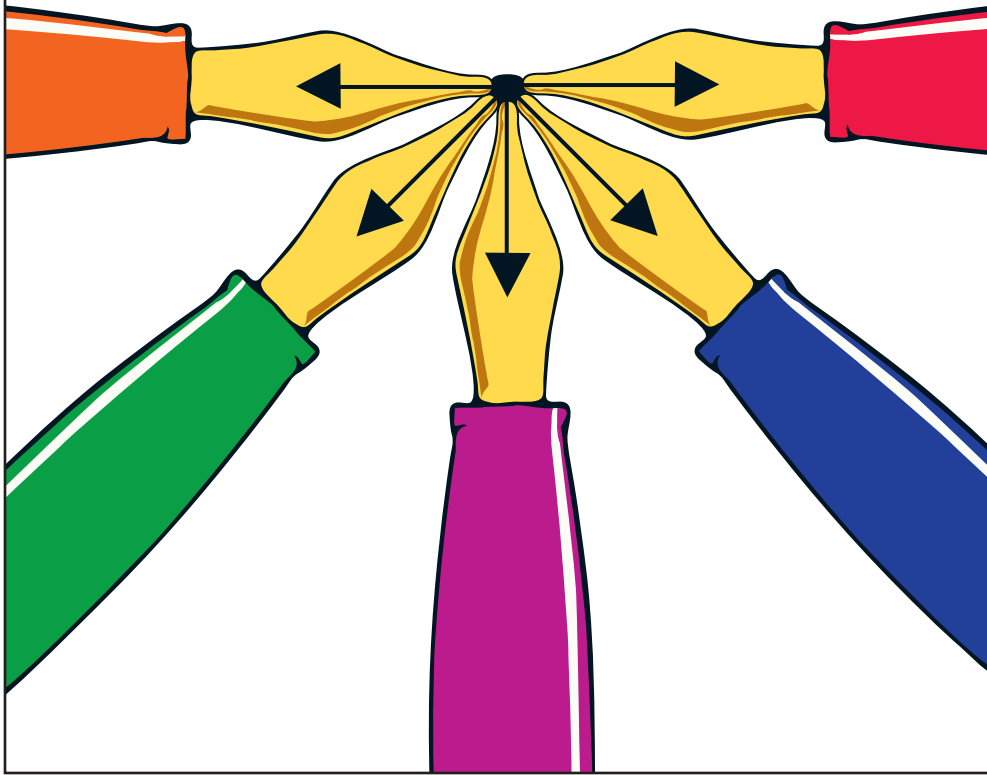# CITY
TECH
WRITER
volume 9 2014

CITY
TECH
WRITER

Volume 9 2014

**Outstanding Student Writing
From All Disciplines**

Jane Mushabac, Editor in Chief

Cover by
Kwame Asenso,
Marc Padmore,
Johnny Santana, and
Christian Santiago
Art Director: Lloyd Carr

Preface

City Tech writers take us to the mountains of Algeria, a Texas Interstate in a storm, a quasar 12 billion light years away, a Brownsville Community Board meeting, an airport in tropical Guinea Conakry, and a kitchen table where women from Barbados tell their stories.

In Volume 9 we think about cross platform apps—and ballpoint pens. We read about film noir—and Aristotle. We read about bioinformatics and cancer, and cyber diplomacy and soft power. We consider online recruiters, and how to get a job. We think about fathers and sons and mothers and daughters.

As we go to press, I have many people to thank: the faculty throughout the College who have submitted two hundred pieces of remarkable writing from their courses; Advertising Design and Graphic Arts Department Chair Mary Ann Biehl for her key support; Professors Doug Davis and Peter Fikaris whose ADV 4700 students produced many wonderful cover designs, and the Triadd Design team in Prof. Davis's class for their attractive posters all over the College; Professor Lloyd Carr, the journal's Art Director since its inception, who as always has been stellar in coordinating the graphics and preparing the cover for production; the Reprographics Center's Lubosh Stepanek who did a handsome job of printing the cover, and Director of Campus Services Jeff Novak who coordinated this support; and Chief Laboratory Technician Steve Caputo, and printers George Pompilio and Peter Pompilio, who produced the volume with care and competence. I'm grateful to President Russell Hotzler, Provost Bonne August, and Dr. Stephen Soiffer for their invaluable support and encouragement from the top; and the President's Executive Assistant Marilyn Morrison and Assistant to the Provost Imelda Perez for their great help and thoughtfulness. Professors Rebecca Devers, Caroline Hellman, Carole Harris, Suzanne Miller, Kara Pasner, Benito Mendoza, Ashwin Satyanarayana and English Department Chair Nina Bannett graciously thought through questions and provided assistance of many kinds; Avril Miller in the Faculty Commons helped also; and English Department Office Assistants Lily Lam and Laura Kodet have been wonderfully generous and resourceful.

But most of all, I thank our bold and clearheaded writers, all thirty-eight of you, who have made Volume 9 so memorable and important.

Jane Mushabac, Editor in Chief

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for which it was written

The Rise of the Primes
As Their Gaps Succumb

Stanislav Shur

A college-level course in "Number Theory" may not seem like an exciting way to pass the semester. Indeed, the course name alone is enough to send chills up some people's spines. As a Math Education major, even I was tense about taking a course in a subject I had little knowledge about. The course is filled with such brow-raising topics as Diophantine equations, the Sieve of Eratosthenes, and the Euler Phi function, to name a few. By the middle of the semester, I thought I'd just about had it with these brain twisters. Then one day, the professor brought in an article titled, "The Beauty of Bounded Gaps." That was the day number theory became fun.

The Hype: the bounded gaps conjecture states that, although the gap (or difference) between consecutive prime numbers seems to increase, there are actually infinitely many prime numbers where this gap is bounded, or constant. In a recent mathematical breakthrough, mathematician Tom (Yitang) Zhang proved that this was indeed the case, showing that there are infinitely many prime numbers separated by at most 70,000,000 (Ellenberg). Since this breakthrough discovery, mathematicians the world over have scrambled to lower this number, with recent results showing a gap as small as 633 (Web). One reason to be excited about this foray into the search for smaller and smaller gaps is that it may succeed in proving another important conjecture in number theory: the twin prime conjecture which states that there are infinitely many twin primes p such that p+2 is also prime. Examples of twin primes are {3,5}, {5,7}, {11,13} and {17,19}. Another reason, as pointed out by Jordan Ellenberg, is "Zhang's success points to a prospect even more exciting than any individual result about primes—that we might, in the end, be on our way to developing a richer theory of randomness" (7).

The twin prime conjecture attracted the attention of mathematicians in the 19th century, when mathematician Alphonse de Polignax noticed that twin primes become less common as numbers get bigger (Ghose). Still, he believed that such twin primes are infinite. For the past two hundred years, mathematicians have tried to solve this difficult problem. Today, with the help of Zhang's breakthrough, they are one step closer to solving the twin prime conjecture, or so they hope.

So who is Yitang Zhang, and how did he achieve such a breakthrough? It's important to note that Zhang did not reach his result on his own. Rather, he relied on many years of published research in the area of number theory. In

particular, Zhang relied on an important paper known as the GPY paper, named after mathematicians Goldston, Pintz and Yaldirim. The GPY paper showed that "there would always be pairs of primes closer than the average distance between two primes" (Chang). Although important in its own right, the paper was shy of the result mathematicians had been hoping for. Besides relying on the GPY results, Zhang had also used math tools developed by mathematicians Bombieri and Friedlander in the 1980s (Chang).

So why should we care about an obscure result in number theory? Although formulating theories about prime numbers was once considered a purely academic pursuit, modern times have found uses for prime numbers that make them relevant in a variety of fields, from theoretical physics and cryptography to internet commerce and, of course, mathematics. An article in phys.org, a technology-based website, describes a research finding that illustrates the relevance of prime numbers in modern times:

> In a recent study, Bartolo Luque and Lucas Lacasa of the Universidad Politécnica de Madrid in Spain have discovered a new pattern in primes that has surprisingly gone unnoticed until now. They found that the distribution of the leading digit in the prime number sequence can be described by a generalization of Benford's law. In addition, this same pattern also appears in another number sequence, that of the leading digits of nontrivial Riemann zeta zeros, which is known to be related to the distribution of primes. Besides providing insight into the nature of primes, the finding could also have applications in areas such as fraud detection and stock market analysis. (Zyga)

These new and exciting uses for prime numbers give our knowledge of prime numbers a new dimension of significance, making it more important than ever that we not only dig deeper into the nature of the primes, but also that we use our knowledge of prime numbers responsibly.

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Den Of Lions
Daniel E. Maples, Jr.

…This is terrorism, nothing more than the entire future of the American race slowly being destroyed by automatic weapons…

Gloria quickly reached her hand out to the dashboard and tapped the control knob of the stereo, bringing up the clock display, and shutting off the voice. Oh, she was late. She was really, really late. Well, she had stayed at the library two and a half hours longer than she was going to.

Well, there are plenty of reasons why she was even later than expected, she thought. Like the rain, sleet, or whatever storm this was that she'd been driving through for the last hour and a half in a trip that was usually forty minutes.

She couldn't control the weather. Now could she?

"When the weather's fast, slow down," her dad would always say. "Better late than never, Baby."

She glanced at Geoffrey. She would get Geoffrey home. Just really, really late.

Three times already this month. Mom would definitely have something to say about being late three times already this month. The first two times were because of Geoffrey, though. And not Gloria's fault. Not that mom cared whose fault it was anyway. She wasn't with them at the mall when Geoffrey crossed his legs, squirmed, contorted his face into all kinds of shapes and squealed. "Pleeease Mommy. Just five more minutes. There are soooo many toys here. We just might find something. Pleeeease!"

Gloria would always give in because she was the coolest mommy in the whole wide world, as Geoffrey liked to tell his friends. And mommies had to be cool, way cool, Geoffrey would say.

Yea, but not broke, she would think.

"It's perfectly fine to be a little short on cash so long as you're filled with love," Grandma McKnight would tell her after seeing her grandson run through the house with his latest toy.

Full of love or not, at this point in her life, Gloria was growing accustomed to being broke. A single mother from the inner city trying to raise a five-year-old and put herself through college leaves little to the imagination, save for hard work, patience, and the support of family. Or at least this was what she had told her mother and father after moving back home with them while trying to balance the complications of a child, a job and her studies.

Gloria was dealing this afternoon with one of those complications, leaving the campus library in the Toyota Land Cruiser to pick Geoffrey up from day care. Her mid-terms were next week, and she had completely lost track of time. Unfortunately, it wasn't the first time. Gloria was getting in over her head

with being a student and being a mom; yet pride prevented her from realizing she needed help. Instead, she just tried harder.

Geoffrey hadn't noticed. And he wouldn't be upset. Between the big screen cartoons and all the toys at the day care, he would be preoccupied and not even notice she was late. Mom and dad were not so easy to fool. They had said for the last two weeks, she needed to sit down and talk with them. They understood how difficult her life was becoming, but Gloria needed to set priorities in order to avoid making some serious mistakes. Tonight was to be that night. She told them she would be home on time.

While Gloria was leaving the campus, however, a serious storm had moved in. And what had made everything worse, she lived miles outside of Dallas, near the lake, away from the city.

It was usually a nice, comforting forty-minute drive where she could unwind as she listened to Geoffrey tell her about his day, excitement in his eyes, describing each incident in detail. But not in a storm. Not tonight. Geoffrey was speechless, frightened by the rain pelting the windows.

Gloria squinted through the darkened windshield at the blanket of water, which was now streaking across the roadway. Visibility zip.

She tucked her hand into the sleeve of her sweater and leaned forward, rubbing it over the cold glass, hoping to improve things a little bit. She flopped back into the seat after a moment when it did no good. There was just no way Gloria could drive faster than thirty in this soup.

The headlights of the Land Cruiser reflecting off the guardrail markers took her mind off the roadway and onto mom and dad for a second. They were probably pacing the house and worried. She wondered if they had called her cell to check on her.

Of course, she answered herself. Parents were supposed to do those kinds of things.

They probably grew even more frantic when the voicemail automatically picked up after the first ring because Gloria had forgotten to charge the phone or bring the adapter for the car.

She looked over at the dash clock again. Four hours isn't that bad. Besides, look at this weather. Just look at it, Mom. Remember what Dad says, "Better late than never, Baby"?

How could she argue with that? She couldn't. And it's not like Gloria was being late on purpose. Her mother was way off there. And anyway, it's not like Gloria was a little girl anymore. She was a mother herself. She was independent, with her own life. A new age girl. Gloria had already been accepted to sit for the bar exam, the bar exam, and that would be the start of a career, not just a job, but a career. In another few years, Gloria would be a licensed attorney. Then she would be able to take care of Geoffrey properly, like a real mother should, and she wouldn't be so busy with her life. But right now, wearing his brown leather lace up shoes, blue jean overalls and his Scooby Doo sweater, Geoffrey was seated next to her, concentrating on the flood coming down in front of the Land Cruiser, oblivious to the fact that Gloria was becoming frustrated, not

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so much from the storm she was traveling through on the road before her, but from the storm she was traveling through in her life.

Oh, they tell you that obstacles are nothing more than blessings in disguise, but it is an entirely different story when you are the one facing them. Just like with the rain on the windshield, you can never clear your view fast enough. You only end up splashing the cold water around in an antagonizing noise like the days of your life.

….splash…splish…splash…splish…splash…splish….

Gloria leaned forward and tried the sweater sleeve one more time on the windshield and that was when it happened.

The noise came first. A crack crack from the left lane opened up and grew in volume. She looked over to Geoffrey because some unknown feeling came over her that the crack just wasn't—

Suddenly, a wall of glass slammed into her side from the left and instantly the SUV was tossed from the roadway. An explosion of the airbags. Gloria screamed and choked on the gritty, dusty powder that filled her lungs.

She tried to hold onto the steering wheel, to keep the Toyota straight, but the force of the collision jarred it out of her hands. Gloria was slammed headfirst into the doorframe while the world became lost in a blindness of tremendous sounds and movement, rolling over and over.

She tried to stay upright and in the seat by pushing against the roof, but the pressure against the seatbelt was so intense, Gloria thought she would explode. She had no leverage.

Shattered glass, twisting metal. The Land Cruiser was keeping her alive. And somewhere in the midst of all that panic, Gloria heard a distinct, terrible scream for Geoffrey and then realized it was her own voice. A solid jolt and everything went black. Right before she lost consciousness, Gloria could hear her father whisper, "Better late than never, Baby, better late than never." And then there was nothing.

When Gloria came to, it had stopped raining. The water had gathered, pooling against her face and she realized she was no longer inside the Toyota. Gloria was lying on the asphalt of the road. It was dark, silent, but when her senses finally caught up to her, she heard a gathering of people and sirens. Red and blue lights were reflecting off the broken glass which littered the roadway.

Geoffrey.

Gloria heard footsteps, heavy and quick.

…Hey Sarge, I gotta live one over here!…

Geoffrey.

…Ma'am don't move…the ambulance is on the way…

Geoffrey.

…Ma'am you need to stay still…you've been in a serious accident…

Geoffrey.

…Geoffrey?…The boy in the car with you?…Ma'am you just need to stay still…

Oh God, Geoffrey. My little baby, Geoffrey.

MOTHER AND CHILD KILLED IN DRIVE-BY SHOOTING
From Wire Reports

A five year-old Dallas boy and his mother were critically injured yesterday night in an apparent drive-by shooting on Interstate 30. Law enforcement authorities have stated that two members of rival street gangs became involved in an altercation in front of a house, which quickly escalated into a shoot-out. A short time after the initial exchange of gunfire, a dark colored sedan returned to the location and sprayed the house with automatic rifle fire. No one inside the house was hit; however, several of the shots missed their intended target and struck a vehicle traveling on the highway adjacent to the home.

A young boy and his mother inside the vehicle were struck by what authorities have described as rounds from a high-powered assault rifle. The mother, who was driving, was hit once in the left arm, causing her to lose control of the vehicle. The young boy sustained serious injuries from a bullet wound to his chest and was pronounced dead at the scene. The child's mother died later in surgery after being transported to Memorial Hospital. No suspects have been arrested or identified.

A police sergeant at the scene, obviously distraught, called the shooting a "disgraceful act toward our people" and the death of the young child and mother "senseless murders by heartless cowards." The sergeant went on to say that gun violence in the United States claimed more victims on a nightly basis than the U.S. waging war in the Middle East and that….This is terrorism, nothing more than the entire future of the American race slowly being destroyed by automatic weapons…

Hunting the Nightmare Bacteria
Aneicka Bookal

The day my cousin's son was born, she cooed to him, singing his first lullaby as she rocked him gently, counting his ten fingers and toes. The delivery had not gone as smoothly as planned. During labor, his fetal heart rate dropped and he had to be delivered via cesarean section. As is common after a surgical procedure, a Foley catheter was inserted for twenty-four hours to help with urine output as the new mother recovered. Forty-eight hours later, she struggled to breathe in the intensive care unit from fluid overload. She could not talk, much less sing. My mother, a neurology step-down nurse, was scared. "Aneicka, you need to come to the hospital. It's serious." I did not know this at the time, but I later learned that insertions of Foley catheters, a standard medical procedure, were a common source of nosocomial infections (Tortora, Funke, Case 2010). My cousin had unknowingly become the latest victim of an ongoing health care crisis, antibiotic-resistant bacterial infections, the subject of Frontline's documentary, *Hunting the Nightmare Bacteria*.

By the time I arrived at the hospital, my cousin had been put on a BiPap machine. She was experiencing acute respiratory failure and the doctors warned us that if she continued to deteriorate, she would have to be intubated. Within the span of three days, my cousin had gone from a healthy, expectant mother to a critically ill patient that needed respiratory ventilation. A blood culture later revealed that she was positive for *E. coli* and Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*, commonly known as MRSA. Two weeks later, she was released from the hospital. My cousin had fought the "Super Bug" and won, but the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) "estimates that 10,800 deaths in the U.S. each year are caused by staph, 5,500 of which are linked to MRSA" (CNN Library, 2013).

While most MRSA infections occur within a health-care setting, they are becoming more common in the community and microbiologists and health care professionals are deeply troubled by the increase of community-acquired MRSA. The aggressiveness and the lack of treatment options available for this bacterium and others are explored in Frontline's documentary, which tells the story of eleven-year old Addie Rerecich, who, like my cousin, had become critically ill from a MRSA infection. Addie's infection had been acquired in the community rather than in a health care setting. While she survived her brush with MRSA and the secondary infection, *Stenotrophomonas*, it was a lung transplant rather than a miracle drug that saved her life.

Antibiotic-resistant bacteria are becoming more prevalent and, despite the efforts of health care professionals, patients are dying of infections that had been easily treated thirty years ago. Even more disturbing, *Hunting the Nightmare Bacteria* reveals that there has been no call to action from

pharmaceutical companies that had pioneered the development of antibiotics during the first half of the 20th century. We are approaching one of the biggest healthcare crises of our time and very little research is being done to address antibiotic-resistant bacteria. The CDC confirms that we are running out of treatment options for pathogenic Gram-negative bacteria (CDC, 2013), and that there is a "limited national, state, and federal capacity to detect and respond to urgent and emerging antibiotic resistance threats" (CDC, 2013).

Given the alarm bells that are ringing across the world about antibiotic-resistant pathogens, one would expect a more spirited response from pharmaceutical companies, but a focus on the bottom line and profit has managed to stifle research around this issue, perhaps because, unlike blood pressure medications, antibiotics are short-term drugs. When Frontline's David E. Hoffman questioned Pfizer's decision to pull back from antibiotic research, which mirrors the decision of other pharmaceutical companies, Dr. Charles Knirsch, a Pfizer representative, replied,

> These are not ruthless decisions. These are, you know, portfolio decisions about how we can serve medical need in the best way. We want to stay in the business of providing new therapeutics for the future. Our investors require that of us. I think society wants Pfizer to be doing what we do in 20 years. We make portfolio management decisions (*Hunting the Nightmare Bacteria*, 2013).

When Alexander Fleming discovered penicillin in 1928, at first he didn't know its significant therapeutic properties and his research was ignored. It was only after Howard Florey and Ernst Chain conducted research on the mold that penicillin was eventually hailed as a miracle life-saving drug. By the end of World War II, penicillin had saved the lives of millions of soldiers. Instead of disregarding the deceptively simple mold because of the cost of the drug's research and production, researchers revolutionized healthcare and changed the course of world history with far-reaching consequences for the future. We're prompted to ask today at what point do medical needs trump profit margins? Until pharmaceutical companies like Pfizer have answered this question, antibiotic-resistant bacteria have the upper hand in the ongoing battle against infection.

While the development of new antibiotic drug therapies has almost come to a complete halt, biomedical research centers like the National Institutes of Health (NIH) have focused on the prevention of nosocomial infections, encouraging hand hygiene and other measures. However, antibiotic-resistant bacteria present a harrowing challenge for healthcare professionals and their efforts are often futile when faced with an aggressive antibiotic-resistant pathogen like *Klebsiella pneumoniae carbapenemase* or KPC. During an outbreak of KPC in 2011, NIH struggled to prevent the spread of the bacteria, but their efforts were in vain. Recalling the outbreak, Nancy Ames, R.N., ICU Nurse, NIH stated, "[We] had monitors here reminding us to wash our hands, built a whole wall up in the other side. We moved every patient in the ICU, completely

cleaned it, moved patients back in. And no matter what we did, the bacteria was still—it was still spreading" (*Hunting the Nightmare Bacteria,* 2013). In the end, the KPC outbreak resulted in eighteen infected patients and six deaths. Officials at NIH insist that they have not fully eradicated the bacteria from their facility and can only prepare for the next outbreak (*Hunting the Nightmare Bacteria,* 2013).

Given the increased threat of antibiotic-resistant bacteria, facilities like NIH might be best served to strictly enforce limited patient visitation and universally swab patients to test for the presence of MRSA and other antibiotic-resistant pathogens as preventative measures. As pharmaceutical companies continue to put profit ahead of medical need, the CDC should implement a marketing campaign designed to educate the general public about multidrug-resistant pathogens. Lack of knowledge about antibiotic-resistant bacteria and multidrug-resistant viruses perpetuates the problem. An ignorant populace is a vulnerable one and patient education about proper antibiotic usage as well as effective preventative measures, like hand hygiene and vaccinations, may be the last line of defense available to healthcare professionals in the current pharmaceutical climate.

The controversy surrounding the recent flu vaccine mandate for children under age five by the Board of Health underscores the public's ignorance about the threat of infection and its potential consequences. In an interview with CBS, Dr. Jay Varma, deputy commissioner of the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, stated, "A lot of people have a misconception that the flu is just like the common cold and nothing that needs to be worried about…In fact, flu is common and can be very serious for children under the age of 5" (Ross, 2013). Our generation has forgotten the age before penicillin and vaccines, a time when death from infection and influenza was commonplace. During 1918-1919, influenza killed more people worldwide than World War I, an estimated global mortality rate of 30 to 50 million people (United States Department of Health and Human Services, 2013). To put this in perspective, the global mortality rate of AIDS over the past thirty-two years is approximately 35 million people (WHO, 2013). As more and more strains of bacteria and viruses present with multidrug resistance, we could potentially return to a time where all we could do to treat infection was pray.

The problem of antibiotic-resistant bacteria demands a closer look at our health care practices and financial priorities. One of the first things you learn as a microbiology student is that microorganisms are ubiquitous, on the food we eat, the hands we shake, and the MTA subway poles we touch on our way to work. They are everywhere and so is the risk of infection. My cousin almost died and my godson would have lost his mother if the combination of drugs the doctors prescribed had not worked. Someone else's mother, sister, child, or grandparent did die because the drugs we have are not working anymore. I want to hear their story the next time I turn on the TV and what companies like Pfizer and the federal government are going to do about it.

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The "-6.00" Experience
Doug Hess

The doctor escorts a man into the dimly lit room, and machines that resemble bug eyes are placed in front of his face as tests are done. A chart looms off in the near distance. Distinct features of English letters seem to flow in an orderly way down the illuminated board. A few clicks, a simple 1-2, 3-4 conversation, and like magic, the blur of figures turns from gibberish to beautiful letters. The doctor reaches slowly for a pen and jots down a series of numbers that seem like a secret code. The doctor extends his arm with the paper in hand and explains the diagnosis in what seems like another language. Myopia, the doctor says, just a diagnosis to some, but to the man a life-defining problem.

It's difficult for me to narrate this experience because my situation is so different. My own diagnosis is emmetropia—normal vision. No correction needed, and that means no corrective lenses! Myopia basically means near-sightedness—the person can't see anything far away but clarity is possible close up. A -6.00 lens allows me to get a glimpse into a world where blurriness envelopes one's life, and clear sight is a great gift.

To get a sense of what a person with this level of myopia experiences, I get myself into a comfortable area— my bedroom. I place the lens in front of my eye and begin exploring what feels like an entirely new world. At first, bravado kicks in. With a couple of vastly different squints and rotations to the lens I think to myself, "Hey, this isn't too bad." But in an instant my opinion changes. My walls change, my door blends itself into the wall. I feel trapped. My computer, my television, mirror, clock, couch, everything becomes a blur. I feel lost in my own life. After a few minutes I begin to calm down. I go from constantly trying to focus and adjust, to slowly gathering and piecing together the situation I am in. My book, although mini-sized now, is legible if I hold it really close, the same with my remote and various other objects. I then stand up, feeling woozy and displaced. I walk up to each object in my room and start to make note of at what point each becomes clear. Close is the only word I can use to describe what I need. I want everything to be close. Nothing feels close enough.

As I've learned from experience, empathy is key to the patient-practitioner relationship. A frame is chosen, lenses are dispensed, sight is comfortable, both parties are happy. Life with glasses becomes routine for the -6.00 OU patient. Wake up, stretch, put glasses on and normality begins for the day.

But this patient is back after an unexpected fall. He stands up, brushes off the tiny debris from his arm and reaches for his frame that lies in three pieces. One lens is shattered. The frame is broken. The gift that was so giving now becomes his enemy. The patient enters the optician's office, broken pieces of

frame in hand. His wife is there to console him but his face tells its own story. The prescription is simple, -6.00 OU and routine to order. I reach in the drawer and find it empty. The shipment of stock lenses hasn't arrived and won't arrive until the morning.   My heart drops, the patient has come to me, and I can't help right away. As a professional, I feel the direct approach is the best. I advise the patient to avoid any type of detailed work and to make sure he is in an environment that is familiar to him until his lenses come in. A scary uncertainty is now just a waiting game and he is prepared. A patient who is informed, in my opinion, is more comfortable.

A mother with a young child walks into the store. Puzzled would be the best way to describe her as she looks around while slowly approaching the counter. Her son looks scared and confused.   It looks to me as if neither of them had ever stepped foot into an optical store. The mother hands me a prescription and begins to ramble. She describes to me what the doctor told her but all I can comprehend is "told me he can't see far away" and "he'll need them permanently." These words can haunt a mother. She asks how bad the situation is. I tell her glasses have become a cultural normality. Glasses aid in fine-tuning and correcting vision. The child's prescription calls for a -2.00 OU; his case isn't too serious. I explain that he is able to make out objects close to him which could've masked the issue for a while. I also say the doctor was right, permanent glasses would give the child the best quality of life.

Being a professional in the eye-care field means dealing with a variety of issues and complaints. My experience has allowed me to grow and view life at a new level as a person and a professional.

Cyber Diplomacy and the Future of U.S. Diplomatic Policy

Thomas B. Waters

How does United States diplomacy need to change to take advantage of cyber diplomacy in the information age? Given the global rise in mass media, the need for a robust cyber diplomacy policy has become a priority for the Obama administration. Secretary of State Hilary Clinton has described this priority as "a new foreign policy imperative" for which the State Department will need to play a leading role (International cyber diplomacy, 2011). Cyber diplomacy includes the ability to communicate directly with the populations of other countries through social networking and mass media; this advanced form of public diplomacy has changed the way countries engage with one another. After providing a brief history of U.S. cyber diplomacy, this paper presents solutions to questions regarding competitive cyber diplomacy, collaborative cyber diplomacy, and restrictions to cyber diplomacy.

Prior to WWII, diplomacy was a slow, interpersonal affair that took place away from the eyes of the public. Much of this changed after Woodrow Wilson's "Fourteen Points" speech in which he stated that contracts of peace and alliances should not be arrived at in closed-door meetings, or in secret agreements (Gilboa, 2000, p. 275). Wilson felt that secret alliances were one of the determining factors that led to the explosive outbreak of WWI, and after the speech, the diplomatic process started to become more transparent. As international diplomacy entered the public eye, America rose from its isolationist past into a role of leadership in world affairs. From this, came public opinion and critique which added a new facet to diplomacy. Diplomacy no longer just consisted of discreet deals with foreign leaders, but often involved governments engaging with their own populations in order to rally support or promote specific agendas. This engagement with populations was the birth of public diplomacy and the precursor of its digital descendent, cyber diplomacy. As mass media innervated new parts of the world, governments gained public access to spread their message through new mediums. In addition to making foreign populations more penetrable, mass media also made it more difficult for governments to maintain credibility in the presence of more well-informed observers (Keohane, 1998). Because diplomacy no longer took place in the shadows, governments would be held accountable for the messages they broadcast. Traditional forms of mass media, such as newspapers, television and radio, were the first steps to a more comprehensive form of public diplomacy and provided the fertile substrate for the growth of cyber diplomacy.

Cyber diplomacy has been defined as

a new discipline in the ongoing evolution of diplomatic relations between nations, virtual states and other related groups and bodies….it recognizes the use of new communication technologies (Internet, mobile devices and other electronic messaging) to create unique opportunities to interact with a much broader public audience by integrating the use of an electronic approach with the growing spectrum of global interdependent systems. (Cyber Diplomacy Distance Learning Program, 2013)

This definition illuminates the distinctive characteristics of cyber diplomacy, including its reliance on modern technology and its interest in a broader public audience. As our discussion moves from the past, where the technology inherent to cyber diplomacy did not exist, to the present, where it does, it is important only to note that in the current context these two terms often represent the same idea as modern public diplomacy makes use of the cyber technology available to it. So from here on, the terms cyber diplomacy and public diplomacy will be used interchangeably. Cyber diplomacy is currently being wielded in a variety of ways. As I continue I will give individual examples and solutions for how U.S. diplomacy needs to change to take advantage of the information age.

Cyber diplomacy is often a competitive endeavor. China, for example, has a much more robust cyber diplomacy program than the United States (Foldi, 2011). Concern has been expressed in the U.S. Senate that the reason for this is the nature of the open mass media networks that dominate the U.S. media industry. Whereas the Chinese are able to use this open system to their advantage, the U.S. government is not easily able to penetrate the closed-off government-controlled media outlets operating inside of China (Foldi, 2011). Furthermore, the Smith–Mundt Act, a post–World War II measure aimed at preventing the party that holds the White House from using the State Department to "propagandize" Americans, effectively prevents most Americans from ever seeing the State Department's own public diplomacy efforts (Dale, H. C., Cohen, A., Smith, J. A., 2012). As a result, the average consumers of mass media in the United States are potentially exposed to endless propaganda from external governments, but experience great difficulty in finding their own government's public diplomacy efforts. So how does United States diplomacy need to change to alter this imbalance?

The United States must continue to put pressure on countries with government-controlled media outlets and use its influence in the U.N. to try to persuade countries to give up the censorship of its news and media by their governments. The United States' inability to access these populations reduces its capacity to wield soft power, so attempting to loosen the state-controlled media with an argument for freedom of information and human rights is necessary. While this approach addresses the philosophical divide between the U.S. media and the repressed government-controlled media of its competitors like China, Russia and North Korea, it isn't really a solution. A solution does exist though. In exchange for broadcasting rights on U.S. frequencies, the United States needs to ensure equal

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visa exchange for U.S. journalists and public access for U.S. broadcasters in these competing countries (Dale, H. C., Cohen, A., Smith, J. A., 2012). Foreign countries' ability to access broadcasting rights in the United Sates should be contingent on their willingness to allow U.S. companies to do the same. U.S. citizens should also have the right to access public diplomacy materials that the Smith–Mundt Act prevents from being published for U.S. citizenry.

Cyber diplomacy is not always competitive. Some developing countries are using social media to engage citizens in developing the policies of their own governments. They have embedded social media as a source of interaction between government authorities and citizens in order to better know their people's views. This development is what author and assistant professor at the University of Ottawa Evan Potter (2007, p. 121) refers to as "collaborative diplomacy." In order for a country to engage in collaborative diplomacy with its own population, the population needs to have widespread access to information. This collaborative approach to governing is significant for the United States as it seeks ways to adjust its diplomatic practices to the information age. Countries wishing to use this style of governing are going to need the proper technology and infrastructure to host it. How should the United States adapt in order to take advantage of collaborative diplomacy?

By providing expertise, the United States can help guide the development of foreign infrastructure to make for a less restrictive mass media and open information model. This will not only create alliances with developing nations, but also allow for U.S. influence, or soft power, in the form of cyber diplomacy once the system is developed. Not only will this approach continue to facilitate the collaborative governing goals of the developing nations, but it will allow the United States future access to these populations through their media system should a competition of public diplomacy ever ensue.

There are restrictions to cyber diplomacy. While the United States remains the most dominant player in the spread of the Internet and its globalization, the outcome has not been entirely predictable. While the U.S. globalization of media initially appeared to heavily favor the United States with its ability to spread its culture and democratic ideals rapidly across the world, we are now seeing some of the negative side-affects attributed to this new wave of mass communication, mainly anti-U.S. sentiment that is disseminated and organized internationally via the same cyber corridors the United States has placed so much faith in (Shanthi, 2002). Much of this anti-U.S. sentiment is a direct result of U.S. military intervention overseas; this reality further highlights the importance of cyber diplomacy's capability of projecting soft power. The use of soft power with a proactive diplomatic presence that works to manipulate the development of nations will be necessary to make foreign populations more receptive to U.S. diplomatic efforts in the future.

Rather than first using coercion or force to attain its goals, the United States needs to make use of soft power through cyber diplomacy. In countries where infrastructure does not support the use of cyber diplomacy, economic and social aid needs to be implemented. While force (such as the invasion of Iraq and

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Afghanistan) and coercion (such as the sanctions on Iran and North Korea) are potent strategies, they should not be the first step taken. No U.S. embassy existed in Iraq, Afghanistan, Iran, or North Korea when the invasions and the economic sanctions were imposed upon them, nor can we easily argue that an embassy should have existed in those countries. The 1979 Iran hostage situation and the 2012 Benghazi attack are reminders of the dangers inherent to a physical presence in hostile and unpredictable countries. With the majority of the population in these countries having restricted access to the Internet and media, or none at all, it is difficult to argue for the use of cyber diplomacy. What we do know, however, is that anti-American sentiment has greatly increased in these regions, making the need for another solution critical. What does the United States need to do to adapt to and overcome this challenge?

Cyber diplomacy cannot exist where the U.S. does not have access to the populations. According to Philip Seib of the University of South Carolina's Center for Public Diplomacy (2013), many of the issues in the Middle East are the result of an antiquated economic model. The United States needs to identify the needs of these countries, and use assistance and good will to build a positive rapport with the host nations. Because cyber diplomacy cannot exist without a certain degree of development, the U.S. should focus on the collaborative economic and social development of nations in order to lay the groundwork for effective use of cyber diplomacy and its soft power. As soft power capabilities are expanded in developing nations, the United States needs to come to rely on them more to effect change in hostile regions rather than relying on a physical U.S. presence.

Cyber diplomacy is a new advance in the evolution of diplomacy. It is being used collaboratively to develop new social policies within developing countries, as well as a form of soft power to alter the public opinion of foreign populations. The U.S. government has expressed great interest in cyber diplomacy and its importance for the future success of the United States; for one thing, open access to mass media in the U.S. makes the U.S. particularly vulnerable to the use of cyber diplomacy as an exertion of soft power from other nationals. A history of diplomacy in the United States reveals a progressive advance towards openness in the diplomatic process, reaching a digital breakthrough in recent years with the rise of the Internet. By defining cyber diplomacy and seeing how it is currently being used, we are able to project into the future to determine how our own diplomatic goals need to change to meet future demands.

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Three Legal Considerations of Social Media and Email:
Discovery, Privacy, Service of Process

Charlotte Winczer

Social Media

The purpose of social networking sites such as Facebook and MySpace is to provide an online environment for participants to share personal information about themselves with others in the context of social life and friendship. Users may not envision that an adversary in litigation would discover relevant material among their publicly posted information and request consent to access the private portions of their social networking sites for further discovery; and they may object on privacy grounds. The question of whether litigants have a legitimate reasonable expectation of privacy to material posted on social networking sites has been comprehensively addressed in *Romano v. Steelcase Inc.*, 30 Misc.3d 426, 907 N.Y.S.2d 650.

In this personal injury action, the plaintiff, Ms. Romano, asserted that she could no longer participate in certain activities or that her enjoyment of life was affected as a result of the permanent injuries she suffered in the underlying incident. The defendant, Steelcase, claimed that the plaintiff's public postings on her MySpace and Facebook pages showed that she had an active lifestyle and traveled to Florida and Pennsylvania during the time period she claimed that her injuries prevented such activity. The plaintiff refused to provide the requested authorizations. *Id* at 429. Defendant moved for an order pursuant to CPLR 3101 to gain access to the plaintiff's current and historical Facebook and MySpace pages and accounts, including all deleted pages and related information because there was a reasonable likelihood of discovering further evidence regarding her injuries that contradicted the plaintiff's claims for loss of enjoyment of life which was material and relevant to the defense's case. *Id* at 427.

In addressing the issue of privacy, the court pointed out: "In New York, there is no common-law right to privacy." *Id* at 432; and quoted *Katz v United States*, 389 US 347, 351 (1967): "The Fourth Amendment's right to privacy protects people, not places. What a person knowingly exposes to the public, even in his own home or office, is not a subject of Fourth Amendment protection." In *United States v Lifshitz*, 369 F3d 173, 190 (2004) the Second Circuit explained: "Users would logically lack a legitimate expectation of privacy in the materials intended for publication or public posting. They would lose a legitimate expectation of privacy in an e-mail that had already reached its recipient," in the same way that someone sending a letter loses the expectation of privacy once the letter has been received. *Romano* at 433.

The court cited *Moreno v Hanford Sentinel, Inc*., 172 Cal App 4th 1125, 91 Cal Rptr 3d 858 (Ct App, 5th Dist 2009) which asserted that no one can have a reasonable expectation of privacy who proactively posts their writings on a social networking site making them open to public view available to anyone with a computer to see. In fact, MySpace reminds users that their profiles and MySpace forums are public spaces and Facebook permits users to select privacy options at their own risk, which may not be entirely protective. Therefore, the court reasoned the plaintiff has no legitimate reasonable expectation of privacy since Facebook and MySpace make no guarantee of complete privacy. *Romano* at 433, 434.

The court concluded that when the plaintiff created her social networking accounts she agreed to share her personal information with others regardless of her privacy settings, consistent with the nature and purpose of social networking sites. She could not claim to have a reasonable expectation of privacy because she knew that her information could become publicly available. "As recently set forth by commentators regarding privacy and social networking sites, given the millions of users, '[i]n this environment, privacy is no longer grounded in reasonable expectations, but rather in some theoretical protocol better known as wishful thinking.'" *Romano* at 434.

Complaint Against Facebook and Its Facial ID Recognition Technology
The Electronic Privacy Information Center (EPIC) and several other non-profit organizations filed a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) against Facebook, the largest social network service in the United States, with approximately 150 million users. The petitioners are organizations involved with public interest issues of privacy and civil liberties, the impact of digital marketing on privacy and consumer welfare, and informational privacy at the state and federal levels. The main causes of action are: Facebook's implementation of facial recognition technology constitutes consumer harm and Facebook's use of facial recognition technology constitutes an unfair and deceptive trade practice.

Facial recognition technology is a method of digital biometric data collection that detects and identifies human faces. It was created when Facebook made changes to its photo technology in 2010 without obtaining users' consent. Users were encouraged to freely upload photos of themselves, friends and family. It works by generating a biometric signature for users who are tagged in photos on Facebook, i.e. using "summary data" from "photo comparisons." Facebook routinely encourages users to "tag," i.e. provide actual identifying information about themselves, their friends, and other people they may recognize. Facebook associates the tags with a user's account, compares what these tagged photos have in common, and stores a summary of this comparison.

Facebook enables "tag suggestions" by default, i.e. automated identification of facial images occurs in the absence of any user intervention. It is not possible for a user to delete the facial recognition data that Facebook has collected by following Facebook's instructions through the user's privacy

settings. Instead, the procedure for doing so is complicated and difficult; and it does not prevent Facebook from any further biometric data collection. While Facebook requires users to obtain consent before tagging a photo, it does not provide the technological means to do so and does not inform or remind users of this requirement. Furthermore, Facebook does not guarantee that advertisers, application developers, the government and other third parties would not be able to access "photo comparison data." In 2006 and 2007 Facebook made unauthorized disclosures of users' personal information and multiple federal lawsuits have ensued. In 2009 Facebook expanded the categories of personal information which it makes publicly available. In this regard EPIC and others filed a complaint with the FTC and millions of users have expressed their opposition to Facebook's policies through online groups and campaigns.

There is a genuine potential for violations of the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) through Facebook's facial recognition technology. As of May 2011, at least 7.5 million U.S. children under the age of thirteen actively used Facebook. This includes more than 5 million children under the age of ten. Facebook collects e-mail addresses and first and last names, which constitute personal information under COPPA, from each child with a Facebook account. Facebook's facial recognition technology links a user's photo summary data to the user's account, including the user's email address and first and last name. Because it is combined with other personal information, the photo summary data also falls within COPPA's definition of personal information. Facebook conditions a minor user's participation in photo sharing and tagging on the user's disclosure of photo summary data. Minors are at risk because they lack the capacity to consent to Facebook's Terms of Service and to understand the implications of disclosing personal information to Facebook.

The right of privacy is a personal and fundamental right in the United States. The privacy of an individual is directly impacted by the collection, use, and dissemination of personal information. The misuse of personal information may imperil the rights of due process and opportunities to obtain credit, employment, insurance and medical services. The excessive collection of personal data in the United States along with insufficient legal and technological protection has resulted in an increase in identity theft crime. The United States Supreme Court holding in *U.S. Dep't of Justice v. Reporters Comm. for Freedom of the Press*, 489 U.S. 749, 763 (1989), cited in *Nat'l Cable & Tele. Assn. v. Fed. Commc'ns. Comm'n*, No. 07-1312 (D.C. Cir. Feb. 13, 2009) states: "both the common law and the literal understanding of privacy encompass the individual's control of information concerning his or her person."

Unauthorized disclosure and/or public availability of their personal information places users at risk for commercial exploitation and exposure to possible public humiliation. The right of an individual to exercise control over their image in a commercial context is recognized in the Restatement (Second) of Torts § 652C (1977) which sets forth: "One who appropriates to his own use or benefit the name or likeness of another is subject to liability to the other for invasion of his privacy."

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In light of the extraordinary circumstances described above, EPIC and the other petitioners asked the FTC to investigate Facebook, determine the extent of harm to consumer privacy and safety, require Facebook to stop collection and use of users' biometric data without their affirmative opt-in consent, require Facebook to give users meaningful control over their personal information, establish appropriate security safeguards, limit the disclosure of user information to third parties and grant appropriate injunctive and compensatory relief.

E-service

In the *New York State Bar Association Journal* Vol. 85 No. 8, October 2013, John R. Higgitt discusses *The Emergence of "E-service" Under CPLR 308(5)* in his article with the same title. In *Mullane v. Central Hanover Bank & Trust Co.*, 339 U.S. 306 (1950) the United States Supreme Court allowed the court broad discretion in devising an appropriate method of alternate service of process provided that it was reasonably calculated, under all the circumstances, to give the parties notice of the action. In New York, service affected by electronic processes, known as e-service, is a method of alternate service that courts have authorized under CPLR 308(5) in recent years. (Higgitt, 28-30)

E-service may be authorized by the court when the plaintiff demonstrates that service by the other methods provided in CPLR 308(1)-(4) is impracticable and the court determines that service of process by email is a means reasonably calculated to provide the defendant with notice of the action. Like other methods of alternate service, e-service should be considered cautiously because both the issues of impracticability and reasonableness may be challenged by a defendant who was subjected to the alternate service. If the challenge is successful, the statute of limitations may lapse before a new action can be commenced. E-service may be effective when it can withstand these challenges. (Higgitt 29, 30) Several cases New York courts have recently decided involving e-service focus on reliability in establishing reasonableness; these include: *Hollow v. Hollow*, 193 Misc.2d 691 (N.Y. Sup. Ct. Oswego County Aug. 19, 2002), *Snyder v. Alternate Energy Inc.*, 19 Misc.3d 954 (Civ. Ct. N.Y.C. Apr. 4, 2008), *Alfred E. Mann Living Trust v. ETIRC Aviation S.A.R.L.*, 78 A.D.3d 137 (1st Dept. 2010), *Wang v. TIAA-CREFF Life Insurance Co.*, 2012 N.Y. Misc. LEXIS 5780 (N.Y. Sup.Ct. New York County Dec. 14, 2012), *Safadjou v. Mohammadi*, 105 A.D.3d 1423 (4th Dept. 2013).

These decisions indicate that alternate service by email under CPLR 308(5) is allowable under *Mullane* if a plaintiff can show that the defendant is reasonably likely to receive the email. The reliability of an email address for an alternate method of service of process can be established by showing that: (1) a defendant themself used the address to receive email, and that they had done so recently, or (2) a defendant has acknowledged a particular address as theirs and that they likely use that address to receive email. Specific details that should be evaluated when considering alternate service by email are:

To which email address or addresses must the process be sent?

What message must be placed in the subject line of the email?

> What text must be placed in the body of the email? How many times must the email be sent, and over what period of time? Who can (or cannot) send the email? What documents should be attached to the email? In which format must the documents be attached to the email? (Higgitt 31)

In granting alternate service by email, a court may be wise to require another of the more familiar methods of alternate service in conjunction with it, e-service-plus, as an additional protection against a reasonableness challenge. (Higgitt 30, 31)

In *Fortunato v. Chase Bank USA, N.A.*, 2012 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 80594 (S.D.N.Y. 2012) the United States Court for the Southern District of New York permitted Chase Bank to implead the plaintiff's daughter, Nicole. However, the court rejected Chase Bank's request for alternate service on the daughter by email to an address found on her Facebook page for failure to substantiate the likelihood that the third party defendant would receive the impleader service at the email address given. The court reasoned:

> Chase has not set forth any facts that would give the Court a degree of certainty that the Facebook profile its investigator located is in fact maintained by Nicole or that the email address listed on the Facebook profile is operational and accessed by Nicole. Indeed, the Court's understanding is that anyone can make a Facebook profile using real, fake, or incomplete information, and thus, there is no way for the Court to confirm whether the Nicole Fortunato the investigator found is in fact the third-party Defendant to be served. *Id* at 7, 8.

Perhaps a court may authorize alternate service to a party's Facebook page if the reliability of the email address as discussed above can be demonstrated in the context of the reasonableness requirement under *Mullane* (Higgitt 32).

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"How to Say 'Look at Me!' To an Online Recruiter"
Helena Melander

      In the essay, "How to Say 'Look at Me!' to an Online Recruiter," published on January 26, 2013, in *The New York Times*, Phyllis Korkki argues that to find a job now you need to be updated and searchable on the Internet. "Some employers aren't even bothering to post jobs, but are instead searching online for the right candidate," says Korkki. She also explains that not being present on the Internet can be catastrophic to your career. When I lost my job working at a café in Sweden, I was devastated, I had no money and I didn't know where to start looking for that new job; all I knew was that I wanted to get into advertising. I agree with what Korkki is trying to say. However, I actually got my new job the old-fashioned way, two weeks after I got laid off.

      "Having a blog can be a good way to show that you're a thought leader," says Korkki. During those two weeks of unemployment I worked harder on my blog than ever before, and the blog got me connections (nobody knew who I was, but everybody wanted to); my blog grew bigger and bigger, I wrote about advertising and media, I won second and third prizes in blog awards, and finally, my blog got me job interviews—but it didn't land me a job. So, I wrote a letter, made a portfolio and posted it through a job site to my future employer. Not every blog grows as big and well-known as mine did, but Korkki makes a good point; it increases your professional visibility. However, I'd like to say, don't always rely on social media to get you a job. Look at me—I had a famous blog, and it got me nowhere!

      Korkki continues giving tips about how "like" on Facebook can give you advantages. In my opinion Facebook is not the way to find a job today, especially not in media. Media people are always on the next big thing, now it's probably Instagram or Vine that is hot. I have always kept my Facebook professional for the reason Korkki notes with this quote from Ms. Doyle, a job-search specialist, "Make sure you understand who is receiving which of your posts, or resolve to be thoroughly professional on Facebook at all times."

      My new employer actually Googled me, and only then looked through my Facebook before hiring me. But Korkki says "Old-fashioned networking can still be an effective way to land a job." *Can* be? I would say this is probably one

of the ONLY ways: whom do you know who knows somebody who works in that place where they do that commercial? Connections are everything when it comes to landing a job. EVERYTHING!

I willingly admit that I don't like, and have never understood, Linkedin. As I stated just now, I believe in real life contacts. If they get me an interview (employers trust people they know), then it's all up to me. However, after reading Korkki's essay I might give Linkedin another try.

Overall, with today's visibility when nothing is private, is there really any privacy? When my new boss looked through my Facebook, what was he looking for? Scandals? If you can't be yourself on the Internet, then why be there at all? As I said before, I actually got my job the old-fashioned way, and it's true. The only reason my employer looked twice at my application was because I wrote that I was from Boden (a Northern Swedish military center) and he had done his military service there when he was young. Yes, that's it. No skills, no portfolio, no nothing, just that. In his mind, I reminded him of something that he liked. That is what a job search all comes down to—it's IMPOSSIBLE! It's like winning the lottery. Good Luck!

Data Mining
Maen Caka and Steve Tipton

The amount of information in the world grows at an exceptionally fast rate. According to IBM, the world generates 2.5 quintillion (2.5 x 10^{18}) bytes of information each day (2012). This new information comes from a variety of sources, including social media websites, search engines, GPS devices, sensors (such as climate sensors or cameras), cell phone usage, and e-commerce. With the growth of content on the Internet, the number of users online climbed from 360 million in 2000 to 2.3 billion in 2011 (Roy 2012). When providing their statistics in 2012, IBM estimated that 90% of all data had been created in the past two years. In order to capture and analyze this constantly expanding information, the field of data mining has developed in tandem with the increase in information. In this paper, we will define the basic procedures of data mining, explore its uses and applications, and review ethical questions of privacy surrounding data mining practices.

The Basics

Data mining is one step in a larger process of information analyses known as Knowledge Discovery in Databases (KDD). When attempting to comb through data, the KDD process performs the following steps:

1) Data Selection: The first step is to understand the group of data to be analyzed. Taking the client's viewpoint into consideration and understanding the specific questions to be asked, an appropriate set of data or subset of data is chosen to undergo analysis.

2) Preprocessing: To prepare the data for analysis, the cleaning process decides how to handle statistical "noise" within the data and completes or accounts for missing data fields.

3) Transformation: At this stage, the data moves into the clusters or other patterns that will be analyzed in the data mining process. The analyst chooses the proper algorithms to perform on the data.

4) Data Mining: The data undergoes the mining process (see below).

5): Interpretation/Evaluation: Any useful information discovered through the data mining process is interpreted by the analyst and formatted into possibly actionable next steps (Fayyad 1996).

The KDD process does not start with a hypothesis to test; rather, it sifts the data to find patterns that are "unknown, valid, actionable, and understandable" (Khandar 2011). That is, we search for new and accurate descriptions of patterns in the data that follow a logical process and can be applied to newer data.

The data mining step of the KDD process applies the algorithms that parse the data to the database. In order to find the valuable information in the database, data mining uses "software techniques for finding patterns, regularities in the sets of data" (Srimani 2012). Its methods are an enlargement of statistical

methods, and can include procedures such as sampling, estimation, hypothesis testing, search algorithms, modeling techniques, artificial intelligence, pattern recognition, and machine learning (Srimani 2012).

In traditional statistical analysis, researchers begin with a hypothesis and then perform tests to validate or invalidate their initial conjecture (Khandar 2011). In the descriptive wing of statistics, a theory is devised about a data set, samples are taken from the data, and tests are performed. Using the information from the test, statisticians can formulate inductive and inferential probabilities about the likelihood of future events (Zhao 2006).

The data mining approach is different from the traditional scientific method in that hypothesis testing is not its goal or approach. Because the data sets are extremely large and can be "messy," the data mining process looks for patterns within the data, which can lead to unexpected outcomes. This "serendipitous element" in the hunt reflects the "bottom-up" nature of data mining, where a large pool of information comes under scrutiny without a pre-formed hypothesis (Zhao 2006).

In fact, hypothesis testing is difficult for data mining for several reasons. First, the amount of data and the speed with which it arrives does not allow the time to devise hypotheses prior to analysis. Second, since the information gathered is usually related to social science, forming control groups to conduct hypothesis testing is difficult. Finally, data mining is less concerned with finding generalized models, than with individual outcomes and behaviors. This element of data mining proves especially useful in business applications such as customer relations and retention. Due to its break from traditional methods, data mining can sometimes be viewed in a negative light. Without a hypothesis, data mining can be called "fishing" and can seem to torture the data in order to provide results. However, as the business community adopts data mining techniques and begins to see increases in productivity and efficiency, data mining has grown from its loose beginnings into a more established and accepted field of study (Zhao 2006).

If data mining does not start with the traditional approach of hypothesis testing, what are some of its methods for discovering information?

1) Association Rule Learning: This method seeks connections between items in the data set, or associations that may signal elements' "co-occurrence" (King 2013). The analysis seeks to discover the patterns that relate the likelihood of one event happening in the data set with the likelihood of another event happening as well.

2) Classification: Before sorting the database, the analyst creates predetermined categories to divide the data. The database then sorts into these separate categories, and the analyst can attempt to determine the patterns that cause the various outcomes within the data.

3) Clustering: Clustering is similar to classification, but in clustering there are no predetermined categories. The analyst groups the data by each element's individual qualities, so that items that have more in common with each other are grouped together. Eventually, these groups of similar items will form clusters,

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and the pattern analysis can be performed on these clusters to determine their causes.

4) Regression: With regression, the analyst attempts to find a function to define the behavior of the data set. The function will describe the outcome of a dependent variable based upon the input of an independent variable. For example, given a scatter plot of data, the analyst will try to find the line of best fit for the data. This could be a simple linear function or a more complicated function such as an exponential or logarithmic function (Manyika 2011).

These methods are only a few of the basic building blocks of data mining; additionally, with the unending and increasing volume of data streams, new methods continue to be developed and refined.

The NSA

One of the largest ethical questions surrounding data mining is its use by government agencies to collect and analyze data. In June 2013, London's *The Guardian* newspaper revealed that the National Security Agency (NSA) requires Verizon to share its information with the U.S. government. A leaked court order sustains that the information collected is "telephony metadata"—not the content of the calls, but "session identifying information," such as the outgoing and receiving numbers, call length, and detailed call-routing information. Using this metadata, the federal agencies can piece together an individual's social networks and calling patterns (Greenwald 2013).

During the summer of 2013, further articles described the expanding reach of government programs into collecting and mining data. With information provided by former NSA contractor Edward Snowden, *The Washington Post* documented that the NSA and the FBI were able to access the servers of major U.S. internet companies in order to "[extract] audio and video chats, photographs, e-mails, documents, and connection logs that enable analysts to track foreign targets." Top secret government slides show how this data mining program, under the code name PRISM, partnered with Microsoft, Yahoo, Google, Facebook, PalTalk, AOL, Skype, YouTube, and Apple to amass information and create social networks of potential terrorist suspects (Gellman 2013). Though this computer analysis was originally limited to suspects who were not American citizens, an August 2013 article in the *New York Times* disclosed government documents detailing a policy change allowing the NSA to conduct " 'large-scale graph analysis on very large sets of communications metadata without having to check foreignness' of every e-mail address, phone number or other identifier" (Risen 2013).

Controversy remains over balancing the need to ensure national security and to protect individual privacy rights. In a press release (Clapper 2013) following the newspapers' revelations, Director of National Intelligence James R. Clapper said that "information collected under this program is among the most important and valuable foreign intelligence information we collect, and is used to protect our nation from a wide variety of threats. The unauthorized disclosure of information about this important and entirely legal program is reprehensible and

risks important protections for the security of Americans." Conversely, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) filed a lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of the NSA's programs. Jameel Jaffer, ACLU deputy legal director, stated in a press release (ACLU 2013) that the government programs are "the equivalent of requiring every American to file a daily report with the government of every location they visited, every person they talked to on the phone, the time of each call, and the length of every conversation. The program goes far beyond even the permissive limits set by the Patriot Act and represents a gross infringement of the freedom of association and the right to privacy."

Business

Companies in a wide range of industries—including retail, finance, health care, manufacturing transportation, and aerospace— are already using data mining tools and other methods to take advantage of data. If the companies use pattern recognition, statistical and mathematical techniques to sift through warehoused information, data mining helps recognize significant facts that might go unnoticed. Most companies tend to use data mining to benefit themselves by making better decisions for the company by discovering the different kinds of patterns and relationships within the data. Data mining helps the company to spot sales trends, develop smarter marketing campaigns, and accurately predict customer loyalty.

The technology of data mining enables companies who use it to focus on important information within data that has been collected regarding the behavior and purchasing potential of the customers. The amount of raw data that has been stored within corporate databases is exploding. With sources ranging from sales transactions to credit card purchases, databases are now being measured in gigabytes, terabytes, and even exabytes. As an example, Best Buy uploads 10 million point-of-sale transactions to a T-Mobile parallel system with 400 processors running a centralized database. But the raw data alone doesn't provide much information. Nowadays companies need to rapidly turn terabytes of raw data into significant insights into their customers and markets to guide their marketing, investment, and management strategies.

Data warehouses are used to consolidate data that is located in disparate databases. In other words, a data warehouse is able to store large quantities of data by specific categories, thereby making it easier for the users to retrieve, interpret, and finally sort the information. These warehouses have enabled executives and managers to work with a substantial number of transactions or other kinds of data, allowing corporations to respond faster to markets and make more informed business decisions. The drop in the price of data storage has given companies incentives to invest in data warehouses. It is expected that in the next ten years data warehouses will be used by every business around the world. Even companies who already use data warehouses need to get still more information about how to improve knowledge of customers and markets. If companies don't continue to learn about new developments in data mining, then they will limit the potential benefits that they can derive from it.

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Using massive parallel computers can allow companies to dig through high volumes of data to discover patterns about both their customers and products. Fast food chains are an example; McDonald's can analyze the factors that come into play when a person decides to order an entire meal instead of just a burger or sandwich. This information can be crucial, helping businesses to provide a wider selection of options to their customers. Apple, AT&T, and American Express are among the growing number of companies implementing data mining techniques for better sales and marketing. Doing so, these companies have been able to increase profit and gain a competitive advantage.

Conclusion

In summary, data mining is an interdisciplinary subfield of computer science. Through a computational process, patterns are discovered in large data sets and transformed into an understandable form for further use. In addition to the fields discussed here, in recent years, data mining has been used widely in science and engineering, in fields such as bioinformatics, genetics, medicine, and electrical power engineering.

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Quasars

Billy Vargas

Our expanding universe is filled with millions of galaxies, yet the universe consists of mostly empty space. One can't help but admire the beauty of this vast emptiness. Our universe consists of almost an infinite number of entities ranging from planets to stars to black holes, each with their unique properties, beauty, and purpose. The size of our universe is mind-boggling; it is something we will never comprehend. Quasars or quasi-stellar objects are one of the universe's mystical spectacles.

In the 1960s quasars were referred to as radio stars because astronomers discovered that they were a strong source of radio waves. Astronomers at that time, using the first radio telescopes to explore space, discovered these small bright objects now known as quasars. According to Fraser Cain from *universetoday.com,* the first quasars that were discovered seemed to move away at one-third the speed of light or about 100,000km/s. Cain also states that at that time astronomers got creative about explaining quasars. They thought that quasars weren't really bright and our understanding of the universe was incorrect. One theory they had was that an advanced civilization somehow managed to harness all the stars in their galaxy and use it as a source of energy! I too as an astronomer might get creative with theory, after all, most of astronomy is based on theory, for example, the big bang.

Quasars are classified as active galactic nuclei; they emit a lot of energy and are very bright; they can be compared to a glowing spinning top. Astronomers consider quasars to be probably one of the most distant and brightest objects in the universe! The light from quasars travels billions of years to reach Earth, which proves that they are one of the universe's most distant objects. The most distant quasars that have been observed are from as far as 10

billion light years away. This means we are seeing 10 billion years into the past and these quasars that we observe may no longer exist. Perhaps our observations of quasars are the early stages of the formation of galaxies that occurred 10 billion years ago! Probably our very own Milky Way galaxy was a quasar 10 billion years ago.

Quasars give off a very high redshift, in other words, an effect or phenomenon that occurs when electromagnetic radiation from an object that's moving away from us increases in wavelength. This causes the electromagnetic radiation to shift towards the red side of the spectrum. An example that correlates to this phenomenon is when a police car, its sirens blaring, passes you. As the car approaches you, the frequency of its sound (pitches) increases, and when it is moving away from you, it decreases. This effect occurs similarly in quasars because of our expanding universe, except we're able to see the redshift in a quasar because its redshift is much bigger than the redshift any object on Earth can produce. Although they tend to go towards the red side of the spectrum, they are still some of the brightest and strongest energy-emitting objects throughout the universe. They are so strong that they can emit a thousand times more energy than what our beloved Milky Way galaxy can produce! If we could only harness a fraction of the energy emitted from a quasar, we would have an unimaginable amount of power. With this much energy we could probably send space probes all across the galaxy and possibly even send manned space-crafts.

These entities are usually found at the center of active developing galaxies and younger galaxies. Although the power of quasars might make us think of them as monstrously huge, they are in fact no bigger than our solar system. You might think our solar system is big, but compared with the size of our galaxy, it is just a speck of dust. At the heart of quasars and galaxies, you can find supermassive black holes that are so strong, even light traveling at 300,000 km/s can't escape. These black holes can be up to a billion times bigger than the sun! But, despite the fact that they have massive black holes, quasars are still able to emit jets of energy formed by the escape of the absorbed surrounding gases under gravitational pressure and friction. These jets are created outside of the massive black hole.

What can possibly power these powerful giants and cause them to emit so much energy? Quasars are thought to be powered by the accretion of material into the supermassive black holes in the nuclei of distant galaxies. These accretion disks that surround the black hole are created from surrounding matter, like gases, and use it to power it. This material gets heated up by millions of degrees from the immense gravitational pressure. It ends up exploding and releasing the energy. We see quasars blasting out twin straight cosmic jets of energy because of the magnetic field created by the black hole. The jets are emitted from the black hole's north and south poles. Quasars can also be formed from colliding galaxies, their collisions providing a source of energy to the black hole. Scientists theorize that a quasar could be formed within the next 3 to 10 billion years when the Andromeda galaxy collides with our very own Milky Way galaxy.

Quasars have multiple names depending on the angle by which we view them according to the jets of energy. For example when the jets are perpendicular to what we see, astronomers call it a radio galaxy. If they are at an angle, it is called a quasar, if the jet of energy is directly pointing at us, it is called a blazar. Our galaxy isn't a quasar because the massive black hole at the center of our galaxy doesn't have anything to power it up. These black holes at the center of every galaxy don't always feed off materials. If there is nothing to use to turn it into energy, the jets of energy slowly start to dissipate and stop emitting energy until something they can use to turn into energy comes nearby.

Think of an old-fashioned wood-burning furnace. To keep it powered you would need to keep feeding it wood. When the fire starts to die out, you put more wood on and start the process again. We are lucky not to have a quasar at the center of our galaxy. According to Ben Brumfield, astronomer Maarten Schmidt said if Earth were to be close to a quasar, "we would all be dead. It would cook the Earth's surface with massive bursts of …gamma rays…the quasar would devour…our whole solar system, in a matter of months…the largest ones can eat a hole out of the center of a galaxy."

With the help of the Hubble telescope, over 2,000 quasars have been discovered in our universe as of today. The first quasar discovered was 3C 273 in 1960; it was located in the Virgo constellation about 260 light years away. 3C 273 is the closest and brightest visible quasar. It lies at the center of an elliptical galaxy and can only be seen during May, around the same time we are able to see the Virgo constellation. Another quasar that has been discovered that I think is probably one of the coolest is the APM 08279+5255 quasar, which is located in the Lynx constellation and is known as the brightest quasar and object in the universe! The quasar is about 12 billion light years away; what makes this quasar so cool is that it contains water vapor. Its water vapor forms a giant cloud-type object; this cloud contains the oldest and largest mass of water in the universe! If we think that the two-thirds of our planet that is water is a lot, then imagine how much water there would be if multiplied by 140 trillion. APM 08279+5255 contains 140 trillion times more water than Earth! The water vapor clouds spiral around one of the biggest black holes discovered, standing at a whopping 20 billion solar masses; in other words the black hole mass is about 20 billion times bigger than our sun. The discovery of APM 08279+5255 shows that water has existed for a very long time, about a billion times earlier than what astronomers had originally thought.

Quasars are mysterious objects. We still have a lot to learn about them. They are strange beings. They stand out from everything else in the universe; they shine so bright they are the universe's lighthouses. As time progresses and our technology advances, I believe that we will learn more and more about them. Maybe one day we may learn how to harness the energy of a nearby quasar and be able to explore the cosmos. Astronomers and humans still have a long way to go to understand everything that's out beyond our solar system.

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The Importance of Science
Mohammad Tazrian

In our society today the importance of science is, unfortunately, often overlooked. Science is constantly advancing and providing people all around the world with opportunities. Three recent *New York Times* opinion articles that sparked my interest talk about scientific innovations and how they have helped us in the past or present or will help us in the future. I also had the opportunity to interview City Tech Professor of Biological Sciences Armando D. Solis. Dr. Solis is Program Coordinator for Biomedical Informatics; his research and teaching interests lie in this growing field in computational biology.

"The World Of Mars" by John Grotzinger, published November 27, 2013, discusses how our current exploration of Mars is very similar to another exploration from 143 three ago. That was when John Powell led men into the untamed and uncharted Colorado River and Grand Canyon. Today, we all know what the Grand Canyon looks like. That's because we have obviously advanced a great deal since then. But as in our past, we need to rely on technology and science to help us explore what is the "new Grand Canyon." The first scientific expedition of the Grand Canyon involved many tools such as barometers, chronometers, thermometers, and compasses. Without these scientific tools, who knows what would have happened to the explorers? Grotzinger argues that this expedition even sparked scientific thoughts that now underpin modern geological thinking. Today we are in the midst of exploring another planet, Mars. This exploration, of course, is on a much larger scale. But without all our current scientific advancements, there would be no way we could proceed. We are sending a machine out there to explore for us and possibly even bring something back which more scientists will study or do experiments on. "Like Powell in the Grand Canyon, we know not. We may only conjecture," is what Grotzimger says. With our current pace in scientific innovation we will be able to discover much more about our own planet as we study others.

"From Marine Biology To Drug Discovery" by Mark Hay, published October

24, 2011, is also an interesting article. It's about the adventure of his research. Hay is a Georgia Tech biology professor writing from Fiji in the South Pacific. He discusses how scientific exploration of the marine ecological system has led to the discovery of new drugs. According to Hay, the connection between ecology and drug discovery often lies in prey species. These species turn production of defensive traits on and off as needed for different enemies. For example, the simple phytoplankton Phaeocystis can use its chemical senses to identify a predator and alter its own traits to avoid attention. Scientists use information like this to create drugs that prevent a variety of illnesses, such as malaria. Hay states, "Expedition research ends up producing compounds that can be identified only through the use of today's most cutting edge technology." It's clear that today's scientific advances allow us to be far more capable of accomplishing things. In Hay's case, he enjoys discovering things in our environment to our advantage with the help of modern-day technology.

The third article, "Inventing the Future," by Walter Isaacson, which appeared April 6, 2012, is about Jon Gertner's 2012 book about Bell Labs, *The Idea Factory*. Isaacson discusses how in 1909, scientists struggled with building a transcontinental phone line that could connect calls from long distances. At that time, science, although not even close to the level it is at now, was nonetheless active in exploring new technologies. Bell Labs over the years was famous for its researching new technology. It brought together many different scientists and people of diverse talents and expertise. The challenge to make the telephone call would need advances in pure science. After working together, they accomplished this task. Isaacson's important point is that "Innovation does not occur in an iconic garage or the workshop of an ingenious inventor." He explains that innovations occur "when people of diverse talents and mind sets and expertise are brought together."

I was fortunate to have the opportunity to interview Dr. Armando D. Solis. He is an innovator in the field of biomedical informatics. His growing field demands math and computational skills to pursue a more theoretical and computational approach in biology. When integrated with biomedical science, bioinformatics has great potential to help the average person. For instance, Dr. Solis explains, getting the genetic profile of cancer patients allows doctors to identify the cause of their particular cancer and also plan on the best treatment specific to that patient. This breakthrough in science and technology will help a very great number of people. Dr. Solis's research involves the process of protein folding. "The question of how nature encodes this structural message in the amino acid sequences is still an open question, and thousands of scientists like me across the world are pursuing this question in their own research activities." He compares his work to figuring out the dictionary and rules of grammar in a newly found language. Bioinformatics is a field that is cutting edge, useful, and important and we can expect that many innovations will result from its work.

Like those before us, we all live with a purpose, whether we know it or not. Human beings are born with the instinct to better themselves and to do the best possible for themselves in any given circumstance. And that's how after

hundreds of thousands of years, we are where we are. The desire to improve ourselves and the desire to advance is in our genes. The science of things is an important part of today's world. Science continually progresses. Scientific innovations allow us to accomplish things that earlier peoples never even imagined. The constant innovations of science are important for us to acknowledge and appreciate. Without scientific discoveries and advancements, we would all be living in a very, very different world.

Interpreting and Redefining Humanity
Remy Octavian Cucui

What are you? What am I? If robots and aliens haven't taken over yet or gotten access to this information, one answer is likely, "Human," right? But what about it? How do we know that we are? How did we come to be? I intend to find out. Rather, I intend to piece together and string along my research across various disciplines, and let you in on my thought process. I've already done the thinking of course, and I've come up with an answer: to be human means to happen to fall at the tip of a branch in a complex tree several millennia upon millennia of age, consisting of a progressively intricate and intangible system of our physical building blocks.

What complex systems am I talking about? We start with Dawkins, *The Selfish Gene*, on complex physical systems. A jumble of the laws of physics made a molecule that could copy itself, and as time went on it grew more complex and became designed to survive, as that was all which could exist and function in the world. This by happenstance grew to be more complex, it changed little by little over time and grew into wildly different things, creating a huge array of proteins and parts. "The Spandrels of San Marco and the Panglossian Paradigm: A Critique of the Adaptationist Programme" adds a further thought, explaining that a massive number of features in a life form are the result of individual mechanics working in the same machine. There may very well not be a gene for our noses, or a few genes. There may be a few genes doing something else to make sure we can breathe, making the structure of the nose appear. Go forward for long enough, and we have enough features and combinations of features to make something that is us: humans. Humans are the result of a physical world where things mash together, and eventually create a system.

Now, the more things change, the more they stay the same. Starting with stable and strong molecules consuming and surviving over weaker ones, moving on to micro-organisms which do the same thing, moving on to animals which still do the same thing. We do it too, but it's not as blunt as it used to be. It's not just "I'm hungry, you look good, dinner!" anymore, though that is what fuels our society. It's become more abstract than that. The perfect example is illustrated by J. C. Clarke's "Why Africana History?" in which we learn how a once perfectly stable and strong system got taken down by a newer, more "advanced" system. I don't mean to say culturally, but technologically. Some small groups of civilization broke off from Africa in its early days, and over time they developed technologies which they could use to trade with and overpower African nations. Cue the slave trade. It's not just Africa either, Europe colonized a majority of the world with their technological superiority. Some civilizations were utterly lost,

others just crippled, but Europe ultimately dominated and the smaller or less advanced cultures fell to it.

We find ourselves today at the tip of a branch when it comes to living things. So much so, that physical handicaps are starting to be phased out. Sobchack's "A Leg to Stand On" shows two things. One, losing a part of ourselves doesn't make us any less human, nor does replacing said part. Two, we can make ourselves in some ways better with our technology. There are now specialized prosthetics we've created which let us do things better. Legs that let us run or swim faster, bladders and valves that we've synthesized and are stronger than our original parts. In a way, we've taken the mash of physical objects into our own hands, applying the same principles. Things that work are improved upon and last, things that break sooner than most get discarded. It's done by us, but it's the same process that created us to begin with.

We may have come far in our manipulation of the physical, but we're not done. We're good with making big things work with our own machinery, but not the tiny parts. The brain works because it's a mass of connected wires. Now, if you've ever unplugged something from a system that's running, you may find that it doesn't work so well. Maybe you've killed the power supply, maybe you've removed something that's doing some calculations. The same thing applies to our brains. We haven't yet, but in the future we may be able to repair or replace broken parts of the brain. This wasn't soon enough for Terri Schiavo though, whose brain began to die from oxygen starvation following a heart attack. A fifteen- year effort to bring her back ensued, ending in the termination of her life. Ultimately, it was decided that she had a life not worth living. She showed no awareness or responsiveness of any kind, what's medically called a vegetative state. After her death, an autopsy revealed that half of her brain had died, and could not heal itself, rendering her recovery at the time impossible.

This serves as a useful bridge from the physical to the philosophical. What's a good life? What's a life worth living? Well, in "Meditations II," we find Descartes going back again and again to the idea that if you can think, then you exist. This doesn't mean that if you can't think, you don't exist. However, it does beg to ask, what's the point of existing if we can't think? I can't think of any. Let's break down what thinking is, starting with basic physics. Every action has an equal and opposite reaction, according to Isaac Newton. As tiny little molecules started constructing themselves, they developed their own action reaction systems, completely physical ones at their level. We don't know what they are, but we can gather: "Resource? Consume"— or "Danger? Defend/Get away." Again, these are purely reactionary, there's no actual thinking behind them, or intention, just reactions. As these molecules evolve into organisms, the reactions become more complex. Now they can sense more complex things in their environment, specific organisms, resources, and dangers. It's a slow growth, but over time the compounding of reactions turns into a thought process. Think of it like a computer, made up of billions of transistors. All a transistor does is receive current, and then let it through. When you sequence a bunch of these thoughts, you can start to play with logic, true and false. Once you've got logic,

you can make complex actions. It adds, and adds, and adds, and it becomes a computer. Same thing happened with living things, but on a much longer scale. Eventually, we have enough reactions that we can call thought. Now, in order to think, one needs something to think about. Something external. No input, no output. This was the case with Terri. So damaged was she that half of her neurons, her little transistors, could not get information to pass on. When you break this chain, or mess of wires, things stop working. It was so extensive in the case of Terri Schiavo that nothing could get in or out. No thoughts. No existence worth having, from both a physical and biological standpoint.

This brings to mind the *Nicomachean Ethics*. In it Aristotle talks about how one only does things with purpose. There's an end goal in doing anything, whether immediate or long term. From everyone's point of view, what they're doing is considered good. Now, everyone is doing something. If you can't do anything, not even think, what are you doing? What is your goal? What do you care about? Do you care? This carries over, again, from our roots in physics. Everything does something, and nothing is ever not doing anything. You could be a rock in space, and still your gravity is pulling on something (gravity extends limitlessly). Maybe physical objects have no goals that we can understand. With gravity, it's to pull things close. That's how we have planets and stars. With electricity, it's to stabilize, go from where there's high to low energy. This is what lightning does. Light travels until it's been absorbed, radioactive materials decay until they've come to stability. As dictated by the laws of physics, our always-doing-something pre-life molecules kept doing things. We don't know what exactly, float around, stick to things, absorb, replicate. They've all taken an initial push, an initial start, which must lead to an end. Now, it may not be known specifically what physics wants to do, but for physical things, it's almost impossible not to carry on that drive. We do it in a much more complex manner than we started of course. Not so with Terri Schiavo, who couldn't do anything. Now, if she can't do anything, forget about thinking, can't do anything at all, what purpose does she serve? Can she fulfill the definition of human? What sets her apart from an early living cell?

Now, we've covered a lot of how everything we do is truly rooted in and comparable to our physical nature and existence. Let's get more abstract. Gender. We as a species are at a point where we defy our physical construction and purpose. "It's Your Gender, Stupid!" (R. Wilchins) talks about the different ways people express their gender and why. We have people who want to be and place their gender as the opposite sex. Some want to keep society nailed down to two genders that they can clearly identify, even if they want the opposite of what they are. Some want society's binary gender system to merge and spread out into a gradient. Shades of grey as opposed to black and white. Now, needless to say, this consideration is a result of a thought process. Interestingly, it's physical though, as our thought process is technically physical. It may defy our actual bodies, but the arrangement and firing of our neurons is physical. We can talk about psychology all we want, but the fact is that we (and as a result our culture) have evolved into machines so abstract that we go against our initial purpose.

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I haven't specifically said this quite yet, so just to make sure we're on the same page, here it is: systems don't run because of their own needs. They run based on the needs of their smaller parts, and the needs that those smaller parts have to survive and function. We eat to feed our bodies, made up of our organs, made up of our cells, made up of molecules, and atoms and so on and so forth. A physical example: as the implications of our building blocks have grown to be more sophisticated and above us, we realize that we're running multiple systems as well. We made them. Look at our economy, look at our politics. In *Remaking Scarcity: From Capitalist Inefficiency to Economic Democracy*, C. Panayotakis tells us how we created and exist in an economy that is determined by our actions, which are determined by our wants and needs. The economy has a mind of its own, and does unexpected things, because this major system is run by us people, major systems in it of ourselves. This system we made isn't physical. It's come to be in control of our physical assets, but it actually doesn't have physical ground. Money is just printed.

Now, this isn't to say that there aren't physical results from the system. We've come to be dependent on it; I'm sure I need not remind you of how hard everyone was hit in recent economic crises. Just as this economic system is run by means that carry little actual physical value, we can observe that we impact the world around us based on non-physical means. In particular, I have in mind knowledge. Yes, our knowledge is rooted in our physical world, we learn based on what we see and experience of the world around us. But knowledge itself isn't a physical thing. It does, however, have a big impact on the world around us. After reading *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*, I find myself more aware of this reality. Some scientist wanted to learn about and experiment with cells, and as a result of this we now, decades later, have medicines and cures for all sorts of diseases, knowledge of how cells work. Had it not been for that desire to learn, that intangible value, we wouldn't have these wild physical implications. Not only are we a result of our systems, but it works backwards, on so many levels in so many fields. We can physically reconstruct and modify ourselves, and the rest of the world.

Yet, just because we cannot touch something does not mean it is non-physical. Remember, all of this is only possible with our little atoms and molecules hard at work bashing into and zapping each other. So there really is somewhere that our intangible things and values have a physical recording. Everything is really somewhere, even if we're unable to see it. Gravity, light waves, sound. But it's all there and we know it. We sense it all, and it has an impact on us. Somewhere, with all of the information (energy) and abstract concepts we are able to create and call upon, there's a lot of information out there. Think about quantum mechanics. Reading *The Amazing Story of Quantum Mechanics*, we learn about the tiniest parts of our existence. The sub-atomic world. Here, nothing is certain. We have nice theories that help us get a sense of where and when things are, but we don't and can't know. Particles and waves and particles spinning around as waves—they are affected by the act of being observed. They don't even have a position or state until they are observed.

Let's take a moment to define what's called a connectome. As is explained in the TED talk, "I Am My Connectome," it is the way our nerves are connected, in our brain and the rest of our body. A connectome is a map of the entire central nervous system, what every neuron connects to, in how many places, and how strong the connection is. Now, connections between neurons happen at the micron level, nearly atomic. If the act of observation determines the state of matter at the smallest scale we're aware of, I think that the act of our brains growing and learning has a similar effect. This means that the abstract meanings we place on things, sometimes things that aren't even real, exist at that tiny level. That chain of neural connections holds the definitions, and the way they interact solidifies said definitions in place, making waves, if only tiny ones.

Think about that for a second. From sub-atomic particles, to atoms, to molecules, to life, to here and now, from our teeny tiny building blocks we're in a hyper-structure full of systems that exist in various hierarchies that all affect each other, both going up and down in scale. Our economy running off of desire, need, and perception, has impacts on our living situations, as our lifestyles have impacts on our economy. Same thing with social structures and politics. We've come a really long way.

Now, what am I saying? Everything's built on top of itself, right? This means that we are our roots. We find more about this in Fritjof Capra's *The Web of Life*. *The Web of Life* digs into several views on life, emphasizing that it's rather difficult to break down a system into its parts. Going from the quantum scale of things only existing because other things make it so, all the way up to large scale systems like the solar system being held together by a bunch of planets and external forces. Systems are made up of parts, yes. But these parts do not make the actual system. A keyboard is made of a bunch of keys. Try typing on a Dvorak keyboard, where "QWERTY" is replaced with "<>PY." Same parts, different layout, making it totally different to use. Everything is integrated into the system of existence. You can identify a part, but removing or changing it has unknown implications. Such is the case with humans. We're a tiny part of this system, with a reach that carries far and wide.

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Pen Types
Adebambo Shomoye

      Over the years that I've been using pens, it's amazing to find out that there are different kinds and we react to them in different ways. As a student I've noticed my own experiences and those of friends. This made me divide pens into three categories: the epileptic, the frail, and the plain.

      The epileptic is the kind of pen which is never good enough to do the job. This pen goes off and on as you write. Have you ever been in a situation when a pen ceases to flow while you are writing? Then you try doing some tricks to get it to work, like wagging it in the air, or driving it fast back and forth on rough paper. I sometimes take the ink tube out of its case and rub it between my palms to generate some heat so it will work. "That's it," you say and to your surprise it suddenly starts writing. But in not so long, it happens again. It stops working. The epileptic pen pretends and is provoking. I remember last summer in math class with my friend James. He kept on roughing his pen on paper again and again to make it work. To my shock, he snapped the pen in two when he couldn't take any more; "f**k" he said. Luckily, the student next to him resolved the issue by providing him with an extra he carried. The corner of my mouth curved with a smile.

      The second type of pen is the frail. It is weak in performance. It goes light on the paper, not legible enough to reach satisfaction, but not bad enough for you to think it has done nothing. Some people are irritated by the frail while others are not. The frail seems to improve as you write. So you press harder to give a good ink-print on the paper, but to your surprise it gets no better. Interestingly enough, for some reason we often don't throw away the frail. Maybe we consider the cost, or probably we still find the pen manageably useful. "Half a loaf is better than none," they say. The frail is often decorative; often the frails are good-looking pens. I remember being in the doctor's office for a medical checkup at the beginning of the semester. I had to put some information down. So while I requested my doctor's go ahead, I extended my hand to grab the best pen from the collection she had stacked in a box on her desk. The one I took was cute, the type you must turn for its point to come out. As I started writing, she noticed me pressing harder to make it write better. She said,

"Actually that writes light, you should try the gray one." Then it clicked in my head that I was unconsciously dealing with nothing but a frail.

And the plain? These pens have nothing captivating about their look, but they write well. Students rarely take good care of the plain pens. They are mostly seen missing their cover and with a cracked case. As a matter of fact some students literally chew the base of this kind of pen. It's still fresh in my memory; about two weeks ago a friend of mine offered me a pen in class because mine was being epileptic. You know, one of those situations when you are in class and you have no pen or the one with you is on strike. So he said, "If you don't mind, this one writes well." I was a little bit nervous about taking it from him. Its base had been completely chewed off, but my need for a pen did not let me hold back. Going to write, I realized this pen was really good on paper. At the end of the class I exercised no rejection when he offered that I could keep it. The plain might not be good-looking, but at least it does the job perfectly.

My experience has made me conclude that pen users somehow have relationships with their pens and significant reasons for holding on to a pen irrespective of its defects.

One App for All:
Developing Mobile Applications
For All Platforms

Alejandro Medina

Technology, as we know, has advanced at an astonishing rate. Today it is possible to have a phone, camera, GPS, personal digital assistant (PDA), media player, gaming console, clock, etc., in a single device that fits in the palm of our hand. We call such devices smartphones. These devices are "pocket computers" armed with a set of sensors and communications channels to receive and process information.

For many of us, smartphones are "necessary" for everyday life; they are entertaining, convenient, and useful, and they come in different colors, sizes, and shapes. However, what really makes them so popular is that they can be personalized for each owner. Users can customize their screen saver, ring tone, alert tones, vibration patterns, and even the way they look and behave. But the true customization happens when we install our preferred applications, or apps, because there is a vast universe of available apps.

Like any other computer, smartphones need an operating system (OS)—a platform. An OS is the main program running in the computer or phone and is in charge of administrating resources such as memory, input and output devices, and all its applications. Currently many different mobile devices manufacturers and platforms exist. Some manufacturers have proprietary platforms, for example Apple has iOS and Blackberry has BlackberryOS. Other manufacturers such as Samsung, LG, and Sony produce devices that use a third-party platform such as Android, Windows Phone, WebOs, etc. Some manufacturers uses both types, for example, Nokia has Symbian, a proprietary platform, and also uses Windows Phone from Microsoft. Of course, all this means a great choice of options for users. However, for application developers this variety means a lot of work to create applications that are compatible with all platforms. Each platform

uses different operating systems, programming languages, and environments, making the task of developing an app program that behaves the same way in all devices very complex.

One solution to this problem emerges by looking at all smartphones and what they have in common. What kind of apps can run on all the devices? The answer is clear, websites. No matter what system a person is using, a web-based application will seem and behave the same in any smartphone (or computer, tablet, etc.). In this paper we discuss a way to develop mobile apps for all platforms (cross-platform apps), using PhoneGap, an open source framework for creating mobile apps using standardized web technologies.

A mobile website is a website that can be correctly displayed by adapting to the size and capabilities in a web browser running on a phone. Mobile web-based applications are created or programed using standard web technologies such as HTML/CSS and JavaScript. After having a mobile web app, the obvious next step is to convert a mobile website into a native mobile app that can run off-line in the phone, that is, installed in a phone and used without the need of Internet connection. This is where PhoneGap comes into play.

There are a few steps that should be followed to create a cross-platform app using PhoneGap. First, the mobile website has to be made using a specific library (a group of rules and styles) called jQuery mobile. Using web standards, jQuery mobile provides the elements to create graphical user interfaces (GUIs) that can use touch gestures and adjust to the size of the screen of the phone, thus giving a feeling of a mobile app. Then we use PhoneGap to compile or wrap up our mobile web app created with jQuery mobile into an actual application to be deployed in the targeting platform. In order for PhoneGap to create such an application, the "mobile website" code (HTML, CSS and JavaScript files) must be uploaded to its servers to be compiled. After compilation, the PhoneGap server makes available a link to download the application for every different system along with a QR (similar to a barcode) code that can be scanned with a smartphone for a direct link to download and install the app.

It is fair to mention that PhoneGap is not the only framework to create web-based cross-platform mobile apps. There are many that offer the same service, among them Appery.io, Appcelerator, and appMobi. But these frameworks have many problems. For example, some of them are completely web-based; everything has to be done in the web browser and mostly by "drag and drop" without the need for any programming. Most of them were created for users with no programming skills and this takes away the power to actually fully customize the app being created. Others require a paid membership, between 7 to 20 dollars per month for a single developer account.

Perhaps in the past the idea of developing an application that could work and behave the same across all different devices or platforms might have been too difficult to even imagine. However, web-based technologies have made this process feasible. PhoneGap is a free and open source framework that allows us to compile mobile apps created using standardized web technologies across platforms. Web-based technologies might be the technology used to develop the

next generation of mobile apps. Big companies like Intel, Microsoft, and Google have been acquiring startup companies that either use these technologies to develop applications and games or that do research and development on these same technologies.

AppInventor vs. Appery.io
David Ramirez

AppInventor and Appery.io are tools used to create mobile phone applications (apps). They are excellent for anyone who wants to learn how to create mobile applications without having previous computer programming experience. However, they offer different features that are appealing to different users. Here we describe the main features of each tool and their pros and cons.

A major similarity between these two programs is the screen designer or editor. This is a simple drag and drop interface used to create the graphical user interface (GUI) of the app to be developed. The screen editor provides a set of components such as buttons, text boxes, lists, image containers, etc., that can be used to create the windows and elements the user will see in the screen. App developers can arrange the components on the screen and modify their appearance by configuring their properties such as the height, width, position, fonts, text, and color.

Once the screen design is completed, developers have to make the application behave as expected; that is, create the app's functionality. Here is where the first difference between the two tools comes in.

AppInventor provides a separate window called the *blocks editor* where the logic or functionality of the app is programmed. On the *blocks editor*, developers can find a list of components in the form of puzzle blocks that represent events, functions, and instructions for the phone. Thus, by dragging and dropping the instructions blocks in the right order and place, developers code the functionality of the screen components and the whole app. For example, if the app were to have a button to display a message when is clicked, developers would simply take the block that represents the click event handler of that button and place, in the right order, the instruction blocks needed to create and display the message.

In Appery.io, the way the functionality is coded is completely different. Once the component is placed on the screen, developers must click on the events tab to give their components a function. The number of options provided in the events tab is what really sets Appery.io apart, offering way more complex features. Some of these features include opening a URL, creating a pop up message or menu, setting an HTML attribute or even running a JavaScript code.

Additionally, Appery.io provides an online database backend service where developers can store information from their application.

Although it is clearly more complex than AppInventor, Appery.io does not make the developer create every aspect of the application. Most of the "programming" work is reduced to configuration by linking or connecting outputs to inputs from one component to another, in a graphical environment. Some of the functionality is already preconfigured. Thus, developers do not need as much programming knowledge. Working with the preconfigured functions is nice, easy, and quick. On the other hand with AppInventor, developers must program every part of the application by using blocks. It requires the user to understand computer-programming concepts in order to make the application function properly. The user has to actually use variables, expressions, if-then and loops statements, and all the techniques a computer programmer should know. AppInventor is a better learning environment for amateur programmers.

One additional advantage of AppInventor is the cost. AppInventor is completely free and users can create as many applications as they want. To use Appery.io a developer has to have an account. Free Appery.io accounts only allow creating one project at a time. Standard accounts allow three projects at a time for $19.00 per month. Premium accounts allow up to 40 projects for $135.00 a month.

With AppInventor, developers can only deploy their apps on Android based devices. Appery.io allows developers to create applications for Android, Apple iOS, Windows Phone, and other devices. This is its greatest advantage since not everyone who wants to create mobile applications has an Android device.

In conclusion, Appery.io is an amazing professional tool that allows amateur developers to create mobile applications without the need of computer programming knowledge. AppInventor, on the other hand, is a tool to gain computer-programming knowledge, since developers actually have to use the essential logic to make an app work. It is more of a graphical educational tool for teaching or learning computer programming. AppInventor is completely free. Appery.io provides free accounts; however, it requires a paid subscription to use the tool to its full advantage. Finally, the greatest advantage of Appery.io is that apps created with it can be deployed in different types of phones, including Apple iOS and Windows Phone. AppInventor's apps are restricted to Android based devices.

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The Shepherd

Fouad Medjekdoud

The debate was set in the classroom where I, along with eighteen other students and the professor, sat in a circle to read "The Shepherd," a short 1789 poem by William Blake. Something in those four rhymes of the poem dug deep in my memory. As comments kept coming from different perspectives about shepherds that day in class, I came to realize how those peaceful characters are thought to be on the way to extinction. Statements which were mostly true in New York where industrialization made the lives of shepherds mere legends and stories, were certainly not true in Algeria where I come from because up to August 2010, I was myself one of them, a shepherd.

My father, whom I took that responsibility from, was always telling me to keep in mind that I was in charge of living creatures, as they deserve to be treated as such. His attachment to the old ways of living, even after his retirement at the age of sixty-five from the profession of chef at a restaurant in France, drove him into shepherding as a way to regain contact with his life in his village. Not to be extreme with the idea, he chose just six, for the number of sheep in his flock. Was it the desire for a new experience, or the need to isolate myself from people, or was I looking for inner peace? All I know is that my free will led me to take over the shepherd work from my father, for I had no material reward to gain by it. I remember the day when my father said: "you'll take them out during evenings," "let the sheep lead the way," and "never intervene

during sheep's fights with each other, it is just an election process for a leader," basic rules that introduced me to shepherding.

On the fifth floor of the building where I lived in Akbou, a small city in Algeria, the building itself at 1900 feet above sea level, and the tallest construction around, I spent so much time gazing at the horizon from the roof, my eyes filled with wonder; hundreds of miles of green lands and thousands of olive trees extended in a descending order as far as the river right before the mountain. North, south, east or west, wherever I looked, were mountains. Every evening, two hours before sunset in accordance with the first rule I was taught, the perfect time when the sun isn't high in the sky, and freshness substitutes for the afternoon's warm atmosphere, I would walk down the forty-eight stairs of the building, and take an additional dozen steps to reach another small portion of land that we own, half built but unfinished, a half garden where my father had a variety of roses, vegetables, and fruits. It is also there that the sheep were kept in an enclosure made of long slats of wood hammered into the earth and held together with wire. Once I freed them, I'd guide them out with a few gestures, using a staff to which they were meticulously attentive, fearing its long range. The sheep would often get scared when they came across someone from the neighborhood or another animal, so they would run away each on his own giving me a hard time, but for a short period luckily, because separating the enclosure from the woods is just a blacktop road 150 feet long.

The woods start with a steep downhill along a tiny road penetrating the green land like a vein of blood inside a large body. It is then when the second rule speaks for itself as the sheep would take the sharp slope on the lead, running fast while I walked behind them with ease. The usual patrol is to follow the vein, as it gets deeper down the hill. I would stay at a certain distance from the sheep not to be a nuisance even if they got used to me, just as William Blake said: "they know when their shepherd is nigh." Indeed I was to keep an eye on them as they progressed on their path, one after another and never too far off the road. Twenty minutes to get all the way down, where a tributary follows its course waiting for us. There, in that small flat surface frozen in time, I would lie down in the large shade of a huge carob tree and let my senses catch every sound, from birds of all kinds to the water flowing nearby. Sparrows moving in groups would fly low over the river.

Now the sun is almost set. My daily walk with the sheep came to its end, and I'd give the signal which by now was well known to them; the same as the conductor of an orchestra, a shepherd facing his flock would quickly raise the staff to trigger the sheep's movement. So did I, and they

headed to the other hill. This was the climbing part, not what they really enjoyed doing, but an essential part to keep them healthy as they needed a daily physical effort. Another vein on the body, going up this time, and slowing down the movements. The sheep would stop to catch their breath just as I would, and they wouldn't eat much until we'd get to the top of the hill; it was so exposed and refreshing, urging me to sit and relax. I would let the sheep walk freely even if they split apart from one another, because I could see them anywhere they were. It was also my favorite part of the day as I got to witness the sunset which came with rainbow colors: a reddish blue sky, some white clouds, green lands, dark mountains and a red sun, all gathered in a 360 degree view. Strong feelings of peace made me forget the commitments I had to my life in the city, but yet questions were popping in my head, dragging me into meditation.

People of all faiths have spoken about shepherds, and a world of irony we live in. We all dream about trust.

I've been wandering since I got to New York City, I've seen no sheep. I've been on the Empire State Building looking for that mountain that always answered "present" to my visions, but couldn't see it. Is it the sheep that I miss so much, the green lands empty of people, or the mountains? Is it that peace the people around never seem to feel? All I know is that something is missing.

Fathers and Sons in *Dubliners* and *Drown*

Titus Atkins

When we hear sayings like "The apple doesn't fall far from the tree" and "Like father, like son," we think of cases where a young son idolizes his father; he tries to imitate the father's every move, and has a burning desire to be just like his father when he grows up. We are able to relate these two expressions to the father-son relationships in two short-story collections, James Joyce's *Dubliners* and Junot Diaz's *Drown*, except that in those stories the two relationships are tainted. It's not just the reader who is exposed to the grotesque nature of the male figures in each story; the sons themselves are impacted by their father's behavior. In Joyce's short story, "Counterparts," the protagonist Farrington is a man who is lazy, irresponsible, and often drunk. These are just some of the characteristics that Farrington puts on display for his five children, and later on we see how this kind of behavior affects his work life, social life and, most importantly, his son's life. In his short story, "Negocios," Diaz also shows how influential a father's role can be when it comes to shaping the son's character. "Negocios" details the life of Ramon, the father of the protagonist Yunior, whose desire to provide a better future for his two sons is dropped and pushed off to the side. Because of Ramon's absence in his sons' lives, they have no guidance in their journey to becoming men. In fact, the two sons' development is neglected and they must go through the ups and downs of life without the help of anyone providing proper direction. In both stories, the actions of the fathers have drastic consequences for the growth and development of the sons. We explore how important it is for a father to take the necessary steps for preparing his son for manhood, and we also see how the father's lack of preparation can permanently damage the sons.

In "Counterparts," Farrington is portrayed as a man who disrespects authority and doesn't take life seriously. This is not how a "model" parent should be acting when trying to set a good example for his children. Farrington takes a nonchalant approach to life and is very lackadaisical at his job. Farrington's attitude doesn't sit well with Mr. Alleyne, his boss, and causes a major confrontation between the two. In the end, Farrington's careless attitude winds up getting him in deep trouble at his job as we see in the following scene when Farrington is engaged in a heated argument with Mr. Alleyne. Farrington says:

> I know nothing about any other two letters, he said stupidly.
> You-know-nothing. Of course you know nothing, said Mr. Alleyne. Tell me, he added, glancing first for approval to the lady beside him, do you take me for a fool? Do you think me an utter fool?
> The man glanced from the lady's face to the little egg-shaped head and back again: and almost before he was aware of it, his tongue had found a felicitous moment: I don't think sir, he said, that that's a fair question to put to me. (70)

Farrington's behavior in this scene is not something you would use to show your son how a man should act. When Mr. Alleyne asks him about the two missing documents, Farrington simply lies; he says he knows nothing about them, while knowing full well he didn't complete them. Farrington tells a bold-faced lie to someone in a position of authority and thinks nothing of it. We also see how sarcastic and unruly Farrington is. He responds to his boss's "do you think me an utter fool?" with the witty and unfiltered response of "I don't think sir that that's a fair question to put to me." Farrington's tone indicates how indifferent he feels toward authority. Farrington's attitude suggests why he himself is so disorderly. Farrington doesn't respect power or structure, so he has difficulty conveying this kind of respect to his children. The narrator even says, "Almost before he was aware of it, his tongue had found a felicitous moment." Farrington behaves in this manner instinctively. The narrator uses "felicitous moment" to show that Farrington has been in this position a time or two before, and he knows how to handle himself. His behavior is unacceptable; I wouldn't condone a child mirroring it.

Farrington is not the ideal parent because of his irresponsibility and lack of decorum in the face of authority. But it gets worse; when he goes out after work to get drunk, he comes home to beat up on a defenseless child. Farrington is a disaster. After losing not just his job but his dignity in an arm-wrestling match, Farrington is tanking towards rock bottom. He comes home to his nearly empty home where he has an encounter with one of his five children. Tom cries out for his father not to beat him, but because his reckless and unfit father is drunk and belligerent, Farrington goes wailing away at his innocent son.

> The boy uttered a squeal of pain as the stick cut his thigh. He clasped his hands together in the air and his voice shook with fright. O, pa! he cried. Don't beat me, pa! And I'll…I'll say a Hail Mary for you…I'll say a Hail Mary for you, pa, if you don't beat me…I'll say a Hail Mary…. (75)

This whipping scene is a terribly depressing passage that explores the effects of liquor and humiliation on Farrington's innocent son Tom. Tom is screaming for his father not to beat him. Tom knows his father's flaws and thinks that he can help save his father's damned soul by saying a prayer for him. Farrington's alcohol-driven actions could go on to affect his son for the rest of his life. Farrington sets a poor example for his son to follow once he's old enough to start

a family of his own. Farrington's violence will stick with his son into manhood, possibly spurring a cycle of abusive males in his family bloodline.

In Diaz's story collection, *Drown,* the reader is alerted to the same misguidance in the father-son relationship. In "Negocios," Ramon leaves his wife and kids home in another country in order to establish himself in the United States to provide a better living for his two sons. Leaving his family to provide them with a better quality of life requires strength and determination and is admirable at first, but Ramon soon loses sight of his primary purpose for being in the U.S. His plans begin to stray after he meets up with Nilda, a woman who's also from his home country of the Dominican Republic. Ramon and Nilda instantly take a liking to one another, which sparks a marriage and a child. It is here, after the birth of his third son and the marriage to his second wife, that we see Ramon losing sight of his initial intentions.

While working in a Chinese-Cuban restaurant, Ramon is reminded of his purpose for risking his life in coming to the States. The narrator sets the scene in the restaurant where Needle, "the chief cook, so skinny they called him Needle," states:

> "You can't forget your familia like that. Didn't they support you
> to send you here?" "I'm not forgetting them," Papi said
> defensively. "Right now is just not a good time for me to send
> for them. You should see my bills." (187)

The cook is trying to keep Ramon on the straight and narrow of bringing his family over from the Island to the U.S. He even reminds him who supported him to help send him to the States. We see that Ramon has lost sight of his agenda. The cook's words seem to resonate in Ramon's ears because he becomes defensive and tries to justify his reason for not bringing the family over. "You should see my bills" is a poor excuse, however, because whether his family is there with him in the U.S. or back home, there will always be bills that need to be paid. Ramon is looking to evade bringing his beloved family over to the States. His absence will play a big part in their lives, as we see as the story continues.

Ramon finally musters up the confidence to make a return trip home and visit his first family. We see that Ramon is now owning up to his mistakes and is trying to correct them by going to visit his two sons and making a productive impact on their lives. He now has the opportunity to build a relationship and possibly teach them not to make the same mistakes he has made, but this return trip doesn't go exactly as planned. Ramon and his second wife get on the plane and arrive in the Dominican Republic, but Ramon never goes to visit his sons while they are there, and his actions have a harsh consequence. After Ramon's trip to the Dominican Republic, the protagonist, Yunior, reflects on his father's absence: "His absence was a seamless thing to me. And if a strange man approached me during my play and stared down at me and my brother, perhaps asking our names, I don't remember it now" (199).

This quote is haunting. We picture Yunior, a young boy around the age of five to seven playing in front of the house—but Yunior is telling the story as an adult and is still having these haunting flashbacks to the time when his father

should've visited his first family. Yunior describes a "strange man" approaching, but due to his father's absence, Yunior has no recollection of who this strange man would have been. This quote foreshadows the negative impact on Yunior not just in "Negocios" but throughout his life in the entire book. Yunior has no prototypical figure to look up to and relate to; he only has his brother Rafa who is about three years older and is in the same situation as he is. Neither Yunior nor Rafa has a father figure in their lives. Neither one knows how to become a man.

In both "Negocios" and "Counterparts," the fathers do not recognize the negative impact they have on their sons. The sons are forever scarred with memories of how their respective fathers treated them growing up. Instead of becoming better than their fathers, the sons become the same men as their fathers, prolonging the cycle of abuse. In "Counterparts," Farrington is unproductive, and always looking to get drunk, poor character traits to pass on to his sons. Farrington's children won't know how to treat women, how to respect authority, and they won't know what being a productive, hardworking man looks like. In "Negocios," Ramon is somewhat the opposite of Farrington because he is hardworking and determined, but he is easily distracted, and absent from his children's lives. This absence will affect Yunior, Rafa, and even Ramon the 3rd. Throughout *Drown* we see a "machismo" mindset, which harms young men like Ramon's three sons. Having no father to teach his children how to avoid the mistakes he has made in life only slows down the sons' development. The children have to endure the same trials and tribulations that the father has gone through and must now teach themselves how to deal with these roadblocks in life. You can only hope this cycle of unfit and absent fathers is broken and the sons will grow up to become the real father figures that were missing in their lives.

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Two Fathers
Mnatalla Eldaas

Junot Diaz's "Fiesta, 1980" and James Joyce's "Counterparts" display pictures of two male figures, one Dominican and one Irish, who are fathers, and show how the two men act to fulfill their "male script." "Fiesta, 1980" discusses Yunior's family trip to the Bronx to celebrate his *tia*'s (aunt's) new home in the States. Before the trip Yunior eats, knowing that any time he eats before he gets into the car he gets sick and throws up. Papi becomes furious when he hears the news that Yunior ate before they left. Throughout the car ride, Papi punishes and scares Yunior. In the car, Papi's macho character begins to show; just by a look, his son feels terrified. When they arrive, Papi continues punishing Yunior in front of the entire family. Later, when Papi's affair with a Puerto Rican woman, whose name is not revealed, is discussed by Yunior, it also adds to his father's manly character. Papi, a man with a strong personality, uses his qualities to embody male dominance, specifically over his family. Like Papi, Farrington from "Counterparts" uses his actions to convince people of his masculinity. He is a man who works in an office writing documents by hand. Throughout the story, Farrington's male script can be seen at home, in the office, and at the bar with his friends. When Farrington's boss discovers that he has not been completing his assignments, he confronts him and Farrington uses wit to talk back to his boss. Later, after being forced to apologize, he hangs out with friends at the local bar for some drinks, the usual spot. Then he returns home, where he uses any excuse to brutally beat his child. Both these men, Papi and Farrington, use the humiliation of others to scare and dominate in order to accomplish their goal of being imperious because that is their idea of being men.

Papi knows exactly how to plant fear in his children, which makes him feel like a bigger man. When the family leaves the house, after Papi discovers that Yunior had eaten before the car ride, Papi feels the need to threaten his son somehow. Papi does not even have to speak; his look alone scares the boy. The stare imposes a psychological threat. Yunior explains how his looks make him feel "bruised" (28) which defines Papi's relationship with his children perfectly; they are hurt by his presence, not physically, but emotionally and psychologically. He describes his father's look as "furious and sharp" (28), which suggests his personality around his children. The trip to the Bronx is supposed to be festive,

but because of Papi's personality, it's far from it. When Papi is mad, Yunior knows he cannot look his way or else he will be punished more severely.

Farrington in "Counterparts" uses his manliness to humiliate not just members of his own family but also his boss. When Farrington's boss realizes that letters he was assigned to copy were missing, he calls him into his office to ask what happened to them. Farrington's response is especially spiteful; he makes his boss look like a fool in front of his co-workers. As he was looking back and forth from Mr. Alleyene to the lady, Farrington was building up the courage to come up with something smart to say back to Mr. Alleyene. Mr. Alleyene expects this kind of response because Farrington is known to be extremely witty. Farrington takes pride in what he says and uses the incident at the office as a way to get his friends to applaud him. After Farrington is forced to apologize to his boss for what he said, he leaves work and heads to the bar to meet his friends. While walking in, he decides to re-enact to his friends what happened at work. "So, I just looked at him—coolly, you know, and looked at her. Then I looked back at him again—taking my time, you know. *I don't think that that's a fair question to put me in*, says I" (71).

Farrington only explains what he said; he does not mention the part about having to apologize. He purposely leaves that part out because it would not make him seem as manly in front of his friends. Telling his story, Farrington also exaggerates how the conversation went. "Coolly" he says, although he was nervous. He tells his friends the story for them to look up to him; he wants them to see him as a man and notice his wit. Farrington wants to be the leader of his group, the one everyone admires, and the one whose jokes everyone loves. Farrington telling the story makes him seem like a brave man who is not afraid, not even of authority.

Both Farrington and Papi feel masculine by spending time outside of their homes. They feel men should not be tied down to just their families. Papi builds a new relationship with a woman described throughout the story as the "Puerto Rican woman," while Farrington would much rather spend his time after work with friends at the bar, drinking and looking at other women. It seems as if they both think that it is the women's job to stay at home watching the children while they are free to do whatever they want. They neglect their families. Gender plays a huge role here. Farrington and Papi know that they will not be punished for what they do, since they are males. "I met the Puerto Rican woman right after Papi had gotten the van," (35) explains Yunior. Papi feels shameless enough to take Yunior along with him while he is cheating on his wife. It seems Papi first made this trip to train his son on how not to throw up in the car, yet Papi makes a pit stop at the Puerto Rican lady's house, so in fact the boy meets the woman that his father is cheating with on his mother. Papi feels some masculine power in doing this; he is entitled to do whatever he wants and spends many of his days at her house, absent from home. Even though Yunior's mom does not know about the affair, she is still made a fool out of in front of her kids and in front of the Puerto Rican lady.

Like Papi, Farrington is also missing from home. He spends hours at the pub with his friends. The pub signifies the rights of manhood. It is where the men hang out after work to play games and drink. Spending time there makes Farrington feel like a man because he is flirting with other women while his sons wait for him. In Farrington's case the humiliation is not as obvious; still he is degrading his family. During the day, he is at work and at night, he's at the bar. His home and family are only for when he wants to eat and sleep.

In "Fiesta," Papi shows his dominance by punishing Yunior after the car ride, when Yunior and his family arrive at his *tia*'s house. In front of everyone, Papi embarrasses him: "'If you eat anything, I'm going to beat you. *¿Entiendes*?' I nodded. 'And if your brother gives you any food, I'll beat him too. Right here in front of everybody. *¿Entiendes*?'"(37).

Papi does not believe that he has punished his son enough in the car. He stops him from eating while everyone else feasts on the huge Dominican dinner. He says, "Do you understand?" in Spanish to ensure that his word is heard loud and clear. He tries to sound powerful by saying he will beat Yunior and his brother in front of everyone. Papi knows that both sons will listen to him because they fear him. Papi threatens Yunior with a beating, embarrassing him in front of his friends. While the kids are all eating, Yunior is hungry and too terrified to grab a plate and eat. This time, Papi also scares Rafa. Instead of sticking up for his brother, Rafa says nothing.

In Joyce's story, Farrington comes home drunk from the bar and finds that the fire was put out. He becomes furious and lets out all of his anger on his son. "Now, you'll let the fire out next time! said the man, striking at him viciously with the stick. Take that, you little whelp! "(75). Farrington abuses his child to teach him a lesson. He feels superior in hitting his child. Even though Farrington has been drinking, he can still aggressively beat the boy. "Take that," (75) he says, as if he is showing him who's boss. The boy is not even aware of what he did wrong. Farrington is abusing his child, who is excited to see him and have him home, for a reason that doesn't make sense. His son is afraid and that satisfies Farrington because he wants people to fear him. Farrington's son feels helpless and cannot fight back; thus, Farrington is successful. He wants to feel dominant and he does, because his son is not able to defend himself. Tom's cry for help highlights how fearful he is of his father. Every time Tom says he will say a Hail Mary, Farrington beats him more. It is as if by every strike he gains more power over his child.

Just like Farrington, Papi uses physical abuse to punish his son. Yunior says about his father:

> He was pissed, though; he jammed his finger into my cheek, a nice solid thrust. That was the way he was with his punishments: imaginative. Earlier that year I'd written an essay in school called "My Father the Torturer," but the teacher made me write a new one. She thought I was kidding. (30)

Papi also wants to teach Yunior a lesson. Like Tom, Yunior does not fight back, although he does write an essay about how abusive his father is. Papi wants to be

the man whom his children fear. In Papi's case, Yunior despises his father because of his actions, whereas Tom is only vulnerable and scared. Although the abuse is different, the outcome for the children is the same. Tom and Yunior are scarred by their father's violence. On the other hand, the fathers both feel they have achieved their goal, to teach their sons a lesson and make a statement, because they are the men in the house.

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Film Noir Protagonists

Jonathan Burcin

Film noir creates a dark, gritty environment where crime is apparent and the streets are littered with the underbelly of society. It's not easy living in such a corrupted world where lust, greed, betrayal and death are inevitable. It takes its toll on some people. We see this through the protagonists in the films English 2400 has watched so far. We see how this world has affected individuals' character and motives. They have to learn to adapt in order to survive these harsh conditions. In this paper, I will argue that despite the crooked and selfish actions of the noir protagonists of the early 1940s-1950s, they can still be considered the "heroes" of the genre as opposed to villainous characters as many people seem to see them. I will be looking at Samuel Spade from *The Maltese Falcon,* Walter Neff from *Double Indemnity* – the book and film—Jeff Bailey from *Out of the Past,* Dix Handley from *The Asphalt Jungle* and last but not least, Philip Marlowe from *Murder, My Sweet*. These men have the archetypical traits that help define future protagonists of this genre.

The characters these films give us share one unifying characteristic: they're all jerks. They constantly defy authority. Sam Spade hides information from the police department, for instance. They're rude, brash, and constantly drinking. Some talk to women like dogs, as with such rash lines as: "Why don't you quit cryin' and get me some bourbon?" (*The Asphalt Jungle*). Sam finds out that his partner has been murdered and goes on with the investigation as if it were just another case. The movie even throws in that he cheats with his partner's wife just to drive home how offensive a person he is. They all have their moments.

In their defense and on a more serious note, you have to be a jerk to live in this environment. You have to be tough and gritty and show no vulnerabilities. The top men who run this "noir city" will eat you alive if you don't; you'd never survive being weak. This is why the protagonists have such witty, fast-talking, suave, sometimes harsh personalities. This bravado shows others that they are confidant and can handle themselves. The bad guys respect this; they won't bully someone who acts like one of them.

Seeing that the characters we are supposed to see as "good" can be on the same side as the bad guys gives them a sense of ambiguity. They possess

qualities of a good guy, but also those of a bad one. Since they did grow up in this rough side of town, it's understandable how they can act this way. We see Spade hiding evidence from the police and even cutting deals with Kasper Gutman, the crime boss in the movie, as a means to an end (to find out about the Maltese Falcon). The same goes with Bailey in *Out of the Past* when he accepts jobs from Whit, a man with an obviously shady background—one that includes gambling, the mistreatment of Kathie, and his questionable sources of income. Money seems to be a recurring theme that motivates their actions. A quote from *Murder, My Sweet* puts it nicely: "You're not a detective, you're a slot machine. You'd slit your own throat for 6 bits plus tax." They commit to these jobs and decisions because money is always involved, from the insurance fraud in *Double Indemnity* to the jewel heist in *The Asphalt Jungle.*

It should be found admirable that despite this, these men do choose the side of good. In fact most protagonists in this genre have careers being detectives or private eyes: they're on the side that fights crime. They always turn in the criminal, whether that is the love of their life, as in *Out of the Past* or even themselves, like in *Double Indemnity*. Even though their character and manners can easily be described as wrong and selfish, they always choose what's morally right in the end: a selfless decision. These inner struggles between good and bad give rise to deeper emotions. They don't know which side they'd rather be on and this creates a distance that occurs within them. For instance, Walter Huff in the book version of *Double Indemnity* explains why he agrees to kill a man for the scam:

> All right, I'm an agent. I'm a croupier in that game. I know all their tricks, I lie awake nights thinking up tricks so I'll be ready for them when they come at me. And then one night I think up a trick, and get to thinking I could crook the wheel myself.... If that seems funny to you, that I would kill a man just to pick up a stack of chips, it might not seem so funny if you were back of that wheel, instead of out front. I had seen so many houses burned down, so many cars wrecked, so many corpses with blue holes in their temples, so many awful things that people had pulled to crook the wheel, that that stuff didn't seem real to me anymore. (Cain 15)

Huff had seen so much pain throughout his life that he disconnects himself from the real world in order to cope. It's not surprising that he and the rest of the protagonists feel alone.

These feelings of aloneness become apparent when they first meet their respective femme fatales. The men are impulsive when they see a beautiful woman. They would go to great extremes, even agree to kill a man, if it meant keeping the person they potentially love. They assume that this is what's going to make them happy, a feeling that they all are missing and try to hide behind a rough exterior. The characters depend so much on money, women, gambling and lust to bring them happiness because those are the only things readily available in this noir urban environment. They're used to it. It's only when they get betrayed

by the money and women that they realize there's nothing better this world they live in has to offer. When we see Dix drive back to his farm on the countryside or Bailey and his gas station in the middle of a small town, this is when the character's real nature shows. When they leave the noir city, all of its influences are gone with it and the protagonist can finally enjoy the little things life has to offer, things that bring them true joy.

I want to take a closer look at *The Asphalt Jungle* because it stands out from the rest. In this film, there is no clear-cut "hero," or femme fatale. The woman we are given is one who loves Dix dearly and wants to see him succeed. She pulls no tricks and has no bad intentions; she just wants to be with him. The protagonist we are following is actually a low-life criminal, this time choosing the bad side of society. This is someone we are supposed to dislike but really grow to sympathize with throughout the movie.

At the start of the film, Handley is on a lineup and we are led into believing that he's the antagonist and Lt. Ditrich is the usual gritty protagonist. As the story progresses, we find out that Ditrich is a corrupt cop who abuses his power and blackmails criminals. Dix on the other hand is a small time thug who is just trying to pay his rent. He lives in a small apartment and doesn't seem to need any more than that. In fact, when Doc offers him riches in the form of the jewels, Dix refuses without hesitation saying: "What would I do with them?" (*The Asphalt Jungle*). He also does a few other noble things such as: saving Doc's life when they were held at gunpoint by Emmerich, offering Doll a place to stay when she gets kicked out of her apartment, and returning to his childhood farm to see his horses one last time before dying. This character is still a likable guy despite the bad path he chose for his life. We can assume he was led down this path because of the influence the noir city has on its inhabitants, especially our main character.

What makes these men heroes is not the same as what makes Superman or Spiderman a hero. These detectives, thugs, private-eyes, and insurance salesmen don't have super powers; they're just regular guys living in a messed up world. A hero is someone with courage, someone who is noble and makes the right choices in the end. In this world that the genre created, it's not easy to have these qualities when everything's out to get you. Sam and Jeff both do the noble thing by turning in the woman of their dreams. Walter has the courage to confess to his crimes. Similarly, Dix doesn't go on a revenge-fueled killing spree when he gets injured. He has the willpower and strength to stay alive to see the last thing that mattered to him in life. This is very touching and generates much respect for the character.

A hero is also someone we can admire. I admire these men for their charisma, the way they handle themselves, their independence, their confidence. They stand up to anyone who gets in their way. The decisions they make may be questionable but that doesn't change the fact that they are strong-willed and strong-minded characters. Other people in film noir can also find the protagonist admirable and see him as a personal hero. Doll, for example, finds Dix to be her hero because he gives her a place to stay when she has nowhere else to go, or

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Ann from *Out of the Past* because Philip helps bring her devious mother to justice.

It's strange how supporting characters like Keyes from *Double Indemnity* or the police commissioner from *The Asphalt Jungle* aren't considered the heroes of the story since they are the men trying to catch the criminals. In reality, they are the ones we are supposed to root for since these guys are trying to catch the criminal. We grow up being taught that if a person does bad things, then they are labeled as the bad guy and the person trying to bring this person to justice is the good guy. But we don't side with the "good guys" because we grow to like these "bad guys"; we feel a connection and want to see them succeed as with any hero. We know what struggles they have gone through and feel sorry for them. We want to see them get away, not get into more trouble. The "good guys" hinder this and try to foil the protagonist's plans. If you look at it from this angle, these supporting characters could almost be considered a sort of villain; someone who doesn't want to see the protagonist succeed.

Film noir is an interesting genre as it gives an exaggerated yet thought-provoking look at the dark side of humanity. In a world rich in lust, temptation, greed, and crime, it's hard not to become overtaken by it all. The protagonists seen in these films are not nice people, far from it. But as we grow with these characters, experience their hardships, and see what they go through, we can get a sense of why they act this way. Their witty, arrogant personalities are a defense mechanism for adapting to their surroundings while keeping their true emotions and morality stored away, until that morality is eventually seen in the film's resolution. These movies show us that there's always some good to be found even in the most corrupt of societies.

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My Father's Decision
Abdoulaye Sow

In August of 2006, my father made a decision that would alter my life forever. Although I didn't initially agree with it, it turned out to be the best thing that could ever have happened to me. I was born and raised in the United States and didn't have much knowledge of my African heritage. Both of my parents are African but I had never been there, so I didn't really know anything about Africa. An American environment filled with gang affiliation, violence, and delinquency had turned me into a very disrespectful and uneducated child. I did not listen to my parents, teachers, or anyone for that matter. Every day after school, instead of coming straight home, I would spend the evening with my fellow delinquents reeking havoc upon unsuspecting victims. I was at a point where if I didn't change, my outcome would have surely been very bad.

At the age of fourteen my bad behavior had reached its peak. My haphazard character and unexplained, deep-seated feeling of antipathy for everyone could no longer be tolerated. This is when my father decided that it was time for a change of environment. His decision was to take me to Africa, a place like no other, in order to experience life on another side of the world and from a different perspective. When I first heard the news, I wasn't very excited. In fact I was scared because I had never known any place other than the United States. I didn't know what was waiting for me on the other side and pictured from tv people living in jungles amongst lions, tigers and elephants, along with other stereotypes. But I was given no say in the matter and had to go. I even remember the exact day I left with my two brothers and dad; it was in the year 2006 on August 26th.

We arrived at the Gbessia Airport in Guinea Conakry, a country in West Africa, after a long two-day trip. The air itself smelled different. It was fresh, I could make out the smell of plants and trees and I remember it being very hot. We reclaimed our luggage and proceeded to exit the very strange airport that looked like a tropical resort. The time was about 2am, so it was already dark. I suddenly heard a group of people yell out my father's name as they waved their hands in the air to signal us. They ran over as fast as they could, hugged us all and asked how our flight was. I felt very uncomfortable because I did not know any of these people. My father introduced each one as my aunt, cousin and uncles. They were wearing strange attire that I hadn't seen before. So many different colors and patterns were carefully woven together into their garments, and I remember thinking that they looked like pieces of a rainbow that had been arranged together. They were immensely happy to see us and wouldn't stop pinching our cheeks and hugging us.

Surprisingly, there was a chauffeur waiting for us. I couldn't help but feel privileged that we had our own chauffeur. We all finally got into the car and continued on our way "home." While on the way, I gazed out the window expecting a group of wild tigers to jump out onto the road and attack us, but luck was on our side that day, I presumed. My imagination was getting ahead of me. In fact Conakry didn't look at all like a jungle. It was a regular city with houses, stores, streetlights etc. My dad turned to me and my brothers and said, "Conakry is not what you thought it would be, is it?" We smiled and nodded accordingly. The drive home was very long but when we finally pulled up, my jaw dropped at the sight of the house. It was huge, and beautiful, not like any house I had ever seen in the United States. It had five floors, each with a large terrace that aligned perfectly with the horizon. You could see all of Conakry when you were on the top floor. The house was painted a bright yellow like that of a sunflower, attracting attention to all passers-by. Surrounded by a large wall with barbed wire on top, it was very wide. Where was the jungle, and the animals? They weren't anywhere. We were greeted by an even bigger group of our family who hugged us even tighter than the first. I could tell they were very happy to see us. They showed each of us to our rooms. The fatigue was overwhelming so I took a shower and immediately slid smoothly into the bed. I spent the next few weeks adapting to the different life and getting to know my family members. Guinea had turned out much better than I had expected. Life there was in a sense better than my previous one. But I was wondering how good living conditions were going to change me and make me a better person.

A few months later, we were enrolled in a private school called "La Citadel" which means The Fortress. It's a Turkish trilingual school that teaches math and science and English, French, and Turkish. I must admit that learning these new languages was not easy. Not many people in the school spoke English so I had to find creative ways to communicate until I could speak the language. The majority of the people spoke French so that was the priority. My father found us a French tutor who would come to our house every day after school. The students would always make fun of me when I attempted to pronounce a word. I hated being made fun of but in the end it turned out really well. My pronunciation became so good that very few people were able to tell that I had only recently begun to learn the language. At the end of my third year there, my French had improved dramatically. My teachers were all impressed by my progress.

As time went by, I could feel that I was getting smarter, and much more serious about my life. I noticed that life in Africa was pretty good for me, but not everyone could say the same. Most people couldn't afford the lavish lifestyles of the rich. They had a really hard time getting by and there was no one they could turn to for help. I remember an incident in which a man was rushed to the hospital after a horrific motorcycle accident. The doctors refused to help this man because his family was unable to produce enough money for his operation; he died a few hours later from blood loss. This incident in particular was heart-

wrenching for me because the accident took place in front of me. Even though my father and I wanted to help, there was not much we could do. If we offered the family money, countless other people would come asking for help as well. And we couldn't help everyone.

My father always reminded me that I should always be thankful for what I had, and that not everyone had the same opportunities. I could have just as easily been born in others' shoes. A saying in Guinea goes "*Tamperai addai gnegnal*; it means, "suffering brings triumph." Specifically, it means that fighting through a difficult life is what molds a boy into a man. This did not directly relate to me, but to the majority of people around me. None of these impoverished people were using their situation as an excuse to give up on life. I once again asked myself how people who barely had enough to get by were doing well in school, worked for hours without rest, and fought hard for what they wanted. If these people who had close to nothing could be so persistent, I shouldn't ever have had an excuse for not working hard to accomplish my goals. I took for granted what I had before my trip, but now that I had seen life through other people's eyes, I couldn't help but regret having been such a hardheaded child. This realization pushed me to work harder on my schooling, and to have more respect for my parents for the things they had done for me.

I had spent a total of four years in Guinea when my dad decided it was time for me to return to the United States to continue my education in college. By the end of these four years, I had become a respectful, respectable, and well-educated person. I felt refreshed and rejuvenated. I got excellent grades in school and was amongst the smartest students. Teachers actually used me as an example for younger students. My experience was life-changing. I had come to understand that not everyone is born with rich parents, that not everyone has equal opportunities, and that if these unfortunate people were working hard for their goals, I would also have to work as hard to accomplish what I wanted. I had also learned a lot about my African heritage and culture. I felt that I had become a part of the country and honestly didn't want to leave. I spent the next few weeks contemplating whether leaving for the United States would be for the better or worse and decided that it was for the better. Ironically, I left on the same day I had arrived, August 26th (of 2010).

When I finally got back to New York, I went back to high school to finish my last year before starting college. Unfortunately, the school felt that because I had come from a foreign "African" country, my level would be lower than that of a twelfth-grade American student, so I was put back in the eleventh grade. Upset, I decided to use this situation as an opportunity to show the school what I had learned. After the first semester I was on the honor roll with A's in almost all my classes. I went to my guidance counselor with test grades and honor certificates to show her how wrong she was about putting me back in the eleventh grade. Having evaluated my progress up until my second semester, my principal and guidance councilor decided finally to put me in the twelfth grade, even though I had missed half the year. I had to work really hard to keep up with the work because I started late, but in the end I was able to graduate from high

school that year as an honor roll student. My teachers congratulated me at the graduation ceremony and said how surprised they were that I was able to make it. I had made it. I proceeded on to college, which I am still attending. After college, I plan on going to medical school to eventually become a doctor. I feel that the best way to repay life for the lessons it has taught me is to help the less fortunate, and doctors do just that. My long-term plans involve getting an international license as a doctor and returning to Guinea to work and help people there as well.

Life has taught me a valuable lesson. In order for people to understand what they have, they have to get a glimpse of life through other people's eyes, less fortunate than they are. People often only behave according to their financial situation. It seems people who find themselves amongst rich families usually work less and feel that they are entitled. They demand more of what they already have and are rarely ever content, whereas people of poor families have no reassurance. They have no choice but to work hard to help themselves and their families. They make do with what they have and hope for the best to come. As Benjamin Franklin stated, "Content makes poor men rich; discontent makes rich men poor." My experience opened my eyes to the reality of life and taught me that I should never take what I have for granted. I will always cherish my experience in Africa and will share it with whomever is willing to listen.

Impact Speech
Deirdre Stokes

The first thing I noticed when I approached the HELP USA Family Shelter in the Bronx was how much it reminded me of a prison. For safety reasons, I imagine, the property is enclosed, with tall, steel gates and security guards at each entrance. The staircases leading to the rooms are dimly-lit and filthy, and since there are no working elevators, families must drag their life's possessions up many flights of stairs. There are rodents and roaches, stray cats and dogs, and the overpowering smell of marijuana and urine permeate the property. The building is over fifty years old, located in a dilapidated area of the South Bronx and is "home" to over two hundred families who have lost their own. It is a difficult place to visit and a more horrifying place to live.

I became familiar with this particular shelter because in November of 2008, my daughter and I became homeless. Prior to that year, we lived comfortably in a two-bedroom apartment in a private house in Queens. Unfortunately, as a result of a declining economy, an irresponsible homeowner and my own unemployment, I soon found my landlord facing foreclosure and my family facing eviction. It was evident that our living arrangements were about to change drastically. What I did not know was how much this experience would eventually shape my life. Being homeless can be, and often is, a humiliating experience. One begins to feel lost, detached and hopeless. Hopelessness is a powerful and dangerous emotion. It can rob you of your spirit and motivation. It can reduce you to a bitter shell, an image so distorted you barely recognize yourself.

It is difficult to imagine how one will respond to life-changing situations. Most of us believe that we will rise to the occasion and can neither comprehend nor tolerate when others do not. However, until one is face-to-face with poverty or disease it is impossible to envision how one will react. I wish I could say that I instinctively rose to the occasion with strength and courage. I can honestly say I did not. I suffered through depression and disgrace. Shame and fear were my companions. I was ashamed that I had allowed my life to take this terrible turn and afraid that I might never recover. You see, I was in unfamiliar territory. Most of my life was spent offering help and now, in one of the darkest moments, I was seeking it. As I struggled with life's ups and downs, I was exposed to a

world that is often unkind, unforgiving, and unaffected. In the eyes of society and the many social service agencies I frequented, I was viewed as just another black, unemployed, under-educated woman. I knew in my heart I could not adopt nor internalize society's view of me and make it my own. But it was several months before I realized that I had to do something if I wanted to be whole again, if I ever wanted to live a life of substance and meaning. I discovered that I must first accept my misfortune and then take all necessary actions to change it. As I began to take the vital steps to resuscitate my life I eventually began to feel better. I came to realize that life is a series of events, good and bad, woven together, a tapestry of pain and joy, outrage and disappointment, and most importantly acceptance and grace. I noticed that as I changed, so did my circumstances. I suppose these are the moments that truly define us.

As I began to recover, I set out to reinvent the jaded image of the homeless and unemployed, and create, or at least be a part of, a more benevolent community. My own experiences eventually empowered me, and that has made it possible for me to inspire others. In my own life, I have seen up close the consequences of substance abuse, mental illness, and poverty. I have visited the incarcerated. I have buried loved ones too young and watched the sick and elderly die slowly and alone. It is only through diligence and spirituality that I have survived. These are the lessons I wish to pass on to others.

Once I began to feel better, I realized that it was time to do better. I spent every waking moment looking for a job and dedicated the rest of my time to searching and applying for affordable housing. It was an arduous and often discouraging process but after six months I secured a position at a small non-profit in the Bronx. I was elated! All my work was beginning to pay off. By this time, I had become acquainted with the other women and their families in the shelter. I sought to be a source of comfort, information and ultimately hope. We often spent evenings together drinking coffee, discussing our dreams, our fears and, most importantly, our escape from homelessness. I did my best to help out with employment and housing applications, creating and updating resumes and assisting teenagers and young adults with educational opportunities. I encouraged them and they, in turn, encouraged me and each other. We laughed and cried as we commiserated about our children and spouses and lives. I continue to be amazed at the struggles and trials most of these women endured. Unlike me, their circumstances were not isolated or random. For many, their entire lives appeared to be a system of poverty, violence, and despair. Their ability to persist and persevere was inspiring. Their resilience nourished my spirit and continues to even today.

After living in this shelter for almost a year, this place where I had lost and ultimately found myself, my daughter and I were leaving. It didn't matter that we were headed to a place where we knew no one or had only the meager possessions that we came with, or that we'd spent eleven months with bed bugs and rodents, froze in the winter and suffocated in the summer. All that mattered was that we had survived. All that mattered was that hope and faith were alive and well and were once again part of our lives. All that mattered was that life

had shown up with thunder and lightning and we had weathered the storm. All that mattered was that we had a home again.

Having escaped the desperation of shelter living it was time to give back. I decided to volunteer as a mentor for homeless women at The New York City Coalition for the Homeless. As a mentor, I have the honor to meet a variety of women from diverse backgrounds and circumstances. I have guided women of all races, creeds, religions and sexual orientations as well as women with criminal backgrounds and those with a history of domestic, child and substance abuse. These are women in crisis. I identify with them. They are me and I am them. My compassion comes from my own plight and I am humbled by them. They are my strength and my motivation.

I embrace the therapeutic value of one person helping another, and I am living proof of that value. When I graduate with a Bachelor's Degree in Human Services, I plan to continue my education with a Master's Degree and work with families in crisis. I hope to learn how to decrease recidivism and determine effective ways not merely to rehabilitate but re-educate and restore offenders and their communities. I would like to assist families battling addictions and evictions and rebuild communities.

To be a productive member of society we must we must be willing to participate in the lives of our neighbors. People are inherently worthy. They are also, at times sick, homeless, and poverty-stricken. These are the times they need us the most.

Brownsville
Stephanie Samuels

My community is Brownsville. Up until September 24, 2013, I have to admit that it was not a community which I would say I was proud to claim. It's dirty, and aside from learning what it means to grow up struggling and always looking over your shoulder, hoping you weren't going to be the victim of the next violent attack, or a case of "wrong place, wrong time," I couldn't really see what it has to offer anyone. It's what any urban society would call the ghetto. I don't mean to sound shallow, but to me, Brownsville was like the half-way house. It was the place you stop in to get your life together until you can do bigger and better things. Well, boy was I wrong. On this particular Tuesday evening of September 24, 2013, I attended my first Brownsville Community Board meeting. I went there with no intention of learning anything; it was just a class assignment I had to get done. As I sat there, I looked around and saw that the community knew and recognized each other. It seemed clear they realized how important this meeting was. The place was packed and people were even standing because the place ran out of seats. The meeting began.

The chairperson, Mrs. Bettie Kollock-Wallace, began by taking attendance. She proceeded to welcome everyone back in hopes that they had a good summer. As she introduced the speakers of the night, people looked as though they had plenty on their mind. These people meant business. What was most interesting was how informed my community was. They knew their rights, rights I had no idea even existed. At this meeting I learned that when outsiders come into our neighborhoods to work (such as to construct buildings or open new businesses), they are required to hire a certain percentage of the workers from the community. For instance, Pacific Houses are currently being built in Brownsville, Bedford-Stuyvesant, and Crown Heights, but there hasn't been anyone from these communities hired to work on these buildings even though, as one contractor currently working put it, many people in the community do pass through and show interest in jobs for these companies. This point was mentioned at the meeting, and neither the New York City Housing Authority nor the New York City Human Resources Administration could seem to explain to us why this was.

Another point I found intriguing was raised by a community member. The question was posed, "Why can't they build more shelters in Manhattan? Why is it that every time we turn our heads, another shelter is being built in Brooklyn?" I had never even paid any attention to this fact, but it's absolutely true. Every time I turn a corner, I see a new building being built. When I finally

wonder what this new building is, I come to learn that it is another shelter. But when you go to Manhattan, if there is a new building being built, you learn that it is new, unaffordable, luxury housing. In Brooklyn hospitals are being closed down and shelters are being put up. It used to be schools were being closed and more prisons were being built (again, in Brooklyn). How can we do better if even the government is doing what is in its power to keep us down?

This Community Board meeting opened my eyes to things in a way that I never thought about before. I realized that Brownsville is a diamond mine. You don't just find a few diamonds here and there hidden around the neighborhood. They're everywhere—you don't really even have to look. At this meeting, there were so many educated people. These people included parents, teachers, retired people, business people, and even other college students. I didn't realize that so many people took such an active role in the attempt to live in and create a "better Brooklyn." Until I attended this Community Board meeting, I think that though I lived in Brownsville, I was just like any other outsider looking in. And as the chairperson, Mrs. Bettie Kollock-Wallace, closed on that night, I will now end by saying "Peace-Out."

Stephanie Samuels, 1987-2014

Pashas in Work and Marriage: Gender Relations in Two Flannery O'Connor Stories

Ariana Chance

In S. Manot's 2005 short story "Pasha," the character David Aroughetti, a Turkish Jew, is a pasha. Based on the Turkish word for a high-ranking official, a pasha is a person who is strong-minded, confident, unapologetic, emotionally withdrawn, in charge and dominant. Pashas do all the talking while everybody else listens, and they are rarely silent, which announces to other people that what they're saying is very important. In Flannery O'Connor's short stories, many characters are pashas. In "A Good Man Is Hard to Find" (1953), worker and husband Red Sammy Butts is a partial pasha, only dominant in his marriage, instead of showing his authority to everyone. Ruby Turpin is a pasha in "Revelation" (1965). Unlike Red Sammy Butts: she shows her "pasha" mindset at work, and shows it also within her marriage. Gender relations determine how characters act or don't act towards the same or opposite gender.

In "A Good Man is Hard to Find," Red Sammy Butts is only assertive with his wife, instead of being assertive to everybody, especially other men, in any situation. The grandmother and the kids stop by his barbeque restaurant, where they meet his wife. As his wife is taking orders and giving the customers their food, the grandmother and Red Sammy Butt have a conversation about how he let two men charge the gas themselves:

> "Two fellers come in here last week," Red Sammy said, "driving a Chrysler. It was a old beat-up car but it was a good one and these boys looked all right to me. Said they worked at the mill and you know I let them fellers charge the gas they bought. Now why did I do that?" (122)

When he's telling the grandmother about letting the two boys charge their own gas, Red Sam seems very unsure of himself, and not even confident about being a good man. As an owner of a restaurant, he should always be polite to his customers, but being a pushover and letting people do as they please is a different story. A pasha values himself very highly, and in this conversation with the grandmother, Red Sam shows himself to be weak, not at all a pasha.

Although Red Sam is not showing his "pasha" mindset while conversing with the grandmother, he quickly becomes dominant as his wife appears with the family's order and joins in the conversation about the Misfit, a man who broke out of jail and is fleeing to Florida.

> "I wouldn't be a bit surprised if he didn't attack this place here," said the woman. "If he hears about it being here, I wouldn't be none surprised to see him. If he hears it's two cent in the cash register, I wouldn't be a tall surprised if he…""That'll do," Red Sam said. "Go bring these people their Co'-Colas," and the woman went off to get the rest of the order." (122).

To regain his confidence, Red Sam shows his authority towards his wife. He cuts her off in the middle of her sentence, in front of the grandmother, and tells her "That'll do." Red Sam is probably only assertive towards his wife while in the company of others. Gender plays a very strong role with Red Sammy being a pasha. He doesn't show his authority when it comes to males, but when it comes to his wife, a female, he is abrupt, dominant, and in charge.

In "Revelation," Mrs. Turpin is the opposite of Red Sammy Butts. Ruby Turpin is a pasha when it comes to her job; she also likes to be that way in her marriage with Claud. In the beginning of the story, Mrs. Turpin shows her authority towards Claud:

> Mrs. Turpin put a firm hand on Claud's shoulder and said in a voice that included anyone who wanted to listen, "Claud, you sit in that chair there," and gave him a push down into the vacant one. Claud was florid and bald and sturdy, somewhat shorter than Mrs. Turpin, but he sat down as if he were accustomed to doing what she told him to. (488)

In this scene Ruby speaks and Claud does what she says to do, which is important in showing her "pasha-ness." In many relationships, as shown in the marriages of both David Aroughetti and Red Sammy Butts, the male is usually the one that wears the pants. However, in Ruby and Claud's marriage, Ruby is the more dominant partner. Mrs. Turpin is the boss of Claud and wants her authority and high rank over him to be shown and noticed by others, which is essentially why she loudly commands Claud to sit down. She wants everybody in the waiting room to witness that she is in charge and she is the dominant one.

Further into the story, Mrs. Turpin and Mary Grace get into an altercation, and Mrs. Turpin later confides in her three black, female workers about the situation and how she feels about it. This is where Ruby Turpin shows herself a pasha in her workplace, with blacks.

> "You know what she said to me?"
> "What she say?" they asked.
> "She said," Mrs. Turpin began, and stopped, her face very dark and heavy. . . She could not bring forth the words. "Something real ugly," she muttered.
> "She sho shouldn't said nothin ugly to you," the old woman said.
> "You so sweet. You the sweetest lady I know."
> "She pretty too," the one with the hat on said.
> "And stout," the other one said. "I never knowed no sweeter white lady."

"That's the truth befo' Jesus," the old woman said. "Amen! You des as sweet and pretty as you can be." Mrs. Turpin knew exactly how much Negro flattery was worth and it added to her rage. "She said," she began again and finished this time with a fierce rush of breath, "that I was an old wart hog from hell." (504-505).

In this scene with her workers, similar to Red Sam with the grandmother, Ruby is unsure about herself and begins to lose her confidence. The narrator reports that she "began, and stopped, her face very dark and heavy. She could not bring forth the words." Ruby, who shows a slight change in her appearance, was so devastated by Mary Grace's words that she couldn't even repeat them to her workers, which is very unusual, especially for a character like Ruby, who always speaks her mind and doesn't think before she speaks. However, in this situation, she is silent, and seems distracted. She is most likely repeatedly replaying the scene in her head. She goes to her black female workers, knowing that they will flatter her, which is very common in a boss-worker relationship, so that she can regain her confidence. Although the workers come off as mocking Mrs. Turpin, they are just being nice to get on Mrs. Turpin's good side. They are even telling the truth about their thoughts of Mrs. Turpin. "I never knowed no sweeter white lady." Although this was a devastating time period for African Americans, Ruby Turpin was probably kinder to her workers than most white people. Because Mrs. Turpin is still their boss, instead of just a friend, she still has to order the workers to complete difficult tasks. Her workers were being polite to remain in her good graces, wanting her to confide in them, hoping that they could become good friends with her.

As the Negro women continue to flatter her, Ruby Turpin thinks to herself: Idiots! Mrs. Turpin growled to herself. You could never say anything intelligent to a nigger. You could talk at them but not with them.

She then says out loud in a short tone: "Yawl ain't drunk your water . . . Leave the bucket in the truck when you're finished with it. I got more to do than just stand around and pass the time of the day." (505)

This scene shows Ruby Turpin's partial "pasha-ness." She makes a rude comment saying that all they do is stand around and do absolutely nothing. On the other hand, she's a boss and she has important things to do. She's letting them know that people of authority have a lot to do, and that's what is different between her and them.

Knowing full well how to be dominant with her husband, Ruby Turpin wants to maintain that authority with everybody. After she becomes emotional about what Mary Grace has said, Mrs. Turpin doesn't go talk to Claud about the incident because showing her emotions to her husband would make her lose her dominance in that relationship. Although she talks to her workers about the situation, she will always hold an authority over them, regardless if she is showing them her vulnerability. She cannot do the same with her husband. As

soon as she shows how emotional she is to him, he would immediately see her in a different way. He would see a woman feeling hurt about a teenager's words, and her title as the dominant partner would be taken away very quickly. Red Sam is not dominant towards the people that he comes across at work. His wife witnesses this lack of authority, and to make sure that his wife doesn't push him over like everybody else, he becomes dominant towards her. Red Sam is very submissive to other men and doesn't hold his authority over them. As a boss of his restaurant, he should let his authority be known and seen by his actions towards the customers, but he fails to do so. In contrast, Ruby Turpin is dominant in her workplace. She lets her authority be known and heard. With the opposite gender, however, both these characters show their authority. Red Sam dominates his wife, which is common in marriages. However, with Ruby Turpin, we see she is already dominant in her workplace, and continues that dominance in her marriage to Claud.

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Bill's Journey
Phadimir Dupont

He towed his dreams from the wildest parts of his imagination, and hasn't stopped towing since. From the largest and tightest of locations, he yanked cars out with all of his devotion. He is a success, in the sense that the definition of success varies by the individual. Bill Meyer, the certified tow man, has been towing for thirty years. Not quite the resumé you'd want, but he's happy and couldn't see himself doing anything else. His journey is unappreciated, so it was an untold story, before today. A successful journey is a journey that results in happiness. Bill, age fifty-seven, says, "I'm happy today, I've seen worse days."

Born in Coney Island, Brooklyn, Bill was consumed in the depths of a lonely world as a motherless and fatherless child. He lost his father to cancer at age seven and his mother at ten. "I've been through hell and back, nostalgia never hit me because, I feel everything happens for a reason. I like to keep the past, in the past." Naive, perhaps, but he grew up fast and practically raised himself.

Bill graduated from Soundview High School. "As far as graduating goes, I had to buy my diploma," he chuckled. He drove for the first time at age twelve, got his first car at sixteen while still in high school and therefore went to class only when he couldn't afford gas. Irony. He didn't need wheels to get to school, he lived five minutes away. Gas symbolized freedom, so if he had gas, he would go anywhere else but school. "Let's not mention what I did for gas money," he mentioned, chuckling once more.

Bill never had much, he was always trying to "make a quick buck." Bill stole cars and car parts to sell, he sold and consumed drugs, he broke into houses and sold whatever he could get his hands on, or that could fit through the small window that he climbed in through. He was troubled as well as troublesome. They called him "Snake" because he never got caught. His transition into adulthood wasn't really smooth. "I never had a hero, I'm not angry or anything, maybe it wasn't meant to be," says Bill. His hopes were never high, he was always into living for "now," rather than his future.

At age twenty-three, Bill was unemployed, depressed and into crack. He was in dire need of change. He sought out help with the drugs, to no avail. He knew it had to be his own will power. He sought to change his employment status. He thought of the things he was good at—"driving is the only thing I ever knew how to do, well." His first on-the-books job was driving a tractor-trailer. "Everyone saw that coming," said Bill. He was the best at what he did, they couldn't find anyone that could maneuver the "big rig" like him.

One afternoon Bill decided to get a couple of drinks before he departed with a load going to New Jersey. He hit a couple of cars on the road. Back then, drunk driving was not really a great criminal offense the way it is now. He got away with the crime, but he lost his job. Again he was jobless, living in his

friend's garage and back into drugs. This was looking like a sad ending to his short-lived driving career. He was unhappy, depressed again. At this point, Bill thought of life as a boxing opponent that was over-sized and well trained. His being undersized and under-trained put him at a huge disadvantage. He said, "there was no way of winning, round for round I got knocked down." Society set the bar of expectation for Bill below average, and he never disappointed anyone, not even himself.

Bill was referred to Apple Auto Tow Truck Company a few years later. He started off as the rookie with very little talent. As time went by, he was trusted, and depended on. He felt as if he was part of a team and he was the most valuable player. Bill was the only tow truck driver that thrived on blizzard conditions. "That's when I could show my real skills," he said, with a rare sense of pride in his voice. Motivated by this sense of reliability, he focused solely on becoming better at towing, and remaining the best.

Bill was never preoccupied with his destination the way many of us are, he was more into his journey. He knew as well as anyone else where he would end up. He did not expect a marvelous ending to his career, no pensions, no plaque of recognition, and no benefits. Till this day Bill tows every car with self-satisfaction in the thought that every vehicle fills the parts in him that are empty. Bill shows us that the definition of a journey is in the eye of the individual.

The Epidemiological Profile of Tuberculosis in Brooklyn

Alketa Plaku

Tuberculosis today is a pandemic. In 1991, the World Health Organization recognized TB as a global health problem. Although the death rate has fallen significantly since then, 1.45 million people died from TB in 2010.

TB is an airborne disease caused by the bacterium *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* discovered by Robert Koch in 1882 (1). The disease is very old and has taken millions of victims through the centuries. Some of the famous people who suffered from TB are Marcus Cicero, Cardinal Richelieu, Friedrich Schiller, Frederic Chopin, Fyodor Dostoyevsky, Eleanor Roosevelt, Eugene O'Neill and Nelson Mandela (2). Tuberculosis is transmitted when *M. tuberculosis* is carried in airborne particles (droplets) of 1-5 μ in diameter (3). The bacilli can stay in the air for several hours when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Infection occurs when a person inhales droplets containing tubercle bacilli that reach deeply into the lungs. The major and most common symptoms of TB are the following: cough that lasts three weeks or longer, weakness or fatigue, fever, sweating at night, chest pain, coughing up blood and no appetite. The diagnosis of the disease can be achieved through medical history, physical examination, PPD skin test, chest radiograph (X-Rays), isolation of *M. tuberculosis* in sputum, acid-fast stain for microscopy and, importantly, mycobacterial culture (1). Treatment of TB is complex, with a combination of three to four drugs; it continues for six to twelve months. The major anti-tuberculous drugs are: Isoniazid (INH), Rifampin, Ethambutol and Pyrazinamide (4).

Tuberculosis became a health care problem in the U.S. in the early 1980s as an opportunistic infection in patients with HIV/AIDS. Currently, TB is one of the leading causes of death among people infected with HIV. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the case rates per 100,000 population in the United States are led by Hawaii with 8.8 cases, followed by Alaska, District of Columbia, California, Texas and New York (5). The five U.S. cities with the highest morbidity are New York City, Houston, Los Angeles, Chicago and Dallas. A tendency of decrease in the number of cases was observed in 2010 compared to 2009. However, these numbers for New York City (800 in 2009) in both years far surpassed the numbers in the other four top cities (5).

According to the N.Y.C. Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH), Bureau of Tuberculosis Control, in 2010 NYC recorded 711 confirmed cases of TB, the lowest number since the dramatic spike in 1990. The highest peak of TB was in 1992 with 3,811 cases. Later on the number of cases was gradually reduced and reached 895 in 2008. Epidemiologic analyses showed

that 70-80% of the TB cases were foreign-born cases. In 2010, the demographic characteristics by birth showed that Asians had the highest number of cases (267), followed by Non-white Hispanics (162) and Non-Hispanic Blacks (95). White Non-Hispanics had the lowest number of cases (34). Analyses showed also that the most affected ages were between 25-44 years and the elderly.

The epidemiologic profile of tuberculosis in New York City showed that the highest burden of TB with 88 cases for 2010 was in Queens, whereas the rates in Manhattan and Brooklyn had decreased. The morbidity rate for Brooklyn was 22.5. Most of the cases in Brooklyn were in Borough Park and Bensonhurst, Bay Ridge, followed by Sunset Park, Bedford Stuyvesant, Crown Heights, and Williamsburg–Bushwick (6). The HIV-co-infected patients represented 18% of the total number of TB cases and were mostly from the Bronx (7).

The main purpose of this project was to raise public awareness of tuberculosis in order to prevent the spread of the disease in our community. The incidence of TB can be reduced by avoiding close contact or prolonged time with known TB patients who are coughing and sneezing. Health care providers can help prevent TB through prompt diagnosis, following the recommended guidelines, monitoring patients' treatment and making sure that therapy is completed.

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What's That Doing In My Sandwich? Negligence and Food

Danielle Berman

Negligence and harmful food have a long history. For as long as people have sold food, contamination and foreign objects have been a problem, with the culprits ranging from something as innocuous as water in milk to things as repulsive as vermin in food. To protect people, the government has enacted laws prohibiting the sale of questionable and contaminated food, as well as allowing for the prosecution of offenders under the civil doctrine of negligence.

As with anything with the law, the criteria for deciding whether the facts add up to negligence vary from case to case. Sometimes the criteria are simple and merely call on one to employ a little common sense. For example, in Ritchie v. Sheffield Farms Co., 129 Misc. 765, 222 N.Y.S. 724 (Municipal Ct. NY County, 2nd Dist. 1927), the plaintiff drank from a bottle of milk that had a dead mouse in it. Because witnesses proved that the milk bottle had to be opened with a pick, the court decided that the mouse could not have entered the bottle between the time the milk was bottled and the time the plaintiff opened it. This proved that the mouse must have found its way into the milk during the milk's "preparation," when the bottler was responsible for keeping contaminants out, and therefore the bottler was negligent.

The court's verdict was similar in Vamos v. Coca-Cola Bottling Co. of New York, Inc., 165 Misc.2d 388, 627 N.Y.S.2d 265 (Civil Ct., NY County 1995), in which the plaintiff suffered stomach upset after drinking from a sealed bottle of Coke that contained two batteries. The court found that the "presence of [a] noxious or revolting foreign substance [the batteries] in [a] sealed container [was] sufficient to warrant inference of negligence" because it was impossible for the sealed bottle to have been tampered with after leaving the Coca-Cola bottling facility. *Id* at 388. The court failed to mention specifically if they found it to be statutory or common-law negligence, instead hinging its decision for the plaintiff on a manufacturer's duty to their customers. Still, the court stated that Coca-Cola violated their "duty to adequately prepare, inspect, and package its product, and failure to take these precautions constitutes or may constitute negligence," which could be construed as common-law negligence. *Id* at 389. Although it was not stated explicitly, the court was referring to the reasonable care doctrine, the backbone of food-and-common-law negligence litigation.

Stark v. Chock Full O'Nuts, 77 Misc.2d 553, 356 N.Y.S.2d 403 (1st Dep't 1974) clearly defined the reasonable expectation doctrine: "The 'reasonable expectation doctrine'…requires that a restaurant owner use ordinary care to remove from food, as served, such harmful substance as consumer would not ordinarily anticipate. Uniform Commercial Code, § 2–315." *Id* at 553. Here, a diner allegedly damaged her tooth when she bit into a "nutted cheese"

sandwich and encountered a "large, hard walnut shell," not something she expected to find in her sandwich. *Id* at 553. The appellate court upheld the decision that the reasonable care doctrine was the proper doctrine to apply to the facts, despite the fact that the plaintiff was the sole witness to the incident.

Vitiello v. Captain Bills Restaurant, 191 A.D.2d 429, 594 N.Y.S.2d 295, 20 UCC Rep.Serv.2d 894 (2nd Dep't 1993) was another example of a case where the reasonable expectation doctrine was used, but here it worked against the plaintiff. The plaintiff was injured by a bone in a piece of fish served by the defendant, and claimed that the restaurant had not "used ordinary care" in boning the fish and was therefore guilty of common-law negligence. Even though the piece of fish was a fillet, as the court quoted from Yong Cha Hong. v. Marriot Corp, 656 F. Supp. 445 (D. M.D 1987), "Everyone knows that tiny bones may remain in even the best fillets of fish." *Id* at 449. Because the restaurant was only required to use reasonable care to remove substances that the customer would not expect, and the plaintiff had no right to expect a completely boneless piece of fish, the defendant restaurant was not found guilty of negligence and the plaintiff was not entitled to recover damages.

This doctrine of reasonable care was also the focal point of Rudloff v. Wendy's Restaurant of Rochester, Inc., 12 Misc.3d 1081, 821 N.Y.S.2d 358 (City Ct. Buffalo 2006), in which the plaintiff was harmed by a sharp object in a Wendy's hamburger. The court broke down its version of a reasonable expectation test into seven aspects, looking at:

> 1) the nature or size of the object, or both, 2) the type of food involved, 3) the way in which the food was inspected, processed and prepared… 4) the type of establishment where the food was purchased, 5) whether the food needed further preparation before consumption, 6) what type of opportunity the consumer had to protect him or herself from the alleged defect (i.e., how the item is traditionally consumed), and 7) what steps, if any, must a reasonable consumer take to inspect his or her food prior to consumption (*id* at 360)

Rudloff is a long, detailed case, but the negligence aspect of it boiled down to the idea that, unlike with fish, one does not reasonably expect to find bones or other hard objects in ground and processed meat like hamburger (#2 and #3 above) and the fact that one usually bites into a hamburger and does not nibble at it carefully, which would preclude chewing foreign objects (#6 above). Still, because what is reasonable for one person is unreasonable for another, the court decided that when someone is injured by an object in their food, questions of whether they should have reasonably anticipated it being there are up to a jury to decide, not a judge, and denied the defendant's motion for summary judgment.

Trembley v. Coca-Cola Bottling Co. 285 A.D. 539, 138 N.Y.S.2d 332 (3'd Dep't 1955) is another case involving common-law negligence. In this case, the plaintiff found a dead mouse in his bottle of Coke. Although Coca-Cola adhered to industry practices in bottling its product, it was still found to be negligent, as the jury decided that Coca-Cola's single inspection of the bottles

after washing them was not good enough to prevent foreign substances due to mechanical or human error. Breach of the Agriculture and Markets Law § 200 was not even alleged, so Coca-Cola Bottling Co. was found guilty of common-law negligence in allowing the mouse to enter its bottles and cause damage to the plaintiff.

Things get more complicated in cases that do allege breach of Agriculture and Markets Law § 199-200. Section 199 prohibits the production and sale of adulterated food, while § 200 defines food adulteration. The current statute at its very simplest deems food to be adulterated "if it bears or contains any poisonous or deleterious substance which may render it injurious to health," and seems to have changed little, if at all, over the years. However, while everybody is in agreement that violation of this statute constitutes statutory negligence, there is still disagreement over what exactly amounts to a violation of the statute.

Alphin v. La Salle Diners, 197 Misc. 415, 98, N.Y.S.2d 511 (City Ct., Kings County 1950) takes a strict view of Agriculture and Markets Law § 200, stating that it creates an "absolute duty of manufacturer or seller for benefit of general public" (*id* at 415). Much as *Trembley* stated in regard to common-law negligence, *Alphin* suggests that even if the seller adhered to the usual standard of care in their industry, the fact that it still allowed a deleterious substance into its food means that, despite their care and perhaps inadvertently, they still violated the statute to serve unadulterated food. In this case, the plaintiff found a harmful piece of wire in his pie. Despite the fact that the wire would not have been visible during normal inspection and handling and its presence was not indicative of a lack of reasonable care on the part of the restaurant, the fact was that it was still there, and the defendants were found guilty of negligence as a matter of law.

In sharp contrast to the above decision, Piazza v. Fischer Baking Co., 197 Misc. 418, 98 N.Y.S.2d 508 (City Ct., Kings County 1950), a decision written a mere few months later in the same court and county, failed to follow *Alphin's* reasoning. In *Piazza*, the plaintiff found a screw inside his slice of bread, but this was not considered food adulteration because the screw was not a *part* of the bread. According to the court's viewpoint, foreign substances like tacks, broken glass, or stones, which are not finely ground up or thoroughly mixed with the food, do not become a part of the food and are not considered food adulteration, and therefore the defendant was not guilty of statutory negligence.

Why the *Piazza* court did not follow the interpretation of *Alphin*, in which a piece of wire was considered to be adulteration, is not explained. The court does concede that the screw "might be the result of negligence," just not statutory negligence, and decided in favor of the defendant. *Id* at 419. It also stated that the "evidence was insufficient to establish that [defendant] failed to use the maximum care which a reasonably prudent person is required to use," and so the defendant could not be found guilty of common-law negligence. *Id* at 418.

People v. Enders, 38 Misc.2d 746, 237 N.Y.S.2d 879 (1963) discusses negligence in regard to a different type of food adulteration than the above cases,

that of debasing by "adding inferior materials or elements or make impure by admixture." *Id* at 746. Here, the defendant, a butcher working at the supermarket of his fellow defendant, added edible beef blood to cheap hamburger meat to make it look juicier. The fact that the beef blood was added to make the hamburger look superior and more valuable than it really was caused the hamburger meat to fall "below the standard of purity, quality, and strength which it purported and was represented to possess" which created a violation of Agriculture and Markets Law § 200(11). *Id* at 746.

Although many cases of food adulteration deal with harmful or repulsive substances being added to food, in *Enders* the beef blood was not harmful, and even approved for human consumption by the United States Department of Agriculture. Still, as the court stated quoting a federal case regarding a violation of a federal law, in these cases:

> The test of adulteration within the meaning of the Act [21 U.S.C.A § 342(b)(2)] does not turn upon whether the article is non-injurious and fit for human consumption. The Act was not intended to be confined to…the addition of adulterated substances deleterious to the health of consumers. It provides protection to the consumer from "economic adulteration" by which less expensive ingredients are substituted, or the proportion of more expensive ingredients is diminished so as to make the commonly identified article inferior to that which the consumer would expect to receive when purchasing it, although not in itself deleterious (*id* at 753).

Here, in addition to the lessening of the meat's purity and quality, the blood that the defendant added made the meat weigh more when being weighed for purchase, cheating the customer just as much as if he had put his thumb on the scale like the proverbial dishonest butcher. The court found this to be a violation of Agriculture and Markets Law § 200(10), and found the defendants guilty of statutory negligence.

While the facts of the cases vary, there are two constants when dealing with food adulteration and foreign objects in food: Agriculture and Markets Law § 199-200 and the reasonable expectation doctrine. The reasonable expectation doctrine establishes that the test of common-law negligence revolves around whether or not the customer could have reasonably expected to find the deleterious object in their food, while Agriculture and Markets Law§ 199-200 creates a statutory obligation to serve and produce unadulterated food. Either way, be it under the civil or statutory obligation to the public, it is clear that food producers and purveyors have an inarguable duty to present the public with pure, unadulterated food free of foreign objects.

Commercial Sexual Exploitation Of Children

Sheila Pettersen-Flynn, RN

I was standing on the beach, mesmerized by the crystal blue water of Matzalán, Mexico. A young boy about the age of twelve came up to me and shook my hand. As I withdrew my hand he wiggled his middle finger in the palm of my hand. I was uncertain what it was and not even sure he did this, but I moved away confused. He followed behind me and this time he deliberately took my hand and more forcefully wiggled his finger in my palm, confirming my suspicion that he was a child prostitute.

This incident has haunted me ever since and I have become alarmed over the fact that the incidence of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) is 1.2 million children worldwide (Hagemann, 2002). Under federal law U.S.C.§7102 (8) sex trafficking is defined as the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision or obtaining a person for a commercial sex act, in which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which a person induced to perform such an act has not yet attained eighteen years of age (End Child Prostitution and Pornography (ECPAT). Also, according to the same law, those who recruit minors into prostitution violate federal anti-trafficking laws, even if there is no coercion or movement across state lines. An estimated 100,000 children are exploited through prostitution every year in the United States (Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking Deterrence and Victims Support Act, 2010). In addition, 300,000 children nationwide are at risk of falling victim to some form of commercial sexual exploitation (Estes, Weiner, 2001). Nationwide the average age of entry for children who have been sexually exploited is twelve to fifteen years of age (Grace, Stark, Potenza, Kenney, Sheetz, 2012).

More locally, according to a study commissioned by the Center for Court Innovation and compiled by John Jay College of Criminal Justice, it was found that New York City has an estimated 4,000 victims of CSEC only counting local children, not foreign victims trafficked into the city (2008). The New York Prevalence Study of Commercially Exploited Children demonstrated that New York City has over five times the number of victims compared to seven upstate counties (New York State Office of Children and Family Services, 2007).

The stories of the victims are endless. Katrina was an A student from Atlanta, Georgia. She was just sixteen years old when she started working in a restaurant and met a trafficker. He started by offering her rides home from work, providing expensive gifts, then engaging in sex. This led to her being groomed into the life of prostitution for which she was frequently arrested and released back to the trafficker after he paid the fine. She tried to leave him, but instead he

moved them to New York City, further isolating her. On one occasion when she was arrested, the judge sent her to Girls Education and Mentoring Services (GEMS). She is now a mentor for other girls looking to get out of prostitution. Her story can be seen on the video, "What I've Been Through Is Not Who I Am."

There are many others, like Donna, a transgender youth who entered the life at age thirteen while running away from abusive foster and group homes. The desire to leave is strong, but there is no place to go. Sara was eleven years old when she first met a thirty-one-year old male pimp who molested her and groomed her to be a sex worker. At sixteen years old she was convicted of his murder and sentenced to life in prison. At thirty-three years old she was granted clemency by then governor Arnold Schwarzenegger. Cass is a fifteen-year-old black girl from Brooklyn whose friend showed her how and where to engage in the market. Tina met up with a pimp outside of Franklin Shelter in the Bronx when she was being thrown out for fighting. The trafficker was there to offer her shelter.

Youth are vulnerable to the tactics of traffickers simply by virtue of the normal developmental tasks of adolescence (Grace, Stark, Potenza, Kenney and Sheetz, 2012). They are looking to take risks, feel misunderstood by parents, and are seeking romantic relationships. Some youth are disproportionately at risk, such as those who have experienced childhood sexual abuse. Traffickers prey on vulnerable teens, runaways, and children previously abused at home. The tactics they use are force, coercion, befriending and seduction. They fill a void in the teen's life. By isolating them from their support system, their dependence for material items and shelter is increased. Imagine then, your daughter, your niece or your neighbor's teenager runs away from home because they are feeling rebellious or alone and spends the night in a bus or train station, she's hungry, tired and cold. Within forty-eight hours a trafficker finds her, offers food and shelter.

There is federal legislation that can help victims of CSEC. The Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) 2000, is a landmark bill that is the first comprehensive federal law to address trafficking persons. It provides for a three-pronged approach aimed at prevention, protection and prosecution. TVPA has been reauthorized in 2003, 2005 and most recently 2008. It establishes that all prostituted children under the age of eighteen are trafficking victims. New York was the first state to pass the Safe Harbor Act, designed to remove minor victims from the jurisdiction of the criminal justice and juvenile delinquency systems and divert them into child welfare instead. The act also provides for protection and specialized services. Unfortunately, because of loopholes, the Safe Harbor Act only protects youth sixteen and under, not those seventeen. In addition, funding for services, especially shelter, is insufficient.

Model programs do exist, such as Support to End Exploitation Now (SEEN) in Suffolk County, Massachusetts, a multidisciplinary team of thirty-five public and private agencies. The motto is "No one agency can do it alone." SEEN promotes partnerships between prosecutors and defense attorneys, social workers and probation officers, street workers and police. Exploited youth are

seen as victims and not offenders. The goals of SEEN are to empower the victim to leave the exploiter and utilize opportunities to regain control of their future. The programs ensure the victim's physical and psychological safety and provide services like mental healthcare, substance abuse treatment, educational opportunities, job skills training, and access to mentors and advocates.

GEMS was founded in 1998 in New York City by Rachel Lloyd, a survivor of CSEC. It provides a holistic multi-faceted approach and provides housing programs such as the Transitional Independent Living Program and Imani House. Court advocacy works to support young women charged with prostitution; in addition it educates judges, prosecutors, and defense attorneys. Other notable support programs around the country are: Victory Program in Georgia, The Hope House in North Carolina, Standing Against Global Exploitation (SAGE) in San Francisco, the Minnesota Runaway Intervention Program, and Project Gold run by Kristi House in Miami, Florida. These programs work diligently to provide multidisciplinary support, but many of them do not provide the much-needed long-term shelter. According to U.S. Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney, "fewer than 50 beds are available to address the needs of 100,000 children victimized by sexual exploitation" (U.S. Submission to World Congress, 2008).

Some people see CSEC victims as juvenile delinquents, runaways, and throw-away kids who have chosen this way of life. The stories have shown that that is not the case. The children have been coerced, manipulated and brainwashed by traffickers into a life of prostitution. Their dreams were not to become caught up in CSEC. They had dreams of being nurses, doctors, policemen, firemen and teachers. Therefore I am calling for action for support in Albany during the 2013 legislative session to pass the Trafficking Victims Protection and Justice Act (TVPJA, Paulin/Lanza A.2240/S.2135) in order to strengthen protection of children victims of trafficking. New Yorkers must provide a Safe Harbor because our children are not for sale.

Author's Note: A recent victory regarding the NY Safe Harbor bill (A8071A-2013) has been the signing of the chapter amendment by Governor Cuomo. Sixteen- and seventeen-year-old victims of commercial sexual exploitation will now be offered services and protection.

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The Snow Globe (an excerpt)
Ramsuresh Rampersad

I was asleep, dreaming I was on an open highway driving a car to some destination I couldn't get to, when the phone rang unexpectedly. Everyone in my circle knew I worked the twelve-hour night shift and, like an owl, slept during the day. I let it ring a few times, hoping the person on the other end would go away.

I answered.

It was for my roommate.

Angrily, "he's working now, can you call back tonight," and hung up without waiting for a reply.

The phone again, ringing…ringing…ringing…ringing.

It was the same distant voice on the other end.

Exasperation, "he's working now!"

Can I give him an urgent message?

"What! Yes, yes, oh, oh, oh, no, oh no, oh no, oh god."

"Yes, yes. I'll let him know."

My anger quickly dissipated, the news had fully awakened me, and it was that which had gotten me out of bed in the middle of my night, and from Brooklyn to Manhattan. But I didn't know how to relay this message to my friend, my roommate and co-worker. How could I break it to him? What could I say?

As I looked through the large windows of a coffee-shop bordering the northeast corner of 96th Street and Lexington Avenue, thinking about this new situation that had popped into my life and how best to deal with it, it started snowing.

I had hoped for snow on Christmas day. It didn't come. I cared little if no snow came on the other days of winter, but Christmas was special, it is the one day I was sure to be off work, and I could then, with peaceful satisfaction—while listening to my favorite Christmas songs—watch nature snow-blanket this great city, outline everything, just like in a Thomas Kinkade painting.

Thinking about the phone call, and having an almost 180-degree view through the glass window walls of the coffee shop, I felt that we all were inside a pretty little snow globe, and New York City itself was part of an even bigger globe, which someone had given a good shake. And now all this silent beautiful snow was raining down on us. How peaceful, how beautiful it looked, all this snow, twisting and twirling, falling at angles, sailing innocently through the air to land on everything.

The winds picked up and steadily increased, blowing southerly along Lexington Avenue, causing the snow to fall at constantly changing angles. Cold air rushed in whenever someone entered the shop, and I wrapped my fingers around the coffee cup. It wasn't fair sometimes—the hand life dealt you from its deck—and who was the dealer anyway? How did some get dealt a flush hand, which they cashed in at the opportune moment and moved on to start bigger things, while some of us, with the cards we received, were still trying to build a hand as our lives eroded away?

Traffic moved at a slow pace, people, MTA buses, yellow taxi cabs, private cars, and Chinese and Mexican immigrants on bicycles—plastic sheets and opened out black garbage bags, tied like bonnets around their heads and down their torso to keep dry—pedaling as fast as they could through the almost blinding snow to deliver food to someone stuck in their apartment.

Despite the heavy blanketing snow, people were getting on with their lives, and while some were coming from somewhere, others were trying to get to somewhere else, and as always, an ordered rush, an expected suddenness of thrust and movement on every street and avenue, gave the city a beat, a pulse, a rhythm, that kept it so dynamic, so brilliant, and so alive.

From the four subway entrances, or exits, at the corners of Lexington and 96th Street—into the falling snow, every few minutes, a rush of New Yorkers, like an army of angry fire ants, poured out of their disturbed subterranean nests—umbrellas, colorful jackets, hoods pulled tightly over their heads, scarves, hats, gloves, hands buried deep in the warmth of pockets—and onto the sidewalks and roadways, adding texture to the idea of my pretty snow globe.

As steady flows of people came in and out of the coffee shop, I tried to imagine I could somehow step out of myself for a moment and look at myself— what would I see? Would it be the way I imagined other people saw me? Or would I be a stranger to me? And if I were objective enough, what would I come to learn about myself, that I was a lonely, worried, middle-aged man brooding over a cup of coffee? It made me question, do we really know ourselves as we think we do?

Nothing blocked the winds from coming down 96th Street that went east, past Lexington, Third, Second, and First Avenues, then under the Franklin D. Roosevelt East River Drive, to end at the East River; and the tall buildings lining both sides of the street, channeled the strong unhindered winds gushing over the river, in the reverse direction.

Across the intersection, just beyond Affiliated Supermarket, on the southwest corner of 96th Street, I could see the fruit seller's stall on the edge of the sidewalk near the roadway directly under a street lamp. As I looked in that direction, I had that momentary feeling again: that we were all really inside a snow globe, and in it, the fruit seller Rohan—an Indian emigrant who was doing his best to secure the makeshift plastic covering he had tied above the fruit stall to protect the fruits and vegetables—was somewhere warmer. **.**

And Then There Was *Twilight*!
Afisha Superville

When I was younger I was never big on reading because it was pretty boring to me with so few pictures. When I was forced to read, I'd read just for the sake of not being punished or doing poorly in school. The thing was I hated sitting in one place for long periods of time reading something that wasn't appealing. Since most books I read back then were chosen by my teacher, I never got to explore books I wouldn't mind reading.

After I started high school my reading habits changed. It all started in 11th grade when my friend, Omarni, who loves reading, brought up a conversation about a new *Twilight* movie that was just out. I know some of you guys are going to be like, really, of all movies to watch. But, in all honesty, in that movie it was interesting to learn about a vampire who has never had the chance to fall in love and then meets a girl who wasn't scared to know what he truly was; the movie had me wanting to know more about them. Okay, maybe it was partly because Edward had such sexy hair with such perfect skin but who wouldn't love to watch him?

Omarni was always that girl with a book in hand while walking in the hall or in English class, which was really funny because our English teacher took her book away from her at the beginning of every class. We both fell in love with the cast of *Twilight* and every moment we'd catch ourselves quoting the lines from the movie. Then she asked, "Hey, Fi, did you read any of the books of *Twilight* because last night I just finished reading *Breaking Dawn* and IT! WAS! AMAZING!" I replied, "No I had no clue there were books—tell me what happens. Wait, never mind, I don't want you to ruin the surprise. Okay, okay tell me something small PLEEEEASE!" That little tidbit was enough for me go to the principal's office to make an emergency call to my mom to tell her to buy me that book that day.

It took me two weeks to read all 800 pages of *Breaking Dawn* and I loved every moment of it. After I finished reading it, I begged my mom to get me

the first three since I read the last book first. My love for reading grew right after that and my love for anything vampire, werewolf, fairy, or elemental-related holds a very special place on my bookshelf and in my Kindle reader on my phone. Now you don't even have to so much as breathe too hard to make me read a book because I already have a book or Kindle in my hand reading.

Now looking back at the progress I've made since eleventh grade I've read over thirty books and counting. Since then every movie that I like that's coming to theaters I buy the book first, read it, then watch it when it comes out. I do this because after reading the book I put up these expectations of what I think is going to happen on the screen and to have all those expectations makes reading the book first that much more worth it.

Swimming
Pratik Lamichhane

I have had a transformational life experience. It occurred when I was swimming for the very first time in my life. Since I did not know how to swim, I drowned and almost lost my life. However, some strangers were able to save me, gifting me my precious life.

I had seen people swimming on lakes and rivers. When I first saw them, I was amazed. I also wanted to swim. I asked my parents to take me to the river. For some reason they never did. Instead they would put me in a children's pool to swim. What I wanted was to swim like other people I had seen on lakes and rivers.

One day I heard my classmates gossiping about their swimming activity. My jaw dropped. I had a keen interest to join them. Finally I made a plan to sneak out of my house to join my friends who used to swim in the nearby stream of a river.

It was the thirteenth summer of my life. I went to the river along with my friends. I was pleased at seeing them floating in the water. Since I didn't know how to swim, a few of my "expert" friends told me to dive from one bank of the river to the other. And when I would reach the other bank, the water level there would be low and I could walk myself out, they added. It was a small stream so without thinking I jumped in. The push from diving helped me to float for a while. Eventually, when I was close enough to the other bank I tried to touch the bottom. I could not feel the ground and my legs were hanging. Suddenly, the river pulled me in and the current was carrying me away. My mind was blank and I could not think of a way to escape because something very different from the plan had happened. I could feel the water pushing me up and down with its ripple. I was motionless. There was no sign of help. The sun was at the horizon. I thought that my first day of swimming had turned into the last day of my life.

I don't know how long it took but when I opened my eyes I was in front of strangers, lying on the ground. One man was pushing my stomach and I was spitting out water. When I saw my friends standing in back of the crowd, I felt a bit better even though I didn't know what was happening. I called them next to me and asked what had happened. Later, they told me the whole story. They told me that I was drowning and the river was carrying me along and they were running helplessly after me screaming "Help! Help!!" A few meters down were a couple of fisherman who were able to take me out of the river where I was unconscious after swallowing excessive amounts of water.

After I rested for a while we headed home. On the way, my friends were saying it was a bad incident and I was lucky enough to walk back to my house. I was feeling dizzy and some of my friends were still looking frightened. Some were worried that I would tell this story to my parents and they would get the

blame. In fact, I never told my parents about this incident thinking that next time I would have trouble getting out of my house.

Next morning I woke up tired. I just lay on my bed and recalled the incident. I made a promise to myself that I would never let it happen again. I realized my mistake of jumping into the river without prior swimming experience and knowing the depth of the water. My small mistake could have cost me my life. I should have first practiced with swimming gear. I learned to take precautions before starting something new.

As they say, " What does not kill you makes you stronger," this incident transformed my view of life as a struggle and made me stronger. I used to think life was easy and normal. But after getting a second chance to be alive, the beauty of life and the joy of living were revealed to me and made my life more precious.

I still love to swim. Now I have learned how. I usually prefer to go to swimming pools and swim where the depth of the water is equal to my height. And I only go to rivers which are familiar to me, because I am still scared of deep water.

The Brooklyn Bridge

José Cabrera

Since the most remote times, human beings have fabricated tools that later served as a means for the construction of colossal temples and shrines. Many of these works have been worshiped like the Stonehenge monument (Wiltshire, England); others have been built for the devotion of a loved one, such as the Taj Majal (Agra, India). However, none of these structures past or present, has prepared the spectator for an icon of mythical proportions like the Brooklyn Bridge. The project was initiated by the bright idea of the distinguished German engineer John August Roebling and finished by his son Washington Roebling. Opened to the public in 1883, it was fourteen years in construction, during the peak of industrial development in this country, a time characterized by the rapid growth of great inventions and works that would change the world during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. For decades this unique architectural achievement set the highest benchmark for bridge engineering.

Many writers have been influenced and inspired by this bridge. On a short lecture tour through the United States in 1925, Vladimir Mayakovsky became one of its greatest admirers. In his view the bridge's mammoth dimensions make it resemble "huge ancient lizards." The poet argues that if the bridge were to disappear in a long apocalyptic 20th century night, nevertheless it would be invariably known for its remains. He wrote the poem "Brooklyn Bridge" after he himself crossed it. The poem is filled with strong emotions. Seeing the bridge, the poet lets out "A shout of joy!" Mayakovsky's poems are a "retreat into a monastery cell." The bridge transports him to an ascetic state of contemplation, a moment to forget the daily pain and enter a mystical world. The austere lines of this legendary structure suggest a monastery from which he can glimpse "New York, heavy and stifling till night has forgotten its hardships."

I am not native to this land. Like Mayakovsky, I too recall first coming face to face with this phantasmagoric structure. I too glory in its monumental gothic archways commemorating America's past and present. The bridge is in fact a great victory of avant-garde engineering on America's front lines of iconography. Its wild beauty bears testimony to the titanic technology innovations of our New York that have changed history forever. Like a palace suspended on tidal waters, between megalomaniac concrete and steel skyscrapers on both sides of the East River, it allows us to see out to all points in the city. After a long day of city adventure, the best place to go to free the mind is the

Brooklyn Bridge at dusk when the first shadows begin to fall, and the landscapes and sunset are spectacular gifts.

The Brooklyn Bridge has been a muse of inspiration for generations. Its towers and steel cables portray a fabled harp that makes us dream. Its silhouette is an indispensable character in the city's skyline. After 130 years, the Brooklyn Bridge is no longer the most modern nor the longest bridge, but it will remain a destination of pilgrimage for anyone who visits or inhabits New York. It is a mandatory journey, an inflection point that marks a before and after of human creativity!

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A Secret Diary

Luiza Kharlashkina

I

Everybody knows that the entire process of going through middle school and high school is a tough one. If you can survive that, you are a winner. Being a thirteen-year old international student in a very American middle school was not easy. I must say first, however, that I was always different from those around me, no matter where I was. In Azerbaijan I was the girl whose mother and sister were in America, and that was a big deal. Actually, an Azerbaijani living in America still is a big deal for anyone living in Azerbaijan or for any "lucky" Azeri in America. My old friends and strangers who add me through their friends on social networking websites due to their fascination with New York, are very jealous of my escaping Azerbaijan.

Back in Azerbaijan everyone knew that I would move to New York eventually because my mom and sister were here already. For almost four years of my life I was without my mother, but even though she wasn't physically by my side, she sent me parcels with clothes from Children's Place every season. In Azerbaijan we don't have clothes like that, especially summer clothes. Therefore when I wore skirts, shorts, dresses or especially crop tops, it drew a lot of negative attention from the neighbors. Jealousy formed in many children's and mothers' eyes and I was severely judged and even bullied. With next door neighbors having something to gossip about in the evening, or with other neighbors listening to my conversations with my crushes, I became so angry I began to fight physically with boys who got me to the point where I was fed up with listening to their nasty talk and constant name-calling. When I fought them, I was labeled a very aggressive girl—they said my father should take better care of me. Eyes were always on me. I hated being discriminated against. As much as I loved attention, this was not the right kind of attention. On top of everything, I had always been a bubbly, happy, loving girl— which no one likes in Azerbaijan, especially in the more conservative neighborhoods. I was considered a rebel. As I said, due to my clothes, but also because of my personality, I was discriminated against. Azerbaijani people believe females have to be "classy" and quiet. They have to be pure and sit at home doing what a woman should be doing. Yes, even the little girls.

I was somewhere between the ages of nine and twelve, so you would think that these rules wouldn't apply. But they did. So much pressure was on me to be a shy, quiet girl who behaves the way society wants her to. Even my math teacher, who was also my homeroom teacher, told me to put a button in a sock every time someone made me mad. So instead of fighting the boys both physically and verbally, I would just put another button in a sock. After three

years of fighting the society I was born in, I gave up after being humiliated in front of my first-ever young love. He made me feel terrible about myself for being friends with, and having a conversation with, a neighbor boy. I was crying so hard I fainted in the middle of the street. And in Azerbaijan everyone is always hanging out in an area where about six buildings face each other. Everyone knew one another, so my fainting and being humiliated was a big deal. After this incident I became like a robot. I refused to talk to anyone, did not laugh at all, all I wanted was to go to school and come back home and that's it. I finally started to act the way they wanted me to. I noticed the difference in the way people spoke to me because they noticed a change in me. I could feel that they thought I was behaving strange all of a sudden, but they were satisfied with the way I was acting. I felt like a flower that had been trampled by a horse.

Nonetheless, I started to gain respect from people or, should I say, I started to be accepted, and this was at twelve years old. What really bothered me throughout the whole time of being discriminated against was that the neighbors and their kids knew that I was a good girl, but they were all jealous of my mother being in America, my clothes, and the future they knew I would have. After I finally got used to the fact that I had to watch myself in everything I did and make sure never to stand out, my father brought amazing news to me. I was finally going to escape this prison of identity, and reunite with my mom and sister in a beautiful democratic country. Little did I know America was going to be another place where I was going to be discriminated against.

II

I spoke absolutely no English and right away was put into a very American middle school, Wagner Middle School in Manhattan. Again, everyone was interested in knowing who I was, and where I was from. Because I spoke no English, eventually people started to make fun of me, calling me a terrorist and making fun of my English whenever I did try to speak. I was always quiet and got all A's and B's for effort and the attention I gave to the teacher, unlike the very open and crazy kids in America. This is the time where my bubbly personality in Azerbaijan all those years would help me make some friends and was actually acceptable. As I started to be able to communicate, I could show people that I wasn't just some immigrant from a weird country no one had ever heard of. By the time high school came along I was back to my own self, a better, stronger self. I didn't get offended by people trying to insult me, I dressed as I pleased, spoke as I pleased and, most of all, I could finally be as bubbly, crazy, and energetic as I always was.

Going through bullying and prejudice from my own people in Azerbaijan and then facing a completely different society in America helped me create a strong sense of individuality and personality, and I would never trade those experiences for anything.

Living a Stranger's Life

Ammr Ahmed

In *The Unlikely Disciple: A Sinner's Semester at America's Holiest University* (2009), Kevin Roose, a man who was born a Quaker pretends he's a believer in another religion. He attends a university that is specifically for Evangelical Christian students. Technically he grew up a Quaker, but actually he did not practice any religion as a child. His curiosity, and his work as a journalist, led him to go undercover at Liberty University in Virginia. Roose decided to go undercover as one of the new freshman students. This led him to lie constantly to everyone around him, and living this lie was difficult. I had a similar story, although for very different reasons. My family is Muslim and in order not to get bullied by those of other religions, I lied about my race, my religion, and who I was as a person. I did not want to lie about who I was, but constant teasing and persecution led me to do so.

The year 2001 was the hardest year of my life. I was in the fourth grade, nine years old, when the tragedy of the World Trade Center happened. As a Muslim of Arab descent it was very hard to cope with everything that happened that year. People would walk up to my mom and speak in a vulgar way, saying, "Go back to your country, you don't belong here." Some kids would pull off my mother's headdress and throw rocks at her. Seeing all this happen to my mother in front of me, I felt weak and defenseless because there was nothing I could do but watch and pray that we would make it home safely. My mother would go home and find bruises on her body where the rocks hit her. I would find my mom sometimes in her room sitting alone and crying, and as a kid seeing my mother cry and just standing there helpless made me cry. The only thing I could do was to go and try to comfort her. I would hug her and pat her on the back and say, "Everything is going to be okay, Mom."

During the fourth grade I was bullied every day by kids and ignored by teachers. I would be called a "terrorist" because of where I am from. I would be picked on, beaten up to the point where I hated where I was from, and I actually came to believe what the other kids said about me. I even said to my mother, "If you want to come and pick me up from school then you have to take off your headdress and dress like every one else." Just as Roose asked his parents to hide who they were so he could be accepted at an evangelical school, I asked my mother to hide who she was so I could be accepted at my school, as a normal kid. To ask your mother to do something like this you must go through a lot of suffering. To ask her to take off the head covering that represents what she believes in and what is her right as an American to wear is unthought-of, but I

had no choice. My mother's answer was, "I will never change who I am or what I believe in even if there is a sword on my neck." My mom was mad at me for such a long time because of what I asked her to do. But I was even accused of having a gun in school by my fourth grade teacher, and before I knew it the cops came to my school and searched me. The cops also barged into my house disrespecting my family and our rights as American citizens, and without giving my mom any warning that they were coming so she could cover herself. They were searching for something that was never there in the first place and nothing was found. As they left, they didn't even think to give a simple apology for the disrespectfulness they showed.

After I was bullied at school and feared for my life, my family moved to another neighborhood and I went to a new school. In that school I told my mom and dad not to pick me up because I did not want people to see them and know that I was Muslim and tease me and pick on me. Whenever anybody asked where I was from, I would say that I'm Spanish; from what country they would ask and I would say Dominican Republic; for what religion I would say Christian. When teachers asked about my name Ahmed, I would say that my great-grandparents were Turkish. And so I had to keep this lie for three years. I wouldn't even go out with my parents in the street. I would even tease other Muslim kids the way everyone did, so I would fit in. I once told a kid out of anger and the hate that was in me, "I wish that all Arabs were dead." I went against myself, and instead of defending the other Arab kids, I went against them. Until this day my words haunt me. I wonder sometimes what happened to that kid, I hope that the words I said were forgotten. I lived a double life, one at school and one at home. I hated that I could not be myself, but at the same time I was relieved that I was not bullied by students or ignored by teachers any more.

My life from a young age was hard. Constant teasing was something I did not choose; it was forced on me at an early age. Kevin Roose met different types of Christians on the Liberty campus, those who secretly doubted the teachings that were presented; and I in the past few years have met people who accept me for being Muslim. It is a joyous feeling to know that living in America and practicing Islam, I am accepted for who I am by close friends. I also noticed that Kevin made a professor a friend. This was something Roose did not expect, and I made a similar unexpected friend as well.

El Forastero
Kevin Mejia

Un barco me espera,
No estoy en busca de maravillas
Sólo tengo que vencer mi tristeza
No sé a dónde me llevara.

Llevo todas mis pertenencias en mi bolsillo
Limitado sólo por mis fronteras
No me avergüenzo de lo que dejo atrás
América es ahora mi hogar.

Ahora donde vaya me llaman el forastero
Mis raíces pertenecen a otra tierra
Mi tierra ya no me reconoció porque me fui
Donde quiera que vaya me llaman el forastero.

 (The Outlander—
A vessel waits for me, I'm not in search of wonders, I just need to vanquish my
sadness, I don't know where it's taking me.
I carry all my belongings in my pocket, I'm limited only by my borders, I am not
ashamed of what I've left behind, America is now my home.
Now everywhere I go they call me the outlander. My roots are in a different soil.
My land does not recognize me because I left. Wherever I go, they call me the
outlander.)

Graphic Design Principles I

When I started this course, I expected to study design, color, and content through the use of digital technology. I soon learned that in fact the course is about helping designers develop great visual perception *without* the aid of technology. Projects were done with only simple materials such as pencils, markers, and rulers. We had to draw squares, rectangles and circles. We had to measure and position them perfectly on a white sheet in order to create perfect tension—the space around them had to feel perfect. The course also taught us draftsmanship. Great draftsmanship helped the detail of designs look better. Our drawings had to have perfectly straight lines and no bleeding edges when coloring and painting. At first my draftsmanship was decent but it became better after I learned from even the slightest mistakes and a lot of practice.   The course also helped us with critiques. We learned to tell which designs work and which do not. Our visual perception was trained. We could find the smallest mistakes in each other's designs, such as slanted lines, transitional mistakes or slight measurement errors. The critiques helped us evaluate magazine ads. I thought technology was going to be the primary means for making art, but in this course we really gained hands-on experience. We developed good visual perception.

<div align="right">—Taquan Tatum</div>

Before it started, I suspected this course would include assignments like doing a color wheel. I had little clue as to what it would teach me and how it would help me develop sensitivity for the different aspects of design. On the first day I saw some squares and colored squares in a pile. I realized this class was nothing like what I had expected. The first assignments dealt with tensions and proportions—tensions were a challenge since I had never thought of them. I had no sense of the tensions created by a square on page. I had trouble creating them because at first I could not sense them. However, the critiques permitted me to see clearly what the tensions were and how to make them work perfectly. The assignments dealing with perspective, pattern, rhythm, and color were taught following the Bauhaus method of "less is more" and with the concept that "form follows function." These design principles were applied to the final project. I understand now when a design works or does not work and why.   I also learned how to be professional when presenting my work.

<div align="right">—Nathalia Tello</div>

During our first week, I thought our class would talk about a certain image or technique, but I was wrong. We started out with "pictorial balance with a focal point," and I had no idea what that meant. We simply drew a black square on an 11 x 14" paper. Correction, we struggled and anticipated to draw a well-drafted

proportional square on an 11 x14" 2-ply Bristol pad. I began to understand what Professor Nicolaou wanted: time consumption. We would need time to do things right. Continuously re-doing every assignment, I noticed that my draftsmanship, and my patience, were improving. I was actually impressed; without my thinking about it, my professor was having a positive impact on me. In the beginning, the work of re-doing every non-A project was pure annoyance and frustration. All I thought about was receiving a grade, rather than the actual work and lesson that came with it. As classes went on and my grades were still not what I expected, the more determined I was to get an A. Everyone knows "time is everything" but will you use it wisely? My draftsmanship was horrible, and my measurements were not proportional. Fortunately, the more I re-did my B- and C+ projects, the more my draftsmanship was starting to get sharper and I saw how to manage my time wisely. As we approach the final section of the course, I've learned that a thirty-second of an inch can make all the difference in a rewarding piece; I also learned the wrongs of being uncouth in the classroom and the real world. Professor Nicolaou always says, "I want to teach you everything all my professors taught me." We've learned plenty but we still have a long way to go.

—Michelle My

Virginia Woolf"s "Shakespeare's Sister" and Paule Marshall's "The Poets in the Kitchen"

Elli Zigenis

The female artist is a theme in both "Shakespeare's Sister" by Virginia Woolf and "The Poets in the Kitchen" by Paule Marshall. In both essays art is words—writing—and both authors by that definition are artists. Woolf may have a narrow view of what art is though, whereas Marshall considers everyday language and storytelling, particularly that of her Caribbean mother and her mother's friends, to be art too. This difference is important; these authors probably wouldn't agree on what art is and what one needs to be an artist.

In "Shakespeare's Sister," Judith Shakespeare is very much like her brother William, the famous playwright. However, Judith doesn't have the opportunities or freedom that her brother has. She cannot go to school, she is basically learning how to be a wife, and she is expected to marry the man her family wants her to.

> She had no chance of learning grammar and logic, let alone of reading Horace and Virgil. She picked up a book now and then, one of her brother's perhaps, and read a few pages. But then her parents came in and told her to mend the stockings or mind the stew and not moon about with books and papers. (Woolf 241)

When reading the essay, one can't help feeling sorry for Judith; she has the same talent as her brother but no outlet—"Perhaps she scribbled some pages up in an apple loft on the sly, but was careful to hide them or set fire to them" (Woolf 241). Every time she tries to read or write she is interrupted by some housework, which is a major theme for Woolf: interruption. Yet this alone is not why Judith runs away. It's because her family is going to make her marry someone she doesn't love, so she leaves for London. She goes to London like her brother, because of the theater, yet she is not well received there. She cannot be an actress because women are not allowed to act, yet, she "…had the quickest fancy, a gift like her brother's, for the tune of words" (Woolf 241). The reader feels the unfairness. Then, because she can't even afford to eat and has nowhere to go, she accepts the advances of a disgusting stage manager, gets pregnant and kills herself (Woolf 241-242).

To me, Judith's suicide is like slippery-slope faulty reasoning at its finest. Perhaps it's just that Virginia Woolf rubs me the wrong way, but I feel like she is

maybe one of the most self-centered writers I've ever read, and not in a fun, entertaining way but in an exhausting, complaining way that doesn't inspire empathy from me. I understand her indignation that women couldn't be writers (artists) or really much more than housewives until relatively recently. Had I lived over a hundred years ago I probably would have been pretty indignant too. But to read about a woman who may or may not have existed, who may or may not have written, who may or may not have been successful if she could have had a chance is not the sort of writing that makes me stand up and say "How insightful and true!" I feel like it is probably more likely that Judith would go home to her parents and marry the man next door and be sort of miserable but get by just the same, the way many women have over the years. I find it insulting to women for Woolf to write that Judith would rather die because life was disappointing and unfair.

> …Any woman born with a great gift in the sixteenth century would certainly have gone crazed, shot herself, or ended her days in some lonely cottage outside the village, half witch, half wizard, feared and mocked at. For it needs little skill in psychology to be sure that a highly gifted girl who had tried to use her gift for poetry would have been so thwarted and hindered by other people, so tortured and pulled asunder by her own contrary instincts, that she must have lost her health and sanity. (Woolf 242)

That is what Woolf feels, and projects onto her Judith character. I just don't agree. I think part of the reason that I don't agree is that Woolf seems to tie art in with recognition, but I'd say that just because you cannot get recognition as a woman doesn't mean you stop writing or making art. I think Woolf didn't understand disappointment at the most basic level. I think most women have learned to accept disappointment over the years, and not easily becoming a writer or an artist was just another disappointment, or another hurdle to overcome. Woolf dwells so much on the unfairness of it all, for Judith, that it is difficult for me to read or relate to.

Paule Marshall's "The Poets in the Kitchen" is a departure from Woolf's essay because we see that art can be found in day-to-day language and storytelling. This idea is powerful because it means that someone doesn't have to be educated or wealthy to be a successful artist. The women Marshall writes about are her mother and her mother's friends, who are all poor immigrants from Barbados. They aren't terribly educated, but they are very creative with language.

> They had taken the standard English taught them in the primary schools of Barbados and transformed it into an idiom, an instrument that more adequately described them—changing the syntax and imposing their own rhythm and accent so that the sentences were more pleasing to their ears. (Marshall 959)

In fact, Marshall gives them credit for being her greatest influences, above Jane Austen and Charles Dickens. This is because she grew up listening to these women in her mother's kitchen, talking to each other.

True I am indebted to those writers, white and black, whom I read during my formative years and still read for instruction and pleasure. But they were preceded in my life by another set of giants whom I always acknowledge before all others: the group of women around the table long ago. They taught me my first lessons in the narrative art. They trained my ear. They set a standard of excellence. This is why the best of my work must be attributed to them; it stands as a testimony to the rich legacy of language and culture they so freely passed on to me in the wordshop of the kitchen. (Marshall 962)

After the author "graduates from the corner of the kitchen" (Marshall 960), she starts going to the library and discovers reading. It feels like Marshall's essay will continue like the books *Matilda* or *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*, in which a little girl rises above her circumstances and makes a new life based on her love of reading and learning. But there's a twist; Marshall discovers the writing of Paul Laurence Dunbar, a black writer who writes the way her mother speaks, in dialect; "Although I had a little difficulty at first with the words in dialect, the poem spoke to me as nothing I had read before" (Marshall 961). It is then that Marshall has a sort of epiphany, because she finally has found an author who spoke to her, whom she could relate to. This opened the door for her to seek out other black writers, and to even start writing herself. "And I began to search then for books and stories and poems about 'The Race' (as it was put back then), about my people. While not abandoning Thackeray, Fielding, Dickens and the others, I started asking the reference librarian, who was white, for books by Negro writers" (Marshall 961).

This idea speaks to me because I found that growing up I was lucky that I never had a boundary around what art was, so I felt comfortable to make art, and to consider what I made art. I could draw, paint, sculpt, write, sew, dance, take pictures; all of these could be art, and my being a girl didn't inhibit me. I feel Marshall had an idea of what good art was, what good writing was; Dunbar's work expanded the definition of art for her. It allowed her to see art in everyday speech, in black writing, and eventually allowed her to be an artist too.

My mother, Cynthia, is the female artist who has inspired me. She grew up in the 1950s and was very beautiful and talented; she won the Miss Greek Oakland teen beauty pageant. She was always sort of sassy, and after she won the pageant she was quoted saying that she wanted to be regarded for something more than her looks. She isn't a successful artist, but she has talent. She used to entertain me as a child with her drawing and painting and often encouraged me to make my own art. I couldn't imagine a childhood that didn't smell like oil paints and turpentine, or one that restricted me creatively. Because of her I have a pretty broad spectrum of what I consider art, and also the confidence to have my own opinion on art. My mother gave me art, she encouraged me to make something with my hands, to entertain myself and others with it, and to make the environment more beautiful.

She wanted to be a painter like my grandfather, but no one was up in arms about this because she was basically just expected to get married and have a family—she didn't need a career. She married a nice Greek guy and had a son in her early twenties. She studied art at the California College of the Arts and Crafts and San Francisco State University. She divorced her husband and moved to New York with a second husband, but after a few years they divorced too. By the time she had me she was forty, already a black sheep in her family. She met my father while living in Greece, and they didn't marry. My mom bought a house near my grandfather in a small town south of San Francisco on the coast, but raised me in the semi-converted garage so she could rent out the house for income. I didn't know any family growing up, except my grandfather, and she raised me in a very bohemian way. This garage had burlap and sheets for walls and partitions, built in plywood and 2x4 "furniture," a swing and a trapeze bar in the house, jungle gyms in the backyard from when my mom had a daycare center, a marijuana garden in the secret greenhouse, a fireplace for heat, a clothesline to dry our laundry, a microwave and hot plate for cooking, a plastic shower pan with some heavy duty plastic around it for bathing and most of the light provided by Christmas lights and whatever light came through the lacy tablecloths used as curtains. Yes, she was an artist, not the most productive artist, but more importantly she was not adhering to the norm. For her, life and art were intertwined. Being an artist meant living the life that she wanted. I did not really appreciate this lifestyle when I was growing up, but I wouldn't be who I am if I were raised differently.

So, you see, my perspective on artists is different from that of Virginia Woolf living a hundred years ago, or from Marshall growing up seventy-five years ago. If anything, I wanted to rebel against the bohemian artist's lifestyle and have a more ordinary life. To me the main hindrance to being an artist was not being able to support myself. It wasn't that the career was taboo for a woman, it's that I thought it was unstable for anyone. I remember hearing my mother say all throughout my childhood how she thought that she'd be famous at some point. She would go through phases, painting subjects that she thought would make people want to buy her art, but then not being able to let any of it go because no one wanted to pay what she thought it was worth. My grandfather made being an artist work because he was a housepainter/sign maker first and an artist second, but I think it really helps if you are born wealthy, like Woolf. That way you can do your art but still survive if you aren't really successful. I think that if you have talent and nurture it today, then you can be a success. I don't think school by itself can teach someone to be an artist: you either are or you aren't. This thought is less applicable to a writer, who needs at least some education, but as we read in "The Poets in the Kitchen," you don't need formal education to be artful with words.

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