice break from the mild flavors of the other dishes. The fish was cooked nicely, but didn't wow me in terms of texture, and it was missing the finesse that one would expect from such a high-end restaurant. The celuce ribbons were warm but still crunchy, but also did not wow me. And the horseradish cream? Sadly, it did not have the spicy kick I was hoping for. This, along with the minestrone broth, made the dish too rich for my liking. Usually, when I eat and think of fish, I prefer it with something cool, crisp and light on the side. The flavors were good, but did not complement each other well, and seemed thrown together rather than carefully considered.

Before dessert, the food runner cleared and crumbed my table, and offered coffee and tea, which I declined. The dining room captain who served me made a request to the executive pastry chef, Jiho Kim, to serve a small "dessert appetizer" as I like to think of it, and it was presented to me by the chef himself. It was a simple quenelle of yuzu ice cream with a wedge of mandarin orange and extremely thin choux pastry shaped like a leaf. I believe the captain provided the complimentary dessert because I told him I was a hospitality student. He was the one to present me with the last course—apple crème fraiche with sage ice cream. The crème fraiche actually tasted like apple, nearing apple Jolly Rancher flavor, but not cloyingly sweet. It was served over a thin almond cake, and a refreshing pile of granny smith apples and celeriac brunoise—a clever allusion to the amuse bouche from the start of the whole meal. The sage ice cream was my favorite part, even though I was dreading constantly having cream being a constant part of each course. The savory flavor of sage somehow provided a warm depth of flavor to the dessert, and I finished it quickly so as not to let it melt and make the almond cake soggy.

After the table was cleared, I was left alone for a very long time. I was tired of people watching at this point, and I felt trapped from the host pushing the table so close to me. Where are my server friends? Where is the Captain? Are they waiting for me to leave and do I have to pay at the entrance? This was the first time in the evening that I felt uncomfortable. But finally, the Captain came to check on me, and I asked if I could pay, which turned out to be one of the reasons why he finally came back to my table. He then surprised me by offering to show me the kitchen. The wait was so long that I thought it was not going to happen. I felt like I had burdened the staff with my dietary restrictions and questions, but they continued showing exceptional hospitality. I had called a week before and asked a reservationist about seeing the kitchen, but I do not know if this is the reason he offered, or if it was because I told him I am a student. Regardless, I was ecstatic, so much so that I asked, "Right now?!" when he turned around to get my bill. After the check was paid, he promptly led me to the kitchen, and expertly explained each station, as well as the names of the chefs working, while still keeping the information concise. It was the perfect end to the meal, and it compensated for the terrible chocolate that I had as my final bite of the night.

Surprisingly, it was the service and hospitality that made the experience memorable for me. The food was good overall. I did have some expectations that were left unmet as far as food and culinary arts are concerned, but I was very happy that the restaurant accommodated every request I made—pescatarian, no alcohol, seat by the window, tour of the kitchen. Furthermore, they even gave me a free dessert, and I met the executive pastry chef. The atmosphere is appropriate for business meetings and more special occasions, and the Bar Room is a nice setting for meeting up with friends in a more upscale setting than the usual bar or café. I was nervous that I would be rushed through the meal as a solo diner, but after visiting The Modern, I think they go above and beyond for each guest.

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# Follow the Potato: How One Plant Forever Altered the World

Nikka Rosenstein

The United Nations estimates that, in 2007, the combined production of potatoes worldwide reached 325.3 million metric tons (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations). That's over 100 pounds of potatoes for every person on Earth. These tubers all eventually made their way into the stomachs of Earth's inhabitants, becoming food for humans, fodder for livestock, or alcohol or food starch. However, the widespread cultivation and use of the potato only occurred over the last 500 years. The arrival of Europeans to the Americas at the turn of the sixteenth century inarguably altered the history of the Western Hemisphere, but those Europeans also brought the potato back with them to their home countries, and that single plant forever altered the history of the entire world.

The Native Americans who inhabited modern-day Bolivia likely cultivated the potato from a wild root in the area (Simmons et. al.). It quickly spread to a large area, including modern-day Peru, as an alternative staple for areas that had difficulty growing the more iconic maize. Properly dried, potatoes could keep for years without refrigeration. Though the version eaten today is often freeze-dried for speed and convenience, *chuño* may be one of the first potato preparations in the world.

The introduction of the potato to Europe was not as greatly marked as it might have been, since many Europeans did not initially feel keen about the tuber. Laws regulating the use of open fields often limited large-scale agriculture to grains, meaning that farmers grew potatoes in small garden plots (Mcneill and Mcneill). Some Europeans thought the potato contained poison, because it grew underground, which resulted in the nickname "the Devil's Apples." The proper French term for potato is still "pomme de terre," which literally translates to "apple of the earth."

By the eighteenth century, however, Europe began to change its mind. Potatoes were cheap, nutritious, and, unlike wheat or rye, did not need grinding before consumption. King Frederick the Great of Prussia thought highly of the potato and insisted his subjects cultivate it. French royalty promoted the potato as food for the peasants. Peter the Great introduced potatoes to Russia, though it took until the end of the nineteenth century for Russians to accept the potato and integrate it fully into their agriculture (Ekshtut).

But the potato did not stop there. European colonists and traders brought the plant to Africa, India, and China. India received the potato in the seventeenth century and quickly adopted it into cuisine (Gopal et. al.). The samosa, a traditional food since the days of the Persian Empire, now almost always contains potatoes. Another Persian originating dish, Massaman curry, is standard potato-bearing fare in Thailand. Cooks in Japan have long incorporated potatoes into stews and ground them into flour for pancakes.

Meanwhile, the potato became first a savior and then a destroyer in Ireland. This root vegetable had become extremely popular in the poorer parts of the country. As one historian explained, “Close to half the population ate little except potatoes and buttermilk—a diet that, although monotonous, was highly nutritious”(Kinealy). Unfortunately, this monoculture made Ireland susceptible to disease. Between 1845 and 1852, five near-consecutive crop failures due to a mold that grew on the potato killed one in eight people. Ironically, this famine drove millions of Irish immigrants to the United States, back across the Atlantic Ocean that had brought them their traitorous staple.

It is ironic that these Irish immigrants were preceded by their own potato. The potato came to North America by way of Ireland, rather than straight north from its origins in what is now Bolivia. Potato cultivation arrived in New England from Europe and spread west with the white settlers (invaders, from the perspective of the Native Americans), reaching the West Coast in a little more than a century.

Following this path, the sheer distance covered by the spread of the potato is astounding. It traveled over ten thousand miles from Bolivia, to Ireland, to Idaho; over 14 thousand miles from Brazil, to India, to Japan. These routes do not count the potato’s many branching paths through Europe, Russia, and Africa. Since the Earth’s circumference is just under 25 thousand miles, it’s no exaggeration to say that the potato has literally circled the globe. The potato’s travels changed nutrition, culture, and demographics worldwide.

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# Exhibition: A Love Letter to New Orleans

Ekemini Nkanta

If you've ever dreamt of exploring someone else's memories, the Museum of Contemporary African Diasporan Arts has what you're looking for. Visit *A Love Letter to New Orleans*, an exhibition by Langston Allston and Demond Melancon, and you'll feel an unspoken connection to their childhoods, upbringings, and culture. Melancon crafts elaborate Mardi Gras Indian suits by hand, while Allston captures the world around him in drawings. Each piece illustrates a personal experience before surrounding the subject with lines and lines of text. Rather than being merely decorative or blunt, the fragmented narratives elaborate on the emotions and nostalgia attached to the memory. Together, these works paint a blurry picture of the past that's more of a feeling than a concrete image—sort of like the difference between a painting and a photograph of the exact same scene. The individual works seem to be untitled, but my favorite is Langston Allston's portrait of Big Chief in costume.

When I first looked at this piece, I was instantly stunned by the intricate details of the linework. Despite the simple medium (marker on tarpaulin, a.k.a. waterproof canvas), Allston achieves several different textures and layers through the manipulation of stroke, patterns, and tone. Big Chief, a major leader and role model for Melancon, is shown standing with his hands clasped and his eyes shut while wearing an extravagant Mardi Gras headdress. It's a stark contrast to his T-shirt, jeans, and various chains. His arms are adorned with tattoos, and his body is surrounded by storyboard panels featuring aspects of the annual ceremony. I love how his ensemble connects his Indian tradition to the modern-day Black aesthetic, and demonstrates how the two can coexist. It reminds me of the "double consciousness" lesson in which we discussed balancing racial identities. Because this is such a large piece, Allston anticipates that you won't be close enough to read the text, so he plays with sizing and negative space in order to draw you in. The concentration of black in Big Chief's dreads brought my gaze to the center of the image, and the extensive layering encouraged me to move closer for a better look. It's beautiful how the finer elements appear to just be gray when viewed from a distance. It could represent how the complexity of a culture, location or person slowly unravels as you begin to interact with it.

What makes this particular exhibition different from any other are the raw stories written directly onto the artwork. They're completely unfiltered: slang, spelling errors, and names given out of context make the anecdotes feel authentic, without leaving the reader in the dark. Mini doodles accommodate the writing, just like in journal entries. Allston's messy handwriting offers details about New Orleans that only an insider would know: late nights on St. Claude, marching through the streets to a drumbeat, running inside at the sound of gunshots, stapling beadwork back on mid-parade ... all subtle signs of the relationship between the writer and his neighborhood. I like that he doesn't romanticize the violence—he just tells it like it is. I also see beauty in the fact that Big Chief

inspired change for the better, rather than holding onto the common mentality of “it’s always been this way.”

All in all, Langston Allston and Demond Melancon did an exceptional job at honoring their city and the people they’ve met within it. Their duo exhibition, *A Love Letter to New Orleans*, offers two different memoirs of how their neighborhood’s culture has shaped them as both artists and individuals. You can tell they belong there just from the passion embedded in their artwork and narration. The good times they share are powerful enough to make even an outsider like me feel nostalgic.

## The Shifting of Power throughout *Angels in America, Parts I and II*

Micaiah Davis

Tony Kushner's *Angels in America, Parts I and II* follows the stories of a group of individuals, some of whom are struggling to make sense of their world, or rather their reality. In some cases their sense of right and wrong is warped. Set during the AIDS epidemic, Kushner reveals to the reader what it was like to be a living in that period, especially as a homosexual, and what an AIDS diagnosis—which was normally associated with homosexuality back then—meant for that individual. Kushner also exploits the idea of power and how it is used or abused. The question one must reflect on, however, is who exactly has the power, and is that power constant or does it shift throughout the play? Power, in this play, is a fluid entity, moving back and forth between and among individuals like the waves of the ocean, and because of this, no one institution or person is in power for too long, not even the Angel herself.

In Part I of the play, readers are introduced to Joe Pitt, a character whose personal feelings conflict with the teachings of his religion, Mormonism. In this case, his religion holds power over him as it has most likely governed his upbringing and dictated what is socially acceptable and unacceptable. Being a homosexual goes against everything he's ever been taught; therefore, Joe has to bury that part of him in an attempt to fit into the social norms that his religion dictates. In Act I scene 8, when Harper confronts him about him being a homosexual, he asks, "Does it make a difference?" and continues, "That I might be one thing deep within, no matter how wrong and ugly that thing is, so long as I have fought ... to kill it?" (40). His religion also plays a key part in his marriage to Harper as it is likely if Joe was comfortable in his sexuality at the time, he would have never married her to begin with. He even confesses to Roy, "I know I married her because ... I loved it that she was always wrong, always doing something wrong" (56). Joe was attracted to her queer behaviour which appealed to him because he himself was "off" in that they both did not fit into societal norms. Again, his religion holds sway over his choices and its preconceived notion of an ideal marriage—between man and woman—is ingrained so deeply within Joe that he is willing to sacrifice his happiness in order to live up to the expectations Mormonism has placed on him. Ironically, however, it is his repression of his homosexuality that causes Harper pain and misery as she feels he doesn't truly love her or is even sexually attracted to her. Joe confesses as much when Harper asks if the reason he closes his eyes when they have sex is because he imagines men, to which he replies, yes. He also tells her he sees nothing when he looks at her which Harper acknowledges as finally the truth.

The power shift between Joe's religion and himself doesn't come about until Part II where he begins to kind of unravel and courts a relationship with Louis. The hold his religion had over him starts to wane but doesn't completely. For the first time in probably a long time, Joe has the power to pursue what makes him happy and at the moment being with Louis is what brings about that happiness. Referring to his relationship and openness with Louis, Joe discloses to him, "I know how you feel, I keep expecting Divine Retribution for this, but... I'm actually happy" (201). Joe even goes as far as to say he would give up anything and be anything to remain with Louis. He has finally found someone he can be himself with and be with in a way he was never able to be with Harper. Joe is not about to let his religion stand in the way of his happiness.

Another power shift occurs between characters Roy Cohn and Belize. Roy Cohn is a successful lawyer who undeniably, in the first part of the play, is the epitome of power. Not only does he have power, it is

official power, which essentially means his ability to do “whatever he wants” is given to him legally. It is important to note that Roy is also a homosexual, albeit one in denial. According to him, however, he cannot be a homosexual because a homosexual is a person without power and that is not him. In Act I scene 9 he states:

Homosexuals are men who in fifteen years of trying cannot pass a pissant anti  
discrimination bill through City Council. Homosexuals are men who know nobody  
and who nobody knows. Who have zero clout. Does this sound like me  
Henry? (46)

This line of reasoning is what prompts Roy to deny his AIDS diagnosis instead of going the “I have liver cancer” route (47). He justifies this decision by reiterating the point, “Roy Cohn is not a homosexual ... AIDS is what homosexuals have” (47).

Belize becomes relevant because he is the nurse that takes care of Roy in Part II of the play while he’s sick. Roy’s official power begins to dissolve—his disbarment is on the horizon—and Belize’s unofficial power grows. While Roy is in the hospital, he is under Belize’s care and therefore is powerless to do anything but do as he’s told. Belize has the power to make life at the hospital for Roy even more miserable or make it very comfortable. When Roy was being offensive and ill-mannered toward Belize as he attempted to insert the IV drip needle into Roy’s arm, Belize responded:

You don’t talk that way to me when I’m holding something this sharp... Now I’ve  
been doing drips a long time. I can slip this in so easy you’ll think you were born  
with it. Or I can make it feel like I just hooked you up to a bag of Lupid Drans.  
(151)

Belize’s medical status is also what grants him access to patient’s medications, which explains how he was able to confiscate Roy’s AZT pills after he died. Regardless of the fact that it was illegal, Belize takes the pills on behalf of his friends telling Roy before his death, “I have friends who need them Bud” (186). One of them being Prior, who—like Roy was—is also suffering from AIDS. There is a contrast to be noted between Roy’s use of his official power and Belize’s use of his unofficial power. Roy uses his for his own personal gain while Belize uses it to aid his friends.

The third power shift transpires not only between two individuals or even an institution and an individual but among an Angel, an individual—Prior and an entity—progress. At the end of Act One, the Angel chooses Prior as her prophet. Later it is revealed that he is not to be a harbinger of change; he was chosen to halt it. Prior objects to being chosen stating, “I’m not a prophet, I’m a sick, lonely man” (173). The Angel continues to impose her will on him and he is left with no choice but to comply, confessing to Belize, “... now I hate Heaven. But I’ve got no resistance left” (177). Prior, however, does eventually attain the power to reject the Angel’s instructions. With some advice from Hannah, Joe’s mother, Prior gains the courage to “reject the vision” (258) and wrestles the Angel. He wins and thus gains entrance into Heaven, allowing him to return the Book of Anti-Migratory Epistle the Angel had previously given him.

Amidst all that is happening, it is revealed that though the Angel had temporary power over Prior, she and her fellow angels were powerless against a much larger force—progress. Understandably, progress terrifies the Angel as the “Heavenquakes” and God’s desertion of angelkind were caused by humanity’s migration to other parts of the world and their intermingling. Prior, when he meets with the Continental Principalities, explains to them that they cannot stop progress:

We can’t just stop. We’re not rocks. Progress, migration, motion is ... modernity.  
It’s animate, it’s what living things do. We desire. Even if all we desire is stillness,

it's still desire for. Even if we go faster than we should. We can't wait. (275)

The angels are but bystanders, unable to do much of anything. Belize says it best, "But see that's just not how it goes, the world doesn't spin backwards" (175), reiterating the point that humanity can only go forward. Progress is constantly being made and those who wish for stillness, to dwell in the past, will ultimately still find themselves thrust forward into the future, into progress.

As previously stated, power throughout the play is continuously shifting and the shifts don't always occur between or among individuals. It can happen between an individual and an institution, an individual, a higher being and an entity or any combination of the above. Power also has different effects on the characters. Some wielding it will abuse it (Roy), will use to help others (Belize), some will reject it (Prior), and some had their eyes opened to the fact that they didn't have as much as they imagined (the Angel). Having power is one thing but what one does with it is what makes all the difference and that is what sets apart each of the characters.

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# Dynamics of Personality in the Workplace

René-Alex Medas, FMP, LEED® Green Associate™

## Part I: Employee/Organization Biography

I have been employed as a Operations Coordinator for Eastman Medical Center's Campus Transformation Department for the past five years, responsible for the day-to-day operations of two multi-specialty facilities, 123 Main Street and 520 Walter Road. Both facilities are leased 25-story buildings; one is owned by Verizon, which occupies floors 3 through 10; Eastman occupies many of the remaining floors. The other building is owned by Columbia Property Trust; however, Eastman occupies the entire building. 123 Main Street opened in 2012 and was the first multi-specialty facility opened by Eastman that wasn't located inside the Hospital's Main Campus. This building has operating rooms; hyperbaric chambers for wound care; endoscopy procedure rooms; a cancer center with infusion care; a pharmacy; labs; and regular office space and exam rooms. 520 Walter Road is currently under construction, part of a 2 phased project that opened as the Ophthalmology Department on April 9, 2018. Since April we have opened three more departments (Radiology, Neurology and Urology) and are set to open Dermatology in three weeks, which will complete Phase 1. Phase 2 commences in September, with the construction of Plastic Surgery and a few other departments that have yet to be programmed.

The Operations Coordinators (OC) role falls under Facility Management. As an OC, I am the focal point for all facility related issues and responsible for keeping the facility compliant with regulatory agencies standards, e.g. CMS (The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services); DOH (Department of Health); NFPA (National Fire Protection Association) and all agencies having jurisdiction. Aside from maintaining the buildings infrastructure, some of my other duties include managing and maintaining vendor contracts, interfacing with departmental leadership and evaluating budgetary allocations. Managing two Healthcare facilities such as 123 Main Street and 520 Walter Road has pros and cons, as most things in life do; however, the pros outweigh the cons by far, and offer a very rewarding and satisfying career. The most rewarding thing about working in these buildings—working in health care, for that matter—is knowing that you are providing a safe environment for patients and their families. Everything we do revolves around our patients' comfort and safety; for instance, if the heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems are not working, that poses not only comfort issues, but also health issues to patients who may have a compromised immune system. Thus, our responsibility to have a solid repair and maintenance program, along with contracted service professionals, is of the utmost importance. Facility Management is an exciting field; every day there is a new challenge or problem to face. Whether a facility, a staff or patient issue, one must be always ready. Moreover, facility management also provides the opportunity to work with people at different levels within the organization, which I find isn't the case with most professions. I am currently pursuing a Bachelor's Degree in Facility Management, which I hope will help further my career. The goal is not to retire as an Operations Coordinator, but maybe a Director of Facilities.

## Part I-B

Eastman Medical Medical Center opened in 1958 as Resilience Hospital and was renamed Fuller Hospital in 1969 in recognition of two prominent and generous benefactors, brothers Jonathan D. and Franklin James Fuller. Eastman Medical Health is one of the nation's premier academic medical centers. Its unifold mission to "serve, teach and discover" is achieved daily through an integrated academic culture devoted to excellence in patient care, education, and research.

Within Eastman Medical Health I work in the Campus Transformation department. This department is responsible for the Facility Management & Design and Construction for the entire Eastman Medical network, and is divided into many smaller departments, such as Design and Construction, Operations, Building Survives, Security, Environmental Services, and Engineering, to name a few. Each department has its own hierarchy, but all departments report to the VP of Campus Transformation, who reports to the President of the Hospital. My department falls under Operations, which manages the off-site locations and some parking facilities. As a OC, I report directly to a facility manager, named Martin Martin and I have a good working relationship. Martin tends to micro-manage and deflect all questions asked, which makes for an interesting management style.

## Part II: Story

In December 2015, I was promoted from Operations Coordinator to "Supervisor of Ambulator Operations in" when Eastman Medical Health acquired Lutheran Hospital (located in Eastman Medical Annex). A colleague of mine, Jair, was also promoted. However, he was promoted to Facility Manager and he was my direct report. I worked alongside Jair for three months when I first started my career at Eastman in 2013, and had few interactions with him after that. We had a decent working relationship until I noticed some aspects of his character that didn't gel well with me, so I kept my distance. One incident happened when I was covering for him while he was on vacation. A department administrator requested new locks for her department, so I naturally took the steps to get this job done and was awaiting approval from Jair's manager but never received such approval. Upon Jair's return, I inquired about the project and asked why his manager never got back to me. He replied in a superior tone, "These are my buildings. Anything that needs to get done goes through me, and I already took care of it. The locks and the project are underway." At that very moment, I decided I would not lift a finger to assist Jair again and I never did. Fast forward to December 2015: Jair has been named the new Facility Manager for Eastman Medical Annex, and I have been named Supervisor. I knew that reporting to him wasn't going to be easy due to his temperament, but I also wasn't going to let my career be contingent on another human being or their behavior for that matter. In my new role, I was responsible for the day-to-day facility operation (i.e., repair and maintenance) and had five union employees who reported to me directly. During any acquisition, there is culture change and uncertainties on both sides, but more so on the company being acquired. Questions are asked such as: What will the new management team will be like? What changes will be made? Will I lose my job? However, unbeknownst to them, I had major uncertainties of my own. How would working for Jair affect my management of these mechanics and how would that in turn

affect this transition? At an early start, Jair made the point to let me know that he was the “BOSS” and that things should be funneled through him, whether that be communication to upper management or mechanics.

I took this in stride and started to manage the repairs as needed, but Jair was always hovering. One interaction between Jair and myself ultimately led to me stepping down from the position of Supervisor and returning to Operations Coordinator. A liability audit was conducted by our insurance carrier at one of our facilities. They noted in the report that we had potential trip and fall hazards on the sidewalk requiring immediate repair, so a contractor was brought in for proposal. Jair decided to send a communication to building occupants including the medical director of the repair and impact to the facility—without asking my opinion. His plan was to repair the sidewalk from 8 a.m. Friday through Sunday. The medical director agreed, but only if the patients would be safe entering the facility. I replied only to Jair, saying that it may not be a good idea to replace the sidewalk at that time, because Fridays are usually busy. I suggested that we should have the contractor do the work on Saturday and Sunday, when there are no patients. Paying for the OT would be better than putting patients at risk. Jair replied and added the Director of Facilities back to the email to say that precautions would be made, and that if anything happened, the contractor would be held responsible. After the repair was completed, Kirst called me to his office to have a meeting and said that he didn't like the fact that I challenged his decision, and that he was the boss. “If I tell you to do something, do it.” At that moment I knew I could no longer work for Kirst.

### **Part III: Personality Analysis**

My score on the Big 5 personality traits and the DOPE Test is as follows: Big 5 O – Openness to Experience – 7; C – Conscientiousness – 7; E – Extraversion/Introversion – 6; A – Agreeableness – 7; N – Neuroticism – 4; DOPE Test – Rational Pea-Cock. Putting together the personality traits and DOPE Test results for Jair isn't easy; after some deliberation I concluded the following results: O – 7; C – 6; E – 8; A – 3; N – 4; and the DOPE Test – Eagle.

Kirst and I have two very different personalities. First let's look at the DOPE Test results and how these personalities affected our working relationship. This may be biased, but I find myself focusing on the negative traits of the Eagle when aligning them to Jair's behavior. The only positive traits I can apply to him is aggressiveness, even though he doesn't use his aggressiveness in a positive way, and motivation. The one thing I do respect about him is that he worked his way up the ladder and is motivated to get to the next level. I was hoping, because we came from the same position and we both worked hard to get to this point, that our relationship would be one of equal support, guidance, and working together to achieve the same goals. I do believe my personality played a role in our working relationship. The “rational peacock” has negative traits as well, and the ones I can identify with are emotionality and selfishness. These can put a different tone and perspective on communication and interaction.

The Big 5 personality traits probably caused most of the issues between Jair and me over the years. His agreeableness rating is low, he does not play nicely with others, and he is not well liked socially. This is the consensus from both the people who report to him and the different departments he supports and interact with. Communicating with Jair was difficult, especially conversations about improvement ideas, or the direction we should take as a department. Things were either turned down or rephrased in his words later. Reflecting on our day-to-day working relationship, I realized that we did have things in common, and worked well together.

all things being considered. We both score well on conscientiousness and extraversion traits, which made for a very effective team. As a team, we were able to implement better training programs for the mechanics, create preventive maintenance schedules, hold vendors to a higher standard, and make sure they adhered to the service level agreements (SLA) that they signed. Within a year, we were able to reduce a backlog of 500 plus repairs and maintenance work orders by 75%. We achieved this by holding the mechanics accountable, which wasn't being done before. Different personalities within an organization can make your life very stressful or easy. The one thing I learned is that you have to understand what your personality weaknesses and strengths are. Then and only then can you manage others.

# The City That Never Slept: The Introduction of the Harlem Renaissance

Maia Bethea Dawson

In 1920, the beginning of a new lifestyle would emerge in Harlem, New York. Over the years spanning the Great Depression, six million southerners of color would migrate north fighting to get away from the rural, racially segregated South in hopes of a change in lifestyle. New forms of art and entertainment would intertwine within the races and concepts never spoken about would be brought to light. Socially, intellectually, and artistically, New York would be changed forever.

Prior to the Great Migration to the North, life for blacks in the South was largely segregated due to large amounts of racial tension. In an attempt to gain freedom, black southerners migrated north ending straight in Harlem. As the beginning of the Harlem Renaissance approached, World War I was coming to a close and the world was a decade before the onset of the Great Depression. The demand for workers in the industrially growing cities rocketed as dozens of businesses sprang up to supply the demand for goods. In the South, blacks saw this as an opportunity to create new lives for themselves. Segregation limited blacks from doing most anything spanning from going to school with white children to drinking from the same water fountain as them.

In New York cultures began to intertwine especially in the field of entertainment. New forms of art began to develop and blacks and whites began to look at each other with more understanding and companionship. Despite the still existing racism in Harlem, blacks dealt with difficulties by integrating music and acting. During this period, blacks would produce musicals written and acted completely by blacks. Theatre and music became the foundation of their social lives and is what began to introduce the races to each other. According to Sabina Arora, "Drama of the Harlem Renaissance sought to overcome the decades long influence of such stereotypes on the popular imagination" (42). Theatre began with white actors in blackface where white actors usually darkened their skin to perform exaggerated roles as African Americans, depicting them usually as mean, ugly people. Soon after, blacks would make it to the stage and would continue to create their own performances. Symbolism and themes of black revolution were seen in them. Plays were written by black migrants, usually those of southern descent. As a result, some racial tolerance began to show over time. Harlem would become the largest concentration of black people in the world, a populace reflected in its theater.

In addition, new ways of innovating and creating things faster were constantly generating throughout the 1920s. One of the first intellectual and cultural shifts began with women. Women went from wearing clothes that concealed to barely any at all. Drinking and partying would also become casual for women. Gender roles for women would also largely change as women became frustrated with traditional limitations. These cultural changes paralleled political currents. In 1920, women would be permanently

granted the right to vote with the passing of the 19th amendment. In 1920, women would also be granted the ability to work a job with a fair wage. These changes are the reason why women can work today under equal conditions.

Books by African-American authors too had a great influence on both black and white Americans. Langston Hughes and Claude McKay are just two famous writers of the Harlem Renaissance. They spoke on the pride and the alienation African Americans felt in Harlem and also how blacks learned to assimilate. In clubs, which Hughes and McKay wrote about, white and black people were no longer averse to dancing with each other. This change of thinking would soon create a sort of peace between the races and would influence later changes such as the ending of legal segregation in 1954.

Art, alongside music and literature, played a major role during the Harlem Renaissance as well. During the period, many of the emerging artists such as Romare Bearden were of southern descent. Music in the black community also served as a means of uplifting and encouraging others that racism and segregation could be overcome. In Harlem, music was simple enjoyment; there's no denying that Jazz and Blues brought people together. Truthfully, Jazz and Blues originated in the South and was brought north by migrating blacks. As Virginia Smith writes, "to put it more exactly the way I have come to think about it, blues could not exist if the African American captives had not become captives" (24). Smith's claim supports the larger matter of African American music being created from difficult experiences. Furthermore, if blacks had not been contained within the South, they wouldn't have their tales to tell. Jazz music completely affected people, from fashion to their attitudes. This style of music urged people to buy cars, wear nice clothing, and overall live life fully. Jazz spoke to all, triggering powerful emotions and would influence change even in sexual norms.

Many would argue that the Harlem Renaissance holds no true significance. Many of the problems recognized didn't change until later in history; however, I disagree. The 20th century marked a time in which white Americans finally began to consider the intellectual contributions of African Americans. Equality was broadened and the meaning of being not only an American but a human being was exemplified with the integration of black and white culture. Many positive legal changes would be born during this time as well; if the Renaissance had not occurred, much of the freedom we have now would not exist. Based out of New York, Harlem's intellectual revolution brought us to where we are today.

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# My Graphic Design Course Experience

## Keon Johnson

Graphic Design Principles I is an intense class with different ways of perceiving design. The class abounds in creative approaches to design. In fact, it incorporates everything from everywhere, due to the various analytical perspectives that are being applied (e.g., analyzing a series of Tommy Hilfiger clothing advertisements). In turn, this makes the required tasks more like a hobby or a lifestyle, rather than a dull project that counts towards a necessary grade. The entire creation process is a legitimate learning experience, as this helps encourage creativity in the process of crafting, decision-making, and carefully learning from mistakes. Instead of using computers, students draft and create almost totally through the manual application of previewed design tactics and elements. This class can comprehensively teach a number of different design methods and improve one's craftsmanship tremendously.

I was introduced to a number of terms relating to the application and understanding of design techniques. Chiaroscuro describes the regions of light and shade in an image, while Surrealism refers to objects that possess dreamlike qualities in a work of design. The color theory unit of the class dealt with projects based on the application of terms like soft, medium, or high contrast to the focal point of a monochrome. The first of these projects appeared simple, but required. This, in turn, made us prioritize focus and craftsmanship. For a majority of the required projects, keeping the design neat was key. This was especially the case on one of the first few assignments, where the objective was to display a pictorial balance of a focal point. The project required patience, since an equally distributed margin was needed, as well as very clean edges. The symmetrical top with right margins was necessary to give off the effect of an absolute focal point. The project gave a better understanding on how to catch a viewer's eye, which follows along based on how the work initially catches the eye's attention. This project gave me ideas for focal point use in my own drawings and paintings.

The class also turns one into an actual designer through the use of the tools that we were required to use. T-squares with clear edges was a new concept at first and still isn't the easiest tool to work with. Being more used to using a basic steel T-square, I found designing in this different style to be a challenge. However, as time went on, creating with this new type of tool became very understandable. Another new type of tool often utilized in this class was gouache paint. This kind of paint dries relatively fast. Early on, the professor emphasized using a high-quality gouache paint to achieve more professional results, which I found to be very true. While gouache isn't the easiest form of paint to work with, it is very simple to use. A problem that I often encountered with this paint was during its application, however. Too much or too little water would lead to uneven textures and faults in the color, which is a big deal according to color theory: even the slightest variation in tone matters a lot. These made everyone more careful when using paints, and more precise when applying measurements with a T-square.

We were assigned many projects in this class. They all served to better my craft skills in some way. The design theory projects addressed focal points and the negative space around the focal point. Something intriguing was the fact that, despite having that much negative space, precise measurements of the projects' margins were necessary in order to achieve the effect of a focal point. Because the contrast of black on white was already present, this added to the focal point's intensity. In the color theory unit, everything in design theory began to make sense to me. We incorporated almost everything we learned in terms of margin measurement and focal points into color theory projects; it would've come off as easy to anyone. There was still the fact, however, that the mastering of gouache paint took patience, and its application required extreme neatness. A common mistake I encountered with these projects was with the technique of masking. Bleeding would constantly occur and my work would suffer. That's something that most people in the class looked forward to improving in the future.

A vocabulary sheet given early on in class also handed everyone a number of new phrases, as well as some new terminology. For a start, symmetry was described in a new sense. Beforehand, symmetry used to mean to me identical shapes on both sides; however, as this class suggested, symmetry has more to do with an even weight, as opposed to identical shapes. Another word that was somewhat reiterated was rhythm. Usually, this term is equated with repetition; however, it's actually not only just that. Rhythm has to do with slight modifications within repetition, which only then becomes rhythm. There were terms, though, that were totally new and that are now becoming a part of my regular vocabulary. The word *chiaroscuro*, for example, signifies the intensity between light and dark areas. Although it was very new at first, the term and its meaning and usage slowly grew on me. .

In conclusion, this class overall has taught and refreshed a lot of things for me. Since the first session up until now, there has been a tremendous change in how students in the class go about creating. Lessons from course portions like design theory enforced precision and neatness in drafting and measuring. There are still parts I'm working on bettering myself in, like applying paint neatly, as I learned from color theory. Often in class, the Bauhaus phrase "Less is More" was emphasized. Bauhaus school—its masterpieces, then its rise and fall—wasn't a new topic to me, since I had taken a graphic design history course; what was new was the saying itself, one small sentence that sticks with me. It's something very true in terms of art, but it can be applied to everything.

# Biology and Power: How Plants, Animals, and Disease Changed the World

Sadman Saqib Ali

Humans settled North and South America thousands of years before Europeans arrived. Migrants from Siberia traveled over a land bridge called the Bering Straits to Alaska during the Pleistocene Ice Age.<sup>1</sup> Between 40,000 and 12,000 years ago, those people moved southward to Central America and South America. They hunted giant bison, sloths, lions, and camels. With the end of the Ice Age, the ice melted away, and the land bridge over the Bering Straits disappeared because the sea level rose. New rivers and landscapes formed throughout the Americas.<sup>2</sup> Those migrants from Siberia, who later became known as Indians or Native Americans, splintered into thousands of different tribes. By the time Europeans arrived, approximately 50-60 million people lived in the Americas, 15 million of them in North America. The arrival of Europeans in the Americas in the late fifteenth century kick-started a massive exchange of plants, animals, and diseases between the eastern and western hemispheres, which changed pre-existing cultures for Native Americans, Europeans, Africans and Asians. This biological exchange (known as the Columbian Exchange) reshaped the landscape of the New World, making European countries like Spain, England, and Portugal dominant global powers in the process.

This exchange began with Christopher Columbus, an Italian explorer and sailor. After a rejection from the Italian government, the Spanish Queen, Isabella of Castile, recruited him to find an alternate route to India. Columbus headed westward with three ships from Palos, Spain in 1492.<sup>3</sup> According to journals, his ships arrived at the Caribbean island of Hispaniola on October 11. Later on, he found Cuba and the Bahamas. Columbus met natives known as the Taino and he called them Indians. Columbus made three more trips to the New World in 1493, 1498, and 1502.<sup>4</sup> Columbus's journeys to these islands initiated more Spanish expeditions into the Americas. Italian mapmaker Florentine Amerigo Vesputti called the Americas the "New World," juxtaposing the western hemisphere with Europe. In Germany, mapmakers called the "New World" America on some popular maps and the name became common.

The interactions between Europeans and Natives Americans often resulted in conflict and death. The Spaniards killed a lot of Taino chiefs and forced the Taino to work in mines and on plantations. Within a decade, most of the Taino population were wiped out by disease, overwork, and malnutrition. As Spanish exploration continued, Conquistador Hernando Cortes landed on eastern Mexico, with 500 men, in 1519. Cortes brought his horses, guns, and metal armour with him. The local populace had never seen horses and guns. These technologies gave Cortes the upper hand in warfare against the native tribes. Cortes defeated the rulers of Tabasco and extracted food, supplies, and women from them. Later on, Cortes headed for the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlan. The Aztec emperor Montezuma II thought Cortes was the fair skinned God Quetzalcoatl. Montezuma welcomed the Spaniards and gave them gold and other gifts. Cortes, however, attacked the Aztecs and took Montezuma hostage.<sup>5</sup> Other native tribes helped Cortes take over Tenochtitlan because they were furious with the human sacrifice that was imposed on them by the Aztecs. When the Aztecs tried to retake Tenochtitlan, they were struck by smallpox, which obliterated much of their population.

Three million Aztecs were killed by smallpox. Some historians have written that Cortes intentionally infected the Aztecs with smallpox.

Because the main cause of these conquests was the Europeans' thirst for resources, many goods were sent back to Europe. Columbus's arrival in the Americas started the Biological Exchange, an exchange of plants, animals, and pathogens between the Americas and the rest of the world. Europeans benefited greatly from this exchange. Plants such as potatoes, beans, squashes, corn, peanuts, pineapples, and cocoa were shipped to Europe. The potato, in particular, became a very important food in Europe because it provided increased nutrition and was affordable to the average people. Potatoes were so popular in Ireland that they became a symbol of Irish culture. Tomatoes became very popular in Italy. Tomato sauce came to be used in spaghetti, pasta, and pizza. Beans provided a source of vegetable protein for the average European populace. Because poor people were able to afford these new nutritious foods, the population of Europe grew rapidly.

Furthermore, Europeans brought sugar, wheat, citrus fruits, bananas, and rice to the Americas. Sugar plantations became big business for the Spanish and Portuguese Empires. Because so many Native Americans were dying from diseases, the colonizers looked for laborers from elsewhere. The need for laborers initiated the Transatlantic Slave Trade.<sup>5</sup> Slaves were taken from Africa to work on sugar plantations in the Caribbean and Brazil. Europeans also brought horses, cattle, pigs, and goats to the New World. Horses allowed the Spaniards to defeat the Native Americans quickly.

Additionally, the British brought their ideas about capitalism to North America. British colonists built settlements in Jamestown and Plymouth. John Rolfe crossbred American and European tobacco to create a product that was highly desirable in Europe. Tobacco became big business, and its production grew so much that African slaves were taken to the British colonies to work on plantations. As for the diseases, Europeans brought smallpox, mumps, influenza, typhus, chicken pox, and measles.<sup>6</sup> Native Americans were greatly affected by these diseases because they were not exposed to animals from the Old World and, therefore, did not have immunity to animal-borne diseases. The Native American population in North America dropped from 15 million in the pre-Columbian period to less than 500,000 in 1850. The effect of the diseases made it easy for Europeans to colonize the New World.

In conclusion, the Columbian Exchange changed the Americas and handed over control of the Western Hemisphere to Europeans. This exchange had both positive and negative aftereffects. The introduction of potatoes, tomatoes, and corn led to rapid growth of population in Europe and Asia. Poor people were able to afford nutritious foods. The need for laborers for sugar plantations initiated the Atlantic Slave Trade. This trade led to the enslavement of millions of Africans. Diseases from Europe obliterated most of the Native American population of the New World. British colonists from Jamestown became rich selling American tobacco. Spanish, Portuguese, and British Empires benefited greatly from the deaths, slave trade, and cash crops. These empires became powerful and used their newfound riches to conquer other parts of the world, such as India, Africa, and Indonesia.

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# The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly: *Everybody Comes to Rick's* vs. *Casablanca*

Gabriel Flores

The play *Everybody Comes to Rick's*, written by Murray Burnett and Joan Alison, and the film *Casablanca*, by director Michael Curtiz, both combine war and romance genres to depict human nature in a time of crisis. Although the two genres are evident in both works, there are a series of remarkable differences that distinguish Burnett and Alison's play and Curtiz's film. These differences are perceptible in the portrayal of some characters, as well the handling of some story plots. This paper will analyze three specific differences between Burnett and Alison's play and Curtiz's film: the character of Captain Luis Rinaldo (called Louis Renault in the film) and his portrayal as a more serious character in the play as opposed to a playful character in the film; the treatment of the war context in both works and the differences in how the war is used as a backdrop for both stories; and the ways in which the two different endings signify the meaning of both play and film.

## Rinaldo/Renault

Both *Everybody Comes to Rick's* and *Casablanca* sketch the majority of the characters as either good or evil, with the exception of the character of Captain Luis Rinaldo (named Captain Louis Renault in the film adaptation). In both works, the character of Rinaldo/Renault is drawn as a hedonist. He is a man who seems to care about nothing and no one except himself. He takes advantage of pretty women taking refuge in Casablanca, who seek an exit visa to somewhere safe, like the United States of America. These actions might put Rinaldo/Renault clearly on the side of evil, but he is also a man who looks the other way while refugees and locals do illegal business to survive the difficulties of war. His willingness to bypass the law in order to protect people shows that he is also a character on the side of good. Although there are clear similarities between Rinaldo and Renault, the character's development arc does differ between the two. In the play, Rinaldo is an immoral and cynical womanizer, but in the film, he becomes the teasing and sophisticated Renault who eventually does the right thing, joining Rick to fight the Nazis.

The womanizing aspects of Rinaldo are evident in his dialogue from *Everybody Comes to Rick's*, such as when he tells Rick that he is in love. When Rick asks "still or again," Rinaldo says, "again, and I hope it will be again and again and again" (1.8). As Rinaldo implies in his answer to Rick's question, this is not the first time he has believed that he is in love. For him, love is more of one-night stand than a commitment, as Rinaldo further explains that he just saw this "love" for the first time that afternoon (1.8). Rinaldo's lust and immorality in the play are even more noticeable in the scene where he pressures Annina to bend to his desires in front of her husband. Rinaldo wants Jan, Annina's husband, to know that she will have sex with Rinaldo in exchange for exit visas.

JAN: Annina, I think we should go.

RINALDO: Why? It is early. You cannot leave now.

ANNINA: Please, Jan, I am having such a good time.

JAN: If we stay, you must promise not to drink anymore.

RINALDO: (slipping an arm around her) You may stay with me and drink all you want.

JAN: (rising) Annina, we are leaving.

RINALDO: Perhaps you are leaving, but when I am the host, I do not like my guests to leave so early.

ANNINA: Please, Captain, we ...  
RINALDO: (pulling her down again) Come sit down. We have made a bargain.  
JAN: Captain, will you let my wife go!  
RINALDO: You fool! If you want an exit visa, do not interfere. (2.2.37)

The dialogue shows that Rinaldo has given up caring about right and wrong. He takes advantage of the couple's desperation to satisfy his lust, forcing Annina to betray her husband for a promise of safe escape from Casablanca.

Burnett and Alison also create a more bitter relationship between Rinaldo and Rick in *Everybody Comes to Rick's*, as opposed to the less dramatic and more humorous Renault-Rick relationship established by Curtiz in *Casablanca*, as these lines from the play reveal:

RICK: Come, come, Luis. Why so formal?  
RINALDO: Because, for the first time in three years, I am here as Prefect of Police, and not as a friend.  
RICK: Not for the first time, Luis. Remember? You closed us up last night.  
RINALDO: Until we have settled this, I am Captain Rinaldo.  
RICK: Fine. Then it won't be necessary for me to offer you a drink. With the place closed, free drinks are quite an expense.  
RINALDO: You can open immediately ... that is up to you.  
RICK: I'm listening.  
RINALDO: I want the Vierecks.  
RICK: The Vierecks?  
RINALDO: (impatiently) The young boy and girl who were here last night. The ones who were responsible for the closing. The people that you have hidden successfully. (3.2)

Unlike the more threatening dialogue above, this conversation happens with a more lighthearted tone in the film:

RENAULT: As I suspected. You're a rank sentimentalist.  
RICK: Yeah? Why?  
RENAULT: Why do you interfere with my little romances?  
RICK: Put it down as a gesture to love.  
RENAULT: Well, I forgive you this time. But I'll be in tomorrow night with a breath-taking blond. (*Casablanca*)

Renault, instead of focusing on the Vierecks like he does in the play, makes jokes about his "little romances" and "breath-taking blonds."

Renault overall supplies more levity in Curtiz's film adaptation than Rinaldo does in the play. He may at times come off as despicable, but he's also one of the funniest characters in the film, providing relief in dramatic moments. The following dialogue between Rick and Renault, at the moment they are talking about whether Laszlo will leave Casablanca, captures one of these moments:

RENAULT: This is the end of the chase.  
RICK: 20,000 francs says it isn't.  
RENAULT: Is that a serious offer?  
RICK: I just paid out 20,000, and I'd like to get it back.  
RENAULT: Make it 10. I'm only a poor, corrupt official. (*Casablanca*)

The above dialogue is in contrast to the play, which only refers to a "wager" (1.11) between Rinaldo and Rick, and the amount they bet is only "five thousand francs" (1.11). The play does not include the additional remarks

that Renault makes about himself as being a “poor and corrupt official” (*Casablanca*), which adds comic relief to the scene.

### War-time Context

The war-time context in which both stories take place is crucial for both works, but there are important differences between how Burnett and Alison represent it in *Everybody Comes to Rick's* and how director Curtiz represents it in the film *Casablanca*, due in part to their two different media (stage and screen). The story, both in the play and the film, is set in 1941 during World War II. Jule Selbo claims that “the opening of the dramatic *Casablanca* is framed in the war genre—in the opening scenes ... and its conclusion” (18). From the beginning of the film, the war itself is an important element, both visually in terms of cinematography and stage design, and expressively in terms of the *mise-en-scène* throughout the entire film.

As mentioned earlier, the war dominates the overall climate of the film. Selbo states, “the supporting genre (romance) ... is present ... when Ilsa (Ingrid Bergman), Rick's former lover, enters Rick's Café ... [but] ... it is interesting to note how the main genre (war) dominates the narrative” (18). The film sets the historical stage by using a series of visual references to establish the time period. It starts with a revolving globe, which then stops revolving and shows Europe, only to turn into a flat contour map of Paris. Jeffrey Geiger and R.L. Rustky, in the book *Film Analysis: A Norton Reader*, argue that the film guides us into its fictional world with smooth transitions and matching actions between shots, creating a smooth narrative flow as it lays out the facts of World War II.

The film then shows superimposed scenes of maps; refugees fleeing from all sections of Europe by foot; and pushcarts, cars, and ships. They all converge upon one point at the tip of Africa: Casablanca. Arrows on the maps illustrate the routes taken as voice-over narration describes the migration. Authors Geiger and Rustky write:

The first moment after the credits assail the spectator with background material that is virtually documentary or even pedagogical in nature—a rush of information conveyed through newsreel footage, maps, and authoritative masculine voice-over. (364)

The film then depicts a scene of refugees in Casablanca surrounded by the military. A man trying to escape the authorities passes by a couple, the Brandels, who “play an important narrative function through the course of the films” (Geiger and Rustky, 365). As the camera pivots, it shows the sorts of shady figures that populate the town. Selbo describes Casablanca as a population of “anxious refugees angling for transit papers in outdoor cafés, military police shooting a criminal with false papers, to set the war genre scheme” (18). Other references are purely visual and strengthen the atmosphere of war, such as the constant revolving beam of light and the German Expressionist style.

Contrary to the strong war visuals in the film's opening, and the first scenes that clearly illustrate the World War II backdrop of the film, Burnett and Alison's play relies on characters' dialogue, rather than visuals, to set the wartime scene. The first stage direction, in Act One, defines the place and the year of the story without mentioning the war specifically: “The bar of RICK'S CAFE. Casablanca, French Morocco, 1941” (5). Then, a character named Ugarte refers to the refugees in a conversation with Rick:

UGARTE: You know something about Europe, senor. You have seen these refugees. They may have everything ... money, permission to enter the United States or South America, and yet they can no leave. Why?  
RICK: Do you have to go to all this?  
UGARTE: I insist. They need exit visas from the country that they wish to leave, and they are very difficult to obtain.  
RICK: And that's where you come in.  
UGARTE: Right, Senor. Just as the lowest animal have their reason for existing so have I. I supply these poor people the necessary exit visas.

RICK: For a price, Ugarte, for a price.

UGARTE: (nodding) And why not? People pay well to get out of Europe today. (1.3)

This dialogue is meaningful because it establishes a sense of urgency from the refugees to leave Europe, where Nazis are conquering and invading their homelands. Instead of explaining the whole war or the general history, like the film does, the play focuses on how the wartime situation affects individual characters. Another reference to World War II in the play occurs in one of the earlier conversations that Rick has with Rinaldo, when Rick explains to Rinaldo that Laszlo must have taken the refugee trail. Rinaldo replies that he doesn't care how Laszlo got to Casablanca; he only cares about the fact that Laszlo needs to stay. This again shows how the war affects the individual characters, rather than showing the war as a whole.

The blog *Rick on Theater* explains how the playwright Murray Burnett's experiences led to his exploration of the war:

Burnett was horrified by what he witnessed there, and he met “a new breed of people”: refugees who were about to become “stateless people,” unwelcome in their homelands and unable to escape Europe easily. While in Vienna, too, Burnett learned about the “refugee trail,” a circuitous and perilous route from Nazi-controlled Europe across the Alps into France (not yet occupied by Germany in 1938) to Marseille and across the Mediterranean to Morocco then back to Lisbon, the capital of neutral Portugal and the center of espionage and intrigue in World War II Europe (2009).

Burnett and Alison include more allusions in the play that help create the war backdrop of the story, such as the entrance of Captain Heinrich: “The door opens. A YOUNG MAN in German uniform enters. Other Germans salute him in the room” (1.19). The German invasion of France is also mentioned during a conversation between Rinaldo, Rick and Strasser:

RINALDO: (quickly) Rick is unlike any American you have ever met, Captain. He is completely neutral.

STRASSER: So, I have heard. I understand you came from Paris in '37.

RICK: (with a slightly sour smile) That seems to be no secret.

STRASSER: (with a lightning glance at Rinaldo) I have always been happy in Paris. I had hoped to be stationed there.

RICK: A pity.

STRASSER: Ah. So, you are not one of these people who cannot imagine the Germans in their beloved Paris. (1.20)

This focuses again on how the individual characters feel about the war. At one point, the characters even discuss how little they know about who will win:

STRASSER: You are very clever. Who do you think will win the war?

RICK: I haven't the slightest idea. (1.21)

Despite the fact that the wartime framing is established early in the play, references to the war appear in other acts as well. In Act Two, Rick asks Lois about her preferences, prompting an intimate moment between lovers:

RICK: Good. What do you like? Cricket, baseball, the war?

LOIS: Oh, the war.

RICK: Disgusting, isn't it? (2.1.5-6)

As these passages all show, references to the war in the play *Everybody Comes to Rick's* focus on interrelations among characters. They do also include dramatic sequences like the singing duel between the German and French anthems; the resolution of the central romantic triangle; and even the signature song "As Time Goes By," which functions as trigger for Rick to reawaken his love and his political activism. Overall, in the play the war reveals character traits and character relationships, rather than using characters to tell the larger war history.

### Plot Changes: Different Motives, Different Outcomes

Changes to the plot between the play and the film create critical differences between *Everybody Comes to Rick's* and *Casablanca*. One of the main differences between the play and the film is Captain Strasser's motive for capturing Laszlo. In the play, Strasser's reason is economic, while in the film, the Nazis' quest for Laszlo is politically motivated. In the play, the tension between Strasser and Laszlo is based on the seven million dollars that Laszlo has collected from criticizing the Nazis:

STRASSER: Laszlo, we are not unreasonable. You can stay here indefinitely ... or you can leave in the morning for Lisbon. On one condition.

VICTOR: And that is?

STRASSER: (leaning forward, speaking intently) When you left Prague, you had on deposit in various other countries a sum amounting to seven million dollars. You made this money by vilifying the German government and its people. Germany is entitled to it! (1.30-31)

In the film *Casablanca*, however, Strasser's motive to catch Laszlo changes. Instead of stemming from economic reasons, Laszlo's persecution is political. This more profound motive increases Laszlo's likability, causing the audience to identify more with his character. The following dialogue from the film emphasizes Strasser's intentions:

STRASSER: You know the leaders of the underground movement in Paris, in Prague, in Brussels, in Amsterdam, in Oslo, in Belgrade, in Athens.

LASZLO: Even in Berlin.

STRASSER: Yes, even in Berlin. If you will furnish me with their names and their exact whereabouts, you will have your visa in the morning.

RENAULT: And the honor of having served the Third Reich.

LASZLO: I was in a German concentration camp for a year. That's honor enough for a lifetime.

STRASSER: Will you give us the names?

LASZLO: If I didn't give them to you in a concentration camp where you had more "persuasive methods" at your disposal, I certainly won't give them to you now. (*Casablanca*)

According to Kriegl, this switch works in favor of the character's impact on the audience and the overall repercussions of the film. He writes:

In *Everybody Comes to Rick's*, the freedom fighter Victor Laszlo is sought after by the German Captain Strasser to obtain seven million dollars the fugitive has accumulated through an underground newspaper publishing "foulest lies" (1.23) about the Nazi regime. Once the money has been delivered, Laszlo would be allowed to leave Casablanca immediately, or so Captain Strasser wants him—and the audience—to believe. The quarrel, it seems, is all about money. In the film adaptation, Major Strasser ... demands from Victor the names of the underground leaders in every major city in the Third Reich as a prerogative for freedom of passage. (5)

Furthermore, although both the play and the film end with Laszlo getting the girl and Rick sacrificing his happiness in order to fight Nazism, the aftermath of Rick's actions in each work differs. In the play, Rick decides not to kill Strasser, instead surrendering himself to Rinaldo's authority. In the film, however, Rick kills Strasser and allows Ilsa and Laszlo to escape Casablanca. Josiah M. Hesse reasons:

Laszlo would get the girl (as in the play) and Rick would avoid jail for shooting the Nazi general, because Claude Rains would utter the memorable "round up the usual suspects" to his officers. The film closes with an intricate dance of the bad guy defeated, a happy couple flying into the moonlight, and two hardened cynics strolling into the fog and commenting on their future: "a beautiful friendship." (1)

In the play, Rinaldo resumes his "blowing with the wind" behavior, but in the film, he chooses a side and joins the resistance against the Nazis. According to Kriegel:

Captain Renault, who appears to be the epitome of neutrality and supine demeanor in both play and screenplay, abruptly performs a complete volte-face by covering up Rick's murder of Major Strasser and subsequently joining the fight against the Nazi regime. In the play, he very much remains the same. (5)

A thorough analysis of the differences and similarities between the play *Everybody Comes to Rick's* and its film adaptation, *Casablanca*, reveals that the film uses powerful visuals and a wider historical approach to World War II, in contrast to the play's reliance on dialogue to reveal how the war affects specific characters. Moreover, while Strasser pursues Laszlo economic reasons in the play, his reasons are political in the film, emphasizing black and white morals rather than ambiguity. Indeed, the film also softens the womanizing, bitter, and morally questionable character of Rinaldo into the more positive and playful character of Renault, who only provides comic relief, but also makes the right moral decision to fight against Nazis at the end. The plot changes affecting Rick's fate are also important. In the play, Rick's actions likely condemn him to capture by the Nazis, but in the film, Rick and Renault commit to the right cause and fight together against the Nazi threat. Overall, the play creates a complicated world where characters are put in difficult situations and make questionable decisions, something that may have been more appealing to theater audiences. The film, on the other hand, sets up a world with more comic relief and a clearer sense of good and evil, which was probably more appealing to the audience of a Hollywood movie.

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# For the New Guys

Nicholas J. Pristina

Grab the keys.

Move the truck.

Unlock the sides and back it up into place.

Get the clipboard and have a pen.

Dig through the bins and cubbies, making a list of what we are short.

Check the list so the boss can place the order.

Without having a full stock, we may waste one or two hours finding the piece we need.

This is how you be a good helper. A mechanic is only as good as his helper.

Take the time at home to get to know the fittings and the tools.

Have a good night sleep. Work starts at 7:30 am.

Help with the cargo and load the truck.

Find the missing inventory in the shop.

When you can't find what you need, add it to the list.

If you have nothing to do, find a spot in the shop: empty the shelves, sweep the top, organize the material as you see fit.

Back and forth, we have material here and there and everywhere.

With a place for everything we can move with ease.

Chaos is avoided once we have neatness

We find what we need in seconds versus minutes and keep the punch list moving. We do more and make more.

It is a lot of work, but it can be done.

# To Support in Intentions and Actions: A Message to All Willing and Unwilling Male Allies of the Women's Rights Movement

Jolly James

Dear Fellow Living, Breathing Men,

I write this article to you not as a judge over you, or as a more upright individual, but as a member of this group—living, breathing men—who understands our position, privileges and role in today's social climate. The women's rights movement began as far back as 1848 at Seneca Falls. There, a hundred signatures were received supporting "The Declaration Of Sentiments," a statement written by women tired of constantly being left out and degraded. They wanted change, but no significant change would come till 1920, when women were finally allowed to vote. There have been some more changes since that time, but frankly, not enough change has occurred. Reports of sexual harassment and assault cases still lead to overly biased verdicts. The existence of such vile acts confirms the sentiment that women are still degraded, left out and trampled upon.

I believe that we men who live, work, and build in this society need to rise up, help, and support strong women fighting for full and equal rights. If you know this, and you have admitted to being part of a group that has enjoyed so much privilege at the expense of another, you are a willing ally. Good work. However, your job isn't done, not yet. If you're a living, breathing man who thinks women aren't any less privileged, and that there isn't any need for them to make known their plights and demand change, you probably think you don't want anything to do with their movement or with this one. Well, I have bad news for you, "bro": as long as you are a member of this society, which means you're not about to move to Mars or Bikini Bottom or some other place that isn't Earth, you're a going to be part of a change coming that can't be stopped. For this reason, I call you unwilling allies, because whether you like it or not, you will play a part in this revolution. You can help it arrive, or you can be a negative example waiting to illustrate why and how women will achieve their full deserved rights.

Anyway, whatever you are, willing or unwilling, there is work to do. Here is how we go about it:

1. We must come to the knowledge and understanding that women are less privileged than we are. We get more respect, pay and freedom to do what we like.
2. We must train our ears, minds, and hands to act accordingly to the change that must come. This means respecting women's voices, ideas, and bodies.
3. We must seek and listen to women's concerns, perspectives, and complaints, aiming to change our own roles in such struggles.
4. We must train our children, male or female, to respect women and give them their much needed space.
5. We must teach our children that men are human beings and not robots who don't have emotions. We must let our boys cry and share their feelings, and not conceal them in the

ever false and ridiculous bid to be more “manly.”

6. We must understand we are not the victims, but only a support group. We must let women grieve and be angry about their plight.
7. We must have uncomfortable and difficult conversations with ourselves and the women in our lives.
8. We must couple our good intentions with good actions, supporting women and their course for freedom.
9. We must understand that our consciousness about women’s right should have been common sense, and that we are not heroes, but regular men doing what we are supposed to do.

# Wigs and Race: It's Personal

Andrea M. St. Louis

Whenever someone comes to me to critique their outfit, I always suggest accessories. Accessories allow anyone's outfit to pop. Wearing plain clothes and adding the sparkle of a necklace or a pair of exuberant earrings can do so much more than a lot of people think. The same, however, goes for hair. When we do our hair, it is because we desire a particular look on that day or for a special occasion. Our hair, in its own special way, is an accessory. A lot of hairstyles can be damaging to human hair or generally hard to do, so plenty of women (and even men) turn to artificial hair. One of the oldest kinds of artificial hair is the wig.

Throughout history, wigs have had significant meanings to different societies. During ancient times wigs were first worn by most upper-class ancient Egyptians. In the span between ancient history and today's modern times, wigs were used mostly for vanity and entertainment. Plenty of European men sported powdered wigs, periwigs and toupees (French for "tufts of hair") on a daily basis, because it was a trend. In Japan, Kabuki actors wore wigs on stage. Wigs were worn by Shakespearean actors to show the age and statuses of their characters. Wigs were used in minstrel shows by blackface actors like Eugene d'Ameli and Rollin Howard, to mock African American femininity. Indeed, while wigs have been around for centuries enhancing beauty and entertaining the masses, they have developed a negative connotation today for one specific group of people: Black women.

Last semester for my marketing research project, I came up with the idea for my group to do a study on protective hairstyles. A protective hairstyle is a hairstyle where the ends of someone's hair are tucked away. This can be a bun, braids, twists and of course a wig. The project was intended to find the most popular kind of hair protection method, and deem what consumers really preferred and spent the most money on while protecting their hair. We included options that were hairstyles, hair lotions, or other techniques. While collecting the data, however, I realized that there was so much bias and ignorance when it came to artificial hair, particularly against Black women. Initially, we were not thinking solely about Black women; we just aimed to be inclusive. We were looking for whether consumers were buying heat protectants, scarves, wigs, etc. However, for many non-Black women, these questions went over their heads. Race seemed to be the bigger issue. One girl looked at me in confusion and said, "This is a survey for black women. Not all women ..." then proceeded to walk away. Another girl said she "wasn't black" and didn't "need fake hair" because she "grew her own." These two responses had absolutely nothing to do with what we were asking from them. It just showcased a bit of misogyny.

This opened my eyes to an entire world of ignorance. I realized how little people think of Black women and our choices. People who aren't Black women (Black men included) believe that our choices to wear artificial hair is a "need," because we "can't grow our own." In an article titled "Let's Talk About Wigs and Race," Ebone Nweze writes, "... the Catch-22 situation many women of colour find themselves in: chemically straighten their hair or wear wigs and they are still seen as self-hating, vain liars; wear their hair

naturally and they are scruffy, unkempt and at a disadvantage in the workplace” (1). It’s almost like we can not do anything, even simply wearing a wig without a chance of criticism. Black women aren’t the first and maybe won’t be last people to adopt wigs into their culture, but we will always be the people who “needed” it, the race who thinks that, because we aren’t good enough naturally, we “need” to conform.

This subconscious idea that Black women don’t love themselves and thus turn to wigs has its roots in slavery. This idea had become more prominent in the post-slavery Black Reconstruction period, leading into today. In her book *Ain’t I A Woman: Black Women and Feminism*, Bell Hooks dissects the devaluation of Black women:

They chose to ignore the fact that the great majority of black women and men attempted to adapt the values and behavior patterns deemed acceptable by whites. During the years of Black Reconstruction, 1867-77, black women struggled to change negative images of black womanhood perpetuated by whites. Trying to dispel the myth that all black women were sexually loose, they emulated the conduct and mannerisms of white women. But as manumitted black women and men struggled to change stereotypical images of black female sexuality, white society resisted. Everywhere black women went, on public streets, in shops, or at their places of work, they were accosted and subjected to obscene comments and even physical abuse at the hands of white men and women... They reminded her that in the eyes of the white public she would never be seen as worthy of consideration or respect. (Hooks 55)

When Black women sought to assimilate into white American culture, they were, to state it simply, mocked. After their African heritage was deemed savagely and sexually loose, they tried to adapt to the prevailing lifestyle, a choice that resulted in their ridicule. As history progressed, black men and women continued their efforts to assimilate. Our clothing, our vernacular and especially our hair changed in the process. As Professor Mercer writes, “Historically in the United States, a cultural preference for Eurocentric features deemed as beautiful has dominated values of appearance. As race was often tied to biological aspects, elements such as hair and skin were politicized and given negative or positive connotations and meanings, which were often internalized socially and psychologically” (qtd. in Garrin 24). For African Americans and other marginalized groups, adherence to dominant standards was often employed to avoid persecution and to “fit in,” thus attempting to increase social mobility (Walker, 2007). “African Americans implemented numerous strategies to move beyond the prejudice, discrimination, and oppression they faced from the dominant society, including changing their physical features ...” (qtd. in Garrin 25). Blacks began to innovate the way they changed their looks. They turned to presses, perms, relaxers and hot combs. This included the invention of the hair weave by Christina M. Jenkins in 1951.

Black people continued to alter their looks until the rise of the Black Panther party in the 1960s. They began to embrace their natural form, while fighting on the grounds of peace. “For African Americans, historically and contemporarily, hair has acted as a means of representing themselves and negotiating their place in the world” (qtd. in Garrin 23). Furthermore, “Black hair is an expressive element of appearance, and

the body that offers insights into the individual and the collective culture (qtd. in Garrin 23). Black women and men proudly wore afros and even dashikis, exploring a culture that had been stripped away from them.

As time progressed, Black women wore their natural hair, wigs, weaves, relaxers, extensions and whatever else they desired, even though they are continuously scrutinised. This scrutiny has not come to an end, and we will probably have to continue to endure as time goes on. But here is something that I firmly believe not many will understand: our hair is our choice. As Kristin Booker writes, "Taken to foreign lands and forced to submit to European standards of beauty, we've had incredible strain placed upon our hair to look and behave a certain way. The varied styles that have evolved have seen a return of more natural textures with a nod to the versatility that the choice is ours now and ours alone" (1). I have never met a fellow black woman who exclaimed, "I'm getting this weave because I want to be white." I have never met a fellow black woman who has said that her daily choices of what she wears, how she talks, or how she wears her hair stem from wanting to emulate a person of another race. It's a personal choice. Some of us are experimenting, and some of us just enjoy wearing one. It's a lot more simple than many people think.

## General Conclusions

Wigs have come a long way in history. When we survey them from their introduction in ancient Egypt to now, we find that wigs today seem to be making a comeback. The production of synthetic wigs boosts an already booming business. The hair industry made \$85.5 Billion U.S. dollars last year and continues to grow (Statista, 2017). "Over the past five years, advanced technology has improved synthetic hair capabilities, and consequently, demand for this hair product segment has grown" (ISBS World, 2017). Plenty of celebrities have chosen the safety of wig wearing over damaging their hair with chemicals or dyes. Black women have adopted wigs into their culture and embrace the idea of wearing any as a form of protection. Wigs have no con, and continue to prove to be a fun, safe, product in the beauty industry. I have always seen wigs as just accessories, but discovering that many people see them differently triggered my curiosity. With all the attention wigs are getting nowadays, I wanted to uncover the history, shed some light on biases, and create reassurance in myself that wigs are nothing more than an accessory and a prop. Through this synopsis of my brief research, I hope any nesecience anyone has ever had about wigs is cleared.

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# The Cost of Dental Care: A Modern-day Medical Travesty

Opal Thomas

Since the beginning of time, mankind has embarked on a perilous pursuit of immortality, but has realistically settled on, for now, vitality (mainly pain free) and longevity. Leaps and bounds have been made in the fields of medicine and dentistry, which have resulted in the successful treatment of once painful and lethal diseases. It is a paradox, however, that despite all the time, energy, resources, research and personal sacrifice spent in finding the proper treatment and cure for people, we are unwilling to do so in the 21st century. The basis and quality of most medical/dental treatment is now being determined by one's financial status. The case study of Ludwig's angina, the PBS Frontline documentary, and even our own modern-day realities, have highlighted an underlying thread: *money*.

Much can be learned on the basis of the case study about the patient with Ludwig's angina, a rare skin infection that occurs on the floor of the mouth, underneath the tongue. The cause of death snowballed from an odontogenic infection, stemming from caries and periodontal disease (Carter and Lewis, 241). There are usually two reasons why a person neglects his/her dental health: fear of the dentist and limited finances. The latter seems to be the culprit of this middle-aged patient. Early dental intervention could have prevented his untimely death. Instead of going to a dentist, however, he ended up in an emergency room, and in the operating theatre of a public hospital.

The same scenario played out in the PBS Frontline documentary *Dollars and Dentists*. Within the United States, having Medicaid insurance [which most doctors do not accept] or no insurance makes many unable to avail themselves of prevention and dental treatment. This results in unnecessary pain and suffering stemming from dental infections, which forces many low-income people, young or old, to seek relief via either charitable organizations or the emergency room. In this country and others, it is not a far stretch of one's imagination that the driving force behind most medical establishments is the bottom line: capital/profit. While most professionals sincerely chose this field to help others, they sometimes forget that when they are faced with an expensive reality or when they come under pressure from exacting bosses or greedy investors. This was the scenario of those 'sweat-shop' model pediatric dental offices *claiming* to be in the business of helping the underserved low-income children.

It is depressing and disturbing that a wealthy country like America, which has the resources and ability to take care of its citizens, refuses to do so. Other less wealthy countries [e.g. Canada] provide universal healthcare for its populace. In this country, however, the oligarchs and the politicians are so insensitive and lacking empathy that they are adamantly opposed to universal health care for their fellow countrymen, a fact evident in their quest to abolish Obamacare. On the other hand, they have no qualms of taking money away from social services, while budgeting billions of dollars for war machines. Having tunnel vision, they even neglect medical assistance for their wounded veterans, which, in my opinion, is immoral and tragic. The truth and sad part about it is that their indifference is squarely and firmly rooted in greed and selfishness.

The situation described in the preceding paragraphs is not unique only to the US; it is also being played out in many parts of the world, only with various twists. In Jamaica, where I am from, the country has in the past been unable to reach its full potential because of mismanagement due to political strife

and/or corruption. With limited resources comes limited, overcrowded, and overwhelmed public treatment facilities. While many people may go to the medical doctor for routine preventative check-up, they only visit a dentist for emergencies, which is usually an extraction. This is not to say that oral hygiene (that is, intact beautiful teeth and smile) is not important; the fact is, a dental visit is very expensive, especially to someone of little means. Therefore, going to a dentist just for a check-up is not a priority, especially if the tooth is not hurting. The rationale is: money is best spent elsewhere, especially on their child's education.

I grew up in a tropical climate, where overall daily physical and oral hygiene was enforced, but not stipulated. I have no recollection, for example, of being taught how to floss, with the exception of the occasional use of a toothpick. In my younger years, I remembered loving candy so much that I would sleep with either a mint-ball or a paradise-plum in my cheek. Never once was there made a correlation between excessive sugary product and cavities. I consider myself very fortunate to have had a dental clinic at my high school; otherwise, without my amalgam fillings, I am quite certain that some teeth, apart from the third molars, would be missing. I am also of the opinion that in Jamaica there is a disquieting awareness that medical, and especially dental services, are severely restricted, accessible only to those who can afford it.

The effects of greed and incompetence are palpable, and the situation may seem overwhelming and hopeless. One may feel powerless to bring about change, especially when there are stronger forces opposing it. Additionally, even despite our best intention, we too as hygiene professionals will feel unethical pressures being exerted on us, and it may be tempting to succumb to them. The question is, *individually*, what will each of us do when we are faced with those choices? Are we in the business of helping others or helping ourselves? While we may not be the major movers and shakers on a world scene (though it is not impossible), we can within our realm exact change by adhering to our core values and by volunteering our time and resources. I know a Jamaican dentist and an oral surgeon who have done this, using their vacation and personal resources to purchase dental supplies that they donate. This is something that I hope to be a part of when I graduate. I also plan to become a part of the American Dental Hygienists Association (ADHA) and support their activities, which give practitioners greater freedom and range to *effectively treat those most in need*. In the end, it is better to do something than to feel defeated and thus do nothing.

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# Traditional Virtues Vs. Modern Culture: A Resolution for All Times

YingYang Zhang

Clothing gives me confidence. It allows me to feel I am unique. I first started to pay attention to clothing when I was in middle school. My best friend followed fashion trends and taught me a lot of brand names. We didn't have much money, so we could only buy cheap knock-offs we found on websites. But we were still satisfied with them. At the same time, I started to feel uneasy when I saw people whose taste in clothing was higher than mine.

In China, I was always told that people in America dress very casually. I thought that when I moved to America I might not care about my clothing any more. But that is not what happened. I saw many fashionable people on the streets of Manhattan.

The first brand I learned about was H&M, and I bought a lot of it. Then I learned of American Eagle, Zara, Calvin Klein. In time, though, I realized that everyone on the street was wearing the same brands. The uniqueness was gone, and I lost the confidence I had felt from wearing them. So I started to look for something that would both be unique and make a statement about myself. I came upon a brand called Andersson Bell. These are old-school-style clothes. They were really different and brought out my latent desire to be different. I became obsessed with this grand style, following models on Instagram and becoming even more conscious of how other people dressed.

Right now, fashion is my number-one preoccupation. I have developed my own style. I like to wear oversized coats and pants. I like clothes with a unique pattern or some clever decoration. I also like to wear turtleneck shirts. But the thing that represents me the most is the long belt. It hangs in front. It gives me a feeling of uninhibitedness and individuality. It is a commentary to my whole outfit. When I walk on the street, I can feel people looking at my clothes. And I enjoy having people look at me because I am different.

My mom disagrees. As a traditional Chinese woman, she believes that I should just be like most people and that I should not be the one to stand out. Except with respect to my grades, of course! She has always taught me to keep a low profile in my actions. I don't disagree with that, and I can be like that in other ways, but not with clothing. Standing out in clothing gives me confidence. But Mom doesn't get that. Every time she sees me dress my way, she says something to make me feel uncomfortable. And I am really tired of those mumbles. Sometimes I would just rather have it out in a big fight and then never talk about this again. But she is my mom. I've been taught to listen to my parents since I was in kindergarten, so I really don't want to create a scene. I do still want to maintain a relationship of mutual respect with her. I also want to set an example so that my future children will respect me just as I respect my parents. I feel thankful for all the things my mom has done for me. At the same time, though, I just want to be myself, the one who is trying to be different.

In China, *Xiao* is a very important virtue. *Xiao* means filial piety. Chinese people believe that *Xiao* ranks first of all the Kindnesses. The concept underlying the principle of filial piety is simple. Parents give life to children, give them food and clothes, give them care and an education etc. "For all the things that children

receive from their parents, children have an eternal obligation towards them. They have a debt towards their parents, a debt that can never be fully repaid.”<sup>1</sup> The only thing that children can do to repay at least a small part of this debt is to take care of their parents in their old age, to make them proud and happy, to obey and serve them. I admit that I am swayed by this idea. It is a rule I don't want to break. But it creates in me a struggle between being myself and obeying my mom.

This situation is similar to what happened when I chose my college major. At first, I was going to listen to my mom and choose either engineering or accounting. She believed these majors would make me a good living in the future. But they are not what I want. I like fashion design. I asked myself: do I really want to do things that I don't like for the rest of my life? I argued with my mom. She strongly disagreed with my choice to be a fashion designer. Then *Xiao* came to my mind. What I was doing was disrespectful to my parent. I chose to step back.

And then—she did the same! We made a compromise. I settled on advertising design in the end. It will be easier for me to find a job, and it at least does involve design. So, as it turns out, although *Xiao* is firmly rooted in my nature, it does not have to mean I cannot think for myself.

Culture shapes people's behavior. And it is shaped by people. But “in their everyday lives, most people do not blindly follow the dictates of their culture. They scheme, calculate, weigh alternatives, and make decisions.”<sup>2</sup> There is a well-known story in China called “The Story of The Six-Foot Alley,” that comes from the Qing Dynasty. Some members of the family of a prime minister named Ying Zhang had a conflict with their neighbor over the space between their houses. The neighbor wanted to extend his house and tried to occupy the alley. Ying's relatives refused to allow him. Neither side was willing to yield.

Ying's relatives sent a letter to Ying in Beijing, where he was minister, asking him for help. Ying wrote back in the form of a poem: “Write a letter from thousands of miles away over a mere wall? Why not let them take three feet? The Great Wall is still there, even though the emperor who constructed it is no longer in this world.” The Chinese text of this poem, a traditional proverb, follows:

千里送书只为墙，  
让他三尺又何妨。  
长城万里今犹在，  
不见当年秦始皇。

Consequently, Ying's family moved their wall three feet back. Upon seeing this, the neighbor was touched and appreciative, so he also moved his wall three feet back. As a result, instead of a three-foot alley, a six-foot alley was created. The alley is still there in An Hui, China, for all to see, and this poem has become a common proverb in Chinese culture.

Life without compromise is impossible. Even in nature, we see compromise happening everywhere. The tree compromises with the sun: the tree is always tilted toward the sun without any external force. The river compromises with the rocks: it rushes along the cracks. If the water must cover the peak of the mountain, then it must change its own form—into snow or rain; that is its compromise. A Chinese proverb says: “Be strict with yourself and lenient towards others.” We have to behave ourselves in words and deeds and be considerate and understanding toward other people. By being willing to take one step back, you eliminate a potential source of animosity, and possibly generate gratitude from others. If one or both parties adopt this attitude, the dispute can be settled with ease.<sup>3</sup> Like *Xiao*, willingness to compromise is one of the traditional virtues of Chinese culture.

Other cultures, too, place a high value on compromise. It is a necessary ingredient in the functioning of a free society. In our civil courts, most cases never come to trial. The parties usually agree on a compromise before an actual court trial can be held. The American legal system is developing more and more processes in which disputes can be settled through Alternative Dispute Resolution, such as mediation and arbitration, rather than by having a court decide.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, the functioning of the United States government depends on compromise between the two political parties, the understanding that neither side will get everything it wants but each side will get some of what it wants. When the two sides adopt extreme positions and become intransigent, then government becomes dysfunctional. The Talmud, representing Jewish culture, states that compromise is preferable to a court verdict because compromise leads to peace.<sup>5</sup>

So where am I in my dispute with Mom? I have started to reduce the time I wear the clothes she doesn't like, especially when I go out with her. I only dress in my own way when I am not with her. I show her respect, and she does the same for me. The clothing issue has been subsumed in a package of life issues that I now discuss with my mother. Compromise in some areas of this package makes other parts of it easier. I take satisfaction in our improved relationship. As a Chinese boy, I comply with my culture. I follow the rules of *Xiao*. At the same time, I don't have to give up being myself. Compromise offers a great balancing point between the traditional and the modern.

#### Notes

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# Apu's Lasting Truth

G. James Mitchell



Discovering Machu Picchu. Photo taken by author.

A vision channeled through blind spots; a sunrise gated in megaliths; a mountain perspiring vibrant flora, with a surreal thumbprint that leaves visitors shimmering. Machu Picchu was a trip of metamorphosis and discovery.

Alex, our capable guide, was a native Quechuan with a friendly and informative demeanor. As he led our journey, he immersed us in the rich scenery of the Andes Mountains and its native culture. Following our predetermined route, we mountain-biked a 2,000 meter descent of paved rural road, traveling through a bit of rain, waterfalls, and enchanting pinnacle views. After turning in gear, we were bussed to our afternoon outfitter in Santa Maria.

A quaint jungle lodge with a small farm served our fill of Peruvian dishes, reviving our weary limbs. While relishing our assortment of morning blessings, a charismatic river-rafting guide captured our nourished enthusiasm. He charmed us from leisure, taking us to plunge through the current of the Urubamba River, which sculpted our

mountainous cradle. Our trek traced the ridges of the Urubamba. We made a welcome acquaintance with the waterway's temper. We were nine to a raft, including the guide. Everyone wore life vests, a reminder of the danger that lay below. With a sense of preparation, we arrived at the unknown. The Urubamba exhausted our bodies, but exhilarated our souls. We retired for the day, vexed by this sacred valley.

The next morning we left modern comforts to backpack through Peruvian jungle, boasting a sense of accomplishment. We hiked over, and down, 16 kilometers across the Inca Trail. Santa Theresa greeted us with natural hot springs and private beds before we hiked an additional 11 kilometers to Aguas Calientes, using a cart and pulley to cross a 70 foot gorge, at one point. Demanding our full capacity, this experience was well worth it.

We overslept. Our Goldilocks-like beds lured us with slumber that muted our alarms. A morning knock at the door, however, brought a hasty ritual that prepared us for our ultimate destination. We'd crossed mountains, a river, a gorge, jungle overgrowth, ancient pathways, and monuments; this would be our ascent into the sacred city.

With a light pack and heavy feet, we strolled to meet friends in the mother of all lines. "What time is it?" my girlfriend groaned. I replied matter of factly, "4 am." Then it rained. Our raincoats were quickly on and zipped, but with no breath for the Nylon in 60% humidity, our sweat sealed to our skin. The line in front of us traced the muddy road for a quarter mile, unabashedly rewarding early birds with worms. No one likes worms.

Sipping coffee, we made friends with umbrellas. Eclectic tourists fed the arresting line, harboring utilities we eyed with amusement. Mystery surged from the gate as buses trickled through. This preceding caravan carried officials, guides, and servicemen fifteen minutes up a narrow switchback road, delivering passengers to the greeting center of the World Heritage site. Following them, climate controlled carriages cradled tourists in leather seats.

I cocked my neck to glimpse the entrance gate. Its simple light and tiny security kiosk satirized the citadel that greeted us. Inspecting the gateway to our transcendence, I audited all the comforts I deliberately left behind, and weighed them against my vision of the top of Machu Picchu. Reveling in a sense of invincibility, I braced for the task ahead.



The summit: viewing the last architecture of Machu Picchu's "advanced society." Photo taken by author.

Steep, overgrown jungle housed seventeen hundred wet stone stairs, linking the mountain base to the greeting center. Ascending mobs gasped arrhythmic breaths. It was every man for himself, and I was nowhere near the front.

The next hour was a little determination, a little discipline, and much disappointment. These stairs could have been traded for a \$15 bus pass and leather seat, but my metamorphosis was my prize. The self-development I experienced in this unique obstacle, shared by millennia of complexly opposite strangers, helped frame for me a truth about reality itself.

There are things beyond our awareness that operate their own agenda manipulating the contents of each domain. Quechuan people described this as the spirit of the mountains. Each mountain had a spirit, or Apu. This Apu's name was Machu Picchu, and his demands were clear from the start. Climb with consideration. Find firm footing. Look ahead. Take one step at a time, with two free hands. Be mindful of pitfalls. Watch out for people above, below, and beside, like a line of ants heaving back towards their colony. Climb.

Foggy morning twilight gradually sapped darkness along the trail. It was still too dim to lift our eyes from the endless mountain face, and we kept climbing. The first greeting platform emerged, full of chaos. Fumbling to navigate the crowd, I made it to my friends near the service stations.

In a flurry, we clamored through the final gauntlet towards the ruins of Machu Picchu. Evidence of an ancient society lifted our faces in awe. We were standing on the shoulders of giants, basking in the architecture of an advanced society, raised over 2,400 meters above sea level. Their mastery over the land lay, undeniable, in stonework that fused deadly cliff-face to a city's foundation. This pinnacle filled us with the sensation of wonder that seeped a purest curiosity. In the face of adversity, my vision had fueled me to continue climbing until I reached this pinnacle. Not only had the journey sculpted a unique prism of perspective, but the reward imprinted sure confidence that I am capable of manifesting a dream into reality.

# The Boy in The Moon

Kay Spitzer

*(Note from Professor DeLeon: For this assignment, I introduced students to the concept of the oral griot, who was the storyteller for the village. Then, students read several folktales and had to discern what the lessons and morals were within each tale. After having done that exercise, they had to create their own folktale. William's wonderful tale was thereby created.)*

Long ago, there was a boy. This boy had inexplicably white skin, platinum blonde hair, and grey eyes. He had no home, and no family to call his own. Due to his complexion, soft tone, and gentle nature, he was ostracized by the villagers. They ridiculed him just because he was different. During the day he would hide from those who antagonized him. But in the darkness of the moonless nights (for there was no moon) when the village was asleep, he would sit upon the beach, feeling the tides pull at him, and was soothed by the gentle breezes washing over him.

With each setting of the sun, he would offer up his hardships and forgive the cruelty of the villagers. He would become one with the ocean, his breath rising and falling with the rhythm of the waves. The creatures of the ocean had no fear of this gentle boy. Seagulls would land on his shoulder, and share their catches with him. Dolphins would beach themselves just to say hello, and he would gently guide them back into the waves.

But his best friend was the matronly sea turtle. She would come up and sit with him listening to the sad story of his life. And with each dawn, as she swam away, she took his anguish with her. As the sun rose, he would rise, brush the sand off of his garments, and return to his hidden shelter.

One year, the village had a particularly poor harvest, and being the arrogant humans that they are, the villagers decided it could not possibly be their fault, so they looked for someone else to blame. Of course, their ire fell upon the boy. They drew their weapons and went in search of him. He hid as best as he could, but in the waning light of the twilight, one of the other boys from the village spotted him. As he ran through the forest, tears streaming down his face, he sought the only place he ever felt safe: the ocean.

Expecting another comfortable evening with their friend, the sea creatures were surprised at the distress that their young friend was in. Without a second thought, they came to his defense as he waded deeper into the surf. The sea turtle came up to meet him where the shore dropped into the ocean. "Grab onto my shell," she said. When he did as she instructed, she started to glow. The light brighter and brighter, until it was so intensely bright, the villagers were forced to look away. And in a flash, they were gone.

The next night, and forever since, when you look up into the sky, you can see the forgiving face of the white-haired boy. He will listen to your tales of woe and give you heartfelt sympathy. Oooh—and wherever his tears touched the earth, grew a flower that blooms only in the darkness of the moonlit night.

# Union St.

Kenet Mejia

Try to walk down Union and see a whole new street;  
This is how Union became a whole new street;  
Not a change for us but for those who own these streets now;  
Now you can't afford the life we once lived;  
Now you let go of the life you grew up with, the home, the people, and the street;  
Now you let those who can spend on the new home, people, and street;  
They may mean no harm, but it doesn't hurt any less;  
They may mean well, but it's only for themselves;  
They may mean to make the street a new home for the wealthy, but that doesn't mean the street will be ours;  
Home to the memories, these streets will be ours;  
Home to the places you can still have fun;  
Home to the bus stop I know you'll never leave at all;  
New people are not worth any hate;  
New people who could end up including a new mate;  
New people who can fix what was wrong, but maybe that means the street will be gone;  
Welcome to the new church our family will go to;  
Welcome to the new McDonald's I know you won't complain about;  
Welcome to the new life we must live now;  
This happened because of the success of others;  
This happened because of wealth and numbers;  
This happened because it's time for something better, but there's nothing wrong with what we once had;  
Please be nice to the new homeowners;  
Please be nice to the new pastor we will meet;  
Please be nice to the new friends you must meet;  
Please oh please be nice to the new teachers you'll see;  
Time for a new home, say hi to Long Island;  
Time for you to say goodbye, Flushing had its great times;  
Time for the street to change, it's just the cost of Union St., the home where we once lived.