

UNA

2019

VOCE

TACOMA COMMUNITY COLLEGE'S  
MAGAZINE OF STUDENT WRITING



## *To the readers of Una Voce,*

This magazine is a compilation of writing done in TCC classes by hardworking students who have taken the time to unleash their thoughts on paper. The time and effort that students have put in are on full display in every selection. The writing within this magazine shows the diverse subjects that TCC students care for, ranging from science to English to anthropology and many more. The editorial process to decide which works to include in the magazine was difficult because of the wide range of writing and the topics they entailed. Each paper was given nameless to student editors to ensure a process that could completely focus on the subject matter of the papers. After much time and difficult elaboration on which papers to include, we had to narrow down the options from about 70 to 26 selections that would represent TCC as a campus filled with students from all walks of life taking different paths through and within TCC. I hope everyone reading this magazine finds a piece of this compilation they relate to and enjoy because every single student that submitted to Una Voce has stepped out of their comfort zone to allow strangers to read their thoughts on a number of subjects and issues that have impacted society.

- MICHAEL WHALEN, EDITOR



# Una Voce

## Student Editors & Their Voices

**Shelby Holland:** The most meaningful experience that came out of being an Una Voce editor was being able to read these students' work and knowing that I am going to have a part in it getting viewed. My Una Voce experience let me meet new people and have the chance to read fantastic pieces of writings.

**Michael Whalen:** A Bittersweet Day stood out to me because the description that was put into the paper was playing out in my brain like a movie. The emotion defines this paper – you really have a feeling for the author as you read through which is really attractive to me. The Tacoma Tenants paper was also informative of an issue of renter's rights and reading this made my stomach turn. Also, Finding Solutions to the Plastic Pollutions gave me hope for the future of finding a solution to the plastic in the ocean and hopefully overcoming this dangerous issue. To the students who submitted: Thank You! It is definitely nerve racking to have strangers read your work, so I respect your courage and time putting your thoughts down on paper to help create Una Voce. I hope everyone enjoys reading this magazine and submits works in the future!

**Ivana Hayes:** I was expecting a lot more of an intense and rigid structure with Una Voce. I think there was a preconceived notion about journalism and magazine editors and it scared me a little. There were a few papers that stood up really boldly for unspoken truths. In one, it was very open about child sex trafficking, something I don't believe anyone would think to find in a magazine, but also very relevant that it should be in a magazine.

**Brianna Fulgencio Estevez:** Being able to be part of the creation of the Una Voce magazine was an incredible honor. I have been able to experience what it is like to create something that can unite a whole school by using student works from their classes. All of the submissions were so amazing, showing me how unique every person is. Everyone uses their own distinct style of writing, and each

had their own story to tell. Everything from the research papers to the simple memoirs had a small portion of the author's personality woven into the words on the page. It was exciting to review each submission and witness a new story becoming a candidate for the magazine. Despite the limitations to the number of student works we can publish in the magazine, everyone on the team is grateful for each and every submission, even if some did not make it in. We encourage you all to continue doing your best work in all of your classes, and to submit your works again for the next magazine!

**Khadijah York:** I had a good time during this process. I learned about my peers in a way that made me appreciate the hard work we all partake in. I want to encourage my peers to keep it up and have faith in yourself.

**Natalie Butler:** I was thrilled by the overall quality of writing that the students of Tacoma Community College brought to this experience. I was not only able to read about new perspectives on topics but more importantly the papers challenged me as an individual to question my own views and thought processes. I would like to thank everyone who submitted their writing! It takes courage to put your own work out there, and that bravery gave those of us with the pleasure to read them the opportunity to widen the horizon of our minds and hearts in a number of subjects.

**Rebecca Jones:** It was extremely difficult to narrow down our options to only about 25 to publish. There were so many amazing and captivating pieces that I wish we could have included. Reading the submissions was a roller coaster of emotions. The range of topics discussed was endless, many of which gave us new perspectives on very topical issues going on throughout the world. I hope you all enjoy these as much as I did!

# Una Voce

## Authors



**Natalie Bittner**



**Jazmyne Cavillo**



**A.D.**



**Ruqaiyah Damrah**



**Shanaelynn Godwin**



**Dorothy Gorder**



**Felicia Hambrick**



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**Michael Whalen**

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**Sean Peterson**



**Uyen Phan**



**Cathy Pick**



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**Chloe Robinson**



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**Lourdes Wusstig**

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# 13<sup>th</sup>

*By Natalie Bittner*

After watching the documentary 13th, one could argue that the law, justice, and penal systems have been weaponized against people of color due to the clause in the 13th Amendment. After the war, black men were criminalized due to propaganda saying all black men were rapists. All black men were savages, animals. Therefore, many were arrested for petty things, and their rights were revoked because they were convicted of a crime. Over the years, it has been shown that a greater percentage of male prisoners are black. If a white man and a black man are both caught in possession of cocaine, the black man has crack, and the white man has the powder. Due to media saying the powder is the “luxury” drug, the white man would be punished less. The black man would be punished in a more aggressive manner because of his skin color.

One of the three sociological issues would be generational trauma. Generational trauma is trauma that is transferred from one generation to the next and further generations. In this case, the black people suffered ever since the rebirth of the Klu Klux Klan. Blacks were murdered for being suspected as criminals. Another sociological issue would be dehumanizing African Americans. When black people are turned into less than human, into nothing more than criminals, this made it easier to turn them into criminals and place them behind bars. And doing so, would cause Americans to dehumanize blacks as well, down the generational road, either knowingly, or subconsciously.

Another sociological issue is turning slavery into the mass incarceration law set forth by Bill Clinton and proposed by ALEC also known as the American Legislative Exchange Council. Mass incarceration would be used in place of slavery, where blacks were imprisoned for small crimes, and they could be used for free, or cheap labor, making brand name clothing for next to nothing.

The over-militarization of the police force in urban neighborhoods has not made the community better. In fact, it has made it worse. The urban neighborhood citizens often find themselves constantly victimized, targeted, criminalized because they live in those urban neighborhoods and “do not belong outside of the neighborhood.” It bred bigotry that while unspoken was still present, and magnified it. This is why the young boy Trayvon Martin lost his life, simply because he was a kid wearing a hoodie, minding his own business, and a hateful man followed him because he was “clearly” up to no good.

What stood out to me the most was the numbers of the prison populations as the years went by. In 1970 the population was 357,292. In 1980, it jumped to 513,900. Five years later, the United States prison population grew to 759,100. In 1990 it surpassed the one million prisoners and jumped to 1,179,200. Over the years, it continued to grow. At the beginning of the documentary, it was stated that the United States is home to only 5% of the world’s population, and 25% is the world’s prison population. Knowing this is staggering.

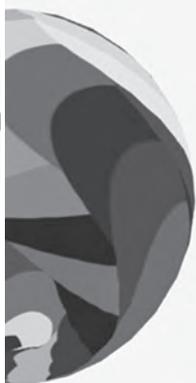
It was eerie finding out about the American Legislative Exchange Council, and that one in four of the U.S. legislators have ties to ALEC and they can introduce bills and policies. Some companies in league with ALEC are AT&T, Verizon, Walmart, State Farm and the big Pharma, and this council has been around for four decades. It almost makes one wonder: Just how many of the laws or bills we now have were proposed by ALEC besides the three-strike felony and the Mass incarceration law?

# Silenced & Suffocated: East Asia's Mental Health Stigma

**By Uyen Phan**

East Asia is an active environment - constantly busy, changing and developing. In such a dynamic society where productivity is emphasized and conformity is valued, personal issues such as mental health tend to get lost in the margins. The rapid industrialization rate has not been positively correlated with expansion of psychiatric services, resulting in millions of people without adequate help for mental issues. In addition, mental illness has always been associated negatively in the region - in Korea, Japan, China and Vietnam alike, it is common to be regarded as "morally weak" when you admit to being mentally ill (Dennis 696). As a result, the mentally ill have no stage to be heard. What would you do if professional help is not accessible and the community - your friends, your own family, shuns you? Effectively, East Asians suffering from a mental illness feel silenced and suffocated. This was how I felt when I found out that my excessive worries, my "odd" personality and social withdrawal are all concomitants of social anxiety. It makes no sense for anxiety to be openly discussed in the United States, but a forbidden topic at dinner with my parents. In order to provide a stage for the mentally ill to speak up, the community must change its attitude to welcome them, not shame them. It is difficult to tackle such a complex issue across a vast region; however, I believe changes start from destigmatization in the community, and then society. Therefore, the most effective foremost approach would be deinstitutionalization alongside widespread establishment of community-based mental healthcare centers due to their flexible and humanistic nature, as opposed to putting people in isolated psychiatric asylums.

Across East Asia, it is evident that there is an ongoing crisis in the mental healthcare sector. Approximately a million youths in Japan suffer from hikikomori - a type of social phobia where young people lock themselves in their room and withdraw from society (Dennis 696). In South Korea, depression is regarded as a stain on the family's reputation, rather than a clinical issue to be sympathized with and treated (Juergens). Over half of all female suicides in the world are in China - one of the rare countries with higher female suicide rate than male (Phillips et al.). In my home country, Vietnam, "more than 80% of patients in two groups (schizophrenia and epilepsy) in the community have not been detected, screened or received care." (Vo). Although these four countries differ in many ways, the pattern is clear - something is critically wrong with the mental healthcare system and people in dire need of help are not receiving it. For a population of a billion-plus, China has only around 15,000 trained mental health professionals (Dennis 697), which makes its psychiatric services severely lacking and inaccessible. Similarly, less than 5% of people with mental disorders in Vietnam received treatment from the social assistance system and state-funded healthcare system (Vo). This demonstrates that the government in these countries are not doing enough to help its people. Mental healthcare is simply not the state's priority, thus allocation of fund for these services is inadequate. Without support from the government, it is difficult for East Asian patients to access professional psychiatric care. Intuitively, their other option would be to turn to their community; however, this proves to be problematic as well. In East Asia, deep-





rooted cultural beliefs about mental illness are prevalent. An interesting example of this is the phenomenon of 'neurasthenia', which literally translates to 'weak nerves' (Dennis 697). Other names for this concept include 'moral weakness' (Dennis 696) and 'weakness of personality' (Ando et al.). East Asians tend to view their mental illness as a physical problem, not an actual 'mental illness' to avoid stigma. Thus, the diagnosis of 'neurasthenia' was invented to imply that their problems are physical, not mental; even though mental illnesses do have a biological basis. You are considered 'weak' and unfit for society if you have a mental illness. An overwhelming 61% of employers in Japan would not hire a person with chronic schizophrenia (Ando et al.). A Korean-American mental health professional, Jin-Hee, points out that, "People with mental health issues are seen as 'crazy' and the issue is something that must be overcome." (qtd. in Juergens). In Asia, the notion of maintaining your family's reputation - or 'face' is extremely crucial and having a mental illness, which is associated with a lot of shame and guilt, could taint it. Thus, it is not hard to understand why many East Asians do not seek help for their problems because they are afraid to be a burden to their family or even be disowned by them.

With an unsupportive community and indifference from the government, it is truly exhausting and frustrating to live with a mental illness in East Asia. As a result, this constant internal repression has had grave implications on society and the economy. When patients have no outlet for their illnesses, they turn to alcohol and other drugs as an effort to self-medicate. Recently, South Korea was named the country with "the world's worst drink problem." by Al-Jazeera (qtd. in Juergens). It should come off as no surprise that South Korea also has one of the highest suicide rate worldwide (Juergens). Vietnam has no alcohol policy and alcoholism is a large burden on society with a prevalence rate of 5.3% (Niemi et al. 257). It is well-

known that people with mental illnesses are at high risk for substance abuse; therefore, a lackluster mental healthcare system and a light attitude towards alcohol is an extremely fatal combination. As written in The Journal of Mental Health Policy and Economics, deterioration of mental health in China has caused declines in incomes for men by 39% and 33% for women (qtd. in Ma). Not only does mental illnesses wreak havoc on society with high suicide rates, but also costs the economy a great percentage of labor participation and productivity. Without an effective mental healthcare system to provide help for the mentally ill, the problem is exacerbated and guaranteed to get worse as the current crisis continues.

Overall, it seems that East Asian nations are not catering to its mentally ill population adequately. Curious to understand whether mentally ill patients feel the same way about the availability of psychiatric help, I had conducted an interview with a friend from my hometown, Nha Trang, Vietnam to gain a better insider understanding and to avoid my own personal bias. From information she researched on the internet, MQ found out that she suffers from Bipolar Disorder. In her case, she was fortunate to have close friends and support from her mother. However, her journey to getting help was not a walk in the park. At first, MQ's family wanted her to get an exorcism for her mental illness. This was an interesting detail because it highlighted how people in Vietnam still hold old-fashioned views on mental illnesses and consider exorcism as first-line treatment. MQ initially agreed to exorcism; however, the process got too extreme and she changed her mind to see a therapist instead. Psychotherapy proved to be quite effective and MQ went on to see a psychiatrist for medication. A few things I noted is that MQ had to travel to a bigger city to see a psychiatrist because there was none in my hometown, Nha Trang. This is quite concerning as there is not a single psychiatrist to serve an entire urban zone, which illustrates how lacking psychiatric services are in Vietnam.





Another noteworthy detail is that MQ commented that her psychiatrist was unprofessional and she will not be seeing her again because she thought the service was inadequate. The psychiatrist only asked for her diagnosis and then prescribed medicine without any kind of personal care. This provided me with insights on the quality of psychiatric services in Vietnam, it is still underdeveloped and MQ did emphasize that she saw a psychiatrist - a doctor specializing in mental health, not just a regular general practitioner. When I inquired her about what she thought of the mental healthcare system in general, she came up with a concise response, "extremely lacking". MQ stated that an internationally accredited hospital, the University of Medicine and Pharmacy hospital in Ho Chi Minh city only had one room dedicated to mental healthcare and there were only six doctors who worked just a day per week. To conclude the interview, MQ also added that most therapists she knows of in Vietnam can only treat sleeping problems. Her replies were tremendously insightful and of great assistance to further my understanding, they confirmed my beliefs that mental healthcare in Vietnam is still very limited and that development is urgently necessary.

As stated earlier in this paper, the mental healthcare crisis is deep-rooted in the community - in the population's belief, stigma and attitude towards mental illnesses. The government can build more hospitals and dedicate more budget to psychiatric services; however, if the negative perception of mental illness in the community does not change, the mentally ill will always be silenced, shamed and discouraged to seek help. I posit that the establishment of community-based mental healthcare centers (CMHCs) will be the most suitable solution for East Asia due to its flexible nature. Of course, no solution will fit all countries and communities, but I believe that in most cases, it is crucial to develop community-based mental healthcare combined with deinstitutionalization - the abolition of isolated psychiatric hospitals. Long-term

hospitalization leads to stigmatization because it removes patients from their communities, as noted by Ando and other researchers, "long stays in psychiatric hospitals may decrease contact between the general public and patients with schizophrenia." This problem is perfectly addressed in a community-based mental healthcare center where patients are fully integrated into a community and it gives them a sense of belonging, not exclusion from society. In a sense, it makes people who are supposedly "crazy" feel "normal." Another reason why CMHCs are appropriate for East Asia is that they can accommodate unique cultural beliefs of the region. Because CMHCs do not follow standard procedures like psychiatric hospitals do, they can better tailor treatment to the patient's specific faith and are able to combine both traditional treatment and medication (Thorncroft et al. 280). In addition to providing effective support for mental health issues, CMHCs also serve to change attitudes and destigmatize. You do not have to be severely mentally ill to be admitted to a CMHC, as opposed to a psychiatric hospital. There is less stigma to see someone in a community center, which is extremely important to East Asians who are afraid to seek professional services. Finally, CMHCs do not have to be established by the government, they can be operated by NGOs, which makes them ideal for countries like Vietnam where mental health services are largely provided through these organizations (Niemi et al. 257).

In conclusion, it is irrefutable that the mental healthcare crisis in East Asia is serious and stigma is still extremely far-reaching and rampant. However, in recent years, light has increasingly been shed on this issue and some governments have taken initial actions, albeit subtle. As of now, community-based mental healthcare centers should be the foremost priority for any nation wishing to build an efficient mental healthcare system and destigmatize. I am optimistic it is only a matter of time until mental illness amasses more public interest, only then will true changes be ignited and voices be heard.





# Finding Life

**By A.D.**



I was only 27 years old when I got locked up. This is my first time in prison. Before all this I wasn't doing anything more but getting high and talking about what I was going to do. I was a lazy drug addict and had no life. I was addicted to crystal meth and honestly I had a problem. I came to prison and did eight months in Mission Creek in the T.C. Program. I gave up T.C and still after eight months was not ready to quit. It took me a year and a couple months of clean time to realize that I am doing so much better without the drugs. I had finished my GED and had a graduation at WCCW. I cried that day of my graduation. I felt like I finally accomplished something. I am now a year and a half clean and sober and going to college for my associate's degree in business. I never thought I would get this far. I feel like I found life and now I am living the way I'm supposed to and it's great. I just want people to know that if they find themselves not ready to quit doing drugs, just give it time. Don't give up hope and keep on going for your dreams. Life is what you make it. Don't let drugs be your life. It's time to start living for the future and not living for the moment!



## Notes:

Mission Creek = Mission Creek Corrections Center for Women

T.C. Program = Therapeutic Community

WCCW = Washington Corrections Center for Women

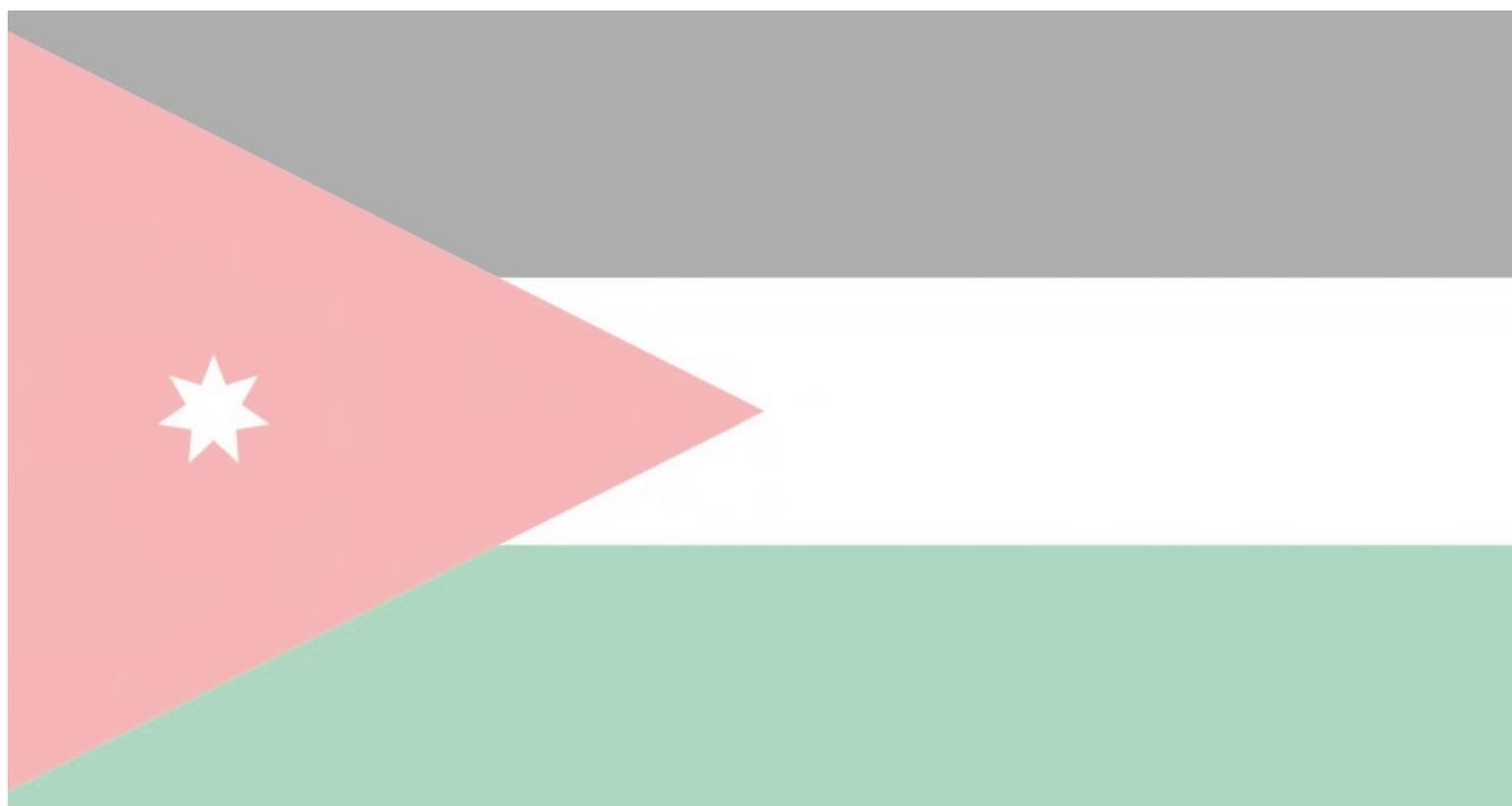


# Confessions of an Arab-American Teen

**By Ruqaiyah Damrah**

Growing up, I took my cultures for granted and didn't think about how strongly my identity is tied to them. However, reflecting on my cultural roots has made me think about how these cultures have influenced my experiences, and therefore my ideas and values. Coming from a culturally mixed family, I identify strongly with both the Middle Eastern - specifically Jordanian - and American cultures, and I've observed both their competing and similar values from an emic perspective, which I will detail through an ethnographic lens.

themselves, they must have a sense of independence to fulfill this expectation. In America, being described as independent is a compliment, and it's an ideal we all strive for. Stemming from this ideal is the American value of equality. Because everyone is seen as independent and capable of carving their own paths in life, everyone should be held to equal regard and opportunities. Of course, this isn't always the case in America, but it is a value that Americans pride themselves on.



American culture's infrastructural systems consist of a state-based democracy built on industrialism and intensive agriculture, as well as a market economy. Because of these systems, a strong emphasis is placed on specialized occupations. In such a large-scale and complex society, there are hundreds of jobs and roles a person can take on, so it would be near impossible for society to dictate to people which role they should fill. In addition, it's more beneficial to American culture's market economy and political system if people take on specialized occupations. This means that Americans choose their own life direction based on their personal choice and opinions rather than interdependent need.

This focus on specialized occupations results in great value placed on independence and individualism. Because people must choose their own occupation and find a way to become skilled in it in order to sustain

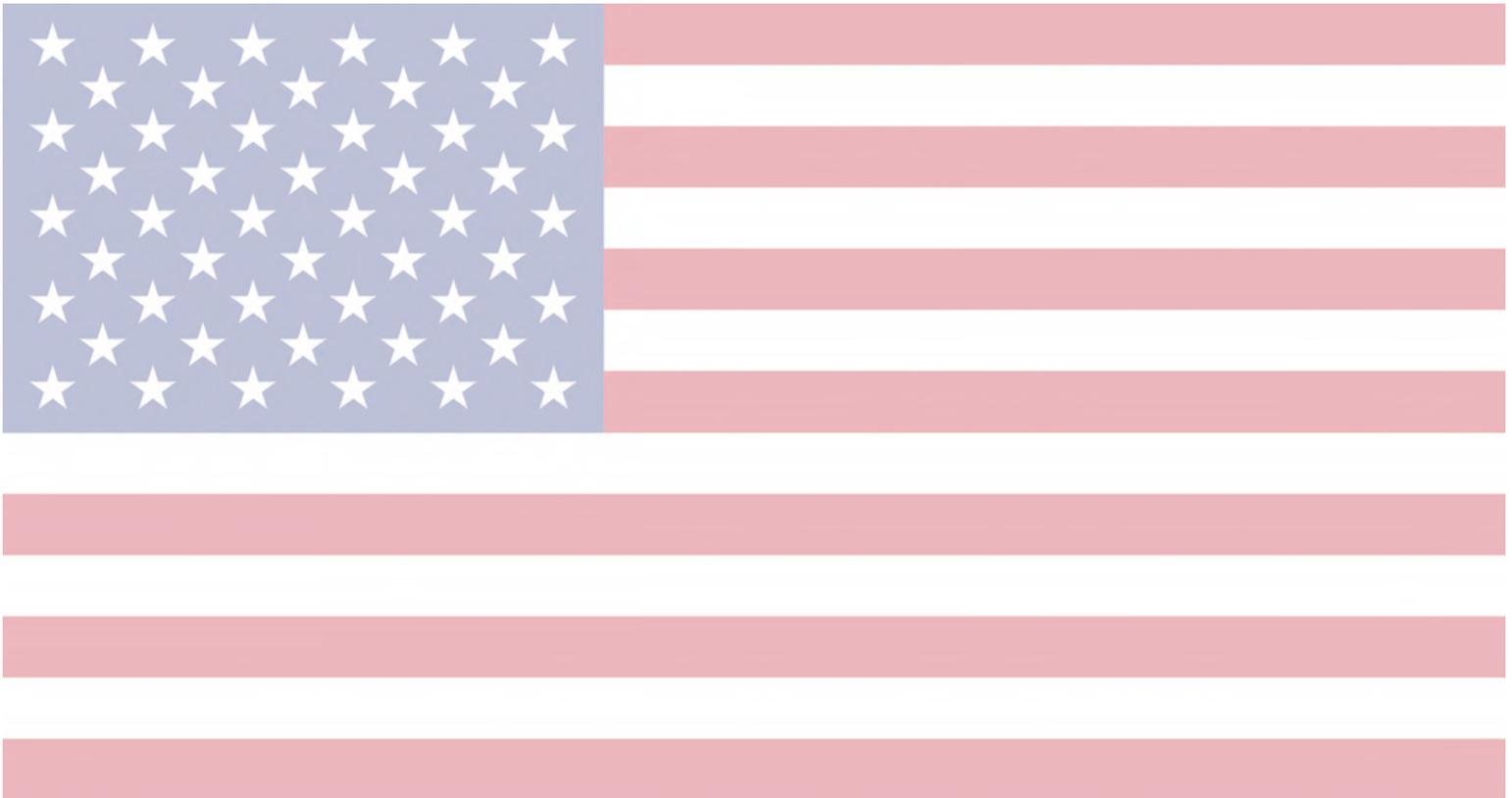
American families are generally nuclear and based on bilateral lineage, although many extended families exist because of blending with other cultures. Children are expected to move out after they become adults and start independent families. They aren't expected to take care of elderly parents or family members. Having strong bonds isn't as crucial to Americans as in other cultures; bonds and "alliances" are created primarily for social purposes. Again, these patterns tie back to the value of independence and specialized occupations. Specialized occupations in a large-scale society don't require dependence on family members, acquaintances, or friends, so they aren't held to as much regard. Jordanian culture is also a large-scale, industrial, market economy society. However, its roots are in pastoralism and horticulture, so many remnants of the cultural characteristics from its past subsistence patterns still exist. As in American culture, specialized occupations are

the norm, although different people are socially expected to enter a certain profession according to their gender, religious affiliation, or other factors.

The most different feature between American and Jordanian culture is the emphasis placed on family and kinship. Jordanians – most Middle Easterns, in fact – center their lives around family. Bonds in general are very important; this stems from the Middle East's history in pastoralism and horticulture. Alliances were crucial to the survival of their ancestors, and this turned into a tradition that has integrated itself into Middle Eastern modern society. This is reflected in a Jordanian person's name, which actually includes dozens – even hundreds – of middle names, each one the name of the previous patriarch in the patrilineal lineage. Extended families are the norm, and children are expected to care for their aging parents. Respect and deference to one's elders

two parts of the extended family. The entire family will be involved in the process, acting as matchmakers. At get-togethers, aunts and uncles will often proclaim, "Why aren't you married yet?! So-and-so is an excellent boy, and he's studying to be a doctor!" Jordanian culture is largely male-dominated, also a remnant of its past subsistence patterns. Males were the main providers in pastoralist and horticulture Middle Eastern societies, and it created a culture of machoism that is still prevalent today. Men are seen as the protectors of the weaker sex. Polygyny is common, as acquiring women is seen as a symbol of power.

Growing up in a blend of these cultures caused me to constantly question and evaluate my values in life, because Jordanian and American values are often incompatible. Living in America, the American cultural values were often superimposed upon me, but I also tried



is enforced. To enforce these bonds, food, gifts, and hospitality are valued and play a major part in Jordanian culture. There are certain protocols for hosting guests and family members: for example, a certain circulation between different rooms is required according to what the guests are eating. Certain foods and drinks should be served in a certain order. Reciprocity of hospitality and gifts is expected, so this back-and-forth exchange maintains close ties. By having this structured bonding mechanism, Jordanians know a family wants to create or strengthen bonds with them if they host them and follow the procedural norms.

A result of the importance of bonds is the use of marriage to create or strengthen alliances within the family. The potential alliances that are created are too important to be left to the emotional decisions of young people, so arranged marriages are common. It's the norm for cousins to marry each other, which strengthens the bonds between

to hold on to the Jordanian cultural values that best fit and supported my lifestyle. When I lived with my extended family in Jordan for about a year, my position and role – even as a young child – was made very clear to me. I was expected to become a teacher or nurse and to be caring, soft-spoken, and obedient. This was to prepare me for my future as an Arab wife and mother. In contrast, when I lived with my American family, I was always told to follow my dreams and to not let anyone hold me back. There are aspects that I appreciate from both sides, so I've learned to pick and choose those that I find to fit my personality and ambitions in life. This, of course, reflects the larger blending of cultures that is occurring with each new generation. It is important, therefore, to conduct ethnographies of the individual cultures so we can learn how the values and aspects they hold arise from specific conditions and needs.

# *I am not My Sabotage*

**By Dorothy Gorder**

I was raised in a stable, nurturing, educated, healthy home environment; I chose to live on the dangerous side most of my life. My grandmother always warned me of a genetic predisposition to mental health disorders and chemical imbalances that run in my family. I never believed her until now. No longer will body image, attachment disorder, dependency, and relationships ruin me.

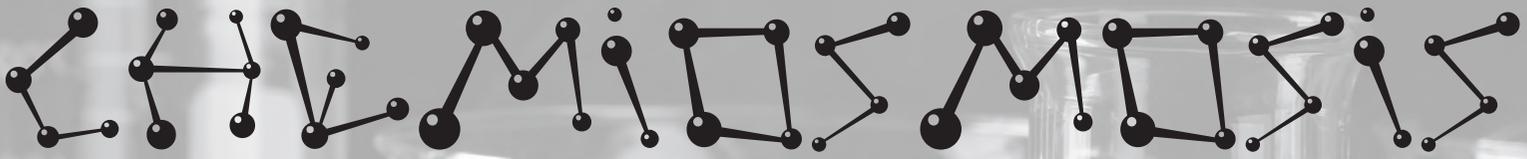
When I was in sixth grade, I had a very hard time going to school. I had to have someone take me to my classes. I had some sort of fear about getting there. It was so much better for me to just skip class and hang out with the stoners on the corner. When I finally got in-school suspension, I did awesome. My mom took me to a classroom with six desks in it and no windows. I got all my assignments at the beginning of the week and was done with them by Wednesday. My teachers and I were so surprised at how well I did. I was no longer labeled a defiant student. It was thought that maybe I had Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD). Shortly after that I was put on Ritalin. Which was not the issue at all, I still have anxiety with walking into new situations and places I have never been. The problem still remains, and I still struggle with going to new places alone. I try to plan ahead by taking a friend someplace with me before I actually have to get there. One might say a practice run. I have traveled all over the United States but never alone due to this anxiety.

Body image is a complex issue for me and always has been. When I was about 10 or 11 years old, I remember people making fun of my back side. I thought when people referred to me as being thick that meant I was fat. I went to Barbizon Modeling School for poise and etiquette. All of my instructors said I had a great face, personality, and cute body. I just needed to lose some weight. Around the age of 11, I developed bulimia and got super sick. I was out of school for almost a month. When I returned to my everyday life, I got so many comments about how good I looked. It made me feel super awesome when I listened to everyone saying how pretty, cute and skinny I was. Weight loss became my first addiction. To control my weight, I have tried many diets that never really worked. I got up to 250 pounds by the age of 16. At the age of 19, I discovered methamphetamines. I had amazing results with meth. I would never be 250 pounds ever again! I lost 150 pounds in nine months. For the next 13 years, meth was my diet. I am now clean and sober by the grace of GOD. I still struggle with my body image. My body image ties into attachment disorders as well.

At a young age, I was labeled with attachment disorder. A child with attachment disorders often times desires high levels of intimacy, approval, and responsiveness from others. By age 12, I was having sexual relations. I was constantly seeking attention, and I got a lot. I experienced low self-esteem, and had difficulties showing affection in healthy ways. My self-worth was very low, I had a hard time truly connecting with people on any personal level. I depended on others for my happiness. By age 12, I was having sexual relations. I was constantly seeking attention, and I got a lot. I experienced low self-esteem, and had difficulties showing affection in healthy ways. My self-worth was very low, I had a hard time truly connecting with people on any personal level. I depended on others for my happiness.

When I was in sixth grade, I had a very hard time going to school. I had to have someone take me to my classes. I had some sort of fear about getting there. It was so much better for me to just skip class and hang out with the stoners on the corner. When I finally got in-school suspension, I did awesome. My mom took me to a classroom with six desks in it and no windows. I got all my assignments at the beginning of the week and was done with them by Wednesday. My teachers and I were so surprised at how well I did. I was no longer labeled a defiant student. It was thought that maybe I had Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD). Shortly after that I was put on Ritalin. Which was not the issue at all, I still have anxiety with walking into new situations and places I have never been. The problem still remains, and I still struggle with going to new places alone. I try to plan ahead by taking a friend someplace with me before I actually have to get there. One might say a practice run. I have traveled all over the United States but never alone due to this anxiety.

As soon as I could get a boyfriend I would have one, sometimes overlapping. Men were a tool that allowed me to go and explore the world. I mentally could not go to places alone; therefore I would hostage them at times. Most of my relationships have been mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually devastating to myself and others. All of these "issues" looked like sabotage most of my life, although this is not who I am today. Today I am a single mother raising Mickey, my 16-month-old son. I am the manager of a clean and sober safe home for woman and children. I am a full-time college student, and a public speaker throughout King and Pierce Counties. Sharing my story has allowed me to motivate myself and others that anyone can overcome adversity while still being a work in progress.



## *Harnessing the Energy of Disorder*

**By Shanaelynn Godwin**

### **OSMOSIS, REVERSE OSMOSIS, & OSMOTIC MEMBRANES**

Osmosis is a phenomenon driven by nature's desire for chaos. The universe's response to any orderliness, much to the bane of humans' organizational tendencies, is to scatter its contents until an even dispersion, or equilibrium, is reached. Imagine this: A room is full of cats, and when the door is opened, they exit the room. Some linger and take their time, a few will stay in the room, but eventually they will all spread evenly throughout the house. The high concentration of cats within the room was dissipated when the barrier between the room and the rest of the home was removed.

Osmosis utilizes this characteristic of matter. The barrier between high and low concentration is a permeable membrane, penetrable to species of specific sizes and charges, and the components that can pass through the membrane will diffuse across the barrier in an attempt to reach equal concentrations on either side. Reverse osmosis is quite the opposite. Like osmosis, this process involves the separation of two solutions of high and low concentrations with a semipermeable membrane. Pressure, or some other kind of energy input, is applied to one side of the permeable membrane to force the solvent to the other, leaving a high concentration of solute on one side, and a low concentration on the other. Going from low to high concentration goes against the desires of nature, and so it requires energy to overcome nature's resistance.

Reverse osmosis is commonly used for industrial applications. The American Water Works Association's handbook lists water desalination as the most prominent process that uses reverse osmosis. Wastewater treatment, and removal of industrial byproducts from water are also pertinent uses of reverse osmosis, and the dairy industry uses it to concentrate milk. The uses of reverse osmosis expand constantly; the wine industry has begun using RO for removing impurities and maintaining a specific alcohol content in their products. Different types or combinations of membranes are used for each process, and the membranes used are chosen for their permeability. The main types of membranes involved in water treatment are reverse osmosis (RO), nanofiltration (NF), ultrafiltration (UF), electrodialysis as well as its reverse process (ED/EDR), and microfiltration (MF) membranes. The size of their pores or spaces between fibers effects the size of particulate able to pass through the membrane, and

charges of ions can also have an effect on permeability through a membrane. The shape and size of a is also dependent upon its purpose; they are made into hollow spirals, rolled spiral-wound layers, lined cells, or simply as layers of membranes within a cartridge.

Scientists began understanding semipermeable membranes after intensive studies of plant membranes in the late 1800's. Humans began designing and manufacturing artificial semipermeable membranes in the early 1960's, with their designs based off of the observed properties of biological membranes. The AWWA handbook also states that early versions were made of thick sheets of cellulose acetate, and required upwards of 1,000 psi to produce miniscule amounts desalinated water. Over the next few decades, human-made membranes became more sophisticated and energy efficient. By 1990, the energy consumed during reverse osmosis in the desalination process decreased more than 50%, and in recent years, the pressure needed has dropped below 70 psi. However, these are only manufactured membranes. Naturally occurring biological membranes surround all eukaryotic cells, partition the organelles from the cytosol of the cell, and even separate sections within organelles themselves. These membranes are fluid and dynamic, primarily composed of large molecules called phospholipids with proteins and large molecules embedded on the surface of and dissolved within the membrane.

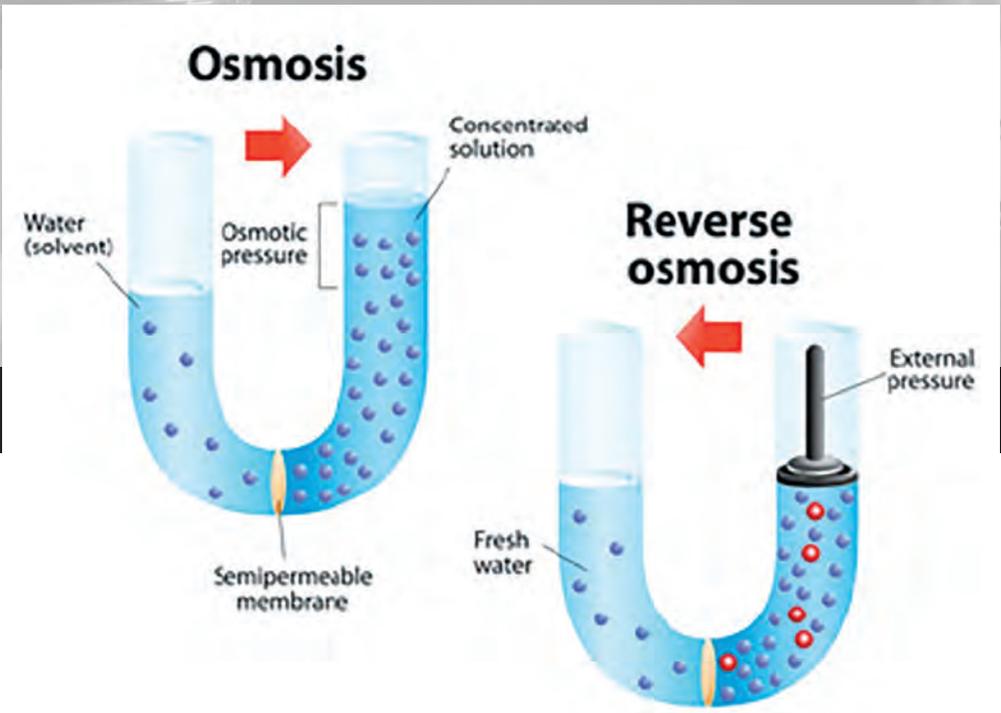


Fig. 1: External pressure is applied to a semipermeable membrane, reversing the flow of water from the more concentrated solution

Size, $\mu\text{m}$	Ionic		Molecular		Macromolecular		Microparticle		Macroparticle	
	0.001	0.01	0.1	1.0	10	100	1,000			
Approximate Molecular Weight	100	200	1,000	10,000	20,000	100,000	500,000			
Relative Size of Various Materials in Water	Dissolved Solids		Humic Acids	Viruses		Clays	Silt	Bacteria	Algae	Sand
Separation Process	ED/EDR	RO	NF	Ultrafiltration	Microfiltration					

Fig. 2: Types of membranes and their efficacy for filtering particles of various sizes

# BIOLOGICAL MEMBRANES

Semipermeable membranes of cells are complex and difficult to model. The flow of permeates across membranes has been modeled for hydrodynamic and non-hydrodynamic pores ("hydrodynamic" refers to a speed requirement for a molecule to diffuse through pores), as well as diffusion across a fibrous membrane, as stated in Cell Physiology. Cellular membranes are a mix of all three; the membrane is able to diffuse uncharged and small molecules, but there are pores embedded in the surface that control the flow of other molecules and ions. Cooper and Hausman also point out that these pores are made up of or lined with proteins.

Biological membranes are composed primarily of phospholipids embedded with proteins, with the most common arrangement of phospholipids being a bilayer. Phospholipids are large molecules with polar "heads" and long non-polar "tails". These molecules are simultaneously hydrophobic and hydrophilic, also called being amphipathic. As detailed by Cain et al., when they form membranes, the polar regions are outward facing, exposed to the cytosol or inner membrane space, and the fatty tails face inward, creating a non-polar environment that allows polar molecules to pass through it without interacting with the membrane itself. This coupling of opposite traits in one molecule allows for versatile usage of cellular membranes. Coupling is a common phenomenon used throughout the reverse osmosis processes that occur within cells, and will be mentioned several times during the course of this paper.

Rather than small, identical pores all over the membrane's surface like some manufactured reverse osmosis membranes, biological membranes utilize passive and active pores, which discriminate between ions and molecules and allow them to permeate the membrane. Passive pore channels use size and charge to allow passage through the membrane, without exerting any energy. Active transporter pores and pumps transport specific ions and molecules through a membrane, utilizing the energy stored within adenosine triphosphate (ATP) bonds to change the physical shape of the protein pore.

By actively transferring the necessary components in conjunction with cellular signalling (communication that takes place within the cell via chemical receptors and hormone secretion), this allows a healthy cells or organelle to directly control the contents within its membrane in exchange for energy consumption. Again, this directly shows that energy is needed to overcome nature's desire for disarray, and in reverse osmosis, this energy comes from an external force, which in this case is energy stored in the bonds between high-energy phosphate ions in ATP.

Partitioning between area of high concentration and low concentration is imperative to healthy cellular function. For instance, peroxisomes are small organelles filled with hydrogen peroxide as a by-product after

breaking down large organic molecules with enzymes that remove H<sub>2</sub> through oxidation. Campbell Biology also states that the processes of the peroxisomes are sequestered within a single layer of phospholipids, maintaining the disposal function of the organelle as well as keeping other components of the cell separate from the damaging substances within. This partitioning is essential to the processes that occur in eukaryotic cells as well as prokaryotic cells.

The membranes of the mitochondria are also designed to maintain a specific environment within. The process of chemiosmosis, a variant of reverse osmosis powered by an H<sup>+</sup> gradient within the compartments of the mitochondria, is dependent upon the mitochondrial membranes' ability to maintain a high concentration of hydrogen ions within the inner membrane space. The inner mitochondrial membrane has significantly more protein pumps and pores than other membranes within the cell. This trait is indicative of the important role of the ion pumps embedded in the membrane, which are present in high concentrations. The complexes of the pumping process are known collectively as the Electron Transport Chain (ETC). The purpose of the electron transport chain is to create an H<sup>+</sup> ion gradient between the intermembrane space and the matrix within the inner membrane. As stated in the video Electron Transport Chain this gradient is created with energy gathered from a series of coupled redox reactions in ETC complexes, and the energy stored in the gradient is used to power the synthesis of ATP molecules during forward osmosis through the inner membrane. This process is called chemiosmosis, and is the main source of energy in animal cells.

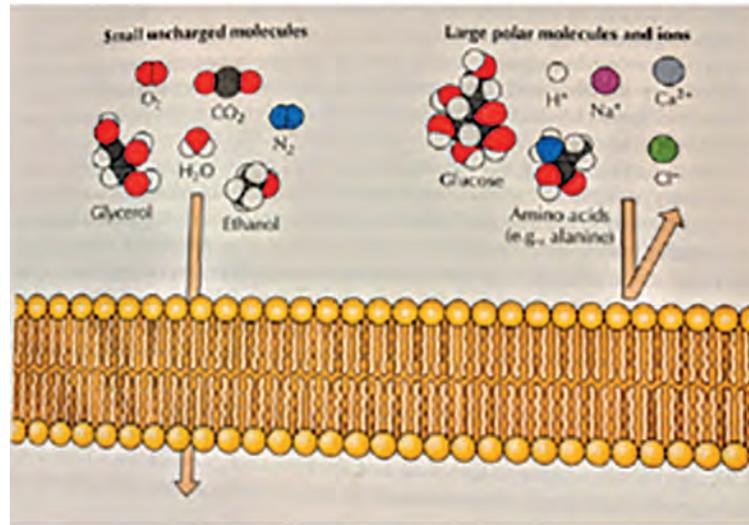


Fig. 3: A visual chart of molecules and ions that can and cannot permeate the phospholipid bilayer within cells

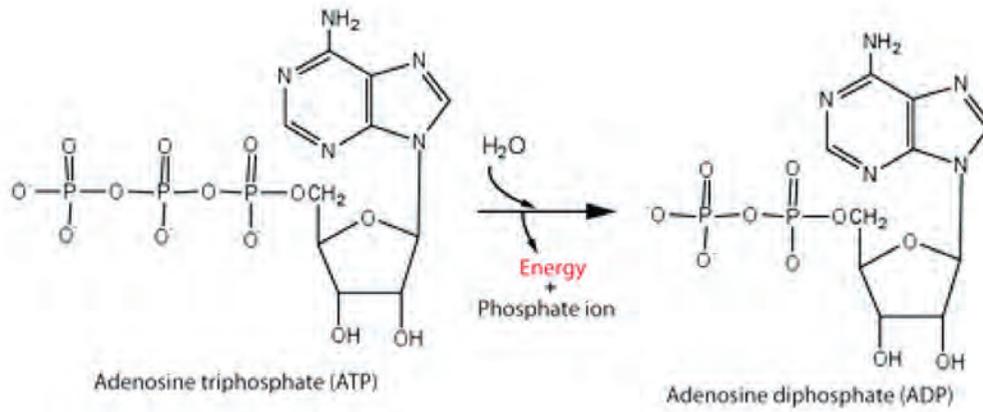


Fig. 4: The energy stored in ATP is released by hydrolysis (literally “cutting with water”), resulting in a phosphate ion bonded with a hydrogen atom and adenosine diphosphate (ADP). This provides the majority of the power to all active processes that occur within cells

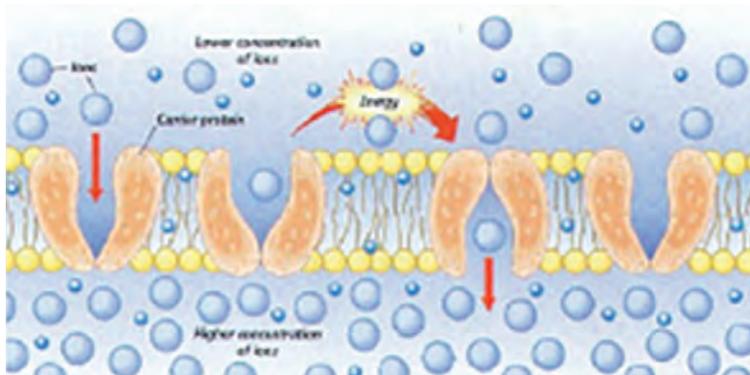


Fig 5: Active transport of ions from one side of a membrane to the other requires energy to change the shape of the protein pore

#### Tomographic volume of mouse heart mitochondrion

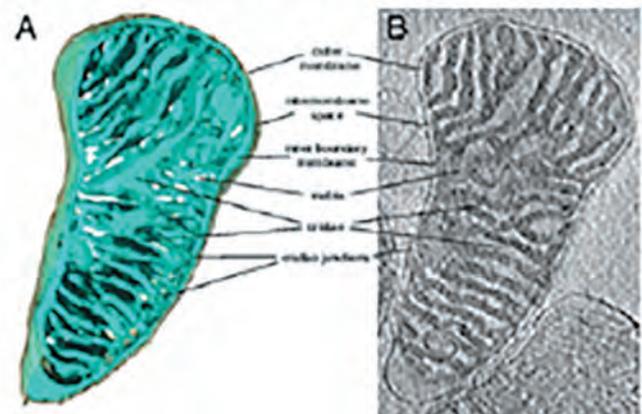


Fig. 6: The proteins in this image are colored blue by nuclear markers. The inner mitochondrial membrane can be seen here as a bright cyan shade, while the outer membrane (which has less proteins) is light grey.

# CHEMIOSMOSIS IN THE MITOCHONDRIA

In order to fully understand the reverse osmosis that occurs inside the mitochondria, the process by which it happens as well as the reasoning behind it must also be discussed. The main components of this process, which will be called chemiosmosis from here on, include the transport of high-energy electrons from NADH and FADH<sub>2</sub> molecules into the complexes of the ETC, the pumping action powered by coupling redox reactions with these high energy electrons, and harnessing the energy stored in the H<sup>+</sup> gradient to form ATP molecules through oxidative phosphorylation.

During the oxidation and reduction of the electrons within complexes I, III, and IV, the electron “falls” through several redox centers within the protein before it is used to reduce O<sub>2</sub> to water. The redox center that initially accepts the electron has the highest affinity for electrons, and the affinity of the following centers decreases gradually, until the complex has gathered enough energy to pump hydrogen ions into the mitochondrial matrix. The number of ions pumped depends upon the complex performing the work (see figure 8).

This method of storing energy in an ion gradient is to prevent the use of energy in ATP or other energy-rich molecules. The purpose of chemiosmosis is to form ATP to power the work of the cell, and using ATP in that process would greatly lower or nullify the amount that could potentially be produced. By using coupled redox reactions and electron transport, while also storing the energy in an ionic gradient, the mitochondria greatly improves the yield of energy produced compared to the chemical potential energy that is consumed. When forward osmosis commences as a result of the reverse osmosis performed by the complexes I-IV, the ions flow through complex V, also known as ATP synthase. ATP synthase acts as a turbine, harnessing the energy of nature’s chaotic tendencies, and powering the synthesis of ATP from ADP. The complexities of reverse osmosis through biological membranes is beautifully captured in the oxidative phosphorylation that occurs in the space of the inner mitochondrial membrane.

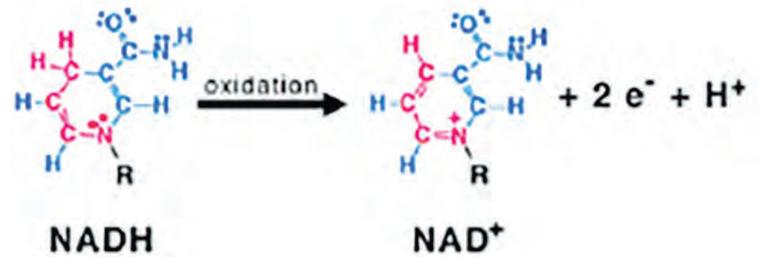


Fig. 7: Oxidation of NADH in the ETC complexes results in 2 high-energy electrons and a H<sup>+</sup> ion, which increasing the ions available for pumping into the mitochondrial matrix

## CONCLUSION

Attempts to model biological reverse osmosis process with mathematical equations are still underway, and often the successful models are only meant to describe specific instances. There are many unknown and hotly debated concepts that occur in cellular membranes. However, as breakthroughs are made regarding biomembranes, the manufacture of more versatile and useful osmotic membranes improves concurrently. Life has developed an efficient way to carefully circumvent the desires of nature, while also harnessing the power of nature’s tendencies. Future technologies in osmosis and reverse osmosis will likely mimic the complexities of biological membranes as the years progress.

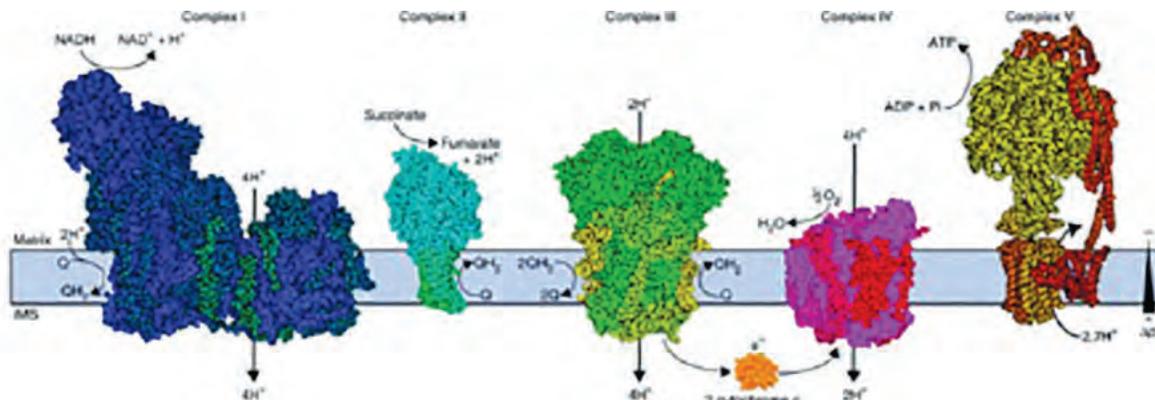


Fig. 8: Complexes I-V of the electron transport chain, shown imbedded in the inner mitochondrial membrane. The relationship between the energy harnessed from redox reactions and the resulting pumping action can be seen here



# Adrinka, the year is 3018

**By Felicia Hambrick**

The year is 3018. The location, Downtown Tacoma. Every 3rd grade class from all the local elementary schools are on a field trip at the Tacoma Art Museum, walking around, enjoying the art and learning about each piece, when Dawn catches a glimpse of something familiar out of the corner of her eye.

Before getting the history of the art piece in front of her, she stares at it, wondering where it is she has seen it before. What was once a bright and vibrant red, green and yellow, is now dull. The dark printed symbols that used to lie on bright ivory are now faded to the point that even if you knew how to read them, you couldn't. That's how illegible they are now. But even given the drastic change, Dawn still knew she had seen this item before. But where?

It had suddenly hit her. Her family tree photo album! There are generations of her family holding this item in their pictures, and each picture was compiled into one big photo album. But the last five generations were missing the artifact. Whenever Dawn asked her great grandmother why they no longer had it, she would just respond by saying, "colonization and mass production." Well that's not much of an answer now, is it? At least not a satisfying one. Not satisfying enough for the curious mind of an 8 year old.

Some of her classmates and other 3rd graders from the other schools started to pile behind her, as she asked Vox to tell her the history of the artifact and how it ended up in the Art Museum. Vox talked about how the artifact was made by hand with all natural supplies, and how each of the different symbols stood for a different blessing, lesson or message. He talked about how it traveled roughly 8,719.4 miles from its point of origin to the state of Washington and everywhere it's been in between. He stated that the last owner of this now piece of art, gave it to the museum so they could preserve and share with the world the last remaining, natural made, Adinkra cloth blanket. Sure, there were many still out there and many still being made, but these were all factory made cloths. No love, creativity or individualism goes into these blankets that are made in the factories.

As Vox is continuing to give the history of the Adinkra cloth blanket, Dawn hears a couple boys in the back of the group snicker, while one of them exclaims that him and his family has three of those in their house. But Dawn smiled and shook the thought of her head. It didn't bother her. Because this blanket was her history. It was the last real one, and nothing could ever replace that or take it away from her.

# dokdo: the heart of korea

*By Sa Soung Kim*

The rising conflict between Japan and Korea over the possession of the Liancourt Rocks has been debated for centuries. With each respective country calling the islands by their own names – Japan “Takeshima” (Bamboo island) and Korea “Dokdo”(Lone island) – the debate over the ownership of these rocks located in the heart of the Korean East Sea or the Sea of Japan has severed many ties between the two countries. Under the Japanese rule from the annexation of Korea in 1910 to end of WWII in 1945, Korea has a history of being dominated by Japan. During this 35 years of oppression, Japan not only took all of Korea’s territory, including the Liancourt Rocks, but also kidnapped many girls and forced them into sexual labor. Nevertheless, the Liancourt Rocks should be referred to only as “Dokdo Islands” as a vast amount of historical evidence proves that these islands truly belong to Korea.

This heated controversy starts with a look into the island’s natural resources. First, its neutral name, Liancourt Rocks, is derived from Le Liancourt, “the name of a French whaling ship that came close to being wrecked on the rocks in 1849”. Spanning an impressive 46 acres, the Liancourt Rocks consists of two main islands, Dongdo and Seodo, along with 89 other islands. The significance of these islands is the haven of natural resources with its indigenous species of sea life and bird, boasting more than 160 bird species, 130 insect species, and 60 different plant species. Also, spurring this controversy is the speculation of a considerable natural gas reserve within the island. Thus, the various natural features that the Liancourt Rocks possess remain as fuel for both sides’ arguments for ownership as these natural features are substantial enough to withstand from Japan or Korea. Although the controversy remains strongly debated by both sides, the current status of the island is: “Since 1954, the South Korean Coast Guard has stationed a small contingent on Dokdo [Liancourt Rocks] as a symbol of Seoul’s ownership of the rocky islets”. Despite this establishment, however, Japan still adamantly clings to its claim that it is the rightful owner of the island.

Before diving into the controversy of the ownership of the island, it is best for one to understand the relationship between Korea and Japan. Korea has suffered harsh Japanese oppression for over 35 years before and during WWII. Under such oppression, Koreans endured numerous cruel circumstances, the most contentious being the Korean “Comfort Women”. The term “comfort women” is a direct translation of the Japanese word,

jugunianfu, a euphemism for young women (ranging from their early teens to their early twenties, mostly from lower-class families) who “were drafted, deceived, sold or abducted to serve as military sex slaves in brothels for the Japanese Army during the Pacific War”, some of which were located on Dokdo island. Countless innocent girls were kidnapped from their families in Korea and forced to serve in bathroom-like brothels called “comfort stations”, often succumbing to the terrible conditions and ultimately passing away during their service. According to the UN’s Global Tribunal on Violations of Women’s Human Rights in 1993, it is estimated that by the end of World War II, 90% of these “comfort women” had died. Despite the years of this continued injustice against young Korean women, Japan has failed to properly apologize and even denied active participation in creating comfort stations regardless of concrete proof, such as the work of Japanese historian, Yoshiaki Yoshimi, who publicly stated that the Japanese were consistently involved in the creation of these terrible comfort stations. With 10% of the estimated 20,000 to 410,000 women survivors voicing their sorrows beginning in 1993, the Japanese government eventually agreed in 2015 to pay the Korean government 13 million dollars in compensation for the “comfort women”. However, when victims began refusing simple monetary compensation and demanding a formal apology, the Japanese government responded with utter silence. This issue is simply a glimpse into the historically hostile relationship between the Japanese and Koreans and serves as just one of many examples of the powerless cries of the Korean people when trying to achieve justice for their nation.



Fig. 1. A statue of a girl symbolizing the issue of “comfort women” in front of the Japanese Embassy on December 28, 2015 in Seoul, South Korea.

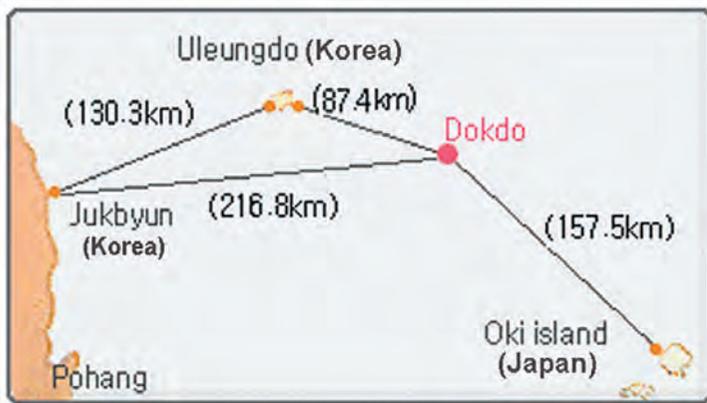


Fig. 2. This picture shows the distance and location of Liancourt Rocks from each country's islands

Another controversy that stirs much dispute to this day is Japan's Takeshima Day, a day that celebrates their supposed rightful ownership of the islands. Observed yearly on February 22nd, "Takeshima Day was introduced by the prefectural government of Shimane, western Japan, in 2005 to raise public awareness about Japan's claim over the South Korean-controlled Takeshima islands in the Sea of Japan". Every year on this day, both Koreans and Japanese express fervent sentiment over their respective claims of ownership. However, this movement run by the Japanese public is flawed in its spread of false claims against ample historical evidence refuting their truth and proving that Dokdo has always been under Korean ownership.

Returning to the subject of historical evidence, numerous documents from both Korean and Japanese records demonstrate that Dokdo has always rightfully been under Korean possession. Documents from both Japanese sources and Korean sources explicitly state that Dokdo is official Korean territory. For example, the historical account written in 512 AD, Subjugation of Usan-guk, from the Reference Compilation of Documents of Korea (1770) states that "Ulleung [Ulleungdo] and Usan [Dokdo] are both territories of Usan-guk". Even more noteworthy, Japanese articles from 1877 "The Dajōkan Order," which is Japan's highest administrative body, stated that Dokdo and Ulleungdo are islands outside of Japanese territory. Even the Japanese Ministry of Home Affairs explicitly stated, "Regarding Takeshima [Ulleungdo] and one other island [Dokdo] about which an inquiry was submitted, bear in mind that our country [Japan] has nothing to do with them". Not only have ancient accounts declared Korea as the rightful owner but, also, previous Japanese government administrations agreed that Dokdo is Korean territory. Some may argue that written documents do not amount to true ownership, but the fact that no one lived on the islands and that Japanese documents prove the same make it clear that Dokdo is truly Korea's. The geographic location of Dokdo island also plays a big part in proving ownership of the island. Dokdo's location is much closer to the known Korean island, Ulleungdo than it is to closest Japanese island, Oki Island. Specifically, Dokdo is 87.4 km from Ulleungdo, and 157km from Oki Island of Japan.

This is crucial because it shows once again the logical reasoning behind the fact that Koreans knew of the island before the Japanese. Japanese people have been long arguing that people of Ulleungdo couldn't have known about Dokdo because it is simply not visible. However, in Sejong Sillok Jiriji of 1454, it is clearly stated that Dokdo is visible from Ulleungdo with the naked eye, and has been clearly proven.

These documents prove that Dokdo was historically Korean, and the San Francisco Peace Treaty of 1958 makes it clear that Dokdo should now be considered Korea. In this formal treaty, Japan signed off to give back all land that they took from their reign of Korea. In Article 2, it states, "Japan recognizing the independence of Korea, renounces all right, title and claim to Korea, including the islands of Quelpart, Port Hamilton and Dagelet". Given the evidence of Japan admitting that Dokdo was Korean in their historical document, it is only right that Japan recants its ownership of the island. This is important because it clears up what should be the end of the controversy. To sum it up, by Japan signing this treaty, Japan acknowledged the illegal take-over of Korea and its properties, and because historical articles prove that Dokdo was Korea's before the oppression, it is only logically right that the island is Korea's now. The island of Dokdo is more than just another property, it's really the heart of Korea. By Japanese people supporting Takeshima day, they are undermining the cruel oppression Korean people underwent. It is something all Koreans will die protecting because it serves as a representation of freedom from the annexation of Japan and all the inhumane Japanese oppression over Korea. Unlike Japanese documents that are two-sided in many ways, there is no known Korean document that agrees with that of the Japanese. Let these things soak in and think for a second of the cries of Koreans who have been treated poorly by Japan, a dominant country. Dokdo is the name and it belongs where it stands, in the ownership of Korea.



Fig. 3. This picture is taken from Ulleungdo island on a clear day. The little spec in the horizon is Dokdo island.

# The Last Race

*By Hayden Jamal Harrington*

It was a sweltering hot day as we tiredly limped inside the field house concluding a grueling track workout. Our wobbly legs did all they could to get us down the hallway. As we slowly made our way through the facility like wounded veterans coming back from war, I stopped at the trophy display case and stared at the contents inside. There was a football trophy from 1984 where the school won the state championship football game. A list of predominant athletes that has graced their respective sport in the past. My eyes were locked on a picture inside case. It was of three runners standing on a medal ceremony podium holding their medals with pride at a state track meet held at UT, in Austin, Texas in 1995. I focused on the gentleman standing on the podium, holding a silver medal, wearing a track uniform with the name of the high school and the mascot of a shark across his chest, somewhat like the one I was wearing. He was taller than me by a good five inches, he had very long runner's legs, he looked fit. I understood why he was holding a medal. Next to the picture were the Palacios High School track and field high school records and a list of names and events of the records broken or set. His name was on it, Alex Acosta, and his race, the 800m dash. Alex had held the high school record at the time of 1:58, the time he clocked at the state meet.

I was a sophomore at the time, a sophomore already running varsity track. I got the promotion by showing potential in my freshman year and the coaches believed I could help carry the team. I wasn't at all pressured running varsity track because I was able to hang with the other runners. I would pace myself during the race long enough to pick up my pace and win races or better my time. One of my races was also the 800m dash. I was still staring at this photo, forgetting how jellylike my legs are and all I can think of is how much I want to break Alex's record. How much I would love to have my picture in this trophy case standing on a podium like a proud Olympic medalist. How I would want to be remembered as one of the greats in my sport and be talked about long after I graduate. To be legendary. As I was daydreaming, one of the senior athletes approached and looked on with me. He said to me, "Yep, that's Alex Acosta. That guy could run, he had that long stride that helped him win a lot of races." I replied, "I want to break his record before

I graduate." The senior laughed at me like I told a funny joke. I asked him, "What's so funny?" He replied, "You're short and not half the runner Alex was, and he was a stud. I don't see anybody breaking that record. Besides, your best time is a 2:10". He laughed on his way out of the field house.

I would slightly improve my time the rest of that season winning races. I would excel further in my junior year and my senior year I would finally qualified for the state track meet in the 800m dash in Austin, Texas in 1999. This would be my final race as a high schooler, my best time was two minutes and I was projected to get the silver medal.

It was a hot day in Austin and the time for my race was approaching. My coach, who was more excited than I was, gave me some advice and I nodded. I took my mark in the 4th lane not far from the Alex Acosta-like runner in the 3rd lane who was ranked best in the state. The starting gun went off and the race began. I was running behind the very tall lead runner whose stride was twice mine, like a leaping gazelle chased by a chihuahua. This happened for the first lap of the race and we would hear the time keeper shouting our first-lap times at us. He shouted at me "53!" My fastest first-lap I have ever ran. I knew the second lap was going to be an uphill battle since I had never run that fast of a lap in this race. I worried about how I was going to finish. Do I have the energy to finish this lap? Can I finish this race? Before I knew it, the race was over. I crossed the finish line. Drained, my legs were rubber bands. I walked out on the field like a wounded deer looking for a quiet place to lay his head for the last time. My coach ran towards me waving his stop watch. He showed it to me, I sighed tiredly. Too drained to celebrate, too fatigued to care.

I slowly made my way to the medal stand and leaned on the third-place stand knowing that a bronze medal for my efforts would be awarded to me. I remembered smiling under that hot sun, still sweating, still listless and looking forward to having my picture in the trophy case next to Alex's and replacing his name in the record books... with mine.

# Green Room: Reflections of Film Violence

*By Kyler Knight*

In the Coen Brothers' film, *Fargo* (1996), a hitman kills his partner with an axe, over a petty disagreement about a car, and shoves the corpse through a woodchipper. The deep red of the blood contrasts beautifully with the white snowscape of Minnesota. In the climax of Quentin Tarantino's WWII film, *Inglorious Basterds* (2008), a Jewish American man, infamously nicknamed "The Bear Jew" by fearful German soldiers for his habit of bashing their brains in with a baseball bat, fires so many bullets into Adolf Hitler that the body shares a cartoonish resemblance to Swiss cheese. In Mary Harron's film, *American Psycho* (2000), a helpless, half-naked woman discovers bags of corpses in the closet of the serial killer protagonist who proceeds to throw a chainsaw, like a Sword of Damocles spinning in slow motion, down a flight of stairs onto her before she can escape his apartment complex. Inventive moments of film violence such as these are more effective than the jaded knife slayings populating the average slasher movie, a murder method which has never again been employed to the potency which Alfred Hitchcock attained in *Psycho* (1960), precisely because they subvert the obvious. For the filmgoer, the obvious and predictable is somewhere safe. For the imaginative and committed filmmaker, the obvious and predictable is a cancerous lump on their creation. To this end, those filmmakers specifically wishing to explore violence with heavy cinematic weight are willing and eager to plunge their audience into the deep, dark, unexplored places of their own psyches.

Picture a CAT scan powerful enough to encompass an entire crowded auditorium of moviegoers during the climactic moments of a screening of David Fincher's film *Seven* (1995). Brad Pitt's character repeatedly screams, "What's in the box?!" before Kevin Spacey's character confesses that it contains Pitt's character's wife's (Gwyneth Paltrow's) head which Spacey has decapitated. Sick with rage, Pitt shoots Spacey point-blank range in the head (*Seven* 02:03:10-02:08:20). At this moment the wholesale CAT scan would show the auditorium lighting up like the Fourth of July. For in the head of every engaged moviegoer, the amygdalae, the area of the brain associated with fear, is more active than it is nearly ever apt to be in the comfort of privileged twentieth and twenty-first century life. What is it that motivates groups of strangers in civilized society to gather into dark auditoriums and

share a moment of such barbarity in the same manner as they would the delights of a feel-good movie or romantic comedy?

Given the disparate aspects of stories from one film to the next it is necessary to streamline an examination of this question to one film, or more precisely, one violent film that not only contains enough on-screen carnage to qualify as a notably violent film but that through its portrayal of violence posits something insightful about the nature of morbid fascination. Though fans and film critics often incorrectly cite Jeremy Saulnier's *Green Room* (2015) as a film about racism, the screenwriter/director uses his bloody action-thriller to posit that film violence is as indispensable to society as it is a beautiful component of the cinematic craft in the way that it pierces deep into the grotesque underbelly of the human experience.

*Green Room* opens on a four-piece hardcore punk rock band so underground they are literally siphoning their way from gig to gig. After their bassist, and the film's protagonist, Pat (played by Anton Yelchin) witnesses a murder, the band, and the murder victim's friend, and the protagonist's ally, Amber (Imogen Poots), are trapped inside the titular green room of a remote, backwoods Pacific Northwest club by a gang of Neo-Nazi skinheads—under strict orders by the malevolent, white-supremacist leader, and the film's chief villain, Darcy (Patrick Stewart). The murder scene Pat fatefully stumbles upon when grabbing his phone he left charging in the green room is that of a teenage girl with a knife planted above her left ear. When the band, having just been forced back into the green room, questions whether or not the girl might still be alive, her macho, skinhead killer yanks the knife out, after some initial difficulty, freeing the blood from her brain to form a puddle on the unvacuumed carpet. This sets the tone for the on-screen carnage to follow which snowballs into deeper, darker brutality as the only way out of the green room is a suicidal mad dash out the door and through the halls of the venue. As expected, members of the band drop like flies in this effort.

This is not to say, however, that characters die instantly like the villains who face down the gun barrel of a John Wayne or other heroes of classic Hollywood westerns. Apart from a skinhead who, in cahoots with the original murdered girl, was discovered in attempting to

betray Darcy and paid the price with a shotgun blast to the face, the deaths in *Green Room* are more drawn out and gruesome, mirroring the hyper-violent realism of Quentin Tarantino's films; the most relevant scene out of many being Tim Roth's character bleeding out in *Reservoir Dogs* (1992). So when Pat first attempts to escape and his arm gets wedged in the door and sliced up by the knives of the Neo-Nazis on the other side, the audience hears the endless scream-crying long after Pat pulls what is left of his arm back inside. It is mangled and drooping from his shoulder, the muscles and tendons can be seen as plainly as the half-functioning fluorescent lights of the green room allow. Likewise, when the band's singer makes his own mad dash down the hall his face is ripped apart by the Neo-Nazi's rottweilers, a shrieking death that the guitarist shares after a retreat and subsequent mad dash. In a moment of vengeance Amber slices an obese skinhead's belly open in a smooth motion that resembles the unzipping of a jacket. Later that evening she slits a skinhead's throat and shoots another in the back of the neck and head, causing a stream of blood to spout out of the head like a common drinking fountain, a death ultimately shared by Darcy in the climax of the film. Suffice to say that *Green Room* is indeed a notably violent film. But from a mere synopsis and recap of the film's bloodiest moments it would be perfectly reasonable to assume Saulnier is using its body count as a vehicle to posit on the issue of race rather than the nature of film violence.

*Green Room*, however much it may superficially appear to be, is not an examination of race. Race serves as the setting rather than the theme for the film with the Neo-Nazi skinheads serving as mere genre reflections. They share blatantly obvious traits and fulfill the same functions as the German bad guys in a shoot-em-up, tough guy action thriller like John McTiernan's *Die Hard* (1988) or a WWII film. *Die Hard* is perhaps the single greatest influence on *Green Room* as both plots take place during one night and revolve around victims trapped in one building, wherein almost all of the plot takes place, at the hands of evil Germans whose leader is played by a charismatic Shakespearean actor, praised for his stage and screen roles alike. *Die Hard* is a film which has virtually nothing to say about German people being innately evil, Nazism, or even terrorism for that matter as the German villains of the film, posing as terrorists, turn out to be high-caliber thieves. This is one detail of many that McTiernan and the screenwriters changed in adapting Roderick Thorp's novel, *Nothing Lasts Forever*, in which the Germans actually are terrorists. McTiernan merely exploits the stereotype burned into the minds of American audiences from WWII films that Germans, whether wearing Nazis uniforms or shirts that accent large muscles and sexy, long blonde hair, are always the bad guys.

McTiernan's apparent influence on *Green Room* aside, an even more helpful filmmaker to further contrast a film's thematic exploration of the issue of race versus violence insofar as German villains are concerned is Steven Spielberg. *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (1981) and

*Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* (1989) both explore the latter with a comic-book or B-movie playfulness and *Schindler's List* (1993) explores the former in the humorlessness with which its grave subject matter requires. Tony Kaye's *American History X* (1998), another film which ventures deep into racial themes with the same dramatic gravity as *Schindler's List*, is perhaps the second greatest influence on *Green Room* as both are populated with Neo-Nazi characters of a specific subculture known as skinheads, that is punk rockers and fans of other extreme music such as heavy metal whose chief distinguishable physical attribute, other than the obvious white skin color, is a buzzed haircut. In the vernacular of, "the pitch," a film industry term for screenwriters or other creatives pleading for funding from executives or financial producers and distributors, popularized in the Hollywood studio system of the 1980s, Saulnier might have easily crystalized his screenplay for *Green Room* to potential funders as "Die Hard meets *American History X*."

Though Saulnier makes frequent and effective use of the racial tension associated with skinheads and the white supremacy movement through the swastika and hateful epithet-coated walls of the club, perhaps best exemplified by Darcy in an intimate moment which he confides in his right-hand man how he fears for his lesser associates of doing, "that nigger dope," he does not show hateful acts of violence visited upon minorities or nonwhites (Saulnier 94). Each band member is white, or at least in the case of guitarist Sam (played by Alia Shawkat who is of Iraqi, Norwegian, Irish, and Italian descent), has white enough skin to count as white to the poorly educated skinheads. This deliberate choice of Saulnier's is in part made by necessity of setting, as the narrative logic of a non-white being caught dead anywhere near a white supremacist compound is unsound enough to break the suspension of disbelief in American audiences who are not currently living under a rock, but it is overwhelmingly made because a scene such as the curb-stomping hate crime in *American History X* would make an impact on the audience so significant that it would derail the true theme of the film; a meta-examination of film violence itself, rather than a white guilt trip across the horrors of hate-motivated violence.

Saulnier, though only his second feature length film as screenwriter and director, employs the skilled filmmakers tools to make a film which critics and educated audiences commonly claim as, "a film that has something to say"; in this case concerning the nature of film violence. The tools which Saulnier employs can be divided into two categories; those of the screenwriter (namely allegory, symbolism, monologue, dialogue, character arcs, etc) and those of the director (performances, framing, music and sound effects, lighting, special effects, etc). However, given that the task of a director is to execute his or her vision of a screenplay, and since, in the case of *Green Room*, those two are the same person, the meatier thematic piece is undoubtedly the screenplay.

In the Green Room screenplay Saulnier uses allegory three times to speak directly to the audience about the film's theme, mostly through his protagonist, Pat, mirroring the three-act structure of the Hollywood standard 120-page screenplay. Since the film and the screenplay have only minute differences, a rarity even among screenwriter/directors, each claim concerning the screenplay can be made in equal measure concerning the final film. This division serves as a delineation of screenwriting to further discover the filmmaker's intent.

The first time Saulnier addresses the audience through Pat is in the middle of Act I, just before the band has made their way out into the boonies to the Neo-Nazi trap waiting for them. The band is being interviewed by a fan and a student, Tad, who plans on airing his tape recording on his college's local radio station (Saulnier 9). When Tad brings up how hard it was to contact them and asks why they lack a, "social media presence" (9), Pat, and drummer, Reece have this to say;

PAT  
No one wants to starve, but if you  
take it all virtual, you lose...  
the texture.

TAD  
What do you mean, texture?

REECE  
Technical wizardry.

PAT  
...t's shared- live. And then it  
goes away. The energy- it can't  
last.

(9-10). Here, Saulnier presents a double meaning in Pat's (and to some degree Reece's) dialogue. The organic, yet aggressive energy that cannot be so easily bottled up to be enjoyed on social media is not simply what matters to Pat about music and live rock and roll shows but, more importantly, what Saulnier believes matters about violence in film. An auditorium full of moviegoers share a visceral moment when they watch violence on the big screen much like punks enjoying aggressive music at a show. These twisted, artistic spectacles are full of, "technical wizardry", or in the case of violence in film, a kind of movie black magic that casts a spell which binds people together (10).

In his second address to the audience, Saulnier-the-screenwriter leans heavily on symbolism, comparing film violence to an image unseen in the film but imagined via a deliberately seeded and revisited anecdotal monologue. In the middle of Act II, when the band argues over the best plan for one of their imminent mad dashes for freedom, Pat tells the beginning of an old paintballing story until he is silenced by his frantic, distracted bandmates who cynically dismiss it as a clichéd, "pep talk" (73). The bandmates may be too panicked to listen to a word Pat has said, but Saulnier knows that the audience

is listening (though hopefully not too closely to catch his attempt to excuse an unabashedly clichéd, sports film-esque pep talk scene with frankness) and ready to find out how Pat's paintballing story pertains to their predicament. So when Saulnier brings the monologue back at the beginning of Act III, immediately following the deaths of Pat's bandmates it is not simply morbid irony for the sake of black humor but rather a signal for the audience to heed Saulnier's words as he again speaks through his protagonist and ally character. Having retreated back into the green room, Pat and Amber are resting on the couch in a shared, approximate state of denial when Amber expresses (the audience's) interest in hearing the rest of the paintballing story. Pat tells Amber that he and his friend were getting, "slaughtered by these legit Iraq vets" with far superior paintball gear and, "tactics" (93).

take cover. It was hopeless. The  
last match, the whistle blows and  
he just tears out there- full  
jackass, in cut-offs and sneakers-  
and takes out their entire team.  
Never stops. Just running and  
shooting and laughing until they're  
all dead.

AMBER  
Pretend dead. We're up against real  
guns.

(93). Saulnier-the-screenwriter, having plenty of other creative options to present valid insights for the heroes to realize their best course of escape, conjures up the unseen images of a paintball game as a symbol of violence in film. If paintball, as Amber (really Saulnier) claims, is a form of pretend violence, comparable to the violence of the pretend world of fictional films, then its use in the context of Pat's pep talk suggests that there is something to be gained from the participation of such pretend violence, a ray of enlightenment buried within the darkness. It is here that Saulnier hits on a point of controversy. For as the University of Michigan - Kansas City film scholar Gregory D. Black points out in his book, *Hollywood Censored: Morality Codes, Catholics, and the Movies*, as early as the 1920s, films with excess violence and sexuality have offended the public and, consequently, been censored by the self-regulatory Motion Picture Production Code, involving the cutting of entire scenes from original film negatives (178).

The link between film violence and real world violence is a question that Saulnier sufficiently establishes and explores in *Green Room*, but, given his fledgling filmmaking career, it is not a controversy that he personally has had to answer for to the degree that another screenwriter/director has; Quentin Tarantino. "I'm shutting your butt down!" is the sound byte that British Television Channel 4 seized from an infamous 2013 interview with Tarantino during the press junket for his controversial film *Django Unchained* (2012). Interviewer Krishnan Guru-Murthy, noting the excessive violence in the film,

questioned Tarantino on the correlation between violence in film and violence in real life. Tarantino, losing his temper, refused to answer these sorts of questions, citing that his views on the subject, had been on the record for twenty years; since the onset of his career with his first film he penned and directed, *Reservoir Dogs*, another violent film that was controversial upon its release in 1992. A brief youtube or google search involving, "Quentin Tarantino" and, "violence" provides an abundance of similar, previous interviews, some civil and some far more heated than Guru-Murthy's, corroborating Tarantino's claim that this debate is familiar territory for him. While Tarantino believes there is not sufficient evidence to establish a link between film violence and real world violence, an unsurprising conclusion considering the niche of violence the filmmaker has carved for himself in the annals of film, the current literature is less certain.

In 1996, not long after Tarantino's *Pulp Fiction* (1994) became the biggest violent film sensation since Arthur Penn's *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967), Richard B. Felson, a sociologist from the State University of New York at Albany, conducted a meta-analysis of the prevailing literature on this link. In his journal, *Mass Media Effects on Violent Behavior*, Felson claims that, "... it seems unlikely that media violence is a significant factor in high crime rates in this country" (123). Countering this claim, Felson surmises, "It seems likely that some people would be more susceptible to media influence than others" (123). Felson, expressing frustration upon the hazy conclusion he has reached, admits;

**... it is puzzling that research has not shown any consistent statistical interactions involving individual difference factors and media exposure. The failure to find individual difference factors that condition the effects of media exposure on aggressive behavior contributes to skepticism about media effects (123).**

If Tarantino, perhaps the greatest single proponent of film violence, believes there is not sufficient evidence to establish its link to real world violence, and Felson, upon scouring the prevailing applicable literature on the link (however unfortunate for the conclusiveness of his meta-analysis), corroborates that lack of evidence, then Saulnier's paintball symbol is not only a fine example of competent fiction writing, but a viable model for examining the societal function of film violence; that humans learn from pretend violence because it triggers profound revelations from the blackest depths of the human experience. The question that must be posed then is where exactly does this pretend violence penetrate? What part of the human experience mirrors film violence so effectively as to inspire profound revelations?

Saulnier's final comment on film violence, answering the question of what part of the human experience it mirrors, comes at the climax of *Green Room*. The tides have turned for Pat and Amber, having

chased Darcy across the woods, to now hold him at gunpoint. After Amber convinces the heretofore nonviolent Pat that they must exact vengeance (obtaining what Quentin Tarantino defines as, "blood-for-blood" in the aforementioned interview), Pat, a little queasy, opens his mouth and Saulnier posits,

PAT  
(back to Darcy)  
...this IS A NIGHTMARE!

Heaving with shock and adrenaline, Pat's voice carries for miles.

Even Amber is reverent.

(110). (One of the minute differences from script to screen is found here. In the script Pat screams the line whereas in the film Anton Yelchin's reading of the line is subdued, with a hint of helplessness. Saulnier-the-screenwriter's attempt to punctuate this line involved literal punctuation flair by means of an exclamation mark and all caps whereas Saulnier-the-director, achieving the desired emphasis through the realism of the moment, decided that less was more. This fits with the common screenwriting tip of avoiding excess capitalizing and exclamation marks so as to allow actors more freedom of line interpretation.)

For his third and final time addressing the audience directly, Saulnier draws a comparison between violent films and nightmares. For much of the film Darcy is unseen by the band members and Amber, speaking to them through the door of the green room or sending his henchmen after them to do his dirty work. Now that Pat can finally get a good look at him in the flesh, albeit in the gray Pacific Northwest morning light, he confesses to Darcy;

PAT (CONT'D)  
Funny... you were so scary at night-

DARCY TURNS AND RUNS. It's almost sad.

POP. PAT MISSES with the .25, KICKING UP DISTANT DIRT.

(Saulnier 111). This claim, according to Saulnier's allegorical dialogue, that violent films serve the same function as terrors in the night hits on a commonly argued converse statement; films are like dreams, a point so widely regarded that any film ending with the clichéd moment of a protagonist waking in bed to discover that the entire plot was a dream, will almost certainly make scoffers of the audience it intends to impress.

Though the average moviegoer may be familiar with the comparison of films to dreams, they might lack a vocational explanation as to why they are similar. In his book *In the Blink of an Eye: A Perspective on Film Editing*, Walter Murch, the three-time Academy Award winning film editor best known for collaborations with Francis Ford

Coppola, stumbles into an illuminating comparison on films and dreams with a question from an entirely different starting point;

**Why do cuts work? We know that they do. And yet it is still surprising when you think about it because of the violence of what is actually taking place. At the instant of the cut, there is total and instantaneous discontinuity of the field of vision. Well although 'day-to-day' reality appears to be continuous, there is that other world in which we spend perhaps a third of our lives: the 'night-to-night' reality of dreams. In fact, the abruptness of the cut may be one of the key determinants in actually producing the similarity between films and dreams. In the darkness of the theater, we say to ourselves, in effect, 'This looks like reality, but it cannot be reality because it is so visually discontinuous; therefore it must be a dream.' (57).**

Murch, shifting his focus from dreams to nightmares, adds;

**... it is revealing that the words a parent uses to comfort a child frightened by a nightmare— 'Don't worry, darling, it's only a dream'— are almost the same words used to comfort a child frightened by a film— 'Don't worry, darling, it's only a movie.' Frightening dreams and films have a similar power to overwhelm the defenses that are otherwise effective against equally frightening books, paintings, music. For instance, it is hard to imagine this phrase: 'Don't worry darling, it's only a painting' (58-59).**

Murch's humorous final point presents the very same argument that is at the heart of Saulnier's *Green Room*; that of rightfully distinguishing film as the dominant artistic medium for the expression of nightmares. (It is no happy accident that the aforementioned shower scene in Hitchcock's *Psycho* is one of the most enduringly potent moments in all of cinema. Finely crafted cinematic horror has a uniquely immersive way of bewitching its audience.) So intertwined are Saulnier and Murch's conclusions, despite arriving from separate paths of thought, that they both entertain the latent potency of the lesser mediums; the latter quite succinctly and the former in passing as the characters that populate his film are walking talking dismissals of such mediums. Discounting the violence-inciting, racist symbols and hate speech tagged on the walls of the film's main setting, Saulnier's punks and metalheads play and listen to violent music with aggressive vocal styles with violent lyrics with violent artwork on their t-shirts, impossible to ignore since they are seen for almost the entire duration of the film. These lesser mediums, though they vary in effectiveness levels even amongst themselves, are incapable of creating an experience that fulfills humanity's morbid fascinations on the same visceral scale as film. Violent films alone can trap humans in the terrors of the nightmare realm.

The final shot of *Green Room* stands in stark contrast to the boisterous soundtrack of bullets and punk rock that inhabits the majority of the film. With Darcy and the others neo-nazi villains vanquished, Pat and Amber simply sit down and enjoy the quiet for a moment. In the screenplay Saulnier dubs them, "Two beaten, half-assed warriors in the late summer breeze" (113). The violence that found them in the night has come and gone with the wind, blowing away the spell that Saulnier has cast on the audience to reveal his completed theme of *Green Room*; film violence captivates audiences by holding a mirror up to humanity's worst nightmares. What the audience sees in that mirror has the power to imbue them with meaning as profound and terrifying as a force of nature. On this point, Saulnier and Tarantino fight an ongoing, uphill battle with the mighty pens of journalists and politicians ever at their throats, because they sincerely believe, however counterintuitively, in the societal value of violence in the cinema. Ironically, the badder and the uglier the images in the thirty-foot tall mirror appear, the more good they can do for those dilated eyes twinkling together in the darkness.

# THE EFFECTS OF DACA ON THE UNITED STATES

*By Rachel McElroy*

There is a current controversy over the DACA program in our country. The Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program started in 2012 in response to an overwhelming number of immigrants and their families coming to the United States illegally. It was “created by the Obama administration” and “allowed young people brought to this country illegally by their parents to get a temporary reprieve from deportation and to receive permission to work, study, and obtain driver’s licenses” (Gonzalez). This does not mean they are given or even guaranteed citizenship, merely a temporary stay here in the United States for two years. Every two years they must reapply to protect themselves from being deported. However, as of early September, the Trump administration has decided to end the program. The administration felt by ending the program it would allow for improvement of America’s border security and the creation of more jobs for native born

Americans. This policy has allowed “800,000 immigrants who were children when they arrived in the U.S. illegally [to] receive protections from the program” (Gonzalez). But, without these protections, these immigrants are at risk for being deported back to their homes where there is poverty, war, violence, persecution and many more undesirable circumstances. **The DACA program should remain in the United States because it benefits the nation’s economy, unites immigrants and their families, and costs less than eliminating the program entirely.**

One reason we should keep DACA is that it increases the nation’s economy and workforce. According to The Center for American Progress, “DACA is having a positive and significant effect on wages. The average hourly wage of respondents increased by 69 percent since receiving DACA, rising from \$10.29 per hour to \$17.46 per hour” (Wong et. al). This difference in wages shows how DACA is benefitting immigrants. It offers them a chance

they would not receive if they were back home. In addition, “Previous research has shown that DACA beneficiaries will contribute \$460.3 billion to the U.S. gross domestic product over the next decade – economic growth that would be lost were DACA to be eliminated” (Wong et. al). Immigrants bring a lot of value to our economy and without them our economy will suffer. In addition, according to Micheline Maynard, immigrants “fill low-wage jobs short on workers, from home building to landscaping and dishwashing” (169). Immigrants are people who do the jobs we as Americans are not doing. In other words, they are filling the gap, which helps our economy grow. Due to the growing number of immigrants in the U.S. workforce, “The U.S. labor force [has] doubled from 1970 to 2017. Rather than ending up with a 50 percent unemployment rate, U.S. employment doubled” (Bier). Despite what some may think, the DACA program has a positive effect on the economy. Immigrants add value to our society that would not be there without them.

Another reason we should not end DACA is because it would tear apart immigrants and their families. Paul Ryan, the House of Representatives Speaker, claims that by separating DACA children “from their families and taking them away from the only country they have known as home, to a country they barely know” they will most likely lack the proper resources in order to succeed (qtd. in Somin). This will be detrimental to the lives of those children as well as their families. Somin also brings up a good point that “in nearly all cases, they [DACA children] either did not come to the U.S. by their own choice, were not legally responsible for their actions at the time (because of their status as minors), or both.” These children who came to this country were too young to make the decision to come here in the first place. It was their parents’ or guardians’ choice. Therefore, they should not be punished for it. In addition, a writer for the Washington Post claims that “some 25 percent of DACA recipients

have U.S. citizen children...[and] those children are likely to suffer considerable harm if their parents are subject to deportation” (Somin). These children would have little means by which to support themselves if they are under the legal working age. One option would be for the children to be deported with their parents because families do not want to be split up. In regards to their parents, they could be sent home where drug wars, persecution, violence, and other horrific circumstances could potentially be awaiting them. Repealing DACA would drastically change the lives of immigrants and their families.

A third reason losing DACA will be detrimental to the United States is because it will be very expensive to end it. Sean Devlin states that “the estimated loss of GDP that the U.S. stands to lose should DACA recipients be removed from the country and the workforce is \$460 billion.” This just shows how valuable DACA recipients are, and by taking away this program we lose a lot of value as a country. In addition, Wong et. al states that “at least 72 percent of the top 25 Fortune 500 companies” such as “Walmart, Apple, General Motors, Amazon...employ DACA recipients...[and] these companies account for \$2.8 trillion in annual revenue.” With this in mind, we see that DACA individuals are productive members of our society who are not utilizing our social welfare programs. Furthermore, “According to a study by the Cato Institute, the federal government would incur nearly \$60 billion in costs to remove all DACA recipients from the country” (Devlin). This price is too high to pay for individuals who bring so much value to not only our economy, but to our country as a whole. These numbers also show how much money will be wasted getting rid of people that add value to this country. Maintaining DACA would help keep these circumstances from occurring.

On the other hand, some individuals feel that immigrants burden society with welfare and medical costs, when in reality, immigrants are expected to pay, out of their own pockets, for their medical care with some assistance from the government. Immigrants do pay into our social welfare programs such as Social Security and Medicare, but do not receive the benefits as an American citizen would. This is because legally they are not considered citizens. In order to receive benefits, they would have to become citizens, which could take years to accomplish. The path to citizenship is a very long and arduous road. By “ending DACA [it] would bring losses of \$39.3 billion to

Social Security and Medicare over the next 10 years” (Devlin). These are significant losses for these programs, which greatly affect our population in many different ways. With the loss of an immigrant workforce, they would not be paying into the system therefore, it would be an overall loss in our social welfare programs.

The United States is facing a difficult decision. With the future of immigrants residing in the country in the hands of Congress we wait with anticipation to see what will become of them in the next six months. Until then, Congress has to make the decision of whether or not they want to create a new, more comprehensive immigration policy. Time is counting down until March of next year when DACA work permits expire. This could potentially force hundreds of thousands of DACA families to be deported. In the meantime, we can still do our part to advocate on behalf of immigrants. DACA recipients deserve a second chance because they have much to offer to our country. DACA has shown us how beneficial immigrants are to this country. Keeping DACA would allow the nation’s economy to continue growing, unite immigrants and their families, and cost less than eliminating the program entirely. One way we can protect immigrants’ rights is to speak out and spread awareness about the issue. Most importantly, we must debunk the common misconceptions and myths that are held in this country about DACA. What we have to decide as a country is, is it really worth sending immigrants home rather than letting them stay?



# ACEs High

## How Adversity Impacts Personality

**By Sperry Mullins**

What are adverse childhood experiences? They are instances of exposure to trauma, abuse, and dysfunctional household environments during childhood. Adverse childhood experiences, also known as ACEs, have been shown to have many biological, social, and psychological impacts on development and quality of life outcomes in adulthood. This essay will focus on the impacts that ACEs have on personality development, specifically that of the big five model, and personality disorders while reviewing relevant research on the topic.

The original ACE study was titled “Relationship of Childhood Abuse and Household Dysfunction to Many of the Leading Causes of Death in Adults” and was conducted by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Kaiser Permanente between 1995-1997 and is currently on-going. This study was, and still is, one of the largest on childhood abuse and its impacts on development and well-being. Its findings are crucially important to the content of this paper, so it will be reviewed here in order to provide an understanding on the subject. In order to collect their data, a questionnaire which broke down adverse childhood experiences into seven categories (psychological, physical, or sexual abuse; violence against mother; living with household members who were substance abusers, mentally ill or suicidal, or ever imprisoned) was sent to 13,494 adults who had previously participated in a standardized medical evaluation, to which the response rate was about 70%. This was done in order to be able to relate the results of the questionnaire to the results of the medical evaluation. The researchers found that over 50% of the respondents reported an ACE score (the number of categories reported) of at least one and 25% reported an ACE score of at least 2. The fact that over half of the study’s population was effected by childhood trauma shows the sheer magnitude of the issue. Felitti et al. found that respondents with an ACE score of four or higher, in comparison to respondents with a score of 0 had 4- to 12-fold increased health risks for alcoholism, drug abuse, depression, and suicide attempt; a 2- to 4-fold increase in smoking, poor self-rated health, 250 sexual intercourse partners, and sexually transmitted disease; and a 1.4- to 1.6-fold increase in physical inactivity and severe obesity.

Felitti et al. also found strong relationships between ACE scores and ischemic heart disease, cancer, chronic lung disease, skeletal fractures, and liver disease. These

results include many more physiological correlations with ACE scores than personality correlations (though they do mention depression and suicide attempt). However, it was hypothesized that there is a strong correlation between ACEs and anxiety, anger, and depression. Looking at this study it is clear that childhood trauma has a profound impact on development and well-being in adult life. In their article titled “Adverse Childhood Experiences, Brain Development, and Mental Health: A Call for Neurocounseling” Carry P. Navalta, Lesley McGee, and Jolene Underwood argue that clinical mental health counselors, and counselors as a whole, require an understanding of the literature on ACEs for their work with people who may be effected by them. This highlights the importance of the original ACE study and its relevance in current research in psychology and neuroscience. Knowing this, let’s take a closer look at personality.

As we have learned in this course, personality development is influenced by nature, nurture, and environment. So what has current research discovered about the relationship between ACEs and personality? As previously mentioned, this essay will look at personality in regards to the big 5 model, as it is the most used and understood model in psychology. According to Navalta et al., replications of the original ACE study have shown positive correlations between ACEs and mental health problems, including mood, anxiety, substance abuse, and impulse control disorders. Although these results don’t indicate personality directly, it is known that anxiety and depression are associated with the personality trait neuroticism. According to Pekka Jylha and Erkki Isometsa, neuroticism has a strong positive correlation with depressive and anxiety symptoms and introversion is associated with depressive symptoms as well. This relationship between ACEs and neuroticism is supported by research done by Sharon McElroy and David Hevey, who found that an increase in ACE score was related to higher neuroticism and lower conscientiousness and emotional intelligence.

A more specific breakdown of the impacts of ACEs on personality is offered by Jason M. Fletcher and Stefanie Schurer, who found that certain adverse childhood experiences have different associations with personality traits. When it comes to the big 5 model, ACEs are associated with neuroticism, conscientiousness,



and openness to experience, but not agreeableness and extroversion. These findings coincide with those previously mentioned in this paper. According to Fletcher and Schurer, neuroticism is the only trait that is associated with the experience of sexual abuse during childhood, while “frequent parental neglect experiences are positively associated with neuroticism, and negatively associated with conscientiousness and openness to experiences”. Overall, ACEs lead to the development of a more neurotic and less open and conscientious personality as well as increasing anxiety and depressive states. These impacts are clearly not conducive to well-being or happiness at any stage in life.

It is important to keep in mind that the associations between ACEs and personality presented by the research do not necessarily prove a causal relationship. There are too many factors that come into play when it comes to personality development in order to pinpoint the cause of certain traits or characteristics. However, these associations are supported by multiple studies which provide a clearer understanding of the negative effects of childhood trauma on well-being as well as personality.

Before addressing the association between ACEs and personality disorders it is important to provide an understanding of personality disorders. As defined in the DSM-5, a personality disorder is “...an enduring pattern of inner experience and behavior that deviates markedly from the expectations of the individual’s culture, is pervasive and inflexible, has an onset in adolescence or early adulthood, is stable over time, and leads to distress or impairment”. According to Roberts, Yang, Zhang, and Coid, people who experienced neglect, physical abuse, and sexual abuse are more likely to develop personality disorders. Personality disorders that are positively correlated to ACEs include borderline personality disorder, antisocial personality disorder, avoidant personality disorder, and dependent personality disorder. These associations are supported by Perez Benitez et al. , who found that reported ACEs and trauma are “very high” in a multicultural clinical sample of patients with personality disorders. These findings clearly indicate the strong positive correlation between childhood trauma and the development of personality disorders. After discussing the relationship between ACEs and personality, this is an unsurprising result. This also furthers our understanding childhood trauma and its effects.

Now that the relationship between childhood trauma and personality and personality disorders has been discussed, the next question to answer is “why is this important”. As with most (if not all) issues in psychology, the importance in understanding lies in the resolution of those issues in order to promote well-being. It is important to understand adverse childhood experiences and their impacts so that we can figure out how to help negate them and/or prevent them all together.

It is important to look at treatment and intervention as a whole, rather than only in regards to personality. As many of the effects of childhood trauma (along with many other negative psychological issues) can be compounding over time if left untreated, it is important to intervene as early as possible. The most logical way to identify the presence of trauma is to screen by means of interview or questionnaire. This method is cheap and can be used to reach large populations. If ACEs are detected, then the next step would be intervention. According to Navalta et al., current clinical literature provides strong empirical evidence that supports the use of cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) as an intervention for both children and adults with a history of ACEs. Interventions should include key elements of the acronym “PRACTICE: Psycho-education, Relaxation skills, Affective modulation skills, Cognitive processing skills, Trauma narrative and cognitive processing, In vivo mastery of trauma reminders, Conjoint parent-child sessions, and Enhancing safety”. Another intervention mentioned by Navalta et al. is child-centered play therapy, due to its empirical support. If a family or child has access to these therapies, they are likely to have a positive impact on well-being and prevent situations from getting worse.

An important factor to keep in mind when looking at interventions for children is that not all families have access to, or are aware of healthcare options that might help them afford CBT or other therapies. According to a study done by Blodgett and Lanigan, the most practical and effective way to address the massive issue of childhood trauma and access to care is to adopt ACE-specific programs in systems that support children, such as public schools. Blodgett and Lanigan also state that the K-12 and early education systems are “...well positioned to meet the developmental needs of children whose ACE exposure has caused distress by implementing trauma-informed practices system-wide”. Implementing trauma

interventions into public school systems seems to be a logical solution to the issue of access to care. The language and ideas presented in this study coincide with those of Dr. Nadine Burke Harris. Dr. Harris started the Center for Youth Wellness which is spearheading a campaign to create ACE awareness, develop a national system to promote early ACE screening, and incorporate trauma-informed care into pediatric institutions. To summarize the intervention methods mentioned here, the first step is to screen for childhood trauma as early as possible. The next step is to intervene by means of therapy, such as CBT or play therapy. Cognitive-behavioral therapy has been shown to be effective for both children and adults who are suffering from trauma.

In conclusion, ACEs have been shown to have a plethora of adverse impacts on psychological, physiological, social development, and well-being. In regards to personality, childhood trauma is associated with higher levels of neuroticism (anxiety and depression), lower conscientiousness, and lower openness to experience. Trauma is also associated with the development of many personality disorders. As stated by Harris (2018), this is an issue that is present in all demographics in the US, regardless of socioeconomic status, ethnicity, or gender. Due to the prevalence of this issue and its severe impacts on development and well-being, it is of utmost importance to first educate on this topic, then detect the presence of ACEs as early as possible, and implement intervention methods in a way that is accessible to everyone. Successful ACE intervention, whether it is local, nation-wide, or world-wide) has the potential to decrease many life-threatening diseases, prevent loss of life, and greatly increase well-being.

In order to draw these conclusions, multiple scientific studies and articles were reviewed. Each of the articles used were extremely informative. The original ACE study conducted by the CDC and Kaiser Permanente was the most important, as it created a solid foundation of understanding on childhood trauma and its impacts. In regards to personality most, but not all, of the sources reviewed provided the same results. One study found a positive correlation between ACEs and trait openness to experience, however this particular study was done only on patients with psychotic disorders (Pos et al., 2016). The fact that each source supported the findings of the other sources, and that the original study was replicated many times, has convinced me of the importance of this issue. It would be difficult to argue against any of the points presented in this literature review, as I have tried in true scientific fashion.



# Trilliums

**By Sean Peterson**

Anthropology as a discipline has a unique way of not only looking at the world through a new lens, but it also can open new insights into yourself and how you are a part of that world.

During the Fall Quarter of 2018 I was taking a cultural anthropology course as part of my anthropology endeavors. One of the week's discussions was how unique cultures around the world are threatened by the global economy. The need for extracting resources to feed First World industrial societies is eroding these one-of-a-kind cultures to the point where some disappear altogether. This is a tragic loss for all, because each culture is a different window into the world we call home. It is an understanding and relationship to the earth only known and understood by these cultures that are disappearing.

I was really reminded of how fragile these cultures, the earth, and our relationship to it all is, when reading "Forest Development the Indian Way" by Richard Reed. There is a tribe in the South American country of Paraguay called the Guarani, who have for centuries lovingly lived intertwined with the Amazon rainforest they call home. I thought it was fantastic to learn how the Guarani managed their land through small slash and burns. They then planted and cultivated small garden plots and eventually let the forest return to those plots and reclaim them (Reeds, pg. 108). They took care of the forest by treating the soil in these plots with care and respect, so as not to allow for erosion to take the nutrient soil away. Tribal members would even return to tend to these plots, reclaimed by the forest, to tend to an orange or banana tree that remained or seeded there (Reeds, pg. 108). This dedication to and care for their environment sustained them for time innumerable.

Within the last 100 years, the Guarani have dishearteningly been subjected to being pushed aside by the continuing need for resources. They are deeply affected by logging and mining companies. The logging industry is the biggest perpetrator to this disruption as they seem to have no idea about land stewardship, or how to interact as a collective with local cultures, the environment, and changing economic needs (Reeds, pg. 106). They plow through and disrupt the land and forests in ways that makes it hard for it to rejuvenate. This in turn disrupts the livelihood of the Guarani.

It's a travesty. The logging industry has desecrated if not decimated the forests where the Guarani live. I wonder if there could have, or should have been more foresight and relationships built with the Guarani. Simple gestures of empathy perhaps? Maybe that would have stopped or deterred the destruction of the forests and the resources there. Could they have shown respect for the Guarani by having their input? Is it possible to do that given the logging industries need to fulfill global demands?

Without care or empathy shown towards the Guarani and their hundreds of years of forestry experience, it is hard to hear these stories and discuss them in class. To hear about these beautiful areas and people continually being affected; lives, knowledge, and culture continually being lost. The Guarani are on the brink, as is the Amazon forest they live in.

I hope this isn't too much of a stretch and not meant as a true comparison, but I have seen so much of this kind of forest loss happen where I live that I can sympathize with the Guarani in a small way. Where I grew up, there was an old forest with huge trees and an abandoned farmstead on it which was in a late stage of decay. For years it was a forested area of over 50 acres that was left alone amidst roads, farm properties, and neighborhoods. I spent a lot of time in those woods wandering alone exploring, sometimes playing with friends, but for the most part in my own world chasing snakes, whistling at birds, or listening to pine needles drop through the canopies as the wind blew. Paradise.

Deep in a marshy area of this forest, I found a spot where strange flowers were growing. I had never seen them before. Fragile stalks supporting waxy leaves rose from the leaf litter. They had a snow bright flower with a fragrant yellow tongue and they were beautiful. Sometimes they even had a wispy pink hue through the white. There were a lot of woods around and I clambered through the best of them, but I had never seen these before.

I went home and told my Dad to come see them. When we got there he was impressed. He hadn't seen these flowers in many years. They were wild Trilliums. My father became excited. He thoughtfully explained to me how fragile they were and that we shouldn't disturb them because of their fragility.

My father was a stockbroker. Gone by 5:00 am and home by 5:00 pm during the week. You wouldn't know how much of a lover of forests and wildlife he was. I didn't. Most of the time his nose was buried in a newspaper or some financial report that he would fret over. So to see his excitement about these flowers brought me closer to understanding his love of nature.

As we looked around there were a lot of Trilliums but only on this one area. I made up my mind right then, that this patch of land would remain hidden. I wouldn't tell anybody what I found. I was their sole protector and as far as I knew, their only visitor besides the deer and other critters that scampered through the woods.

Several years later there was talk of someone building a neighborhood in those woods. Having seen around us several large parcels of land destroyed to make room for homes and businesses, I became concerned. I knew my favorite haunt was going to disappear; it was inevitable.

Soon, there were property markers, flags, ribbons wrapped around trees, and other signs of development in the forest. Even though I couldn't make heads or tails of these markings, I knew that it wasn't long before a bulldozer would make short work of the Trilliums; crushing them under a track and leaving them as a pressed flower in a book, on the forest floor.

My father shared in my concern and we decided to transplant some of the Trilliums to our yard as if the bulldozer was on its way. I was discovering at that time that my father not only had a love of the woods but why that love extended to rhododendrons. We had enormous ones growing in our yard. Rhododendron flowers of all shapes, colors and sizes would bloom in the spring and he would let them grow tall and grand as he did for our large maple trees. This shady canopy had many prime areas to replant the Trilliums. Shady to keep the plants from drying out, protected from destructive weather elements, and rich soil.

Carefully we dug a few deep and wide sections around a few of the individual Trilliums so as not to disturb the entire area. The idea was to not only take care of the main bulb and roots of the plant but to take a section of the soil with us with the hope that the soil would help with the relocation. Each hole we dug we refilled to not leave a trace of where we had worked.

We then took these clumps of earth with the Trilliums back to our yard and planted them in a several safe spots. The tender care we gave them worked and they thrived, and over the years spread. What a victory! Luckily we didn't disturb the Trillium grove in the forest

too much and they regrew there as well. Also whatever construction that was planned for the forest did not come to fruition until many years later and the land stayed as it was; wild and beautiful.

As time passed, we moved and I forgot about the Trilliums and the forest. Not too long ago I drove by my old home and those woods; they were gone. The swamp where the Trilliums grew were under a lawn or driveway. I felt a huge pang of sadness. My youth, those woods, and the Trilliums were gone and just a memory. Besides the Trilliums there were salamanders, sneaky garden snakes, deer, fox, red-headed ant hills the size of a VW bug, even a resident weasel. It is safe to say there were many other creatures, known and unknown living amidst that acreage. What other creatures lived within the huge cedars with hollows, hemlocks with their tiny pinecones, giant maples with their seeds that fly like helicopters, and other flora creating a silent dense canopy like a blanket that cradled my musings and, of course, the Trilliums.

I knew so much about those woods I could write for hours about it. Does anybody but me remember this? Would those developers have ever cared how I felt about the land in which I had traversed? It was mentioned in the book that developers don't stay around to see implications of their work (Reeds, pg. 112). I don't think they even really looked to see what was there in the first place. What hurts as well is that I can't take my family there to show them my memories. It is one thing to describe what you have seen and done but it is another to take someone there and share it with them.

I can't compare my experience to the complete cultural upheaval that the Guarani have suffered. But I can imagine a rare flower, maybe an orchid that was a favorite of a young child of the Guarani. A flower amidst a myriad of other known plants used for medicine, food, or decoration, only known to the Guarani. The flower admired and tended tenderly between a father and son. I only hope that flower is still there for them to see and cherish.

# It's Sweet

By Ally Laxa

A spoonful of narrative, two dashes of reality and a dash of humor - scratch that, I'm not particularly funny. A jumbled splatter forms on the page and I'm forced to start again. Half a cup of narrative, a dash of sarcasm, and a whole bag of me. Ice it with imagination and transport myself to a whole new world. Essays are bitter but strengthen my technique. Analytical, Comparative, Personal - a three tiered cake. I don't always like baking, but it always makes me feel better. The end result seems so much sweeter. I write because at the end of the day it's always worth it.

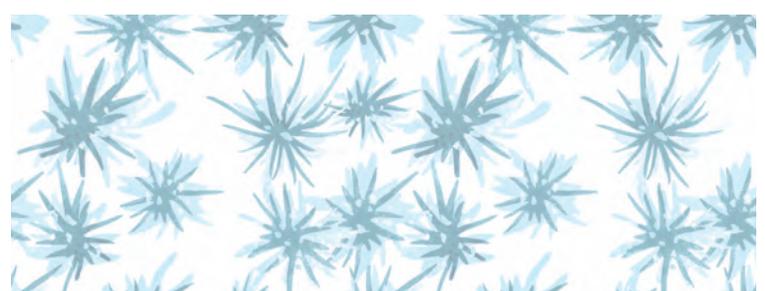
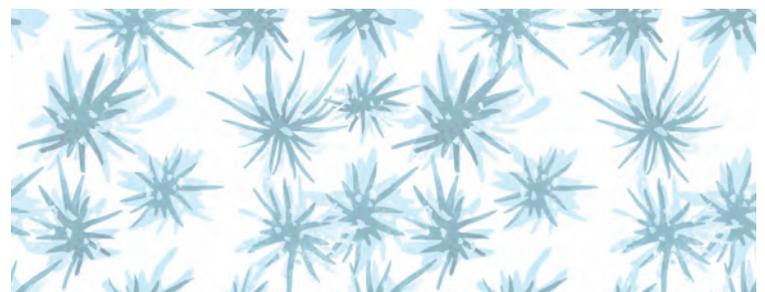
# Process

By Ally Laxa

"Write a good story", my teacher ordered  
Sitting alone, like I preferred  
I started to write, supplies were scattered

Time passed and passed, seconds absurd  
Lacking ideas, mind was all blurred  
Frustrated, mad, "just write" I figured

Paper and pencil, vision pictured  
Hands working busily, emotions forward  
Letter after letter, word after word  
Thought after thought, mind freed like a bird



# GROUNDING FOR LIFE: THE IMPACT OF JUVENILE LIFE WITHOUT PAROLE

For many, teenage rebellion is a normal part of growing up, but for some young people rebellion leads to crime, some of which is severe enough to warrant a sentence of life without parole. A juvenile life-without-parole (JLWOP) sentence means that someone under the age of 18 is jailed for life, with no chance of parole. Is this a fair punishment for a crime committed by a minor? Are there crimes so severe that this type of punishment is justified? If it is not justified, what are the arguments against JLWOP? In reviewing the pros and cons of this subject, I found relevance in the following viewpoints. Laurence Steinberg, a professor of psychology at Temple University, presents the idea that the juvenile brain is not developed enough to understand the severity of its actions, and because of that, it is not okay to lock someone up who might, through education, rehabilitation, and time, turn out to be a contributing member of society. John Hambrick, Speaker of the Assembly in Nevada, presents the idea that juvenile crime is often the result of child neglect and/or trauma and should not result in the serious long-term repercussions inherent in JLWOP sentencing.

However, writer and researcher Mary Onelia Estudillo argues that the severity of punishment for juveniles should mirror the severity of their crimes, and if the crime warrants it, JLWOP sentencing is justified. But is it? Professor Christopher Walsh of Harvard Medical School contends that a JLWOP sentencing is cruel and unusual punishment. My research into this subject includes not only these sources, but an interview with Mary Fox, an English professor at Tacoma Community College who works with incarcerated juveniles, and whose experience leads her to believe that JLWOP sentencing is not effective as punishment. As a result of my research, I feel that a JLWOP sentence robs a youth (often a victim of trauma) of any chance of redemption through rehabilitation, and that instead of juvenile sentences mirroring adult sentencing standards, youths should not receive the cruel and unusual punishment of life-without-parole.

Many people are aware of the saying, "Kids will be kids," an instinctive human notion that teens do not have the same brain as adults and will often make rash

decisions without considering the consequences. While these actions may well need addressing, should adult administration of juvenile crime take a permanent form with no hope for rehabilitation? Professor Laurence Steinberg of Temple University in his article, "Don't Put Juveniles in Jail for Life," argues that a juvenile's mind is not developed enough to make sound decisions and they should not be judged as harshly. The justice system should not lock up minors for life because of mistakes they made without thinking. He further demonstrates the unfairness of their sentencing by explaining how it prevents teenagers from redeeming themselves over actions or mistakes they made, "A 14-year-old boy in the presence of his peers will often do foolish and dangerous things". Long-time administrator at Johns Hopkins University, Rebecca Lowry agrees with Steinberg. In her article, "The Constitutionality of Lengthy Term-of-Years Sentences for Juvenile Nonhomicide Offenders," she explains that the mind of a kid is different than the mind of an adult, and the judicial system needs to recognize this difference. "Juveniles are more malleable than adults; consequently, they are more capable of reform".

District Attorney for Colorado's 1st Judicial District, Peter Weir argues in his article "Some Juvenile Killers Deserve Adult Justice," that there should not be a solid line between a juvenile and an adult when it comes to crime. "It is clear that a developing adolescent brain does not prevent deliberate, thoughtful actions. It cannot be an excuse for unspeakable behavior. It cannot be used as a basis for sweeping reform of the juvenile system or to challenge the propriety of addressing the most serious crimes in our criminal justice system". Lowry believes that Weir's argument is incomplete because, "Every state has laws that mandate a minimum age for drinking alcohol, driving a vehicle, voting, getting married, having sex, serving jury duty, and alienating property... These limitations on juveniles recognize their relative immaturity and underdeveloped sense of responsibility." If state laws define a line between juveniles and adults regarding licensing, marriage, and other behaviors, then an argument can easily be made to extend that line to criminal behavior, separating the resulting punishment into adult or juvenile categories, and making it reflective of those categories.



## ***By Haleena Annalisa Necessary***

In her article, “Juveniles Should Be Tried as Adults in Certain Circumstances,” Mary Onelia Estudillo discusses points from both sides of the debate but leans toward Weir’s argument of supporting JLWOP sentences. Estudillo explains that the juvenile system was originally intended as punishment for minor crimes, but the system was taken advantage of when juveniles committed crimes knowing they would get off easy. “Trying minors as adults will toughen the system and hold someone responsible. Minors must be fully culpable for their behavior if we are to deter future delinquents from committing violent crimes.” She also discusses how institutionalization should not be the go-to solution but believes that when it comes to crimes such as murder, life-without-parole sentences are in fact warranted. “Without a tougher punishment system, society is left with a high percentage of delinquents and a rising percentage of crime victims”. I found Estudillo’s argument weak, due mainly to a lack of statistical evidence backing up the effectiveness of her proposed solutions. Additionally, I found her arguments somewhat contradictory, especially when she mentions that she is “a strong advocate of rehabilitation and second chances” but then states, “It is not about giving children second chances. It is about making them responsible for their actions” (Estudillo). If we are to make juveniles responsible for their actions, should we also not take into consideration the nature of those actions and how a juvenile’s level of maturity impacts them?

Vice Dean of the NYU School of Law, Randy Hertz maintains a position on JLWOP sentencing that takes into consideration this issue of the juvenile brain versus the adult. His researched opinion finds expression in his article titled, “Why Life Without Parole Is Wrong for Juveniles.” In his main point he says, “We now know that the parts of the brain that drive emotional reactions, impulses and reactivity to peers develop before those that control impulses and imagine consequences... Scientists who study the teenage brain describe it as akin to a car with a fully functioning gas pedal but no brakes”. This comparison perfectly describes how a teenager may well have trouble moderating their rash behavior. Impulsive behavior can lead to criminal activity, and in that case there should certainly be consequences.

But the severity of these consequences need to consider the maturity of a juvenile brain. Hertz goes on to state, “The recognition that children are different is supported by recent neuroscience and psychosocial studies that have shown adolescence to be a period of intense change in the brain... The law recognizes the developmental and biological factors that differentiate children as a class in literally hundreds of areas”. To expand upon this point, Lowry argues that “The Supreme Court granted certiorari to determine whether a juvenile’s age is a factor taken into account when determining whether the juvenile is in custody or not.” Lowry cites the judicial opinion of Justice Sotomayor “Who saw no reason for police officers or courts to blind themselves to that commonsense reality that children might succumb to police where an adult would not.” Lowry further states that common sense is all that is necessary to determine “that a 7-year-old is not a 13-year-old, and neither is an adult”.

Another often overlooked factor in juvenile behavior centers around the idea that many juvenile delinquents are also victims of childhood trauma and abuse. Vice Chair of the Nevada Assembly Ways and Means Committee, John Hambrick discusses his opinion in an article by Christina L. Lyons entitled, “Should Teens Who Murder be Treated as Adults?” Hambrick states, “Often the children who commit serious offenses have suffered abuse, neglect and trauma, which affect their development and play a role in their involvement in the justice system. Drawing in part on this research, the U.S. Supreme Court has said children are ‘constitutionally different’ and should not be subject to our harshest penalties”. When abuse victims (juveniles or adults) commit crimes, their punishment should be reflective of their diminished emotional state. Mental health treatment should be a strong consideration in their sentencing, especially in the case of juveniles who may well benefit from this type of help and recover enough to contribute positively to themselves and society. Hambrick continues, “When we sentence a child to die in prison, we forestall the possibility that he or she can change and find redemption”. How will we know whether a child has the potential to change if they are not given the chance to? Life sentences should not be given at all if the juvenile justice system has any regard for the mental maturity

and emotional health of juveniles. To deny a juvenile this chance could well be considered cruel and unusual punishment.

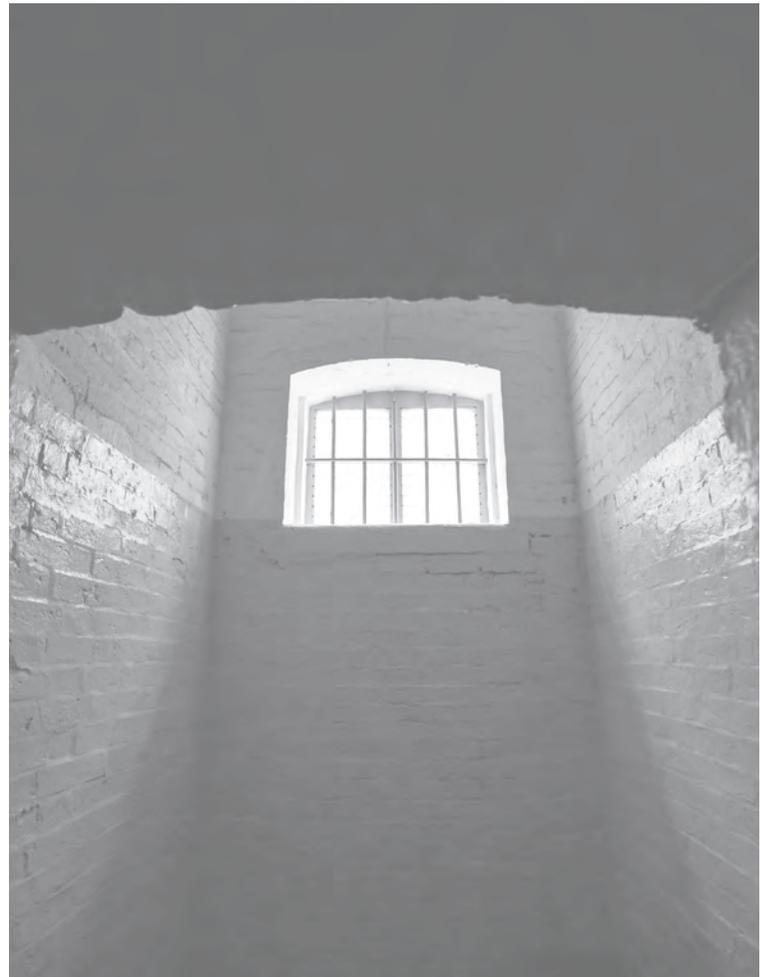
Along those lines, Harvard Medical School professor, Christopher Walsh believes that JLWOP sentencing is exactly that: cruel and unusual punishment. In his article titled, "Out Of The Strike Zone: Why Graham v. Florida Makes it Unconstitutional to Use Juvenile-Age Convictions as Strikes to Mandate Life Without Parole Under § 841(b)(1)(A)," Walsh discusses the Eighth Amendment and the fact that it prohibits locking up a juvenile for life for a non-homicidal crime because it is considered cruel and unusual punishment. Walsh further explains that, "We have nothing to guide us in defining what is cruel and unusual apart from our consciences. A punishment which is considered fair today may be considered cruel tomorrow. And so we are not dealing here with a set of absolutes". This lack of absolutes could extend to homicidal crimes as well as non-homicidal crimes. A JLWOP sentence is a cruel punishment no matter what the crime.

So, what does Walsh propose as an alternative? He cites judicial opinion that supports rehabilitation as an alternative to JLWOP sentencing, and which discusses how JLWOP sentencing goes against rehabilitation efforts. "Through rehabilitation, the state seeks to reform and improve a criminal's character so he can become a productive member of society. In Graham v. Florida, the Court stated why the theory of rehabilitation can never justify life without parole: 'The penalty forswears altogether the rehabilitative ideal [because] . . . the [government] makes an irrevocable judgment about that person's value and place in society'". If rehabilitation is impossible under JLWOP sentencing, then which is more important, life sentences, or possible rehabilitation of juveniles? I argue that rehabilitation is not only an effective partial solution, it reduces the cruel and unusual punishment of JLWOP sentencing. Walsh agrees, stating that rehabilitation is "[t]he process of seeking to improve a criminal's character and outlook so that he or she can function in society without committing other crimes". Walsh's examples underscore my argument that life sentences for juveniles are not and should not be the go-to answer when dealing with young criminals.

Law makers are not the only people who feel that JLWOP sentences are unjust or ineffective. On the front lines of this issue are volunteers and employees who work in juvenile detention facilities and who have first-hand experience in dealing with juveniles who have committed crimes. Mary Fox, an English professor at Tacoma Community College and volunteer at a local juvenile detention center, shared her insight with me about the issue of juvenile incarceration, and whether it should be a life-long condition. When I asked her if she thinks that juveniles should be locked up for life, Fox replied, "Absolutely not. There is nothing in the research that shows that locking kids up for life prevents other kids from committing crimes, while there is research that shows that kids can change with quality programs. The research is clear". Like my previous sources, Mary agrees that

programs designed to help kids are far more effective than merely locking juveniles up for life. In her opinion, research simply does not support the claim that jail is always the best option. For instance, Fox donates her time "[working] with groups of 7-10 kids every other Thursday on creative writing... [and] with two kids at a time on their academic writing. Those one-on-two sessions are incredibly productive, and the students are always engaged and motivated... They thrive, and it doesn't matter whether they are charged with attempted murder or a minor drug offense". As someone who is regularly face-to-face with kids in the juvenile justice system, Fox's opinion is based on regular interactions with incarcerated minors. The fact that Fox donates her time to helping these kids is telling, both of her dedication toward kids who obviously need special treatment and services, and to the kids themselves, who may well use this opportunity to rehabilitate their previous delinquency.

I believe the above arguments uphold the idea that a juvenile is not an adult, and their actions should not be condemned in the same way an adult's actions might be. A minor's brain does not have the capacity to think about consequences in the same way an adult's does. Without opening another subject entirely, much legislation goes into addressing behavioral reform and rehabilitation for offending adults. Why should juveniles, whose brains are according to Lowry, "more malleable than adults," not benefit from a chance to experience rehabilitation as well? It is my firm conclusion that juvenile life-without-parole sentences need to be banned, and more attention and resources need to go toward helping juveniles grow and learn from their mistakes.





# || | BARS & DOLLAR SIGNS \$\$\$

## MONETIZING INCARCERATION IN THE LAND OF THE FREE

*By Terrance O'Toole*

“Cash for kids” is a phrase that, without context, brings to mind many horrific possibilities. In the context of the debate over prison privatization in the United States, it highlights one of the many issues facing this government outsourcing practice. In February of 2011, Mark Ciavarella, a Luzerne County, Pennsylvania, juvenile court judge, was convicted of taking payoffs from private prison officials in exchange for sentencing kids to longer punishments to keep their facilities full. The scandal landed Judge Ciavarella a 28-year prison sentence and led to the reversal of thousands of cases. Was this an isolated incident of an unscrupulous judge, or was this just the kind of corruption that monetizing imprisonment invites? The unfortunate truth is that this issue was not unusual, but a symptom of an expanding problem. White refers to the fact that between the years of 2000 and 2015 the number of prisoners housed in private facilities rose 165%. A result of growing prison populations, shrinking government budgets and a trend toward privatizing government functions, the debate over prison privatization grows as fast as the issues created by them.

With concerns ranging from public safety and facility security to governmental corruption, the problems are exacerbated by the fact that there are no federal laws regulating how individual states implement privatization, impose standards for confinement, or rehabilitate offenders. This is especially alarming when considering that 67% of the approximately 2.2 million people serving time nationwide are held in state prison. To make meaningful improvements in the effects of prison privatization, we must address the structure and requirements of government contracts as well as sentencing reform with wide-sweeping national legislation.

The dramatic upshot in the use of private prison facilities over the last 30 years can be largely attributed to two factors. The first is the trend of “tough on crime” policies that became prominent during the 1980’s and 90’s. These policies include the “War on Drugs” started during the Reagan administration and the “Three Strikes” laws that went into effect during the Clinton presidency. In addition to a shift in how the United States dealt with crime and punishment was a new emphasis on fiscal responsibility in the government. Nationwide, outsourced services as a share of government spending on services rose from an estimated 25% in 1959 to an estimated 45%

in the year 2000. With pressure to reduce government spending while also housing an increased number of inmates, private prisons became a popular option to solve these issues, creating new ones in the process.

In the absence of regulations on how state governments contract and implement private prisons, individual states are left to choose for themselves, creating a culture of back-room dealings and corruption. Brickner and Diaz tell of the 2010 escape of two inmates from a private prison in Arizona operated by Management and Training Company. The ensuing investigation brought to light several security deficiencies. These problems included a malfunctioning perimeter alarm, no guards on the perimeter at the time of escape, improper alarm maintenance, and non-operational perimeter flood lights. Further investigations uncovered close ties between several members of then, Arizona governor Jan Brewer’s staff, and lobbyists for private prison companies. Brewer also received nearly \$60,000 in campaign contributions from people associated with corrections companies shortly before signing S1070, a bill that would have increased enforcement of immigration laws, increasing the head count and profit for the companies that would house them. This eye-opening incident coupled with the aforementioned sentencing scandal in Pennsylvania illustrate how the free-flowing cash of government contracting cultivates an environment of corruption that puts profits first and minimizes accountability, leading to obscene profits of \$629 million in 2014.

Examining the issues surrounding the monetization of confinement in our own state, the issues turn toward privatizing inmate goods and services more than the prisons themselves. Northwest Detention Center in Tacoma is the only contract run facility in our state, housing a portion of the estimated 60,000 incarcerated nationwide for immigration related matters. Jessica Wolfe, an attorney with the Washington Appellate Project, informs me that contracting companies to hold inmates represent only part of the dilemma. The cash grab doesn’t end with taxpayers, it extends to the inmates and their families directly. Just because the state of Washington does not contract out prison space, it does not stop them from making money off their detainees. This is because local governments rake in cash from the contracting of things like commissary, mail-order goods, video visitation and

even health-care. A company such as ATT will negotiate a contract for something like video visitation. These contracts almost always give the company contracting exclusive market rights to that county or state. Then, with a monopoly for that service, they can charge whatever price they wish. In the case of video visitation, the fleecing is to the tune of \$20 for a 30-minute block of time. What makes that worse is that many of these video visitation contracts come with a clause requiring the county or state to phase out in-person visitation. This is usually done under the guise of improved security protocols. Driving this financial milking further is the fact that these contracts are often incentive laden with kick-backs for the government entities earned by hitting profit targets. In 2017, Thurston County announced plans to build a new jail with twice the capacity. This was done even though it was widely held that the current jailed was neither outdated or overcrowded. Wolfe believes that this was specifically to contract the housing of inmates from other counties in the states, increasing their revenue from both bed space and kickbacks from service contracts. This information leaves me to wonder what the purpose and motives of incarceration really are.

As we discuss the river of revenue streaming into the coffers of private corrections companies, it is important to remind ourselves that the traditional role of incarceration system was to serve the following three purposes: protection for the community, rehabilitation for the offender, and punishment. Corrections companies make their money by maximizing head counts and minimizing costs. Brickner and Diaz point out that the states with the highest per-capita number of private prison beds, Alaska, Hawaii, New Mexico and Vermont, also have the highest three-year recidivism rates. Considering that Corrections Company of America and The GEO group, the two biggest contracting firms, make a combined \$3.3 billion in annual revenues, there is little motive to offer rehabilitative treatment.

As Aman and Greenhouse assert, the political rhetoric concerning contract corrections has increasingly become a financial discussion. This occurred simultaneously with reductions in market protections

restricting prison made goods and services, and an industry wide shift away from the practice of prisoner rehabilitation. This is particularly alarming because the shift away from rehabilitation directly affects community safety, meaning that two of the three long-held objectives for incarceration have been effectively abandoned. Taxpayers ultimately foot the bill for prisoner incarceration, but their interest in rehabilitating offenders and preventing future crime through education and treatment is being largely disregarded in favor of profits. Brickner and Diaz opine that the failure of the states to stop the endless cycle of incarceration is what led to the overcrowding and budgetary crises in the first place. Considering that the private prison model has a huge financial motive and that means of profit involves the deprivation of liberty for some citizens, it is imperative that we implement increased oversight and equivalency requirements through strong, national legislation.

As I contemplate the staggering numbers and facts associated with the privatization of prison detention and services, I quickly realize that any kind of solution is going to be like swimming in rapids upstream against a tide of cold, hard cash. CCA and GEO spent a combined \$8.7 million on lobbying efforts from 2010-2015 alone. This capital obstacle is highlighted by the fact that around the same time as the trend of partnering with corporations to gouge inmates took hold in Washington, so did a successful effort to eliminate the state board overseeing county jails. To fight the rising tide of capital interests, there must be a three-pronged effort of political action, litigation and legislation.

One of the most apparent options to combat the issues created by prison privatization is through legal challenges. Judicial precedent can often be nearly as controlling as legislation and in some cases, invalidate it. As I learned from O'Carrol, one promising possibility for this type of challenge is in context of the Federal Activities Inventory Reform Act, or FAIR. This law passed in 1998 governs what federal activities are considered inherently governmental that must be performed by government actors, and what are considered commercial activities that can be performed by private contractors. The law



defines an inherently governmental function as “a function that is so intimately related to the public interest as to require performance by Federal Government employees” (O’Carroll). By that definition, it seems obvious that inmate detention is indeed an inherently governmental function. A successful judicial challenge could render the practice illegal altogether. According to Wolfe, another way to combat the financial abuse of the system is to challenge the contracts themselves. She told me of Jones v. ATT, a Florida case in which the price gouging of inmate telephone calls was successfully challenged by an inmate and his family. As a result of the money involved and conflicts between the FAIR Act and Office of Management and Budget directives, a legal challenge to the FAIR act may not be feasible, and contract challenges are only symptomatic remedies. It is for these reasons, I posit that legislation will be the most effective means of change.

There are two types of legislation necessary to combat these issues and the first is sentencing reform. When you consider that of the estimated 2.2 million inmates nationwide, approximately 371,000 are being held for drug offenses, it seems obvious that the penalties for these crimes are unreasonably harsh and outdated. Wolfe believes that this change can only happen with a combination of public education and political pressure. It seems logical that reducing these sentences could help stem the tide of mass incarceration and reduce the overpopulation that fuels the industry and provides and endless supply of hosts for this parasitic system. The other type of needed legislation is to improve transparency requirements and the financial abuse of inmates and their families. The Prison Policy Initiative characterizes the prison telephone and video visitation industry as “predatory”, and Wolfe agrees, stating that FCC regulations limiting the amount of money that phone companies can charge inmates for phone calls and video visitation are long overdue. I believe this call to restrict corporate gouging can be extended to all goods and services available to inmates. Wolfe also feels strongly that laws mandating transparency in contracting and operation of facilities are badly needed to increase accountability. Currently the records of private prisons are not subject

to Freedom of Information Act requests. It is also crucial in my opinion that we have national legislation mandating state oversight boards for all prison operations public and private.

In today’s era of budgetary shortfalls and mounting debt, the debate over private prisons will always be a polarizing subject, but we cannot continue to ignore the fact that we now have more people in bondage in this country than at any other time in this country since slavery. Massive community action is needed to pressure the judiciary into reviewing cases and lawmakers to enact strong legislation regulating the industry. The most promising way to avoid being a country of inmate slaves and those that guard them is a combination of political action, judicial challenges and strong national legislation.



# Tacoma Tenants Seek Housing Justice

**By Cathy Pick**

## *Abstract*

This essay explores the unfolding story of the Tiki Tenants mass displacement as they became a lightning rod for affordable housing issues in Tacoma, Washington. Their tenacity in organizing with each other and joining other marginalized renters has morphed into an unignorable political force. The emergency protections passed by the Tacoma City Council to assist the Tiki Tenants led the issue to be reviewed by a subcommittee. These protections have been referred to the full City Council for an upcoming vote this month. The Tacoma Tenants Organizing Committee is mobilizing members to advocate for passage of the revised Rental Code as written by the Committee.

## *Keywords:*

Tenants Rights, Housing Justice, Affordable Housing, Grassroots Movement, Community Organizing, Tacoma City Council



## Tacoma Tenants Seek Housing Justice Now

“Affordable Housing” is a myth, much like unicorns and leprechauns. There are more displaced tenants in Tacoma tonight because the locks were changed on the front door of the Merkle Hotel less than a week ago. Because the tenants joined forces with the Tacoma Tenants Organizing Committee, a handful of tenants were able to identify this illegal act to regain access to their apartments and their personal property. If not for this grassroots community organizing movement, those tenants would be homeless. What kind of community are we when we allow human beings to struggle in this manner? What are we willing to do today to decrease the number of homeless persons within our city? Do we value justice and compassion or unjust profiteering and suffering? Tacoma has an opportunity to strike a balance between development and tenants’ rights that includes protecting our most vulnerable citizens. In the next month, the City Council members will hear and vote on a revised Rental Housing Code that includes basic rights for the 50% of Tacoma residents who rent. Tenant protections must be enacted now, without further delay or revision rendering them ineffective. By delaying action, our homelessness crisis is worsening.

Recent events in Tacoma have highlighted the loopholes in our Rental Code. This past April when the residents of the Tiki Apartments were initially notified of the impending renovations, all tenants were given a 20-day notice to vacate the premises. (Drew, 2018) . Many of the Tiki tenants were living on fixed incomes due to disabilities, thus creating a frenzied panic to secure adequate housing in such a condensed timeframe. The residents quickly sought help, began organizing and created a Tenants Organization. City Hall could no longer ignore the issues of affordable housing and tenant protections. Shortly after enacting an Emergency Ordinance to relieve the Tiki Tenants and sending the issue to the Community Vitality & Safety Committee, yet another mass displacement was announced regarding the historic Hotel Merkle in downtown Tacoma.

This is not the first time tenant protections has come to the attention of our city leaders. Back in 2010 they had an opportunity to effect change and admittedly failed (City of Tacoma, 2010) .

One of the main contributors to Tacoma’s rental market issues stems from a greater regional dilemma. Too much development too quickly has simply priced some tenants right out of their neighborhoods. Many long-time Seattle residents have now relocated to Kent, Auburn, Federal Way and Tacoma. Many rental listings are spoken for the same day as they are posted. The lack of affordable rental inventory coupled with the consistent, allowable rental increases have led to the current housing crisis.

While the rental market is reflective of basic economic principles of supply and demand, the increased costs pose severe human consequences.

By attending the Committee Review meetings, the Tacoma Tenants Organizing Committee has heard firsthand what many landlords’ objections are to the proposed updated Rental Code. Some have said they are “housing providers” who already designate affordable housing units. First, they are not “providing” anything, they are people seeking a profitable business model. While profitability is not inherently negative, human beings are not a commodity to be profited from. Also, a quick glance at rental listings does not reflect availability of affordable housing. The average price for a two-bedroom apartment in Tacoma is just under \$1300 per month. (A-List Staff, 2018) One solution might be to include a percentage of units as low income while considering developing rental properties.

Land lords have also stated their desire for responsible tenants. Being vague about their terminology doesn’t help bolster their position. When rental listings indicate an income requirement equivalent to five times the tenant’s income, we observe what that term means. Typically, making this requirement is economic and racial injustice. While the economy has taken an upturn, not all renters have been able to increase their income. Many fixed income renters have rental increases which outpace their cost of living increases from Disability, Social Security and Veterans Benefits. One of the protections being considered is prevention of source income discrimination. This would compel a landlord to accept a subsidized housing voucher once the tenant has qualified for this form of housing assistance.

Land lords often mention their need to make a profit. Business students understand this argument on a pragmatic level. Accounting students learn on their first day of class the equation reflecting assets equal liabilities and owner’s equity. Many landlords have created stricter lease agreements because of irresponsible tenants destroying their property. However, this is not accurately reflective of all tenants. Punishing many for the actions of the few is unfair and creates further economic disparities. Landlords have a means of recouping revenue for nonpayment of rent and destruction of property, up to \$5000. (Rental Housing Association of WA, 2018) . Tenants rarely have access to resources for housing assistance for the aim of retaining housing. Community resource providers tell their clients that unless people are physically homeless, sleeping on the street or in their car, funds for retaining housing are unavailable.

And finally, landlords might adamantly state their need to protect their investment. Again, to an undergraduate business student this is completely understandable. However, housing is not just a merchandising inventory equation. There is a human component here that cannot be ignored. Unless someone has personally experienced homelessness or housing

insecurities, their perspective is limited. Maslow's hierarchy of needs describes food, clothing and shelter as basic human necessities. Before one can even begin achieving their full potential, fulfilling basic life sustaining resources must be complete (Maslow, 1943) .

The simple fact remains that no landlord or developer is in jeopardy of being homeless tonight, while rental tenants are in a much more vulnerable situation. The hardship for a displaced tenant is far greater than any inconvenience effecting project management that developers might face, especially when the displaced tenants' only alternative is homelessness. If one's business includes syphoning funds from programs designed as safety nets for low-income families, then it's clearly time for pivoting to a new business model that includes a new revenue stream (Clark, Osterwalder, & Pigneur, 2012).

The Tenant Protections which the Tacoma City Council is voting on this month will help alleviate many of the tenant's concerns while providing little if any impact on a landlord's business. What this revised code provides is accountability and enforcement. Landlords will give 60-day notices for both rent increases and vacating for renovations. Installment plans will be required to ease the process of relocation. Source income discrimination will be eliminated by compelling landlords to accept all sources of income, including subsidized housing vouchers. Landlords will distribute tenant rights as well as any code

violations in the past 12 months. Relocation funds matched by the City will be provided to defray moving costs for tenants who fall below the poverty line. Retaliation against tenants who assert their rights by requesting repairs and organizing will be prohibited. Economic intimidation and physical harassment of tenants will have consequences. And finally, an enforcement mechanism is enacted for this code, including a significant per day, per unit fine for failing to follow the Rental Code (Tacoma Tenants Organizing Committee, 2018) .

We must examine what kind of community we want to be, and the current dilemma of tenants' rights is an opportunity for us to clarify our values. Do we protect our most vulnerable? Or do we continue allowing unfettered development in the name of profit? Do we want to look good or do we want to do good? Someone once said that what is popular isn't always right and what's right isn't always popular. Our city budget is a moral document. Where our city allocates funds indicates the heart of our leaders toward the people they represent. While landlords and developers sleep warm and secure in their homes tonight, many tenants are faced with the impending doom of homelessness. Living with that kind of uncertainty, the insecurity of not knowing where one is going to sleep tonight or awaken tomorrow weighs heavy on their soul. This simple truth should compel us to act: basic housing is a human right. We can no longer allow such suffering of our neighbors when it's in our power to act now.



# Bittersweet Day

*By Linda Tran*

Our home was stripped of the things we clothed it with: the comfort of the grey couch and its pillows, the creaky stools on which we ate every meal, the seven-dollar paintings my dad got from Goodwill . . . The only ones left were Dad and me. It was our turn to say goodbye to our home in Chambers Creek Crossing, whose steep hills turned my leisure biking into serious exercise, whose greens and blossoms made the hard pedaling worthy.

That August afternoon, we sat together in the deserted living room, waiting for our realtor Tommy. Through the window, the sun shone, and the lilies were vibrant as ever, as if trying to calm the longing and uncertainty that weighed down on each of us. I looked out at our backyard where we spent a great deal of time in the past few weeks mending fourteen square feet of dead grass.

"Ughh, ughhh . . ." I grunt as I lift the other end of the grass "carpet" with effort. It drops with a tiresome whump on the dirt. Dad squats down— in his soiled tee, soiled sweatpants, soiled shoes, and very soiled gloves— to unroll it. I hold up the end for Dad to trim, then together we push down on the edges with all our might, hoping they won't show.

"I feel so guilty," I can't help saying, despite our arduous work. "It's almost like cheating".

"We tried to grow new grass. That didn't work, so this is the only thing we can do," Dad reassures, with a smile that tells me he feels the same.

I sighed, "Okay." He's right. At first, we tried to grow new grass in this big bald spot in our lawn— a fruitless attempt. Short on time, we have no choice but to buy pre-grown grass that Home Depot sells in rolled sheets of soil. To our dismay, their grass is thicker and darker than ours.

So, one by one we moved and unrolled and trimmed and pushed, covering up the dry earth underneath.

Dad broke the silence, "We are ubiquitous now," chuckling a little. He meant that from then on, we would be out and about— at Grandma's house, at Aunt's, at Uncle's, at Walmart, at Ross, at Macy's, at Subway, just about everywhere but home.

"Yeah," I laughed, "Good vocabulary!" I add in an altered tone, "I'm going to miss this house."

"Me too," he looked down, pausing, "I thought you said you didn't like this house. I remember you saying that it was too old."

Chambers Creek Crossing was built in 1995, and I still consider our house's crème and sky-blue paint, the glass chandelier, and the patterns on the bathroom tiles old-fashioned. I hesitate, "Well . . . I guess you learn to love it once you have to live in it. You'll always miss something that you spend a lot of time with no matter what, I think."

"Really," Dad said, in a half sarcastic, half empathetic tone. Changing the subject, he suggested, "Why don't we take a few pictures? Stay there, I'll take a picture of you."

Instead of objecting as I usually would, I let Dad take pictures of me and took pictures of him with the empty homescape. I always smile big in front of cameras, but Dad's lips were tightly pressed, as they have been lately. We made our way from the living room to the kitchen and even took a picture with the stairs.

Tommy came at last. Tommy does a decent job at selling houses; he also happens to be my grandpa's friend's son. Yet somehow a little bit of me despised him, for the moment I saw his face I knew I could no longer call this place home.

Dad and Tommy talked while I put my backpack and violin in the trunk of our 2007 Honda CRV with our other belongings. We did not leave right away; Dad circled the neighborhood and passed over our house, or the house now, a few times. The third time we passed, a violet sedan was in the driveway. I caught a glimpse of a young couple following Tommy to the front door. How excited they must be!

"I hope they take diligent care of our backyard," Dad said with an important air.

"Unlike us! We got a neat and beautiful backyard and left it in two different shades of green," I reminded him, finding it hard to resist a grin.

"It's not too bad. You can't really see the darker grass unless you are standing close," he replied, not sounding confident at all.

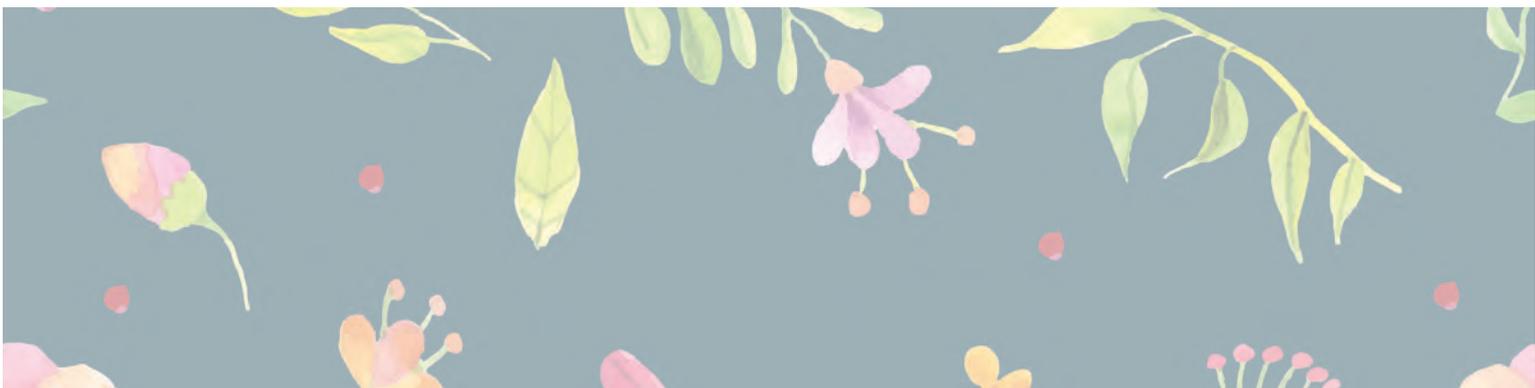
"I could see it from the window in the living room!"

Dad said no more. We headed north on I-5, to Aunt Trinh's house in the East Renton Highlands where I now live. The long highway stretched before us, with the familiar Emerald Queen Casino, La-Z-Boy Furniture, and iFly Indoor Skydiving passing by, only that time we didn't have a place to come back to. I sat in the back seat watching dusk fall and fell asleep.

Here I am, a year older than when I said bye to our dear home, later to Dad’s car, then to Dad himself. Moving to America, Mom and Dad endured many trials of rebuilding their lives while raising Simba and I in a foreign culture. It was after two years that they decided to go back to our homeland, Vietnam, where they have established careers and relationships. As it turned out, I was to stay with Aunt Trinh’s family for the sake of my education. Four-year-old Simba, though, was too young; when Mom got her job in Vietnam back earlier that year, he flew back with her, leaving Dad here to take care of me and selling our house. Oh, how we ever got on without Mom for seven months remains a mystery to me. On the second day of school, a month after we sold our house, Dad left me to join Mom and Simba.

It is not the same now as it was then, of course. But I have Aunt, Uncle, and my cousins Felicia and Alex, whom welcomed me into their family and made their home also mine. I still have Mom and Dad to confide my worries to, I just can’t give them a big hug until next summer. I’ve made good friends, too, and I will try hard to keep them.

Yes, the old home was lost. But you know what? A new one was made with a love and bond deepened by separation. I am grateful.





# The Forgotten Founding Father

By Michael Whalen

“An infamous scavenger of filth” is the greeting American Founding Father Thomas Paine received from newspaper Gazette of the United States returning home at the age of 66 (Browne). Thomas Paine, like other founding fathers, is from England, but differs for his political beliefs and bombastic writings that include opposing religion, opposing monarchy, and supporting social safety nets. Seen as a radical by the founding fathers, his legacy has been squandered and downplayed, even going as far by not recognizing him as an American. In addition, Paine, unlike other founding fathers, was not wealthy and ended his education at the age of 11 to aid his Quaker father. After working a number of different jobs, Paine’s friend Benjamin Franklin persuaded him to move to the colonies and begin a new life. This is where his political mind begins to form even further, where he plays a pivotal role in spurring the revolution through his pamphleteering. He later uses his tenacious writing style to argue for revolution and representative government in France and support Deism, which left many in the United States labeling Paine an atheist. Thomas Paine, like the transcendentalist view on church/religion, government and on the disadvantaged through pamphlets, revolutionized how issues are to be argued and brought to the public.

## What is Thomas Paine’s View on Religion?

Religion is an issue that led many to despise Paine because he points out hypocrisies and corruption within the church. He is similar to the Transcendentalist thinkers for having an independent spirituality that is not in connection to the church. He may not oppose religion on the same basis as someone like Henry David Thoreau, but opposing for an abuse of power is seen in both men’s arguments because Thoreau hated how religion is used to brainwash slaves to deem their lives to be destined to slavery. Thomas Paine wrote a three-part pamphlet titled “The Age Of Reason” where he depicts his belief in Deism and argues that religion such as Christianity focuses not on the deity that created them, but more on the Bible and the works of god. Paine defines his belief as, “...to imitate him in everything moral, scientific, and mechanical” (Paine 65). Paine loved to use reason in

nature and the sciences to understand spirituality. This correlates to Thoreau because he stayed in nature and understanding life in the woods. Paine still believed in one creator, but believed in using what the world is to justify the magnitude and power that god would have. In the “Gale Encyclopedia of American Law” Deism is defined as, “a religious and philosophical belief that accepts the concept of God but views reason as the key to moral truths.” His true feelings on Christianity are revealed in the second part where Paine exclaims, “As an engine of power, it serves the purpose of despotism; and as a means of wealth” (Paine 190). This direct criticism is part of the radical nature of his writing and much like the Transcendentalists, his language and style are seen as radical as he goes against society’s dominating philosophy of religion. Paine is misconstrued as being an atheist, but in reality, “Paine intended it as much as a response to the dogmatic atheism of the French revolutionaries”(Walters). Thomas Paine’s passionate argument for his beliefs are what shocked society and his ability to spread his influence with everyday people.

## What is Thomas Paine’s View of Government?

Paine moved to the colonies when civil unrest was beginning against the British government; in fact, this period of time is what helped shape his view on government and revolution. He would have his views on the American Revolution outlined in the pamphlet “Common Sense,” which had “perhaps five hundred thousand copies of it sold within the first year”(Bennett). This is arguably the best selling political pamphlet in American history. Paine gives his ideas on monarchy in which he describes “a detailed history of the rise of hereditary monarchies and an equally scathing rejection of these institutions”(Bennett.) He opposed this form of government as he deemed them inherently corrupt and tyrannical. Like the Transcendentalists, he would frame monarchy in a skeptical light wanting the government to be what is best for all people of that land. In “Common Sense,” Paine declares, “But government even in its best state is but a necessary evil; in its worst state an intolerable one” (Paine 3). This directly mirrors some of the language that

is echoed by Thoreau in "Civil Disobedience." By writing in pamphlets his message is able to reach the masses of everyday people, in churches, town meetings, and taverns and written in the popular linguistic style of the time (Hamilton). Expanding on his view of government in "Rights of Man" where he addresses civil and natural rights in addition to revolution and constitution, Paine supported a constitution and government changing with the people, not the government changing the people. He states passionately, "Lay then the axe to the root, and teach governments humanity" (Paine 22), supporting revolution in his statement here for the French. He writes of being treated unjustly by the British government and equating this to slavery for the unjust laws that were being placed on the colonists (Inside American History). Thomas Paine arguing for a government to best represent the people in a nation is a direct parallel to the Transcendentalist thinkers and their egalitarian mindset.

### **What are Thomas Paine's opinions on the disadvantaged of people such as slaves, women, and working people?**

Unlike other founding fathers, Thomas Paine was rumored to be against slavery and even wrote a pamphlet on raising wages for excise or taxmen. Paine in comparison to the Transcendentalists is not as direct when supporting women's rights and slavery, by not directly addressing the issue, but hinting at equality through his writings of natural and civil rights. Writers like Thoreau and Emerson were direct in their opposition to slavery, advocating civil disobedience to oppose the barbaric system. Paine contributed to the Pennsylvania Magazine and one of his writings was apparently, "an argument against slavery"(Oliphant). After his supposed writing in the magazine, he made a connection with Benjamin Rush, who was a staunch abolitionist. However, this part of his life is not clear and less documented, and, thus, could be up for argument. Some say that Paine only began to support women's suffrage late because in the rights of man he states, "Every civil right has for its foundation, some natural right pre-existing in the individual..." This is not like the transcendentalist Margret Fuller whose writings were loud and straightforward in support. A conference on the history of Thomas Paine took place in 2012 at Iona College and the arguments of whether Paine stood against slavery and for women's rights took place. A scholar at the

conference stated, "If Paine opposed slavery, why did he devote so little time to it in his writing"? (Erkkia). Writing about economically disadvantaged or regular people is something Paine did that the Transcendentalists did not fully address except for Herman Melville showing the internalization of Bartleby the scrivener. Thomas Paine supported a progressive tax to aid families and petitioned for higher wages when he was an excise man. Paine's first pamphlet "The case of the officers of excise" argued for higher wages and displayed his understanding and feeling of economic pressures that can arise within society. In fact, he had a petition signed by, "...three thousand excise men..."(Oliphant) though his tenacious persuasion was ignored, his upbringing had brought a new dimension to his beliefs that were not as prevalent with the transcendentalists. He diagnoses society like the transcendentalist's, but his diagnosis of England and America were different because America was so young. His focus on poverty was concentrating on families that struggle to live well in society and the elderly (Stedman). Paine wrote on the subject stating "that a remission of five pounds annually of taxes to one hundred and four thousand poor families, is not a good thing?" (Paine 192). Paine was ahead of his time in many regards to the economic angst he felt in his life, but due to Paine's history being muddled, to definitively say he defended civil rights like the Transcendentalists would be a falsity.

As an American founding father who revolutionized the way society can recognize and bring up debatable issues, Paine is much like Emerson and Thoreau and having sympathies with much of Herman Melville's description of Bartleby makes him similar to Transcendentalists. However, his record of standing up against slavery is now coming into question, but his passionate endorsement of a representative government and fear of a tyrannical government is not in question. Something that many Americans still hold today is a fear of a tyrant dictator. Paine's writings were revolutionary because of the impact and ability to relate to the average American by being able to attract people to one cause. His up front and in your face word play is what attracted so many to his pamphlets. Thomas Paine had a knack at opposing what he saw as injustices, and endorsing Deism over Christianity shows that he was transcending his thought on issues deeper and not conforming to society. He is the embodiment of American ideals, an advocate for regular people and a skeptic of power, in addition to being despised by many other founding fathers; Thomas Paine is relentless, passionate, and impactful. Thomas Paine is American.



# BLACK LIVES MATTER

*By Jakob Wilcox*

The Black Lives Matter Movement was founded in the midst of many cases of innocent African-Americans being shot and killed by police officers across the country. “Black Lives Matter is an ideological and political intervention in a world where Black lives are systematically and intentionally targeted for demise. It is an affirmation of Black folks’ humanity, our contributions to this society, and our resilience in the face of deadly oppression” (Black Lives Matter n.d.a). The Black Lives Matter movement is making waves in the world through their widespread activism, diverse goals, and resilience against systemic racism.

## BLACK LIVES MATTER WAS FOUNDED BY WOMEN

Despite all being African-American women, the founders of the Black Lives Matter movement are still diverse and have used this diversity to come together to collectively fight the systematic prejudices they each have faced. In an interview, Black Lives Matter co-founder Patrisse Cullors states, “I grew up in a neighborhood that was heavily policed. I witnessed my brothers and siblings continuously stopped and frisked by law enforcement. I remember my home being raided. And one of my questions as a child was, why?”. Cullors has felt the effects of the extreme policing of African-Americans firsthand. These experiences are common for African-Americans, and they are core to what Black Lives Matter is trying to stop: racial profiling and police brutality against people of color. Alicia Garza is a queer black woman, and a co-founder of BLM. Being a queer woman, Garza offers an insightful minority standpoint within African-American culture that is valuable for the Black Lives Matter movement as a whole. Garza is able to bring insight into the movement about the experiences of queer people of



color. The third and final co-founder of Black Lives Matter is Opal Tometi, the daughter of Nigerian immigrants, which has led her to become a major advocate of immigrant justice. Once again, Tometi is able to bring in her own unique standpoint amongst the founders because she is an immigrant. Those who are minorities are able to give more valuable insight on the struggles of that minority than those who are privileged.

## THE BLACK LIVES MATTER MOVEMENT FACES CONSTANT CHALLENGES

Black Lives Matter was created in the midst of an epidemic of police brutality and racism plaguing people of color. According to the movement’s official website, “In 2013, three radical Black organizers—Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi—created a Black-centered political will and movement building project called #BlackLivesMatter. It was in response to the acquittal of Trayvon Martin’s murderer, George Zimmerman”.

Trayvon Martin was a seventeen-year-old African American who was shot in the chest by a community watch member named George Zimmerman. Zimmerman had profiled Martin as suspicious when he saw Martin walking home from the store with Skittles and Arizona Tea. Trayvon Martin’s death polarized America, and this polarization was compounded when Zimmerman was later acquitted of second degree murder and manslaughter. A major barrier that BLM has faced since its start is public opposition, as Chapman points out, “The Black Lives Matter movement is also unpopular among whites. Only 35 percent hold a positive view of it, according to a recent Harvard-Harris poll, compared with 83 percent of blacks.” There are many reasons why so many white Americans

hold a negative view of Black Lives Matter: they dislike how some Black Lives Matter marches and demonstrations have been violent in the past. Despite this, often times these same people oppose the completely non-violent NFL protests. Chapman continues to point out that this opposition is present against all forms of African-American protests, stating, “The problem is not how blacks raise their complaints about American society; it’s that they raise them.” An overarching theme present throughout America is that many white Americans try to silence the outcries of African-Americans when they speak out against injustice. The public outcry against both the protests within the NFL and the Black Lives Matter movement – despite the fact that the two entities are polar opposite in terms of their approaches to protesting – displays that this barrier is a hurdle that is not exclusive to the Black Lives Matter movement.

## BLACK LIVES MATTER IS NOT DONE YET

The Black Lives Matter movement is still hard at work, and they are hoping to change not only the public opinion, but also the political landscape of the world as a whole. The official website states, “The project is now a member-led global network of more than 40 chapters. Our members organize and build local power to intervene in violence inflicted on Black communities by the state and vigilantes”. In the past five years, Black Lives Matter has built a global network, which is a major accomplishment, and will certainly be a large part of the movement’s legacy. Although most of these chapters are in the United States, the Black Lives Matter movement has also done work in Canada, Australia and the United Kingdom. Despite success, the ultimate goal of this movement has not yet been achieved. This is shown through the recent death of Jemel Roberson on Sunday, November 11th, 2018, when “witnesses said a Midlothian police officer responding to a shooting inside a south suburban bar shot at the wrong person early Sunday morning”. Jemel Roberson was an African-American security guard – armed and licensed to carry a gun – who worked at a bar in Robbins, Illinois. On Sunday, November 11th, Roberson was able to apprehend a gunman who had begun shooting inside the bar, but when the police arrived at the scene, they saw Roberson – who had pinned down the gunman – and shot him. Relating this back to Black Lives Matter, Slowik states that “Roberson’s death could become the Southland’s moment in the Black Lives Matter movement,” if justice is not served. As the shooting is still incredibly recent, there is some uncertainty to whether or not there will be justice for Roberson or not. In the aftermath of this tragedy, Roberson’s partner, Avontae Boose, has sought legal help, and her attorney has demanded that the Midlothian Police Department release the name of the officer who shot Roberson, or he will do so himself. Boose’s attorney has apparently learned the identity of the officer separately from investigators. There has been no word yet from Black

Lives Matter. Although the Black Lives Matter movement has not yet ended systematic racism or even police brutality, the movement is still working towards those goals; their work is still making an impact. In five years, the movement has built an ever-growing global network, and that is a legacy in and of itself. Obviously, police brutality is still happening, but Black Lives Matter will not stop until people of color can interact with police without the fear of death. The Black Lives Matter movement has put the topic of police brutality into the minds of everyone in America. Incidents of police brutality in America have been pushed under the rug for so long, but Black Lives Matter will keep marching for as long as it takes to bring an end to the killing of innocent, unarmed African-Americans at the hands of police officers.



# Finding Solutions to Plastic Pollution in All of Our Oceans

*By Lourdes Sablan Wusstig*

Did you know that a dump truck load of garbage gets discarded into the ocean every minute globally? Every year, 8 million metric tons end up in the ocean. Ninety percent of plastic waste comes from 10 rivers; eight in Asia; The Yangtze, Indus, Yellow, Hai He, Ganges, Pearl, Amur, Makong; and two in Africa, the Nile and the Niger. An estimated 1.5 million metric tons pours out of the Yangtze River alone into the Yellow Sea. Because of this problem, China has put a ban on imports of plastic waste since January 1, 2018, causing the United States, Britain, Japan, and Mexico (the largest exporters of scrap plastic to China) to scramble for ideas to solve this horrendous problem. The good news is that this has mobilized 250 organizations to find answers to the troubling situation; among them are the Plastic Bank and The Ocean Clean Up.

Picking up the load to ease the recycling of plastics before they reach the ocean is the Plastic Bank, which focuses on aiding impoverished nations. They go to where there is an abundant waste and open recycling centers to employ the residents. According to an article in PR Newswire, the Indonesian government has pledged to provide \$1 billion per year to minimize plastic pollution. This comes with SC Johnson (a leading packaging company) and the Plastic Bank teaming up to address the challenges of poverty in communities across Indonesia. SC Johnson has been operating in Indonesia for decades and has pledged this amount of money to reduce plastic pollution in its waters. The Plastic Bank will open eight recycling sites in all, aiming at a 70% reduction in marine waste by 2025. All the centers will have a minimum capacity of 100 metric tons of plastic per year and expect



The National Sword Policy, which China has implemented, will ban the imports of plastic waste to protect its environment and the people's health. This new policy is likely to displace 111 million metric tons of plastic waste by 2030. Because 9% of waste produced globally is recycled, the remainder ends up in landfills, incinerated, or somewhere in the ocean, causing more pollution in the environment. Since 1992, China alone had imported 45% of the world's plastic waste equal to 106 million metric tons. It is estimated that 1.3-3.5 million metric tons pours into the oceans along China's coastline. Ten to thirteen percent of trash was added to China's domestic waste between 2010-2016, making recycling more difficult for China, so it stopped buying 24 types of waste, including the plastic waste processed and turned into new products (Parker and Kennedy). The figures show that China is in dire need for changes, so stopping the imports of plastic waste could just solve that problem, with China focusing on its own plastic waste.

to employ hundreds of waste collectors. The first center opened in Bali on October 28th, 2018, and the rest are planned to be up and running by May 2019. The local communities will be educated about the growing risk of plastic contaminants and about possibilities to recycle locally. This opportunity will impact so many people who do not have much income, which in turn will add worth to their lives.

As people are working to keep plastics from entering oceans, The Ocean Clean Up with Boyan Slat is determined to clean what is already in the ocean. The organization uses a 2000-foot barrier device that forms a giant horseshoe and relies on currents and waves to push the garbage together to be collected at the system's center by a team on a vessel, who then bring it to land to be recycled. The plan is to strain out millions of pounds of plastic that are collected in the gyres, and this is the first of 60 or more devices to do the job. The testing began on Sept. 8, 2018, where a team of 11 scientists and

engineers had brought the device 350 miles offshore and a second trial 850 miles further out to sea. At last, the third placement is 1,200 miles out between the west coast and Hawaii in the middle of the Great Pacific Garbage Patch.

The system 001, nicknamed “Wilson,” is named after the volleyball that kept Tom Hanks company in the movie “Castaway”, as the movie portrayed him lost in the middle of the Pacific on a deserted island. As they ventured out to the garbage patch, the crew of 17 staff members from The Ocean Clean Up came head on with heavy weather, but the 12-foot waves and winds of up to 35 miles per hour did not damage Wilson; it moved well with the waves. The tests went as expected with no problems and there are plans to deploy 60 of these devices by 2020 in hopes to clean up 50% of the garbage in five years. The most exciting time in reality is testing this system as the winter cyclones begin, which will be monitored by the observation crew as the ship will keep at a distance while smaller inflatable boats get closer to inspect the situation. There are two solutions working at both ends of the spectrum: First, the Ocean Clean Up picking up the trash in the ocean and the other, the Plastic Bank recycling from land. There is much concern about the affect Wilson might have on marine animals, so Briane Gibbs, who will gain financial support by the Ocean Clean Up, will install acoustic sensors to learn if fish and/or other marine animals gather under the system for shelter.

it is a start. Having the government’s input will certainly ensure the process.

I conducted an interview with Professor Ralph Hitz of Tacoma Community College in Washington State, to gather some insight on the subject of plastic waste. Mr. Hitz is an instructor in the Natural Sciences division at the college. He said he was inspired to teach oceanography because of his early years spent near the beaches of southern California where he grew up swimming, surfing, and diving. He also worked on a fishing boat, and while in college, he was part of a research crew. He learned of the Great Pacific Garbage Patch 10 years ago when he read the book “Plastic Ocean” by Captain Charles Moore. It inspired him to use the book in his class. I asked if he had heard of the Plastic Bank, and although he had not, he was eager to learn about it and pass it on to a fellow student to use as a topic to write about in his oceanography class. Hitz was skeptical and curious about The Ocean Clean Up’s system 001, the Wilson. He said he prefers the idea of stopping the input of plastics before they reach the ocean. He has no opinion on China’s ban on the import of plastic waste, but he thinks the Plastic Bank is great. He did, however, share his excitement about a mushroom-based packaging solution from Ecovative, a New York-based advanced materials company. Hitz commented that “climate change is a bigger problem than plastic in the ocean,” which I found surprising, but he does



Because animals are getting entangled in nets and plastic, it is critical that sensors like this are placed under the system.

Two hundred and fifty organizations have joined together to change the way the biggest plastic producing companies do things. Adele Peters, a journalist at Fast Company, states that by 2025, plans to eliminate virgin plastic and create a movement to make plastic packaging either compostable, recyclable, or reusable will be under way. The companies plan to create reports on the progress to be made available annually. Pepsi Co., Coca Cola, and Colgate, among other organizations, have committed to this endeavor. Peters continues in another article that Pepsi Company is currently spending \$10 million to help build a recycling infrastructure in the U.S. and has a goal of raising \$100 million as a result. Furthermore, governments are dedicated to putting policies into place to make sure that plastics labeled recyclable will be recycled. It does not seem like a significant amount of money being contributed by Pepsi to start a recycling infrastructure, but

acknowledge the importance of removing plastics from the ocean.

The Plastic Bank and The Ocean Clean Up are major solutions to keeping plastics out of the ocean. However, 250 organizations are also answering to the call of the problem. Additionally, the Plastic Bank with its Blockchain App is enabling those without much education to use a device to keep tabs on their earnings, much like a secure savings account to purchase needed resources like healthcare and their children’s tuition for school, but more importantly to keep tabs on plastic intake as well as weight. Because of the fact that trash is already in the oceans to be cleaned up, The Ocean Clean Up plans to create 60 more of the system 001 to place throughout the planet’s oceans to further the success of cleaning up our oceans. Working diligently on both water and land, the two organizations are showing progress as they pursue their endeavors. China will begin sorting its own waste with 46 of its cities, reaching a 35% recycling rate by 2020. Because of being prompted to do something about their

own waste, wealthier nations have to look for solutions to the packaging system and implement biodegradable products as well.

So, what are U.S. citizens doing personally about the plastics in the sea, and how can we as individuals eliminate the garbage in the oceans? There are organizations one can join or contribute to by offering donations, so those who are actually working on projects can continue to make a difference. Companies like the

Surfrider Foundation, a California-based grassroots conservation group; The Ocean Conservancy, which focuses on long term solutions for healthy oceans, wildlife, and coastal communities; The 5 Gyre Institute, a husband-wife founded organization to fight pollution; and so many others are working to keep our oceans as beautiful as nature intended it to be. The projects of The Ocean Clean Up and the Plastic Bank are currently working to enable this massive cleanup of our oceans.



# The Relationship between Racism and Mental Health

*By Jazmyne Calvillo*

## Abstract

This paper studies the role racism has played in the mental health of racial minorities. Socioeconomic segregation caused by racial discrimination created unequal living experiences. These living experiences portrayed vast differences among whites and people of color, the latter group being more exposed to stressful conditions. Along with these conditions, many racial minorities do not seek professional care when it comes to their health, especially mental health. Stress, along with a lack of proper health care, led to the development of poor mental health for many racial minorities. While not necessarily the main factor for continued mental health care disparities now, racism has played a massive founding role in the disparities.

**Keywords:** mental health disparities, racial minorities, racism

In aspects such as homelessness and violent crimes, mental health may play a significant role, though it is not often realized. One might question why such illnesses would have an impact on society in these ways, and an answer might lie in discrimination. Specifically, what caused a large number of people of color to develop mental health issues and why do these individuals not get proper treatment? Racism is to blame for both aspects of the question. In Rebecca Skloot's narration of the Lacks family's hardships in *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*, the poor treatment of Henrietta's children painted a heartbreaking picture. The lack of care of Henrietta's children along with their lack of proper counseling led the children down a path of misfortune. Seen in Zakariyya's downward spiral and Deborah's chronic trust issues, the environment the Lacks siblings grew up in played a large role in their development through adulthood. Abused both physically and mentally, the Lacks children had little or no support due to their living situation. As many adults in the

lives of Henrietta's children did not believe the claims of abuse, her children were left in the hands of their abusers. The cause of the Lacks family's societal standing and lack of mental care leads back to discrimination due to racism as they had no way to escape. Racism was a big factor in mental health as the socioeconomic status segregation caused by discrimination lead to stressful living situations of racial minorities, who also had no way to combat said stress with professional care.

## Impact of Discrimination

Fundamentally, the reason why so many racial minorities in America deal with mental health issues has been due to discrimination brought on by racism. To give context, the article written by Williams and Williams-Morris (2000), "Racism and Mental Health: The African American Experience," began with some background stating, "Segregation affects the quality of life of the community where African Americans reside" (p. 247). These deviations in quality of life provided context as to why there have been differences in mental health between races. For the poorer black communities, racism created a barrier between themselves and their dreams. Being low-income, hardships developed in the form of feeling powerless, leading to an inability to leave unsafe neighborhoods. This feeling stemmed from people's belief that they were unable to successfully overcome adversities in life, which created complacency along with a fear of trying and failing. With the lack of improvement in black communities, a sense of racial segregation appeared as black people became distanced from the privileges of being white. According to Williams and Williams-Morris (2000), "Residence in ... impoverished neighborhoods created by institutional racism can adversely affect mental health. Research reveals that several characteristics prevalent in these neighborhoods ... can have a negative effect on the psychological functioning of adults and children" (p. 251). The precarious living situations of many African Americans led to long-lasting

health issues. Seeing and being involved in violent situations that often accompany black neighborhoods has been known to be scarring, especially to children and adolescents. With an inability to properly cope, children developed mental illnesses. In the article "Racial and Ethnic Factors," Jones, Burns, Schwartz-Goel, Immel, and Moore (2012) contributed to the thought by stating, "Research has suggested that individuals in the lowest socioeconomic and lowest education groups tend to report experiencing significantly more lifetime traumatic events" (p. 515). The violent events that have been seen by low-income families often resulted in people succumbing to the consequences of their poverty through emotional distress. Once again, many low-income families were low-income due to racial discrimination. Racial minorities that have been discriminated against endured many hardships in the form of simply living. Not having control over one's surroundings due to a lack of money was a difficult and frustrating way to live, and this frustration with the strain of neighborhood crime left people in a poor state of mental fitness.

## Access to Treatment

Another side of mental health in communities of color displayed the issues regarding the proper care of poor health. Howell and McFeeters (2008) introduced the topic in the article "Children's Mental Health Care: Differences by Race/Ethnicity in Urban/Rural Areas," claiming, "Minority group children are more often persistently poor than Whites, and thus ... there are continued racial/ethnic disparities in receipt of such [mental health] services; in particular, Hispanic youth have low service use. One factor in Hispanic children's low mental health [care] use is their high rate of uninsurance" (p. 238). Adding to the first point of the thesis, racism was still currently present in the world of mental health, this time extending to the world of treatment rather than the cause. From the text, the impact race has had on health treatment became apparent. Uninsurance for a child has been a serious topic and has more of an impact than just a lack of mental health treatments. Children need to visit health care facilities frequently, and a lack of insurance can lead to a lack of visits. With difficulties obtaining proper treatment, racial minorities often developed their own ways of coping. As stated in Robinson's (2006) article, "Mental Health," "For urban elementary students chronically exposed to violence, the support of teachers enhanced their social competence in the classroom, as did support from peers and family. Family support was also found to be critical in relieving the children's anxiety" (p. 297). Now, a light shined on coping mechanisms for these children. With the onslaught of erratic factors from urban living, stress has been a given for all inhabitants, so ways to manage stress became extremely invaluable. For the children of these communities, receiving emotional support greatly decreased their chances of suffering from mental health issues and has allowed them to maintain optimistic views in uncertain times. Sealy (2008) in his own research, *Racial Oppression and the Link to Mental Illness in Blacks and the*

*Substance Abuse Factor*, wrote about coping mechanisms of poor African-Americans who had the inability to receive professional health care, stating that for parents, even just talking about the wrongness of racism "pays off in the long term as the child grows up knowing how to confront racist treatment rather than to repress it through such means as substance use. Confronting and taking action against racism is consistent with community activism and helps counter a propensity toward self-isolation and internalization of anger and pain" (p. 125). Instead of professional help, some minorities passed down ways to deal with the strain of racism to their children before the weight of the strain can cause mental distress. Such mentors can include parents, other relatives, and teachers, though other people have been able to provide guidance. The idea of passing down coping mechanisms for racism does end up widening the gap between minorities and health care. While good and necessary advice, racial minorities have been known to deal with issues on their own due to the former need to completely rely on such advice for survival. While independence is certainly not horrible, if it stems from fear of relying on professionals due to racial discrimination, independence can be dangerous.

## Final Thoughts

From the research, it can be determined that racial discrimination founded the basis of the poor health of minorities due to the development of socioeconomic segregation. With the segregation of these racial groups, differences in quality of life soon appeared. Differences included healthcare disparities, amount of income, as well as basic safety. Such differences provided insight as to how racism has caused such a mental health crisis among minorities. Along with simply having mental health issues, minorities do not often have access to proper, professional treatment for any mental illnesses. This lack of treatment seems to stem from inability or unwillingness to receive help. For people of color, accepting help proves difficult due to personal coping mechanisms and often a fear of professional help. For some, even if he or she wanted help, it is difficult for low-income people of color to pay for treatment. To focus the research, racism has a profound impact on the world regardless if one chooses to see its impact or not. While the thesis is not accusing the people of today for creating such disparities among racial groups, it does blame the racism of the past for founding a difficult barrier to overcome.

The socioeconomic segregation provides a means to keep people separated in times of freedom. In life, acknowledgment of past mistakes is needed to move on and build a stronger foundation for the future, and in this case, the impact racism has on mental health needs to be addressed so that those affected can receive proper treatment. Racism might not be the cause of all issues in America, but it is still deeply important to acknowledge when it is the cause of something. America's mental health epidemic can be helped, although help must first find its way to those most in need.



# Making the Invisible Visible

*By Emyrsen Pryce*

Over \$32 billion are made every year off of children being sold for sex (Kuzma para. 2). This number only takes into account the small portion of sex trafficking that can be recorded, not the majority which happens illegally and in secret. Sex trafficking is often thought of as its own issue, not an outcome of other issues, but this idea is incorrect. Though sex trafficking can be separate from other issues, it is often a consequence of extreme poverty. When mothers have no way to feed, clothe, or educate their children, they turn to what they think will begin to solve their issues, which is selling their children into the industry. This isn't because they do not love their children, but instead, because they want to save their lives (Van Wey para. 9). On the other side of the situation, when children are hungry, tired, and looking for comfort, they are easily swayed when asked to go home with someone who promises all they ever wanted (Kuzma para. 4). Though research has been done on poverty and sex trafficking separately, the necessary step of relating and incorporating the two is often forgotten. Every day people are suffering worse than imaginable, but so little is being done about it. Sex trafficking isn't just sexual abuse, but also physical, emotional, and mental abuse as well (Carey et al. para. 3). Sex trafficking seems like an unsolvable issue, especially because worldwide poverty is a large contributor; however, one solution that is helping to lessen the impact of poverty and therefore alleviate sex trafficking is Lunar Fertility Tracking Bracelets.

While conducting this research I suspected that sex trafficking is an invisible issue, but I haven't found any research to confirm and backup my hypothesis. In order to prove this point, I decided to interview Liesl Helland. Liesl Helland is a 16-year-old homeschooled junior in high school. She is highly academic and she also cares deeply about people. She shared that she has four brothers and her goal for the future is to be a stay-at-home mom.

Whether she is nannying, volunteering in her church nursery, or working at a local preschool, Liesl is always giving herself to others, especially children. I started the interview by asking her if she had heard of sex trafficking and what she knew about it. Liesl answered that she had heard of sex trafficking; however, she admitted that she knew very little about it. She claimed the all she knew was that it was an issue and that it happens to young girls when they get kidnapped. Liesl shared that she suspected that sex trafficking stemmed from immoral people and their desires. As the interview continued, I asked Liesl if she believed that there was a solution for this issue, since she did admit that she believed that it was an issue, and she responded no. She believes that there are organizations that can help make a dent in sex trafficking, but nothing can solve it (Helland). I then asked her what role she thought she played in this. After a few moments of silence, she said that the only thing she could think of would be to not go places alone and be cautious and aware of her surroundings. Listening to Liesl Helland say these things shocked me. I had the suspicion that sex trafficking was overlooked, but for someone who is highly academic and involved, I thought she would know a little bit more. Many people can tell you more about gun violence than they can sex trafficking; however, sex trafficking is a worldwide epidemic and is the second largest and fastest growing crime in the world, just behind the drug trade (Kuzma para. 2). This interview solidified my suspicion that sex trafficking is not just an overlooked issue, but invisible all together.

Poverty is a raging issue that is often not addressed. However, in order to attempt to fully understand the magnitude of sex trafficking, it is necessary to unpack poverty first. Poverty is often just acknowledged, not attempted to be understood. It seems impossible to solve, therefore too intimidating to address. It is vital



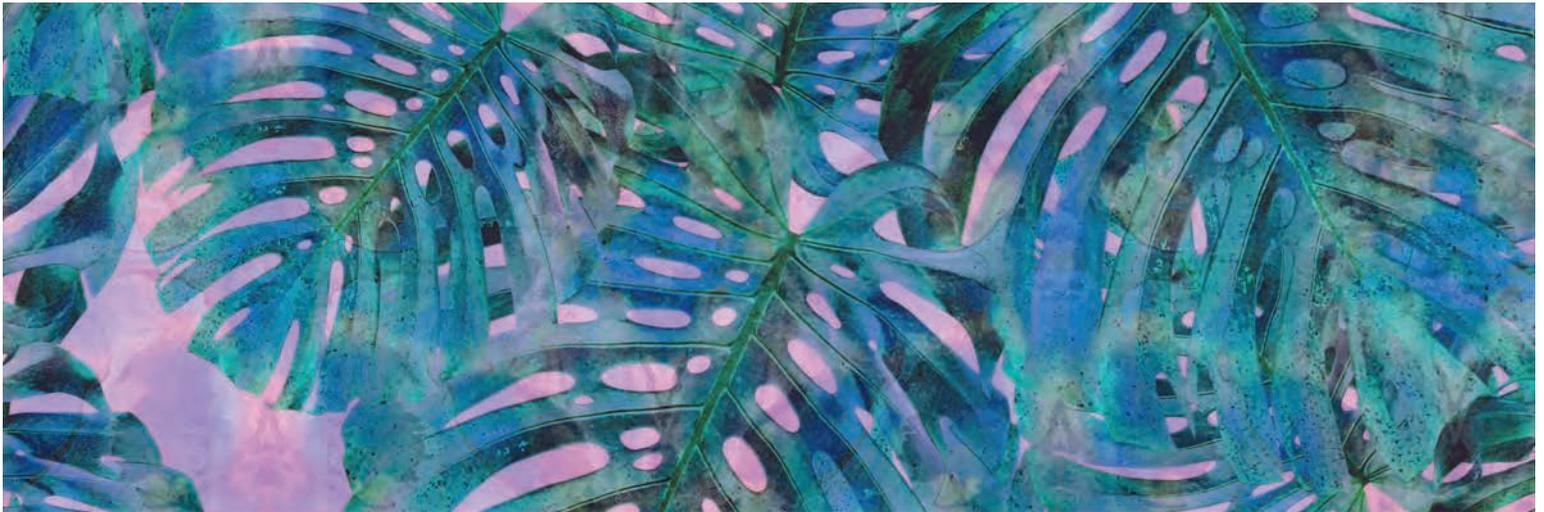
to understand that people every day are suffering from malnutrition, lack of income, and disease which all work together to cause the poverty we see everywhere. World Bank sets the definition of extreme poverty as living off of less than \$1.90 a day (Frykholm para. 1). This amount of money is barely enough to buy basic necessities, certainly not more than one meal and definitely not any sort of luxury such as education. By the 2000s, babies born into a country living in extreme poverty were twice as likely to die as an infant than any richer country (Quane 151). The people facing the brunt of this hellish life are the children. Their care givers often abandon them or die while taking care of them because of the extreme circumstances and so they are left to fend for themselves. The girls are then forced to sell themselves in exchange for a living. They become victims of sexual violence which leads to sexual disease and impregnation. At times, parents even sell their children into the sex trafficking industry, not because they do not love their children, but because they want to save their lives (Van Wey, para. 9). The boys either enter the armed forces or are some of the first victims of warring factions. (Quane, 153). In addition, these children face physical, emotional, and psychological abuse along with cognitive deficiencies, increased health problems, poor or no academic achievements, and impaired behavioral and psychosocial abilities (Quane 153). These treacherous conditions are the normal daily hassles that children who live in extreme poverty face every single day.

Similar to poverty, sex trafficking is an issue that is often forgotten, not because it is impossible to solve, but instead because it is practically invisible. Sex trafficking is a worldwide epidemic and is the second largest and fastest growing crime in the world, just behind drug trade (Kuzma para. 2). The magnitude of the issue strikes the questions of why and how. Why is sex trafficking so prominent in the world? Why is it magnified by poverty?

How is it so forgotten? The answer to these mind-boggling questions is that it is easy. It is easy to access, easy to hide, and easy to forget. Women are sometimes finding themselves with upwards of 15 children because they believe they have no way to control having them. This means that they cannot provide any of them with food, housing, clothing, or health care (Van Wey para. 9). Because of this, children are wandering the streets constantly looking for any relief. This causes the easy victims of sex trafficking to be underage children. They are manipulated into believing that their “boyfriend,” who ends up being their trafficker and abuser, has their best interests in mind and cares for them (Kuzma para. 4). The victims affected by poverty are tricked into thinking that if they were to just go home with a man then their problems would be solved. They could have a meal, be sheltered from the outdoor elements, and most tempting of all, they could finally receive the love that they have been craving. They don’t try and get out of the situation because they think it is normal, they have never known anything else. Sex trafficking is usually assumed to just be prominent in developing countries; however, it is also very prominent in already developed countries, such as the United States and the United Kingdom. In the industry, these countries are thought of as destination countries. The traffickers in developed countries have the money to buy humans from poorer countries and then bring the victims to where they are (Kuzma para. 3). Because doing this is obviously illegal, the amount of sex trafficking recorded is just a portion of the actual amount, making this issue practically invisible.

These issues seem hopeless. How could anything ever make a dent in world poverty and the invisible issue of sex trafficking? How could there be a solution to something so out of control? The answer is there isn’t. Not if it is thought about that way. The only way a dent can





begin to develop in these issues is to target the issues that are at the root. One organization that does that is the Let's Empower Women Company. Kristin Van Wey, the founder of the company, saw the women in Haiti without jobs and unable to support themselves and their families. She also realized that these women were clueless on how their body worked. They didn't know that they had a menstrual cycle and rhythm and they had no idea that there was any way they could control when they had children (Van Wey para. 9). This realization is what led to the Lunar Fertility Tracking Bracelets being created.

Creating these bracelets not only give women a job that produces income for their families, but they also educate women on their cycles and their times of fertility. Each bracelet has 30 regular beads, one red bead, one large bead, and a marker. The red bead symbolizes the first day of the women's period. Following that bead are six same colored beads that resemble the remaining six days of the period. Then comes six beads of a different color, the large bead, and then four more of the different colored beads. These all resemble the days the women are most fertile, the largest bead being the day they actually ovulate. To finish the bracelet, the beads return to the original color and represent the last 14 days of their menstrual cycle. Each day the women move their marker one bead to track what day of their cycle they are on. Men are even wearing the bracelets too, in order to show that they are educated and that they respect women (Healing Hands Foundation min. 3:41). Over 300,000 child slaves are in Haiti alone, and there are so many more around the world. Even though this hasn't been around long enough to have statistics of specific improvement, a small corner of the world has already tasted the hope that this solution offers and the women are already claiming "whether you know this or not, this could end poverty." (Healing Hands Foundation min. 2:43).

If women who live through worse than imaginable every single day can have hope that the harsh life that they have been living through has a light at the end of the tunnel, cannot we? Poverty and sex trafficking are such large issues that they are often too intimidating to even think about, causing them both to be overlooked. However, addressing some roots of these issues is a lot less intimidating and much more effective than trying to solve it all in one motion. This is what the Lunar Fertility Tracking Bracelets created by the Let's Empower Women company does. Instead of trying to solve poverty and sex trafficking in one attempt, they are taking baby steps and teaching women and men about their bodies and their rhythms in order to educate and empower them. By simply wearing a bracelet with a 32 unique beads, light can finally be shed on the invisible issue of sex trafficking.





# Las Lecturas en Lengua Original: Las Puentes Entre Las Culturas

**By Chloe Robinson**

El tema que desarrollo es el ejercicio de leer la novela Cajas de Cartón porque tiene importancia en la educación del español y la cultura mexicana. Me gusta que este libro me mostró a mí una vida distinta pero no única. Es muy importante que las personas aprendan sobre las culturas y las experiencias que son muy diferentes de las suyas.

Este libro me ha ayudado a comprender mejor el español de muchas formas. Lo más importante es que aprendí mucho vocabulario nuevo del libro y ahora puedo leer y hablar mejor. La lectura de textos culturales y literarios en la clase es importante porque crece nuestra entendimiento sobre las culturas que no son estadounidenses. También, las lecturas explican experiencias distintas a las nuestras, los estudiantes. Por ejemplo, nací en los Estados Unidos mientras que el protagonista de Cajas de Cartón, Francisco Jiménez, nació en México. Francisco y su familia vivían con mucho miedo a la migra cada día. Un día, la migra barrió todo su campamento. Cuando Francisco llegó a su casa, sus padres se abrazaron. Él tenía mucho miedo cuando

su padre le dijo que la migra los visitó. Es importante aprender sobre las vidas difíciles de las familias inmigrantes porque me ayuda a apreciar mi vida más. He crecido con un conocimiento de otras culturas y del Español más grande por las lecturas y los programas en lengua original.

Es importante hablar y estudiar temas como los de Cajas de Cartón porque es necesario que las personas entiendan la diversidad de culturas y experiencias en el mundo. Cuando estoy estudiando una lengua, la cual normalmente no hablo, necesito hablar y leer mucho sobre la cultura, la gramática y el vocabulario. Es necesario aprender otras culturas para usar la lengua en la vida real. Por ejemplo, en Cajas de Cartón, cuando la maestra de Francisco oía hablar en español, ella le decía “¡NO!” a Francisco. Francisco no llegó a entender la cultura de la educación estadounidense mientras que la maestra tampoco llegó a entender la cultura de un inmigrante joven. Estudió sólo español e inglés, pero me interesan mucho las lenguas del mundo. Espero que yo pueda aprender más lenguas en mi vida.

En resumen, el ejercicio de leer la novela era muy importante porque explicaba aspectos de una cultura distinta a la mía. El libro Cajas de Cartón, me ha ayudado a entender la lengua española y las vidas de los inmigrantes indocumentados un poco más. Los programas y las lecturas en lengua original tiene mucha importancia porque aumentan el conocimiento de una lengua extranjera y ayudan a las personas a aprender sobre culturas diferentes.

(written for Spanish 221)



# My Lightskin Privilege

*By JoEllen Stokes*

High Yellow, Olive and Teasing Brown  
I am the lesser of two evils  
I am the more sophisticated from the two  
I am called light skin  
And the privilege I was born with rips me apart between  
two distinctly different worlds  
While my dark skinned brothers and sisters try to bleach  
their melanin  
I myself have enough courage to walk through a crowd of  
people  
Feel less likely to be sneered at and looked at like some  
kind of animal because my skin compliments the lighter  
shade

Ode to my mixed hair

Thick, frizzy, but always tame when seen through the eyes  
of whites

Ode to the hair of my ancestors  
Thick, bantu buns and a wild mangle  
A culture misunderstood by most  
Though different  
we come from the same roots

When I was young  
my fair skinned mother had the most beautiful straight hair  
of any person I had glanced upon

It fell gracefully when she let down her bun, in silky waves  
of elegance

One day, I woke up and rushed to the bathroom mirror

Grabbed my Woodstock brush, wet it beneath the flow of  
magical water in the sink as if it would  
miraculously change the mess of curls atop my head  
I stood there for what felt like hours, my thin arms aching,  
my dark brown eyes staring back at  
myself in the mirror, hoping that the next stroke of the  
brush would not cause my curls to spring  
back up in the form they were meant to be in

When my Grandmother found me, she kneeled down and  
asked what I was doing

The puddle of magical water around me was a  
representation of the future ocean of depression I  
would be drifted away in because of my race

I told her I wanted straight waves like my mother

I remember my grandmothers sweet smile as she  
gracefully told me  
Your curls are beautiful  
They will always remain

When I look at the little light skinned girl who had no idea  
what racism was  
And how far she has come in her own experiences of  
understanding it  
I somehow wish she had known  
I wish the ignorance and innocence of the young was not  
set upon my shoulders  
If only I had been as knowledgeable about the persecution  
of those darker than I

My fair-skinned mother fell deeply in love with my dark-  
skinned father  
A mix of Filipino and Black but she never saw any problem  
with that

To her his skin reflected pain from her own people  
She wanted him to know love was possible and the color  
of his skin was not the cause of being unloved  
She understood that the lashes of the whip from white  
American tongues still stung in his back  
Nigger was the salt in his wounds  
Self-harm was and still is his temptation  
And alcohol still his savior

My mother cannot heal him  
She understands that now  
She can only love him and hold him as he is racially  
persecuted each and every day

Light skin girl  
How you grew  
How you grew

I am not the lesser of two evils  
I am not the more sophisticated  
I am not better in knowledge or academics  
I am not more worthy of the attention I receive from  
fair-skinned teachers or those in authority  
Who live in a dark room as if only the lighter skinned are  
seen and the darker forgotten  
I am the in between  
The light skinned girl

With a heart just as big as my dark skinned brothers and sisters

I am the first mixed child in my family on my mother's side  
I am glad to have been  
I am glad to have a white mother and a black father  
But I am not okay with how we are treated

-  
As I got older, as I saw my father deteriorate more and more  
I became more aware of color  
He longs to be loved and still does not know how to open up to receive it  
Talks through eyes that have seen hands of the white beat his own  
And his cigarettes burn the throat that held back words to defend his own self  
They scream  
I AM NOT MY SKIN  
I AM NOT MY SKIN  
I AM NOT MY SKIN

-  
From the world of the darker- skinned  
I feel your fear  
I walk hand and hand  
Shackle to shackle  
Chain to chain  
Across the plank of glass onto the ship of racism this world still echoes with  
I am privileged  
I do not have to question my every thought and action when I walk into a room full of those called "majority"  
I am less likely to be stared at when in public  
Or stalked like my father each day he goes to shop for more plants for his garden

Those of my roots do not live in constant fear  
Hands in pockets are less likely to be assumed to be grasping a weapon  
Bullets are less likely to pierce our bodies  
Nigger less likely to be said  
We know how to adjust our tone of voice and our body language  
To accommodate those around us  
We can adjust with this full body mask  
That echoes unintentionally  
I AM NOT MY DARK SKINNED BROTHERS AND SISTERS.  
DO NOT FEAR ME.  
I AM SAFER THAN THEY.

When I look in the mirror, I am trapped, so full of burden that a part of me once created the noose and the other hung from it.

However, light skins like myself unknowingly live hanging

from the noose that we also created on our own.

-  
Dear white people, I am neither yours nor my black brothers and sisters  
I am the mutt  
The person able to adjust to two different cultures and communities  
While carrying the burden of the past  
Being a part of something so terrible and degrading  
Being born from the slave by the hands of a master  
I am the child conceived in rape  
The intentions of us blacks are not to hurt you  
To turn on you and do the same thing you keep doing to us  
We long for justice in a system no longer run by only you  
To drink from the same fountain, to use the same restroom, to learn in an equal minded classroom  
To learn what breaks each other so we can mend the wounds our ancestors began which still affect us today  
We want a voice  
We want to know standing up for ourselves isn't labeled as disrespectful or out of line

The white hand of ultimate control must be completely loosened from our necks  
We are not evil  
We are not perfect  
Nor are you  
Black is beautiful  
Black is bold  
No matter the shade or gender

We have a voice, let us speak to you  
We have hands, let us show you what we create and not what we are perceived to smuggle  
whether that be drugs, weapons, or illegal substance  
We have ears, let us listen to you as long as you promise to listen to us  
We have eyes, they hold stories so broken if only you stopped to look you would understand  
We have the blood of the murdered, raped, and tortured in our veins from those of your hands  
We have hearts that beat just as yours do  
We are not mutants, we are not your slaves, we are human beings with skeletons just as yours  
And in every race there must be evil  
But please remove your mirage of the level of dangerousness judged by the complexity of our skin

I am just as knowledgeable, just as willing to learn, just as willing to fight for what is right, just as worthy and valuable of respect and love

I am not my skin colors stereotypes  
My skin color is a part of me  
Each dot of melanin with a story to tell  
Please open your ears, hearts, and minds to hear them

# UNA VOCE

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**We have a voice, let us speak to you.**

(from My Lightskin Privilege by JoEllen Stokes)

Since 2001, Una Voce has showcased work from Tacoma Community College's diverse student body and encouraged all students to add their voices to the college chorus. This year's editorial work was highlighted by lively conversations about equity and inclusion. We hope you enjoy reading this issue and are inspired by the bravery, creativity and intelligence of the writers.

