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IDENTITY





WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU MISS A STAGE IN LIFE

by Khailynn Baker

Self-acceptance is hard for me. This natural concept flew out of my mind faster than it had come in when I realized as a child I possessed flaws I could not change. Today, as an adult, I do not feel like a functional person; it is as though I am missing some important piece of myself that never developed. This piece that never developed was discovered when a powerful thought finally hit me one day: I am terribly immature. I act like a ten year old, despite being in a twenty year old's body. This is the only logical excuse as to what it is I must be missing. This is why I am dysfunctional as an adult, but how can I change myself? After this realization, my thoughts immediately pressured me to look to psychological development theories from Sigmund Freud and Erik Erikson. Those two discussed the developmental stages of children into adulthood. They both concluded that failure to successfully complete a stage would leave a person confused along with possessing a tendency to act inappropriately for their age, which is exactly what I have.

Now it is understandable to doubt that I may have a problem considering that the Developmental Stages theories were shown to have some inaccuracies, but I believe they relate well to my situation. I've gone through countless personality tests, and asked my family what they

thought of me as a person. What I mostly got from their evaluation was that I am immature, creative, close-minded, and melancholy. One of the personality tests I took was the Myers-Briggs four letter personality test. The test shows multiple statements that relate to different habits and pattern of thinking; questions are answered by indicating how much you agree or disagree with the statement shown. One question, for example, is “You find it difficult to introduce yourself to other people.” When I finished, the results described me as an INFP: introverted, intuitive, feeling, perceptive. This personality type is described as a person who usually excels at artistic pursuits. I suppose this is a fitting match, since I see myself as an idealistic individual who is not that social and trusts their own thoughts and feelings above logic and other’s views. But this makes me sound bad, doesn’t it? Apparently, this is a popular personality type for introverted females, which I definitely feel represents me well. Though I’m not alone, these results don’t make me feel any less dysfunctional as an adult or less confused about my childish interests.

Speaking of interests, most of my mine are connected to children’s media like video games and cartoons. Frankly, those childish things still have been the only activities that can ever make me happy. But is that wrong? Most people find joy in watching cartoons or playing games, but what I never understood is why many have grown out of it but not me. I don’t feel like I’ve changed much since childhood. Even my best friend, who is goofier than I am, managed to change her interests and hobbies to things more appropriate for her age, so I’m forced to assume that something important that took place in others’ childhoods didn’t happen in mine.

Here is where I should probably preface this by stating that I understand that comparing myself to others is an awful habit. But how else are you expected to gather an opinion about yourself when you naturally know who you are anyway? And as expected, whenever I look at others I perceive them to be much more secure with themselves than I am with myself due to the behavior they exhibit, which shows that they are interested in topics that are

bigger than themselves and aren't based around their personal satisfaction unlike myself. They talk about important things such as politics and the current news, things that matter because they affect the world. In contrast, those topics rarely cross my mind or interest me because I'd rather think about things like animation and video games, things that exist to serve as personal entertainment. Thus, other adults my age possess a broader perspective than I could ever care to possess.

As mentioned earlier, my current interests are focused to mostly two topics, but I think I always had limited interests during my childhood as well. In school, I would express my interest in art and video games by doodling ridiculous drawings of ugly people, or talk about new games that were out for the PS2 system like Rockstar Games' titles, "Bully" and "Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas." Naturally I attracted certain people to talk to me, but my conversations with them were usually short. Part of this was because I didn't care about talking about anything else, which made it difficult for people to carry conversations with me. It was also because I held limited interests within the actual interest. For example, whenever a video game geek in school would talk to me about games, I'd have very little to say since I only played a small selection of one specific genre—3rd person perspective action adventure—while the other person would prefer first person shooters and many other genres: puzzle, retro, RPG. The same scenario went for just about anything else too: fashion, sports, music, writing. I hardly cared much beyond one specific aspect of the topic. Even in art, I mostly cared for cartoons and animation, rejecting painting, sculpture, and realism. Eventually, this limited interest problem got in the way of me having friends. As I got older, I started to realize that most people shared a good number of common interests with others, so much that they became friends and hung out in groups. Without the variety of interests for the only two things I enjoyed and because of my refusal to take interest in other things, I didn't have a chance to belong to any group or clique. I had no friends and no people to want to be around me. A loner. A dreamer. Some kid without a

label to hang on to. That was me, I suppose, and this is the stage I failed to overcome.

As a 20 year old student now in college, I see the same things happening in childhood happening in adulthood and I constantly question “Why am I this way? There probably isn’t a real answer to that, but the closest I can come up with is not exploring. According to Erik Erikson’s model, 12- to 18-year-olds are supposed to explore different social roles and learn about what they can do as adults. But I didn’t. I had a one track mind set on doing one thing, and I’ve only recently realized that it wasn’t what I wanted to do. Are my parents to blame for that? I’d say no, but it’s likely only for my case. My mother repeatedly tried to get me interested in different careers and activities, but I declined almost every time. Four years later, I have only begun to learn my lesson. I look in the mirror now, and I can’t see the person who I was really hoping to see. Someone secure, confident, talented, smart, without doubt. I want to see that so bad, but I’m stuck with myself and these ridiculous theories that make me think I failed the most basic part of life.

I’m sure at this point, I’ve terrified whoever was unfortunate enough to read this self-deprecating text, but alas my self-discovery has not yet finished. In my efforts to right the wrongs of my past, I’ve neglected to consider that sometimes confusion about your identity is appropriate no matter what age you are. I expressed my troubles to my mother, and she admitted that she still has doubts about who she is, and she is nearly 40. She also explained to me that everyone goes through life trying to find the answer to who they are, but it doesn’t come immediately or necessarily easily, and that’s perfectly okay and completely natural. I see now what she is saying, but I can’t say I’m capable of fully accepting myself yet. My flaws—my inability to draw a variety of things, despite being interested in art; my dependence on childhood nostalgic things like cartoons; my lack of existential growth—they can never be “fixed” right away. I can accept though, that there isn’t some fool proof way of going through life without doubt; some things need to be talked about with friends, family, or counselors.

Maybe the best way to “overcome” a stage is to talk to someone, and I plan to help accept myself by talking to a therapist or anyone willing to listen and help.



ISSUE ANALYSIS OF CHICANA FEMINIST WRITERS
by Stacy Sekervan

Throughout Chicana feminist literature there are many issues each writer brings to light through their written works. One issue discussed by many Chicana feminist writers are how their views of the roles as women, mothers, and writers ought to be in relation to society's view. Breaking out of the cultural norms that these women were raised in puts them on a path to solidarity. Although, Chicana women do spend some time engaging in more traditional roles such as, being a wife and a mother, they do not engage in those roles traditionally. It is through their life experiences and the understanding of relationships, starting as children, that they construct their definition of themselves through their writing.

The memoir, *Loving in the War Years*, begins with Cherrie Moraga delving into the past. She recounts her relationship with her mother and father as well as their relationship with each other. She greatly criticizes the fact that her father did not love her mother properly (8-10). The biggest reason for her father's love being inadequate

towards her mother could have been because he is gay. This fact is known by both the speaker and her mother but never discussed with the father (4-5). Knowing her father's sexual preference may have given her a deeper understanding to the reasons he was distant from her mother emotionally. However, it imbedded the notion that one should hide their own identity in order to conform to the social norm. Back in a time when being anything but heterosexual was not socially acceptable, it makes sense as to why her father would seek refuge in a false relationship, using her mother as his 'beard.' Moraga, however, was able to embrace her own sexual identity as an adult and fought to do so. That is not to say she did not struggle with it, believing that "even as a feminist lesbian, I have so wanted to ignore my own homophobia, my own hatred of myself for being queer" (49). During her childhood, Moraga's father modeled the concealment of his sexuality on the grounds that it was not socially acceptable. The hatred and repugnancy of being gay was instilled at a very young age. Even though as an adult she strived to embrace her true sexual identity, the dynamics of her parents' relationship that ignored her father's true sexual desires continued to culminate the negative association she held with a non-heterosexual identity. It is through the memories of her parents' relationship paired with her life experiences as an adult that she built the architecture of her own identity which she explored through her writing.

Another example of the correlation between relationships and finding identity through writing can be uncovered in Lucha Corpi's memoir, *Confessions of a Book Burner*. She explored past memories from her childhood where she had been reprimanded to conform to the ideals of a girl from a very young age. The four-year-old Corpi and her older brother were inseparable, doing everything together, and he protected her. When it was time for him to start school, Corpi wanted to join, so he refused to go without her (26). With permission from the principal, Corpi joined her brother in school with her own desk in the back of the classroom (26-28). Corpi attended the first and second grade 'illegally.' When she reached the age of six she

could legally attend primary school; her father and principal fought the department of education to make an exception to allow her to start in the third grade rather than go back to the first grade. Long story short, she started school in the second grade where she began on her path to loving poetry and literature (30-31). Though Corpi's parents supported her getting an education, they valued the education of her brother differently than hers. Her father said to her, "When you educate a man, you educate an individual. But when you educate a woman, you educate the whole family," (43). While Corpi's father was divergent to traditional ideals of girls' education, he was still pressured to follow the social norms. Her parents tried to steer her away from career aspirations Corpi possessed, arguing they were not best for her. However, Corpi felt as though they were telling her to conform and not allow her true identity to be exposed (43-44). Corpi, a girl who would rather read a book in a tree than play with a dollhouse, was determined to continue her education. Her parents were restricting of her dreams and her true identity. This led her to leave Mexico in favor of the United States, which eventually allowed her the freedom to express her identity in the form of writing. However, had it not been for the support of her father and the principal in her youth, Corpi may not have had the exposure to literature and education. Thus, proving the strong, loving family and community she came from as a base from which her creativity in writing overflowed.

Growing up and throughout her life, Corpi experienced 'disturbing dreams' (132) during times of great change or stress. As an adult, she gained a deeper understanding of how to deal with her frightening subconscious when she made the decision to not only understand the fear defined as courage to confront its challenges but also to embrace it (133). Through these nightmares, Corpi was able to identify her "fear of the unknown... that ensued [her] survival by testing [her] resolve and strength to overcome any difficult situation" (147) with which she was faced or that life would throw at her. By understanding and accepting the relationship between her subconscious fears and the inevitable

nightmares, Corpi was able to realize that the gift of those night terrors were the greatest she ever received. They brought her the gifts of poetry and narrative paired with the courage to write without regard to circumstance (133, 152).

As a curious and ever inquiring child, Corpi felt urged to discover what her destiny was, to which her Abuelita Nico told her, "It's who you were meant to be and what you were born to do in life" (155). At first these words meant little to her; later on as an adult immigrant in the United States, Corpi realized how right her grandmother had been affirming that "writing poetry and later narrative was what I'd been born to do in this life" (160). Though Corpi had had many tough times in her life, both financially and emotionally, she was able to seek fulfillment through her writing.

Additionally, a crucial author that exposes the correlation between relationships and finding identity through writing is Ana Castillo with her memoir *Black Dove*. Though Castillo was raised, for the most part, by her mother, she did not lack the family bonding a child would have missed with only one active parent. She and her mother would go down to visit family in Mexico in July when the factory her mother worked in was closed for vacation (17). Chicago, where Castillo was raised, did not hold a comfortable suburban life with green backyards and white picket fences. However, the degree of poverty she was immersed in during those summer trips to Mexico would not come close to her home in Chicago (19). As a teen, when Castillo and her cousins grew bored of the deprived entertainment, they spoke in English to each other about wanting no part of Mexico in the way their mothers spoke of their experience of it twenty years ago (21). Castillo praises her mother for migrating north from the seemingly inescapable poverty of Mexico, where she too may have been destined to become a live-in domestic servant (24). Arguably a relationship Castillo had that was more important than the one with her mother was with her aunt, Flora. Unlike her own mother, Castillo felt a strong connection with Aunt Flora who listened to her stories without judgement (34). Aunt Flora shared with Castillo

that her mother was concerned about her writing about the family, to which Aunt Flora exclaimed, "I don't care if she writes about me. She'll make me immortal!" (35). In her early years as a child when Castillo's mother had to work in the factory, she was left in the caring arms of her grandmother. Even though her grandmother passed when she was about age ten, as her primary caretaker during that time, Castillo experienced the utmost tenderness from her grandmother. Castillo was left with life-lasting impressions by her grandmother, the most significant of which was the unconditional love her grandmother gave not only to Castillo but to others as well (251-52). One thing that Castillo knows for certain is that, "It is because of my abuelita... that I am convinced I was able to be a mother, even the writer that I became" (252).

In Gloria Anzaldua's book, *Borderlands*, she too discusses the ins and outs of her childhood. Anzaldua was called lazy for studying, reading, painting, and writing instead of doing housework (37-38). From a young age, she learned that men made the rules. Those rules defined culture, the culture formed beliefs, and in turn the culture and the church said that women were subservient to men (38-40). That's when she decided the only option for her was to leave home in order to find herself (37-38). She rebelled from what she was taught as a child so she could be the person she wanted to be. Anzaldua spoke to her feelings of alienation from both her mother culture and the dominate culture, which left her with the choice to either become a victim or to feel strong and thus more or less in control (42-43). Though Anzaldua considers herself "a turtle, wherever I go I carry 'home' on my back," (43) she truly feels that as a Chicana, language is her homeland and a means of identity (77). She compares her ethnic identity to that of her linguistic identity, clearly professing, "I am my language" (81). Anzuldua describes her feeling a sort of duel identity, not really white American but also not exactly Mexican either (85). This conflict of identity stems from the struggle of borders, a conflict that will only cease with true integration (85). Anzaldua yearns for the separation to be

over so that she may not have to choose one side or the other.

Among each of these authors, their quest for self-identity, while differing, delves into the importance of the relationships they experience in childhood and with their families paired with their innate desire to write as paths to seeking their individuality. For Moraga, one key piece of her identity puzzle was with how she understood and witnessed the relationship between her parents. Another was embracing her sexuality even though it went against what she was taught growing up. When Corpi was young, her drive for attaining education, even if it was not the norm, helped her uncover her identity. She also learned to face her greatest fears, those yet unknown, through her subconscious dreaming. Arguably the most important piece was her relationship with destiny, allowing herself to go for opportunities leading her to her passion of writing poetry and narratives. In the case of Castillo, the relationship that had the greatest positive impact on her, while short-lived, was with her grandmother who gifted her with unconditional love. Anzaldua spoke to her opposition of the patriarchy, leaving her no choice but leave home. However, ultimately she felt as though she had one foot on each side of the border, but not actually belonging to either. While each of these stories are unique, means to self-identity overlap from one Chicana to the other. The circumstances with which they were raised and the terms on which they perceived the inner workings of relationships, molded these Chicana writers' notion of who they are as a person, as a lover, as a friend.

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COMPARISON OF THE SEARCH FOR IDENTITY
by April Westmark

Identity is something that everyone strives to discover during their life, and can be influenced and formed by many factors. The theme of identity is very complicated, as individual people have different journeys to find their own; some can confidently say who they are from the beginning, while others cannot, even after searching for a long period of time. The theme of identity, and more importantly the factors that can shape it, is shown in the novel *The Dew Breaker* by Edwidge Danticat and the story “Black and Latino” by Robert Santiago. Identity is explored in both texts as forms of family identity, cultural identity as a whole, and how these aspects shape the individual identities of the characters. Family, cultural, and individual identity are all present in both texts and are used to show how the identity of an individual is not only created through their personal experiences, but can be shaped by the family and cultural identity as well. *The Dew Breaker* explores how individual identities can be influenced heavily by their cultural and family identities, as well as the overall connection that these groups create for individuals. “Black

and Latino,” in comparison, shows that an individual’s identity can be influenced in a negative way by their culture and family, as it can lead to them feeling lost if they don’t fit the stereotypes associated with their culture and family identities.

The themes family, culture, and individual identity are both separate forms of identity and are also intertwined. Family identity is how the identity of a person is often shaped by not only their family’s collective character, but also those of individual members of the family. Cultural identity is the form of identity that not only can shape the identity of an individual, but can also be the overall collective identity felt by members of the same cultural group, because they have often experienced many similar circumstances. This can also lead to some members of a culture feeling separated from the collective cultural identity if they have had a different experience or are lacking an experience in comparison to the majority of the cultural group.

In *The Dew Breaker*, Danticat uses her character’s individual experiences in relation to the violent dictatorship that disrupted the Haitian population to explore how the identities of Haitians individually have been lost and are in the process of recreation. Danticat also uses the structure of her novel to demonstrate the overall connection between the characters to show how Haitians are bonded together through these experiences, and that they have still been able to retain a collective identity despite the individual struggles they have experienced. “Black and Latino” explores a topic that many Puerto Ricans experience in America, and one that is not a main focus in *The Dew Breaker*, of how appearance can impact one’s identity and more importantly impact the way that people try and influence a person’s identity through their appearance. Although this is something that many Puerto Ricans have discussed, Santiago focuses on the individual, and his search for identity in relation to everyone around him and how they identify him, so that he can establish his own identity.

Family identity is a form of identity present in *The Dew Breaker* throughout, as many family connections are

mentioned, but the most central family connection that Danticat uses to show how family can shape identity is Ka's family. Ka is a young woman who grew up thinking that her father was a victim in the political and social issues that caused havoc across Haiti under the Duvalier dictators. In the first chapter of *The Dew Breaker*, Ka learns from her father that he was one of the torturers of the regime rather than a victim. This leads Ka to take a step back from her previously known notions, and view her father, and her thoughts on her family, as if she does not know who he is and how this impacts her perceptions of her own life. Ka's father, the Dew Breaker, also is a very strong example of the importance for an individual to form their identity based on their family's identity. The Dew Breaker desperately wants to move away from his past through creating this new identity not just of a barber, but as a pleasant old family man and great father.

The Dew Breaker cannot move away from his past self, even though he does not see himself as that person anymore, without acceptance and acknowledgement by Ka. In the conversation between Ka and her father, there is an important moment as the Dew Breaker is still tied to his true past identity, his false identity, and what he wants to be perceived as: a good person and a great father. This is shown in the conversation between Ka and her father when he tells her the truth about his identity from the past. While trying to tell Ka the truth about everything, the Dew Breaker distances himself from his past saying "I would never do these things now" and "Your father *was* the hunter" (Danticat 21). Her father says these things while simultaneously asserting that he is still, no matter what his past contains, her father in the present. Interestingly however, the Dew Breaker says these things confidently and with firm assertion, not because he fully believes them himself, but more because he is trying to convince Ka and himself that this news shouldn't change her perception of him as a caring father. The conversation even begins with the Dew Breaker asking for Ka to "let" her father talk to her showing that in this case the Dew Breaker is not in full control of his own identity (Danticat 13). This new identity

is dependent however on Ka's acceptance or rejection of this new identity that is a blend of his real and false past that depicts the important role of family in individual identity.

"Black and Latino" explores family culture in a couple of ways, as it describes a seemingly ethnically blended family, despite having the same nationality. Santiago writes that he is "a blend of my mother's rich, dark skin tone and my father's white complexion" (93). This is the largest source of struggle for Santiago, but is also his strongest influence on his identity in relation to his family. Both of his parents are Puerto Rican, but with one being darker than the other, Santiago formed a complicated view of his identity from this, as did society around him who perceived him as one race or the other. His identity was often impacted because of his parent's interracial marriage, as to Puerto Ricans it was not nearly as uncommon or discriminated against in comparison to the non-Puerto Rican whites and blacks. His Aunt Aurelia even tells him, "Nobody even considers these marriages interracial" (Santiago 94). Aunt Aurelia is also a strong example of how family members can help discover and develop a sense of family identity for a person that later helps them form their individual identity, with Santiago going as far to say she became his "source for answers" about racial, family and identity matters (Santiago 95). She goes on to say that he doesn't think of his parents as being of different races because he wasn't raised with the notion that blacks and whites couldn't get married, showing him that he has known his family identity this entire time, but needed it to be pointed out to him (Santiago 94).

The Dew Breaker explores cultural identity as a collective Haitian identity by combining the different experiences of the citizens who lived through the traumatic events into the characters in the book as representations of all Haitians.. This is different from "Black and Latino" due to Danticat exploring the way in which the characters, who represent a group of people in Haiti in reality, is able to re-establish cultural roots and Haitian collective identity after the breakdown in Haitian society resulting from their

troubled past. Dany experiences this the hardest, as when he comes back from America, he is treated like an outsider by his own village even being given the glass “reserved for strangers” (Danticat 88). This is something he finds very difficult to get through, and make better, because he didn’t realize he needed to reconnect with his village until after they treated him as an outsider, he assumed himself to still be part of them and like a large family (Danticat 88). This struggle was something many Haitians experienced if their roots were broken from the conflict and they moved away from their home. Danticat’s writing leaves Dany in a place that he has not become part of the culture again, but is not fully an outsider either, but he does know that he wants to become a full part of his community again.

In “Black and Latino” cultural identity is explored differently than in *The Dew Breaker*. Santiago uses cultural identity to show what it is like when a person is not a member of one cultural group due to their different appearance. Santiago writes that skin color is a factor that caused an internal divide due to his mixed appearance, and being able to be part of either Blacks or Latinos. By having two cultural groups to identify with, but not being able to identify with either one, it leads to a large amount of internal conflict and a more complicated search for a set identity. This struggle is mostly created from outside people, who tell Santiago who he is, “You’re not black” the lighter skinned Puerto Ricans told him, even though he clearly knew his appearance and never could or tried to deny his black heritage (Santiago 93). Santiago writes that he knows now that his “life has been shaped by his black and Hispanic heritages” not one, or the other, so he was always confused why he was being told he needed to choose one over the other based on other people’s assessment of him and not even his own (93).

One of the largest connections between Danticat and Santiago’s approaches to exploring identity is that acceptance is the key to an individual identity. Both authors show that with acceptance of themselves by other people, either family or members of their culture, leads to acceptance of one’s own identity. Without this outside

acceptance however, both authors also show that individuals establish their own identity in full and be satisfied with it. People are often searching for not only their own identity, but their acceptance of their identity by others around them, either those in the culture they belong to, their family, or individuals important to their lives. Without this acceptance by at least one important individual the person cannot fully accept their own identity. This is shown in the search for identity in the *Dew Breaker* and in *Black and Latino*, where the *Dew Breaker* is looking for acceptance by his daughter so that he can forget his past and identify instead as a good father, Dany seeking acceptance by his former village and people, who despite his heritage treat him as a stranger. This search for acceptance is shown in *Black and Latino*, when Santiago is told by society is his one thing or the other, or not one thing, making him unable to identify with one group which leads to his individual identity not being able to develop since identities are shaped by one's surroundings. He is finally able to confidently say who he is only once his Aunt tells him it does not matter what other people say, because he is the same identity as his family, and is "Black and Latino", not Black *or* Latino.

In *The Dew Breaker* the search for identity is more focused on finding one's identity through the family and cultural identity. The collective identity and experiences by Haitians allow for the individual to have a safety net to fall back on. Being part of the culture allows for one person to find their identity after being uprooted and lost. Danticat allows this by not only connecting her characters and their paths crossing, but because all of them have been impacted in some way by the past of Haiti. In comparison, "Black and Latino" show that the collective identity, and being assigned an identity through stereotypes leads to the individual being lost because of the perception of what their cultural and family identity should be. This leads Santiago's character to become more confident in finding his own individual identity than being able to identifiable because of his cultural and familial identity. One big difference between the approach to identity in *The Dew Breaker* and

“Black and Latino” is that the Dew Breaker and other characters are creating new identities, and the Dew Breaker himself is intent on losing his past. In comparison, in “Black and Latino” Santiago’s character is trying to determine himself for the first time, and not be only identified by the perceptions of the people surrounding him. This shows not only the different ways in which the authors interpret and represent individual identity, but the different ways in which people explore their way to establish their identity.

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MEN TAKE THE BEAUTY WORLD BY STORM

by Sydni Chapman

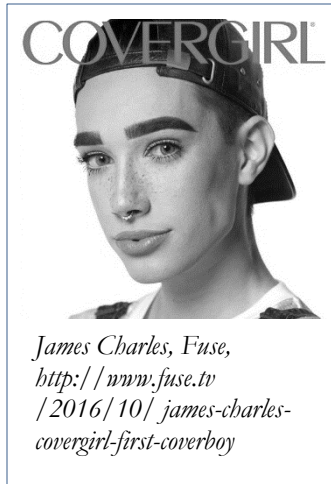


Manny Mua, YouTube,

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NMueLiu0UHU>

She wakes up every morning to her daily routine – gets up, brushes her teeth, jumps in the shower, does her hair, looks in the mirror, then envisions what she will paint with her makeup today. She delicately picks up her brush and begins the carefully executed process, mixing the colors in her palette to create her masterpiece. Finally, she leaves her house proud and confident with her bold lips and striking eyes.

Now let's go back and tell that story, replacing “she” with “he.” In this new age, men are picking up their brushes and beginning to paint themselves in the same way



women have for ages. This trend is so prominent that it is beginning to influence big-name beauty brands that are taking on a gender-neutral approach to their marketing. A report by “The Innovation Group” found that 56 percent of Generation Z shops for clothing without restriction to gender (Laughlin). Lucie Greene of the J. Walter Thompson Innovation Group explained, “It’s this very self-confident, hyper-

individual generation who are constructing their identity in fashion and makeup outside of their traditional gender buckets” (Thomas).

This movement towards gender fluidity makes it necessary for beauty brands to start creating products for all people – not just the traditional female. Popular brands like Sephora and Cover Girl are teaming with male makeup artists and vloggers (video bloggers) to advertise their products to this new demographic. Luxury brands are also moving toward gender fluid beauty. Giorgio Armani released a line of tinted lip balms “for him/for her” with their fall makeup collection (Thomas). In addition, new brands such as Milk Makeup are designing products for “experimentation and self-expression.” Milk Makeup’s promotional strategy includes models of many types of gender identities and encourages beauty with “no rules.”

GEN MILK

The world is giving rise to a new breed of empowered, ambitious, entrepreneurial individuals. Meet Generation Milk: they are the rebels, thinkers, and makers that shape our vision and bring it to life. Learn about their hustle and the products they use to facilitate their busy and adventurous lifestyles. Get inspired.



Matt



Gray

Milk Makeup, MilkMakeup, <https://milkmakeup.com/live-your-look>

A big part of this trend is credited to YouTube vloggers like Jeffree Star and Manny Mua who are normalizing makeup for men in the mass media. While men in makeup were previously associated with drag, these vloggers stress their separation from drag and simply identify as boys who wear makeup (Tonic). This statement has inspired other men and the media to accept the idea that men can wear makeup and remain masculine. For vlogger Jeffree Star, his reach extends beyond the beauty world – as a singer/songwriter he’s been featured on the cover of the music publication Alternative Press, and curated both male and female fans alike. Of course, Star is not the first male musician to wear makeup. Artists Marilyn Manson, Steven Tyler, Jared Leto, Billy Joe Armstrong, and David Bowie preceded him. But Star’s aesthetic differs from the thick black liner and striking face paint as it aims to transform traditionally feminine beauty standards.



Jeffree Star, Listal, <http://www.listal.com/viewimage/5314186>

While makeup for men is most relevant in the mass media, the trend is slowly taking hold in the lives of everyday men. In an Allure article, a 45 year old man explains how his wife influenced him to begin using makeup. He explained, “I was out with some friends on



*Marilyn Manson, Metal Injection,
<http://www.metalinjection.net/shocking-revelations/marilyn-manson-shows-in->*

Friday night fairly late. When it was time to get ready my better half told me I looked terrible after being out half the night. After some back and forth I let her make me up so I didn't look like death warmed over” (Jacques). He was

impressed with the results and received so many compliments that he knew he could never go back to life before makeup. He encourages men to try makeup and expresses how things, such as filling his brows, makes him feel “more masculine”.

In a culture where self-expression surpasses gender, ‘men in makeup’ is not a bizarre concept. It is an expected and natural progression, which could easily become less stigmatized and even ‘normalized’ over time. Sam Cheow, chief product accelerator at L’Oréal, predicted a growing market for men's’ makeup, “In the next three to five years, there could be some really interesting products coming out” (Thomas). This is truly an exciting time in the beauty world for men and women alike, who are celebrating more beauty freedoms than ever before.

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RELATIONSHIPS





CAN WE TRUST THE SHEPHERD? – AN ANALYSIS OF
CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE’S POEM “THE PASSIONATE
SHEPHERD TO HIS LOVE”

by Johnny Vaccaro

At the surface value, Christopher Marlowe’s poem, “The Passionate Shepherd to His Love,” is the ideal scenario for a couple living in the countryside. Throughout the poem the shepherd paints a perfect picture to his love, promising her the comfort and appearance of the rustic countryside, many pleasures, fine clothes, and simple living. The shepherd makes it clear that if his love accepts his proposal then together they will experience the pleasures he lists. If one interprets this poem beyond surface value, and knows information about Christopher Marlowe’s reputation, one can decipher if the shepherd is trustworthy. Notorious for being a spy, Christopher Marlowe did not have a puritan reputation during the Elizabethan era, and it is safe to say that the shepherd in his poem is not trustworthy (Honan). The shepherd deceives his love with the witty use of setting, form and meter, figurative language, and visual imagery. The poetic devices in Marlowe’s poem help exaggerate and embellish the shepherd’s impractical proposals.

The shepherd tries to persuade his love to come live with him by exaggerating the idyllic countryside setting. Elements of the rustic countryside include, “Valleys, groves,

hills, and fields,/ woods or steepy mountain yields,” shown here is a list of sites there are in the rustic countryside (774). Marlowe uses enjambment in these lines to embellish the setting; he extends the list of sites onto the next line to exaggerate the numerous places there are in the countryside. This line gives persuasion and appeal to the shepherd’s argument. The next quatrain, lines 5,6,7,8, also demonstrate an exaggerated use of setting, “And we will sit upon the Rocks,/ Seeing the Shepherds feed their flocks,/ By shallow Rivers to whose falls/ Melodious birds sing Madrigals” (774). The shepherd implies that living in the countryside will be a leisurely living. Instead of working, they will watch the other shepherds work while the birds sing in harmony with the water. The shepherd glorifies the simple rustic pleasures of the countryside, but it seems too perfect – almost fairy tale perfect. Moreover, in line 21 and 22 the shepherd claims there will be dancing and singing each morning of May for his love’s delight. The use of the word May adds to the setting of the poem because it specifies a specific season, spring. The shepherd’s enticing portrayal of the setting gives his love all the reasons to pack up and move in with him as soon as possible, but the shepherd cannot be trusted because he does not discuss the other three seasons. Throughout the entirety of the poem, the shepherd only mentions the idyllic setting of the countryside during spring. The use of setting serves as an intelligent deceptive exaggeration to persuade his love to come live with him. Though it is believable at first glance, in reality the shepherd’s proposal is impractical because spring is not the only season in the countryside. The only mention of a different season is in line 15 where the shepherd states he will make his love “fair lined slippers for the cold” (774). The shepherd never mentions the changing of seasons or the coldness of winter the people of the countryside endure. He only writes about the picturesque setting of the countryside in the spring! He tries to persuade and deceive his love with the exaggerated indefinite setting of springtime. The proposal is not realistic, but the shepherd does a sly job by using setting as his persuasion.

The shepherd's use of form and meter is used to sooth and persuade his love to come live with him. With a classic rhyme scheme of *aabb*, "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love," is written in iambic tetrameter, which is four feet (tetra) of unstressed/stressed syllables (iambic), with seven stanzas each composed of two rhyming couplets. Iambic meter has a certain pace and tone when read out loud, the emphasis is on the second syllable rather than the first, as oppose to trochee, where the emphasis is on the first syllable rather than the second. The rhyming couplets sooth the person being spoken to (his love), and makes the shepherd's argument believable. Let's look at the first two lines, "Come live with me and be my love,/ And we will all the pleasures prove" (774). Besides the iambic meter the rhyming couplets make this first line easy to listen to, but also ambiguous because we don't know what the shepherd's intentions are. Is this a request or a demand? Also the internal rhyme, (me/be) makes the listener gaze over the first line without determining what the shepherd's intentions are, so in fact the rhyme scheme is hypnotizing and enticing. Besides iambic tetrameter, Marlowe uses alliteration to make the shepherd's proposals more appealing; "And we will sit upon the Rocks,/ Seeing the Shepherds feed their flocks" (774). Seen in lines 5 and 6 the /s/ and /f/ consonants give the shepherd's love comfort and ease, and does not give his love negative thoughts or the skepticisms to question his words. Moreover, in the next lines, Marlowe uses consonance to again sooth the shepherd's love, "By shallow Rivers to whose falls/ Melodious birds sing Madrigals"(774). The /l/ consonant when read aloud is soothing and relates to the leisurely country living the shepherd pitches to his love. In line 23, alliteration is seen again, "If these delights thy mind may move," the /m/ consonant makes this statement from the shepherd nonchalant and mesmerizing. The depth of the shepherd's statement is easily gazed over because alliteration, and if one takes a closer look one will see that the shepherd is appealing to his love's emotions and pleasures rather than her logical reasoning. The poem is filled with alliteration (1-2,5-6,8,18,20-24), consonance (3-

4,7-8,9-10,) and assonance (1,4,6,7,18,20,24), and they all serve to entice and sooth the women to come live with the shepherd.

Throughout the poem, the shepherd also uses figurative language, visual imagery, and symbolism to describe what he “can” give her. We see that the poem is mainly an argument or the shepherd’s pitch to his love, but he poses impractical possessions a normal shepherd cannot provide. Line 13, “A gown made of the finest wool/ Which from our pretty Lambs we pull:” may be viewed as a contradiction because in a former line the shepherd states he and his love will leisurely watch the other shepherds work (774). Moreover, how will the shepherd attain the finest wool if he and his love are going to live a relaxed life? At first glance, the shepherd’s pitch is believable, but when thoroughly analyzed it is not cogent. To expand, the shepherd goes on to state he will make his love slippers for the cold with gold buckles. This is not realistic because in Marlowe’s era, shepherds were not gold carriers and there was not gold in the countryside to be discovered. The shepherd proceeds to say that he will make his love a belt of ivy buds and a clasp with amber studs (774). As mentioned prior, amber was expensive in this era and was not commonly owned by shepherds. We see a common trend throughout Marlowe’s poem: the shepherd tries to persuade his love with material possessions that are impractical. Even if the shepherd could provide his love with all the items he mentions, moving in with him would be an artificial love based on pleasure and material possessions.

Christopher Marlowe is a sly poet, and one who does not know his reputation would interpret this poem as kind acts a shepherd would do for his love, but it seems contrary. One needs to posit the question: what are the shepherd’s intentions? Are they sexually oriented? Sinister? His intelligent and witty use of poetic devices helps exaggerate and make the shepherd’s argument more appealing and persuasive. Marlowe leaves the audience questioning if the shepherd’s motives and desires are pure.

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MORES ON THE MOORS: SOCIAL CLASS AND POWER
IN WUTHERING HEIGHTS

by Morgan Herbener

In nineteenth century England, social class determined the amount of power people had. The aristocrats in the upper class had all of the power and the poor working class served them. Society strictly abided by these rigid social classes and changing one's social standing proved incredibly difficult to accomplish. *Wuthering Heights* shows readers that determination to better one's station can sometimes cost one's happiness or result in failure. The characters in the novel feel the need to raise their social status and in most cases they either fail at doing so or end up depressed and alone. In this essay, I discuss important characters within the novel and how their desire for power motivates or hinders them to change their social status.

Heathcliff changes his social status the most and seeks to dominate everything and everyone throughout the novel. He starts as a nameless orphan on the streets of Liverpool. Fortunately, a respected gentleman Mr. Earnshaw takes Heathcliff away from Liverpool to the countryside in northern England and raises him as his own. Thus, Mr. Earnshaw elevates Heathcliff from the lower class to the aristocratic class as a country gentleman. Garofalo claims that critics understand Heathcliff as, "radically opposed to the world he inhabits, yet compelled

to participate in it” (Garofalo 823). He is opposed to the new world he lives in because he comes from a completely different background than the Earnshaws. Heathcliff is compelled to participate because of his desire to impress Mr. Earnshaw and to remain his favorite. The residents of Wuthering Heights immediately reject Heathcliff, but his child-like desire to be accepted makes him want to participate in their lives even though he receives a profusion of physical and emotional abuse. However, the abuses that he endures create a desire in him to upgrade his social position.

Heathcliff soon realizes that he needs to improve his station. When Catherine rejects Heathcliff because he cannot advance her socially, he leaves Wuthering Heights to change into a wealthy gentleman. He returns to prove to Catherine that he can be a powerful and respected member of society. His love for her consumes him and he obsesses over her to prove himself to her. His obsession with Catherine represents his desire for power and status. Garofalo argues that Heathcliff sees Catherine as a possession: “Although he imagines that Catherine is lost to him, he finds that she can, nonetheless, be partially obtained through collection” (Garofalo 824). Garfalo’s interpretation suggests that Heathcliff’s desire to own Catherine demonstrates his appetite for power and to heighten his social status because she embodies everything he wants: wealth, power, and recognition from society. Catherine’s death furthers his infatuation with power because the desire for power motivates him exceedingly when she dies. Her death causes him to spin out of control and become even more obsessed with power. Now that he has nothing left, he feels a need to be wealthier and more powerful. When Catherine was alive, he had two things to focus on: Catherine and power. After she dies one half of his reason for living is gone, which motivates him to be as powerful as he can. This need for money and power causes him to acquire a need to exercise control over everyone in his life.

Heathcliff wants to dominate everything and everyone around him. T.K. Meier calls him a “capitalist villain” and not a “Marxist hero” because he does not want

to destroy the social classes, he wants to control them. Because of these desires, Heathcliff does anything to acquire more power, including using and abusing those closest to him. He has a large amount of animosity towards the Lintons and, "his aim is to secure the traditional prerequisites of economic power and social elevation for his posterity" (Meier 309). He uses the Lintons to accomplish this. Heathcliff's union with Isabella further establishes him in the community as a gentleman, which elevates his social status. He exploits Isabella Linton to gain more money and land. He believes that by marrying her, he will collect the Linton inheritance when Edgar dies. He sees her as an asset to use at his disposal because of her youth and naivety when they marry. He manipulates his son Linton by forcing him to marry Catherine Linton when his inheritance plans with Isabella backfire. The union between the two children causes Heathcliff's acquisition of Thrushcross Grange and Catherine Linton's fortune. The inheritance and land increase Heathcliff's power in the community. Obtaining all this land and money becomes the pinnacle of Heathcliff's social status and power, something that he desires from a young age.

Catherine's desire for power differs tremendously from Heathcliff's because instead of gaining social status, she desires to maintain hers. Her high born status means that she does not have to work for her social class like Heathcliff. Catherine's desire for power stems from her greed to maintain a high social status. She is an incredibly narcissistic character because she only thinks of herself and does everything to better her station regardless of the feelings of others. When she debates with Nelly on which man she should marry, she justifies marrying Edgar because, "he will be rich, and I shall like to be the greatest woman of the neighbourhood" (Brontë 76). She does not think of why she loves Edgar and only cares about being the lady in the neighborhood with the highest social status. She makes a selfish decision and leaves Heathcliff, who represents a non-society based relationship that would lower her social status, and marries Edgar because she knows he can elevate her on the social ladder because the

Linton family has a higher level of respect in society than the Earnshaw family. According to Eagleton, Catherine's decision between the two men is, "the decisive catalyst of tragedy; and if this is so, then the crux of *Wuthering Heights* must be...a social one" (Eagleton 101). In this turning point of the novel Catherine, "rejects Heathcliff as a suitor because he is socially inferior to Linton; and it is from this that the train of destruction follows" (Eagleton 101). At this juncture the reader first comprehends Catherine's true nature. Her greed and desire to be more powerful expedites the tragedy in her life after her decision to marry Edgar because after their marriage she maintains her social power, but she marries someone she does not truly love. Catherine knows that she has made a disadvantageous decision marrying Edgar and loses her hope.

Catherine destroys her aspirations because of her selfish nature and mistakes and she eventually goes mad. Meier claims that this desire and selfishness also shows a moral decline in Catherine, "His [Earnshaw's] daughter and foster son become amoral [...]evidence of overt evil is too apparent to mistake" (Meier 311). As she descends into madness, Catherine raves and exclaims whatever comes to her mind: "I thought, though everybody hated and despised each other, they could not avoid loving me" (Brontë 119). She shows off her vanity and truly selfish personality in her final days and concludes her life as less of a person than when she starts. Catherine's refinement plummets and she wholly contradicts her original desire to establish herself at the highest social status possible.

However, some characters in the novel experience a huge social downfall, like Hindley. Hindley is a respected gentleman's son and when he comes home to *Wuthering Heights* after college, he has a new bride and importance in the community. Although he continues to relentlessly abuse Heathcliff, he still has a great deal of power and a high social standing in the neighborhood. When his wife dies, he starts to lose his sanity and "degenerates into an animal" (Meier 311). He abuses his only son and fears Heathcliff immeasurably. Hindley falls from grace because he has no desire for power and no drive to live his life how he should.

He and Heathcliff oppose each other in this way because Heathcliff obsesses over power to the point of madness and Hindley has no ambition, which leads to his alcoholism and his eventual demise. Hindley is known at the end of his life as a disrespected gambling drunk that Heathcliff looks after and cares for. Hindley cannot even take care of his own son and Joseph raises him while Hindley drinks himself to death. Although Hindley still technically holds his social station during his life, he becomes completely powerless and lives in constant fear of Heathcliff and his rising social status. He is destitute and no longer respected in the community. Hindley contrasts with characters such as Catherine and Heathcliff because his total lack of desire ends up ruining him just as much and their obsession with power ruins them. The only saving grace he leaves behind is his son Hareton, the last Earnshaw by name.

The only normal and socially correct relationship occurs between Catherine Linton and Hareton Earnshaw. Catherine II and Hareton are the only children in the novel born of pure aristocratic blood. Meier informs the reader that “tradition is victorious over innovation” because of Catherine II and Hareton’s relationship (Meier 311). Catherine II and Hareton are a proper couple according to society. They restore the social classes back to the way society defines them in the resolution of the novel, “*They are afraid of nothing...Together, they would brave Satan and all his legions*” (Brontë 322). Catherine II and Hareton’s social classes never change throughout the novel because they do not desire power like other characters, such as Heathcliff and Catherine. Young Catherine and Hareton exude pure happiness because they do not have a maniacal obsession with power that would cause their relationship to implode. They finish their lives content and prosperous thus restoring the social order.

In conclusion, *Wuthering Heights* informs the reader about the principal theme of social structures and power struggles in a small community. Most characters break through the unyielding social structures of the nineteenth century. Their desire for power and respect in their community drive the characters to change their station and

practically every character in the novel changes their social status in either a negative or positive way. *Wuthering Heights* shows the effects of power and how power affects social classes.

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UTANAPISHTIM'S IMPACT ON THE CERTAINTY OF
TIME'S PASSING
by Samantha Stallings

In the ancient Greek poem, *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, a major turning point in the text is Gilgamesh's mourning of his good friend, Enkidu. He grapples and toils over the loss of his friend, and traverses the Earth looking for hope and answers in his uncertainty and fear of death. He finds this hope in his ancestor, Utanapishtim. Utanapishtim was chosen at one point in time by the gods to build an arc and survive a great flood with his wife and livestock. Utanapishtim and his wife are blessed with immortality. Because of Utanapishtim's burden of watching mankind as he knew it get killed off by the gods (for no just reason), he is the ideal individual for Gilgamesh to speak to about his fears and hardships concerning death. The poet uses Utanapishtim as a symbol of time and its consistency, as well as death's perfect correlation with time, in order to soothe Gilgamesh's mourning over Enkidu's passing at the conclusion of the poem.

The first lengthy conversation Utanapishtim has with Gilgamesh consists of his explaining how life continues to go on after death. The uncertainty of death weighs heavily on Gilgamesh's psyche, and Utanapishtim acknowledges this by stating, "no one can see death, no one can see the face of death, no one can hear the voice of

death, yet there is savage death that snaps off mankind” (90). This points out how Utanapishtim is aware of and empathetic to the substantial fear mankind has with grasping the idea of eternal rest, mentioning how it “snaps off mankind,” regardless of said fear. The poet is aware that without fail, death happens every day and individuals have a difficult time grasping this. Utanapishtim’s character is also conscious of the absolute certainty of time passing and death, and must illustrate this to the audience.

Utanapishtim mentions to Gilgamesh how humanity goes on after death, “For how long do we build a household? How long do we seal a document? For how long do brothers share the inheritance? For how long is there to be jealousy in the land? For how long has the river risen and brought the overflowing waters, so that dragonflies drift down the river?” (90). The poet elected for Utanapishtim to recite laborious and emotionally tolling moments that everyone (at the time) has faced, yet he concludes his issue with a natural recurrence, the river overflowing. This specific example illustrates how Utanapishtim is mindful of all toils one faces in a lifetime, yet in this same lifetime of hardships, the ever-steady river will continually flow and overflow. This example of a natural reoccurrence symbolizes time’s perpetual nature of life, death, toils, and fortunes.

Utanapishtim has witnessed a great deal of time pass by after being made immortal, and visually displays this inevitable passing of time to Gilgamesh while he rests. In *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, the biblical story of Noah is recreated, however the poet creatively takes Utanapishtim’s character, and places him as a survivor of such a flood, then uses his character to contemplate how one would cope emotionally with witnessing all of mankind being killed. Utanapishtim challenges Gilgamesh to stay awake for one week, but Gilgamesh immediately falls asleep and does so for one week. Utanapishtim demands that his wife bake one loaf of bread for every day Gilgamesh is asleep. These loaves naturally rot away as the days go on. When Gilgamesh awakes, he is shocked to discover how long he has rested for. Utanapishtim mentions “how alike are the sleeping and

the dead. The image of death cannot be depicted. After Enlil had pronounced the blessing, the Anunnaki, the Great Gods assembled...They established Death and Life, but they did not make known 'the days of death'" (90).

Utanapishtim correlates sleeping and death, because one who is sleeping is unaware of the life that continues on around them, until after they awake. The poet uses Utanapishtim's loaves of bread as an example that one be aware that life will go on once they have passed on. This is a difficult message for Gilgamesh, as well as all of humanity, to digest, and he immediately flees on Urshanabi's ferry.

The poet uses Utanapishtim's backstory of the great flood wiping out humanity, and the gods' lack of reason for creating it, as a symbol that death is often viewed as swift and unfair in their loved one's eyes. Utanapishtim recalls how "The gods were frightened by the Flood, and retreated, ascending to the heaven of Anu. The gods were cowering like dogs, crouching by the outer wall," demonstrating how the gods appear to be regretting their idea to kill off all of humanity (93). In death, a grieving individual feels hate towards the gods that took away their loved one, but in "reality," the gods themselves could have made a rash mistake. This is a relatable feeling to Gilgamesh because his good friend has passed away and he cannot cope with the sudden loss. Utanapishtim describes his overwhelming emotions after viewing the loss of life after the flood, "I fell to my knees and sat weeping, tears streaming down the side of my nose," detailing how he was struck with the remorse of surviving all of his friends and family in this strange act of nature called down by the gods (93). The poet uses this moment in the story as a symbol for the injustice one feels when a loved one dies suddenly.

In *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, the loss of a good friend and the grieving process that goes along with it is illustrated as a long and difficult journey for the main character. The poet places Utanapishtim's presence at the conclusion of the poem, to show how death CAN be unfair. However Utanapishtim builds the hero back up from his mourning, and presents the idea of the continuation of time that goes on regardless after death: the time that everyone must savor

while they are buzzing with life. This is a difficult concept for humans to wrestle with for an entire lifetime. Utanapishtim, in *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, eloquently points out the beautiful, powerful continuation of time, as well as its hand-in-hand relationship with death.

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MAMA'S CHRISTIAN LOVE IN *A RAISIN IN THE SUN*
by Diana Lizotte

For only love can conquer hate
You know we've got to find a way
To bring some lovin' here today
(Marvin Gaye)

While Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun* has been noted as an enduring work because it denotes the societal ills of racism and segregation, it also endures because Christian values lace the play and these values appeal to its audiences who either believe in God, are predominantly Christian, are guided by Christian ideals or a combination of any of these principles. In Hansberry's own words, "...it is a play that tells the truth about people [...] people who are the very essence of human dignity" (Nemiroff 91). While Mama's children, Beneatha and Walter Lee, struggle to find their human dignity throughout the play, the matriarch, Lena Younger (Mama), exudes this quality. According to Christian teachings, human dignity derives from God – every human being was created in God's image and so by their very existence they have inherent value and worth (The Holy Bible, Gen 1.27-8; Groody 111). Mama is sure in her faith in God and she uses her faith knowledge to teach her children. Because of this, *A Raisin in the Sun* sets an enduring example of how all

people should support, get along with, and love each other. In a “Raisin in the Sun,” Mama Younger is a Christian who sets an example of how family members should love one another.

Since its opening, *A Raisin in the Sun* has been acclaimed by critics and audiences alike for various reasons. In 1959, Brooks Atkinson, a New York Times theater critic, stated that Lorraine Hansberry had brought up “some serious problems, but has not tipped the play to prove one thing or another” and “told the inner and out truth about a Negro family in the Southside Chicago” (1). James Baldwin, award-winning African-American writer and poet, notes that “Never before, in the entire history of American theater, had so much of the truth of black people’s lives been seen on stage” (Nemiroff – xii). The play has won numerous awards including the New York Drama Critics’ Circle Award in 1959, the Cannes Gary Cooper Award (for most social and human significance) in 1961, and a Tony in 1974 (Wilkerson 1; Perkins, Loren 1, 4; Tony Awards). In her 1986 essay, “*A Raisin in the Sun*: Anniversary of an American Classic,” Margaret Wilkerson states that the play “has become an American classic within a quarter of a century,” and in a 1986 Washington Post essay, playwright and poet Amiri Baraka concludes that “what is most telling about our ignorance is that Hansberry’s play remains overwhelmingly popular and evocative of black and white reality; and the masses of black people saw it was true” (Wilkerson 1; Baraka F3 Col 1). While critics and intellectuals have noted that the play is an enduring classic, they normally note that the reason for its long-standing relevance is its treatment of racism, sexism, Marxism, intergenerational conflict, and Africanism.¹ However, one reason that the play endures that is not fully explored in other criticisms is the Christian spirituality that infuses the play.

Although the play is laced with spiritual allusions and Christian themes, there is only one critical essay that relates the play to the Christian Faith. This is Angeletta K. M. Gourdine’s “The *Drama Of Lynching In Two Blackwomen's Drama, Or Relating Grimke's Rachel To*

Hansberry's *A Raisin In The Sun*," in which Gourdine relates Ruth from *A Raisin in the Sun* to the biblical character Ruth (541). In the play, Ruth is devoted to her mother in law Lena, just as the biblical Ruth is devoted to her mother in law Naomi. Although there are no other critical essays dealing with the spirituality of the play, there is reason to believe that part of the play's enduring success stems from its Christian themes that likely resonate with Christian or God-worshipping audiences.

From the time the play was released in 1959 through the present, America has been a nation that believes in God and was founded on Christian principles. According to Gallup polls from 1952 to 1965, the years around the time of the play's release, 92% of Americans identified as Christians and 98% believed in God (Gallup: America Remains; Gallup: Religion Historical Trends). Although this percentage has decreased, as of 2014, the majority of Americans identify as Christians and 89% of Americans polled have a belief in God. (Gallup: Three-Quarters; Gallup: Religion Historical Trends). The United States Constitution is based on a belief in God. In the Declaration of Independence, our founding fathers wrote, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights" (par. 2). It is clear that America is and has been a predominantly Christian nation that believes in Christianity and God. Therefore it is likely that the audiences and critics who watched the play were predominately Christians or ones who believed in God. They would have noticed the play's spiritual allusions as well as the depictions of Mama's faith in and Beneatha's questions about God.

Another indication of the play's spiritual relevance is its nomination to a religious foreign film festival. In 1961, *A Raisin in the Sun* was nominated for competition in the Moral Values category at the Valladolid Religious Film Festival in Spain ("3 U.S. Pix" 10). This is significant because the US film company Columbia campaigned hard for it to win in Spain and according to a Variety Weekly article, even though it did not win the Valladolid's Golden

Sheaf award for moral values, “There were many delegates and visitors [...] who felt that “Raisin in the Sun” more than merited the City of Valladolid award [...]” (Japan’s Prizes 15). From this, one can infer that the US and foreign film community and audiences felt that the film depicted religious values. But, there are no in-depth discussions of the play’s religious themes. So, in the following paragraphs, I will explore one of the play’s Christian themes: love. In *A Raisin in the Sun*, Mama Younger reflects the vast majority of the film’s audiences when she exhibits Christian morality and belief in God. Throughout the play, her most prominent Godly characteristic is Christian love.

Several sources have noted that love is a key aspect of Mama’s character. In “Hansberry’s *A Raisin in the Sun*,” Frank Ardolino describes Mama as “the family nurturer” (Par. 1). In describing Lena’s nurturing nature, Ardolino states that she and her husband, though he is now deceased, “love their children” (Par. 2). He also feels that Lena is a loving mother who cares about the development and advancement of her children (Par. 1, 3). Amari Baraka makes similar comments about Mama’s love. He states that Mama is the “emotional adhesive of the family” (F1 Col 1). He does not see her as “the stereotypical black matriarch,” who is merely a “folksy counsel” and an “upholder of tradition” (F1 Col 1). Instead he describes her as “proud and loving,” and he refers to her as the embodiment of “truth, history and love” (F1 Col 1). Mama loves, and her love stems from her Christian faith and values.

According to the Apostle Paul in his first letter to the church in Corinth, “Love is patient and kind; [...] Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends” (The Holy Bible 1 Cor. 13.4, 7-8). According to the New International Bible, the phrase “bears all things” is translated as love that “always protects” and another way to look at love that “never ends” is love that perseveres or never fails (1 Cor 13:7-8). According to the biblical commentary in Gill’s *Exposition of the Entire Bible*, love that believes all things is belief in “all that God says in his word, all his truths, and all his promises” (1 Cor 13:7). So, from two different versions of the Bible and Gill’s

commentary, Christian love includes these seven elements: patience, kindness, protection of others, belief, hope, endurance, and perseverance. Mama Younger has all of these qualities and through many examples she teaches them to her children and the audience at large. Because her Christian belief in God is the lynchpin of this thesis, I will begin with it, followed by the other six elements in this order: patience, kindness, protecting others, hope, perseverance, and endurance.

Mama believes in God and Christianity; it is obvious from our first encounters with Mama that she is a devout Christian. As Mama enters the stage for the first time, the stage direction indicates that, “she has, we can see, [...] faith [...]” (Hansberry 1920). Her belief in the Christian faith is reinforced throughout the script, which is infused with comments like, “It’s too early in the morning to be talking about money. It ain’t Christian,” “... I don’t want that on my ledger this late in life” and “God knows...” (Hansberry 1921 and 1922). This Christian faith informs her interactions with the other characters in the play; it is an integral part of Mama’s character. In her critical essay, “The Visions of Lena Younger created by Lorraine Hansberry in *A Raisin in the Sun*,” Lizandra Gomes states that Lena is a woman “who guides her life and her family’s life by the rules of Christianity” (88).² Because she is guided by her Christian beliefs, she exhibits the other six elements of Christian love with little difficulty. We see her patience with Beneatha, her kindness toward Ruth, her protection of the family, her hope in Walter Lee, her perseverance with Beneatha and Walter Lee and her endurance through many hardships.

Mama is patient. Her Christ-like patience is most evident during her discussion with Beneatha about God. The conversation begins with Beneatha disparaging God in front of Mama. Despite Beneatha taking God’s name in vain and making sarcastic comments about losing her saltiness (a biblical metaphor for spirituality), Mama lets her off with a warning, “Now that will do. I just ain’t going to have you ‘round here reciting the scriptures in vain – you hear me?” (Hansberry 1924). Beneatha adheres to the

admonition for the time being and Mama, showing more patience, changes the conversation by asking Beneatha what time she will be home from school. The conversation continues with Beneatha talking about the many activities she has been involved in (drama, horse-riding, photography, and now guitar). Then, the conversation meanders through other topics, including how Beneatha is trying to express herself, how she is going out with a wealthy boy, how she thinks ill of her brother, her negative feelings about rich people, and her desire to be a doctor. In other words, Mama patiently listens to, chides, and encourages her daughter through many topics of conversation and minutes until Beneatha again begins to disparage God. During this next interchange, Beneatha first states that “God hasn’t got a thing to do with it,” then, twice she says that she is “sick of hearing about God” (Hansberry 1926). At this point the ever-patient Mama warns Beneatha “[y]ou ‘bout to get your fresh little jaw slapped!” (Hansberry 1926). But Beneatha does not heed the warning and declares that she doesn’t “believe in God,” and that “[t]here simply is no blasted God...” (Hansberry 1926). At this point, Mama must correct Beneatha and does so with control and determination, absent of wrath. The stage direction states that, “Mama absorbs this speech, studies her daughter and rises slowly and crosses to Beneatha and slaps her powerfully across the face” (Hansberry 1926). Then, to restore God to his place in the family, Mama has Beneatha state that, “In my mother’s house there is still God” (Hansberry 1926). Mama again does all of this with patience. The stage direction states that, “Mama repeats the phrase with precision and cool emotion” (Hansberry 1926). Although Beneatha sorely tests Mama’s patience, Mama maintains her patience throughout her discussion about God with Beneatha. So Mama is patient. She is also kind.

Her kindness is evident through her care about Ruth’s condition; she truly cares about Ruth’s health and happiness. One of the first things that Mama does when we meet her in the play is to ask after Ruth’s health and to offer to do some of the ironing (Hansberry 1920). Gomes sees this kindness as nurturing and states “This is obvious

when Lena offers to help Ruth ironing some clothes after realizing that Ruth is not feeling well” (90). Shortly after offering to iron clothes for Ruth, Mama encourages Ruth to take better care of herself, “[g]irl, you better start eating and looking after yourself better” and to stay home and rest when Ruth says that she is tired (Hansberry 1921-2). Later, Mama shows great concern when Ruth collapses from fatigue and while massaging Ruth’s shoulder to relax her, Mama states, “[n]ow you just relax. That’s right...just lean back, don’t think ‘bout nothing at all...nothing at all—” (Hansberry 1927, 1930). Ultimately she cares for Ruth by fulfilling Ruth’s dream of moving out of the tenement and into a larger house. Ruth is so happy when Mama tells her the news that Ruth exclaims, “[p]raise God!” twice and later proclaims, “Hallelujah! and good-bye misery...” (Hansberry 1947). Ruth is important to Mama as is the rest of the family. Mama cares deeply about the family and has spent her life protecting it.

She protects her family members by working hard, buying a house for them, sharing her money with them and wanting to keep them safe. She and her husband spent years working hard to pay the rent and take care of the family, and her husband “finally worked hisself to death...” (Hansberry 1921, 1923). While thinking about buying a bigger house, Mama says that “maybe [she] could take on a little day work again...” (Hansberry 1923). She decides to buy the family a house in the white suburbs of Chicago and tells Travis that she “went out and she bought you a house!” (Hansberry 1946). She also shares her \$10,000 insurance check with them, giving Walter Lee \$3500 and Beneatha \$3000 (Hansberry 1951). We learn that she and her husband made the Northward Migration to escape the threat of lynching in the South and to give her children a safe home (Hansberry 1937). She prays to God to protect her family from the Clybourne Park Improvement Association after Mr. Lindner, their representative, let the Youngers know that the white housing development did not welcome the Youngers moving into the neighborhood (Hansberry 1958). Her family is precious and paramount

and she does everything possible to protect them. She also puts her hope in them.

She hopes that Walter Lee will behave responsibly with the \$6500 with which she entrusts him (Hansberry 1951). She knows that he wants to buy a liquor store against her approval, yet she still gives him the insurance money, hoping he will do the right thing. Unfortunately, he loses all the money (Hansberry 1962). Despite that, she does not lose hope in Walter Lee and forgives him for losing the money. She encourages him to choose human dignity and his family instead of the money with which the Improvement Association is trying to bribe the family. In answering Lindner, he focuses on his other family members, instead of himself, stating:

What I am telling you is that we called you over here to tell you that we are very proud and that this is — this is my son, who makes the sixth generation of our family in this country, and that we have all thought about your offer and we have decided to move into our house because my father—my father—he earned it.

He even supports Beneatha, telling Lindner, “And that’s my sister over there and she’s going to be a doctor” (Hansberry 1972). Mama’s hope in Walter Lee is transformational. When he chooses to keep the Clybourne Park house, choosing family well-being over money, Mama states that he is “Kind of like a rainbow after the rain” (Hansberry 1974). Through her hope in him, she ultimately guides him to the decision that will benefit the whole family. She also guides Beneatha through perseverance.

Mama perseveres in teaching Beneatha to love others, especially her brother. After Walter Lee loses the \$6500, part of which would have paid for Beneatha’s medical degree, she admits to Asagai that she has stopped caring about people. Asagai asks, “And you’ve stopped caring?” and she replies, “Yes—I think so” (Hansberry 1964). This lack of caring is especially evident when Beneatha states that Walter Lee is “[...] not a man. [He] is

nothing but a toothless rat” and “there is nothing left to love” in him because Walter Lee wants to accept Lindner’s bribe (Hansberry 1970-1). So, Mama tells Beneatha:

There is always something left to love...have you cried for that boy today? I don’t mean for yourself and for the family cause we lost the money. I mean for him; what he been through and what it done to him. Child, when do you think is the time to love somebody the most; when they done good and made things easy for everybody? Well then, you ain’t through learning—because that ain’t the time at all. It’s when he’s at his lowest and can’t believe in himself because the world done whipped him so (Hansberry 1971).

After this lesson, Beneatha supports Walter Lee’s decision to scorn Lindner’s bribe. She comes to his defense for the first time in the play. After Walter Lee tells Lindner that the family will be moving into Clybourne Park, Lindner states, “I take it then that you have decided to occupy” (Hansberry 1972). Beneatha answers for Walter, showing solidarity with him: “That’s what the man said” (Hansberry 1972). Mama’s lesson on love made a great impact on Beneatha and encouraged her to support Walter Lee for the first and only time in the play. Mama persevered in teaching Beneatha to love even after Walter Lee lost the money.

Despite losing the money, Mama endures. She also endures through the Northward Migration, living in the tenement, and the loss of her baby, Claude (Hansberry 1923, 1937, 1962). Through all of this, she never loses faith in God, in fact she turns to God to strengthen her in the face of adversity. When she learns that Walter Lee has lost the money, she turns to God, “Oh, God...[She looks up to Him.] Look down here – and show me the strength” (Hansberry 1963). She is proud of the generations of slaves and sharecroppers, her ancestors, who persevered and never let anyone tell them they weren’t good enough (Hansberry 1970). And at the end of the play she triumphantly carries her plant out of the tenement and

prepares to move into the racist, all-white neighborhood of Clybourne Park. Frank Ardolino also notes Lena's endurance. He feels that Lena has successfully nurtured her family and that all members of the family "have had their humanity, maturity, and familial endurance confirmed" (Para 7). Through Mama's perseverance and integral Christian faith, she loves her family, ultimately leading it to stay together and move to a better house.

Mama's Christian love – her belief in God, her patience, kindness, protection, hope, perseverance and endurance – brings her family through a difficult trial of loving each other in the face of adversity. It is a compelling story that is appealing to wide audiences and has become a lasting piece of literature. Although *A Raisin in the Sun* is an enduring American classic, most critics attribute the reasons for its universal appeal to be anything but religious. However, one key element of the play's steady success is that it depicts true Christian love through the character of Mama. Because love trumps all, Mama and her family members forgive each other and find a way to support each other. At the end of the play, there is a hope that – as the family members move out of the tenement and into a new, bigger home – their love for each other will continue to grow.

Notes

1. For more information see works by Baraka, Nemiroff, and Wilkerson.
2. This literary criticism is from an undergraduate thesis. However, I consider it peer-reviewed because according to the article, "This research began in the summer of 2009 as an Adrian Tinsley Program Summer Grant Project under the direction of Dr. Suzanne Ramczyk and has expanded into one semester honors thesis. Lizandra will be presenting her research at two conferences in 2010: The National Conference on Undergraduate Research in Montana and the New England Women's Studies Association conference at UMass Dartmouth" (Gomes 87). Ms. Gomes presented her entire thesis, "African American playwrights" at the

New England Women's Studies Association Conference at
UMass Dartmouth on May 1, 2010 (NEWSA 4).

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MEDIA AND SOCIETY





THE ART OF TELLING AMAZING TALES

by Khailynn Baker

You can't be a great storyteller if you are unable to analyze how stories are formed and be original in your own story. The knowledge of how a story is constructed and the creative freedom to follow your own rules are a writer's most powerful advantages when attempting to write fiction. Now I'm no expert, but I've learned the hard way how a good concept for a story can lead to nowhere if you forget the structure and altogether lose focus on what message or purpose you were trying to convey through characters and the sequencing of events. My purpose for this writing is to explain what I believe is the way fictional short stories and movies are crafted—the patterns I notice. What some successful groups do to tell a powerful story, and why originality, imagination, analyzation, and writing knowledge matters.

So what makes up a story? The basic structure is: it has a beginning, a middle, and an end. It sounds simple, and you can find this set-up in both fiction and nonfiction narratives, but I'm more familiar with fiction, so I'll focus on this genre. In the beginning, the main characters need to be introduced and the conflict should be introduced soon after. It's not a good idea to wait on doing this since I notice that stalling will occur, making the plot slowly progress. For film and television this is disliked because

they have to adhere to a shorter time slot for the sake of not going on too long. In fiction novels and books, the concern for delaying introducing conflict is that audiences will not want to continue reading the book out of boredom. For the middle section of a story, characters are supposed to go through trial and error to solve their problem. Before a resolution is made, there needs to be a climax, an intense moment where the characters are desperate to find a solution before a terrible consequence occurs. The end is where the resolution comes. At this point, characters have come out of the conflict having changed from how they were in the beginning of the story. Without a change to the character or the situation, it leaves viewers feeling empty or disappointed because the progression of the story did not lead to anything substantial occurring. Knowing the structure is important because the audience's reaction depends on the writer's ability to get their attention and entertain them.

What makes up a story figuratively? Before thinking about how to construct a story for short stories, novels, or movies, a person generates creative ideas they received naturally in their minds, and this is called "imagination." Imagination can be relied on to build a non-existent world, construct characters, and make up concepts. Personally, I've always had a wild imagination, and while the downside is that I tend to be goofier than any human should be, a plus is that I don't have to piggyback off of concepts that others came up with. To make sure there is no misunderstanding, I must iterate that no idea is truly only mine because I thought it up in my head. A billion other folks have definitely thought up the same imaginary character archetype I did and whatever you see around you will work its way into the subconscious thought, which can be brought out through imagination. But the thing is, imagination kickstarts an idea, and it's up to the writer to use careful research on the subject matter they're writing about to properly utilize imagination in their writing.

In conjunction with imagination the term "originality" is expected to come next. The reason for this is that a creator of anything aims to change something or add

something new to the artistic medium they use. For a fiction writer, the need to be original is drawn from their imaginations and what ideas they come up. It's hard to accept that nearly everything has probably been done before, but the point of using your imagination and cleaning it up with research is to essentially gain originality—at least in presentation. One example of a distinctive story teller is Quentin Tarantino. Tarantino doesn't direct movies the way most directors and creators would. In fact, I'm sure that most people wouldn't be able to name the director for most movies they've watched (even if it's their favorite!). However, sometimes a director has their own style of presenting scenes that is iconic, and this is what makes Tarantino a successful, original, creative director. He may have a random scene meant to break up tension, despite the timing being unusual or he'll have a quick shot of violent acts being done, only to follow up with a laid-back scene of peace. His method to writing and presenting can break certain rules that audiences and directors are used to seeing, but Tarantino has a large following. Why? He is a smart creator who has his own vision and has reinvented the way stories can be told.

So, can this writing knowledge be used to write a story even if you're not experienced or an expert? Well, at the age of 7 I was in the habit of creating imaginary characters and writing their adventures. The earliest story I wrote, "Heart and Star" was about two contestants in a never-ending reality TV show who would do competitive challenges to win a makeover for their bedrooms. Star was a rude, egotistical girl who cheated in every challenge she did, and Heart was a sweet, happy-go-lucky girl who always let Star have a fair chance to win. In the end, Star would create an overly convoluted plan to thwart Heart's progress, but Star would get physically hurt by her own contraptions, thus disqualifying herself. If this sounds intriguing enough to want to read about it, then I have successfully convinced you that you don't need to be an expert on these things to execute a good idea for a story. However, imagination, originality, and the writing knowledge is what will sell this idea to people if it were made into a story.

When young, it is the easy to understand the structure of a story and come up with original characters and concept, which is why some children get interested at an early age. However, the trouble will come to a child when they have to explain or understand the main point or purpose behind the story. For example, whenever I went to the movies with my friends or family and expressed my confusion, they would shrug it off basically saying, “It doesn’t matter what the point was. I had fun watching it, so it was a good movie.” But not being able to explain why you like a movie makes it difficult to trust what makes the story good. Deeming things “good” or “bad” is subjective, but in the case of writing, I believe there is a set pattern of strategies professionals use to make powerful stories people always enjoy. For example, Pixar Animation is a company that produces films that are known to rely on the one strategy of storytelling: conflicting character dynamics (usually between two characters). One of Pixar’s films, *Monsters Inc.*, is about a monster named Sullivan working at a company where monsters scare children so that their scream energy can power the monster world, but besides scaring, monsters are told to not touch humans or else they will be exposed to toxins. Sullivan eventually meets a little girl who escapes from her room in the human world and joins him in the monster world.

Originally I believed the movie’s message was “Don’t judge a book by its cover” because Sullivan learns that she isn’t toxic and that scaring human children is wrong because they are innocent. While this is one interpretation that is not incorrect, there are more layers to this movie that the writers intended to hit viewers subtly. If you analyze the movie in depth, the main theme is about challenging authority. Sullivan disobeys the word of his boss, friends, and co-workers to protect the human child, and he is nearly killed for it. A side theme that is brought up is morality vs. the all for one, one for all principle; it is explored in a way for children to be able to understand—Sullivan disobeys his boss because the life of an innocent child is at stake. The experts behind *Monsters Inc.* communicate these symbolic themes through their writing

without being too blatant, e.g. Sullivan slowly adjusting to the child's presence, escorting her to the bathroom and being overly protective of her when she disappears. He treats Boo as a person because he recognizes that she is not a danger or treat, and he chooses to sacrifice the company's main energy source for the sake of one child's life and happiness. They already knew what they were trying to convey to the audience before writing, and they anticipated that audiences would connect with the situations since it was made to appeal to their intended audience's morality. Being able to analyze all these ideas and themes makes this movie seem very powerful, possibly more powerful than it really is, but by doing this thorough breakdown of a well done story, I've gathered more intelligence into what successful people do to tell great stories.

Now as an adult, I have learned some of this knowledge through taking creative writing classes in high school, and experimenting through my public writing online on sites like Fan fiction, Inkitt, and on my Tumblr blog where I review artwork and published stories. Out of all the sites, I chose Fan Fiction to see what little progress I made in becoming a better storyteller. Fan Fiction is an informal place to write that allows people to experiment with already established media and use it to produce their own fan-made works. It has become a bit of a joke for the internet savvy, but it is no secret that users on the Fanfiction site are fairly young and often write stories where they'll create their own original character and write them in a romantic relationship with a fictional character that happens to be incredibly frustrating to read about. These writers will write paragraphs detailing their character's appearance, outfit, and attraction to others, and they don't always care about telling a story so much as they just want to write romantic fantasy scenarios involving their original characters. So it is easy to imagine there are a lot of disgusting, disturbing narratives told.

As a test, I created a story that deconstructs all the typical tropes that you find in badly written fan fiction. I wrote my character without going into much detail on their appearance or background, I introduced the conflict early

and made the focus on the adventure my character is forced into, and I didn't write a love interest for them. It was never meant to be taken seriously, but I gained a following just by doing these things, and now they have repeatedly asked for more of my story. I'm not sure if I'll continue since I'm in school to learn how to write creative fiction proficiently, but I feel a small confidence in my skill thanks to taking advice like in this paper. Many of these things have been said before by professionals and amateurs in fiction writing, and I don't want to limit myself to these rules every time I write because the writing process for creative work is difficult enough as it is. Sometimes people want to reinvent the way stories can be told by going against some of these rules. Some professionals are unable to analyze works of fiction, but they make great work. Some novel writers don't want to go into the conflict immediately because they are trying to shock the readers by the how anti-climactic the book begins or they want to establish characters more before introducing conflict. Doing these things doesn't make you a bad writer and some writers who do this are successful. Really, the best thing to do to become an expert storyteller is trust that knowing the structure, using your imagination, identifying themes that resonate with people, and standing out with your presentation can make you a great writer.

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Monsters, Inc. Directed by Pete Docter, Lee Unkrich, and David Silverman. Pixar Animation, 2001.



THE INVASION OF ADS

by Emily Quijano

The 2016 article, “Instagram’s Creepy New Ads Look Like Posts from Your Friends” written by Kyle Chayka, and posted on *The Atlantic*, addresses the presence of advertisements in social media. Chayka explains how companies have targeted Instagram—a popular social media site where people share personal photos and videos—to campaign their ads. Presently, advertising methods gain influence from social aspirations that make platforms popular and aim to reproduce the aesthetics shared on social media (2). Companies want their ads to be relevant, so they create the illusion that their products and brands are a part of social trends and lifestyles. Chayka makes the argument that ads have invaded a personal space of friendship and authenticity to bring awareness and criticism toward the way companies exploit human vulnerabilities for economic gain. He communicates his purpose and connects with his audience through appeals to pathos and ethos by talking about his personal experiences, using tone shifts, and writing with witty, sarcastic diction.

Chayka begins his article with a personal and highly detailed account of his experience with ads on social media to establish his credibility and universalize his personal dislike of ads. He states, “Summer is the best time for Instagram. Friends are always out on weekend trips,

posting nature selfies or snapshots of their Airbnb cabins,” which suggests that his target audience are people who are familiar with the functionality of Instagram and can comprehend the modern slang (e.g. selfies, snapshots) that he uses in his introduction (Chayka 1). He attempts to make connections and further cultivate his audience by describing the experiences of scrolling through a news feed and double-tapping to like a photo which creates a sense of community and strengthens his assertion that Instagram fosters human connections. He is able to animate the invasiveness of ads through his narration by shifting his serene and untroubled tone to a tone of violation: “Then, in a moment of quiet horror, I notice the ‘Sponsored’ tag at the top right” (1). His discomposure creates dramatic emphasis on how ads disrupt social aspirations and connections.

Throughout the article, Chayka carries a prominent voice and tone that reflects his disapproval of ads in social media platforms. Early in his article, he makes a jarring declaration, stating that “there’s an uncanny valley effect occurring: Your friends look more like brands and brands look more like your friends” (2). This statement brings public consciousness to the harmful reality of ads due to the fact that Chayka purposefully underscores how ads feed on genuine aspirations. Chayka labels the human activity on Instagram as “moment[s] of vulnerability” which generates a sense of victimization and weakness within the reader, further revealing the exploitative nature of ads (3). Chayka becomes bitter when he describes how companies “[give] brands their own semblance of life” to trap us as viewers (4). Chayka’s wording of “semblance of life” emphasizes how he believes that ads are a facade of reality as they try to give life to inanimate and one-dimensional things. Essentially, Chayka is troubled by the fact that companies campaign their products and brands by fabricating a purposeless and artificial parallel universe.

Companies want their ads to achieve a sense of personhood so that they can have a social presence in intimate digital circles — which Chayka perceives as violating and creepy (6). Chayka believes that people will

inevitably become inserted in the virtual reality of ads as he deduces that “ads are compelling, but in a sickly way, like candy: you know they’re designed for you to like them a little too much” (9). Advertising methods are manipulative and deceitful; therefore, in the ads themselves, the faces of the human models are blurred out and the central focal point is the brand to nurture consumer identification (5). Chayka regards sponsored ads as “spat out [robotic approximations] of the overall aesthetic” as they lack originality or a purpose other than trying to inject themselves in the lives of consumers (9). The tone of the article becomes sickened and displeased as Chayka explains how companies are only interested in gaining profit by devaluing the authentic experiences shared on Instagram. He carries a nostalgic tone for former marketing that encouraged people to model themselves after brands because, instead of imitating social platforms, they promoted authenticity and originality by introducing new trends and lifestyles (10). His distasteful and negative approach towards the methodology of ads is meant to stimulate public criticism: he wants to people who regularly use Instagram to share his perspective on the presence of ads in social media platforms.

Chayka is an advocate for inimitability and authenticity; therefore, he views the invasion of ads on Instagram as threats to genuine connections as they produce a virtual reality. By showcasing his unmistakable disapproval of ads, he aims to universalize his displeased feelings for ads. Simultaneously, he creates a sense of community by using witty diction and tone shifts to evoke an emotional response from his audience. The way he attempts to make connections with his audience by talking about personal experience highlights how he wants to build credibility, authenticity, and trust. His audience are those who use Instagram and are already skeptical about the ads in their news feed. He wants to foster public criticism and bring awareness to how ads are exploiting the genuine social connections on Instagram in order to trap prospective customers. His fear is that people will “never escape ads”

because they are invading a space meant for social connections and aspirations (11).

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COVERING A MODERN ELECTION

by Rebecca Lake

Digital convenience and a fall in advertisement revenue for print media resulted in the decline of print newspaper circulation; readers frequently turned online to find information. In a democratic society, news fulfills an important role in informing the public regarding events that directly fall in their sphere of interest or in the surrounding world. The public still relies on news outlets to educate and enlighten regardless of the source. For politics especially, the candidates and political figures depend on news to circulate positive word on their policies and personalities. With news there retains a focus on exciting and breaking stories, detailing often more scandalous stories on politicians than those of praise for their actions. For political figures to control the information, they create advertisements to encourage either a positive view of themselves or a negative campaign against their opponents. Traditionally advertisements work to sell a specific product, but political ads aim to broadcast a sentiment to encourage viewers to vote. The inner workings of the bipartisan system shape the amount and topic in newspaper outlets while political advertisements consciously expose the country to biased messages, contributing to the narrow scope in politics.

When it comes to presidential elections, all news outlets concentrate mainly on the campaign and the candidates. In this day and age the media has this integrated type of partisan press where newspapers cover both political parties and, instead of just endorsing one, they reveal both the good and bad aspects of candidates. It is important to include all perspectives when it comes to political issues so readers with no strong political alignment can use the news to gauge and determine where to place their vote come Election Day. When deciding how to vote, there is this heavy emphasis on the negative qualities of a candidate, specific reasons why a certain person does not meet the qualifications to lead the United States. For voters with strong convictions on who should be president, these negative articles have a minimal effect; in the case of those undecided voters, news is essential in deciding who to cast their vote for.

Hal Hankins, a high school government teacher, criticized the media for giving Trump “free media”, making Trump the center of attention for the Republican Party and overshadowing the Democratic Party. Starting in the primaries, when Donald Trump ran opposed to a handful of other Republican members, the name Donald Trump overwhelmed that of the other competition. In *The New York Times*, from the beginning of January 2016 up until the end of July (after the National Conventions), 4,764 articles covered some aspect of Trump’s life while only 1,831 articles covered Trump’s top competitor, Ted Cruz. For the Democratic side of the election, there was a closer amount of coverage with 3,474 articles on Hillary Clinton and 2,158 on Bernie Sanders. After the National Conventions and just before the Presidential Election, Trump still outnumbered Hillary with 5,513 articles to Hillary’s 4,503. Among the top few newspaper outlets, *The New York Times* includes a refined search bar to narrow down articles based on dates of publications; other top news sites only have a keyword search bar. Of the articles on Hillary and Trump there were a variety of authors in gender and race writing on different stories related to the two candidates. The articles relevant to

the search (the candidate's name) focused on negative stories, but still contained some positive, and neutral stories.

As for such a difference in the coverage for the candidates, this falls in the newsworthiness of the person. For Hillary, she lived in scrutiny of media during the presidency of her husband, Bill Clinton. Many people already formed an opinion of the First Lady and later Secretary of State under President Obama. Trump, as a business man, still felt the presence of the media before campaigning, but in a smaller scale. To inform the public, Trump as a political icon needed more exposure than a seasoned political figure with an established platform.

Such a large focal point on Trump does not translate into *The New York Times* being sexist toward the position of president. In the domain of politics, Trump is a new player, bringing new ideas and scandals into the public domain. The two main contenders of the two parties inherently receive more coverage because of their chance of winning; one of the two will become president, so there is no need to focus on the other candidates. In this way the papers control what type of media the readers experience and limit which candidate fills the media spotlight and receives public attention. In the democratic system the top political parties ultimately take on the role of president instead of alternative third party members; the paper is not at fault for displaying this trend in America's bipartisan system. This design of politics resembles the agenda-setting theory where the news impacts what the audience perceives as important. This fault is an institutional problem in both politics and the media where the popular, exciting story receives attention. *The New York Times* is good for contributing to the informing of the public, but bad in the sense that it still emphasizes those main players and doesn't deviate from that system.

The focus of the story, whether negative or positive, depends mostly on the content of the story and some on how the author decides to spin certain information; any author can frame and make a neutral fact into either a positive or a negative story. Authors may sway facts to appear negative or positive, but the effect depends

on the opinions of the readers. Certain readers may pay attention to select articles that align with their perception of the candidates and selectively ignore negative stories on their preferred candidate. Another obstacle in news arrives from the newspaper's desire for profit. With a decline in paper sales, the company compensates by establishing a paywall on the newspaper's website, limiting the selection available to non-newspaper members; a portion of the country may ignore top media sites, with vetted news stories, due to the restriction in articles.

To improve the complications with news media, there needs to be an alteration in how the site operates during election seasons. To boost equality, the newspaper can remove the paywall from articles relevant to the candidates and the current election. To possibly eliminate biased stories the newspaper should label the type of journalism used in each article; readers can rely on objective or investigative stories for information rather than opinion pieces.

In addition to newspapers, candidates depend on advertisements to persuade American citizens to vote for them; the most effective way to visually stimulate a viewer is through TV advertisements. Both Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump possess YouTube accounts with videos of speeches and political advertisements. As viewers progressively turn more to pre-recorded content, this online platform reaches those voters who predominantly consume media online. The Trump and Hillary campaigns employ similar tactics in their advertisements, both strongly depending on association to draw out voters, placing themselves in a positive light while negatively portraying their opponents. The candidates modified the plain-folk pitch by allowing average citizens to comment on how either Trump or Hillary contributes to "normal" life. In the context of the advertisement, the candidates reveal the important demographics that the candidates want to persuade to vote a particular way. Hillary constantly emphasizes the priority of women, children, and family in her advertisements, trying to target families and women. Trump reinforces his business experience that will restore

jobs for the middle class, indicating his priorities in the employment.

Campaigns negatively portray their opponents and overplay their aspirations for the sake of securing votes. Contrasting good qualities to bad policies of the opponent offers a sharp distinction between the candidates, making one candidate look significantly better than the other. When politicians run for office, they create a platform of ideas and policies to enact in the case of their presidential victory; this influences how they target individuals. In response to Trump's sexist remarks, Hillary's attack ads criticize Trump's words and challenge voters to not vote for someone who treats women in such a deplorable way. Trump's ads expose Hillary's years in the politics, reminding the public of the harm Hillary's policies have brought upon the working class; his presidency would combat and restore jobs which Hillary destroyed.

Ads are good in persuading viewers to vote for a certain tactic, but bad in their presentation of the truth. Inherently ads take on a very biased perception of a candidate by focusing on the positive aspects. A candidate may have some brilliant ideas for change, but as a human being they cannot be intrinsically good as the ads portray. Their planned laws and policies, while beneficial for select groups, sometimes negatively impact others, it is unavoidable. Trump plans to eliminate Obamacare which has increased the price of healthcare exponentially for some, while others now depend on that system to cover them when no one else would.

The entire election process strives to persuade as many voters as possible, the ads being a way to mass market their viewpoints to the public. Ads often come off as insincere and fake as the candidate uses them as a general tool to generate their victory. To alter this approach to the political advertisement process, there needs to be a change in how the candidates market themselves to the public. Candidates should focus more on seeing and directly speaking to potential voters rather than trying to rely on mass media to reach voters.

For the 2016 Presidential Election the newspaper outlets continuously made it that Donald Trump would remain the center of attention by writing thousands of articles on him. Overall news influenced the election outcome more than political advertisements. Newspapers and even broadcast news constantly mentioned Trump day after day, reinforcing the presence of Trump in the election. People consciously choose to consume news while advertisements sit back and sometimes help secure a vote. Advertisements will always remain a form of biased content, trying to sell a product or a person, but newspaper does not need to adhere to such a focus on the popular and exciting stories. There can be a change in political coverage, starting by fighting inequality in news stories and representing each candidate an equal amount.

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ECONOMIC AND STOCK MARKET ANALYSIS AND
FORECAST
by John Zeray

Introduction

Investors deciding to hold a portfolio of US stocks and bonds, perhaps within an employer-sponsored 401k plan, require an approach to the investment process. The top-down approach to investing begins with an analysis and forecast of the economy and stock market, followed by an industry analysis, and then company analysis. Macro-economic factors, the business cycle, industry life-cycles, and the competitive environment all have an impact on how industries, and firms within industries, perform. A study of industry sectors shows they cycle through peaks and troughs of the larger economy. For example, Reilly and Brown explain how financial stocks excel as the economy approaches a trough, consumer durables excel in the trough, and basic industries perform best at the cycle peak.¹

¹ Frank Reilly and Keith Brown, *Analysis of Investments & Management of Portfolios* (Amherst: South-Western, Cengage Learning, 2012), p. 400.

This paper assesses the current US economy and stock market as of Fall 2016, and their anticipated future performance as context for investor decisions.

Economic Analysis

At \$18.65 trillion,² the US economy is the world's largest and represents about 20% of global output, exporting \$1.5 trillion in goods in 2015.³ "The economy is dominated by services-oriented companies in areas such as technology, financial services, healthcare and retail"⁴; services account for 80% of output. We are the second-largest manufacturing nation in the world with manufacturing representing about 15% of domestic economic output, while agriculture now comprises less than 2% of US output.⁵

Our economy has shown improving growth in recent years, recovering gradually from the Great Recession of 2007-2009. Real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has increased over 10% from the previous trough six years ago.⁶ Per capita GDP has grown from \$49,725 in 2011 to \$55,868 in 2015.⁷ Exhibit A shows several key measures of the US economy over the last five years. Unemployment has

² Lisa Mataloni, "National Income and Product Account - Gross Domestic Product: Third Quarter 2016", *Bureau of Economic Analysis*, News Release BEA 16-57, accessed November 5, 2016, https://www.bea.gov/newsreleases/national/gdp/2016/pdf/gdp3q16_adv.pdf.

³ US Economic Outlook, *FocusEconomics*, accessed November 5, 2016, <http://www.focus-economics.com/countries/united-states>.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Thomas Cooley, Ben Griffey, and Peter Rupert, "GDP Report Shows Modest Gains", *US Economic Snapshot* (blog), September 29, 2016, accessed October 28, 2016, www.econsnapshot.com/page/3/.

⁷ US Economic Outlook, *FocusEconomics*, accessed November 5, 2016, <http://www.focus-economics.com/countries/united-states>.

decreased from 8.9% in 2011⁸ to 4.87% according to the most recent Household Survey data.⁹ The Dow Jones Industrial Average (DJIA) has increased from 11,232 in 2012 to over 19,800 recently, recovering nicely from February 2016's low of 15,660.¹⁰ Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) data shows Real Personal Consumption Expenditures have increased about 10% from the previous peak seven years ago, while Real Exports of Goods and Services have increased by over 20% from the previous peak in 2009.¹¹ Inflation in the economy has decreased from 3.1% in 2011 to about 1% this year.¹²

The Federal Reserve raised its key Fed Funds rate to 0.75% at their December 14th meeting.¹³ It had been at 0.5%, (see Exhibits B and C) and had previously been raised in December of 2015, the first increase since the Great Recession.¹⁴ The change is due to the Fed's goal of

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Thomas Cooley, Ben Griffey, and Peter Rupert, "September Employment Report Card: Modest", *US Economic Snapshot* (blog), October 7, 2016, accessed October 28, 2016, www.econsnapshot.com/page/3/.

¹⁰ DJIA, Interactive Charts, 5-year and 1-year charts, *MarketWatch*, accessed December 30, 2016 <http://www.marketwatch.com/investing/index/djia/charts?chartType=interactive&countryCode=US>.

¹¹ Thomas Cooley, Ben Griffey, and Peter Rupert, "Q3 GDP Grows at an Improved Pace", *US Economic Snapshot* (blog), October 30, 2016, accessed November 5, 2016, www.econsnapshot.com/page/3/.

¹² US Economic Outlook, *FocusEconomics*, accessed November 5, 2016, <http://www.focus-economics.com/countries/united-states>.

¹³ Ylan Q. Mui, "Federal Reserve Hints at December Interest Rate Increase." *Washington Post*, November 2, 2016, accessed November 2, 2016, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2016/11/02/>.

¹⁴ Fed Federal Funds Rate, American central banks interest rate, *Global Rates.com*, accessed November 7, 2016,

managing the money supply in the economy via monetary policy to keep inflation and employment at target levels. The improved job market may lead to inflation, and the Fed is watching both. While the economy has added about 200,000 jobs per month this year¹⁵, that number is considered modest and less than what many would wish for in a more robust recovery. The November 4th release of Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) employment numbers shows an increase of 161,000 jobs in September. “Since the trough of the great recession, dated June of 2009 by the NBER [National Bureau of Economic Research], employment growth has been steady . . . yet below all other expansions except for the 2001.”¹⁶

While most economic measures show a broad and gradual domestic recovery has been underway for many years now, there are other indicators that may be of concern. *Kiplinger*, publisher of business forecasts and financial advice since 1920, anticipates the annual GDP growth rate in 2016 at 1.5% - somewhat lower than the 2.6% rate last year.¹⁷ Business Corporate Net Worth is recovering from 2011’s floor, at which time it had declined 30% from the previous peak in 2009; it is now less than 10% down from the 2009 peak,¹⁸ but still has not reached

<http://www.global-rates.com/interest-rates/central-banks/central-bank-america/fed-interest-rate.aspx>.

¹⁵ Thomas Cooley, Ben Griffey, and Peter Rupert, “GDP Report Shows Modest Gains”, *US Economic Snapshot* (blog), September 29, 2016, accessed October 28, 2016, www.econsnapshot.com/page/3/.

¹⁶ Thomas Cooley, Ben Griffey, and Peter Rupert, “October Employment . . . Strong Enough?”, *US Economic Snapshot* (blog), November 4, 2016, accessed November 5, 2016, www.econsnapshot.com/p3/.

¹⁷ David Payne, “Economy is Muddling Along”, *Kiplinger*, October 31, 2016, accessed November 6, 2016, <http://www.kiplinger.com/article/business/T019-C000-S010-gdp-growth-rate-and-forecast.html>.

¹⁸ Thomas Cooley, Ben Griffey, and Peter Rupert, “Stagnant Growth Continues”, *US Economic Snapshot* (blog),

pre-recession levels. Publicly Held Federal Debt as a Percentage of GDP has increased over 100% from the previous peak in 2009.¹⁹ The recent Brexit decision by British voters, unsteadiness in the European markets, and slowing growth in China may also pose concerns for some sectors of the domestic economy. Another potential concern is the surprise outcome of the recent presidential election that was decided on November 8th, 2016.

Economic Forecast

What lies ahead for the economy? Bill Conerly, contributor to *Forbes*, expects a mild rebound in 2017-2018. He writes, “2016 suffered from the short-term impact of reduced petroleum drilling more than the long-term benefit of cheaper gasoline,” adding, “the US Economy will enjoy a mild cyclical rebound in 2017, then return to a lower growth rate more in line with long-term potential.”²⁰ Brian Schaitkin, Senior Economist for The Conference Board, says that “While this is the first quarter [Q3] in a year where the economy grew faster than a 2.0 percent annual rate, underlying trends in consumption and investment indicate that the economy is unlikely to exceed a 2.0 percent trend growth in the near term.”²¹ The Conference Board’s October Economic Forecast for the US economy shows it to “remain on a moderate growth path with tight labor market conditions.” Schaitkin adds, “overall rising labor

July 29, 2016, accessed October 28, 2016, www.econsnapshot.com/page/3/.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Bill Connerly, “US Economic Forecast 2017-2018: Mild Rebound”, *Forbes*, September 16, 2016, accessed October 22, 2016, <http://www.forbes.com/sites/billconerly/2016/09/16/u-s-economic-forecast-2017-2018-mild-rebound#5f92587c5337>.

²¹ “Comment on Q3 GDP by Brian Schaitkin, Senior Economist, The Conference Board”, Press Release, *The Conference Board*, October 28, 2016, accessed November 6, 2016, <https://www.conference-board.org/press/pressdetail.cfm?pressid=6885>.

costs without offsetting pricing power is slowly putting a squeeze on profits and slowing the trend of hiring.”²² The Conference Board’s October 2016 GDP and Consumer Spending data and projections (percent change, seasonally adjusted annual rates) are summarized in the table below:

Period →	2016 Q3	2016 Q4	2017 Q1	2017 Q2	2016	2017
Real GDP	2.4	2.1	1.9	1.7	1.5	1.9
Real Consumer Spending	2.7	2.2	2.2	2.1	2.6	2.3

Table 1. Real GDP and Consumer Spending: Current, and Q3 2016 – 2017 forecast.

The Leading Economic Index (LEI) increased in September, resting at about a 2.3 percent annual rate.²³ “With strengths among the leading indicators remaining slightly more widespread than the weaknesses. . . . Taken together, the improved performance of both the LEI and CEI [Coincident Economic Index] suggests that the expansion in economic activity will continue at a moderate pace into early 2017.”²⁴ Among the largest contributors to

²² “The Conference Board Economic Forecast for the US Economy”, *The Conference Board*, October 12, 2016; accessed November 6, 2016, https://www.conference-board.org/pdf_free/economics/2016_10_12.pdf.

²³ “The Conference Board Leading Economic Index (LEI) for the US Increased in October”, *The Conference Board*, October 20, 2016, accessed November 6, 2016, <https://www.conference-board.org/data/bciarchive.cfm?cid=1&pid=6878>.

²⁴ “The Conference Board Leading Economic Index (LEI) for the US Increased in October”, *The Conference Board*,

the LEI's increase were building permits and manufacturers' new orders for consumer goods and materials.²⁵

Longer term forecasts are somewhat more tenuous. However, Kimberly Amadeo, president of World Money Watch, says about the US manufacturing outlook that it "... is forecast to increase faster than the general economy. US production will grow 2.6% in 2016, 3.0% in 2017, and 2.8% in 2018. Growth will slow to 2.6% in 2019 and to 2.0% in 2020."²⁶ Her expectations for the unemployment rate are that it will drop to 4.6% in 2017, and to 4.5% in 2018. For inflation, Amadeo expects 1.3% in 2016, 1.9% in 2017, and 2.0% in 2018. The website, Trading Economics, forecasts future interest rates as shown below,²⁷ and expects the Federal Funds rates to increase by 1.5% from 2016 to 2020. See Exhibit D for M0, M1 and M2 money supply forecasts, and other monetary metrics.

Period →	2016 Q3	2016 Q4	2017 Q1	2017 Q2	2017 Q3	2020
Interest Rate	0.5	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	2.25

Table 2. Federal Funds rate: Current (November 2016), and Q4 2016 – 2020 forecast

October 20, 2016, accessed November 6, 2016, <https://www.conference-board.org/data/bciarchive.cfm?cid=1&pid=6878>.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Kimberly Amadeo, "US Economic Outlook: For 2016 and Beyond", *The Balance*, September 27, 2016, accessed November 6, 2016, <https://www.thebalance.com/us-economic-outlook-3305669>.

²⁷ United States Fed Funds Rate, *Trading Economics*, accessed November 7, 2016, <http://www.tradingeconomics.com/united-states/interest-rate/forecast>.

The Financial Times reported in June that the possible UK exit from the European Union may have kept the Fed from raising rates, and could produce a ripple in the US economy. They quote Fed Chair, Janet Yellen, saying that Brexit “. . . was one of the uncertainties we discussed . . . and that it would be a factor in deciding on the appropriate path for policy.”²⁸ *The Financial Times* reported Fed projections of GDP growth in a tight range around 2% from 2016 into mid-2019. The graph below shows the Fed’s projected GDP bandwidth, with the darker shading indicating central tendencies for Fed projections, and the lighter shading showing the slightly broader range for future GDP projections (+/- 0.5%). The same article expects U.S. unemployment to range around 4.5% but to stay below 5% beyond 2018.

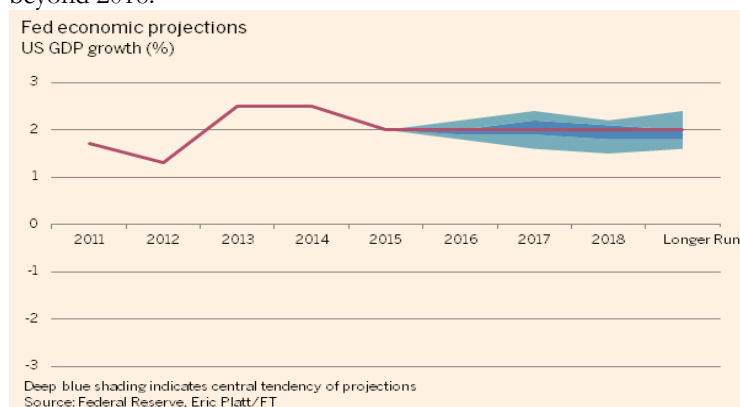


Figure 1. Federal Reserve’s GDP Projections

The Conference Board projects *global* economic growth rate at 2.6% in 2017, somewhat stronger than the 2.2%

²⁸ “Fed Pares Back 2017 Interest Rate Forecasts”, *Financial Times*, June 15, 2016, accessed November 7, 2016, <https://www.ft.com/content/99ac1df2-3320-11e6-ad39-3fee5ffe5b5b>.

forecasted for 2016.²⁹ The International Monetary Fund (IMF) projects a global growth rate of 3.4% for 2017, an increase from their 3.1% rate for 2016.³⁰ They expect global monetary policy to remain “accommodative”, with the chugging US economy and potential Brexit putting downward pressure on global interest rates. In summary, the US and global economy project steady, but not spectacular, growth ahead.

Stock Market Forecast

Stock market forecasts for 2017 and beyond range from expectations of an upcoming crash to continued opportunities for growth. What’s driving the variability in expectations? Some expectations can be sorted out into pre-election and post-election predictions. Dow Jones Futures plunged by over 800 points on election night, but then the market added more than 400 points the next day, trading at highs above 18,600. The following day it traded at above 18,800.³¹ Corporate earnings, stock dividends, and interest rates *had not fundamentally changed*; the market was clearly just trading on emotion and expectations. During the past 12 months the DJIA has ranged from a low of 15,451 to a high of 19,974,³² a disconcertingly wide range. *Schwab’s* November 11th *Market Perspective* states “There is much uncertainty ahead, and we expect bouts of volatility.”³³

²⁹ “Global Economic Outlook 2016”, *The Conference Board*, September 2016, accessed November 7, 2016, <https://www.conference-board.org/data/globaloutlook/>.

³⁰ “Subdued Demand -Symptoms and Remedies”, World Economic Outlook (WEO), *International Monetary Fund*, October 2016, accessed November 7, 2016; <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2016/02/>.

³¹ DJIA, Interactive Charts, 5-year and 1-year charts, *MarketWatch*, accessed November 11, 2016 <http://www.marketwatch.com/investing/index/djia/charts?chartType=interactive&countryCode=US>.

³² Ibid., accessed December 30, 2016.

³³ Liz Ann Sonders, Brad Sorenson, and Jeffrey Kleintop, “Schwab Market Perspective: Is the Fog Starting to Lift?”,

John Lombardi, an editor at *Lombardi Financial*, writes in a September 2016 article for *Profit Confidential*: “It’s quite possible that Warren Buffett, John Paulson, and George Soros also think U.S. stocks are in a bubble. And why not? Stocks have a price-to-earnings ratio of 25.67. Over the last 10 years, that average has been 15. Stocks are currently priced 71% higher than their 10-year average.”³⁴ He states that Berkshire Hathaway “has been dumping its exposure to American stocks that rely on consumer spending,”³⁵ and provides examples of large sell offs in recent years by Buffett’s company of Johnson & Johnson, Kraft Foods and Proctor and Gamble stocks. He cites similar sell-offs by Paulson and Soros. Lombardi offers that while the economy may look good on paper:

the underemployment rate is still at an unacceptable 14.6%, wages are stagnant, personal debt levels are high and one in seven Americans are on food stamps. Plus, more than half of Americans are still living paycheck to paycheck. For the world’s largest economy, these are not the makings of an economic recovery, nor are they the foundation for sustainable economic growth, especially when you consider the fact that the U.S. gets more than 70% of its gross domestic product from consumer spending.³⁶

Lombardi’s key argument for why a crash may be in the offing is that the quantitative easing that the Fed began in

Charles Schwab, November 11, 2016, accessed November 12, 2016, <http://www.schwab.com/public/schwab/nn/articles/Market-Perspective>.

³⁴ John Lombardi, “Billionaires Dumping Stock, Stock Market Crash is on the Way”, *Profit Confidential*, September 13, 2016, accessed November 7, 2016, <http://www.profitconfidential.com/economic-analysis/upcoming-stock-market-crash/>.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

2008 led investors to the markets as the only avenue for making money. Now that rates expectations are headed upwards, the market may correct as stocks “are going to have to rely on real revenues and earnings to propel them higher.”³⁷ Given that GDP has grown at low rates of around 2% since 2013, the news for the future of the market may not be so good. This type of “firm foundations” analysis may hold up better than the “castles in the air” philosophy³⁸ for 2017. Given the predictions of future volatility, it’s possible that a correction, or at best some market rattling, will occur in 2017 although timing and duration are uncertain.

John Tobey, contributor to *Forbes*, has a different view. “Faltering growth (and specter of reversal) was the concern of late 2015 and early 2016. The subsequent rising trend and this summer’s new high foundation building could be setting the stage for earnings and stock price gains in 2017. Dismiss the concerns of forecast earnings uncertainty and too-high stock market valuation. Fundamentals (economic and financial) continue to improve and reasoned Wall Street outlooks indicate growth ahead.”³⁹ Earlier this year, Bankrate.com reported “the bull market in stocks, which began in March 2009, should persist at least another year.”⁴⁰ The S&P Election Year Seasonal Chart (see Exhibit E), and

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Burton Malkiel, *A Random Walk Down Wall Street*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2015), 31-33.

³⁹ John Tobey, “Wall Street Sets Sights on 2017, So Adjust your Thinking Accordingly,” *Forbes*, September 6, 2016, accessed November 7, 2016, <http://www.forbes.com/sites/johntobey/2016/09/06/wall-street-sets-sights-on-2017-so-adjust-your-thinking-accordingly/#3886ecc175a6>.

⁴⁰ Mark Hamrick, “Bankrate Survey: Many Stock Analysts Believe the Bull Market Will Continue into 2017”, *Bankrate*, March 31, 2016, <http://www.bankrate.com/finance/investing/market-mavens-survey-0316.aspx>.

the S&P Post-Election Year Seasonal Chart,⁴¹ below, are based on a 59-year range ending in 2009, and may have some information for us. The Election Year chart shows a 6% gain for the S&P 500, while the Post-Election Year chart, below, shows only a 4% gain for the year following an election.

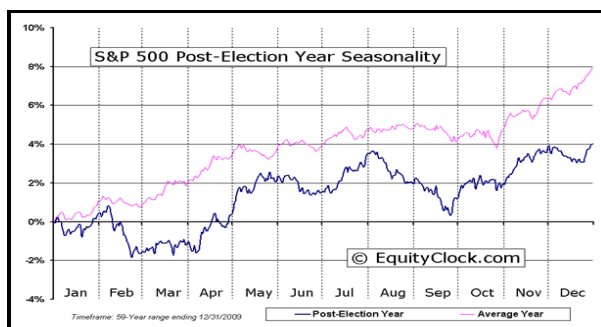


Figure 2. S&P 500 Post-Election Year Seasonality

The S&P 500 had closed at 2,087 in December 2015; it closed this year at 2,238,⁴² or just 36 points higher than projected based on historic trends. The Dow opened at 17,149 in January 2016. If we can use the historic S&P Election Year chart as a proxy for the DJIA (they usually trend together), a 6% increase would have indicated a market close at 18,178 at year-end. Similarly, using 4% anticipated gains for next year, we would expect the DJIA to close at 18,905, and the S&P 500 to close at 2,300 in 2017. Again, these projections are based on *historic trends*.

⁴¹ S&P 500 Index Four-Year Election Cycle Seasonal Charts, *Equity Clock*, accessed November 8, 2016, <http://charts.equityclock.com/sp-500-index-four-year-election-cycle-seasonal-charts>.

⁴² DJIA, Interactive Charts, 5-year and 1-year charts, *MarketWatch*, accessed December 30, 2016 <http://www.marketwatch.com/investing/index/djia/charts?chartType=interactive&countryCode=US>.

GDP Forecasts for Year-End 2016

The Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) releases current and real GDP numbers monthly, revising numbers each month for previous periods. Real GDP is simply current GDP adjusted for inflation in the economy, using a base year of 2009. The BEA released their advance estimate⁴³ for third quarter (Q3) of 2016 on October 28, 2016. Their second estimate for Q3 was released on November 29, 2016 and third estimate for Q3 GDP was to be released in late December. The table below summarizes BEA data for Current and Real GDP, and their respective annual growth rates, through third quarter (Q3) 2016.

Period →	2015 Annual	2016 Q1	2016 Q2	2016 Q3	2016 Q4 forecast	2016 Annual forecast
Current GDP	18,037	18,281	18,450	18,651	18,595	18,601
Current GDP Growth Rate %	3.7	1.3	3.7	4.4 *	3.1	3.13
Real GDP	16,397	16,525	16,583	16,702	16,676	16,676
Real GDP Growth Rate %	2.6	0.8	1.4	2.9	1.7	1.7

Table 3. Current and Real GDP: Current and Forecasted

*** Calculated**

⁴³ Lisa Mataloni, “National Income and Product Account - Gross Domestic Product: Third Quarter 2016 (Advance Estimate)”, Bureau of Economic Analysis, News Release BEA 16-57, accessed November 5, 2016, https://www.bea.gov/newsreleases/national/gdp/2016/pdf/gdp3q16_adv.pdf

By my calculation, Current GDP Growth Rate for Q3 2016 is 4.4%. See Exhibit F for calculations and definitions. Forecasts for fourth quarter 2016 and annual 2016 are shown in the final two columns. Growth rate forecasts for 2016 are lower than 2015's actual growth rates, with Current GDP growth at 3.1% and Real GDP growth dipping to 1.7%. Methodology for forecasting numbers and growth rates are discussed next.

The BEA methodology for annualization of growth rate, r , is:⁴⁴

$$r = [(GDP_t / GDP_0)^{m/n} - 1] \times 100 \quad (1)$$

The formula assumes GDP in the current period (GDP_t) and the previous period (GDP_0) are known. Because fourth quarter GDP is unknown at this writing, the forecast for fourth quarter 2016 and annual 2016 GDP numbers are future estimates based on the arithmetic average growth rate of the previous three periods. For example, GDP growth for Q4 2016 is calculated:

$$Q4 = (Q1 + Q2 + Q3) / 3 \quad (2)$$

The Q4 2016 Current GDP is arrived at by multiplying the 2015 Current GDP (18,036.6 billion) by the computed Q4 Current GDP Growth Rate (3.1%). Similar methodology is used for computing Q4 2016 and annual 2016 Real GDP and Real GDP Growth rates. The forecasted 1.7 % rate of Real GDP growth for this year is pulled up by third quarter Real GDP growth of 2.9%. While less than the previous year's 2.6% growth rate, it indicates continued steady economic growth. BEA's final fourth quarter and annual

⁴⁴ "How is Average Annual Growth Calculated?", FAQ/Answer, Bureau of Economic Analysis, US Department of Commerce, accessed November 8, 2017, http://www.bea.gov/faq/index.cfm?faq_id=463.

GDP numbers for 2016 will not be available until March 2017.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average (DJIA) Index Forecast

Reilly and Brown, in their book, *Investment Analysis and Portfolio Management*, offer several approaches for forecasting stock market growth. The Dividend Discount Model (DDM), used to forecast individual firms' stock prices, can also be used for stock index forecasting.⁴⁵ The DDM forecasts market value, V_J , defined as equal to the stock index price, P_J , and is calculated as follows:

$$V_J = P_J = D_1 / (k - g). \quad (3)$$

This involves first calculating D_1 , dividend, based on $D_0(1+g)$, where D_0 is the average stock index dividend for the previous year, and g is the expected growth rate of the economy. Reilly and Brown use the trailing 52-week dividend estimate in *Barron's*. The other main method for arriving at stock market valuation uses the Free Cash Flow to Equity (FCFE) model. Yet other methods include Price-to-earnings ratio (P/E), Price-to-book value ratio (P/BV), Price-to-cash-flow ratio (P/CF), and Price-to-sales ratio (P/S). The DDM, FCFE, and other methods are relatively complex and would require a separate detailed discussion. The table below shows year-end closing values for the DJIA index for 2014 and 2015. The next column shows the actual market close for Friday, December 30, 2016.⁴⁶ The final column shows the projected close for the end of this year

⁴⁵ Frank Reilly and Keith Brown, *Analysis of Investments & Management of Portfolios* (Amherst: South-Western, Cengage Learning, 2012), p. 360.

⁴⁶ DJIA, Interactive Charts, 5-year and 1-year charts, *MarketWatch*, accessed December 30, 2016
<http://www.marketwatch.com/investing/index/djia/charts?chartType=interactive&countryCode=US>

based on historic data embedded in the S&P Election Year chart discussed previously.

Period →	2014 December 31	2015 December 31	2016 December 30 actual	2016 December 30 forecasted
DJIA	18,054	17,425	19,762	18,200

Table 4. Dow Jones Industrial Average: Current and Forecasted

Given the Dow's actual year-end close at 19,762 and the over 1,500-point variance from the forecasted close of 18,200, it would certainly seem stocks are considerably overvalued today. It would be fair to say that based on this brief analysis and historic trends, the scenario for a market correction is more realistic than continuing expectations for unabated market growth ahead. Informed investors may want to frame their expectations accordingly.

Exhibit A
United States Economy Data⁴⁷

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Population (million)	312	314	317	319	321
GDP per capita (USD)	49,725	51,384	52,608	54,375	55,868
GDP (USD bn)	15,518	16,155	16,663	17,348	17,947
Economic Growth (GDP, annual variation in %)	1.6	2.2	1.5	2.4	2.4
Domestic Demand (annual variation in %)	1.6	2.1	1.3	2.5	3.0
Consumption (annual variation in %)	2.3	1.5	1.7	2.7	3.1
Investment (annual variation in %)	6.4	9.8	4.2	5.3	4.0
Exports (G&S, annual variation in %)	6.9	3.4	2.8	3.4	1.1
Imports (G&S, annual variation in %)	5.5	2.2	1.1	3.8	4.9
Industrial Production (annual variation in %)	2.9	2.8	1.9	2.9	0.3
Retail Sales (annual variation in %)	7.3	5.0	3.7	3.9	2.2
Unemployment Rate	8.9	8.1	7.4	6.2	5.3
Fiscal Balance (% of GDP)	-8.4	-6.7	-4.1	-2.8	-2.4

⁴⁷ US Economic Outlook, *FocusEconomics*, accessed November 5, 2016, <http://www.focus-economics.com/countries/united-states>.

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Public Debt (% of GDP)	98.3	102	104	105	106
Money (annual variation in %)	7.4	8.6	6.8	6.2	5.9
Inflation Rate (CPI, annual variation in %, eop)	3.1	1.8	1.5	0.7	0.7
Inflation Rate (CPI, annual variation in %)	3.1	2.1	1.5	1.6	0.1
Inflation (PPI, annual variation in %)	3.9	1.8	1.4	1.6	-0.9
Policy Interest Rate (%)	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.50
Stock Market (annual variation in %)	5.5	7.3	26.5	7.5	-2.2
Current Account (% of GDP)	-3.0	-2.8	-2.3	-2.2	-2.7
Current Account Balance (USD bn)	-460.4	-449.7	-376.8	-389.5	-484.1
Trade Balance (USD billion)	-740.7	-741.2	-702.6	-741.5	-759.3

Exhibit B
Daily Treasury Yield Curve⁴⁸

Date	1 mo	6 mo	1 yr	2yr	5 yr	10 yr	30 yr
11/01/2016	0.24	0.50	0.65	0.83	1.30	1.83	2.58
11/02/2016	0.24	0.51	0.64	0.81	1.26	1.81	2.56
11/03/2016	0.24	0.52	0.64	0.81	1.26	1.82	2.60
11/04/2016	0.25	0.52	0.62	0.80	1.24	1.79	2.56
11/07/2016	0.28	0.54	0.63	0.82	1.29	1.83	2.60
11/08/2016	0.28	0.56	0.71	0.87	1.34	1.88	2.63
11/09/2016	0.30	0.56	0.72	0.90	1.49	2.07	2.88
11/10/2016	0.30	0.59	0.72	0.92	1.56	2.15	2.94

Exhibit C
Tables - current and historic American central bank interest rates⁴⁹

US FED latest interest rate changes

Change Date	Percentage
December 16 2015	0.500 %
December 16 2008	0.250 %

⁴⁸ US Department of the Treasury, Daily Treasury Yield Curves, November 10, 2016, accessed November 10, 2016; <https://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/data-chart-center/interest-rates/Pages/TextView.aspx?data=yield>

⁴⁹ Fed Federal Funds Rate, American Central Banks Interest Rate, *Global Rates.com*, accessed November 10, 2016, <http://www.global-rates.com/interest-rates/central-banks/central-bank-america/fed-interest-rate.aspx>

October 29 2008	1.000 %
October 08 2008	1.500 %
April 30 2008	2.000 %
March 18 2008	2.250 %
January 30 2008	3.000 %
January 22 2008	3.500 %
December 11 2007	4.250 %
October 31 2007	4.500 %

Summary of other central banks' interest rates

Central Bank Interest Rate	Region	Percent	Date
FED interest rate	United States	0.500 %	12-16-2015
RBA interest rate	Australia	1.500 %	08-02-2016
BACEN interest rate	Brazil	14.000 %	10-19-2016
BoE interest rate	Great Britain	0.250 %	08-04-2016
BOC interest rate	Canada	0.500 %	07-15-2015
PBC interest rate	China	4.350 %	10-23-2015
ECB interest rate	Europe	0.000 %	03-10-2016
BoJ interest rate	Japan	0.000 %	02-01-2016
CBR interest rate	Russia	10.000 %	09-16-2016
SARB interest rate	South Africa	7.000 %	03-17-2016

Exhibit D
Interest Rate Forecast⁵⁰

United States Money	Last	Q4/16	Q1/17	Q2/17	Q3/17	2020
Interest Rate	0.5	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	2.25
Interbank Rate	0.88	0.91	0.96	0.96	1	2.5
Money Supply M0	3735753	3945828	4044574	4144915	4246928	5758726
Money Supply M1	3318	3373	3423	3460	3487	3544
Money Supply M2	13071	13284	13484	13661	13819	14770
Foreign Exchange Reserves	122431	122586	122051	121472	120895	114011
Central Bank Balance Sheet	4430040	4422105	4403748	4380187	4354390	4064024
Banks Balance Sheet	15924600	15905510	15905657	15903158	15900576	15866833
Loans to Private Sector	2077	2098	2117	2131	2141	2104
Private Debt to GDP	198	198	198	198	197	194
Foreign Bond Investment	-24784	-15004	-11109	-7530	-4768	9295

⁵⁰ United States Fed Funds Rate, *Trading Economics*, accessed November 7, 2016, <http://www.tradingeconomics.com/united-states/interest-rate/forecast>

Exhibit E

Election Year Seasonal Chart⁵¹

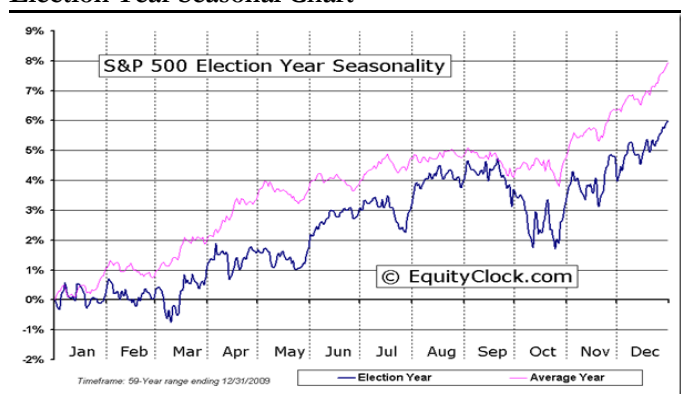


Exhibit F

Bureau of Economic Analysis GDP numbers are used for second quarter (Q2) and third quarter (Q3) of 2016.

The BEA methodology⁵² for annualization of growth is:

$$r = [(GDP_t / GDP_0)^{m/n} - 1] \times 100.$$

My Calculation:

$$r = ((18651.2 / 18450.1)^{(4/1)} - 1) * 100$$

r, nominal GDP growth rate, is calculated at 4.43% for Q3 of 2016.

Data:

⁵¹ S&P 500 Index Four-Year Election Cycle Seasonal Charts, *Equity Clock*, accessed November 8, 2016, <http://charts.equityclock.com/sp-500-index-four-year-election-cycle-seasonal-charts>.

⁵² "How is Average Annual Growth Calculated?", FAQ/Answer, Bureau of Economic Analysis, US Department of Commerce, accessed November 8, 2017, http://www.bea.gov/faq/index.cfm?faq_id=463

Q3	GDP_t	\$18,651.2 billion
Q2	GDP_0	\$18,450.1 billion
	m	4 (quarters)
	n	1 (period)
Result:	r	4.43 percent

Terms:

GDP_t	the level of activity in the later period
GDP_0	the level of activity in the earlier period
m = periodicity of the data (1 for annual, 4 for quarterly, 12 for monthly)	
n= the number of periods between the earlier period and the later period	
r= nominal GDP Growth rate	

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MEMORIES





THE GREAT AND POWERFUL OGG

by Diana Lizotte

I had an experience like Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz* when I got off the bus at Basic Training in Fort Knox, Kentucky. Like Dorothy, I said to myself, “I don’t think we’re in Kansas anymore, Betsy.” Drill Sergeants were yelling at us for any and every reason. It seemed insane.

“Move, move, move, get off that bus!” they yelled. There were over 50 of us on the bus, all rushing to get out. The drill sergeants didn’t seem to understand or care that the doorway only allowed one person to pass at a time.

Basic Training stories are funny because they are about a life that is so different from life quotidian. The job of training people to be disciplined enough to face mental and physical hardship even when they don’t want to is serious business. Trying to train people well enough that they have a chance to live and survive on a battlefield is also serious business. So, when that very system is seen in a humorous light, it relieves tension. And because it is so different, it provides irony and humor.

As I stepped off the bus, a tall, ebony gladiator yelled, “You’re not dragging that duffel bag fast enough, Cadet! Didn’t your parents work for a living?”

I wondered what that even meant! Of course my parents worked for a living, but what did that have to do with dragging a 60 pound duffel bag, which was over half of my weight, out of the bus and onto a pile of other stacked duffel bags?

About ten feet from me, a medium-sized, two-legged American Bulldog wearing thick glasses and sporting a “high and tight” haircut yelled out, “When I call your name, you will sound off with ‘Here, Drill Sergeant!’” He had a thick southern drawl. I found out later that he was from the Blue Ridge Mountains of Tennessee. I could see that his nametape read “Ogg.” I kept the thought to myself that the name *Ogg* rhymed with *dog*, which is what he looked like. It was a good thing I didn’t share my humor with him, because I found out that he was humorless.

He started taking roll call.

“Once you claim your name, you will form a line on the lines you see painted on the ground in front of you.” He pointed at four yellow lines. “You will fill in the lines from my left to my right. Once the line is full, you will begin to fill in the next line back. Do you understand?” yelled Ogg.

A few of us conversationally and in normally-toned voices replied, “Yes,” or “Sure.” You would have thought we had just put Ogg’s favorite kitten in a microwave.

“Where do you think you cadets are?” he bellowed. He started yelling sentences at machine-gun pace, “This is not Mr. Roger’s Neighborhood! Do you think we are sitting in Mr. Roger’s living room taking off our sneakers and putting on a special sweater so we can watch a puppet show and a toy train?!!” He paused, then growled, “When I ask you a question, you will respond with either a ‘Yes’ or a ‘No’ unless the answer requires a more detailed response. At the end of every response, you will end your statement with ‘Drill Sergeant’ and all of this will be said in a command voice. A command voice is one that is delivered at the volume that I am using right now. That way everyone can hear everyone else and everything is out in the open, so that when each of you makes a mistake and I correct it – and believe me, ALL Y’ALL will make mistakes and I will

be right there to correct you – everyone can hear and learn. Is that clear, cadets?”

This time, we all yelled back in a thunderous cry, “Yes, Drill Sergeant!!”

“Good. We can now commence with roll call,” said Ogg in a command voice. “Arnold, Michael J.”

Arnold yelled back, “Here, Drill Sergeant!” He had blond shoulder length hair and looked like a hip tennis player or surfer.

“Brown, Marquez A.”

“Here, Drill Sergeant!” bellowed a tall cadet with a handsome face and a fade cut. His trimmed and shaped Afro had a gleaming gel in it. His muscular biceps were so large that the short sleeves of his polo shirt puffed up and couldn’t fit over those bulging biceps. I thought to myself that no one would ever dare tell Cadet Brown that Anne of Green Gables would have been envious of those puffed sleeves. I thought that Brown looked like a man who could stand up to any force, but looks can be deceiving.

“Brown, Shaniqua C.”

From the back of our group, I heard a mouse squeak in its loudest voice, “Here, Drill Sergeant.”

“Who the hell let Minnie Mouse join this man’s Army?” belted out Drill Sergeant Ogg. “Brown, Marquez A., you will train your sister to use a command voice.”

“That ain’t my sister,” replied Marquez.

That was the wrong answer.

“Drop and give me 100 push-ups, Brown, M.,” directed Drill Sergeant Ogg. As Marquez began knocking out push-ups, Ogg stated, “From now on you will be known as ‘B.M.’ which is merely an acronym for your name, Brown, Marquez. Is that understood?”

From the push up position Marquez yelled, “Yes, Drill Sergeant.”

“Gooooood,” replied Ogg, with a wide grin.

When Ogg finished calling our names there were 32 of us standing on the four lines. We were his platoon.

Ah, the platoon: Third Platoon, Charlie Company. We were fondly known as “The Third Herd,” because we were as slow as cows and pretty dumb – at least to the ways

of the Army. Or maybe it was just because the words rhymed.

If you've ever seen the drill sergeants in movies like *Major Payne*, *Biloxi Blues*, or *Full Metal Jacket*, you know what drill sergeants do. If you haven't, then let me tell you a little about the mission of drill sergeants and Basic Training.

I went to Army Basic Training in 1984. The Vietnam War had ended nine years earlier. Some of our drill sergeants and training cadre had served in that war. Luckily, I don't think any of them had metal plates in their heads like the unbalanced Sergeant Toomey of *Biloxi Blues*. But although Toomey was unbalanced, he got it right when he described the mission of the drill sergeant in his conversation with Epstein in the movie:

This isn't Sunday School, this isn't pass or fail – this is death shit we're talking about. Men do not face enemy machine guns because they're treated with kindness. I don't want them human. I want them obedient. I'm trying to save those boys' lives, you crawling bookworm.

Just as Sergeant Toomey ruled over Epstein in *Biloxi Blues*, Drill Sergeant Ogg ruled over me and my fellow cadets at basic training. What he taught me is carved into my psyche more permanently than the "Mother" tattoo on his biceps. I always wondered if Drill Sergeant Ogg's "Mother" tattoo was a testimony to his "Dear Old Mom" or to remind him to always be a "Mother F---r." It remains a mystery, but if I had to guess, it would be the latter.

When I got off the bus and saw my surreal surroundings, I immediately made the determination that I wanted to stay out of the crosshairs of Drill Sergeant Ogg. I didn't like getting yelled at. Some people have thick skin, but I don't. I might even cry if someone yelled at me and that would be very embarrassing to cry in public! I wanted to do everything I could to meet his requirements, so he wouldn't yell at me.

For two weeks, Ogg had let us know that he was in complete control. During his first lecture to us, he said,

“You will not eat, sleep, or defecate unless I tell you to!” And that wasn’t far from the truth. Every evening, he posted a schedule onto our barracks door. It told us the times for chow, personal hygiene and lights-out. If we deviated from it, he yelled at us and made us do 100 push-ups. If any poor Soldier happened to moan from the pain of doing those push-ups, Ogg would yell, “THAT’S WHAT MY WIFE DID WHEN I SATISFIED HER LAST NIGHT! DO YOU THINK DOING PUSH-UPS IS PROCREATION, RECRUIT????? GIVE ME ANOTHER 100 SO YOU’RE NOT CONFUSED!!!!”

Initially, members of the platoon would want to kill the person who had moaned, or anyone else who messed up and made us do push-ups. But as time passed, the numbers of platoon members Ogg yelled at increased and the targeted insults created a special bond among those who received them. So far, Ogg hadn’t yelled at me personally and I was proud of that. I was trying hard to be perfect. My pride set me apart from my fellow platoon members. I felt that I was better than them.

During the second week of basic training it was my turn to lead the platoon. During the first two weeks, I had been excelling at everything: I “maxed” the physical training test, got expert at the firing range, “maxed” the land navigation test, and made it to every formation ahead of time. I was happy and proud of my success and it seemed to keep me out of hot water with Ogg. But I didn’t notice that as time passed, my fellow platoon members seemed to be avoiding me. They sat together during meal times and didn’t save me a seat. They didn’t go out of their way to say, “Hi,” or to talk to me during breaks. I was letting my success go to my head. But Sergeant Ogg would soon show me that I was a mere human, just like my fellow platoon members.

So there I was, leading the platoon home after a grueling day at the Fort Knox grenade range. I was confidently calling cadence: “They say that in the Army, the chow is mighty fine! A biscuit rolled off the table, and killed a friend of mine!”¹ To which the platoon responded appropriately, “Oh, Lord, I wanna go, but they won’t let me go ho-o-o-o-o-me, hey!”¹

The sun was on my back and I was looking forward to getting to the mess hall for some chow. We ruck-marched as a form of transportation, burning over a thousand calories daily. We only ate three meals a day, no snacks. We were so hungry, we usually devoured everything the cooks threw onto our plates: mashed potatoes and gravy, fruit cup, overcooked spinach, dense rolls with as many pats of butter as possible, and whole chicken legs including the tendons and nubs on the ends. We were so hungry that even if it had smelled like canned cat food we would have devoured it; if the food seemed mildly edible, we ate it.

Then, as I dreamed of eating dinner, I called a command on the wrong foot. Who cares about this simple mistake, right? Well, in the Army everything is about unity and the team. As the Drill Sergeants say, normally with a southern drawl, “They ain’t no ‘P in TEAM, dipshit!” and the Army is the ultimate team. So, when marching troops, you want them to move as one unit – organized and pretty. To keep the unit together when turning, you gotta call the command on the correct foot. For a right turn, you call it on the right foot; left turn, you call it on the left foot. I wanted the platoon to go right, so I needed to yell, “Right turn! March!” with each portion of the command on the right foot. If the timing is right, the platoon will flawlessly execute a 90-degree right turn.

But, this was my first test on a team event. I was good at individual displays of competence, like firing a rifle, finding points on a map while using a compass, and taking written tests. But, looking back, I can see that I was still green when it came to team activities and Drill Sergeant Ogg was getting ready to snap me like a twig!

I said, “Right turn! March!” on the left foot, instead of on the right one.

I expected the platoon to collapse in on itself, a lightning bolt to strike, or the ground to swallow me up. Nothing like that happened, no, something much worse! Although it didn’t look pretty because a few people shuffled their feet while turning, the formation did make the right turn. Then, Sergeant Ogg magically appeared at my side like

Voldemort. Ogg marched to my left, sandwiching me in between him and the platoon. He started calling cadence above my voice and took command away from me. Despite this jarring loss of authority, I forced myself to stand tall, all five foot two of me.

Sergeant Ogg barked, "MARK TIME! MARCH!...PLATOON! HALT!" Spittle glistened on his small, Army-regulation, Hitler mustache. We stopped marching. Everything was quiet. I remembered to execute a left face so I could face him. My eyes were pinned to the nametape on his chest with its three terrifying letters, O-G-G. I dared not to look into his beady little eyes for the fear that they would burn a hole into my soul.

"LIZZY!" He bellowed. I could smell the burnt coffee and Cremora on the stressed syllable of my nickname, "Lizzy." "Yes, Drill Sergeant!" I yelled back, pretending to be fierce and confident, though I wanted to run and hide.

"What did you do wrong?" he menaced, his eyes squinting behind his black-rimmed, "birth-control" glasses, fondly known by the acronym BCGs.

"I called the command on the wrong foot, Drill Sergeant! Sorry, Drill Sergeant!" I said, wondering how many hundreds of push-ups he would make me do. But he momentarily held off on the push-ups and did something that hurt me even more.

"SORRY?! SORRY?!" He fumed. His face got red and he looked like a volcano ready to blow, "SORRY LIES SOMEWHERE BETWEEN SHIT AND SYPHILIS IN MY BOOK! NOW DROP AND GIVE ME 100!"

I got down into the front-leaning-rest position, all alone, and started knocking out push-ups. "One drill sergeant, two drill sergeant..."

Then, the platoon burst out laughing. They couldn't help it. They weren't just laughing at Ogg's alliterative joke – they were laughing at me. I was mortified. I wanted to crawl into a hole from the embarrassment – both from my mistaken marching command and from saying the dreaded S-word, "sorry." Then, Sergeant Ogg dropped the whole platoon for laughing and we started

counting out the push-ups. We stopped laughing somewhere after push-up number nine because it didn't seem like Ogg was getting tired. Of course he would never get tired, He is Ogg. He was just standing there, as always, watching us. Finally he called, "ON YO' FEET, DISEASE!!!!" We rose with effort. He marched us over to the mess hall and filed us into line.

At chow, I thought the platoon would be pissed at me for my mistake, for making us all do push-ups. As we waited in line, everyone followed the rules, standing silently, looking straight ahead at some random spot on the back of the person in front them. We were only allowed to talk in the mess hall for the last five minutes of chow, but until then, we were under a cone of silence.

After I got my tray of mystery meat, overcooked broccoli (at least that's what I think it was), and rice that crunched when I chewed it, Marquez motioned me over to his table. At first I didn't understand what was occurring since no one had ever asked me to come sit with them before. I approached hesitantly and when I arrived, Shaniqua pulled out a chair for me so I could sit down next to her. She actually smiled at me. I was in shock. Then, a drill sergeant yelled, "TALK!" Almost everyone at the table turned to me and started laughing and teasing me with comments like, "Lizzy that was an awesome display of ineptitude! Welcome to the Herd!" or, "Ogg sure laid into you, Lizzy, that was awesome!" and "I thought you were Ogg's Golden Child. I was getting ready to draw a Hitler mustache on you while you slept!"

At first, I was indignant. Then, I smiled too and laughed at myself along with them.

That night, lying in my bunk, thinking about my embarrassment, I realized that by making a mistake, I had become a member of the team. The Great and Powerful Ogg's targeted belittlement of my marching commands and use of the S-word, had taught me an enduring lesson: "They ain't no 'T' in TEAM!" For that moment I was the happiest cow in Third Herd. "Mooooo!" I was no longer an arrogant outsider, but a Soldier on a Team. Who would have thought that mistakes would lead to great friends and memories?

Note

1. If you didn't get the irony of this cadence, called a "Jody," let me point out that the Army biscuit of legend is so hard that if it rolls off the table, bounces and hits you, you will surely die.



THE COLLAPSE OF THE VIDEO RENTAL INDUSTRY

by Emily Quijano

Friday nights meant one thing to my family: A Blockbuster visit. My sisters and I would be shaking with excitement as my mom drove us to the one that used to be down the street from our house. Racing past the movie posters along the store-front windows, I would always be the first one to step foot in the store where I was immediately greeted by a cardboard cutout of Luke Skywalker and Jerry, the cashier who wore a blue uniform and awesome movie-themed ties. Anticipation would build within me as I scanned the kaleidoscopic array of aisles that held thousands of VHS movies waiting to be watched. We made sure to cover the whole store—more than once—to pick the movies we wanted to see. My sisters and I enjoyed creating our own storylines for films we passed that had strange names or humorous movie covers. According to us, *The Breakfast Club* was about a group of teenagers who were obsessed with IHOP. Our visits ended with a bag of four movies in blue cases, a carton of Milk Duds, and microwavable popcorn. I remember it was the best way to spend a Friday night.

The 1980s is most commonly referred to as the era of Blockbuster as cinema was an integral part of American popular culture (Bach 2). From *Top Gun* to *The Princess Bride*, iconic movies that we cherish now were just premiering in theaters and, understandably so, prompted a universal appreciation for motion pictures. Because of this wide-ranging appeal toward film, video stores monopolized the home entertainment market as people preferred to spend their free time watching their favorite movies with family or friends (Fairchild 2). Video stores were found on every corner, but Blockbuster was one video rental chain that quickly became a household name. However, in the 21st century, developing rivals threatened the prosperity of video stores, including Blockbuster's decade-long success (Bailey 4). With the emergence of new digital business models, the video rental industry has become almost obsolete, generating a myriad of public reactions and erasing a piece of American culture that revolved around discovery and genuine connections to the realm of film.

Before video stores, movies were solely watched in theaters, leaving studios hesitant to embrace video technology and video stores because they feared for losses in revenues. The rise of Blockbuster and other video shops occurred in 1980 when studios learned that the afterlife of their films could extend to the developing home-viewing sphere (Bailey 5). At first, the market was growing slowly because video cassettes were not affordable; however, when the prices dropped in the mid-80s, the market thrived and revenue for home video superseded theatrical box office (Vascellaro 4). Soon enough, America became littered with video shops, both independent and chain stores. Blockbuster became the most successful of its kind as it "operated like a contemporaneous movie theater, with 'New Releases' dominating and 'opening weekends' driving customers into the store" (Bailey 5). Their vision for the store layout was to keep it simple: "A uniform store design, with wide aisles, bright colors, and clean shelves deep with new releases" (Bailey 5). Blockbuster was the place for Americans to get their favorite films, explore different genres, and meet people who share their same taste in films.

At the pinnacle of Blockbuster's success, new digital business models were emerging. These new models became known as streaming services which redefined convenient entertainment and altered the home-watching norm (Bach 2). Among these digital rivals, Netflix became the David to Blockbuster's Goliath (Bailey 6). Ironically, Netflix creator Reed Hastings was a Blockbuster customer who decided to start a mail-order DVD rental service after he owed forty dollars in late fees for his copy of *Apollo 13* (Bailey 6). People became intrigued with the convenience of Netflix, the variety of titles it offered, and their subscription policy (Bailey 7). Blockbuster rejected the opportunity to buy Netflix, which led to the company's decade-long effort to replicate Netflix's success by starting their own mail order service and in-store subscription (Bach 5). Blockbuster tried to prevail; however, it became quite clear that people had shifted toward digital distribution of video entertainment (Stelter 4). Blockbuster filed for bankruptcy in 2011, closing their doors along with other big video rental companies. The announcement "amounted to a surrender: a statement that Netflix, symbolized by its little red envelopes and more recently its streaming service, had prevailed over the little blue boxes that Blockbuster VHS tapes and DVDs came in" (Stelter 4). Home entertainment has evolved into digital streaming and movie-delivery methods which has led to the public perception that "brick-and-mortar" stores are inconvenient and troublesome (Vascellaro 5).

The public reactions to the collapse of video rental stores were sparse. Some people had a paradoxical response as they predicted the closing of Blockbuster, yet they were shocked when it actually happened (Gach 6). People assumed that although digital streaming seemed to be the future, there would still be space for the video industry. Many had an expectation that there would be dual sources—digital platforms and brick-and-mortar stores—to obtain film just like bookstores that still exist alongside Amazon and act as an alternate way to get books (Gach 6). Others are confused on why video stores have become obsolete as they believe digital services, specifically Netflix,

have many limitations in their instant streaming as they fail to offer obscure and older films (Gach 7). The closing of mega-stores has left a small, but zealous clientele that believe the video industry still lives on through independent stores (Bailey 4). They believe that local video stores that exist today demonstrate how there is still room for physical media. Independent stores still struggle with the technological advancing world, so they attempt to adapt and modernize their strategies with the support of local people who loves movies. Some independent video shops have installed bars or screening rooms in order to attract customers (Bailey 41). The shock, confusion, and determination to keep the video rental industry alive signifies the importance of video stores in American lives as a source of entertainment.

Video stores carry cultural significance in America's cinematic and societal history. Video stores were not "just a retail space; it was where people made discoveries, took risks, happened upon oddities, [and] realized what kind of moviegoer they were" (Bailey 41). Film viewing had regressed as people depend on Netflix's streaming library which is not curated, programmed, or quality controlled (Bailey 46). Netflix shows carelessness toward film culture as it fails to have important, highly praised, or commercially successful films (Bailey 45). With more convenient and fast ways to obtain films through digital means, video stores have been publicly forgotten and neglected despite the fact that they fostered true appreciation for film culture, cinematic history, and filmmakers (Bhattarai 4). Video stores aimed to make high quality, quirky, foreign, and iconic films accessible to customers (Vascellaro 3). Video stores were shrines to film culture and became the social pubs in neighborhoods across America as they promoted a sense of community (Vascellaro 5). They treated films as artifacts that people could swap, study and recommend which inspired "a generation of movie buffs and cultural critics to collect and treat films the same way books and art are amassed" (Vascellaro 6). People "came to love their quirky "dude behind the counter" keen to help them sift through what

was new, good, and suited to their tastes” (Vascellaro 5). Video stores fostered social interactions and open dialogue. Josh Greenberg, an owner of a local video shop in Washington, says that “there is something wonderful about walking into a video store and seeing all the titles lined up on a shelf. You don't get that with an iTunes interface or a cable on-demand menu” (Vascellaro 6). To those who grew up with video stores, the sight has become a nostalgic thing.

Video stores are disappearing. People are now bewildered to see one at the end of their block. The younger generation of the 21st century will never experience stepping into a shop with an array of aisles holding VHS films. The video rental industry became the epitome of film culture as it nurtures open conversation and interaction. However, it is being replaced by digital business models that isolate the appreciation of cinema. Now the question is when will these new digital streaming models face the same position of possible extinction?

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MY APARTMENT OF MEMORIES

by Hussab Almalik

As the daughter of diplomatic parents, I had to adapt to constant change. Moving every four years and leaving people behind was a normal thing for me. Despite always packing up and leaving, I was able to think of my life as a still growing apartment. Although I am currently constructing the seventh, American floor, each of the other floors holds dear memories from the seven countries in which I have lived. The memories of my floors are still tied to activities that I do today.

I find myself reminiscing about My Apartment of Memories at any moment of the day, even if it is just a simple activity that I do. My mind becomes a projector screen playing these images for me. On my screen, the first floor is small and dark because I was so young that I don't have many memories of the Philippines. The second floor holds my memories of Lebanon, which are rich in detail and love. The third floor holds my memories of Portugal. The fourth floor, my Saudi floor, is still under construction; I know that I will go back there one day and build my actual grown up life there in my parents' home country. Someday,

I will reconstruct the projections of my brain in the fourth floor to fit the memories that I make in Saudi Arabia. The fifth and sixth floors present Czech Republic and Qatar. I have fond memories of each, yet I do not reminisce much about them, since my stay there was short and did not impact me as much as the other floors in my Apartment of Memories, especially the second, Lebanon floor. The seventh floor is the floor that I am currently living in, which is my time in America. I do not look back to my time in America since I am still here.

In all these seven floors, my parents tried so hard to ensure that we were part of the community and that we were together in some way. This was most evident in Lebanon, where I felt as though we were such an integral part of the community, that we made one big family with the other people in the neighborhood. In my Apartment of Memories, the floor that I visit and reminisce of the most is the second floor.

In Lebanon, the apartment that we lived in was a community within itself. To encourage a sense of familiarity in an outside country, the Saudi Embassy bought the apartment building for the Diplomatic Saudi families living there. The apartment was located near the school as well as the Saudi Embassy, which made the location even more of a community than it already was. We all went to the same school, then went back to the same home. Our parents would go to the same work place, then go back to the same home. We would spend our Fridays at the mall down the street either watching a movie, going to the arcade, or sand-coloring cartoon drawings near the food court.

The Apartment had ten floors, each floor belonging to one Saudi family, other than the owner of the tenth floor, who was single Saudi man that filled his apartment with exotic animals rather than humans. We all knew each other and if any of our parents were having a house party, the kids would gather around with the housekeepers and go to the arcade down the street, the movies, the rooftop, or the skating rink. It did not matter where we went, as long as we went together we would be happy.

I was five years old when we first moved to Lebanon. The first floor belonged to the gatekeeper and his family. Whenever our apartment needed maintenance, he would bring his daughter, who was exactly my age, to play with me. I still remember zooming past the narrow halls of my apartment, pushing my sister's pink doll cart with our gatekeeper's daughter sitting on it. Today, every time I see a pink doll cart, I can hear my sister chasing after me, yelling that if I broke her cart, I would be in trouble. I can still hear my mother opening the door to our apartment after coming home from a house party. I can hear me and my sister fighting about whether or not it was me who had vandalised her toys.

The second floor belonged to Laura and her family. I met Laura at school and her brothers were friends with my brother. Every time my brother wanted to go play video games with her brothers, I would go to her room and play with her musical toys. Today, whenever I see a colorful xylophone, I can still remember the feeling of her beige carpet. I had spilt chocolate milk on it while playing the xylophone one day. I was so excited with playing the instrument that I hit it too hard and ended up spilling my milk all over the carpet. Laura's mother was upset when she saw that huge, circular, milky-brown stain covering the majority of the beautiful, new and soft beige carpet. But, she took pity on me and still let me come over to play with Laura after the incident.

The third floor belonged to Rana. Her mother got me a toy kitchen for my sixth birthday, and Rana would always come to my house to play with it. I loved that toy kitchen because it was the biggest box out of all the other presents that I had gotten at my birthday party. I can still hear the tearing of the yellow bow and the red gift wrap covered with colorful balloons.

The fourth floor was one of my best friends, Ghalia, and her family's apartment. I remember going to her house every day after school just to watch fairytales on her bed, while she was learning French from her nanny. My parents never considered to teach me French, however I surprised them by going back home one day and speaking

French to them. It was already difficult for me to differentiate the different languages that I spoke with my family since I was exposed to Arabic, English, Filipino and now French. My favorite memory in Ghalia's house was when we were sitting in her kitchen eating a huge pink watermelon, whilst her mother was rushing to get ready for the dinner that my mother was hosting that night. I remember the watermelon running down our chins and her mother panicking over not being ready on time.

Mimi and Reema lived in the fifth floor. I would go to their house just to bake cookies. I can still hear the loud and annoying beep of their oven, which indicated that the cookies were ready. I remember trying to find a way to stop that beep from occurring, every time I went to their floor, even though it usually meant that I would soon be eating delicious cookies.

The sixth and seventh floors belonged to my mom's best friends who would always prepare food for us, especially during the dinner parties. We lived on the eighth floor. My other best friend, Nourah, lived in the floor above mine, the ninth floor. I would always go to her house just to sit in her room and stare at her Winnie the Pooh lights. I was so fascinated to see Winnie the Pooh on her ceiling rather than on a television screen. I always went back home to my parents wishing for Winnie the Pooh lights. They got me those lights. However, I didn't know that once I got the lights I would not like the design. I ended up not liking Winnie the Pooh, so I ended up giving the lights to Nourah, who ended up with two sets of those lights. Even though I disliked Winnie the Pooh, I still went to her room to stare at those lights. It was our way of bonding.

I find myself traveling back to the second floor of my Apartment of Memories and remembering the door entrance to the main living room located directly after the front door. I remember the smell of the *oud* incense that my housekeepers would burn before a house party. I remember as a child how smelling that meant that my favorite dessert, Knafeh, would be hiding behind the kitchen door. My seventh floor neighbor would always make the dessert whenever my mom had a dinner party. My mother must

always have one of the housekeepers hold me away from the Knafeh, until the guests arrived. I loved anything that she made since she was an excellent baker. Whenever I was looking for anything to eat, I would go downstairs to the seventh floor, just to see what our neighbor had prepared for us since she would make us food every day. When I was a child, if there was cake, that meant that it was my birthday – even if it was not actually my birthday. I remember the large cherry oak table in the dining area, where the housekeepers would set up the food for the house parties, and how if there was cake, we always had back-up candles, so that the guests would sing me happy birthday while I sat at the head of the table. My mother would bribe me that she would let me blow the candles, if I promised to go to bed. I would make my promise just so I could blow the candles. Then, I would go off to bed but I would fake acting as though I was asleep so I could hear what my sister and brother were telling their friends and eavesdrop on the adult conversations that were going on in the house. I remember one night my mother entered the room and I was standing by the door trying so hard to listen that I did not realize that she was approaching. When she found me I acted as though I fell asleep on the floor rather than my own bed. I thought I was coy but my mother knew I was not asleep before she even approached my room.

We had a lot of different fun activities to do in the apartment. It was like living in a big building with all your friends. The best part about living in a building with all your friends was that for the holiday season and for any celebration, we would all gather on the rooftop and watch the fireworks that our parents and older siblings would perform. The kids my age would play with the regular firecrackers. The firecrackers may not seem like much, however now when I see a firecracker, my thoughts immediately go back to my cherished memories of the rooftop building that I once called “home” in Lebanon. I still can hear the cackling and snaps of the fire crackers when I envision and project the rooftop of the second floor in my Apartment of Memories in my own mind. I still see the somewhat dark blue and black sky with glowing with

red, green, yellow, gold and blue fireworks sparkling up the night. I can still hear cars honking in celebration when the fireworks would go off. I can still hear some babies crying because of the loud noises and cheers. I can still hear parents telling us to be careful not to get hurt from the spark. I can still remember when Ramadan ended and the *Eid* celebration came and the entire apartment celebrated its arrival at the rooftop. It was our final year in Lebanon so my family wanted to go all out and buy fireworks that made shapes such as hearts and other geometric figures. I remember how all of us were so happy to see the sky light up with a firework that made a heart and stars surrounded the heart. I remember telling my brother and his friends to do it again just so I can see the heart and stars spark one final time that night. They never sparked a second time, but in my Apartment of Memories, they spark constantly.

I remember us lying on the balcony of our apartment on the seventh floor with my uncle on his final night during his last visit to Lebanon, which was also the year that my family had to travel. I remember looking at the stars shining bright that night and wishing that my next journey would hold memories as beautiful as the ones that I had of Lebanon.

My next journey was in Portugal and I did enjoy it. However, it could not compare to Lebanon.

Because I pick up and leave every so often, I find that until this day, all that I look for in life is togetherness. I know that right now all that I should do is be content with what I have until I go back to Saudi Arabia, where I know that I will actually be starting my life. Until I go back, however, I will often visit the second floor of my Apartment of Memories. It always cheers me up to “go back there” whenever I feel nostalgic and wish to feel some of the togetherness of my big Lebanon family.

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Morgan Herbener is a Fashion Design major and will graduate in 2018.

Rebecca (Becky) Lake is a freshman majoring in Graphic Design, minoring in history. Becky has a passion for design and history, and hopes to combine both in her future career. For hobbies, Becky loves creating art in Photoshop, writing short fiction and poems, and watching Netflix.

Diana (Betsy) Lizotte is a Writing Major who hopes to be able to show and not tell, someday. Although she has been published in the Marymount Banner and the Army's Logistics Magazine, she would like to broaden her repertoire to include novels and literary pieces that somehow help to liberate the oppressed. A retired military officer, she now enjoys studying, nature walks, and hanging out with her one husband, two kids and three miniature dachshunds, often at the same time.

Emily Quijano is a Psychology major and Spanish minor.

Mark (Joey) Robbins is an English major.

Stacy Sekercan is majoring in Sociology and will be graduating in the Fall of 2017. She plans to continue her education by directly going to graduate school to study Social Work. Her focus will be on underprivileged children and/or women and children affected by domestic violence. Among other things, Stacy enjoys volunteering and/or working with children, reading nonfiction, running long distance, and basking in the sunshine at the beach.

Samantha Stallings is an English major with a focus in Secondary Education. After graduating in 2018, she has aspirations to begin teaching at her former high school, Robinson Secondary. Her interests include going on adventures with her younger sister, Kayleigh, reading, participating in compelling discussions with her significant other, Matthew, relaxing, watching old movies, and being around her lively, exuberant family.

Julia Torrico is an Information Technology major with a specialty in Cybersecurity & Networking, and her minors are English and Philosophy. Also, she is considering double majoring in English with a focus in Literature & Languages. She spends her free time reading, watching anime and TV shows, playing video games, and she makes time to spend with her family.

Johnny Vaccaro is an English major and philosophy minor.

April Westmark is a Politics major and International Studies minor.

John Zeray is a mid-career student with an Economics undergraduate and Business Administration graduate academic background. John's taking Finance and other courses to broaden his knowledge and update his skills. He lauds Marymount's students, faculty and staff for their notable kindness and consideration. He has a special interest in the cultural and historical context of Early Christianity.