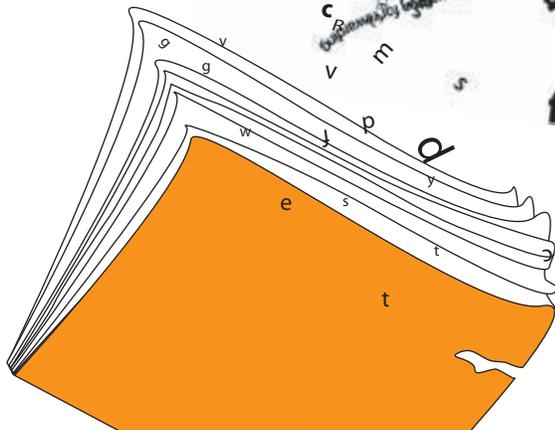
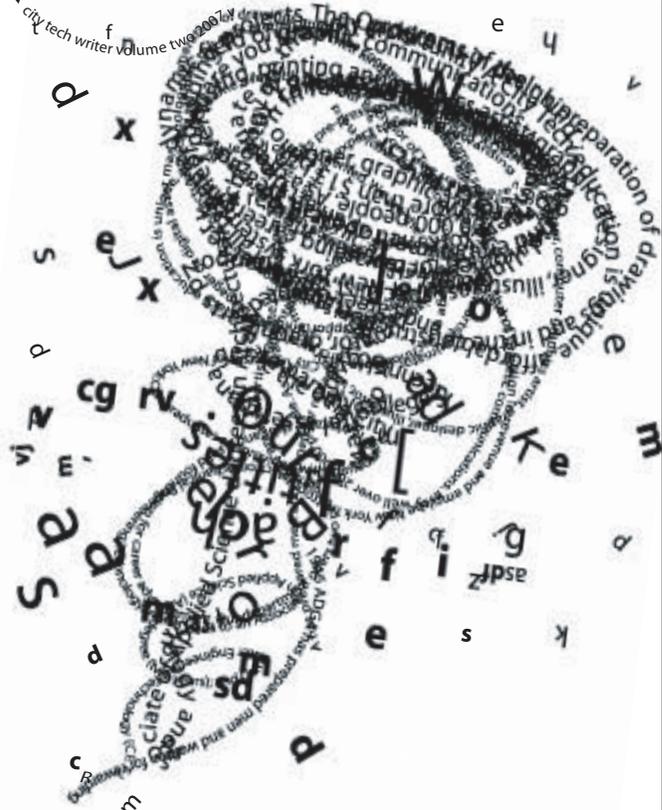


**CITY TECH** VOLUME 2 2007

# WRITER



# **CITY TECH WRITER**

## **Volume 2 2007**

**Outstanding Student Writing  
From All Disciplines**

**Jane Mushabac, Editor in Chief**

**Cover by Roshell Ramsay and Sut Lo**

**New York City College of Technology  
City University of New York**

# Preface

What is it like when your child's father is serving in Iraq? Is it possible to outrun your shadow? What is it like to be a deaf man ordering a closing-time brandy in a Hemingway story? What does the hospitality industry gain by improving access to hotels for those with disabilities?

Who taught a young man at a Brooklyn high school to be a student? How does rice evoke family and pleasure? What is eminent domain and why does it matter? How are Antoni Gaudi's buildings magically colorful? How can researchers get brain-cancer medication past the blood-brain barrier? When is a patient consent form important? How and why did Malcolm X learn to read?

The student writers of *City Tech Writer* ask fabulous questions. They have done their work; now it's time for the readers to open the book—in hand or online—and browse, or jump in here and there, or read it cover to cover. In the process, you'll be enlightened, provoked, and amused.

As editor, one of my tasks is deciding on the journal's order of pieces. To see all the connections between pieces, despite the wide range of disciplines, is fascinating. Some informal groupings evolved this year, like one around being a New Yorker. The reader will find the range of perspectives on a given issue refreshing and bold.

I want to thank the faculty in fifteen disciplines who've inspired, nurtured, and submitted such fine writing; AD 700 Professors Nasser McMayo and Mary Ann Biehl whose students designed a variety of fine possible covers; Graphic Arts Program Director Lloyd Carr who graciously coordinated the graphics element of production and whose GA 732 and GA 513 students formatted and printed the cover. The support of President Russell Hotzler and Provost Bonne August is of inestimable importance, and Dr. Stephen Soiffer, and Ms. Marilyn Morrison have also generously smoothed the way for a successful outcome. Professor Steve Caputo and the printers George and Peter Pompilio are committed to excellence and I've enjoyed working with them; and Alberto Vargas, Senior Designer, Image and Visual Communications, has wonderfully photographed and publicized the President's memorable reception. I thank English Department Chair Brian Keener for his strong valuing of the publication; Professor Kate Falvey, whose student's award-winning short story appeared in Volume 1 (her name was inadvertently left off the listing); Professor Nina Bannett for her helpful feedback; Professor Marta Effinger-Crichlow for her thoughtful input; and Lily Lam and Elayne Rinn, English Department secretaries, for their always graciously extended and extensive help.

But most of all I thank the student writers who make teaching a great pleasure, and whose writing focuses with clarity and spirit on things that matter.

Jane Mushabac, Editor in Chief

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# Reading and Malcolm X

Aisha Kenion

Reading can mean a lot of things: analysis, interpretation, impression, and evaluation. My experiences with reading came easily. My parents, who were patient with my progress, taught me. It is less complicated to learn how to read as a child than as an adult. In reading Malcolm X's chapter entitled "Saved," I see learning to read was very challenging for him. Not knowing how to read shamed him tremendously. He often felt he had to apologize for his poor handwriting and grammar. Malcolm X's determination to learn how to read came from envy. He was jealous of a fellow prisoner's knowledge and others' interest in what that prisoner had to say.

In the beginning, Malcolm X could neither read nor write well. He had poor spelling and grammar. His penmanship was hardly legible. In the process of exploring the letter he wrote Elijah Muhammad, he shares, "I was trying to make it both legible and understandable. I practically couldn't read my handwriting myself; it shames [me] even to remember it. My spelling and my grammar were as bad, if not worse. Anyway, as well as I could express it, I said I had been told about him by my brothers and sisters, and I apologized for my poor letter" (169). The shame Malcolm X felt about himself gave him the urgent desire to learn. The fact that he had to apologize for his poor writing skills encouraged him greatly to solve his problem. Most would say that he was just apologizing to Muhammad, but I believe he was apologizing to himself. His need to make the letters both legible and understandable was a direct problem. Because he had to try so hard to do something so simple, he felt the need to apologize for it.

In the street, Malcolm X was used to the attention he got. When he spoke everyone listened, but all that changed when he was arrested. A fellow prison mate named Bimbi was Malcolm's superior when it came to reading and social conversations. Bimbi held himself with confidence when he spoke to others. He presented himself with bulky words that demonstrated his intelligence. In prison, Malcolm went through a dramatic change in status. Malcolm explains, "In the street, I had been the most articulate hustler out there—I had commanded attention when I said something. But now, trying to write simple English, I not only wasn't articulate, I wasn't even functional. How would I sound writing in slang, the way I would say it, something such as, 'Look, daddy, let me pull your coat about a cat, Elijah Muhammad—'" (171). While in the streets, he didn't need to try so hard to get people to listen. He always got the attention he desired. Out there his words were power, but in prison your words had to be right. He couldn't adjust from street language to proper English; he realized he couldn't

write the way he used to talk. In prison others were not focusing on him. He changed from being envied to being envious of Bimbi. In resentment, Malcolm tried to compete with Bimbi but couldn't reach his level. Malcolm had a long way to go. He continued to struggle with his reading, and tried to work around the difficulties.

“It was because of my letters that I happened to stumble upon starting to acquire some kind of a homemade education” (171), Malcolm writes. Malcolm turned to the dictionary. He became extremely fascinated with it, and it encouraged him to learn more about the world he was so clueless about. Malcolm wanted the use of a dictionary to learn new words and improve his writing skills. After realizing the immense number of words he never knew were in the world, he says, “I was so fascinated that I went on—I copied the dictionary’s next page. And the same experience came when I studied that. With every succeeding page, I also learned of people and places and events from history. Actually, the dictionary is like a miniature encyclopedia” (172). Fascination can bring further curiosity to the mind. This curiosity offered an excitement to Malcolm X about learning all the different historical events in the world. After learning an abundant number of words from the dictionary, he felt a superb achievement in himself. X felt grand and refreshed that he accomplished a part of his goal. His reading, in multiple ways, opened up a new exhilarating world of knowledge for him. Malcolm became capable of absorbing the social conversations he heard and books that he read. He often found himself reading books on black history. The fact that he saw something like the dictionary as a fraction of an encyclopedia is fascinating. Sometimes I imagine what a high level of knowledge he would have reached if he actually had access to an encyclopedia.

In the beginning, reading started off as a challenge for Malcolm X. The shame and nakedness of his illiterate mind pushed him to higher heights. His envious nature reviled against his notice of a fellow prison mate. His pride and ambition drove him to learn. Through all of his hard work, he eventually learned how to read and write and not just the basics. Malcolm X developed his own stock of knowledge to grow from. Malcolm learned and set his goals not because it was a standard trend but because of himself. He achieved excellence and would not settle for less. If one person can do it, so can another.

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# Scenic Design for *The Cherry Orchard*

Colin Fredericson

To analyze what I might want to look at for the scenic design of *The Cherry Orchard* I first read the script, and then watched the movie. From the script alone I could not get a sense of the historical period and the style of the architecture. I don't think I have ever seen an orchard, except maybe an apple orchard at some point.

I wanted to get some ideas that would be historically accurate for designing the look of the house and the orchard. Therefore I searched the local video stores and DVD sellers for this title. It was hard to find since it is a foreign film. The film was done in a long, drawn-out, somewhat slow style. I thought the script gave that feeling too. I like the idea of an extravagant, colorful, spacious orchard, even more spacious than what I saw in the film. On stage this should mean huge trees, with pink and white blossoms. Let the beauty of the trees inspire people.

As the movie went on, I didn't get that sense of beauty from the orchard. Even though the play takes place just over the course of two days, I got the feeling that the seasons had changed. But my orchard would always stay the same, bright and colorful. The trees and the orchard themselves would be the most attractive and attention-getting part of the scenery. They would be like the unspoken, ominous main characters of the play; the trees would show their dominance over the characters by being huge and droopy-branched. Their branches would be like huge arms always hanging over the characters. The trees would be very tall, extremely tall, and their branches would come down to just above head-height of the characters.

Act II takes place outside on the orchard grounds. During this scene and the other outdoor scenes, the trees would be surrounding the group sitting on the benches. It would be like an actual small play area for the actors on stage, with these huge trees taking up most of the stage on both sides. The trees should be

big on stage to make them the central focus, and not a scene indoors or out should be realized without a tree in it.

For an indoor scene, a tree would be seen out of the window and maybe the blossomy branches would blow through into the window. Chekhov was fascinated by nature, especially trees, in his plays. Ranevskaya was also fascinated by them. She doesn't want to lose them. The trees will be what holds the scenes together.

The house itself should appear like a small mansion. In the movie it was more modest looking, even ugly. But this house should be classic in its elegance. There will be chandeliers and Turkish rugs. The plates and glasses will be refined, of exquisite style, like the beautiful rare antiques in the house. All the things in the house will be elegant, which will make parting with them so much harder, and make it so much easier for Lopakhin to have a motive for wanting them.

Although everything is elegant in this house, it should not be sparkingly beautiful. Although the chairs and furniture will be exquisite, they will be worn. There should be small imperfections all over, from small areas of chipping paint and cracked walls, to holes in the furniture. But this should not overshadow its beauty. It has a worn, rustic beauty.

The whole look of the play should be rustic, giving the people in the audience the feeling of going back to their old country house where they spent their own summers growing up and discovering life and nature. All the furniture, gazebos, and benches outside should be constructed of whole, unprocessed branches and logs. This will give the feeling of something natural and warm.

When they step outside the house it will be like stepping into nature. It will be like getting security from the arms of mother nature. You will see more and more why Ranevskaya loves this place through each scene growing in its natural extravagance as the play progresses. You should also grow to love this place as the characters do. That will make the ending so much more devastating if the audience can come as much as possible to that same feeling of love for this orchard, and the security it represents. It should be such a warm and exciting place.

When the trees start getting chopped down, those beloved cared-for trees, and when you see the splinters fly from them and hear the sounds as the axes hit, and see some trees start to crack until the chopping is stopped, it will look like a giant is being slain. The half chopped down trees should be still upright yet looking like they will fall soon. The only time the trees start falling is after Firs realizes he is the only one left in the house. When the trees come down they make a tremendous sound with branches crashing and shattering.

This play can be set on a reasonable budget. The trees will be built with care, built strong like glass men. These will be a bit expensive. All the furniture can be bought from antique furniture shops, or it can be regular used furniture with period styling added by a craftsperson and a painter. All food platters and glasses can actually be plastic replicas. Outside, the grass will be a bright green. Plots of artificial turf, like those used on sports fields, will be fine. There will not

be much sky to see over the arching trees, but that which is on the backdrop should be crystal clear blue, like the Caribbean sea.

The trees can be a bit surreal. The branches will be upright, the blossoms hanging down upon the scene. The branches can be made perfectly round, with shimmering, sparkling blossoms. The trees are light gray and cylindrical. There should be a few smashed cherries scattered here and there on the ground. All over the house there will be cherry sculptures, paintings of the cherry trees in the orchard, books on cherries and trees, and on the dining table some jars of those dried preserved sweet cherries. This will add to the humorous effect the play is supposed to have, and connect the indoor scenes with the outdoor ones, with the indoor scenes holding the fruit, the outdoor scenes showing the bearers of the blossoms.

This play can be accomplished on a reasonable budget; sacrifices can be made in the area of furniture, by using less of it, or house wares, as long as no sacrifice is made in how the trees are depicted. They are the heart of the story and are things of Ranevskaya's mind.

# The Pilgrim and Puritan Contributions

Andrew Aaron Vega

America today is a melting pot of ideas and beliefs, some that go back as early as the original colonists. Many of these ideas and beliefs not only helped to forge the America we know today, but set into action many events, good and bad, that have helped define the world we know. Two groups that brought many such mixed views and opinions were the Pilgrims and Puritans. Whether these people were raising families or declaring war on the natives, their ideas and practices can still be seen today.

Though many people follow a belief or a religion as a way of making sense of a senseless world, there are others who would rather wield it as a weapon. This is a sad fact that can be seen time and time again throughout history. The Puritans sought refuge in the Americas to be free of persecution for their religion. Sadly enough, they carried the evils done to them and repeated them in the Americas. It can't be denied that their religious beliefs helped bring them together as a people, as is stated by Pilgrim Governor William Bradford, "That night was spent with little sleep by most, but with friendly entertainment and Christian discourse and other real expressions of Christian love" (84). However, these beliefs also provided a great many excuses for such cruel actions and thoughts as can be seen when Bradford states: "But it pleased God, before they came half seas over, to smite this young man [a sailor who had been rude to the Pilgrims] with a grievous disease...." (85). This young man died a bitter death but no Christian love was given to him. Was this truly the action of a God of never-ending love?

These are attitudes that still can be seen even today in America and the world. Our world is not only ruled by ideas and beliefs but is made of these. Many gather under the beliefs of Christianity and other religions not only for comfort, but for unity. After September eleventh, many people were confused and hurt and took to the church to gather and seek comfort. But just as religion today is used to bring masses together, it is also used to justify outrageous acts. Many modern Christians actually believe that September eleventh was a result of an act of God. They feel that the tragedy of that day was not only right, but God was punishing America and New York City for their many sins.

War, death, and murder have plagued the history of the Americas, but have been explained and supported by European colonists as simply being the will of God. As Bradford wrote: "It was a fearful sight to see them [the natives] thus frying in the fire and the streams of blood quenching the same. . . but the victory seemed a sweet sacrifice, and they gave the praise thereof to God" (101). This was not only the mindset of these people but their truth. Such a gruesome and loathsome act, that if done unto them was seen as murderous, was seen as justifiable as it was the will of god. These natives were fighting a war against a nation of oppressive tyrants, doing only what was done to them and what they deemed necessary to survive. For this they were considered savages and beasts, but when the colonists did what they wanted, it was just water under the bridge. This habit of vengeance and the placing themselves above all others because of their religion appears many times. Even with members of their own faith they would be quick to persecute. One such case is Mrs. Hutchinson of Boston who dared to disagree with the views of the church. She was put on trial, and "The court proceeded and banished her," and "...because her sons would not agree to it, they were admonished also" (119). This yet again was not only seen as justifiable, but required as government and church existed as one. Even worse though was the silencing of the individual and stifling of human growth.

Unbelievable as it is, even today in the modern age war still wages on. President Bush is one of the most prestigious figures for using religion to help motivate and justify a war. From his famous lines of "This is a crusade on evil," President Bush tends to use many religious references to justify his actions. Many of today's terrorists feel that they are doing God's work and will, that they themselves are dying in the name of God, and that all U.S. citizens are evil. Isn't it funny how everyone wants to talk for God, but when it comes down to following every supposed divine word, they seem to forget them or bend them to their own wants. But thankfully the U.S. long ago divided government and church. Today we are not only free to express ourselves, but even to question such authorities as the church and, yes, even the government. Today we realize that no establishment is greater than the people.

Many things came to be in the glorious past of the U.S., but none so wicked as racism itself. Pilgrims and Puritans found it easy to disassociate themselves from other races as they thought of themselves as God's chosen. Racism wasn't an idea but a reality more extreme than what can be seen in modern day America. Not only did your background play a role with this hate, but so did your religious belief and homeland. The Americas were only fruitful and fit for habitation if devoid of all native inhabitants, or, simply stated, the people of the land were expendable because they were different from them. This view assisted in the many brutish acts done to the natives. Native Americans suffered so many atrocities. Mary Rowlandson describes the colonists' strategy: "It was thought, if their Corn were cut down, they would starve and die with hunger; and all their Corn that could be found was destroyed, and they driven from that little they had in store, into the Woods in the midst of Winter" (257). This could only be seen as the total attempt to murder and starve an entire people.

But this was the mindset of an entire nation; the original inhabitants were seen as "hell hounds," "wolves," "ravenous Beasts," and "barbarous creatures" (233). Even their kindness in war was of little interest, as when a brave "came to me and asked me, if I would have a Bible...I was glad of it" (237). Instead of gratitude, however, Mary Rowlandson's response was "... yet the lord would gather us together, and turn all those curses upon our enemies'...what a comfort it was to me" (237), as she read the scriptures of a Bible given to her by her supposed savage enemy. Even in times when faced with the reality of the humanity of the natives, the colonists turned to the Bible and declared the natives heathens and unfit.

Racism is a reoccurring subject throughout U.S. history. Modern society struggles with the battle to do away with racism but, in a way, it's doomed to failure. People find many ways to condone it, and a popular manner is the usage of the scriptures. Pilgrims took this tool in their hands and used it successfully to begin the massacre of the natives, and today, to our sorrow, others follow in their footsteps. Native American tribes have been scattered by this ignorant view, and many have suffered the loss of their lands, culture, and livelihood. Today we still see its toll as these people live on small reservations of land, cut off from the world they once knew. And, even worse, our society still retains the ignorance born in its colonial past as religious fanatics still try to stifle human expression, individuality and, yes, even the expansion of knowledge.

America has become what it is today through the many cultures and views brought into it. We have learned to accept other races and cultures due to the many wars fought for the right to live and be free. But at times certain views have brought us many problems and started negative trends that last till today. The Pilgrims and Puritans lived and breathed such ideas as fit them and only them. So much life was lost due to ignorance bred through ideas of superiority by these people. The consequences are still seen today as Native Americans and African Americans have just started to heal from the scars of racism and genocide. Still these errors have led to many good changes within the framework of our society: freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and the pursuit of happiness are just a few. It's only natural for problems to occur as a country grows, but learning from these mistakes and changing are all that can be expected.

#### Reference

All citations from McMichael, George (Ed.), *Anthology of American Literature*, Vol. I, 8<sup>th</sup> ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2004) .

# The Magic of Antoni Gaudi

Jesmin Aktar

When I was first assigned to write on Antoni Gaudi (1852 – 1926) of Barcelona, I abhorred the topic. I imagined Gaudi as a typical back-in-the-day architect who repetitiously used elements of Roman architecture. I was stereotyping because Roman and medieval architecture were popular in the nineteenth century. However, when I did the research, I was awed. Gaudi created odd designs and informal shapes, which most architects would typically level out. Despite the fact that he may have been color blind, he showed the world that he could create magic. His magic was to incorporate natural figures into his buildings and colorful tiles in exteriors and interiors. When he used to take his morning walks, he would carefully observe nature, especially how trees or animals stood upright. Because his styles are abstracted from nature, his works are original and organic. For this reason his art is called Catalan Art Nouveau.

Antoni Gaudi grew up in Tarragona, in Catalonia, Spain. His father was a coppersmith. He studied at the Escola Superior d'Arquitectura in Barcelona. At that time, Europe was looking for its identity through a unique architecture. The Catalans mixed local Gothic and Islamic art in their new design, which became the Catalan architecture. Because Gaudi's family was poor, he was given an allowance to work with several architects. One of them was Joan Martorell by whom he was inspired to use Gothic and Islamic design in his early works (Solas-Morales 17). Personally, Gaudi admired Violet-li-Duc's works because Violet-li-Duc revolutionized Gothic's heavy supporting structures into autonomous ones (10). In Paris, Violet-li-Duc designed stone domes surrounded with groin vaults without supporting columns. He used cast iron braces at the corners to support the building's weight (10). This is why Gaudi was inspired to establish alternative use of a structure. Although Gaudi's work was loathed by his peers, he had a fan who appreciated his strange designs, Eusebi Guell, an industrialist who supported Gaudi for Casa Mila and for many of Gaudi's other works.

"If Art Nouveau was a delicate flower, Gaudi was a jungle" is what one website says (McGee, <http://metropolis.co.jp/tokyo/505/art.asp>). The way Gaudi imitated nature can be fascinating to describe. If one takes Casa Mila, for example, and focuses on a particular space, he could personify that space several ways. I have read a few articles on Casa Mila. Just the carved balcony of Casa Mila was said to be the bird nest or the cave houses. I find the carved balcony looks like the hollow eyes of a skeleton. Also, "The facade itself glitters in numerous colours, and small round plates that look like fish scales are let into it" (<http://gaudi.hit.bg>). Moreover, since the building has no edges or corners, its

smoothness and curves suggest a “sea serpent” wriggling in a space. Another example of his design is Casa Batlo. As Rainer Zerbst says, the roof of Casa Batlo takes us to a “mythical world”; it has a ridge that looks like the “backbone of a dinosaur” ( Zerbst 176).

Architects may create new designs, but at some point they always refer back to historic architecture. In his projects, Gaudi experimented with Gothic, Islamic, and extravagant decorations. Gaudi’s work is incredibly artistic, especially the way he arranged tiles in the interior and on the exterior of buildings like a collage. This work is seen in Casa Mila, Casa Batlo, Park Guell, and Sagrada Familia; however Casa Vince (1883-1888) shows the mixture of Islamic architecture with Moorish minarets and pointed arches. Its black and white checkerboard design looks similar to the Islamic glazed tiles on the façade. We can also see some of his Gothic styles in Bishop’s Palace in Astorga, Spain, a huge structure with skinny windows, rose windows, and internal arches.

One of his successful creations due to Violet-li-Duc’s inspiration was the alteration of the flying buttress: the catenary arch. It is very interesting how he worked with simple devices that worked faster and more profoundly than powerful computers. He used rope and hung it from the ceiling, put weight on it, looked at the reflection in a mirror, and then inverted it. This became the catenary arch, which he used to determine complex curves for construction. The basic knowledge of the catenary is that all the elements on a hanging cable are in tension, so if we were to invert that cable then all of its elements would be in compression. If stone masonry is built, it needs great resistance from shear forces. If we place a catenary arch outside of the stone masonry, it will resist shear force. Then the structure will not fail due to structural failure; it may fail due to material failure, if the materials are not strong enough for the loads. It is evident how efficient the catenary arch is (Deville).

Gaudi spent a lot of his time coming up with effective structures. He figured out how to use iron in his rippled design. The wavy structure in Casa Mila basically consists of wrought iron girders and vaults that are supported by metal beams on brick, ashlar, and iron columns. He placed the girder in between the spans, which eliminated the load-bearing walls. To hold the façade, the rippled lintels are built into the stone and attached to girders. He commented that even if Casa Mila becomes a hotel someday, there would be no problem. Because there are no bearing walls, the walls he has in the building can simply be taken away ([www.gaudiclub.com](http://www.gaudiclub.com)).

Gaudi’s accomplishments did not come without a conflict with the law. When he was constructing Casa Mila in 1906, a column exceeded the one-meter limit on the sidewalk, which was not on the plan. The officials ordered the construction of Casa Mila stopped, but Gaudi refused to fix the problem, and instead continued his project. Then, the government threatened to cut down the column that exceeded the legal limit; Gaudi replied he would respect their decision and would put an inscription on the sidewalk explaining his motive. This wasn’t the end of his dilemma, however. Gaudi extended four meters on the building height, added volume of more than 4,000 square meters, and projected

the cornice past the limits. Because his building had unique aesthetic values, after many meetings with the officials, it was agreed that they would spare him ([www.gaudiclub.com](http://www.gaudiclub.com)). This proved how determined he was to keep his plan. Could anyone today take a chance like Gaudi?

Gaudi's most common decorative material was mosaic. His use of mosaic inside and out really takes me to his colorful magical world. In Casa Batlo, the mosaic in the entrance to the master bedroom balcony was made of recycled clay pipes, china, ceramic tiles, and glass to design the Spanish flower garden on the wall (<http://www.inspiredmosaics.co.uk/21.htm>). This is really elaborate and elegant work, rarely seen on such a large scale.

Gaudi said, "Only man drew straight lines. God and nature preferred curves" ([www.spanish-living.com](http://www.spanish-living.com)). And, yes, we can clearly see how strongly Gaudi felt about nature. Everywhere we step in his buildings, the design will remind us of caves, plants, and animals. Inside of Sagrada Familia, the columns look like the stem of a plant and the column capitals look like sunflowers that are branched out in four different directions. Now, I can see how important he is to architecture, and I am truly inspired by his magic.

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# Using Porous Silica To Treat Cancer: Our Research Experience

Lisalena Galarza and Victor Acevedo

Silicon is a common element found in the earth's crust, usually in the form of silicon oxides such as sand. Because silica is found in such large quantities, it is an inexpensive and convenient compound that may be used as a drug-delivery vehicle. In the presence of surfactants that generate air pockets and bubbles, fine pores can be introduced into silica, which may be used as an absorbent, catalyst, or a drug-delivery vehicle to treat diseased tissues. Silica that is synthesized with surfactants is known as synthetic silica and provides an increase in pore size that allows larger compounds to be loaded into the silica.

During the Fall 2006 semester, we took part in laboratory research by synthesizing porous silica as a way to deliver camptothecin (CPT), a fluorescent drug used to treat cancer. Treating cancer requires multiple drug dosing usually in the form of multiple drug injections. In the case of treating brain cancer, the skull and the blood-brain barrier both limit the feasibility of multiple drug dosing. Oral dosing by pills or capsules is not effective due to the blood-brain barrier where tight cell-to-cell junctions inhibit the passage of large soluble molecules. Physicians try to bypass this problem by administering larger drug doses that will elevate drug levels in the bloodstream in order to increase the chance that the drug will pass through the blood-brain barrier. Unfortunately, high levels of cancer drug in the bloodstream result in side effects such as vomiting, severe diarrhea, nausea, alopecia (hair loss), and other symptoms associated with most cancer drugs.

An alternative to administration of high drug doses and multiple drug injections is the implantation or administration of a one-time batch of silica particles loaded with cancer drug where it may be continuously and locally released at the disease site. The rate of controlled drug release from the porous silica depends on the number and size of the pores. For instance, silica particles with fewer pores and smaller pore size would provide slower controlled release of CPT than those silicas with many pores and larger pore sizes. Larger pore sizes enable freer mobility and movement of larger drug compounds through the pores. In contrast, smaller pore sizes place greater constraints on the mobility and release of larger drug molecules.

The only problem with CPT is that in the presence of plasma, it converts to the carboxylate isomer, which results in greater side effects in patients. However, the -OH group at the C-20 of CPT may be bound to silica particles modified with an acid chloride -COCl surface group. The reaction results in an ester that stabilizes the active therapeutic CPT lactone isomer. Since CPT fluoresces, the amount of drug released from the silica particles into buffers, cells, and tissues may be measured with a fluorimeter. Both the conjugation of CPT to silica to stabilize the active CPT lactone and the continual drug release from silica particles together would provide a more effective way of treating cancer than multiple drug injections with an inactive CPT carboxylate not attached to silica.

We did online research by reading scientific articles to understand the theory behind using polymers for drug delivery to treat cancer. Then we went to College of Staten Island (CSI) laboratory safety training to learn how to handle chemicals and work safely in a lab. We did hands-on laboratory work for a week at CSI. We synthesized Santa Barbara-15 (SBA-15) that has small pore sizes of 5-20 nanometers and Mesocellular Foam (MCF) that has larger pore sizes of 20-50 nanometers. The different pore sizes allowed us to experiment with which pore sizes would be best for the delivery of camptothecin to tumors.

From the first day, we were expected to wear safety goggles, lab coat, and gloves, as instructed at our lab safety training. In our MCF experiment, we used an electronic balance to weigh the mass of different chemicals. We determined what volume of 1.97 M HCl and deionized water (dH<sub>2</sub>O) was needed to generate 75 ml of 1.60 M HCl. Professor Ying helped us understand various chemistry terms and provided us with formulas and equations to help us perform these scientific calculations. Once we generated 1.60 M HCl, we used a magnetic stirrer hot plate to mix the solutions at 40°C, which was set by adjusting the heating knob. We added 2.00 g of Pluronic P123 three unit copolymer surfactant to 75 ml of 1.60 M HCl and Ammonium Fluoride (NH<sub>4</sub>F) swelling agent. It took us about 2 hours to dissolve P123 in HCl solution at 40°C. We added 1, 3, 5-trimethylbenzene (TMB) swelling agent and then immediately added tetraethyl orthosilicate (TEOS) silica compound. For both the TMB and the TEOS, we used a P5000 micropipette to add the correct volume of solution. We let the solution stir overnight.

On the second day, we placed the capped propylene bottle of MCF solution into an oven at 100°C for 24 hours. On the third day, we took the solution out of the oven and let it cool to room temperature for half an hour. Then we filtered and washed the solution using a vacuum funnel setup. The precipitate was a white powder, which was dried in the fume hood at room temperature for 1 hour and then placed into the vacuum oven at -25 mm Hg pressure and 60°C for further drying. The process of filtrating a solution using the vacuum filter setup to collect the MCF product was fascinating to us.

The first three days included the general steps in synthesizing porous silica. The MCF synthesis had to be performed accurately and precisely to ensure uniform silica pore sizes. We practiced synthesizing these silicas over

and over again until we could reproduce batches with similar pore sizes every time. This ensured that each batch we used would have reproducible results in the rate of drug release, which will be important in testing the therapeutic effects of cancer drug release on tumors.

This experience has been not only rewarding, but inspiring to us. We were able to have real life experience in the laboratory and see what scientists actually do when a new medicine or product is made. We now value the work of scientists more because we have experienced the challenges of performing experiments in a laboratory setting. Our research, which is to use drug-loaded silica particles to treat cancer, is just at the beginning stage. We have focused our efforts on the first step in synthesizing these silicas. However, we still have much more to learn and to do in this project. We will focus on the next steps of conjugating these silicas to CPT, studying the rates of drug release, and testing this drug-delivery method in tumor cell lines to treat cancer. This research has been so inspiring to us that we both would like to continue our work on it.

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# Sunday Suffocation

Olendi Saavedra

I work in a Mexican deli and grocery in the Bronx on Jerome Avenue and 193<sup>rd</sup> Street, where you can find a variety of Mexican products as well as Avon beauty products for men and women. Outside the place you see two quarter machines: a metal rocking horse, and a vending machine where you get small toys. Above them, you can see the big sign colored like the Mexican flag: green, white, and red with the name, “La Azteca Deli & Grocery,” and some information on what we have inside. Two parts of the sign are covered with tape which is peeling off; they say cigarettes and cold beer. The owner says selling these products only led to trouble. When you go in, you hear little bells on the steel frame of the door hit against the glass. This is very helpful to get our attention and let us know someone is inside since the store is narrow and long and at times we are working in the back.

I notice the first thing a customer does is walk in slowly and look all around because the walls are covered with Latin music CDs and T-shirts that have religious and Mexican phrases and images. Hanging from the ceiling are Mexican soccer jerseys and star-shaped piñatas. The white wooden shelves reach almost to the ceiling and contain canned Goya beans, canned spicy sauces, coin banks shaped like pigs and bulls, and many more products; I have to remember the prices of all of them. The counter is a bullet-proof display case that can hold Mexican candy and has an opening where people place products; it’s annoying since I have to bend down in order to see and speak to the person. In the middle of the store there are packs of seven brands of tortillas, fresh and dried spices, avocados, red and green tomatoes, fresh nopals, apples, fresh cilantro, and dried herbs. In the back are three refrigerators filled with white cheese, sodas, juices, water, milk, Mexican cream, yogurt, and meat products. The store is very colorful with a mixture of smells and the sound of Mexican music, and right now it’s cold because we don’t get heat.

On the weekdays business is slow unless there is a Mexican holiday with big dinners and celebrations needing special kinds of products like piñatas and clothes for Niño Dios or Baby Jesus. The weekends, like holidays, are never slow. The weekends are the busiest days because we sell food such as tamales, boiled corn, tacos of goat meat, consommé, and hot drinks. The store gets really packed and we have to work quickly. Only two people are working there, the owner and me. We have to prepare the day before by stocking up completely since we are going to be busy and won't have time to be searching or getting products. Across from the counter are two display cases that have Mexican bread and Avon products inside, and on top is the coffee maker, but on the weekends, the top is cleared to serve people and the homemade green and red sauces are placed there for the tacos.

The most difficult day is Sunday because it's the day most people are not working and families or groups of friends are outside together. I have to help the fifty-year-old owner open until her boyfriend comes back from Mexico and because she's family, but when we go to open there are some people already waiting, so I feel pressure to open up fast. I come in quickly with seven big hot pots and put them behind the two display cases and on my last arrival there are people already inside ordering what they want and I see the owner cutting meat and heating tortillas for tacos. I go to the counter when people are ready to pay or people are shopping for groceries. I have to move fast and the things that slow me down are not having change and going next door for change, waiting for the EBT (Food Stamps) machine due to phone calls, and writing a receipt for people who want it because we don't have a cash register, only a calculator. The line is sometimes long and I need help, but the owner also is needing help and I feel the pressure of moving fast. I also have to be aware of people not paying for something they ate so I have to call the owner to ask how much they have to pay, but the regular customers who come are helpful to us by being honest. There are some people who come in and try to trick me, but most of the time I notice because I have observed them and just remind them or charge them. Some of the calculations I do in my head since I am good in math, which is fine, until someone says they want me to show them the calculations and tell them each of the prices and wait until they calculate it. At this point, I feel frustrated because then they complain to the owner that some prices are too high. I feel like saying "you cheap bastard," but then I think "whatever" and just get annoyed because I know our prices are cheaper than other stores since the owner sends me to check their prices, especially the new Mexican store on Fordham Road. I don't really talk back to people because I am respectful of people's opinions, unless they start to do something physical to me or others.

Sunday is the worst because it gets so packed that I hear people talking, babies crying, the sound of the bells, laughing, and so many people everywhere that I can't go to the owner to ask for prices I forget or orders people gave me on the phone. I have to whistle to get the owner's attention or she whistles to get me, to get her more white cheese, for instance. As I hear the bell keep ringing because people keep coming in, I feel like closing the door and stomping the bell

to the floor, but I put my hand in my face, and sigh in frustration. At times, I hear my stomach groan because sometimes I don't eat until the afternoon. As I look outside the counter I feel like I am going to suffocate in the ocean of people and the frustration, but I have to smile. I don't mind doing this because the regular customers make jokes and there is laughter and joy, so I feel I get some air in the thick air inside the store. Most of the times in the afternoon there is no more food because we are sold out and when this happens I feel thankful to God because now I have help on the counter. I feel happy when the ocean of people starts to become a river at the end of the day. Almost every Sunday I play with two little kids that come with their mother to the store to buy groceries, and I feel happy. Then I start to sweep and mop the store because we close at 8:45pm.

# Erasmus Hall

Brian O'Daly

The mention of Erasmus Hall in *A Short and Remarkable History of New York City* brought back a flood of memories. I attended Erasmus Hall High School way back in the nineteen sixties, after it had been rebuilt in the twenties to accommodate the ever-growing number of young students entering New York's expanding public school system. Erasmus Hall as I knew it was a multi-story, stone and steel Gothic-styled structure, capable of handling a large student body. As you entered beneath the high Romanesque archway, you came upon an imposing rectangular shaped campus surrounded on all sides by reddish stone-faced buildings, which gave you the sense of being transported into some parallel academic universe away from the cacophony of sounds on the street outside; but what really let you know that your transition from the ordinary was complete was the guardian of this pedagogic universe. There he was, right under the archway as you entered, right there in your face; the campus and buildings behind him nothing more than a background to the imposing foreground of intellectual imperium he exuded. Larger than life itself and more challenging than a Phi Beta Kappa IQ, stood a monumental statue of Desiderius Erasmus himself, the renowned Dutch scholar and theologian of the Renaissance. The statue was imposing enough to stop Attila the Hun in his tracks. It was huge, and its gleaming gilded bronze surface refracted light around it like a shining celestial halo. The classically sculptured figure showed the formidable scholar in a sitting position, deeply engrossed in an opened book which he held with both hands in his lap. Draped in flowing, broad shouldered robes, with his wide staring eyes and aquiline nose focused downward into the book he was reading, the figure radiated a timeless impression of gigantic intellectualism and profound scholarship. However, for a fourteen-year-old high school freshman such as

myself, the impression that hit me was one of profound foreboding. Did I have what it took to make it in this place?

There was always a crowd of students around the statue, it was the center for everything: meetings, sports discussions, gossip, and all forms of social interchange. Students would throw pennies at the statue trying to get the pennies into the book Erasmus was reading. If the pennies landed in the book, it would bring the student good luck on exams and assure a passing grade. Needless to say, I enjoyed this tradition very much and thought of it as a sure way of getting through high school. Some of the older guys swore by this penny tossing ritual as the route to academic success. I became an expert penny thrower. My mother was constantly finding pennies in my pants and shirts when she did the laundry: penny throwing replaced studying. Basically my idea of high school consisted of being accepted by my peers. Personal image and social acceptance were important to me because the student body was large and broken down by the hierarchy of age. The age parameters ran from as young as thirteen to as old as eighteen, and the most admired and respected students were those that had the size, strength, and physical talent to make the school sports teams (especially the football team) number one in the borough standings. Superior athletes were always held in awe by the contemporary student body. Being the best penny thrower gave me a modicum of recognition, especially with the jocks because these guys were always trying to get pennies into Erasmus's book for luck with everything from sports to romance and academics. My unique talent provided me with the opportunity to get to know all the jocks in the school, even though they were older than me. It was great. I went to all the games, football and basketball, I even hung out with them sometimes, I was like a kid brother who they weren't responsible for. Unfortunately for me though, my grades were not that great, and the ominous image of Erasmus began to appear in my dreams at night warning me that underneath all this social artificiality was the need to perform academically. After all, every student was required to meet at least a minimum level of academic accomplishment in order to be promoted and graduate from high school. All the sports, social activity, and personal acceptance of your peers notwithstanding, the grim underlying message I was starting to get was that if you do not pass your academic subjects, you will never graduate; worse yet, you could be booted out. One day I met one of the jocks I knew who was on both the school football and baseball teams. He told me he was not going to go into school to take any of his tests until he got at least ten pennies into the book Erasmus was holding. He said he was in trouble at home with his father who did not give a damn about sports and would insist on his going into the army if he could not graduate high school on schedule. I felt bad for him because I knew that many of the sports superstars in school were lacking in the area of academic achievement, and some were so far behind they would be lucky to make it to graduation.

By mid-September of my sophomore year I was failing two subjects due to lack of attendance and had borderline grades in the others; my arrow of academic performance was aimed downward, not upward. Time was running out, I would not be able to hold out much longer, sooner or later, my father would get

wind of how badly I was doing and that was something I definitely did not want to happen. The good life would be over. My dad was the kind of guy who took great pride in winning the Dept. of Sanitation award for the best prepared and contained garbage in our neighborhood. Failing in high school was something he would not take lightly. It would be either the military for me, or living with my uncle Patrick until I was “straightened out.” Uncle Patrick was my dad’s older brother, a retired professor from Trinity College in Ireland, who did pro bono work for the Archdiocese of New York in return for living expenses and housing. He was a widower with two grown sons, one a doctor and the other a priest. He lived alone in a two-story house full of books, no tv was allowed, and his key enjoyment in life was the subway ride back and forth to the libraries and research institutions he liked to frequent in Manhattan six days a week. The only day he took off was Sunday in order to attend services to show his respect for the Almighty. He also had a big German Shepherd named Ramo. He got the dog as a puppy from a carpenter in the neighborhood whose kid he tutored in mathematics. Ramo could fetch anything, my uncle’s pipe, his slippers, even the *Sunday Times*; one time he even tried to fetch my sneakers with me still in them. Actually, at that stage in my life, it was a toss-up as to who was smarter, Ramo or me. The specter of living with Uncle Patrick until I was “straightened out” was a daunting prospect that haunted me day and night. I began meeting the mailman every day, deathly afraid that a notice from school would get through to my father informing him of my underwhelming academic performance before I could intercept it.

I desperately wanted to stay in school without having to subordinate myself to the monastic “straightening out” process Uncle Patrick had in store for me, but I knew I lacked both the will and commitment to do it on my own. Finally, I was called to the office of Mrs. Bronstein, the student guidance counselor. Mrs. Bronstein could be best described as being firm, but fair. She informed me that I was at a critical stage in my life, which due to the natural forces of nature that affected boys of my age, led me to making the wrong choices when it came to decisions regarding educational requirements as opposed to social pursuits. She knew this because she had raised three boys of her own, “and was well aware of the social temptations and peer pressures that negatively impact good school work.” She further informed me that in order to correct these negative forces that I was subject to, she was transferring me from the formal student body to the special program conducted by Mr. Daniel Shanman, Dean of Boys for Erasmus Hall High School, under whose guidance and supervision she was sure that I would regain the intellectual inspiration and perspective needed to attain admission back into the formal student body. I was to report to Dean Shanman’s office the following day.

Dan (The Man) Shanman, was well known on campus. He was not a member of the formal teaching staff, he was more of an administrative enforcer. His program was the last stop for every hard case misfit in the school. Those that made it through went on to higher horizons, those that didn’t went out. The rumor was that he had been either a college wrestling coach or Marine drill

instructor. He wasn't called "The Man" for nothing. He was six foot four and weighed about two thirty. He had broad shoulders, a narrow waist and huge hands; he was all muscle, no fat, with square Romanesque features and piercing blue eyes. He had a way of looking you straight in the eye and affecting a quizzical grin that exposed a set of even white teeth when he knew you were lying to him. He always wore a suit (winter or summer) with suspenders and a bow tie. He provided me with all the intellectual inspiration I needed the first day I went to his office. He was sitting at his desk questioning two tough guys I knew from the football team who were part of his special group of students. They had been caught drinking beer in the swimming pool locker room. Dan the Man had their six empty beer cans lined up along the left side of his desk. When I entered the room he told me to take a seat on the couch across from the boys who were sitting in the two chairs facing this desk. The office was pretty big, the couch was about fifteen feet from Shanman's desk, flush up against a side wall, with a large picture window built into it that provided a panoramic view of the campus below and the monumental statue of Erasmus. Between the couch I was sitting on and the picture window to my right sat a small waste paper basket about eighteen inches high and a foot in diameter. As he continued questioning the boys, Dan the Man would take a can of beer from his desk with his left hand, crush it, then flip the crushed can to his right hand, and nonchalantly fire it across the room where it ricocheted off the surface of the wall and landed in the waste paper basket next to the couch I was sitting on. It was all done in one swift motion, and was a mind-bending attention getter. I sat transfixed, fused to the couch, unable to move a muscle in my body as each can exploded in his hand with a loud pop, rocketed across the room and slammed off the wall next to me, landing unerringly in the waste paper basket. The two boys who had been denying everything began falling apart like a pair of cheap suits at a dance. Dean Shanman still had three cans to go when they began confessing everything and started apologizing profusely for their miscreant behavior, swearing they would never violate school rules and regulations again. Shanman ended the interview by telling them he was going to take them at their word and give them a second chance simply because their grade records had shown a marked improvement since entering the program. "But if you guys screw up again it won't be empty beer cans that go into the basket next time." The boys went on thanking him profusely as they stumbled over each other leaving his office. The room fell deathly silent as Dan the Man turned around and fixed his steely blues eyes on me. My knees were knocking so loudly I thought he could hear them. Slowly that enigmatic grin he was famous for spread across his face. "Does Muhammad come to the mountain, or does the mountain come to Muhammad?" he said. I got the message real fast, jumped from the couch, ran across his office and sat in one of the chairs the boys had recently vacated. "Bucky, that's what they call you, right?" "Yes, sir" I said, thinking how the hell did he know that. Then it dawned on me, he must have seen me everyday for the last eighteen months pitching pennies, cutting classes, and goofing off in front of the status of Erasmus. "Bucky, do you know what the real meaning of the opened book that Erasmus is

holding in his hands is?" I didn't, so I kept my mouth shut. "For your information, 'Bucky,' the iconography—that means the subject matter of the statue—is that reading is the key to knowledge, and knowledge is the key to freedom from tyranny. Now that you understand this, let me ask you one more question; do you want to learn something and graduate from here, or do you want to continue your desperate search for social acceptance by pitching pennies for the rest of your life? Tell me the truth, one short answer, yes or no. If your answer is yes, you will begin by reporting to this office one hour before classes each day and be prepared to stay one hour after classes as well." Like a paralyzed rabbit fixed in a cobra's glare, I looked directly into Dan the Man's feral blue eyes and said "Yes, I want to make it here." Somehow, the wave of insidious fear and nausea that had possessed me since entering his office vanished. That was it. From that instant on I was his man. Twice a day, five days a week, schedules and studies, finishing off a late Friday afternoon with a complete review of the week's work. It wasn't long before I was part of a self-supporting, dynamically unified unit with Dan the Man at the head. He was the Commander in Chief, and the last thing you wanted to do was let him down. Later in life I came to realize that he had a gift few people possess. He had the ability to empower people, influence and motivate them. I can still hear his voice now. "Pay the price, don't quit, do the right thing, I'm going all the way with you because I know you can do this." I literally sailed through the next two years at Erasmus Hall High School without a hitch.

June 1965 graduation day arrived before I knew it. I saw Dan the Man in the audience smiling and shaking hands with people. I knew this wasn't his thing, but as he often told me, "we all have to do what's expected of us." After the ceremony I went to his office to say goodbye. He asked me what my plans were. "The Marine Corps," I replied. "You are only a kid, go to college first." His response shocked me. He had a serious look on his face and said, "When are you scheduled to leave?" "This Monday, from Whitehall Street in Manhattan." "Oh, I forgot, you just turned eighteen and make all your own decisions now, that's why your father can't stop you, right?" "You got that right," I said laughingly. "Ok, big shot, if your mind is made up, let me be the first guy to buy you a beer." On the day of graduation, I had my first legitimate beer with Dan the Man. With the exception of my father, I respected him more than any adult I knew. Little did I know at that time that he would be right again and Vietnam would be a finishing school that would sorely tax my youth, brain, and brawn to the quick.

Four years later after being discharged at the Brooklyn Navy yard, I went to pay Dan the Man a visit at Erasmus Hall High School. He was not there. His old office was occupied by a guy named Bemis, whose title was Administrative Coordinator. When I asked him where I could find Mr. Shanman, the Dean of Boys, he stared at me strangely and said, "Did you serve with him?" "No, I was a student in his group when I attended school here," I replied. Bemis seemed dumbstruck and slightly disoriented, like a man who is not sure of what to do. "Please follow me," he said, and proceeded to take me across the hall to a small

gallery. Inside was a row of ten by twelve inch ornate frames with glass covers that contained glossy head shots. Above them there was a shining brass inlay with the words "IN MEMORY OF THOSE WHO SERVED." The photograph in the frame was one of those stylized things you see in a corporate prospectus which tells you nothing about the humanity of the man himself. The inscription below the photograph was painfully simple. "Daniel Isaac Shanman, Major in the United States Army, killed while on active duty in Vietnam, June 16, 1968. His service and commitment to his country was matched only by his dedication to the students of Erasmus Hall High School." Dan The Man would have like that.

# Harlem

Ingrid Jeannot

“What happens to a dream deferred?” asks Langston Hughes in his famous poem, “Harlem.” Hughes, one of the great black writers of the twentieth century, first moved to Harlem while studying at Columbia University, and his short opening question touches a very sore spot, the frustration of the African American community about not achieving the American dream in white America. With its mostly black population, Harlem became the center stage, and was full of emotions and tension during the 50s and 60s. In his poem, written in 1951, Hughes vividly describes this tension, which he sees increasing to the point of explosion. Like a pressure cooker, which withstands the slow build-up of an enormous force from the inside for a long time, but constantly seems on the verge of an explosion, Hughes’s poem evokes a similar tension, and leaves the question “Or does it explode?” (42) unanswered.

When walking around in Harlem today, do we still remember the struggles the African American community has gone through? Can we imagine the hopes many African Americans had moving to and living in Harlem, hopes and dreams of the realization of a color-blind community, and the desire to be accepted and treated equally with their “white brothers and sisters”? This vision was the trigger for the various movements within Harlem, beginning with the Harlem Renaissance in the 20s and 30s, then after World War II turning into the Civil Rights Movement, culminating in the 60s with the Black Power Movement. But there is more than meets the eye in Harlem, more than the movements and the struggles of the African Americans for equality. Harlem is a vibrant place, a community full of life, full of emotions, and full of families. In order to understand the complex aspects that are important to Harlem and the African American community, one needs to consider different angles from different moments in time. A very personal viewpoint is displayed in an unusual little book that Langston Hughes wrote together with the highly acclaimed photographer Roy DeCarava in 1955. *The Sweet Flypaper Of Life* captures the “normal life” of a Harlem family, in contrast to the tension pictured in Hughes’s poem “Harlem.” Gretchen S. Sorin, on the other hand, gives an overview of Harlem’s history in her 1997 essay, “The Capital of Black America.” Hughes’s

and DeCarava's personal experiences and viewpoints are explored in a 2001 essay by Cindy Dyson, "Biography of Langston Hughes: Worriation over a Poet," and a 2001 article by Michael Tierney, "Out of the Shadows." A final up-to-date perspective comes from a personal interview I held this year with Walter Hughes, an African American born in 1943 in South Carolina who settled in Harlem in 1948 and has lived there ever since. He very colorfully described his personal experiences and emotions towards his neighborhood.

Roy DeCarava and Langston Hughes, both African Americans with strong ties to Harlem and the African American community in New York, illustrate in *The Sweet Flypaper of Life* how Sister Mary Bradley's family, an average family, lived in Harlem during the 50s. Almost in the style of a family album, this short extraordinary book of 141 photographs accompanied by short pieces of text, tells its story through Sister Mary Bradley's eyes and voice. She is an old woman from South Carolina and feels very affectionate toward her diverse offspring. Through the pictures and text fragments, she introduces her family, which includes a diversity of people, some hard working, some who are abused, some she cares more about and others she doesn't have to care about. In addition to her private thoughts about members of her family, she also shares thoughts about political concerns, in particular the Supreme Court's decision on racial integration, and her work. Sister Mary Bradley has "always done day's work ever since [she] come to New York" (32). Despite the hard work she is doing and the weariness she feels after her hard day of work, she always tries "to change [her] clothes before [she] come[s] home, so's my grandchildren would see me looking fresh" (34) because she deeply loves her grandchildren. This small world covered in the story is a reflection of both the poverty and richness of an African American Harlemit's life. With its emphasis on the joy of being a part of a family, it clearly contrasts to Hughes's poem, "Harlem," and its emphasis on anxiety and frustration prevalent in black people's lives.

Sorin's essay, "The Capital of Black America," reflects the changes of the African American community in Harlem through the years from the 1920s until today. Harlem, which was and is still seen for some people as a "black ghetto" (17) "has been a place for American dreams" (17). The main idea of the inhabitants of Harlem was to establish a "color-blind community in a color-conscious world" (17). This dream was energized and evolved through different stages. Beginning in the 20s and 30s, with the Harlem Renaissance, the concept of the "New Negro" was announced. It was the vision realized in the "new" African American, who "had a sense of pride in African-American identity and was angry about being treated as a second-class citizen" (23). The Harlem Renaissance, a cultural and artistic outpouring, is seen as the first expression of the musical and literary equality of African Americans within the United States. And while there were certainly many events that led towards it, one of the most important triggers was the First World War, when black soldiers fought together with white soldiers, but were not rewarded with jobs and education like the white soldiers after they came home.

Sorin's history continues with a discussion of how World War II gave new ground for the "non-violent Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s" (27). During these two decades, the African American repeatedly pushed forward with marches and protests to fight for "equality, voting rights, and an end to segregation" (27). Led by famous men like Martin Luther King Jr., Adam Clayton Powell, and Malcolm X, the Civil Rights Movement eventually became successful and "brought some unexpected changes to Harlem's circumstances" (29). For the first time, a larger group of African Americans were able to achieve the social and economic success which had been withheld from them before. Ironically, as a result of this success, the new African American middle class moved out of Harlem. They wanted to enjoy their new wealth, and no longer be associated with an overcrowded ghetto, an environment which for them represented their unequal chances. Mainly the poor stayed behind, those who could not afford to move to one of the "better neighborhoods." Entire houses were abandoned by their owners, and were taken over by the Department of Housing in New York City. Even though "grass root organizations and churches" (29) worked hard to maintain Harlem and attract investors, it took until recently to rebuild the Harlem community, a community which is "the culture and history of this historic American place and the dreams that flourished here long ago and that flourish here still" (29).

As Cindy Dyson's essay makes clear, Langston Hughes stayed loyal to Harlem during this period even though Harlem was in the process of a "downward slide" (50). Dyson's essay quotes Hughes describing his feelings in a letter to a friend, saying, "I love Harlem. I've lived all over the world and I still find it's one of the most beautiful places I know" (50). Regardless of his love for Harlem, in 1966 Hughes had his famous character Jesse Simple move to a "white suburb" and then Hughes stopped writing Simple stories entirely. The Black Power Movement changed not only the ideas of the community, but also introduced a bitterness to it that worried Hughes. Nonetheless, Hughes then wrote "his most militant book of poetry...the book was Hughes's way of telling the younger generation that he was still there, still fighting" (51).

Today, says Dyson, Langston Hughes is still well-known and recognized for his notion of seeing people as people, independent of color and race. This notion, and the fact that he was one of the great African American writers at the time of the Civil Rights Movement, helped him to reach the peak of his career, when he "doubled his speaking fees and jumped into the fray" (49), as Dyson mentions in her essay. Being always a strong supporter of the N.A.A.C.P., he finally became awarded with the Annual Springarn Medal on June 26, 1960 after being ignored for many years. In his acceptance speech, as Dawson mentions, Hughes encouraged his colleagues to write black literature in order to reflect the feelings and the pride of black communities and to educate everyone, especially white people, "that colored Americans are like any other people; help our children to know our contribution to the struggle and development of America, and help white children gain respect for colored people" (49). But Hughes not only talked about his ideas of educating white people, he also lived and believed

these ideas. His approach of working together with white people, and recognizing people as people not “making a distinction based on color” (49) was undeniably a key part of his successful career.

Roy DeCarava, who shares Langston Hughes’s ideas and ideals, was born and grew up in Harlem during the 20s in the years of the Harlem Renaissance. In his interview with Michael Tierney, published in The Herald (Glasgow), DeCarava describes his experiences as an African American artist who likes to capture “the world he saw around him” in his photographs, a world that is “living, breathing, dancing, singing, painful and real Harlem” (14). DeCarava first encountered racism while presenting his photographs to white people and publishers in New York who “couldn’t deal with the subject matter,” which they felt was too “ethnic” (14). As mentioned in the interview, some of them blamed him for only taking pictures of African Americans.

DeCarava sees the United States as extremely racist. In the interview, he strongly emphasized the ideal of a color-blind world. He doesn’t want to accept a world based on race and color; he does not categorize people in black or white skin color, instead he said that he likes to see *his* world in different *shades of grey*. To him, the color *grey* represents neutrality, a humanity uncolored by a person’s race. To use DeCarava’s words quoted by Tierney, “Colour is the least important thing between human beings” (14).

Another person with this philosophy, and for many years an inhabitant of the African American community in Harlem, is Walter Hughes. Mr. Hughes, who is not related to Langston Hughes, was born in 1943 in South Carolina and moved to Harlem in 1948, where he still lives today. He is neither a famous writer nor photographer, but nevertheless an important institution to the people living around 120<sup>th</sup> Street between Lenox Avenue and Adam Clayton Powell Boulevard, where everybody just knows him as “Walter.” Mr. Hughes opened the interview with the interesting statement that “Changes are hard for the people in Harlem; they see the changes, but don’t know that they have to look at them different. A lot in people’s lives could become better, but it won’t, because people don’t change; they still live in 1950; they like to procrastinate.” Mr. Hughes experienced the different movements on the one hand as positive for himself, because he himself was flexible enough to adapt to the changes and thus was able to improve his life. On the other hand, he feels it was a “money maker”: good for the rich, but bad for the poor, who he considers the victims. The only people who had the power to fight for the poor, and to make the poor feel like they are people were Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Jr. But even though they fought for the poor, the “poor man was not ready for these changes. It feels almost that out of 100% African Americans, 20% like to accept these changes and use these changes for their own good, meanwhile the other 80% will stay where they are.” They will still go for easy-to-get jobs. Despite this, Mr. Hughes’s love of Harlem is extremely deep. While trying to find words to describe this love, his eyes and face transform into a dreamy expression. After a while he starts describing, still stumbling, and looking for the right words: “It is the people, the buildings, the streets, the feeling ‘I’m home.’ Everybody is still

doing what they did. It makes you cry, laugh, and sometimes feel sad. There is no place like Harlem. The feelings will never vanish, even if you go away for twenty-five years. There will always be a John and Annie who sit on the corner of the street and say hello to you. It's like being reborn!" And it is true, Harlem is a "rich" community, because the people living in Harlem take care of each other.

Living in Harlem for more than a year, I feel very close to the African American community. I am learning about the people, their history, and most important, their ideas. I also see that people like Langston Hughes, Roy DeCarava and Walter Hughes give me an appreciation of the complexity behind the African American community and Harlem and the community's own visions for the future. Hopefully, the "Harlem spirit" will stay alive, along with the vibrations so unique to this neighborhood. I hope Harlem will grow steadily without losing its extraordinary visions and feelings.

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# How to Become a New Yorker

Sean Ballantine

New York City is often considered one of the great cities of the world. It has a rich history, a variety of cultural backgrounds, and some of the grandest structures in the world. Naturally, thousands of immigrants have traveled great distances to be a part of such a magnificent city. But to truly become a New Yorker takes a lot more than just living in it. Colson Whitehead and John Steinbeck prove this in their essays, “The Colossus of New York,” and “The Making of a New Yorker.” In both these essays, and in another essay by Edwidge Danticat, “New York Was Our City on the Hill,” the authors show from their own experience that becoming a New Yorker happens in a variety of ways.

In “The Colossus of New York,” Colson Whitehead says that each individual person builds his own version of New York City based on his experiences while living there. This begins “the first time you lay your eyes on [New York City]” (6). Each experience is like a brick that will later transform into a city that only we can build (7). As Whitehead explains, when we first come to the city, we remember the things that are close to us, such as our apartment, school, or neighborhood grocery. As more people move into the city, our neighborhoods become more developed. Thus some of our favorite spots we enjoyed no longer exist physically, but remain fixed in our minds. So our New York then is how we remember it as we go along.

Whitehead says, “we become New Yorkers the day we realize that New York will go on with out us” (9). This quote helped me to realize that the city’s existence does not depend on us and that the places and things we cherish and love about New York City will someday be gone. As New Yorkers, we often take the city for granted and most people in general really never appreciate something until it’s gone. Acknowledging this fact can be difficult for some, as we wish we could stay forever, but it’s a reality we all must deal with.

John Steinbeck, another well-known writer, found it very difficult to assimilate himself into the urban culture of New York. This is partly due to the

fact that he'd never lived in a city before (11). Steinbeck's experience shows that the city doesn't accept just anyone unless you first can accept what the city offers. He found it hard to get accustomed to the people, sights, and sounds of New York City. In some ways, his difficulty in accepting the city kept him further away from it. Once he got over his fear of being lost or feeling misplaced, he was finally able to embrace the city. He finally became a New Yorker, and New York became his home.

Steinbeck describes the moment of becoming a New Yorker as a light going off in his head. He said "the realization happens in a flaming second" (15). This understanding came to him unexpectedly and he wasn't doing anything spectacular or noteworthy; he was just looking through a store window. This is different from Whitehead, who started becoming a New Yorker instantly. Rather, Steinbeck had lived in New York for some time and did not feel like he was a New Yorker. His acceptance into the city didn't happen until he felt everything fall into place in his life.

Edwidge Danticat, who wrote "New York Was Our City on the Hill," had another experience. She had parents who were immigrants from Haiti who would do anything to see that she and her brothers were cared for. They left the poverty and political turmoil of Haiti in order that Danticat's family would "have not only clothes and food and school fees but also a future" (69). Her mother even risked a stroke so that she could take care of her children. The parents' self-sacrificing attitude clearly showed that their children took first priority. They wanted to make sure that their children succeeded and lived out their dreams in New York. As Danticat said, "New York was our city on the hill, the imaginary haven of our lives" (69), and her parents dedicated themselves to making life for their children better.

From my personal experience I realized I was a New Yorker when, like Whitehead, I understood the city would one day go on without me. This happened last June when I graduated from high school. On my last day of school, I walked the exact same route to school, but something was different. It was as if I could remember myself walking to school four years earlier, looking forward to starting a new part in my life. It was the same experience except that this time, I realized how fast the time flew by as my high school career ended. This deeply saddened me. But I used this as an opportunity to reflect on what I planned to do for the rest of my life and that, no matter what, I wanted to fulfill my ambitions right here in New York. It welcomed me in like no other city I lived in before and could not have been a better fit for me.

When you look back and think about your New York experience, whether good or bad, you appreciate how unique New York City is. It is composed of many people who came here from other places. They probably didn't like it at first, but the longer they stayed, the more they enjoyed city life. And as they embraced New York City, the city became closer to them. Being in New York City is a remarkable experience that no one should go through life without, nor take for granted.

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# Underground

Clarence Leaphart, Jr.

Deep beneath the urban surface of the rough contours and craters that we generously call streets, the polluted liquid stagnation that we laughingly call rivers, and the densely over-populated land mass that we call New York City, lives a silver serpent.

There are many that have given, in my opinion as well as others, suspect accounts of encounters with the Loch Ness Monster, Sasquatch (Big Foot), and unidentified flying objects (UFO's). Some of those that have claimed to have seen UFO's have also spoken of their abduction, departure, and safe return. But all of these "eyewitnesses," and I use the term loosely, added together would not even approach the millions of people who have encountered the two-headed, at times elusive, silver serpent. It is widely known that there are more than just a few of these subterranean serpents in our city.

Some officials, I guess, in a scientific notation, have given these serpents numbers to keep a record of their movements in hopes of encountering them first hand. I don't consider myself an expert, but those like me, who have encountered one of these serpents on numerous occasions, will tell you that she is relentless. Many have told stories of trying to catch the beast, but that she would dart further and further away while her posterior-anterior head seemed to laugh as she escaped.

Rather than chronicle the accounts of others I will share with you my first hand knowledge of the underground serpent. She shares her burrow with vermin which must dreadfully fear her because when she approaches, they scamper with reckless abandon. On occasion I have seen men exploring in her burrow and heard her scream at them with a repeated loud, abbreviated, 1 kHz. blast. The men in their mining uniforms never challenge her; they respectfully let her pass and, when she has gone, they continue their exploration.

She has many portals through which you can enter her tough skin. Her stomach is unbelievable; it's bright with bacilli that you can use to hold onto until your moment of escape. Some choose to sit on her skeletal structure. She can apparently devour humans, but for some reason she can't digest them. She is almost like a cat which, for its own amusement, repeatedly tosses a dead mouse into the air. Anyone who has been sucked into one of her many portals will tell you what a strange experience it is. She is relatively graceful, the sort that regurgitates what she can't digest. We are all eventually excreted by choice or force. She rarely sleeps. Her labor is ceaseless. She has been sighted above ground in a few locations on various occasions but seems to prefer the earthen underworld.

She has taken the lives of a few unfortunate souls who ill-advisedly ventured too close to her. There have even been accounts of those who have stood in front of her as if their frail bodies could possibly slow this serpent. Ironically, she would eventually stop, but usually only after having taken the life of her unworthy opponent. She would lay dormant as she almost reverently permits the emergency personnel to respectfully remove the corpse from her domain. She would continue her journey. The serpent's movement has been charted, and though we know where she's going, few of us know how many of the serpents actually exist.

I guess our beloved Mayor, Michael Bloomberg, is a brave soul. He too enters a portal of the serpent they call six, every workday. I suspect that he wants the public to be assured that the serpent means us no harm. There is, though, an elusive one of the serpent sisters that not many have seen, but depose me if you must, I have seen her. She must be heavier than her sisters because she makes the ground shudder as if it's anguished. I've seen her eat on only one occasion. A conspiracy of silence, a shroud of secrecy, seems to surround this serpent. I believe that the governing body knows something more about her and is hiding it from us. I saw heavily armed paramilitary personnel enter her body from one of her rare portals with bags of guarded material. Armed personnel guarded the cubicle that apparently houses the desired offering that is fed to her. Unlike her sister serpents, she seems to get what she wants. But why then all the secrecy surrounding that one serpent that makes the ground shudder? I guess we will not know until they want us to know.

# Internship Journal: Advocacy and Outreach with Disenfranchised Communities and Undocumented Immigrants

Angela C. Romulus

Note: To protect confidentiality, names and specific locations have been omitted.

## The Agency

As a Human Services student, my aspirations for a professional career in this field motivated me to secure an internship with an agency which would provide both structure and the flexibility to accommodate new interests. I carefully explored my options and selected an agency which would provide opportunities to gain experience from a grassroots perspective, actively assisting clients to act as a community to take action on issues that affect them. This would be my first experience working with a community as the client.

The agency I selected follows the basic tenets of community organizing. The agency is extremely knowledgeable; it is strategically placed, and has equipped itself for the challenges of an ethnically and racially diverse geographic community. The agency is faith-based. It taps into the resources of the community to promote inclusion, and has implemented programs that reflect the diverse needs of a population of individuals and families who are homeless, hungry, or living with HIV/AIDS, as well as plagued by racial tension and discriminatory practices. The agency's hallmark is the comprehensive continuum of care it provides, such as intensive case management, mental health services, HIV prevention and education, alcohol and substance abuse counseling, domestic violence intervention, vocational training and job placement, emergency and transitional housing, emergency food and clothing, and immigration and legal services. The aim of the agency is to work with individuals and the community as a whole to achieve self-sufficiency and enhance quality of life. During my internship, I had numerous opportunities to apply theories and skills I learned in

school. My supervisor at the agency regularly shared her knowledge and expertise with me.

#### Anti-Violence Task Force Meeting

One of my first assignments was to attend, as an observer, a committee meeting of an anti-violence task force. This committee is spearheaded by the agency, and is usually chaired by my supervisor. The highest level of community law enforcement personnel, local politicians and representatives of the agency's Hispanic affiliate agency, community members, and representatives of the agency's high-school-based initiative program were in attendance. The primary objectives of the meeting were to review the racially motivated death of an immigrant and to search for solutions that would promote intolerance of violence against individuals. Specific concerns addressed to the police were the response time by the police when immigrants report crimes, and the possibility of a language barrier between the police and victims when crimes or incidents are reported. The police refuted these concerns, citing a reputable record of adequate response time and efficient operators available on every shift.

Initiating a task force to deal specifically with issues concerning violence is a typical example of the agency's influence in empowering and mobilizing the community to effect change. The collaborative teamwork of those present resulted in suggestions for solutions such as:

- 1) Implementing collaborative teamwork including extensive involvement of community leaders and professionals
- 2) Having the police visit schools and conduct meetings with students
- 3) Setting up mobile precincts in communities to strengthen police presence
- 4) Extending the agency's school-based programs to more schools to foster tolerance in schools and the community.

Other community meetings I attended sought specifically to address drug trafficking and related homicides in the community. Attending these meetings were top police personnel, district attorneys, politicians, the media, the clergy, community members, and, of course, representatives of the agency. Suggestions arrived at were:

- 1) Establish a task force to plan and carry out protests
- 2) Request police assistance in identifying known illegal drug locations, especially occupied or unoccupied buildings
- 3) Request each task force volunteer to make a one-year commitment to participate regularly in protests
- 4) Solicit the help of houses of worship to organize people from their congregations to join protests

## Immigration Rally

The first immigration rally I attended addressed the general discrimination against immigrants in the borough, and the ongoing issues of planned federal immigration reform and its effect on the millions of undocumented immigrants in the U.S. I utilized the agency's database to mail letters to religious institutions, politicians, businesses, stakeholders, schools, and community members. At the rally I distributed brochures outlining the legal advocacy services the agency provides. Representatives of the clergy, politicians, local community organizations, school officials, students and the general community attended the rally.

The Latino/Hispanic, and in particular the Mexican community, was well represented, making not only their presence felt, but their voices heard. A similar scenario was repeated at a later immigration forum. The Mexican community, by all indications, appears to be the only immigrant group which is highly proactive in dealing with and attacking policies deemed to be detrimental to their well-being. Despite concerted efforts by the agency, including preparing fliers regarding forums in the immigrants' native languages, response from other ethnic groups has been minimal. My supervisor explained the frustration experienced when some institutions are invited to become members of the agency's broad-based initiative, and don't join. Many of these institutions have a growing number of clients who are immigrants, including those who are undocumented. Some institutions have reluctantly joined but only years after initial contact.

## Clergy Leadership Team: From Bias to Tolerance and Trust

One of the most effective committees of the agency is the Clergy Leadership team, an offspring of the borough's first anti-bias summit. The aim of the leadership is to educate the community on the virtues of inclusivity, tolerance, and hospitality.

At a meeting I attended, the leadership addressed concerns plaguing the borough, and identified areas of action and policy changes necessary to effect changes. My supervisor recapped for my benefit, and for clergy members attending for the first time, some issues which had spurred the formation of the clergy leadership alliance. The main issue was the bias incident when a young black male was killed by white males. A solution summit was called based on the theme, "From Bias to Tolerance and Trust." Out of the summit the following committees were formed: civic, youth, teacher, and interfaith.

Discussion at the meeting centered on whether the leadership would succeed in using its abilities to effect change. In their capacity as change agents, the leaders agreed they needed the participation of racially or economically homogeneous churches in the borough. The following measures were suggested:

- 1) Contact the Housing Preservation department in attempt to preserve affordable housing units slated for demolition
- 2) Look into which other housing programs are slated to lose public funding (It was aired at the meeting that the federal government intends to privatize public housing.)
- 3) Advocate for former residents who were relocated to different locations, to have the “right of return” under section 8 guidelines
- 4) Advocate for accessible health care for the poor
- 5) Advocate for wage increases to reflect the realities of the cost of living
- 6) Set up a racial bias hot line in cooperation with police; publicize through affiliates and encourage victims to call; contact businesses regarding sponsorship of the hot line
- 7) Look into plans by Department of Youth and Community Development to eliminate the immigrant youth budget. The agency currently utilizes the immigrant youth budget for afternoon activities for youths of all ethnicities; need clergy to write letter on the importance of continuing to allocate funds to this budget
- 8) Raise the consciousness of the homogeneous churches of the community; problems exist in their communities as well, but are hidden
- 9) Invite the clergy of the homogeneous communities to a “needs and gifts” meeting
- 10) Invite these clergy to do a self-assessment of their needs, to identify their own needs first, which could be: lack of affordable housing, mental health issues, and under-employment
- 11) The clergy leadership will assist in implementing strategies to help meet those needs
- 12) The gifts to the leadership from the clergy of the homogeneous churches would be to help eradicate poverty by combining efforts as a unified, not as a racially divided, community.

A clergy breakfast to discuss these issues and establish what gifts and services each group could offer for these collaborative endeavors is tentatively scheduled for early this year.

The agency’s individual consumers and families are a racially and ethnically diverse group of people who rely on the agency to provide services to ease their social needs. I had the opportunity to observe the agency advocate for a group of its consumers who would be subjected to intended new legislation regarding their housing benefits. Within days after the intended legislation was announced, the agency’s team of case managers contacted their respective consumers to advise them of the changes. Constant dialogue between clients, case managers, and the agency’s legal department ensued thereafter. An emergency luncheon meeting was called. Consumers, case managers, and representatives from the agency’s legal department attended the meeting. Protests and letter-writing to local politicians were measures agreed upon.

## Conclusion

During this internship I have seen communities desperate for solutions to their problems.

Despite the differences in attendees' ethnicities, I observed active collaboration among members at all the meetings I attended. I learned, first hand, about some of the difficulties many immigrants experience due to discrimination, language barriers, and legal status. My experience also made me aware that many communities in New York and nationwide are faced with similar problems, and yet there does not appear to be a formal unified plan to address these issues.

More than forty percent of immigrants residing in the community are undocumented. The agency has assumed the role of chief advocate for these immigrants. By utilizing its well established broad-based network of religious institutions, human service agencies, civic associations serving undocumented immigrants, colleges, politicians, the media and volunteers, the agency is recognized as an authority on immigration matters and a primary vehicle through which common areas of concern regarding undocumented immigrants are dealt with collectively. The agency is actively engaged in initiating and organizing immigration rallies and forums.

In retrospect, I conclude that the agency's strength is undoubtedly in its ability to collaborate effectively through its broad-based coalitions. I have witnessed the aggressive efforts of individuals who have the daunting task of attempting to eradicate anti-immigrant discriminatory practices and racial bias in the community. Meetings are held frequently, and issues and the barriers associated with them are analyzed and addressed effectively.

On a personal level, my experiences at the agency have also made me aware of my own inadequacies and limitations. Too often I am faced with language barriers, as I am unable to communicate effectively with the agency's diverse population. This has restricted me to some extent in effectively carrying out my tasks. As part of my professional development, I will continue to look for opportunities to learn the language and cultural competency skills I need to empower consumers with diverse needs. Finally, I consider myself fortunate in having had the opportunity to experience community outreach work and advocacy from a grassroots perspective.

# Bicycle

David Guzman

*[Our scene opens in the early afternoon on a city street. Patrons venture in and out of music stores, banks, etc. A subway station on the corner has a chain across the entrance. We hear the sound of cars and honking. On occasion, some cars will have particularly loud music blasting out of their speakers.]*

*[Everybody onstage is jostling from one spot to the next, with the sole exception of a POLICE OFFICER, who stands with his arms folded, unmoved.]*

*[DAVID, a reluctant bicyclist, rushes past on the sidewalk, missing passersby. The police officer stirs, and shouts to the bicyclist once he's pedaled offstage.]*

**OFFICER:** Hey, kid! Get off the sidewalk!

**DAVID** *[still offstage]:* Wait! Hold on! Hold on! I'm stopping...

*[David, now on foot, wheels his bicycle onstage at a cautious pace to confront the police officer.]*

**OFFICER:** You can't do that.

**DAVID:** What?

**OFFICER:** You can't ride a bike on the sidewalk. You didn't know that?

**DAVID:** No, I didn't know. I wanted to stay on the sidewalk —I didn't want to get hit by a car or something.

**OFFICER:** Well, you can't very well ride your bike on the sidewalk on a street like this. Fulton Street's always busy, whether it's people shopping, people waiting for the bus, you know?

*[We hear a car pass. Its radio, presumably set to a hip-hop station, blasts "Window Shopper" by 50 Cent. David laughs.]*

**OFFICER:** What are you laughing at?

**DAVID:** Nothing. It's just that some guy's playing "Window Shopper" in his car. I think I have a new appreciation for why 50 Cent hates window shoppers so much—they just stand in the middle of the goddamned sidewalk while you've got to get somewhere. The sidewalk was fine until I got to Fulton Street—now it's like a living obstacle course.

**OFFICER:** That's exactly why I don't want you riding on the sidewalk with that thing. It's against the law. You should be wearing a helmet, too.

**DAVID:** I don't know where my helmet is. I was in such a rush to get out of the house that I didn't even look for it.

**OFFICER:** Who rides a bicycle in December, anyway?

**DAVID:** I have to ride my bicycle. I don't have a choice because of the MTA Strike. Hell, the subway is bad enough when the trains are running. You've probably seen a dozen people on bikes today already, anyway.

**OFFICER:** Some. I didn't know why until you pointed that out to me just now. The thing is, all the bicyclists I saw had the sense to ride in the street to avoid pedestrians. Besides, why didn't you just drive?

**DAVID:** I'm not going to drive with all this traffic. I don't even have a license.

**OFFICER:** What, did it get suspended or something?

**DAVID** [*lightly insulted*]: No. I never learned.

**OFFICER:** You couldn't get anybody else to drive you?

**DAVID:** I asked my parents and my grandfather. They all said I should stay home, even though it was finals week.

**OFFICER:** Aren't the colleges closed?

**DAVID:** Most are. Everyone said mine would be. I suppose everyone was wrong.

*[Another car passes, blasting music by The Beatles (?!). "The Long And Winding Road" is played at a confident volume. David laughs again.]*

**OFFICER:** What's so funny this time?

**DAVID:** The oldies station. They're playing "The Long And Winding Road" by the Beatles. Seems like kind of a tease—here I am, pedaling on this long and winding road to take finals. John, Paul, George, and Ringo. [*To no one in particular*] I don't know if the four of you can hear me back there in 1970, but you guys get knocked out of the number one spot by a bunch of kids from Motown. That's not even the clincher, this is the clincher—the lead singer of that group goes on to buy the rights to all your songs. Just so you know; just so I'm not the only one today who feels like garbage.

**OFFICER:** Are you talking to the Beatles or something?

**DAVID:** I'm talking to myself—it helps me think.

**OFFICER:** Well, if you're out here on a bicycle instead of at home, you need to think harder. What area did you come from?

**DAVID:** I live in Bensonhurst.

**OFFICER:** That's far.

**DAVID:** Still Brooklyn.

**OFFICER:** So how far away is your school?

**DAVID:** It's the New York City College Of Technology—it's only a few blocks away, on Jay Street.

**OFFICER:** Well, don't ride on the sidewalk, even if it is only a few blocks away.

**DAVID:** Never mind. I'm so close now, I'm just going to walk. There's too much traffic here to ride, anyway.

**OFFICER:** Fine, then. Just remember what I told you.

*[David wheels his bicycle offstage as the lights fade.]*

# Rice

Atsuko Okada

“There is nothing more cherished by the Japanese people than a bowl of freshly made rice” (Kaiser, 2004, p. 60). How does this author know my secret? I have traveled in many countries and tried many types of cuisine: American, Australian, Chinese, French, German, Greek, Spanish, Swiss, Taiwanese, and Thai. Here in New York, I have also enjoyed some other cuisines: Indian, Korean, Peruvian, Senegalese, and Turkish. I liked them all, and I sometimes wished that I could have grown up eating those foods, instead of Japanese cuisine. However, none of them gives me the strong feeling that rice, particularly, the Japonica variety—a short grain sticky rice—evokes. It is like an addiction, curse, or magic. Rice definitely has a magical effect on me; rice always brings my soul back to my family; it is the only thing that can symbolize my country in my mind; and I always miss its neutral taste when I eat foreign food.

The steam from my rice cooker makes me think about my family back home, just as Cabassac, the main character in *The Fly-Truffle*, can dream about his late wife when he eats truffles (Sobin, 1999). If I look back on my life, I do not have any particular memory of the people closest to me being connected to rice. Why does my brain connect rice to my family back home? I guess it is an imprinting effect. I have eaten rice every day, and often more than once each day, for over thirty years. Even though eating habits in Japan have been rapidly westernized since the 1980s, rice is always on our tables. Rice is like a port. It has the same function that my family has: making me comfortable, happy, and secure. Every time I have rice, I feel comfort, satisfaction, and security.

For me, rice symbolizes my country more than samurai, geisha, sushi, sake, or even the Emperor. Rice is, perhaps, the only food that has been a staple of Japanese cuisine for a thousand years. We use a word, *gohan*, to describe rice and also a particular meal; for example, breakfast is *asa-gohan*, lunch is *hiru-*

*gohan*, and dinner is *yoru-gohan*. We not only use rice for words, but also for making sake and rice-cake. Rice-cake, called *mochi*, is traditionally made at the end of December in order to celebrate the new year. Rice even appears in old expressions; spending time in a jail is called “eating stinky rice.” Rice is not a festive food, but as that expression suggests, rice is embedded quietly and deeply in Japanese culture.

Rice has a neutral flavor, yet the flavor constantly expresses itself by enhancing other flavors or making strong flavors mild. Foreign cuisine tends to have distinctive and rich flavors. I am becoming familiar with those dishes, but I always crave something that can work like rice in order to refresh my palate. Of course, foreign cuisine has some neutral-tasting foods, like pastas, salads, breads, and potatoes, but none of them completely satisfies my need. It is as if I still itch after applying Benadryl cream. Only rice can supply the missing part and create a perfect balance with main dishes.

Rice is a staple food for many countries (FAO, 2004). Rice is so ubiquitous that I did not even realize that rice had a mysterious power on me until I moved to a foreign county. Rice is deeply “engrained” in my heart. Every time I cook it, I see my family in the steam and imagine my country in my mind. Every time I have foreign cuisine, I unconsciously miss a bowl of rice. This is the magic power rice has over me.

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# Sea Urchins

Rokhaya Samba

I grew up with an exotic, magical food: the sea urchin.

I grew up in Senegal. My family lived on a small peninsula on the coast of Dakar. Sea urchin is a delicacy in my ethnic group, the *Lebou*, meaning fishermen. This exotic seafood is nicknamed “sea ice cream” because it is mainly a children’s delicacy. Every year from May to October, we would indulge ourselves with sea urchins even though we never knew their nutritional value. Sea urchins would vanish in the winter, but became very abundant in the summer at low tide. The harvest was thrilling for the simple reason that it was an initiation to a bigger step in life. We had to learn through trial and error how to amass them properly and alive. Also, the harvest was a way to get acquainted with the world of the sea.

When I was a youngster, every year I looked forward to summer vacation when I would get a sea urchin treat. The harvest of the truffles by Philippe Cabassac in *The Fly-Truffle* by Gustaf Sobin is similar to my experience with sea urchins. The main difference is that the truffles are underground and the urchins are in the ocean. Philippe used a whiskbroom, and I used an iron broom. His delicacy has the same characteristic as my childhood delicacy: the truffles like the sea urchins are a seasonal treat, and are consumed very fresh.

Since sea urchins have spines, gentleness was important in taking them off the rocks. We placed them in a floating bucket that was attached to our waist. We consumed the “sea ice cream” as a snack. Moreover, we used the harvest as a way to congregate on play days; I always harvested sea urchins with the neighbors’ children. As Kitter writes, food is often “used as a system of communication” (2004, p. 320). After the harvest, the sea urchin is roasted on a wood fire and then cracked like a coconut. The fun part was the revelation because you didn’t know how much was inside until it was cracked open. The taste is sea-salty, nothing exceptional about it. It was more about the ceremonial

harvest and the myths. Children believed that any time you eat a sea urchin, you have been kissed by a heavenly mermaid, and therefore you will never drown. This is comparable to Mr. Cabassac's dreams that he is kissing his late wife when he eats truffles.

My own story about this magical food came when, one day during the harvest, I slipped from a rock, and landed on sea urchin spines. Both my hands and feet were covered with spines, and when I returned home, my mother took some wheat dust mixed with water, and coated my hands and feet with it, then put on a bandage. Miraculously, two days later, all the spines were out of my skin.

These days the young generations are not steeped in the harvest of this magical food. Sea urchin has become more like a commodity than a delicacy with the arrival of Chinese commercial fishing boats. It saddens me that the authentic harvest of sea urchin by children has almost vanished.

Memories of my childhood are mostly accentuated by this delicacy. Even now all my dreams are linked to the ocean. Reading the story of Philippe Cabassac led me to believe that maybe there is a connection between my childhood delicacy and my dreams.

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# Sorrel Drink, A Christmas Treat

Tamara Chambers

In *The Fly-Truffle*, Gustaf Sobin mentions that in his family, “the truffle was considered a delicacy, and a seasonal treat.” Likewise, the sorrel drink is a rare and seasonal treat for most Jamaican families, including my own. As children, my sister and I were always excited to visit our grandmother around Christmas time to see the sorrel in full bloom in her fields. We were often given the task of picking the sorrel which we enjoyed because of its bright deep purple color. My sister and I would compete with each other to see who could pick the most. On Christmas eve, my grandmother would use the sorrel we picked to prepare the drink for the family. My sister and I were fascinated by this process and always watched.

In preparing the sorrel, my grandmother would put up a big pot of water to boil. She would gently wash the sorrel buds and when the water started to boil, she would place the buds in the boiling water with grated ginger. She would let the mixture simmer for a while. The combination of the sorrel and ginger boiling together released a pungent aroma, which usually left us all with a warm Christmasy feeling. Even though the sorrel-ginger aroma permeated the entire house, my sister and I would often go into the kitchen for a heady whiff of it.

After the mixture had simmered for a while, my grandmother would turn off the stove and let it cool. She would then sweeten it to taste with sugar, some Jamaican rum, and several types of wine. The amount of rum and wine that she added to the mixture determined its level of potency. For the children, including my sister and me, as well as for adults who did not drink alcoholic beverages, my grandmother would pour some of the sorrel drink into a different container before

adding the rum and wine. After the sweetening process, my grandmother would put the sorrel drink in the refrigerator to chill. For my sister and me, Christmas would never have been the same without my Grandmother's sorrel drink.

Now as an adult I reside in the United States. Nonetheless, my sister and I carry on my grandmother's tradition of preparing sorrel drink on Christmas eve. However, unlike in my childhood days, we can no longer go out to the fields to pick the buds. Instead, we buy dried sorrel buds at the Korean store. Overall, in addition to continuing my grandmother's tradition, and sharing it with friends, one of the perks of drinking sorrel at Christmas time is the fact that my sister and I are old enough now to have our sorrel drink with alcohol.

# The Hero in My Life

Evelyn Manzueta

I was only fourteen years old, and my neighbor's ninety-year-old mother had locked herself in the apartment next door. They didn't know what to do; everybody was just standing there trying to figure out how to open that door. I was trying to help. I tried opening the door with a knife, a metro card, an old credit card, but unfortunately, nothing worked. My neighbors were getting really worried. Our last hope was coming down the stairs, a five foot eleven 18-year-old male whose skin was as white as milk, making a sharp contrast with his very black mustache. His name was Joel Reyes, my second-floor neighbor who I found the ugliest guy I'd ever seen. After a while Joel finally opened the door and ended up being the hero of the situation, but in my eyes he was still an alien, the stranger from the second floor. Later on in life I realized that you shouldn't judge a book by its cover.

Joel has always been influenced by his parents. They always guided him to the right path and instilled in him good values and morals, and because of that, he was able to step away when bad influences came his way. Even as a teenager, Joel showed skills of leadership and, whether what he felt was right or wrong, he always stood up for what he believed and in the end he always seemed to make the right decisions. Today he has chosen a profession in which he is a believer and he has proven himself as a great support to his family.

Joel is the kind of person who likes to save money. He likes to look neat and he's always wearing the latest trends in fashion, however he never forgets that he has a family whose future he needs to secure. He's always thinking of what is best for his son. Every time Joel sets a goal in life he pursues it. As he would say, "I have a mission to accomplish." His current mission is to protect his son from anything and everything that represents a risk for his child's future. So there he is, doing his best; right now he's in Iraq fighting for his son, his family, his country, trying to stop the insurgents and terrorists from destroying America. He wants his son to have a safe place to grow up in, and Americans to have a more secure country.

When I first met him, he was just a teenager with no responsibilities. He was used to his parents giving him everything, and it's amazing how much he has changed from the moment he found out our son was on his way. He now is the most responsible and caring daddy I've ever seen. Ladies and gentlemen, I am the proud fiancée of Specialist (SPC) Joel Reyes, the father of our two-year-old old son, Joel Anthony Reyes. I am grateful to have him in my life and our son's life.

# Letter to President Lincoln

Shawndell John

Dear Abraham Lincoln:

As I stood there and watched you give the Gettysburg Address, I was filled with a mixture of feelings. First, I felt guilt for the death of my son tearing away at my conscience for letting him leave my side. I never thought I would have lost my most beloved son. Never would I have thought it would end this way. A mother just wants a safe return of her pride and joy. I so dearly wish I could see him again, just once. Or perhaps be given the opportunity to comfort him in his last moments, as I did his first moments when he was born, to be able to reassure him with my presence. I will not let his spirit die in vain, I will not because I now know what the cost of his life was for.

Today I stood there bewitched as if a spell were cast over me. I can honestly say that I have received a gift. Today I have heard amongst great men the meaning behind war. I felt the release of all the grief held inside me, almost as if it was never there at all. I could feel the anger and bitterness drain from me as each word uttered filled my ears. Perhaps in my grief I have let the dark side tear away at me, forgetting the pride that comes with war. I realized this was in fact the greatest contribution my son could have given to the world. To my surprise, unexpectedly from out of the blue, I found myself glued to your every word. My son's life is now revered in this moment through this war, and by this great battle. I felt a joy that can only be described as the most important chapter in my search for peace. To finally hear these words that I have wanted to hear, to know that indeed my son will be remembered in honor! I have lost my home, my child and close to everything I lived for, but today you have given me hope for my future and hope for our country.

Sincerely yours,  
Anna

# My Son

Keisha Nettles

There was a knock on my door that I didn't expect. It was a knock that meant trouble. It was approximately five o'clock in the morning. Afraid but curious, I tapped my husband and notified him that someone was at the door. We both proceeded to the door, with my son right behind us. "Who is it?" said my husband, in a very deep and frightening tone to scare off this particular individual. "Good Morning, Sir. I am here to pick up...." said a man with a counter intimidating tone. At that moment my son's whole life flashed before me. I began to recall how he was born. The last thing I wanted to do was some day recall the last time I saw him. I just yelled at the top of my lungs, "Uh, Sir, you're making a mistake; no one here is trying to join the Service. It may be the next door neighbors." In a frustrated tone, he dictated my address. It was from that point on that I thought of the government as cruel bullies violating the United States Constitution.

All I could remember is my son saying, "Mom, I'm sorry. I signed up just for fun; I didn't think they would really come and get me." I just cried. I wiped my face as I tried to keep my composure for the Gold Star Mothers that were at the protest with me. "Hello, Miss, are you okay?" "Yes, I'm fine," I responded, "I'm just thinking about my son that the government came and took from me. I don't see how they can have so much power to where they can just come and take someone's child and tell them to fight in a battle that isn't theirs to begin with. I don't see how they can be such bullies. They came and removed him from our home about two weeks ago; I miss him so much." As I began to pour out my feelings to her, she said, "I'm sorry to hear that. I know just how you feel. In fact, everyone here knows how you feel. By the way, my name is Sue Niederer. My son served in the army. He was killed while attempting to disarm a bomb. My baby was only twenty-four years old when he died. One time I went to a Laura Bush rally wearing a t-shirt that said, "President Bush You Killed My Son." I wanted him to be aware of the pain I endure from this tragic event that Bush could have prevented. Why aren't their twins serving in Iraq if it is such a justified war? I was later arrested and charged with daring to challenge the Bush policy in Iraq" ([www.newyorktimes.com](http://www.newyorktimes.com)). From that point on, I thought of my

situation as minor for right now. I just had to pray that my son returned home in one piece, alive and well. It was then I realized that it was imperative that I do something to save my son.

As I began to walk further into the crowd, I heard, “Bring them home! Bring them home! Bring them home!” All this time, I thought I was alone. I didn’t know that people were actually trying to stop the war in Iraq. I didn’t pay it much attention until it happened to me. I began to make myself more familiar with the mothers that were at the protest. As a matter of fact, I was very happy and grateful that they were actually fighting for my son as well as for others to be pulled out of the war and sent back to their families.

During the protest, I met Carmen Palmer, a Jamaican woman living in Mount Vernon. Her son served in Iraq in 2003; he returned to Camp Pendleton, where he collapsed and died. I met Vicentina Rivera, a Peruvian who now lives in San Juan Vapistrano. Her son was killed when his tank battalion was ambushed in Iraq ([www.nydailynews.com](http://www.nydailynews.com)). I could not help but mention these two because there was a lot of controversy when they were rejected while trying to join the other Gold Star Mothers because they were not U.S. citizens. This law was later changed. During the protest, these two mothers were honored. In support of this change, Dorothy Oxendine, a past president of a Gold Star Mothers group, clearly stated, “There is no discrimination when they get killed side by side” ([www.newyorkpost.com](http://www.newyorkpost.com)). Because of this change, mothers from all over the world can now join the other groups of Gold Star Mothers.

A loud voice said, “Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen.” Next thing I knew, it felt as though I was at a concert. Everyone stopped what he or she was doing immediately and gave this mysterious speaker his or her undivided attention. Being that I was new to this, I didn’t know who this person was and what she stood for. “Sheehan, Sheehan, Sheehan. . .” the crowd chanted as I stood there more lost than I have ever been in my life. I tapped a lady standing beside me and asked, “Who is this Sheehan lady?” The woman said, “Are you kidding me? This is our hero. Do you know that this lady actually camped out on a Texas roadside, imagining that President Bush was somehow obliged to personally receive her and take a face-to-face scolding and then act at once upon her demand that he bring back all the troops right now”([www.nydailynews.com](http://www.nydailynews.com)). After I heard what Cindy Sheehan did, she became my role model. She was informing the crowd now of changes made in the Gold Star Mothers groups, the latest news on the troops, and words of encouragement to keep us strong.

So far, this protest was amazing. I thought about going to every protest that comes up until my son comes home and even after that. After all, I now understood what these mothers were going through and how much they wanted to stop wars from taking place. Approaching the end of the protest, the crowd yelled, “I hate war as a mother to a soldier who has lived it can, only as one who has seen its brutality, its stupidity,” by Dwight Eisenhower” ([www.sundayindependent.com](http://www.sundayindependent.com)).

I was awakened by a knock on my door. I was confused because I didn’t know whether that was a dream or if my son was really shipped off to fight a war

in Iraq. "Mommy is you woke? I'm hungry and *Dragon Tales* went off." At that point, I was so happy to see my son, my baby, and my heart. Taking a deep breath, I was so relieved that it was just a dream. But you know what, I am about to make this dream into part of my reality. My son is just a baby now, but what will happen when he grows up? I felt that it was a must that I do something about the war in Iraq.

In order to understand the trials and tribulations another person goes through, you must take a walk in that individual's shoes. I have no idea what these Gold Star Mothers go through on a day-to-day basis. This dream only gave me an idea of the pain they endure and the things they do to try to stop our youth from being killed off in a war that could have been prevented. I put myself in a Gold Star Mother's shoes, and took a walk, which led me into a dream that I will never want to come true.

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# New York City: From Broadway to Bellevue

Valerie Pennington

Among the many experiences that I have treasured over the years that would identify and characterize “My New York” are my weekly visits to a six-story tenement that was in dire need of structural repairs like plastering, painting, and pointing. To escape the cloying mugginess that only a New York summer could bring to the brick-oven like confines of a dwelling that was without air conditioning, many of the Puerto Rican and African American tenants (with ice cold bottles or cans of Rheingold beer in hand) would seek temporary relief by sitting on the paint-chipped and fractured cement stoop at 45 Bartlett Street. Overwhelming evidence of the need for a serious paint-job could be observed by the weathered appearance of the edifice that begged to be scraped free of its chipping patches of brown paint that exposed an old layer of murky green paint. Sounds of the Williamsburg ghetto, or barrio, depending upon your cultural persuasion, could be heard through opened windows on the first floor of the tenement. Ethnic music would fill the streets, Latino conga rhythms, jazzy-blues being bellowed out by Etta James, or Jackie Wilson singing his latest Rhythm and Blues hit, “Lonely Teardrops.” The sounds of the summer in the ghetto/barrio could be heard a block away depending upon the time of day and whose window was open.

Upon entering the building, you know the expression “melting pot” is well defined. If ever there were any question in one’s mind about the expression “melting pot,” the pungent and spicy effluvia of the culturally diverse cuisines that permeated the six-story walk-up would have removed any doubt in your mind about its origin and meaning. The earthy smells of soul-food included fried chicken, boiled pigs feet, seasoned and boiled collard greens and baked potato pies, depending on the time of year, or the sweet smell of fried baccalao and fried plantains, pastelas, peas and rice boiled in coconut water. The kitchens were in “full-burn” and the smells identified each inhabitant by culture. Today, some would say that tenement life was a testament of urban decay. For me, it was where real life was lived. My grandparents, Ralph and Rose Pennington, lived in this bastion of culture and flavor in apt. 4C.

Ralph Pennington, Sr., was born Raphel Pennerman, “a subject of the British Crown” (as he would proudly proclaim), from Nassau, Bahamas. My grandfather, like so many others who lived and died in New York, was an immigrant. And like so many others before him, the immigration authorities changed his name. He came to America in 1925. My grandfather had a well-proportioned physique and stood at about 5’7”. He was quite a presentable old party. His brandy-brown eyes danced mischievously whenever he was up to something. His shenanigans were soon discovered because the dimples in his cheeks would lift two little apples to his prominent cheekbones as he struggled to keep a straight face. Like many men of that day, he was clean-shaven with a neatly trimmed and properly clipped mustache that brought attention to a broad expanse of lips that framed the most beautiful and brilliant smile. My grandfather was a garrulous and humorous character whose conversations were often didactic accounts of the quality of education in the West Indies as compared to the quality of education in America. I recall a rather interesting treatise on the Latin language and how it was a basic requirement for all children attending school in the West Indies during his school days. More often than not, his stories were exciting and absolutely crazy and funny. I recall the blow-by-blow account of a fistfight that ensued as a result of the laundry attendant’s failed attempt to gyp him out of his correct change. I’ll never forget the story, complete with sound effects, about the “broken down jalopy” that went “who-daa-daa, who-daa-daa,” whenever he would start the engine. That old green ‘56 Ford was the source of much laughter when my grandfather spoke of it. The stories of conquest and near misses were endless and, most times, a true source of comedic entertainment and value. He was my friend and always a joy to be around.

It was during these weekly visits that my grandfather and I would frequent the various vendors and shops along Broadway from Bartlett Street to Graham Avenue. It was 1965; I was all of nine years old. The anticipated excursion began on Broadway beneath the L train, at the Broadway Bridal Shop. This particular shop presented a wood-framed structure that held a large flawless and clear plate glass window. The large painted sign that hung just above the window was beginning to flake and fade. None of that mattered to me. The scene before me was the object of my dreams. The picture window presented an impending wedding that offered two brides and a groom, the bridal mannequins reflecting no real person’s size or dimensions that I knew. The faces were angular and held a strong resemblance to Jacqueline Kennedy, wife of former President John F. Kennedy. I thought that the mannequin was the most beautiful image of femininity I had ever seen. Her upper eyelids were painted a brilliant cerulean blue and outlined with a heavily applied black kohl liner at the perimeter of the blue shadow. The first bridal mannequin’s lips were thinly molded, but painted a dramatic ruby-red. It was all I could see as I peered through the diaphanous veil that hung prettily over the permanently beautiful visage, her face. The intensity of the make-up application reflected the look and style of the day. I remember that most of Motown’s female groups of the 60s

wore this look, including Diana Ross and the Supremes. Ladies of the evening also wore this look!

I was in awe of the pristine tapestry that seemed to imply "...and they lived happily ever after." The other Bride was dressed in yards and yards of a voluminous white satin bridal gown and a flowing diaphanous, white silk moiré veil. I hardly noticed the tuxedo clad, stiff male mannequin standing between the two bride mannequins. Out of the corner of my eye, I noticed Pop sidle up closer to me. As usual, he'd slightly bend his head to audibly whisper his conspiratorial secret, "I'm going to marry that one and run away with her, don't tell Nana." Then Pop would roll his eyes and wink at me. I would laugh just as hard at his "secret" and facial expressions this time as I did on the first time I was let in on the "secret." Sometimes, the bride in the third window was the chosen "runaway bride." The switch was to keep me guessing as to when the "secret" would be told so that he and I could become co-conspirators in his weekly plan to abscond with a "mannequin-bride." The story was always the same. I loved it. I treasure this memory most.

Our stroll down Broadway would culminate in a visit to the grocery store where Pop would invariably forget to purchase something Nana asked him to get. The black cherry sodas and the black cherry ice cream (neither of which Nana requested) were never forgotten. It seemed to me, that every street vendor's name was either Harry or Sam. Our street vendor was Sam. Sam sold the usual fare, knishes, pretzels, and hotdogs with a selection of dressings that included sauerkraut, pickle-relish, mustard, ketchup and ketchup with onions. "Brooklyn's Best Hot Dogs, Knishes and Pretzels," was printed in huge, black and emboldened block letters around the circumference of the red and white striped, carousel top, sun-brella that was anchored to the center of the cart's hot table. The same style of lettering was also printed on both sides of the food cart, giving it a carnival-like feel. Approaching the cart, Pop would say aloud, "bread or potatoes?" My childishly eager response would be, "A Ballantine please." I would never vary. "Brooklyn's Best Pretzel" was my choice. The pretzel was shaped like the logo on the Ballantine beer can. Having played this scene before, Sam would give me the pretzel wrapped in waxed paper, while my grandfather gave him the exact change for the pretzel. Then Pop would offer another treatise. As he began his next out-of-school lesson on the historical ramification of the "Pretzel," I would stand there with my two thick long braids hanging one on either side of my head, thinking of the pretzel in terms of being something good to eat. With my large patient eyes looking straight into his, I would adjust the one-inch wide strap of my navy-blue pinafore jumper. All annoying things happen at once. My red and white saddle shoes are beginning to hurt my very long feet, and I think I have to go. You know—go. Pop begins, "The way that the pretzel is twisted is supposed to represent hands in prayer while the bread itself was symbolic of the body of Christ." Its religious connotation was an interesting contrast to my own historical association with the twisted treat which was nowhere in the vicinity of a religious consideration.

After completing our transactions along the strip on Broadway, we would return home with bag and baggage to Nana. Nana, a beautiful brown-skinned maven from the vicinity of Durham, North Carolina who had been married to my grandfather for more than twenty-five years at that time, was my “no-nonsense” but tolerant paternal grandmother. Mary Laurence, my Creole, maternal grandmother, often spoke admiringly of how “very smart old Lady Pennington” dressed and maintained her hair. Indeed it was true, Nana’s hair was her “crowning glory” as she would often say of every woman’s hair. I observed that she was especially fond of mine. She kept her hair straightened and hot-curved. She would comb it all back and carefully push it all forward while pulling a group of strands this way or that to suit her fancy. Her creation would softly frame her face while giving her a youthful appearance. Nana’s complexion was flawless. She had very soulful eyes set in a very serious and expressive face. Her lips were full and often poised. She wore no lipstick or make-up. She was and always has been Pentecostal, “A Holy-Roller.” They run in my family. The women don’t wear make-up. However, there was no restraint on adorning the physical form. Nana’s wardrobe was what her contemporaries would describe as “sho nuff tuff.” Today, she would be “the bomb,” if her classy attire was of the moment. Her skirt suits were navy blue, black, or charcoal gray, some modestly feminized with a “peplum flair” and others double-breasted with a straight “pencil” line skirt that revealed a kick-pleat at the back center seam. Rose Pennington presented quite a trim, shapely, and fashionable silhouette. She always carried a leather bag with matching Joan Crawford-styled heels. She actually wore “Lily Dasheyd” hats, (given to her by one of the wealthy clients for whom she did day-work), and matching three-quarter length gloves. They were a must-have in various lengths. She owned various lengths of gloves in all colors to match her bags and shoes. Her jewelry was most simple, a double strand of six-millimeter pearls that adorned her very graceful neck while accentuating the neckline of her chosen apparel, and a pair of eight-millimeter pearl studs on her ears. She would say, “The first impression is the best and most remembered.” My father Ralph Pennington, Jr., a substitute teacher (at that time) at Boys High School located (at that time) on Marcy Avenue in what was known as Stuyvesant Heights (at that time), was the proactive recipient of Nana’s school of thought. Nana was meticulous in her concern for her appearance. She was also a very good cook.

After our weekly excursions, Pop and I would return home to plates piled high with spaghetti and homemade meatballs ladled with a homemade tomato sauce infused with garlic, thyme, onions, green pepper, salt and bits of spicy Italian sausage. A very long loaf of Italian bread was warmed in the oven. Nana prepared a garlic-butter and parsley spread for the sliced bread. In place of the garlic-butter I would have Muenster cheese melted on two slices of the bread to go with my spaghetti and meatballs and a heavy sprinkling of Parmesan cheese on the meatballs and sauce. Nana knew this was my all-time favorite. She was not about to let Pop to have all the glory.

Times have changed and have become to some extent “the best of times” commingled quite liberally with “the worst of times.” My New York is now characterized by what I refer to as my “Hub-of-Heaven” located in the very heart of Union Square, 14<sup>th</sup> Street, Manhattan. For me the Hub includes the Fourteenth Street Cineplex, because going to the movies reminds me of my childhood growing up in Crown Heights, Brooklyn, where we went to the Nostrand Avenue Theatre to see the latest James Bond thriller, starring the only real James Bond—Sir Sean Connery...Nonetheless I still anxiously await the release of the next James Bond thriller...After acquiring a sufficient cinematic-rush, like any self-respecting movie junky, I head straight to Virgin Entertainment where nostalgia has its way with my wallet and me. After gorging my insatiable desire for cinematic entertainment . . . I’m off to Circuit City. I was actually considering the purchase of a new sound system to play my CDs. I heard they might be having a small discount on IPODs, my computer is in dire need of more memory, there’s also new software out for casino games, I’ll have to look at those. The new Duet Washers and Dryers are in stock, I’m wondering if they are as large as they were reported to be, 16 pairs of jeans is a lot of laundry, if the Sears commercial claim is accurate. There’s that new atomic clock that I need. I’m so bored of having to change all of the clocks in the spring and fall, spring forward, fall backwards, it’s enough to cross your eyes. However, any excuse to go to Circuit City will suffice. After my hour-long stay in Circuit City, I leave empty handed, heading straight for Whole Foods. It’s my last stop on my frenzied odyssey. With visions of beautifully cut and displayed red meats, geometrically stacked piles of fruits and vegetables, shelves and shelves of seasonings, I shop. After spending a deliciously obscene amount of money for two porterhouse steaks, two Cornish hens stuffed with apples, walnuts, and cherries; four 16oz. cans of lump crabmeat, and one quite large red snapper, I stand in one of four or five cordoned off lines, and eventually get to pay for my “gastronomic booty” and leave. While standing just outside Whole Foods, like many other “cab-hailing” New Yorkers, I hail a cab, jump in, bag and baggage, and instruct the driver to take the Manhattan Bridge to Myrtle Avenue, turn left and drive to the Citibank, where he should turn right, drive down to the block between Green and Gates and drive up to the street lamppost that’s next to the green collection mail box located directly in front of 420, my apartment building. Upon my arrival, I pay the fifteen dollars that includes a three dollar tip and rather busily exit the cab with all bags accounted for. I turn around to see the wrought iron and glass double-door entry that is perfectly centered between one large apartment on either side that has front door access from the front of the six-story white brick edifice. My stress-purging odyssey has come to its sated end.

I am a Licensed Practical Nurse at the Bellevue Hospital Center, located at 462 First Avenue at 27th Street in Manhattan. It is where I have been employed with the New York City Health and Hospital Corporation for more than twenty-five years. Bellevue Hospital Center is one of the many hospitals along First Avenue that characterize the avenue as “Hospital Drive.” Beth-Israel,

New York University Hospital, and Sloan Kettering Cancer Research Center are but a few of the healthcare facilities that are along the avenue.

Of the many areas that I have been assigned to as a Float-Nurse, the Department of Corrections, hosted and housed by Bellevue Hospital Center Prison Ward, is the most valued and interesting assignment and experience that I have known while employed at the facility. Dr. Budd Heyman, Director of Prison Health Services, a very tall, thin and handsome middle-aged professional, is a most capable and compassionate administrator. He has been on the prison ward as administrator since 1992. He shares his love of Rhythm and Blues and jazz with the nursing staff. We often share the music that he brings in from his personal collection. He too is a connoisseur of the “oldies but goodies” genre of musical delights. Dr. Heyman is very much appreciated by both the nursing staff and the prisoners. We rock on the “Rock” with him. The “Rock” refers to the prison ward, as in “Alcatraz.”

The prison ward contains a very special populace for which healthcare is provided. Their needs are often very different from those of the general population of Bellevue. Their needs will often include: clearance for court, and clearance for continued use of a drug maintenance program such as Methadone, that requires continued monitoring of the patient/inmate. The personalities encountered in the Bellevue population can be seen on the six-o’clock news, although they may be on the prison ward in total anonymity because they are implicated in a high-profile case that involves a heinous crime, or they could very well be a “good-fella” turning states evidence in another high profile crime. From Tupac Shakur to the Stuyvesant Town Rapist, the Bellevue prison ward has housed them all, including turnstile jumpers. I have had the duty to medicate and monitor them all. I never read their background reports, because bias is inescapable in the face of the damning facts that blacken the prisoner/patient’s true character. I say this because, I have not met one prisoner on Nineteen South, Bellevue Prison Ward, that gave me the feeling that I should fear for my life. I do believe that negative energy has a way of communicating itself when challenged by more negative energy. Complete knowledge of the prisoner’s crime against society and humanity can only serve to color your behavior and attitude toward the prisoner. Case in point: a seasoned female physician is asked to cover the prison ward for the Chief of Medicine on this particular day. She enters with obvious trepidation, and asks to see the patient’s chart. After reading the patient’s medical history, she asks that the patient be brought to the treatment room. Being anxious and idle during her short wait for the patient, she continues reading the patient’s profile. While reading the chart she is ensconced in a small room just off the main area of the nurses station. Suddenly, there’s an enraged scream, “No Way!! I am not seeing this prisoner.” I observe that he was no longer her patient, but had been relegated to prisoner status only. With tears streaming down her foundation-streaked face, her protests loud and clear, “I’m not going to see a man that rapes little children!! Not when I have a three-year old baby that could well have been destroyed by that beast or some beast like him, I can’t!” Suffice it to say, she was immediately assisted off the prison ward with interns in supportive

tow. Meanwhile, I'm recalling that it was the same patient with whom I had begun ignorantly conversing about his future plans. I was encouraging him to take advantage of his circumstances and complete his education while he was incarcerated, "When you come out, you'll make your mother proud." Now I had heard the reason that he was incarcerated. I wanted to risk my own freedom just so I could slap his mocking face. This is exactly why you don't want to read those background reports.

I often look forward to seeing my co-workers. Mary, Austin, and Oral Lee, all patient care technicians and Dyer, Rosa, Kathy, Sy, Orlando, and Obie, the RNs I've shared many fun-filled and not so fun-filled moments with on the "Rock." They have proven to be something of an extended family. We socialize mainly over food at East Bay Restaurant located directly across the street from the Bellevue Hospital Center Mens Shelter on First Avenue at 29th Street. We, like so many other close knit groups in the working place, play lotto together.

My New York is a very controlled and planned experience for the most part. There are other places that I frequent in New York City, but these are the regulars in my memories, and in my work and play.

# Constitutional Rights and Real Property: Eminent Domain

Mabel M. Pluas-Martinez

At the beginning of the creation of our nation, many issues arose that needed to be resolved as quickly as possible. A constitutional convention was convened; representatives got together and signed the final draft of what is known today as the United States Constitution on September 17, 1787, in Philadelphia. The Constitutional Convention was created in response to disagreements with the Articles of Confederation, and for the much needed stability of the new government. After debate and ratification, the Constitution was made officially valid and the new federal government came to be in 1789. The Constitution was comprised of the primary law of the newly formed federal government, and also described the three branches of government and their jurisdiction. Also, it stated the basic rights of the citizens of the United States. In addition to being the oldest federal constitution in existence, it is the landmark legal document of the United States.

In addition to the Constitution, the United States created the Bill of Rights, the first ten amendments of the Constitution, on December 15, 1791. This was done in order to confirm the basic rights of citizens. The U.S. Const. Amend. V states: "... [N]or shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation..." This section of the Bill of Rights was created by the men who composed the Constitution, who, for the most part, were landowners with a mistrust of the government's power. This was done in a manner to protect private landholders from possible abuses by government, which at that time were common. As governmental power grew, so did the need for land for expansion.

As the country's population grew, local governments began taking control of more land, and established new rules and regulations. Landowners realized that these restrictions interfered with the use of their land and property, and to some, the value of the land was lost, so they began burdening the courts, seeking relief from the "Taking." Over time, courts began to acknowledge the

existence of this problem, which added a new perspective to the law of eminent domain. In 1876 the Supreme Court affirmed the power of eminent domain during the early years of our nation. The Court ruled that the power of eminent domain was required for the existence of the national and state governments. See *Kohl v. United States*, 91 U.S. 367 (1876).

The law of eminent domain is the power of the government to take private land for public use. Originally, this law was derived from the “Takings Clause” of the Fifth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. “... [N]or shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation....” That clause was made applicable to the states by the Fourteenth Amendment. See *Chicago, B.& Q.R. Co. v. Chicago*, 166 U.S. 266 (1897). The Fifth Amendment’s “Taking Clause” is composed of several parts, or requirements. The first requirement is that it applies only to private property, the second requirement is that the land be taken for public use, and the last requirement is that just compensation be provided for the property taken to compensate the land owner for the dispossession. The law’s power is limited by the federal Constitution and by each state constitution. In some circumstances eminent domain is a simple matter, in which the government gives the landowner a fair price, and the owner yields the property to public use. However, the government and the landowner cannot always agree on a fair price, whether a taking has already occurred, or a just compensation is the issue.

Eminent domain is subject to due process of law. An occasion for use of eminent domain is when the government decides that it needs certain property owned by a private citizen, and wants to construct a project for the public use. The project at hand could be a new parkway, for instance. The government then has to offer the landowner a price to which he or she agrees. If they cannot agree, the government begins a process called condemnation proceeding: notice of the decision, opportunity to respond, just compensation, payment of set price, hand over of property, project is built. However, in certain circumstances the government denies the taking of anything from the landowner. Under those circumstances the property owner begins a process that is called an inverse condemnation proceeding. This action is commenced to seek the just compensation as described in the “Takings Clause” of the Fifth Amendment.

Private property, the first requirement of the “Takings Clause,” is defined by the right of possession that belongs to a private individual, as distinct from the public in general. Constitutional law scholars agree that “...property is the foundation of every right we have, including the right to be free....” When applying the “Takings Clause” in regard to private property, eminent domain powers can be applied to remedy urban ills. In *Berman v. Parker*, 348 U.S. 26 (1954), the courts ruled that even though the owner of the property had the right of possession of this department store, the neighborhood as a whole located in Washington D.C. was so deteriorated that it was in dire need of redevelopment for the sake of public health, safety, morals, and welfare, so the powers of eminent domain were enforced. In *Berman*, plaintiff’s department store was

itself decaying, but 64.3% of the neighborhood's dwellings were beyond repair 348 U.S., at 30.

Public use is the second requirement of the "Takings Clause." This is a limitation placed on governmental officials from taking private land for their personal use. The land they appropriate must benefit the public in general. However, the question whether a particular intended use is a public use is clearly a judicial one. In the case of *Hawaii v. Midkiff*, 467 U.S. 229 (1984), the court upheld a land condemnation scheme in Hawaii. Concentration of land ownership was so dramatic that on the State's most urbanized island, Oahu, 22 landowners owned 72.5% of the fee simple titles. *Id.*, at 232. The Hawaii Legislature concluded that the oligopoly, an ownership market with only a few sellers who can greatly influence market factors, was "...skewing the State's residential fee simple market, inflating land prices, and injuring the public tranquility and welfare...." *Id.*, at 240-241. Any private citizen should be entitled to purchase a piece of property. In *Midkiff* the power of eminent domain was applied to relieve Hawaii's shortage of available land.

Finally, regarding the requirement for just compensation, that concept is usually determined by the market value of the subject land, in other words, the price that a property owner would set for sale to a prospective buyer. The value of the land can be determined by the size of property, location, buildings on the site, etc. The courts have several methods to determine the market value. Anybody who feels that an unjustly compensated taking has occurred has the right to commence a timely action. A three-year limitation period exists to file a claim (*See* Court of Claims Act section 10 [1]).

In 2005, the U.S. Supreme Court decided *Kelo v. New London*, 545 U.S. 469 (2005), a controversial case regarding the "Takings Clause." The Supreme Court addressed the issue of whether or not public benefit is enough to satisfy the public use requirement of the Fifth Amendment. This case relies heavily on *Berman* and *Midkiff* and their precedent rulings. The court in *Kelo* determined that this transfer of private property to a private entity satisfies the public use requirement of the Fifth Amendment Clause. In a dissenting opinion, Judge O'Connor noted "...[t]he Court's holding in *Berman* and *Midkiff* were true to the principle underlying the Public Use Clause. In both cases, extraordinary, pre-condemnation use of the targeted property inflicted affirmative harm on society—in *Berman* through blight resulting in extreme poverty and in *Midkiff* through oligopoly resulting from extreme wealth...." Judge O'Connor continued: "Here, in contrast, New London does not claim that Susette Kelo's and Wilhelmina Dery's well-maintained homes are the source of any social harm. Indeed, it could not so claim without adopting the absurd argument that any single family home that might be razed to make way for an apartment building, or any church that might be replaced with a retail store, or any small business that might be more lucrative if it were instead part of a national franchise, is inherently harmful to society and thus within the government's power to condemn...."

In *Berman*, the court allowed for the transfer of private property to a private developer in order to revitalize the community and protect the health, welfare, and safety of the citizens of the District of Columbia. In *Midkiff*, the courts allowed for the transfer of private property to a private developer in order to cure social ills brought by oligopoly in Hawaii. In general the Supreme Court has approved the use of eminent domain by federal and state governments joined with private companies to make urban renewal easier. Judge O'Connor's opinion says *Kelo* does not fall into that category.

Since *Kelo*, the government takings of property can occur for the purpose of economic development. The founding fathers were right for mistrusting government actions and creating the Fifth Amendment. What is happening since *Kelo* is that, because private landowners are subject to the police powers that courts enforce through their decisions, the judicial branch, rather than the legislative branch of the government, can decide where and when to exercise police powers on private citizens. The government now has the authority to take land away from the less fortunate and give it to developers with more financial resources. Real estate developers now have the power to do what they want.

# The Training Crisis in Restorative Dentistry

Rebecca Schmucker

Even in a field as complicated as restorative dentistry, there are issues which the general public can be made aware of to the profit of all. The article “The Training Crisis: How It’s Affecting Our Industry” highlights some of the problems created by, and efforts being made to confront, a technological training gap affecting the entire restorative dentistry field.

The article points out three causes of the technical training gap. First, over the last few decades the materials and techniques of the industry have expanded. Second, there are fewer traditional educational programs available to dental technicians than in the past. And finally, student dentists are receiving less technical training than in the past.

The greater range of materials and techniques used in dental restoration is readily apparent. The explosion of new products is reflected at the consumer level in the aisles of any drugstore in the country. Cosmetic dentistry, once only available to the wealthy, has reached far into the mainstream of the middle classes and beyond. Baby boomers, who once filled the chairs of the orthodontists, are now clamoring for and receiving alternatives to the dentures their parents and grandparents settled for. In view of these changes, it is no small wonder that technicians require more training than ever.

The second problem the article discusses is the decline in the past twenty years in the number of traditional two-year training programs. It is ironic that even as those aforementioned baby boomers reach for the new services available in the market, schools that supply the trained personnel to provide those services are closing. The article points out some industry efforts to preserve a few of the remaining programs.

On a personal note, two years ago I met the head of the dental lab program at Southern Illinois University Carbondale. Despite the fact that hers was the only program in that region, she had been informed that the university was closing her department to make room for more profitable programs. It isn’t hard to see the financial reasoning behind the decision. Look at any university’s catalogue and compare the programs they offer and the tuition they charge. Tuition at state-sponsored schools is generally low. A program that requires students to have hands-on training with a variety of equipment is limited in the

number of students it can accommodate. This training requires that the student-teacher ratio be much lower than less technical programs as well. If you divide the tuition of all the students in a program by the costs of staff, support personnel, administration costs, overhead, and so forth, it becomes clear that, in the short term perspective, restorative dentistry programs aren't very profitable to run.

The third factor the article speaks of is the decrease in the education of dentists themselves in the technical aspects of their trade. Whether it is more politically correct or merely cheaper, schools like the University of Iowa, according to the article, are giving their student dentists more classes in communication skills and fewer in the technology of dental work.

If labs cannot find the qualified technicians to use the new materials, and dentists are not trained to use them, how are manufactures supposed to market their products? In the article, a variety of training materials and techniques outside traditional two-year schools are mentioned. There are also some examples of how the industry is trying to support those more traditional programs. The Internet, videos, and manuals are no doubt important, but there is no replacement for old-fashioned hands-on learning. The article points to seminars, clinics, in-lab training, and chair-side technical assistance as other ways the industry tries to fill part of the training gap.

My mother recently became a patient/guinea pig for a dentist who was learning to use his new Procera system. Fortunately, he was kind enough to let her know she was his first patient using the new system and offered her a break in the price of her treatment. I wonder how often dentists are trying new systems and don't tell their patients they may not be fully proficient using them?

The wide range of materials and services available in the restorative dentistry industry today, and the broader section of the public receiving the services, are creating an ever-widening gap between the number of trained technicians and the dentists seeking their services. It is apparent that we are in the midst of a paradigm shift in the field of restorative dentistry. Whether this will result in increased costs, outsourcing to laboratories outside the U. S., or a McTooth approach to mass-produced technical services has yet to be seen.

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# Africa: Uncivilized or Critically Undermined?

Alaedeem Khalil

In the novel *Things Fall Apart*, Chinua Achebe illustrates the complex structure and civilization of Igbo society in pre-colonial Africa. To refute the notion that African people are without a history, Achebe depicts many aspects of Igbo society. Achebe presents Igbo social, political, religious, and economic institutions. These institutions clearly manifested themselves and Africans are indeed a people with a history. In the novel, one can see how these institutions governed the lives of the Igbo people, and how this advanced civilization flourished in pre-colonial Africa. It is also important to see how many aspects of Igbo society are similar to those of other societies around the world.

There are many facets of the social institutions of Igbo society. Igbo society was male-dominated. As Achebe states, “no matter how prosperous a man was, if he was unable to rule his women and his children (and especially his women) he was not really a man” (53). He also states that Okonkwo, the main character, would tell his sons “masculine” stories of violence and bloodshed (53). This trait of Igbo society distinguishes the social status of men from women. Many societies in the world are similarly male-dominated.

Igbo government resembled a democracy in several ways. Congregations of men would gather for communal ceremonies. These ceremonies were held for a myriad of reasons, for religious, legislative, judicial, and traditional purposes. We note that as crowds for a ceremony formed, it was obvious that the ceremony was for men only as “women looked on from the fringe like outsiders” (87). This highlights the status of women and their limited participation, in comparison to the men of Igbo society. However, despite Igbo society being patriarchal, women still had relative importance. In the novel a woman leaves her husband and goes with her family, because he constantly beats her. At a ceremony to settle the conflict, the *egwugwu*, the judges who are the physical embodiments of the ancestral spirits, side with the woman as they tell

the husband "...beg your wife to return to you. It is not bravery when a man fights with a woman" (93). This ruling shows women have rights and are to be treated fairly in this patriarchal society. The ruling also exemplifies the integration of Igbo social and political institutions.

When Okonkwo has been ostracized in Umuofia, his uncle Uchendu, explains to Okonkwo the importance of women:

It's true that a child belongs to its father. But when a father beats his child, it seeks sympathy in its mother's hut. A man belongs to his fatherland when things are good and life is sweet. But when there is sorrow and bitterness he finds refuge in his motherland. Your mother is there to protect you...And that is why we say that mother is supreme (134).

This is how Achebe elucidates the significance of women in pre-colonial Igbo society.

Marriage was an integral part of Igbo society. Achebe writes:

On the following morning the entire neighborhood wore a festive air because Okonkwo's friend, Obeirika, was celebrating his daughter's uri. It was the day on which her suitor (having already paid the greater part of her bride-price) would bring palm-wine not only to her parents and immediate relatives but to the wide and extensive group of kinsmen called umunna. Everybody had been invited—men, women, and children. But it was really a woman's ceremony and the central figures were the bride and her mother (110).

Marriage is such a collectivist event that everyone partakes in its ceremonies, as in many cultures worldwide. Note that the suitor must pay a bride price, or dowry. In Islam and many other cultures, the suitor must also pay a dowry. The men of Igbo society practiced polygamy, also widely practiced in Muslim and Middle-Eastern societies.

Achebe highlights the significance of death in Igbo society. Death was a social and religious event. It symbolized a transition into the ancestral world:

The land of the living was not far removed from the domain of the ancestors. There was coming and going between them...an old man was very close to the ancestors. A man's life from birth to death was a series of transition rites which brought him nearer and nearer to his ancestors (122).

A man's social status was partly based on the number of titles he collected. If a man collected four, he was considered the lord of the land. Ezeudu, the village elder, collected three. As Achebe says of Ezeudu's death rites, "It was a great funeral, such as befitted a noble warrior" (122). Achebe uses Ezeudu's prestigious funeral to exemplify social status among men. During the funeral, there was dancing and shouting, and shots were fired. Also heard were the beating of drums and clanging of machetes (123).

Political and legal institutions are notably prominent in Igbo society, and as previously mentioned, many of these were similar to those in a democracy. In

the beginning of the novel, Okonkwo is sent as an emissary to resolve a situation with a neighboring clan. Umuofia would rather try to resolve the situation using peace than war, unless there were no other means of resolution (12). The egwugwu were the nine spiritual representatives of each clan. They, with the elders of each clan, enforced laws and settled disputes within the society. Many oracles and priests upheld and enforced the religious principles of the land. For example, during the week of peace, which started before the planting season, a man does not say a harsh word to his neighbor (30). Okonkwo violates this law by beating his wife. His actions were condemned by a priest, and he was forced to repent.

For different crimes, individuals were punished according to the extent of the violation, for instance whether it was a “male” or “female” ochu. Ochukwu means crime; the male ochukwu was an intentional crime, while the female was inadvertent. Okonkwo kills a clansman unintentionally, and is forced to flee Umuofia with his wife and children (124). Had his actions been intentional, surely he would have been killed. The legal system plays an important role in Igbo society and those who violate the laws of the land are punished.

Igbo society was not without an economy. Its society was agrarian with many farmers and sharecroppers. Men were encouraged to have as many children as possible because children were an asset in this type of economy. The main crop was yam, and whoever was able to harvest more yams was considered prosperous. In the second chapter a large store of yams indicates economic prosperity; Achebe writes “The barn was built against one end of the red walls, and long stacks of yam stood out prosperously in it” (14).

It is also noted that a man is considered wealthy because of his “three huge barns,” nine wives, and thirty children (18). A man’s greatness was marked by the number of his wives and children and the number of yams he could harvest. Yam was the king of the crops, and it was considered a “man’s crop” (23). The Feast of the New Yam was the New Year, and it marked the height of Umuofia’s economic prosperity. It was a social event that was celebrated annually; it illustrates the union between Igbo social and economic institutions.

In *Things Fall Apart*, it is clear how the social, political, religious, and economic institutions combine to effectively govern the lives of the people. Many aspects of this society, including social status, marriage, life and death, ancestors, clans and village elders, harvesting, and the egwugwu, join to define the development of pre-colonial Igbo institutions. It is clear from the Igbo example that Africans had a significant culture before the advent of the white man and colonization. Igbo society was indeed a developed one, and it celebrated the epitome of African virtue. It was rich in culture and heritage, until imperialism and colonial rule arrived. To dismiss this substantial fact about African history is unjust because it undermines Africa and its contributions to civilization. Ethnocentric Europeans and white colonists in Africa perceived Africans as uncivilized and barbaric. However, to displace, exploit, and harm innocent people, and destroy their heritage is inhumane, in fact, barbaric and uncivilized. Achebe uses Okonkwo’s tragic death at the end of the novel as an

emblem of the effects of colonization on pre-colonial Africa. Okonkwo kills himself, and by doing so, negates all of his virtues. His act was significant because Okonkwo formerly epitomized the virtues of pre-colonial Igbo society. His death marked the end of Igbo society, as all its foundations were razed and no more.

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# Readings in American Literature Have Improved My Understanding of the Role of African-Americans in American Culture: Final Exam Essay

Marie Brown

Having known and experienced all my life how difficult it is for black people in this country, I'm glad that I have not been jaded to the point where I cannot appreciate our roles as contributors to this country. And we have contributed a great deal, much more than just physical labor. That much becomes apparent from the various viewpoints in the short stories and speeches we read this semester, as well as from reading about the authors themselves. However, the most important things I have read this term in regard to appreciating black history within American society have been the speech and essay by Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois, respectively.

I must admit that although I have heard of both men from childhood, it was not until this American Literature course that I actually read the inflammatory words of Booker T. Washington. This made quite a difference for me because, although I had heard various opinions over the years about his philosophy, having never read his speech, I never put much thought into what the debate about him was all about. However, now that I have actually read his words, I have to admit I became quite indignant at the very thought of what he was suggesting. I could not have imagined the level of submission Washington expected us to endure as a people!

I remember coming to class ready for a heated debate and was disappointed when no other black student showed signs of the anger I had experienced over Washington's text. Where was their concern over what Washington's words implied? How would they feel in reaction to someone suggesting this as a social or political platform for our people today?

Those were some of the things that went through my mind in reaction to what I believed was Washington's offensive piece in regard to our people. I must admit I felt somewhat mollified by Du Bois's response. I felt that he correctly chastised Washington for his attempt to keep our people at a socioeconomic level that would have delayed individual and collective progress for years, if not immersing us directly back into slavery.

After calming down (because I'm sure I'll never get over the impact of his words), I tried to look at the speech from Washington's perspective. I told myself that perhaps he made the speech as a way to ensure peace and survival for black people at that time, in 1895. This did not work for me. After the years our enslaved forefathers had to endure acculturating to a new land, I had to question how long Washington thought it would take to finally be accepted as a people, not only for our differences but for our contribution as well? That separate but equal idea was the worst kind of garbage. We get a sense of exactly how Washington's submissive ideas failed when we read Ellison's powerful words in *Invisible Man*.

Ellison's is indeed a powerful story and I could not even begin to address all of what it implies in regard to a black man trying to elevate himself in a world ruled by those who despise him. Every incident in the novel provided a contradiction to what the young protagonist was led to believe about navigating his way through a world where he was hated: respect white women and don't lust after them, and yet blacks were suddenly herded to the front of a ballroom with a naked white woman; be submissive before white folk, yet the blacks were literally forced to display animalistic aggression. That's what Washington didn't see; it would have been an eternal fight for us struggling against not just black nature, but human nature. Many more of us might have chosen to become invisible. Some of us may still choose it, just as some of us choose self-hatred and despise our rich heritage like Dee in Walker's "Everyday Use."

Still this is only a part of our story and whether I am angry or proud, amused or disgusted, I do realize that all parts of the story are important to allow all people, not only black people, to see how much we need to appreciate who we are and how much we have contributed to this society, as well as how different life in America would be without us. Individually and collectively, there is good and bad in every race, and it is up to each individual to decide which attribute they wish to acknowledge more. I personally would rather see the good.

# The Pauscher Case Study

Donna Milling

There is no doubt that contrast agents aid radiologists in visualizing certain anatomical structures which would otherwise not be seen radiographically. In the radiology department, artificial contrast agents enable physicians to better diagnose and treat diseases. Unfortunately for some patients, these agents come with minor, severe, or possibly deadly side effects as was the case with Ms. Pauscher.

All personnel involved with this case must share the blame for Ms. Pauscher's death. Hospital personnel failed to obtain an informed consent from the patient before performing a contrast examination on her. Hospital protocol requires that informed consent be obtained before the administration of contrast agents. Informed consent in medicine is the process whereby the physician informs the patient about options for the diagnosis and treatment of illness as well as the risks and benefits of a procedure with contrast. "The physicians deviated from normal standard of care by not telling Ms. Pauscher about the remote risk of death associated with an EXU (about 1 in 100,000 to 1 in 150,000)" (Wilson, 1997, p. 62). Furthermore, the doctor failed to examine the patient's relevant past since he had not checked her chart which in fact "contained evidence of allergies (bee stings) and the patient had suffered from asthma as a child" (Wilson, 1997, p. 62). This type of medical history warrants consideration of alternative diagnostic procedures such as ultrasound or an EXU with a non-ionic (less likely to cause a reaction) contrast agent. Additionally, the radiographer and other personnel would stand alert so as to provide immediate treatment at the first sign of an allergic reaction.

Unlike the physician, the radiographer spoke with the patient, asking brief questions and disclosing some side effects of contrast administration. At this point, the radiographer had an opportunity to obtain and document subjective information which might alarm everyone of her high risk for contrast procedures. However, he/she neglected to check for the informed consent. In the end, the patient was observed closely throughout the procedure and when she began to show signs of distress, the radiographer acted appropriately, but not with the

diligence which might have saved her life. Even through their best efforts, too little too late; death came very suddenly for Ms. Pauscher.

Physicians and radiographers are healthcare professionals. With this recognition comes an increase in responsibility. Mandatory consent forms and questionnaires should be made available at all times. Only by means of full disclosure could this patient have made an educated decision. In the case of Ms. Pauscher, death came too soon. If proper protocol were followed, Ms. Pauscher might still be alive today.

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# Deafness in a Hemingway Short Story

Joseph F. Sogno

Ernest Hemingway's short story, "A Clean, Well-Lighted Place," talks about a deaf man in a café and describes how the two hearing waiters, one younger and one older, differ in their views about deaf culture and how to communicate with the deaf man.

The younger waiter does not seem to speak to the deaf person in a sentence, but uses only a few words, such as "Finished" and "No more tonight. Close now." He thinks that the deaf man is not intelligent. I understand why he thinks this way. It is because he does not understand about deafness and is not able to communicate. He only wants to make sure of two things. First he wants to be sure the deaf man does not get too drunk and forget to pay his bill, and second, that he (the waiter) can get out early and go home to be with his wife.

The older waiter has more feeling for the deaf man and tries to explain why the deaf man might have wanted to commit suicide. This waiter feels that although the deaf man has money, he is very lonely and likes to come into that café at night because it is quiet, comfortable, clean, and has a lot of light. The light helped the deaf person read the waiter's lips when he said, "What do you want?" so the deaf person could clearly reply, "Another brandy."

I feel that I need an explanation to clarify the difference between hearing and deaf culture. Hearing people are exposed to many different sounds, people speaking different languages in addition to English, such as Italian, French, and Spanish, newscasters on the radio and TV, and the theater. This helps them to speak and write proper English and increase their vocabulary. They also can understand how one word, such as "deal," can be used to mean different things. It can refer to a business deal, dealing with problems or situations, or giving out cards in a card game.

On the other hand, deaf people are part of a smaller world and are not exposed to the same things. Sign language interpreters provide help for deaf people in the classroom, at doctors' appointments, and court appearances, but the deaf are limited in their job opportunities and cannot apply for certain jobs, such

as pilots, TV announcers, positions in the military. American Sign Language (ASL) is the dominant language of the deaf community. For example, the English phrase, "My hair is wet", when translated into ASL, would be "MY HAIR, WET." Deaf people who sign in ASL also use various facial expressions and body language to get their message across. They do not sign in "English," which would allow them to use proper grammar.

In conclusion, I believe that if the younger waiter knew more about deaf culture, he would have treated the deaf man with more respect and would have communicated with him in a better way, such as writing something down on a piece of paper or using sign language. Also, if he had understood what the other waiter was trying to explain to him about why the deaf man liked to come there, he might not have been in such a hurry to close the café and send the deaf man home early. The older waiter and the deaf man were both lonely and did not have anyone at home waiting for them. After turning out the lights, the older waiter was talking to himself about what he felt. It was not "fear or dread"; it was a "nothing." I believe that the deaf man felt the same way and also that the older waiter really wanted to be friends with him to find out about his life.

# How the Hospitality Industry Is in Compliance with ADA Laws

Lauren A. Schulof

Did you know that one out of five individuals has some type of a disability? According to the Census Bureau, one out of five Americans has either a physical or mental disability (Perry, 1998). Until recently, America had not recognized disabled people as being capable of doing some of the same jobs as those who are not disabled. Nor was it recognized that disabled persons needed and were entitled to special facilities while traveling. With the help of such laws as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), people with disabilities are given the chance to participate in all of life's activities (EEOC, 2004). Over the last decade the hospitality industry has made great strides in catering to the handicapped community. This paper examines how the hospitality industry has adapted to the ADA laws, and specifically how it has handled the delicate situation of dealing with disabled persons to ensure that people with disabilities are offered the same accessibility as any other guests.

In 1990 the United States enacted the ADA because people with disabilities were having trouble finding employment. They also were complaining about not having the same rights as those without disabilities (Panitz, 2000). With 43 million Americans having some type of disability, it is evident that ADA laws were needed (Frierson, 1990). The ADA guarantees that a person with disabilities has the same civil rights and employment opportunities as everyone else. This law directly affects the hospitality industry. Title III of the ADA states that businesses must be readily accessible to those with disabilities. In order to do so they must have entrances with ramps, braille signs, specially marked parking spaces, and other such effects to help a disabled person (Murrman, 2002).

There are 4.5 million private sector entities, businesses, and government agencies who need to comply with ADA standards (Frierson, 1990). An employer cannot refuse to hire an employee because of a disability. Similarly, a restaurant or hotel cannot refuse to service a disabled person, and cannot treat a disabled person any differently than any other customer. Businesses must be aware of the ADA laws and which ones apply to each of them. An owner or manager must know what changes to the physical space are required to satisfy the needs of their employees and customers.

The ADA stipulates that a hotel must accommodate a person with disabilities to the best of its ability. According to Courmoyer, Marshall, and Morris (2004), "For existing buildings not undergoing renovations, the Disabilities Act requires places of public accommodation to undertake the removal of barriers, if doing so is readily achievable" (p. 59). To avoid lawsuits and cater to its disabled clients, a hotel or restaurant must comply. However, it is also in the hospitality industry's own interest to comply fully with ADA regulations.

In 1997 many restaurants were being targeted by lawyers who wanted to make a quick buck. They would find the slightest infraction of the ADA and sue. Often this meant a restaurant was only missing one braille sign on its doors. Instead of allowing time to fix the door, they were suing. This problem has been solved in two ways. One is, for a small infraction the businesses are now given warnings and must comply within ninety days. After those ninety days, if they are still not in compliance they may be sued. The other way, is to make every business owner aware of all compliance rules and how to make those changes in their business to become fully compliant (Panitz, 2000). Ken Kuniyuki, a lawyer in Hawaii says "the ADA has 'so many gray areas' and 'fine details' that businesses can't readily know what's expected. It's common sense that there should be access, but it's not common sense on how to provide the access," (Panitz, 2000). The ADA Notification Act has done just this, made business owners aware of their responsibilities. Today, looking on the internet, an owner of a hospitality business can find ADA compliance checklists and handbooks on how to deal with employing persons with disabilities.

A hotel makes itself handicapped-accessible in many simple ways, such as putting railings and ramps in entryways and exits and making sure elevators are accessible for those in wheel chairs or those who are blind. While doing research I found companies that sell products specifically to hotels and restaurants to help with accessibility. One such company was HARC, which sells compliance products for the deaf. It is recommended that hotels have 4% of their rooms equipped with such communicating devices for the deaf as: visual smoke detectors, door knock signalers, phone alerts, and closed caption decoders. ([www.harc.org](http://www.harc.org)). With stricter laws and more enforcement of the laws, most hotels are in complete compliance with the ADA laws. The number of lawsuits has plummeted since 1993, and has continued to decrease as more hotels are becoming fully compliant.

Section 4 of the accessibility guidelines explains how a facility needs to be designed for full compliance. A hotel room needs extra wide doors, accessible bathrooms with wide floor showers, and plenty of space to maneuver a wheelchair around the room. If any hotel or any public facility was built without this accessibility, it must alter building elements. This may mean enlarging entrance ways, putting in new elevators, lowering payphones, etc. New buildings are included in another part of Section 4. Newly designed or renovated facilities must be in compliance with 4.1.3 which requires at least one exit route which is wheelchair accessible with all floors and ceilings at certain slopes and heights, and proper surfacing on floors.

Disabled employee rights are another aspect of the ADA. Often business owners and operators do not want to hire people with disabilities. It is thought that a person suffering from depression or with some sort of physical debility can not do the job as well as a non-disabled employee. In some cases this is true, however in many cases it is not and the employer just doesn't want to take the chance in hiring them. Nancy Christy, owner of the Wilson Street Grill, is a strong believer that hiring should be about finding the right person for the job and not about whether they have a disability or not. Eleven of the restaurant's twenty seven employees have disabilities, mostly mental or developmental disorders. Christy says; "My employees with disabilities are just tremendous employees." She goes on to say, "They work hard. They care about the restaurant. In today's tight labor market, any boss would be happy to have such dedicated workers" (Bread and Butter, 2000).

According to the 1999 *AAA Tour Book*, "travelers with disabilities still suffer from not being in the know" (Whitford, 1999). Therefore, to help them learn about their rights as travelers, the AAA decided to expand their hotel accessibility accommodation ratings. This has benefited the disabled by saving them time in researching their trips. They now can look up accessibility in the AAA, as well as in other guidebooks. A hotel may not be fully accessible to a handicapped person if it was built before the ADA laws and is not required to spend the amount of money it would take to become fully accessible. However, a disabled person needs to know this prior to a trip, especially if he or she is in a wheelchair and there are no handicapped restrooms.

The hospitality industry has come a long way in compliance since 1990. More and more restaurants have braille menus and have trained their servers on how to serve a blind person or accommodate a person in a wheelchair. One restaurant has its servers cut up the meat into bite size cubes, then gives each item on the plate a number and describes where it would be on a clock— the meat may be at 12 o'clock and the potatoes at 6 o'clock (Panitz, 2000). This is one way of showing the disabled customer that the restaurant cares and wants the patron to have the best experience possible. This is not only the proper way to handle such a situation, but it is also the way to build a clientele.

The hospitality industry also works closely with advocacy groups like the Society for Accessible and Travel & Hospitality (SATH). In existence since 1976, SATH is a non-profit organization that represents the disabled traveler. Its

“mission is to promote awareness, respect and accessibility for travelers with disabilities, and educate the travel, tourism, and hospitality industry on becoming more accessible for persons with disabilities” (info @sath.org, 2004). SATH keeps disabled travelers aware of accessibility and the hospitality industry aware of the needs of the disabled. It works closely with travel agents and the airline industry. Recently SATH has partnered up with American Express to promote: “awareness of the needs of disabled and mature travelers, respect for disabled and mature travelers, accessibility to accommodate disabled and mature travelers, and employment opportunities for qualified disabled persons” (info @sath.org 2004).

Although the hospitality industry has come a long way in serving disabled customers, numerous other changes still need to be made. For example, sometimes a hotel doesn't even realize that it is not in compliance until an incident occurs which prompts the hotel to make such changes. One such incident occurred when Carl Ford, a disabled consultant who was limited to a wheelchair, tried to book a twin room for himself and his helper at a London Express by Holiday Inn. Although the hotel had wheelchair accessible rooms, it did not have any rooms with twin beds. Mr. Ford was forced to purchase a second room for his helper, which placed an additional financial burden on Mr. Ford. He took his case to the Disability Rights Commission where he received compensation for the inconvenience. The parent company of the hotel has since changed its disabled room policy to include the option of twin beds (Frewin, 2002).

It seems that although disability laws and guidelines are in effect all over the world, they may not always be instituted in a timely manner. Who is to blame? Is it the government or businesses themselves? There may be a gap between the guidelines, laws, and the actual carrying out of a mission. One mediating factor would be training and education of owners and their employees.

What many in the hospitality and travel industry have not realized is that there is a huge market for the disabled traveler. What the industry is starting to see is that, by not only being in ADA compliance but by adding something special to clients' experience, they will gain customer recognition. For example some airlines are offering special seating and a “meet and greet” program at the airport to make it easier for the disabled person to travel alone (Amarante, 2003).

In my reading I've realized that the ADA issue is an outgrowth of the civil rights legislation that was developed in the 1960s. The physically challenged have become more active, vocal, and visible over the last thirty years. They have had an impact on all aspects of every industry including hospitality. In 2002 alone, the hospitality industry received \$13.6 billion from travelers who had some sort of disability. It was estimated that, with the proper changes, the industry could make at least \$27 billion a year from these travelers (sath.org).

With the advent of hospitality-related technology comes the opportunity for more inclusion of disabled clients. This also presents opportunity for new regulations to insure equal opportunity and protection of both the industry and its clients. The hospitality industry needs to be proactive in thinking about

accommodating new and expanding definitions of disabled travelers. The hospitality industry has not perfected its compliance, but it has come a long way, and is still working on it. For me this is an exciting time to be a part of the hospitality industry.

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# A Brief Opinion Survey on Gender Roles and Family

Anna Grechikhina

The instructor distributed a questionnaire which we used to interview friends and acquaintances (50% male and 50% female). Then we summarized and/or analyzed the answers. Two of the interview questions were:

Question 5: In your opinion what is the ideal number of children for the average family to have nowadays?

Question 9: Do you think there is inequality between men and women in our society? If yes, in what area or areas of social life do you think there is more inequality, for example, employment, dating, marriage, parenting, or other areas?

Analysis of Answers to Question 5:

75% of the women said that the ideal family size is two children, while the percentage of men who said that the ideal family size is two children was somewhat lower, 71.4%. A small proportion of females—12.5%—said that the ideal family size is one child, and the rest, another 12.5%, said that the ideal family size is three children. A small proportion of the men, 14.3%, said that the ideal number of children is three, whereas the other 14.3% of men said that the ideal family size is four or more children.

Summary and Analysis of Answers to Question 9:

Among the males and females interviewed, 4 people (25%, two males and two females) said there is equality between men and women. And 12 people said that there is inequality (75%, 6 males and 6 females). I noticed that people who were

not religious answered that they thought there is equality between the sexes. However, there was one person (female, age group 18-30, education completed 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade, religion Christian) who gave that answer as well.

Most of the males who answered that they thought there is inequality said that it mostly exists in the household and has to do with the woman's and man's role at home. On the other hand most of the females who answered that there is inequality thought that the inequality exists in the workplace more than in any other area; they didn't think that there is discrimination against females regarding housework and the household in general. Most of the females who answered "yes" thought that most of the discrimination between the sexes occurs in the workplace and has to do with men thinking that women are inferior to them and therefore incapable of taking on certain tasks in the job, and that's why they thought that when a man and a woman apply for the same job, the man would be most likely to get the job.

I think the upbringing of the people matters a lot in a question like this. The people I interviewed were born in Europe, so they grew up in a different culture, which might have affected their answers. They also seemed open-minded about answering these questions. For instance, they thought that everyone is free to think what they want or choose the roles they want to play in the household or in the raising of children. In my opinion, they were more open-minded about this question and more analytic of it than others who answered the same question in the rest of the group's subjects.

What I found very interesting is that there were 4 people (2 males and 2 females who were not religious and who had some college education or were college graduates) who stated that they believe there is no inequality, that everyone is equal.

Both of the interviewed females who were not religious said there is no inequality, that both men and women work in the same fields and that everyone does what they want, that is chooses what they do in the world of work. They thought that it is a woman's choice whether to work at a paid job or to stay at home and raise children, and it would not be considered discriminatory against that female.

Both males with education 9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade believed the inequality between the sexes exists mostly within the household, especially because it focuses on a woman's role as a mother and caregiver of the children.

It seems that religion did influence the answers of the interviewed people because in the case of the two males who saw inequality in the household, one of them who was not religious also mentioned that he thought the discrimination between the sexes occurs in the workplace as well because of the traditional assumptions in most cultures worldwide that women are the weaker sex and should not try to reach the same professional level as a man, and should do what females are traditionally thought to do best such as cooking, cleaning, and taking care of the children.

I think education plays an important part in people's opinions on this question; both females and males interviewed who have some college or a

college degree seemed to address a variety of issues in their answers and not only the idea of discrimination inside the household, where they believed women take on a more traditional role as a housewife and a mother. Their answers ranged from the idea that inequality mostly occurs in the workplace to the idea that the inequality doesn't exist. I think this is because as people grow up and after they finish college, they have a totally different understanding of their surroundings and how the world works because they learned a lot in college, so it expanded their horizons. However, this also might be a matter of the age of these people, because when people grow up their views and opinions about the world change and they begin to discover their own identities, and therefore can relate to problems with more awareness.

# Anne Roiphe's Essay, "A Tale of Two Divorces"

Tarika Williams

I will recount the main ideas in "A Tale of Two Divorces," written by Anne Roiphe. In her essay Roiphe expresses her opinions on divorce by comparing two marriages, hers and her parents. She essentially argues that divorce is necessary sometimes but explains that it is bitter-sweet; it can have both good and bad effects on the people involved—especially children. She acknowledges that to totally eradicate divorce would be impossible, but feels that if people began to look at and go into marriage more seriously, then the divorce rate could decrease.

Roiphe begins by explaining her parents' marriage, which she thinks should have ended in divorce, but did not. The marriage is an awful one, where the pair of them fight constantly. The father is verbally abusive towards his wife; he is hardly at home; he gambles and uses his wife for her money and he shuns and cheats on her—all in front of Roiphe and her brother. The mother's self-esteem—which was already low coming into the marriage—just shoots down to zero after years of put-downs by her husband and cripples her from being able to leave him, although she is extremely depressed. She dies "at age fifty-two, still married, still thinking, if only I had been taller, different, better" (201).

Although Roiphe thinks she has married someone completely different from her father, she soon realizes that her husband is no better. In fact her husband's actions toward her closely parallel her father's treatment of her mother. Also, she sees that she had allowed herself to become just as pitiful as her mother. However, unlike her mother, she does not waste her life in a suffocating and depressing marriage; she doesn't tolerate her husband's cheating, using her for money, and being too drunk to appreciate their child.

This is where Roiphe argues that divorce can be a good thing: "I know that if my mother had left my father not only her life but mine too might have been on more solid ground" (204). She argues that because she grew up knowing only a marriage where the husband regards his wife as worthless and the wife accepts and lives with it, it conditioned her subconsciously to allow the same thing for herself. Fortunately, she was able to realize her situation and get out of it before she subjected her own daughter to having the same history as she and her mother had. This, Roiphe claims, is ultimately the benefit of divorce.

Children are spared growing up in a loveless environment that will eventually shape them into people who can not love or be loved.

Nevertheless, just as children can be saved by divorce, they can also be so emotionally and mentally scarred by a divorce, that they can grow up to be emotionally and mentally conflicted people. Roiphe writes: “Divorce is also the terrible knife...that marks them ever after, walking around wounded, angry, sad souls akimbo, always prone to being lost in a forest of despair” (210). The trauma that they endure from that one event in their lives may forever define them as a person. They may build up walls and never let anyone in or they may have no defense and allow anyone to take advantage of them. Adults also suffer from divorce. They have to admit failure and start all over again. Some may lose all confidence and not have the strength to go back to a functional life or be able to love and trust someone again.

Roiphe understands that divorce is necessary, but she hopes for a world where it is rare. She thinks that people should change their attitudes about the institution of marriage and not ground it solely on romance: “If we were able to see marriage as largely an economic, child-rearing institution involving ambition, class, and money, we might be better off” (211). Of course, this change in attitude wouldn’t change everything. We would still need divorce because “men and women will always fail each other” (211).

While Roiphe’s opinion on divorce may be too complex to provide a simple answer because she argues both for and against it, it is evident that she agrees with the continual existence of a legal means to divorce but she thinks divorce can be bitter-sweet because it can have both good and bad effects on the people involved—especially children. She writes, “It may be necessary, but divorce is never nice” (211).

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# Amy Tan's "Two Kinds"

Simone McKenzie

In the autobiographical short story, "Two Kinds," by Amy Tan, setting is very important. The setting the author uses is very broad at first, America. However, this broad setting is key to the themes of her story. Several themes can be observed in this story, with each being dependent on the other to make the story come together well.

Life in different countries can be very different due to unique cultures. The first line of this story reads: "My mother believed you could be anything you wanted to in America." This strong opening line immediately states the setting. It also gets straight to one of the main themes. The mother sees America as a place with unlimited opportunities, while the daughter's view is very different. If their opinions were the same, the author would have indicated that she *and* her mother believed that you could be anything you wanted to in America.

After reading this story I realized that it could have been about a family from a number of different countries, not just China. However, I think that America is the one setting that could have worked so well with the author's theme. America is unique in that it is the one place that so many people see as "the land of opportunity," so much so that they are willing to leave everything behind to come here. It is viewed as being a place where you could start over and fulfill your dreams. Sometimes, however, this can be an overly optimistic way of looking at this country. The author's mother is an example of a person with such an overly optimistic a view. Tan states that "America was where all my mother's hopes lay. She had come here in 1949 after losing everything in China." Because the author's mother was so optimistic about America, she believed that her child could be a prodigy. To her mother, becoming a prodigy was something that could be done through working hard, instead of through an innate ability. Tan's mother would see children on television and compare them to her own child, not really taking into account that these just may have been exceptional children, and that her own daughter may have been different.

As the story continues, the author indicates that while her family lives in America (California specifically), they also live in a section called "Chinatown," a community where many Chinese-Americans live in close proximity to one another. In such communities the adult members are often those who were not born in the U.S., but chose to come here. Living close to others from the same

background allows people to hold onto their culture without being alienated from the rest of society. Tan's mother shows that she holds traditional Chinese values when she tells her daughter that only a daughter who is obedient can live in her household. In fact, the author even writes that her mother said this in Chinese. Though the daughter was born and raised in America, she apparently understood the Chinese language. This shows that the mother was not going to let her child completely ignore her Chinese roots even though the child was not in China.

This story centers around the conflict between mother and daughter. The mother wants a "proper Chinese child." However, the author, whether she realizes it or not, has become Americanized. Like a typical American child, she wants to be allowed to decide herself what her path in life should be, even if it leads to mediocrity. Her mother, however, will settle for nothing less than her daughter's best. This conflict is possibly what the author is referring to when she gives the story its title. There are two kinds of people in her household —one who holds traditional Chinese beliefs, and one who is more American. Another (and in my opinion more important) interpretation of the title "Two Kinds" is that it refers not only to the conflict the author has with her mother, but the one she has with herself. As stated in the story, there are only two kinds of daughters. There is the one who is obedient and the one who follows her own will. The author does not necessarily want to be considered the latter kind of daughter, but she feels as though her mother's aspirations are too unrealistic. The author states that her mother "had hoped for something so large that failure was inevitable." I feel that the mother in this story is trying to live not for her daughter, but through her. In China she was not able to live her dreams, so in America she imposes them on her daughter. Her daughter, not interested in becoming the next Shirley Temple or a piano-playing genius, made feeble attempts to do as she was told, but eventually got to the point where her only effort existed in trying to be unsuccessful. She seemed to reach that point when she changed from obedient to disobedient.

As time went on, the author developed an even stronger conflict with herself when she realized the severe disappointment she caused her mother. In paragraph 43 she laments that she probably could have become a good pianist had she not been "so determined to not try." She now seems to realize the opportunity her mother saw for her here in America, but she did not take advantage of it when she had the chance at that young age. The author let this guilt remain with her well into adulthood. At the same time, her mother still held onto the belief that her daughter could have been a prodigy. Near the end of the story, the author writes that "The lessons stopped. The lid to the piano was closed, shutting out the dust, my misery, and her dreams." Her mother's unrealistic expectations of her had caused her pain because she could not live up to them. They never spoke of the matter in the years afterwards, but eventually the author was able to make peace with herself. When the mother returned the piano to the author for her thirtieth birthday, she reasserted to her daughter that she could have been a genius if she had tried. The author no longer sees this as

criticism, but as faith that her mother had in her, and still has. This is the kind of faith she didn't have in herself.

This kind of tremendous faith that the author's mother had in her was comparable to the kind of faith the mother had in America. The author's mother was starting over not only in a new country, but with a new person—her daughter. Her daughter was a clean slate that was not marred by the limitations she would have experienced in China. However, since her daughter never got to experience this kind of oppression, she never fully understood how important it was to have such an opportunity.

# White-Collar Crime Is More Harmful Than Street Crime

Charles Evelyn

Crime is a major subject of American popular culture. It infuses the consciousness of citizens through best-selling crime novels, television shows and news, or by the direct means of personal victimization. For this reason, I have chosen the issue of the comparative damage caused by white-collar crime vs. that caused by street crime as the subject of my paper. I agree with Jeffrey Reiman's thesis on this issue because he goes beyond the conventional, pragmatic approach to the analysis of crime costs and develops a more philosophical critique with broader applications.

Reiman argues that there are two components in any discussion of crime: the concept of "crime" and the act itself, which are not absolute, fixed things. The relative semantics are created and controlled by institutions such as the criminal justice system and the mass media. As Reiman sees it, any viable crime solutions must take this into account if we are to accept that the purpose of the justice system is to protect society from the most harm (p. 282).

Reiman begins with the media, by citing two articles in the *New York Times*. One report is about a case involving employer safety misconduct and the deaths of ten miners; the other article covers the killing of five people by a man on a commuter train (pp. 280-281). These examples support Reiman's assertion that deaths caused by unhealthy or unsafe workplace conditions are not perceived (or punished) as acts of murder, as the shooting of people on a train by a single assailant would be. They therefore serve as evidence of the relative definition and perception of crime as "created" by institutions (p. 281). Reiman believes that

people are deceived into thinking the only real crimes are those perpetrated against a specific person or person with malice aforethought (p. 282).

On the matter of defining crime by its consequences, Reiman compares statistics from the FBI's *Uniform Crime Reports* and the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and concludes that occupational disease and hazards result in far more deaths than those caused by typical street crime (pp. 282-285).

If we are talking about body counts and widespread consequences, then I am inclined to agree with Reiman's thesis that white-collar crime is more harmful than street crime. However, in discussing the relativity of crime and its perception, Reiman cites medical malpractice and cigarette smoking. I think his analysis needs more nuance in these areas. Comparing deaths from a surgeon's scalpel to that from a thug's switchblade is crude and overlooks the question of intent, acceptable risks, and cost/benefit ratios (Reiman p. 286). In my opinion, medical malpractice, for instance, would be murder only if systemic administrative neglect or deliberate tolerance of hazardous conditions for profit were involved, not just human error or the limitations of medical science.

Nevertheless, I have found additional data to support Reiman's point about crime's relativity in our system. The first source is an ABC news transcript from the TV program, *Nightline*. Seven executives from W.R. Grace & Co. had been indicted for the environmental crime of exposing workers and residents of Libby, Montana, to lethal asbestos. The salient point here is not just the immediate illness and deaths inflicted on the townspeople (18 percent of the population or 1,100 people suffer from asbestosis), but the millions of eventual victims in 236 cities across the United States who have been exposed as a result of corporate malfeasance (*Nightline* Transcript). This validates Reiman's point about the consequences and victims outnumbering those in typical street crimes. Furthermore, the crime was perpetrated over a 40-year period (*Nightline* Transcript) in plain view of a criminal justice system that commits little resources to policing corporate industries. Yes, the offenders were caught, but were efforts to deter such crime kept foremost in the general public's mind? That brings me to my second data source.

In the survey, "Television Network News Coverage of Corporate Crime from 1970-2000," published in the *Western Criminology Review*, Brendan Maguire's conclusion makes several points:

- 1) Corporate crime is not exciting enough to retain viewer interest in network news coverage; there are no graphic symbols of blood and bodies to signify "crime" to the viewer's eye.
- 2) The typical white-collar criminal is an affluent white male who tends to be perceived as a role model to the general public; he gets "the benefit of the doubt."
- 3) In addition, due to advertising and public relations, viewers have a positive bias toward corporations, which in turn produces a false perception about the reality of things, that is, what Reiman calls the "double deception" of the public.

Maguire's research supports Reiman's argument that the "reality reflected in the criminal justice mirror" does not represent the true and greatest dangers to the public (Reiman p. 282). In the debate over which is the great evil, white-collar crime or street crime, Reiman's thesis about the concept and relative definitions of crime must be addressed so that we can make a truly objective assessment of the harm caused to society by white-collar crime.

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# Projecting My Future As an Older Adult

Elizabeth Collins

Before I visited the Jubilee Senior Center on Pierrepont Street, projecting my future would have been bleak. Having visited there, I have a new optimism about my senior years. In our current era, age is becoming just a number. So many factors go into one's psychological state now that activities for seniors have evolved. My mother and grandmother were psychologically middle-aged when they were still young, and old when they were actually middle-aged. My generation does not feel the intense social confines of aging.

It's hard to project myself as an older adult because who knows what seniors will be doing in thirty or forty years? I have no children so I will most likely live by myself. I picture moving to a warm pleasant place where I can remain physically active on a fixed income. I'm an active person, and barring any serious illness or injury, see myself remaining one. Walking, swimming in the ocean or a lake and gardening are all free activities. I am fearful of what a dollar will or rather, will not, be worth by then.

I'm not very shy and hope the senior center I join will have lots of dances and discussion groups. I love to watch the classics, experience new movies, and see contemporary art. I picture having coffee and sweets and chatting the afternoon away. I think it is vitally important to network, especially with people in the same circumstances or stage of life. Sharing information, emotional support, and friendship can keep illness, calamity, and crime at bay. For me, losing someone close is greatly upsetting. The need to share that grief and celebrate life will be more acute when I'm a senior citizen. I hope I will have people in my life who share that philosophy. I guess what I am projecting most and what I saw from my visit to the Jubilee Senior Center, is that friendship and sociability are keys to enjoying life, and you're never too old to have friends.

# Poem

Madelyne Shabot

For Radiologic Technology 226 I was asked to read a poem written by a bedside nurse. In it he opens his heart and describes how he is ready to throw up his hands and walk away from his lifelong career. Then, just as if the devil sitting on one shoulder stopped prodding and gave the angel on the other shoulder a chance to speak, his outlook took an about-face. The nurse realized, after much soul-searching, he could not walk away!

The conflicts he felt didn't have to pertain only to being a nurse. It could be anyone in any career who is passionate about what he or she is doing. I understand completely the turmoil this man feels. Being on the more "mature" side, with some of life's lessons under your belt, can make a person disillusioned—feeling as though work is a futile uphill climb. Then you realize the climb is not impossible. It's clear I'm not the only one whose thoughts are doubtful one day, and optimistic the next.

I always wanted to be part of the healthcare profession in some capacity. Unfortunately, I will never be able to make up for all those lost years of not pursuing my dream. But I didn't do so badly raising my five children (little kids-little problems—big kids-big problems) during that time. Now it's my turn. I hope and pray that I am successful.

I never realized what was involved in becoming a radiologic technologist. I will have invested five years in my college journey. Now I'm amazed I've already done one year of courses in my field. Some days I feel like my brain will explode from all the information. Some days I feel my nerves are shot from the pressure of yet another exam. But when the day is over and I look back, I usually (not always) say to myself, "Why did I work myself up into such

a frenzy? It wasn't so bad—enjoy the ride.” I'm one day (and one exam) closer to my goal—helping people. It's what I've been doing as long as I can remember while growing up and then with my own family. I'm at a point now in my schooling when I actually work at the clinical site side by side with professionals. How exciting is that! But I have noticed, even though it is a teaching hospital, there are those who may not be too receptive to the idea of teaching. Is it an ego problem? Do people feel threatened? By me? That's a laugh! Don't they remember when they were in my shoes? Didn't they appreciate all the help and advice they got? And how did they feel when someone they respected turned their nose up at them? So why continue that negativity? There should be no room for butting heads and inflated egos. These professionals are all working many more years than I will have the opportunity to—they should be wiser. If I ask a question, don't be curt. Pick your head up from your desk and show some common courtesy. Don't make believe I'm invisible—or anyone else for that matter! You're there to help—whether you come into direct contact with patients, or do paperwork. Butting heads, butting egos, it's just a waste of energy. You go home angry, frustrated, discouraged, and for what? You begin to think, “Did I do something wrong?” You second-guess yourself, and you shouldn't. You know in your heart you're doing your best for your patients and their families. But I digress.

Every day is a learning experience and I love it. Sure some things are routine, but sometimes this work is amazing. For instance an elderly patient tells you he's in such pain and he hasn't been moved from lying on his back in a long time. You talk to him, encourage him, calm him down, and before he knows it, he's on his side and can't believe how much better he feels! He is grateful. And the woman suffering from leukemia and pneumonia. Simply holding her hand and talking to her calmed and reassured her—she didn't want to let go! The funny thing is I felt calmer too. I could do a little extra to help patients. Isn't that what it's all about? A professor I once had compared me with another student. I was the one with the best bedside manner and radiographs that were only acceptable. The other student produced great radiographs, but the patients were not impressed with her attitude. I want to be great at both things. There's my naiveté again. As old as I am, I still believe both things are possible. I still believe I can make a difference—a big difference. But in actuality, it may never happen. Who am I? I may have to be content with handholding and calm reassurances. Will I get rich from this job? I doubt it. But I'm not greedy. I've learned that the real riches in life don't always fit in your wallet. They do, however, fit in your heart.

Some days I'll throw up my hands and say, “What for? Who needs it?” Working long hours, never a thank you, always asked for another favor, never getting paid your worth. On the other hand I hope I persevere. It only takes a smile, or a pat on the back (maybe a raise— not likely!) to negate the disappointment. Now my eyes are wide open, looking forward to great things. Don't discourage me. Encourage me. You have to earn my respect; I hope I can

earn yours in return. I will bend over backwards for the patients and co-workers, but don't take advantage.

I want to go home exhausted but exhilarated. I want to see a smile on the patients' faces even if only for the short time I'm with them. Some have made me smile (that's nice!). What would I want if I were in their situation? How would I want to be treated? I have seen fellow techs treat patients with respect, kindness, and compassion. I've seen others just get in and out as fast as possible without any personal contact at all. No one is perfect, but you must know right from wrong.

This poem we read for class came from the writer's heart; it could have come from mine. I feel the same drive to help people who can't help themselves. I am frustrated with politicking and ego clashing. I'm sure there will be days when I say I can't deal with this one more day. But what kind of person will take my place? Do I know they will have the same sincerity that I do?—there's my naiveté talking again. As long as I can I will continue. The writer of the poem could have been reading my mind, but not just at the frustrated beginning of the poem—also at the end when he feels renewed in his passion for his work.

# The Creative Mind Links Itself to Science

Francisco Lopez

In this crazy world, the only certain thing is “cause and effect,” the certainty that every action will have a consequence. That applies to our decisions in life and to everything else in this universe. We know it’s true, because if we cut a flower it will eventually die, or if we place a piece of paper in flames it will become ashes. This principle of “cause and effect” is shown in *The Way Things Go*, a 30-minute 1979 movie that takes place in a warehouse in which a 100-foot structure was constructed using the most unlikely combination of objects. Another principle, that “Energy is never lost, it only transforms itself,” is demonstrated in the movie as well. Energy is used to make a black garbage bag spin around with a certain strength so that it can push a tire and start a chain reaction. The use of these and other scientific principles by Peter Fischli and David Weiss, the people who created this movie, makes us understand that human creativity links itself to science.

After being presented with the first event that triggers the action throughout the movie, we can see that the events that follow are set up to happen in a choreographic form, in which each event causes another to happen in real time. Each event takes a very calculated time to happen, and at that time only will the next event be triggered, causing the desired effect which in turn will trigger the next event. Various items are used to make this movie. First is the hanging garbage bag that pushes the tire that in effect pushes cylindrical pieces of wood that then push a little car up to bottles of chemicals that produce fire and cause more events. Observing this process might sound boring, but this is where human creativity comes into play. The people who designed the structure in which all these events take place, designed it in such a way that it becomes entertaining. The movie makes us see patterns. The same principles of science are applied over and over, but are presented to us in different ways and with different elements such as water (with chemicals), wood, metal, and fire.

These elements are used almost in a regular order, where first they used a tire, then wood to make ramps and wooden cars, then fire is produced, and after that some mechanics would be applied, and then we’d have wood again. We see

that everything begins when the garbage bag pushed the tire thanks to the energy that the spinning gave it; then with that energy, the tire hit more tires, which in turn passed that gained energy to other tires that would hit wooden objects that contained water. With the energy passed on, that water would fall into a container and produce a weight that with the help of mechanics would raise other objects to in turn cause other events. Finally, at the end, even more unlikely objects such as shoes and knives are used to give the movie a little humorous touch that leaves the viewer with a smile and with the understanding that a creative mind is linked to science.

# Urban Sociology: *Roger and Me*

Nadia Menard

Making decisions is a major part of life. Every day we must make decisions by weighing all our options. Whether we make wise decisions or not, the consequences will have an impact on us. Every major decision that people make will not only affect their own lives, but the lives of others as well. In Flint, Michigan, the CEO of General Motors, Roger B. Smith, made a decision that was wise to him, but had a negative impact on others in the city of Flint. Michael Moore made a film showing the impact of Mr. Smith's decision on people's lives. The film, *Roger and Me*, showed the impact of deindustrialization on city life. Changes can be beneficial to everyone, or they can shred people's lives to pieces.

In Flint things were going pretty well for everyone. Many people had jobs that provided a pretty good income to support their families. One of the major sources of employment was General Motors. Thousands and thousands worked for GM, which had many plants in Flint. Eventually, Roger Smith, GM's CEO, decided to close all of the GM factories in Flint. He made this decision because it would be of financial benefit to GM. He thought it would be best to build GM factories in foreign countries where they could pay workers less money. Smith's decision was very wise from his point of view; he thought mainly of the profit that GM would gain by moving elsewhere. Any business owner would probably think the same way, and besides that's what being a business owner means. An owner is aware of the negative impact that moving elsewhere will have on employees, but the goal of making more money will nearly always win and crush the feeling of pity. *Roger and Me* expresses the dramatic effect that the GM closings had on people's lives.

The GM closings caused a lot of problems. About 30,000 workers were out of jobs. Many were basically living paycheck to paycheck; and because they were unemployed, they were evicted from their homes. Many families were left stranded on city streets. Hundreds were moving away not knowing what tomorrow would be like. Homelessness grew dramatically, and crime rates and homicides went up. People turned to violence and robbery. Many were selling whatever they had. Even though some people were receiving some financial help from the government, it was not enough.

Flint city life basically went down the drain. It was a tearful time for many, not knowing where their next meal was coming from. Finding new jobs was not easy; even if new restaurants like Taco Bell opened in the area this would not make up for the thousands upon thousands who were still without jobs. President Ronald Reagan suggested that the people who lost their jobs move to other states like Texas, and get better jobs. Unfortunately, however, not everyone could just get up and leave, especially those with children.

Those who were not affected by the plant closings took a different point of view. While the poor were going to religious ceremonies for encouragement, the rich were enjoying themselves at gatherings, not realizing how GM's decisions were affecting people. The rich people's response to the plant closings was that this kind of situation was normal in a free market society; many said that if people lost their jobs, then they should find another one. In fact people were somewhat making fun of the poor. Some wealthy people paid \$100 to spend one night in jail just to see what it would feel like. In the end, the plant closings did not affect them, so from their point of view, why should they feel bad?

The lobbyist for GM, Tom Kay, of course was on Smith's side. The closings did not affect him in a negative way, but rather in a positive way. During his interview, he defended Smith and thought of him as a warm man. He concluded that Smith's decision was best for General Motors, and in a free market, companies should be allowed to pursue their interest.

These issues are definitely relevant to my own life. My parents are working hard to make a living. As life gets more and more expensive, eventually they will need a raise and part of their union's job is to fight for that raise. Any decision that is made at their jobs will not only affect them, but my sister and me too. Even if my parents try to save, they are still living from paycheck to paycheck. If a decision like that of GM took place, it would have a bad effect on us as a family. It would not be easy for us to just get up and leave. My sister and I are in the middle of schooling in order to work towards careers and just leaving like that would be difficult. If my parents had to search for other jobs, they could not just accept anything because they have to pay the mortgage on our house. Dramatic changes would make things more difficult, and could lead to poverty.

There are two different approaches to poverty. The structural approach says that poverty is caused by unequal opportunities. The structural approach says the type of jobs that people have can lead to poverty. The cultural approach, says that the subculture, values, hopes and beliefs of poor people cause them to stay in poverty. The poor are seen as present-oriented and fatalistic, and these

traits cause them to be poor. After the plant closings, many were let down not because they were present-oriented or fatalistic, but instead because of what had happened in the economy. The deindustrialization in Flint affected a large number of people. The jobs that provided income for large numbers of people were now being sent overseas. The structural approach seems most appropriate for understanding the problems in Flint. For the workers who lost their jobs, perhaps increasing the minimum wage and providing employment through public projects would have helped many to get back on their feet. Michael Moore criticized the limits of our country's democracy and commitment to justice because of our unequal economy.

GM's decision created a negative impact which led to poverty and made the wealthy richer. The rich were getting richer and the poor poorer. In Flint, many were financially shredded to pieces, while the owners were prospering. In the film, the song from the Beach Boys played saying, "Wouldn't it be nice if we could be together.....". Yes, it would be nice if we could work together in society with fairness, then no one would have to suffer. Unfortunately, that is not how things work because almost everyone is seeking his or her own interest. We live in a society in which selfishness and the love of money have taken a toll. Will we ever live in a world where everyone is on an equal footing and treats others with fairness? If so, how long would it last?

# A Rose Is Special: Tupac Shakur's Lyrics

Changjing Xu

I saw the rose in Tupac's poem  
I gazed on it  
I found it special  
Since it grew  
From a crack in the concrete.

It is special  
Since it walked  
Without having feet.  
It is special  
Since it tried to breathe  
In a nasty environment.  
It is special  
Since it kept its dreams  
Through its lifetime.  
It is special  
Since it visualized its beauty and strength  
In a brutish time.

It is special  
Since it sang  
It played  
It marked its spot and  
It was colored  
To make the world wonderful.

I would like to learn from  
The rose  
To establish and keep identity  
To be original  
To be not old  
In the earth world.

# I Am Music

Sherryann A. Robert

I am the keys to Stevie Wonder's song, "Dark 'n' Lovely"  
I am the daughter of the river flowing freely down mountains through valleys  
I am an old worn out pair of shoes with no bottoms  
I am a dark cloud pregnant with rain and bursting with angry lightning  
I am midnight green  
I am my hair, thick, black, and nappy  
I am the sky  
I am a fire burning strong  
I am the power of the earth.

# Impact Speech

Eric Bourne

Most people claim that some things are impossible, like moving so fast that you'll leave even your shadow behind. For me, loving my brother was impossible. He's my one and only younger brother, five years younger than me, named Oliver. For years we have always tried to get the other in trouble any chance we had. We never shared anything with each other except punches and kicks, never too hard though. At the rate we were going, it is hard to believe that all that could change. The day when I started believing nothing is impossible had finally arrived. It was one year ago, during spring recess. I had planned to visit someone, but had forgotten to set my alarm and had my cell on vibrate. The uncontrollable tremor of an unknown nuisance made my sleep restless. I finally woke up to find that the pain in my back was actually my cell going off. Resisting the urge to haul my cell into the wall, I decided instead to answer it. It just happened to be the person I planned to see, calling me. I had over twenty-three missed calls back to back from the same person. I apologized to her for oversleeping, only to go right back to dreamland. Such an act was difficult due to the warm, sunny, blindingly irritating light of the sun, beaming through my sky light and magnified into my face. I turned my head in disgust but the even more annoying chirping of the birds on my roof denied me my endless sleep.

I could fight it no longer, so I washed up to remove the night's mask of drool. It was about 1p.m. in the afternoon, which meant breakfast time. I took a whiff of the milk which sent a tingly sensation to my brain, signaling for me to put it back. I then noticed one of the hundreds of Domino pizza ads that decorated my kitchen. The craving for pizza was too unbearable to fight. I made a pact with my brother to help pay for the pizza so he could have his own pie. He ignored me and went into his room. I then shouted. "Fine, you're not getting any toppings." He yelled back. "Pepperoni." I didn't make the call right away due to my being hypnotized by the video game I was playing.

My brother slowly walked into my room. With a pale look on his face, he quietly whispered, "Can I have toppings on my pizza?" I replied, "What do you want?" With an even lower voice, he repeated, "Can I have toppings on my pizza?" I start calling him out of his name for asking again. His face was still very pale as his body stood slightly tilted. He had a dead stare in his eye as he tried to speak once more. His eyes rolled back into his head and his arms rose up

as well. He turned and began shaking as he slowly descended to the floor. Before he could hit the ground, I rushed over to catch him. There my brother lay on the ground shaking uncontrollably. I yelled out his name, "Oliver...Oliver, what's wrong?!" but no reply. I didn't know what to do and was paralyzed with fear. I got up and ran, then jumped straight down the stairs missing every step to land in front of my door. I zoomed out and rushed towards my aunt's house that was right next door. I barged in and told her what was going on.

We rushed up the stairs, back to my brother where he continued to shake. My aunt cried his name out and prayed over him. The cell phone that had annoyed me was the same cell phone I now depended heavily on. I called 911 and gave them all the information they required. Five minutes later my brother lay motionless on the ground. He slowly breathed as if he were asleep. My aunt went in the kitchen, and at that time I held my brother's hand and told him he's not allowed to die while I'm still around.

He uttered, "I love you." I was in shock that he even spoke, let alone those words said for the first time to me. I replied, "I love you too." Five more minutes passed and he finally woke up in a confused state. I explained what happened to him, but he didn't understand. He didn't remember even asking what toppings he wanted on his pizza. Ten minutes later, the fire department arrived despite the fact that I asked for an ambulance which then arrived ten more minutes later. They did their work and took him away to the hospital for testing. He came back later that night. The doctor couldn't exactly tell what was wrong or what happened to him. My aunt judged it to be a seizure. Since that day, my brother and I enjoy each other's company and continue to do so. Now all that's left for me to do is leave my shadow behind, thus defying another impossible action.