bubble wrap by Elijah Acquah

There reeked danger
Down under.
There were bruises
From blunders.
Australia was the country of death and woe.

To prevent this
However,
To save people
Forever,
The government decided to censor what explodes.

They took off the video games
Right from the stores' shelves
Because they said they promoted violence,
And sexism against females.

They blocked websites on the Net--
“Objectionable” and “obnoxious”--
Since they provided awkward material
For the young and restless.

The government banned TV
Which had Carlin's seven curses.
It poisoned the youth,
Even if it was blocked on U-verses.

And there went away candy and sweets.
And there went away the workforce.
Candy would rotten people's teeth;
Work permitted injuries from headfirst.

The government wouldn't stop scrutinizing.
More paranoid they were to the paralyzing.
Danger was lurking everywhere
Across the land and the air.
They said, "So what if something
That seems kinda harmless
Would cause many casualties
Without expectation, to be honest?"

For the sake of their citizens' safety
Moreso with that of children,
They began to rid of everything
Because all had some burden.

They banned train stations, cars, buses and planes;
Condiments, books, titles and names;
Beaches, furniture, buildings and shoes;
Signs, natives, wildlife and the didgeridoo.

The government effaced everything
Right to their cores,
Such that their society looked like
Oceania from Orwell's 1984.

Nowadays when tourists find
The land down under the map,
They would see a country
 Entirely covered in bubble wrap.
strange by Elijah Acquah

Boys find some friends
At very first sight,
Only to find themselves
Breathless on a cold night.

Girls trust a jolly man
Who said that he can
Give them what they need
In the back of his white van.

One was greeted to
A friend of their parents,
Claimed that he would
Show them important merits.

But instead, they witnessed
Their parents killed
By bullets that get their heads drilled,
With all their blood gushed and spilled.

We have been taught
To be ignorant, to be safe
From all harm and danger
As we're in a fabulous place.

But our experiences can be
Not what is meant to be,
For underneath the friendly faces
Lurks something strange.

Good Samaritans become public enemies
From false accusations
Of crime, of rape, of murder and felonies
Made by people who just don't like them,
Who seek vengeance for their denial.

They were kind and courteous at first,
Peaceful and tranquil.
But only then they became vile
When they receive nothing special in return.

Citizens carry their corpses
While they walk down the streets.
Peacekeepers turn into firestarters
When backs have been turned.

Below their gentle wave,
There exists burning hatred
By the paranoia of potential culprits
And segregated, profiled minorities.

But our experiences can be
Not what is meant to be,
Because underneath the friendly faces
Lurks something strange.

We have been taught
To be blissful, to be safe
From all harm and danger
As we stay in a friendly place.

The city is harmless,
Innocuous and so calm.
Apparently nothing goes wrong
Under the springs of palm.

But nothing however stops
Demonic nature to exist
And dwell inside your biggest enemy
Coming after you in the mist.

It's best for you to understand
That to not be ignorant can stop a genocide,
And resist the agony and pain
From those who are dark on the inside.

The experiences you take
Matters onto whom you relate
Because under the friendly faces
Lurks something strange.
Fear by Matthew Faley

You do not grow from a girl into a woman once you become an adult.

It starts much younger, when that first spark of fear is implanted into you and continues to grow.

You used to play outside until the sun was long gone. Now you get weary and anxious when you see the sunset.

You used to make friends readily with everyone. Now your aware of the stares people give you and you’ve got to pick and choose painstakingly carefully who you even dare talk to.

Despite the rapid age growth you’d under gone, your mind and body have finally caught up with each other and things are much worse.

You hear about the victims of domestic abuse and how little is done for them.

You hear about all the assaults happening on campus to your peers.

You hear about how a rape is most likely done from someone you already know and that only 3% of rapists see jail time.

Most importantly of all, you hear how it’s your fault.

You shouldn’t have been walking there at that time of night.

You shouldn’t have been wearing that short of a skirt.

You should’ve been watching your drink more closely.

You should’ve realized the type of person you were talking to you.

You shouldn’t have done that and you should’ve of known.

The fear and the blame make you want to cry. How can you be both the perpetrator and the victim?
Sticks and Stones by Matthew Faley

I’m stuck in a world that both
denies
my existence and
demonizes
me

I’m just like everyone else,
I laugh when I’m happy
cry when I’m sad
but to them I am less of a person
because I cannot choose between male and female

I’m not harming anyone,
but I’m still barred from making myself
look like how I am on the inside,
while women in hollywood visit
a plastic surgeon like its
going out of style

I have to be angry all the time,
because if I’m not they have already won
by making me accept the state of things

that this is just how life is
and this is how I deserve to be treated
for trying to change the status quo

I can’t let them win though,
not ever

I dread every semester,
every new encounter
I have to correct them
that’s not my name and
pray they forget it
and treat me like a human being.

God must be dead though,
because not a day goes by
without the wrong name
and the wrong pronouns

Sticks and stones may break my bones
and the pain of their punches may last for days
but the agony of their words lasts a lifetime.
Taught Appreciation for Literacy

Elizabeth Halverson

I had Mrs. Frank as a teacher for three years, during which she covered a wide curriculum that prepared me to enjoy writing then and in the future. In seventh grade, we had one combined Advanced Language Arts group with the eighth graders. It seems hard to believe now that Mrs. Frank managed to cover as much as she did in that one year. We wrote short journalist biographies about our classmates and parody fiction pieces after spending the beginning of the year on a letters-to-the-author national contest called Letters About Literature. While we did learn the five paragraph essay, it was not taught as The Five Paragraph Essay as it was in my later classes. We explored the writing process in different ways, and I appreciated the flexibility, especially since Mrs. Frank taught us to give good feedback to each other in peer reviewing. Strong comments were expected of us, and we all had the same mindset of “I want to get good comments, so I need to give good comments.” Sometimes that involved superficial editing, but it also went deeper into content and clarity. Through the writing portion of this class, I learned to explore my writing and to enjoy doing it.

In reading, we began the year with a utopian short story unit and followed it up with a history lesson on the USSR to give us the cultural understanding for Animal Farm. The year continued on with Fahrenheit 451 and Lord of the Flies, which we as the prosecution followed it up with a mock trail case against Jack and Roger for the murders of Simon and Piggy and the attempted murder of Ralph. (If I recall correctly, we won the case against Jack but not Roger.) This year allowed us a stretch of different experiences, but it was only the beginning as Mrs. Frank continued to push us to work hard while enjoying our work. She taught me to mix academia with pleasure in how I read and wrote as we continued in the next two years to grow under her teaching methods.

We had a slight hiccup with a long term substitute when Mrs. Frank was diagnosed with Crohn’s Disease shortly into my eighth grade year. With this sub, we followed—albeit the stricter version—of Mrs. Frank’s plans for a Greek mythology unit leading up to The Odyssey and a short story unit afterward. We performed speeches under the sub’s guidance, and I can’t help wondering if
this is where my dislike of them originated. This sub—a retired teacher—had strict ideas of what the classroom should look like, and she obviously disapproved of the freedoms we were often allowed, as well as the creative outlets Mrs. Frank would often use as a way to get us interested in a topic. Looking back, this sub was not a bad teacher, but her style and manners served as a vastly different approach from what we were used to. The class resented her for it, and we all looked forward to the day Mrs. Frank’s return would be announced. After Mrs. Frank recovered, the year continued on through books like *The Great Gatsby*, *Hiroshima*, and *Night*. I remember watching several documentaries, and some of them were British for a more neutral perspective on our decision to drop the bombs. The image I remember best, however, was the map of Hitler’s occupied territory. It is one thing to hear a list of countries; it is quite another to see a white map slowly turning red as the war continued. New perspectives and cultural understanding were an important aspect of Mrs. Frank’s curriculum, and it was usually done in an eye-opening way that sticks with me better than most of my actual history courses. Mrs. Frank always wanted to make sure we got the fullest understanding possible, as was the case here as most of us had a visual of the true scope of WWII for the first time.

In ninth grade Honors English, Mrs. Frank brought to our attention more contemporary books like Chris Crutcher’s *Deadline* and Carl Deuker’s *The Runner*, along with *The Kite Runner*. As a follow-up to the reading and typical of her tradition of teaching cultural background, we each chose a topic of Afghan culture to research. I chose women’s rights and discovered writing from a feminist perspective, something I would continue to do as I moved through high school and transitioned to college. This year felt different than before, but that was mostly due to new guidelines and work preparing us for the way our high school Rhetoric and other English classes would function. A lot of students in that class got mad at Mrs. Frank that year. She held us more to deadlines and focused more class time on defining the writing process. While I felt it was all justified, some people disliked the strictness. They did not seem to realize that she was not trying to penalize us but to prepare us. It did not help that during first semester, due to a scheduling conflict, six of us were only there three days a week. Mrs. Frank did amazing things, especially given the time available, and I still respect her for the flexibility and opportunities she provided us throughout those three years.
I have always considered my time in Advanced Language Arts and Honors English as an important step forward in my reading and writing education because it was a time of exploration surrounded by others who loved literature as much as I did. From that first year, I considered Mrs. Frank my favorite teacher, and I still have a hard time believing she introduced us to as much information as she did in such a short amount of time. Aside from literature, she’d given us cultural lessons on Ancient Greece, the formation of the USSR, WWII in Europe, perspective on the decision to drop the atomic bombs, 1980s to current Afghanistan, and social problems in modern America. Looking at the sheer amount of information and critical thinking that happened each year, it provides an amazing image for me to think about as a future educator, but Mrs. Frank did so much more than just the lesson plans for us. I didn’t actually realize how close to death she was my eighth grade year until much later. I had an extremely limited idea of what Crohn’s Disease was, and the one time I saw her in the hospital was after she had started recovery. All things considered, she was back at school in amazing time. I remember the sub warning us just before she left that we needed to take it easy on Mrs. Frank because she was still recovering, but when she came back, it all seemed very normal. Sure, she seemed a bit more tired, but it was class as usual. She was still Mrs. Frank.

It feels incredibly rare to find a teacher willing to alter class plans based on student preference. The *Lord of the Flies* mock trial wasn’t planned; it was chosen based on our strong reactions to the deaths in the book. When we complained in eighth grade about not having enough time in our day to enjoy free reading, Mrs. Frank readily gave us a partial period every Friday for free reading. Such a focus on reading for pleasure was one she had always wanted us to place importance on. The fact that we turned it into a mini celebration with hot chocolate every week just added to the enjoyment. (This was something our substitute never understood but followed along with to humor us and Mrs. Frank’s instructions.) Apparently this was something they continued first semester of ninth grade as well, although that was more by circumstance than anything else. I was not part of that since they mostly did free reading on the days that the six of us were in choir instead of Honors English, a scheduling error that still boggles me. That kind of flexibility led to class that gave us more control than most, especially for a middle school level. She did things in that class I
am learning now make for engaged teaching, providing a level of fluidity that is recommended for new teachers that “isn’t likely” to be seen in older, more traditional teachers. Given that she retired after my freshman year, I am going to assess that she defied the teaching expectations set for her in a way that provided me with an amazing experience.

The biggest lesson I learned from Mrs. Frank was how to enjoy different kinds of reading and writing. I already enjoyed the subject, but she taught me to branch out and see it positively in an academic understanding. She is largely the reason I decided to become an English teacher, and I hope to be able to influence students even partially as positively as she did. As I think of lesson plans, I go back to what has been most effective in my own life experience, and the answer is frequently from her classes. Of course I had other good English teachers, and of course I has positive experiences in (almost) every English class I took; however, Mrs. Frank’s teaching methods stand out because she was willing to go above and beyond classwork for us. She encouraged our creative writing endeavors and pushed us to strive for our best. Regardless of whether it was an assignment or just something I wanted her opinion on, I always worked to get it to be as good as I felt I could before giving it to her because I valued her opinion. Through her classes, I learned to look critically at my own writing even before getting feedback from others. Valuing what I could do was an important step forward that has helped me enjoy my work as I continued through academic work.

Even after I left her class, Mrs. Frank helped me and other students figure out our futures and aided us along the way. The local PEO group in my area nominates one student every year for a national scholarship. She recommended me, and apparently many members of that group from my church readily agreed. Instead of acting as the nominating member, she helped someone else put together their end of the paperwork in order to help me bring out the best in my writing for the personal essay portion. I got the scholarship, by the way. Yes, it was my writing, but I’m so thankful for that extra perspective she gave me because it changed little things about how I put that essay together in ways that benefited me and my writing.

When I can, I like to check in with Mrs. Frank. Last year during winter break, I met her for coffee to catch up. She asked me questions about my ideas for the future and the classes I was taking, as well as using my knowledge as a way to check in on some of
her other students. She told me her honest opinions about other teachers from my high school that you don’t often hear from an educator. “Her classes are a great way to get people interested in health, but they’re far too easy. All of these kids keep declaring pre-med only to realize the workload is far more difficult than they were led to expect.” I gave her as much information as I could and enjoyed hearing about the changes in her life—she and her husband had recently spent a month in Texas for the sole reasoning of spoiling their grandkids. And even though I put up a small protest about it, she bought my drink because it was “no hassle and the only proper thing to do.” Everyone has those authority figures who they feel connected to and received important aid from. Mrs. Frank was that figure for me, providing me with the opportunities to widen my reading selection and strengthen my writing—all while creating a welcoming environment that only made me enjoy it more.
Rachel Lerman

**Background and Introduction**

In the last few years, we have seen brand-name drug prices increase by 14.8%, with specialty drugs increasing by 9.7% and generics up by roughly 4.9% (Worth 2015). Inflation is a natural economic process. Historically, however, medication prices haven't increased as steeply as they have in recent years. The cause of this is linked to the fact that the population as a whole is living on average 25 years longer than in the 1960’s (rgs.org), creating a much higher demand for medication. The “baby boomer” generation is requiring medicines for a wide array of common conditions as well as cancer treatments and specialty drugs as they age; as demand goes up, so do prices. The process of supply and demand and inflation is natural and usually works itself out within the economy. The issue is patients are paying a large amount of their medication costs out of pocket, despite the fact that 90.8% of Americans are currently insured (Potarazu 2015). People need their medications to maintain their health and not taking their prescription is usually not an option. Unfortunately, as prices increase, more and more patients are beginning to put their mortgage or food bill before their medication, with roughly 24% of patients failing to fill a prescription because of its cost (Pollack 2015).

Another cause of the price increases is simply the lack of competition within the pharmaceutical market. Large manufacturers are buying out smaller manufacturers and insurance companies are merging, which leaves fewer choices for the consumer. “The unfortunate fact is that three major pharmacy benefits managers -- CVS Caremark, Express Scripts Inc. and Prime -- negotiate rates between the manufacturers and pharmacies”, writes Sreedhar Potarazu (Potarazu 2015). Because there are fewer companies making decisions, the prices are going up and are being passed along to the consumer. Many manufacturers are trying to justify the rapid jump in drug prices by claiming they need the funds for research and development, as well as to turn a profit and stay in business. However, critics believe this is just an excuse to make a bigger profit, and are even going so far as to call it “price gouging” (Potazaru 2015). Regardless, patients are paying a hefty price to cover these research and development costs.
Both my parents work in the healthcare field: my mom is a nurse and my dad works with University-based hospitals to help them minimize unnecessary costs. When I discussed this assignment with them, the topic of increased drug costs was one that stuck out to them as it is prevalent in their jobs. Many of my mom’s patients suffer from muscular dystrophy, a genetic disease in which the muscles gradually decay. Her patients require dozens of medications daily and while some of the costs are offset by their health insurance, a large amount of their treatment is paid for out of pocket. Most of her patients do not have a significant other and can’t work, a combination that creates constant worry about medication costs. Additionally, my dad has seen a steady pattern in the hospitals he works with: they are all spending more on medications annually than they have previously. Medication costs are costing the hospital more, and patients are paying for it. The fact is the hikes in costs is a nationwide issue; they are not isolated to specific patients, hospitals, or cities.

With this topic being brought up in the news and current campaign so frequently, I have some knowledge on the issue, but also an emotional connection. I have seen the impact that the price increases have had on patients and their families. However, I haven’t taken time to consider the other sides of the argument yet, making me eager to learn about the various positions held regarding the prices of prescription, generic, and specialty medications.

The Process of Forming my Opinion

At the start of my research process, I had some background knowledge on the subject of drug price increases. However, a large amount of my initial knowledge was based on a conversation I had with my dad when I first received the assignment. Before doing any research, my dad was able to give me general and unbiased information about what’s going on nationally regarding the price increases. I asked him several clarification questions regarding both his personal experience working with hospitals as well as the economic aspect of the controversy. While this information didn’t influence me to form an opinion, it provided me with a rough guideline to start researching.
Prior to searching for sources and articles, I created a list of arguments and opinions I wanted to try and find; I knew sources from doctors, patients, presidential candidates, and pharmaceutical companies would be essential to forming an opinion. Starting the assignment with a “game plan” helped make it much more manageable as I was able to break it down into sections. Going into my research, I wanted to be as thorough as possible, which included finding arguments from the companies driving up the prices on medications. I decided to start with that side of the controversy and found articles as well as an interview with the CEO of a major Big Pharma company (CNBC 2015). A majority of these sources argued that the increased costs were for Research and Development, and these led me to look into specifics on how companies were spending their income and excess profit. However, the sources that I found from Big Pharma companies and the CEO of Turing Pharmaceuticals didn’t quite convince me of their argument. Their points seemed a little far-fetched, especially after finding several sources saying companies were only spending a fractional amount of their profit on R&D (Anderson 2014, Pollack 2015). These sources led me to find articles arguing the other side. Many of these discussed the monopolies present in the pharmaceutical market and how the lack of a price cap on prescription medications is negatively affecting patients. I found these articles especially compelling because through this process I have discovered I am attracted to authors’ use of pathos in their writing. Personal stories of how this issue is affecting real people tugged at my heartstrings and really made me feel for the patients. I think through my research process I was slightly leaning toward the position against the price increases, and the arguments I found supporting that side stuck out to me as stronger arguments than the opposition.

I also found several articles that didn’t present a clear argument. While I initially thought these would be helpful sources, I found they didn’t have a passionate opinion one way or the other. These sources made me a bit concerned that perhaps the issue wasn’t as big a deal as I believed it to be; if people weren’t excitedly debating this issue, perhaps it wasn’t something I should be concerned about. At first these sources were annoying. However, I ended up using them to gain some insight for
background information. I also appreciate finding these “average” sources as they led me to continue researching and look for better sources.

Throughout my research, I expected to have initial confusion as well as a few questions regarding the development of the controversy. After I really got into my research, though, the majority of my questions were out of frustration! I found myself finding flaws in both sides of the controversy as well as being upset about the controversy being an issue at all. Through that frustration, I realized I was looking at the argument too much from the emotional aspect and not focusing enough on Big Pharma’s perspective as well as the perspective of doctors prescribing medications and candidates in the current presidential campaign. This class has helped me look at all controversies, not just this one, as more than 2-sided arguments.

At this point, I have not formed a set opinion on this controversy, but I am leaning toward the side opposed to the steep price increases. I believe a cap on prescription drugs is a valid solution if implemented correctly. With that being said, I understand that Big Pharma companies are more than providers of medications, they are businesses and they require profit to stay in business. After all my research, I am no longer confused about this controversy and have a solid foundation of knowledge, helping me begin to take a side in this debate.
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Apple, Google and Automobiles

Anonymous

Apple and Google are trying to change the dominance of traditional carmakers in the auto industry. They are paying attention to the connectivity that links cars with data networks. Compared with traditional carmakers, Apple and Google have great advantages.

Firstly, Google and Apple have access to more financial resources than Daimler and Volkswagen in the stock market. Secondly, Google and Apple understand information and communication technology at the highest level, which traditional carmakers have had difficulty mastering. Thirdly, pressure from competition in the information epoch compels carmakers to use new technologies such as autonomous driving systems, which are closely related to Apple and Google.

Although Apple and Google have so many assets in this competition, I do not think that they will defeat the traditional carmakers easily, because Apple and Google have not mastered the hardcore technologies of manufacturing automobiles. For example, they still do not produce a qualified engine for petrol. Traditional carmakers have not licensed the hardcore patent to Apple and Google. Meanwhile, the high cost of batteries has led to no great progress in the development of electricity-driven technology.

It is well predicted that the entry of Apple and Google into the auto industry not only makes the auto industry more competitive, but also accelerates innovation in this industry.
China’s One-Child Policy

Anonymous

China has made great progress in controlling the population by means of the enforcement of the one-child policy since 1978. Therefore it is surprising that the Chinese government has recently declared it will abandon it. Why has the Chinese government stopped the one-child policy? What effect will the abandonment of one-child policy have on Chinese society? These questions are that this article will discuss.

The first reason that the Chinese have abandoned the policy is that China is encountering an aging society. If China keeps the one-child policy, there will be an insufficient labor force in 30 years. There will be an imbalanced proportion of the young to the old, and the situation will place a heavy burden on the young to support their parents. Secondly, the policy has made parents spoil their children, so that children from one-child families rely more on their parents than themselves when they meet difficulties. During the period when they grow up, their parents do everything for them, and that they develop the habit of caring for only themselves. It is reported that children from one-child families are more selfish compared with other children from families that have more than one child. Thirdly, if parents lose their child and can’t bear another, they will live sad lives when they are old. According to Chinese tradition, the elderly really hope that their offspring are able to come see them from time to time. It is admirable that Chinese government is abandoning the one-child policy.

To encourage young couples to bear more children, the Chinese government has stopped the one-child policy. However, it is doubtful that the government can achieve this goal, because the cost of rearing a child is increasingly high with economic development. The young couples living in big cities such as Beijing and Shanghai are willing to bear a child later rather than sooner, because they must firstly strive for their own apartments where they can live steady lives. High living costs in big cities makes them choose to have one child to support. It is claimed that rich people welcome the abandonment of the one-child policy, because they wish that more young people can inherit the fortune of their families. Maybe this is the only positive effect of the abandonment of the one-child policy.
Industrial Fungal Catalysis

By Felipe Nicolau Manterola

Processing of industrial chemicals by microbial catalysts is a growing and important technology, but at present is more at the research and development stage than at the industrial-commercial one. However, due to the ongoing trends for global processes to increase quality, safety, health, the environment requirements of industrial chemical transformations have strengthened the translation of global bio catalysis research work into industrial applications. It is forecasted by the Freedonia Group that the catalyst market will grow more into chiral catalyst technologies and in technologies that facilitate new, novel transformations; opportunities where fungal catalyst may thrive. The application of fungi in synthesis ranges from the preparation of novel compounds in the milligram scale up to large-scale industrial production of bulk and fine chemicals. Since fungi subsist in absorption of nutrients, they possess a complex metabolism with a large arsenal of enzymes of various activities which degrade compounds in ways that are often not feasible chemically. In addition, substrates are often transformed with high selectivity which can be applied for the production of special chemicals. Before biocatalysts can be of industrial relevance, it is necessary to overcome low substrate conversions, low enzymatic expressions, gain control over cell type, and handle mycelia. Beauveria bassiana is a filamentous fungus widely used as a bio pesticide and biocatalyst; it can enhance the yield and conversion of oxidative biotransformations when it is grown in the presence of chemical and/or environmental stresses. The purpose of this project is to determine the ability of B. bassiana ATCC 7159 to metabolize the sulfur containing azaarene, phenothiazine, in the presence of inducers such as hydrocarbon and insecticides. In this review we explore the major advancements to overcome these bottlenecks for the successful implementation and translation of science and technology into sustainable industrial practices.
To all business people: What I learned about learning

Mary Nyaema

Negotiation is a word that I often associate with a business deal. Back home in my country, Kenya, we often bargain on the lowest prices for common household goods with small scale retailers. Depending on how shrewd you are, one can actually come to settle at half the price that was first quoted. All this is owed to the art of negotiating. I would never have looked at it differently was it not for the help of my educational experience in the ‘learning in the science classroom’ course. In this course, I learnt how to look at negotiation from a learner’s point of view. Learners and their colleagues can be compared to a business deal whereby each one is entitled to contribute ideas on fair ground. The classroom becomes the grounds in which there is no right or wrong answer. Everyone is involved in negotiating ideas and coming up with a commonly accepted answer. While many people in the business world may think the way we learn has no relationship to how they might close deals in the hustle and bustle of their everyday lives, I present this paper to convince them to think otherwise. My intent is not to make learning a business phenomenon. Instead, I want to share my view about the way we learn to business minded people in a manner that might be of interest, and to improve the working relationship between those in the business sector and those in the educational sector.

Before taking this course, I tended to describe learning in terms of teaching. However, most educational experiences, just like how we offer business services, tend to be about something done to someone rather than just a process. There is a whole lot more going on than just the process itself. “Why should we bother ourselves to understand learning?” You may ask yourself “Shouldn’t it be left to the work of educators?” Actually, understanding the term and why educators go into all the trouble of developing theories to perfect this art, might actually help you build more respect for all those involved in shaping it.
Learning tends to have goals such as seeking motivation, vast resources, a good outcome or supporting people as we explore learning. These are very similar to goals one might find in seeking to close business deals. Sometimes, learning in itself becomes entwined with the self of the learner who may never bother to understand where the term actually evolved from.

To begin to shape this understanding, it is important to identify the major components that may be involved in learning: assimilation and accommodation. Assimilation as the process of absorption; just like in a merger, small businesses are absorbed into a larger organization. On the other hand, accommodation can be thought of as changing business strategies to improve on losses that might have happened in the previous budget. While assimilation refers to the use of existing concepts to deal with new phenomenon, accommodation deals with reorganizing existing concepts. For the soccer lovers amongst you, it might help to rethink this idea in terms of a soccer game. When there is a loss, the team starts identifying pitfalls such as weak strikers or a strong defense from the other team (assimilation). With this in mind, they become determined to give it a better shot next time around (accommodation). Only with the occurrence of assimilation and accommodation can conceptual growth and change occur.

Conceptual change is very relevant in the business world as it is in education. For it to occur there must be dissatisfaction with existing concepts (as it often happens when trying to market a new product). This arises when an idea becomes open to debate. When this happens, one concept opens up multiple pathways upon which those involved reach an agreement that there is need for improvement. Only through dissatisfaction can we convince others to buy a new product. Educationists tends to refer to this conviction as a paradigm shift taking place in one’s mind. This occurs because a particular situation that he or she has placed himself in cannot be fully explained. The way an individual gets to the point of dissatisfaction is mainly through self-critique. Critiquing helps take one beyond a confirmation bias. Also important for conceptual change to occur is that a new conception must appear intelligible i.e. it must make sense to the individual. Only then can he fully benefit from the possibilities that it holds. Thirdly, a new conception must appear initially plausible i.e. it has to have truth. It must have the capacity to solve problems that could not previously be solved. Finally, a new conception should suggest the possibility of a fruitful research program i.e. it helps explain what
could not be explained before. It must show the potential to open up new areas of inquiry. Conceptual change does not happen often and when it does it must be feasible. In terms of how a learner constructs knowledge, no one can pinpoint its exact nature as to whether conceptual growth or change takes place. This is because the only lens that a learner has when he comes to the classroom is his own.

One way in which a conceptual change can be achieved in education is through the help of theoretical frameworks. In business we often build theories about how we expect a product to work in order to deliver the right message to the right audience. One tried and true learning theory is constructivism where knowledge is basically generated by the learners themselves. In this sequence, students are given an opportunity to elicit ideas. This is important in order to get to a meaningful end. It is the starting point for the teacher to get to know where the learners are at. In this way, he gets to know the misconceptions that are in place about a particular learning concept and gets a chance to correct them. Isn’t this similar to the way you would go about finding out about people’s tastes and preferences before launching a new product?

One constructivist learning approach is inquiry. This learning approach tends to focus on ways in which contexts can be structured to facilitate the development of learners’ understanding. John Dewey, the founding father of this approach, focused on hands on learning, construction and critiquing. In critiquing, meaning cannot stand by itself and is strongly shaped by whom one interacts with, be it peers or more knowledgeable others. This is very similar to quality assessment of a product. The final product is very much shaped by all those involved in the various steps of its development.

Constructivism, like the stock market, tends to be both objective and subjective in nature. In the stock market the brokers often watch out for the best prices and quote the best prices to their investors. The price their offer is at their discretion and is therefore objective. In learning, constructivism is viewed as objective when knowledge is located within the mind. Basically, disciplinary knowledge i.e. knowledge that others in the discipline agree with, tends to be objective. For example, knowledge in math or science is located within the discipline. Even though everybody’s contribution in exchanging ideas is important, knowledge
that everyone agrees to is only attained after careful negotiation. For instance, various scientific laws have to be tested against nature before they become universal laws. This takes place in a smaller scale in the classroom amongst students when coming up with an answer they all agree to. Similarly, in business, market prices are subject to market trends beyond the control of the brokers which have to be carefully watched and analyzed before naming a suitable market price.

A major driving force behind the constructivist theory is how language is used to advance a particular discipline. Language does not necessarily have to be formal text. It is possible for communication to occur without language. In the stock market example, the deal that is being negotiated between the broker and the investor can be accentuated by a firm handshake. Other forms of language that do not involve text can be seen when one is carrying out a monologue. In learning, dialogues are often more beneficial than monologues as they involve exchange of ideas; it is a conversation through which action is possible. Words can take on different meanings according to the context. Therefore, the role of language is important.

Learning also centers around how a teacher defines pathways or “trajectories” on how to present knowledge to students. This is analogous to undertaking a business trip to explore potential global markets for your products. You and your business partners embark on acquiring as much knowledge as possible to make the trip a success. You may plan on what you intend to achieve from this trip and even anticipate certain gains from it. However, once you embark on this trip, you are forced to adjust because of the conditions that you encounter. Certain investments might present themselves that you might want to bring back home with you. You may also find that you might need to make some adjustments to the product to better suit the consumer. These are unforeseen circumstances that were unknown to you when planning for this trip and become your “trajectory”. The original plan that you had before you set off can be referred to as your “hypothetical trajectory”.

In the learning situation, a teacher’s hypothetical trajectory centers on learning goals. These goals are usually stated behaviorally in the curriculum standards for teaching. They are usually about disciplinary and content knowledge. However, a teacher’s own conceptual framework also plays a key role in developing learning goals he wants to achieve. It is important for him to
think about his own orientation of teaching. He should be able to use his own efficiency to get through the content where he incorporated his own knowledge and what he has come to know about his students.

Closely linked to this hypothetical trajectory is what the teacher knows about a particular discipline on one hand and what he knows about student learning on the other. In advancing disciplinary knowledge, a meaningful relation must develop between what a teacher knows about a particular discipline, his knowledge about student learning and how he intends to achieve his learning goal. In considering his own knowledge of a particular discipline, he might want to look at disciplinary activities and representation where language serves as the negotiator between what he actually knows and the actual teaching experience.

On considering what a teacher knows about student learning, his own hypothesis of students’ knowledge is important. He should find out what they don’t know and use it as a predictor of where they will be at. This is different from an assumption that all students are at one point. He should also consider his own theories about disciplinary learning and teaching. This may include philosophical theories like Piaget’s stages of development. All this should be focused on information transfer which is the best way to teach and learn. Also important is the teachers’ knowledge of how students prefer to learn a particular topic. Understanding how students learn is important for the development of a teachers’ pedagogical content knowledge. His own philosophy determines how he shapes students’ learning. After teaching the same topic repeatedly, a teacher develops knowledge of students’ learning of that particular topic. He develops various pathways to teach. Some may be based on content development while others may be based on understanding a concept. The pathway he chooses is determined by what a particular group of students know.

Teachers and students are engaged in co-construction of knowledge. A teacher lays out one form of conceptual framework while the students he interacts with each lay out a different form. Knowledge is advanced through the interaction of the two. The teacher tries to create disequilibrium within the frameworks that students present. It is equally important for the teacher to understand these frameworks, otherwise it becomes difficult for the student to progress. How a particular student views a particular topic is important for how that particular topic will be taught by the teacher.
Through this course, I have also learnt to deal with real world situations, especially when they involve diverse classrooms. Diversity is inevitable even in the business world. It tends to encompass more than just physical appearance and may include religious beliefs. The teacher should work towards developing a non-threatening learning environment in this instance. He should make the students comfortable and acknowledge what they bring in. There should be no judgment in this kind of environment. He should be well versed with his role in this particular classroom and have some knowledge of language participation and how to participate. Discourse is important where the dialogue becomes more or less co-generative. Negotiation of ideas is the starting point to move forward.

Learning is best defined as exchange of ideas that involves negotiation, prior knowledge and linking what we know to what we are dealing with. It is aligned with the nature of a discipline—science, in my case—as it has to be consistent with its accepted behavior and language. The way the nature of knowledge is presented over the years of schooling is likely to affect students’ understanding of it, and how they relate to that knowledge. If science is presented to students as a body of knowledge, proven facts and absolute truth, then students tend to focus on rote learning. On the other hand, if they are taught to embrace argumentation, then they might focus on concepts and variations which are more beneficial to them. This is very similar to the business situation where argumentation is the game of the day in launching and sustaining massive advertising campaign. It is proof enough to show that we can go a long way by meaningfully interacting with others as opposed to mere presentation of facts.
Found Love

Hieu Nguyen

One Friday evening, the Wayne family is having a delightful dinner at their home, located near Langley Air Force Base in Virginia. Luke Wayne is a Major in the United States Air Force, or USAF, a fighter pilot flying the F-15C Eagle. His wife, Cierra, is also an Air Force officer with the same rank. She is a communication officer of the air base. Their children are 11-year-old Patrick and nine-year-old Grace. They are talking about how their days go.

When Grace starts talking, she says, “Today in class we made cards for Valentines’ day and gave them to everyone.” She goes to get the card that she receives from a boy and puts it on the table. Everyone seems surprised because of the robots and flower drawings on it.

“What is love?” Grace asks curiously.

“How do I answer this? Let's say love is about caring and when you love someone you care, think, and worry about that person or persons all the time like the way I love your mother and you,” Luke replies, looking at both children. “You will understand it when you grow up and meet people.”

“Dad, how did you and mom meet?” Patrick asks.

Then Grace asks her parents, “How did you fall in love?” Luke and Cierra glance at each other and smile.

“It’s a long story. Let’s finish the meal then your mother and I will tell you,” Luke answers.

After helping Cierra clean the table and wash the dishes, Luke takes the kids to the living room. Patrick and Grace sit comfortably on the couch. The telephone suddenly rings and Cierra answers. The call is from her family in Nebraska; her parents, uncles, aunts, and relatives want to talk to her.

“Luke, I have to talk to my family. Would you be all right telling the story by yourself?” She asks.
“I’ll be okay. Go ahead. They need to talk to you. Leave the kids to me,” he replies. “Say hi to everyone for me.”

“All right. I’ll be back as soon as possible,” Cierra tells him. “Kids, I have to take a phone call. Have fun with dad, okay,” she says to Patrick and Grace.

“Yes mommy,” they respond.

Cierra goes to the basement to talk to her family.

“All right, kids. Are you ready to hear an awesome story?” Luke asks.

“Yes dad,” both children reply.

Then Luke begins telling the story of how he met and fell in love with Cierra.

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In 2018, I sat waiting patiently for my flight to Laughlin Air Force Base; I could not wait to get my flight training started. All I wanted to do was to live out my dream of flying combat aircraft. That was my ultimate dream.

_Flying made me happy._

As I sat there waiting, I thought about my terrible romantic life. I had been a loner and I had never dated anyone in high school or college. Before becoming an Air Force officer, I had made lots of friends, both guys and girls. However, I still felt alone when my friends were away. None of my lady friends really had interest in dating me. Deep down inside, I always felt unwanted and unlucky. In the past, I met someone, a girl who changed me, but she did not choose to be with me. I had never opened myself again to anyone after that.

Years ago, I kept having a dream about a girl would hold reach out for my hand and hold it; this mysterious girl and I would then walk and talk, holding hands.

As I sat on the waiting chairs, I looked across and noticed another airman in the same Air Force tiger striped camouflage uniform I had come to adorn. This airman was a female officer with gold bars; she was a Second Lieutenant like me. After checking
messages from my phone, I looked up and met the airman’s blue eyes. We smiled at each other. Looking over the top of her right pocket, the nametag read ‘Cosgrove.’ Both Lieutenant Cosgrove and I were only the military service members, waiting for our flights to Austin, Texas at Dallas International Airport. Interestingly our seats on the plane were next to one another. Lieutenant Cosgrove’s first name was Cierra. We talked for a little during the flight. When the aircraft arrived at the airport, we said farewell and wished each other good luck.

_I would have never guessed that I would see Lt. Cosgrove again._

I graduated the University of Iowa with the Bachelor’s Degree in journalism and also received my Second Lieutenant commission through the Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps, also known as Air Force ROTC. During my time with the Air Force ROTC Detachment 215, I was a group commander with the rank of Cadet Major. Born in a military family, Cierra followed her father’s footsteps by joining the Air Force ROTC program at the University of Nebraska in Lincoln. By graduation, Cierra was the wing commander of her detachment, Detachment 414.

After the flight with Cierra, I went to flight training in Laughlin Air Force Base in Texas and received the silver pilot wing after completing jet training program at Sheppard Air Force Base. I was assigned to Tyndall Air Force Base, Florida for F-15 training and duty after receiving my pilot wing. Meanwhile Cierra went to Goodfellow Air Force Base for her communication technical training. When she completed the training, she was assigned to Seymour Johnson Air Force Base. She worked in a communication squadron there.

While working at Tyndall Air Force Base, I attended the annual NATO aerial refueling convention, which was held in San Antonio in 2020. I, now a First Lieutenant, was assistant officer to Air Force Major Jake Menster to the convention. We represented one of the USAF units for fighter aerial refueling. On one day of the five-day conference, I walked on the Riverwalk for a break. As I walked along the Riverwalk, I recalled my time with Phi Theta Kappa (international honor society of two-year community colleges) friends and advisors just a few years ago at this same location.
Suddenly I met an enlisted airman walking by himself; the airman gave me a nod of acknowledgment. We then engaged in conversations about the USAF. A few young ladies walked by and winked at the enlisted man. He then asked me if he could go talk to one of the ladies because she was actually waiting for him regardless of her friends. Seeing the airman as my younger self, I told him to go and gave him advice on life and girls before departing.

After the airman left, I continued walking until I saw a female officer walking by. I looked at her and she looked at me. After passing one another, we both stopped and turned around for we recognized each other.

“Lieutenant Luke Wayne, is that you?” Cierra asked.

“That’s me. Lieutenant Cierra Cosgrove, right? Surprised to see you here,” I replied.

“Yup. What a small world!! Mind if I ask where you’re heading?” Cierra said.

“I’m just walking around,” I answered.

“May I walk with you? It’s boring walking by myself,” She asked.

“Why not,” I replied.

Cierra and I continued talking while walking on the Riverwalk.

On Sunday morning, Cierra found me sitting by myself at the Catholic church and joined me. She reached out to hold my hand as we began to say the Lord’s Prayer during mass, but I nicely refused. At the Catholic mass, people usually hold hands as when the Lord’s Prayer begins. I personally don’t want to hold anyone’s hands because the only person I would hold hands is my girlfriend or my wife. I told her I’m sorry for not holding her hand when the mass was over. We later went to a restaurant on the Riverwalk for breakfast after mass. Before departing, Cierra and I exchanged emails and phone numbers.

After our meeting in San Antonio, Cierra and I began to communicate via email and Facebook. We chatted and emailed one another whenever we had the chance, but we were busy working and training.
We learned more about each other through online communication. Interestingly we found we had a lot in common. We both liked reading, biking, and traveling. We were Star Wars fans, members of Phi Theta Kappa, Air Force ROTC graduates, dreamers, planners, and overachievers. Our favorite bands were the Beatles and the Bee Gees. Chess was our favorite board game. Cierra and I also enjoyed listening to music of other artists such as Paul McCartney, John Legend, and Olly Murs. We also liked combat aircraft and Belgium comics such as the Adventures of Tintin and Lucky Luke. Not to mention, we always carried a deck of playing cards wherever we go. Surely I had met someone like myself, but I still thought of Miranda Hamilton, my first real “crush.”

It was the first time in my life, I really felt caring and jealous for a lady friend. Meeting Miranda had changed my life and point of view of “the one” and she was one of my close friends. I still believed that other young ladies would not appreciate me for who I was and I only felt happy when I was with Miranda. In my mind, she was still “the one.” Sometimes I considered her my best friend, and I told her everything before telling my family and my other friends.

Miranda attended Coe College in Cedar Rapids, Iowa after transferring from Scott. At Coe College, she studied English and mass communication. Miranda and I went to Scott together; we were both members of Phi Theta Kappa. After graduating from Scott, we studied at different universities. Miranda and I kept in touch and hung out whenever we could during our time in college.

Miranda started dating George Johnson in college while studying at Coe. George was a student in the business department. They met at one social event through their mutual friend. For the first time, they decided to spend more time together. He later asked her out on a date. Gradually she started to like him. Their relationship got more serious after graduation and eventually they started dating.

That was Miranda, my first real love interest. Now let’s get back to your mother and me.

In 2022, Cierra and I were both promoted to Captains at our respective air bases and assigned to 84th Fighter Wing at RAF Lakenheath in the United Kingdom after completing the technical training and serving in different bases. The 84th Fighter Wing was
one of two USAF fighter wings in Europe. I was a pilot of the 493rd Fighter Squadron, under the 84th Operation Group. Cierra was an officer in the 84th Communications Squadron of the 84th Mission Support Group.

I was always single and hadn’t dated anyone for years. In the past, I had crushes on several girls in high school and college, but none of them were serious. I prematurely liked them for their looks. Yet I met Miranda and I did not consider her as my crush even though I had feelings for her.

Unlike me, Cierra had been in two serious relationships. She dated Justin Lenz, a football player in high school. They broke up during senior year. When Cierra went to Central Community College, she met John Anderson. They both graduated and transferred to the University of Lincoln at the same time. Cierra and John were friends at the junior college, but then decided to take it to the next level at the University of Lincoln.

As fate intervened, Cierra and I met again on the Open House weekend at RAF Lakenheath. Cierra saw me in my green flight suit, talking to local citizens about the F-15 Eagle and came to me after they left. She was behind me as I was checking the aircraft.

“Hello Captain Wayne. It’s good to see you again,” Cierra said.

“Captain Cosgrove, what a surprise!! How have you been?” I responded.

“I’m doing well,” Cierra replied. “You did not tell me that you’d be stationed here.”


“That's all right,” Cierra said. “Hey, are you hungry? If so we can eat lunch together and catch up. It's nice to hang out with an old friend.”

“I am indeed, and I would love to catch up; it’s been awhile,” I told her. Then we headed to get food. Cierra and I departed after the meal; we had different tasks to do that day.

We spent time together whenever we could find time for our jobs were different. Eventually Cierra and I became closer friends. I slowly began to like her more than a friend. Similar to Miranda's situation, I felt jealous whenever I saw Cierra talking to
other guys. I also worried about her safety although my job, flying an expensive warplane, was more dangerous than hers. *I always care and worry about my friends, but never in this way.*

Due to the ongoing conflicts in Europe and the Middle East, I was deployed to several bases in Spain, Poland, Italy, and Turkey. I participated in the military exercises and air patrol missions. For me, every homecoming, returning to home base in the United Kingdom, had been lonely and boring because my family and friends from Iowa were not there to greet me, and I was single. The only people who greeted me were pilots in my squadron and other airmen and officers.

Military service members are always given 30 days off per year. I came home in Iowa to visit my family and friends every once awhile. During one trip to my home state, I realized I could not stop thinking about Cierra. I talked to Dakota Murphey, one of my close friends. Dakota became one of my “wingmen” since we first met at Scott. I always asked him for advice. We often helped each other whenever we needed help.

“*I think you really like this girl. I know that you still have feelings for Miranda, but she is taken now. Have you told Cierra your feelings?”* Dakota asked me.

“You’re totally right, my friend. I haven’t told Cierra yet. I must admit that I like her, but she has a boyfriend. That’s why I haven’t told her anything because I’m waiting for the right moment,” I answered.

“Good point. But remember, honesty is the best policy. You should tell her as soon as possible. The boyfriend may stand in the way. But, she is your friend. You guys know each other well. You never know where life can take you,” Dakota said.

“*Funny. Miranda told me the same thing couple years ago when we were in San Antonio. I’ll keep that in mind,”* I replied.

“*Luke, let me ask you something… Do you feel happy when you’re with Cierra?”* Dakota asked.

“I do feel happy when I’m with her. I don't feel like that when I'm with other lady friends I've known. It's just her,” I responded.
There you go! That is how Carly and I feel about each other, too. I say give it a try. You don't know what may happen. Besides, I'm sure Miranda would tell you the same thing,” Dakota said. “You don't have to wait for 'the one' to show up anymore; go and find her.”

We continued chatting about other matters. Dakota mentioned that he might propose to Carly, his girlfriend, in the near future. I thought about all of this for a while.

I then returned to the base in England after visiting home. I still hadn’t told Cierra my feelings for her. Suddenly Cierra found out that John had cheated on her while overseas, and he had broken off the relationship with her. In the States, John began losing interest in Cierra because she had been far away, working in the UK. He started seeing another girl and told her on the phone.

After being dumped by John, Cierra told her friends about it and they helped her out. Cierra's friends tried their best to make her feel better. Cierra and I continued working and going out as usual. Our friendship continued to grow.

On one Sunday afternoon, Cierra decided to visit me while her female friends and coworkers were absent. She came to me for company because she trusted me. At that time, I lived in an apartment near the base.

Cierra came knocking at my door. I opened it and invited her in. Seeing her in sad mood, I knew something was wrong.


“I'm not in a good mood. John broke up with me over the phone. He's seeing another girl in Nebraska,” Cierra answered. “I talked to my friends in the base and back home about it, but it still hurts.”

“I'm sorry. I know it's painful,” I said. “Is there anything I can do to help you feel better?”

“Actually you can. Would you mind if I stayed with you this afternoon? I can’t call my family and my friends are out of town. I have no one to talk to,” She told me.

“Of course, you can. You are welcome here anytime,” I said to her.
Tears slowly came out of her eyes. I had her sit on the couch and gave her some tissues. Cierra sat next to me and laid her head on my shoulder. Suddenly she was reaching out for my hand; I gently removed hers from mine. She tried to talk, but could not and started crying. Seeing my friend in such a mood, I held her tight and told her, “It is okay to cry, let it all out.”

While she was crying on my shoulder, I felt bad for her. “You know, he’s just another jerk who does not treat you right. You deserve better than this,” I said to her.

“How do you know when you’ve never dated?” She stopped crying for a moment and asked.

“I know because I once cared for someone, but she chose another guy over me. I’m fine with it as long as she’s happy. In the end, she chose the right person and she’s happy with him,” I answered. “I never dated her, but it felt painful seeing her with another guy. I felt it should be me, not him.”

Cierra continued crying for a little bit. To help her feel better, I played Kermit the Frog's *Rainbow Connection*, and the Beatles' *Penny Lane* and *Help* after Cierra finished crying. When the songs were over, she became calmer. I also played a couple songs that I knew would make her feel better. *I just wanted to make her happy.*

Cierra then got up, walked to my desk nearby, saw a photo of me and Miranda, and asked me who the lady in the photo was. I told her it was Miranda, my “unwanted and real crush.” Then Cierra asked more about her. I told her about Miranda.

After I finished his story, she said “I'm sorry about what happened with Miranda. She should be with you. You deserve better. You’re a nice, funny guy and a gentleman. I don't get why other girls did not see that.”

“It's okay; I'm already used to it. I'm used to being a lonesome person. Sometimes things are not meant to be,” I replied.

“No, you should not feel that way. I know there’s someone out for you,” she said, trying to cheer me up. “She’ll find you or you’ll find her. I know it.”

I smiled after she said that. “Let's forget about sad things by doing fun stuff like board games. Say, how about chess?” I asked her.
“Definitely, I love chess!!” Cierra happily replied.

We played chess and some card games while listening to music and we were both happy for the first time in a while.

After that Sunday, Cierra and I spent more time together. We had meals together whenever we could for our work schedules varied. When off duty, we played chess at the library in the base, listened to music at each other’s places, and met at the bookstore, and coffee shop on the weekend in a small city nearby named Brandon. On Sundays, we went to church together. Our friendship grew stronger. Naturally, our coworkers observed, realized what was happening, and told us individually. Both Cierra and I denied, saying we were just friends.

Usually nobody greeted me at the homecoming except other pilots and airmen. Not this time. To my surprise, Cierra waited for me. She was in the Air Force camouflage uniform and ran to me as she saw me walking away from the F-15. She couldn't wait to see me so she ran to me to give me a hug. When I saw her coming toward my direction, I thought she was going to one of the other pilots, not me. I then realized she was quickly approaching me, as though she had not seen me in a decade. She collided with me, almost knocked me down.

“Hi there Cierra,” I said, smiling.

“It's good to see you, Luke. I missed you,” Cierra said.

“I missed you too. I'm surprised you came,” I told her. “I needed to because I want to see you right away after my friend told me that your squadron will be home today,” she said.

“Thanks for coming, I'm glad you came,” I replied to her. *I felt happy when she hugged me.*

Then we met other airmen and I went to the debriefing with the other pilots.

Time went on and Cierra came home to visit her family and friends in Grand Island, Nebraska. During her visit, she met her best friend, Amanda Nedic. Amanda was a professor, teaching English at Central Community College. Cierra told her about me. As Cierra’s best friend, Amanda told her what to do.
“It is obvious that you like this guy. Think about it, he made you feel better when you broke up with John. He's such a nice guy. I'd ask him out if I wasn’t dating anyone,” Amanda told Cierra. “I mean you probably not going to find another guy like this. He's right in front of you.”

“You have a point, but I don't know what to do. I know that he's waiting for a right person to show up and I don't want to scare him off,” Cierra said.

“You are silly. You won't scare him off. He may like you. Who knows,” Amanda said. “Just give it a try. Why don't you ask Luke if you can go to Iowa with him? Just spend couple days with him and see how you feel.”


They went on and talked about other subjects. Cierra also visited her PTK advisors and old friends.

Cierra then flew back to RAF Lakenheath. One day, as she and I played chess at Brandon Bookstore she asked me if she could go to Iowa with me the next time I came home. For me, it was a surprise because I never imagined Cierra would ask such a question. I happily said yes. We requested the same week off and booked our flights. When the days came, Cierra and I flew to Davenport together. I showed her my hometown and my favorite places after we arrived.

Before flying to Iowa, my PTK advisor asked me to be the keynote speaker for my chapter’s induction and Dakota invited me to his wedding. I informed Cierra about the PTK induction and my friend’s wedding and she was okay with it. In fact, she told me that she would love to attend both PTK induction and the wedding with me.

I attended the PTK chapter Beta Zeta Epsilon’s Induction as a guest speaker. The induction was held at Scott on Wednesday night. My family, high school advisor, PTK advisors, and friends were present. It was like a reunion. I introduced Cierra to my friends and former advisors when Cierra and I arrived on campus. Before the induction started, Cierra carefully checked my Air Force service uniform and put on my PTK officer medallion. My friends and advisors noticed how fond she was to me. As I spoke at the induction, I gave my personal and successful story and giving the new PTK members advice and inspiration.
After I finished my speech and sat down, Cierra tapped my shoulder. I turned to her and she whispered to me “You did a great job.” I smiled and said “thank you” to her. Dakota and Miranda were sitting next to Cierra in the back row and noticed.

Two days later, Miranda and I met in downtown Davenport. Cierra and my sister Mackenzie went shopping for the wedding. Miranda and I talked about what had been happening in our lives. Then I told her about Cierra. After I finished talking, Miranda explained to me her observation of Cierra at the PTK induction. She then gave me some advice.

“Do you really like Cierra?” Miranda asked me.

I paused and answered, “... Yes”.

“Good, because she seems to like you a lot. I noticed the way she acted around you during the induction. I think you should tell her how you feel right away and ask her out. Have you done that yet?” Miranda said.

“Not yet,” I responded.

“Why Luke, the right girl may be in front of you and you have not told her your feelings and asked her out???” Miranda said. “Let me ask you. Do you find her attractive? Does she make you happy?”

“The answer is yes for both,” I replied. “But I don't know what I should do.”

“It’s very simple, my friend,” Miranda said. “Ask her to dance when you guys go to Dakota's wedding tomorrow since she is your ‘date’ and tell her how you feel whenever you two are alone.”

Miranda continued. “I can clearly see that you like Cierra and she likes you. So why don't you guys just tell each other how you feel? Everyone else surely sees it.”

“You're always right about everything,” I said to her. “I'll think about it tonight. Thanks for listening and giving the advice.”

“Not a problem,” Miranda said. “I can’t be there for you, but she may, so don’t let her go.”

We continued chatting for little bit and went home to get ready for the wedding tomorrow.
Cierra and I went to Dakota’s wedding on Saturday. Dakota and Carly Bailey were getting married. At the reception, Cierra and I chatted and socialized with others. I confidently asked Cierra to dance. Dakota, knowing me well, had DJ play my favorite dance songs. Feeling happy and energetic, Cierra and I danced with fast-tempo songs and slow songs. When the slow songs were played, I could feel my heart beating as I was dancing with Cierra. So did Cierra.

After the adventurous and fun weekend, Cierra and I returned to England for duty. We met up and spent time together as usual. Our works were busy and stressful as always. As for me, I started to think more about Cierra. I felt happy, comfortable, and excited. I could feel my heart beating faster whenever I was with her. Despite my feelings, I hid them all inside and waited for the right moment to tell her. Cierra felt same way as well and she tried her best to keep her feelings for me.

As time went on, Cierra felt like she could not hold her feelings anymore so she asked me to go for a walk at Theford Forest Park near the city of Brandon, in Sulford, UK. We got there, chatted while walking until we found a beautiful fountain and sat down near it. There were British and American couples of all ages, parents with their kids, and people walking with their dogs. When we sat comfortably on the chair, Cierra confessed her feelings.

“You don't need to feel alone anymore,” Cierra said.
“What exactly do you mean, Cierra?” I replied.
“I mean I know a girl who has strong feelings for you,” she told me.
“Who is she? Do I know her?” I asked curiously.
“You do know her and that girl is sitting next to you. Me!!” Cierra replied. “I like you, Luke” After hearing that, I was frozen for 10 seconds. I was too happy to respond.

“Are you okay?” she asked.
“Yeah, I’m fine. I’m just shocked when you say you like me. No one has said that to me before. You had feelings for me the whole time??” I said surprisingly. “I honestly did not know. I just thought that you like me as a friend.”
“Well, I did like you as a friend, but I gradually like you more because you’re always there for me. We have fun together. You make me laugh when I’m sad,” she told me. “Do you remember that Sunday when I came to your apartment and cried? I was super mad and unhappy, but I felt better because of you.”

“I never thought you would think of me that way. I just wanted to cheer you up because you’re my friend and I always care for my friends,” I told her.

“That’s why I like you. You always care for other people,” Cierra said. “I know you may still think about Miranda. I know I’m not her, but I’ll always be by your side. Think of it this way. Miranda is dating someone thousands of miles away and I’m here. She won’t come to you!! You don’t have to wait for the right girl to show up anymore because she’s right here.”

“I know and I want to tell you something. It’s been awhile since I really have the feelings of caring for a girl since Miranda,” I told her. “It’s you. I like you more than just a friend; I started having feelings for you after our first meeting at RAF Lakenheath. You suddenly showed up in my life. I wanted to wait for the right moment for tell you everything.”

“Well I’m glad you finally told me,” Cierra replied. “You should have told me earlier, you silly goose.”

Cierra moved closer to me. She put her hands on my shoulder. Then she leaned in, closed her eyes, and we kissed. I did not see that coming.

“Wow. That was...,” I said after we kissed.

“I know,” she told me and smiled.

After expressing our feelings and kissing, we got up and started walking. Cierra reached out for my hand as we walked. I was holding my hands like fists, as always.

“Don’t need to hold your hand like fists anymore. We are not marching in ROTC,” Cierra said.

“I’m used to it, lol,” I told her.
“Give me your hand,” Cierra demanded with her sweet voice. I let my hands go free. She then took my right hand with her left hand and held it.

“It feels nice and weird holding your hand,” I said to her.

“You'll get used to it. We are a couple now, aren’t we,” Cierra replied, giving me a wink.

“We are indeed,” I responded.

We both smiled. I held her hand like I’d never let it go.

Like I mentioned earlier, I had dream that a mysterious girl would hold reach out for my hand and hold it; we then would walk and talk, holding hands. This dream finally came true; Cierra and I walked around the park, holding each other’s hands.

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“And kids, that’s how your mother and I met and fell in love,” Luke says.

The children start to yawn. It’s 8:30 pm.

“Thanks for telling us the story, dad,” Patrick says.

Then Grace comments, “It was an awesome and romantic story”.


Cierra comes back to the living room after talking to her family.

“Am I interrupting the story?” she asks.

“Nope. I just finish telling them the part where we first confessed our feelings and held hands,” Luke answers.

“Aww. I can’t believe I miss it. It’s my favorite part,” she says to me.

Then Cierra looks at the clock.

“Grace, Patrick. It is bedtime. You need to sleep before going to the air show tomorrow,” she tells the children. “But we need to pray before going to bed.”
“Yes mom,” they both reply quietly because they feel sleepy.

After praying together, Luke and Cierra help the kids get into their beds and give them goodnight kisses. The couple then goes to the living room and sits down.

“How did the storytelling go?” Cierra curiously asks him.

“It went well. They enjoy the story,” Luke replies. “I feel like I was reliving those days as I was telling them. Time surely goes by fast, doesn’t it?”

Cierra nods in agreeing.

“What was the phone call about?” he asks her.

“Everyone is at my parents’ house for mom’s birthday. I called her earlier today, but she wants me to talk to my uncles, aunts, and relatives since they are all at her house.”

“I see,” he replies. “I feel bad I could not talk to anyone.”

“That’s all right. I told them you are telling Patrick and Grace how we met and fell in love and they understand that.” Cierra says. “There will be another time to talk to everyone.”

“Thanks for helping me out,” he tells her. “You’re always the best.”

“You’re welcome,” she replies with a smile.

Then Luke gets up and finds his MP3 Player. He turns it on and plays the slow songs that they both enjoy listening to. Cierra places her head on his shoulder.

“I love you, my best friend, favorite airman, and awesome pilot,” she says.


As if time slowly moves, the couple enjoys their night with lovely music.
Assessing 3D Mental Models from Fractures

Salvador Rojas-Murillo, IE PhD Student

One of the first manuals about surgical skill in English, attributed to Morstede\(^1\), he states that surgeons should be “dexterous, have steady untrembling hands, and clear sight” [1]. Since its introduction in healthcare, radiographs have helped health professionals to have this “clear sight” described by Morstede [2]. During surgical planning, orthopaedic surgeons often observe a pair of two two-dimensional radiographs, and generate a three-dimensional (3D) mental model of the relative position of the bones, bone fragments, and fracture planes [3], [4]. During diagnosis radiology experts generate patients’ anatomical mental representations or schemata. Mental representations are a basic requirement for visual search and detection. A cognitive schema fulfills the following purposes: it serves as an anatomic repository, it holds schemata of the diverse normality and abnormality representations, it contains image related prognosis and/or treatment procedures, and it holds information about the frequent location and/or the severity of an abnormality [5]. Likewise, Gunderman suggests that the true difference between expert and less experienced radiologists lies in the accurate generation of 3D mental models [6].

Unfortunately, despite its surgical relevance, the specific skill of 3D spatial interpretation, a key competency for orthopaedic surgeons, has not received sufficient research attention. Past research on musculoskeletal radiograph interpretation has concentrated on two main areas: fracture detection [7]–[9], and the comparison of the amount and quality of the information acquired from the observation of computerized tomography (CT) and musculoskeletal radiographs [10], [11]. Moreover, past

\(^1\) Thomas Morstede, the royal surgeon of England in the 14\(^{th}\) century
research also documented behavioral and assessment differences between expert observers and less experienced observers [6], [12]–[16].

Mental representations are supported by perceptual encoding of domain specific patterns [15], [17]. Mental models are analogue representations of external visualizations [18], are built from schemata [19], and are created in working memory, usually in the visual working memory [20].

Since the amount of information that can be held in the visual working memory is limited to 3-4 pieces of information [21], expert observers are able to integrate several pieces of visual information into sets of aggregated information, as described by Treisman in his “Feature integration theory” [22].

Although previously identified as a key component for the skill of radiograph interpretation, the generation of 3D mental models has not been tested by using mental model comparison in previous studies. To assess this skill we developed a test that requires observers to generate a situational model from the observation of two 2D radiographs. Accurately assessing this skill could help learners acquire the skill faster, identify trainees requiring remediation and enable the quantitative analysis of training techniques designed to improve this skill.
References


Hercule Poirot to James Bond

Sanat Kumar Tiwari

Very recently I developed a habit of following the famous (though fictional) detective characters of world literature. Since then I have read and watched most of detective series featuring “Hercule Poirot,” “Sherlock Holmes,” and modern avatars of detectives like “James Bond.” Each of them has ruled an era of detective literature. Each of them solved murder mysteries or other issues most importance to national interests. But still they are just reflections of their contemporary society when it comes to etiquette and approach. The differences are rather significant.

Let’s start with Hercule Poirot, an English detective of Belgian origin, his associate Captain Hastings, and Miss. Lemon. While the character of Poirot is of a rather middle-aged person, his associates are much younger than him. The characters have been so nicely fabricated by the author Agatha Christie that they make a great company. Detective Poirot is a gentleman by all means and yet as common as any gentleman in contemporary England. Although he has an ego and he does not like it to get hurt, he is often too polite. Poirot is an attention seeker. He wants to be noticed whether he had made some nice recipe for Captain Hastings or he is passing through minor cold/flu issues. Poirot takes only those cases, which he thinks of most importance to national interests. At least he claims so. But the readers will find him many times even solving cases of a missing domestic too. Though he will make his best efforts to hide this information with his competitors from Scotland Yard Police. After all it hurts his reputation, about which he is too particular.

Poirot is a keen observer while working towards solving his cases. Each involved person is a suspect and each of them is equally well-portrayed as the case proceeds. He has a quite distinct approach when looking into and that’s why a few times he will go ahead with a case that the chief inspector of Scotland Yard had declared a straight incident and considered to be closed. Logic and thinking are his biggest weapons. Hastings is always with him and has access to same evidence. Yet one can see how differently he thinks by his common response to Hastings’s theory remains, “No no no Hastings ...” while talking to his associate. Because he is a character from a gentlemanly society, modern day weapons have the least to do with his diagnostics procedure.
You may find it bit unlikely of a detective, but Hercule Poirot does attach his sentiments and feeling to his cases. His aim is to remove criminality more than criminals. In many of his cases, he lets the culprit go when he finds that the crime was due to a moral obligation or if he finds the culprit more bound to circumstances than habits. Poirot does solve the cases most of time but it is not his habit to hurt someone’s reputation unnecessarily.

Next comes another famous detective, Sherlock Holmes, a young native Englishman and a creation of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. He is probably the most famous detective character from a popularity point of view. Dr. Watson is his associate, friend and biographer. Holmes ways of solving cases include not only sheer logic, but also include tricks, weapons, forensic science, and sometimes even physical exercises. His manners are more English compared to Hercule Poirot’s character and he looks more like a detective than a common man.

Finally comes James Bond, a British secrete service agent character created by Ian Fleming originally. Bod is more like a spy than a detective and gets involved only in the cases of very high importance to national security or other national interests. His methods and tools for solving his cases actually belong to future generations and hence he is always miles ahead of his, or rather, British, enemies. This character became so famous with time that multiple authors kept writing different James Bond series novels. With each new series a better-equipped James Bond comes into the picture, and his tasks become so much more complex. Movies made him much more popular.

James Bond has the best guns, vehicles, IT support, and any other tech savvy tool that are going to be materialized only in his future generations. Because his cases involve international territories, he does have any number of passports. Surely it’s not a commodity that a common man can avail himself of. He is very political; the enemy of the state is his enemy too. Bond has no moral obligations and has no emotions when he is on his job. Most of the brains have already been used to develop tools to help Bond hence Bond uses no brains. At times he may use his physical fitness but use of brains is a rare accident.
Not separate, but not equal

Brittany Todd

After years of fighting for equality,
the battle against discrimination
remains stacked against us.

Illness once upheld as
the great equalizer,
colorblind,

leaving no stone unturned,
just might be the most
prejudice of them all.

More than police brutality.
Staining the clothes of youth with blood,
staining the headlines with lives that matter.

Progress made from marching
in streams of pink.
bypassing black bosoms.

Only hope is universal.
Though it seems
this too may wane.

Health disparities
still going strong.
moronece pronounced than ever.

Though served in the same hospital
by black hands and white,
cancer remains not separate, but not equal.

Women of African descent are 42% more likely to die from breast cancer than white women. The lack of research on breast cancer in this demographic is just one injustice hidden among countless others, and serves as a reminder that though we have come a long way in terms of racial equality, we still have so far to go.
Once Known as Chicago, Now Chiraq

Shantel Turner

According to The Chicago Tribune, in 2015 over 400 people have been murdered in the city of Chicago, and it's only November. Chicago’s violence has led people to give the city the nickname Chiraq. In certain areas in Chicago you are liable to hear gunshots at night and sometimes during the day. The violence has affected many families including my own. We are tired of losing our youth to gun violence. It’s time to make a difference!

I have lived in Chicago my whole life. The city has changed from the time I was a kid till now. In 2009, I moved about forty-five minutes away from Chicago. My mom started telling me the city has changed for the worse, but I didn't believe her. In 2012, I learned on my own how much Chicago has changed. One day my mom and I were driving in the city, and I saw bullets coming right at us. It was the scariest situation I ever been in. I was not the only one affected by the gun violence in Chicago. There were people in my high school who endured similar situations.

Every year in my high school we would have assemblies dedicated to important situations. In 2012, the assemblies began to be directed toward the gun violence around the city. Students started to ask “who knew of someone that has been killed due to gun violence?” Many hands started to go up. However, my hand didn't go up the first year the question was ask. It was in 2013 when the same question was asked at the assembly that I raised my hand indicating that I knew of someone that was killed due to gun violence.

On May 16, 2013 my little cousin Coota passed away due to gun violence. Coota was only 15 years old when he died. He was a freshman in high school receiving good grades. The day he died my aunt knew something was going to happen. Therefore, she told
him to come in the house early. Coota was home for a little while until he decided to sneak out the house to go visit a girl. Coota was gunned down by a gunman a few blocks from his house.

May 16, 2013 was a good day for me. I was so happy because my daddy let me drive his car all the way home. I ran into the house to tell everyone I got a chance to drive and everyone looked so sad. I asked why is everyone looking like they want to cry. That’s when I was then informed that Coota had been shot. My face instantly dropped. We didn’t know what hospital he was in so we started calling all the trauma hospitals to find out which one he was in. We found out he was in Christ Hospital. As we were getting ready to go to the hospital, my older cousin came in the back door saying “he dead he dead”: my auntie dropped her plate, my granny started falling down the stairs, and I found myself in shock again.

The night my cousin died I couldn’t sleep. I kept the news on all night; they kept talking about what happened to my cousin on it. My mom slept in my bed with me that night and I cried myself to sleep all night. I went to sleep for an hour and woke up hoping that what happened was only a dream. I always saw on the news about the many murders that occurred around the city, but I never knew how it felt until I lost my cousin. My family took this loss very hard to the point that some people would not eat.

I’m not the only one that lost someone due to gun violence in 2013. As told by Times there have been 415 homicides in Chicago. There are many other people who lost loved ones. My friend Brittany lost her best friend Hadiya. Brittany went into a depression after the loss of her best friend Hadiya. Hadiya was only 15 years old; she was standing at the park and a gunman got out the car and started shooting and Hadiya got killed. Hadiya was in the inauguration a few weeks before she got killed. Hadiya’s death was one of the biggest stories in Chicago. According to Chicago Park District, they renamed the park that Hadiya got killed in from “Buckthorn Park” to “Hadiya Pendleton Park” in honor of Hadiya.

Hadiya and Coota were not the only young people who died as a result of gun violence. As indicated by “Crime Lab” reports, in 2008 there were 510 people murdered in the Chicago area. Moreover, eighty percent of these people were killed due to gunfire. That was only 2008, Chicago’s violence has skyrocketed from that year till now. From Jan, 1st, 2015 till Nov, 3rd, 2015 there have
been 421 homicides in the city. Many teens do not watch the news anymore because it has gotten really sad. I had been unaware of the homicides that took place in 2008 because it was not displayed as much as it has been these past three years.

Chicago has a high violence rate and it affects many people. Gun violence in Chicago is a problem because it is too easy to buy a gun. Gun regulations are not enforced. Chicago may sound like a scary place to live. Teen boys have it the hardest: some of them can't walk down the street. I freak-worry about my cousins getting hurt while being outside every day because I know what happens to young people on the streets of Chicago. I am tired of worrying about my family and friends going outside and getting hurt while only trying to have fun. It's time to make a difference in my City.

Works Cited


Mount Burdell

Devin Vandyke

This is a story from my childhood that takes place on Mount Burdell an 1800 acre open space in Novato, California.

The housing subdivision propagated alongside the bottom of the mountain like it was alive. When the builders created waste wood, I was there to scoop it up. I was a small kid, but with the idea firmly implanted that I could build a tree house, I hauled wood back up to the Two Trees. What nine-year old boy waking up to 1800 acres of oak trees and cow pasture with pieces of scrap housing material piling up nearby daily wouldn’t reflexively want to build a tree fort? It was one of those things you do when you’re young and have the material near enough at hand to indulge in: you wake up one day and it’s time to build.

Breakfast can’t be eaten fast enough and when it finally is, you make for where a house is being built and by lunch you’re dirty, hungry, and exhausted—but you got some wood. After lunch, I’d jump on my bicycle, race down to Pini hardware to buy nails with my allowance. Needless to say, by this time I’d already secured permission to use one of Dad’s handsaws.

Most of the time the wood was a random assortment of scraps, the most common was two or three feet cut off the end of a 4-by-8 piece of plywood. It wasn’t often that I found scraps of useful lengths of 2-by-4s, so it was hard to engineer a fort of any great size. My treehouse sat in a huge V in the upper of the Two Trees.

The floor was nowhere near level, but I had walls and a roof. You got inside by climbing up through a hole in the floor and up the trunk on a ladder made of widely spaced 2-by-4s. Those rungs always needed work because thick tree bark and the weight of a hundred-pound kid climbing with plywood scrap necessitated using 4-inch nails of which I had few and frequently couldn’t get them in all the way. I could just about climb the trunk without them, but I wanted to be able to have guests come up. It gave me a place to go that was mine and built by me.
Not long after it was built, I put in a swing. I wasn’t good at making straight cuts with a hand saw and I was even worse at tying knots. I always tested my knots by slowly increasing the pull on the rope until I was sure it could hold my weight, first by hanging on the rope, then by swinging higher and higher hoping the knot worked.

The uphill neighbor kid, and another from way down the street went up the hill with me the day I put in the swing. As we walked the short distance from where Tommy and my house stood side-by-side below the Two Trees he said, “Hey Devin, man, you know what you’re doin?” Tommy was not really a Korbin, when it came to voluntary outside play, but he knew how much fun a good swing right up the hill might be, so like always, he was looking fun if someone else provided the means.

One day at the start of summer right after school got out Tommy and I were bored and wanted some candy like the kind we used to scrounge money for or talk Dirty Bill out of, who ran the gas station we walked past on our way to school. We called him Dirty Bill because he had a beard with hair jutting out in all directions and he was dirty from working on cars or something.

We got addicted to free candy on the way home by acting as though we had given the vending machine money and then we’d tell Bill we’d been cheated. He’d go in and check out the machine and then crack it open which caused Tommy and me to be awed by all the nice neat rows of candy waiting to be bought. He’d look at one of us and ask us which candy we wanted. The trick was to be sure we agreed on which one we’d tried to purchase. And like a lot of kids our age we used to keep our eyes peeled for dropped coins—what the heck right? I mean a dime and a nickel could get you some sugar laden hot cinnamon gum and you could split it with your buddy and have it gone by the time you finished the walk home—what parents don’t know about they can’t punish you for.

Tommy came up with the idea to do the candy thing and he was smart enough to get me to do it for both of us. Tommy telling me what to do and what lines to use, like a movie director, probably made it easier for me to have an aura of innocence in Bill’s eyes—kids can be natural actors for the Oscars of candy. Appearing innocent was easy for me because I was gullible and somewhat naïve individual, and I was usually the last one to figure out when I was the butt of a joke. Don’t get me wrong, though, I got to eat candy or gum and certainly never protested that Tommy’s idea didn’t sound okay.
If we couldn’t see Dirty Bill from the sidewalk on our way home, we’d stomp on the hose that rang the bell for service and then get back to the sidewalk and look around as if nothing had happened. I was good at it because I could run fast. All Tommy had to do was wave a hand toward the empty service bay and the inviting hose and off I would dash to stomp and run.

“Yeah I got a good idea of where to put the swing so we can fly out of the tree right below my fort.”

Tommy replied, “That’s high up, are you sure?”

“We’re actually jumping off right near the top of the ladder—I can climb out the limbs over the fort far enough to hang the rope right, I just gotta have some help making sure it’ll swing where we want it to.” The reality was that even if the rope was hung in the right spot and tied securely, I still couldn’t jump out of the V below the fort unless someone else came along with me to throw the rope up. Swinging isn’t as much fun if you can’t drop out of a tree a story or so above ground.

Dan came along too because I wasn’t sure if Tommy was going to break himself away from afternoon cartoons—his Mom let him watch, mine never did. The three of us made quite a group, with Tommy’s mop head of blond hair and tall as me, but not as skinny, and me in a crew cut. Dan had short straight brown hair and was muscled like a ten-year-old who spent too much time at the gym, like a fire plug, only six inches taller. As always I was eager and was out in front and moving right along. I looked back at my cohorts and said, “We gotta be sure we test the rope.”

Dan, who because of his build had an aura of toughness the envy of all third graders added in, “I ain’t afraid of nothing man. You know my Dad’s a cop and everything—he lets me hold his gun.”

Tommy, feeling the need to add in his one-upmanship said, “Dan we ain’t talking unloaded guns your Dad let’s you touch here. We’re talking about Devin there, and whether or not he can tie knots better than he can straighten out the nails he bent and have them work.”
Tommy knew me well enough to know that if I wasn’t sure about some aspect of one of my many zany projects and urged caution, then it might not be a bad idea to heed my words. By the time we got to the tree I had the rope coiled up and as I soon as I got to the trunk I said, “You guys wait down here and I’ll climb out on the best limb and tie on the rope.”

Tommy looked up at me and pointed, “Look, the dummy’s got the rope around his neck! If you fall you’ll hang man.”

Dan said, “Shit man I could already got all the way out that limb and back down to the ground by now you idiot.”

“Shut up you guys, it’s my rope remember?” I was desperately trying to tie a good knot or at least one that would hold for the rest of the day, but my buddies down below were just giving me a hard time. Over the next five minutes Dan and Tommy became bored and started throwing rocks at the trunk of the other tree thirty feet away and having a contest to see who could hit the trunk more often. Dan was throwing huge rocks and missing by a mile while Tommy was throwing pebbles and hitting often. They looked up as I jumped over the last rung on the ladder and made for the rope dangling from where I tied it to the tree.

Dan noticed me and while dropping the small boulders held in each hand, started walking in my direction and said brusquely, “Dibs on seconds.”

I made a huge knot on the end of the rope and hung on it and drifted a few feet in each direction. Tommy said “Aww just go ahead and try it or it’s gonna’ be dinner time before I get my turn.”

Backing up the hill towards the trunk of the tree, I looked up to try and see if my knot on the limb was slipping from where I stood twenty feet below—it seemed okay, so I decided to let myself have a bigger swing. Dan stood there almost in the way of where the swing was going with his arms crossed and wearing a crease on his forehead and sporting squinted eyes. I spun around as the rope reached its highest point and as I headed back down Dan held out his arm and said, “That’s at least three turns coming to me now!”

“Alright already. Don’t go too high at first though cause I’m not sure the knot’s gonna hold.”

Tommy, always along for the ride said, “And so it begins.”
The summer before when Tommy and I needed money we decided to make a Jungle Book style ride. The Jungle Book was an animated movie about wild animals, and we thought maybe we could get the younger kids to pay us a nickel for a wild wagon ride around his back yard. We made a small ramp, laid out a few boards like railroad track ties and put in a few tight turns around some trees. I dug a shallow hole to push the wagon through and we tied his dog up to a tree that we would pass nearby. After we had our tour all ready to go we told the neighbor kids to come by and check it out, “It’s only a lousy nickel and all—and of course everybody knows five pennies is a nickel.”

Half an hour later he was sitting in a chair from his kitchen leaning up against the eight-foot tall wooden fence on his side-yard with me sitting cross-legged at his side. When our first customer arrived and flashed their shiny nickel, he opened the gate in the fence and took the kindergartener’s money and gave them a ticket. Then Tommy would walk them back to where the wagon waited on the brick-surfac ed back patio while I trailed behind.

After the kid climbed in the wagon and onto the pillow from the dog’s bed, Tommy took their ticket and tore it in half. He steered the wagon while I hunched over the back end and pushed like I was the engine on a jet plane. The kid would scream with glee, the dog would bark and after their 30-second ride they’d come back ten minutes later with another nickel. We got a few packs of candy with our nickels before their parents finally cut everybody off. Tommy and I, the older kids, might have been taking advantage of the younger ones or maybe we were kinda’ like babysitting—but without the benefit of actually having the children being safe and well taken care of. Or maybe the parents ran out of nickels. For Tommy and I this was one of many things we did to either keep ourselves amused or to make money.

I reluctantly gave the rope to Dan who defiantly went up past the trunk, turned around and then started running down the hill. With the rope held in both hands and his elbows flying out, he raced past me like he was a halfback carrying a football thwarting defenders.

I shouted, “No wait we gotta’ be sure it’s okay first!”
He yelled back, “Watch this.”

He went up just fine, but he came down way too fast—straight into the ground three feet from where the cows had holed Korbin’s and my fort—as the rope came out of the tree and landed on his back.

Tommy, still trying to look bored said, “You okay man?”

Dan looking annoyed and with eyes that looked like mine when my allergies were in an uproar said, “Of course I’m okay. I just need to lay here a bit.”

Reaching out and grabbing the rope I started to wind it up like it was when I went up the tree. Dan sat up and Tommy walked over to us and looked at his left arm and said one of the few things I’d ever heard him say seriously, “That doesn’t look good buddy.”

With the rope coiled and my hands on my hips I looked at his wrist and stated the obvious, “It’s getting bigger Dan, you might wanna go home and maybe go see the doctor.”

Tommy observed the possible pragmatic benefit, “You might get to have a cast man.”

Dan took in a big breath through his running nose and kept his well-watered eyes wide open while holding his left arm up with his right. He looked towards Tommy still not willing to cry and said, “You think so?”

Tommy said, “Come on man. Devin and I will walk you home.”

We headed off down the hill and I got to the barb-wire fence first. I held the second strand down with my foot and pulled the third up in my hand and Dan passed through the fence followed by Tommy. My Mom was standing on the back deck with her hands on her hips and yelled up at us, “What happened?”

I had just crossed over the top of the fence and yelled back, “Dan fell off the swing.”

I punctuated my half-truth by jumping from the top of the fence and landing with both feet like a gymnast at the end of a routine. Jogging to catch up with my friends and pointing at Dan’s arm I said, “He needs to go to the Doctor.”
By the time the three of us got through the back door Mom was on the phone with Dan’s Mom. She got off the phone and said to the three of us, “She’ll be here in a few minutes. Why don’t you guys sit down and tell me what happened?”

Ten minutes after we sat down to tell my Mom the details of Dan’s flying off the swing and missing the pile of wood with nails sticking out that was once a fort, the doorbell rang. I led the three of us plus my Mom to the door and the second I opened it and Dan’s Mom could be seen, the silence of the house was disturbed by the crying and sniffling of an eight year-old. Dan’s right wrist was twice as big as the last time his Mom had seen it, and tears were running down both cheeks. He started to wail as soon as she looked at him. She reached out and laid her hand on top of his head and stroked her son’s hair and then gently pulled him closer and said, “Dr. Uphem will meet us at the ER. Let’s go champ—we’ll get some ice cream on the way home.”

Dan’s tears dried up as he marched behind his Mom and got in beside her in the front seat their car. Tommy, Mom and I watched from the front door as their car backed down the driveway and Tommy waved goodbye and said, “Hey Devin, Scooby-Doo’s on at four wanna’ come over and watch?”

I looked up at my Mom and said, “Please, oh Please?

“Well, I guess so. But let’s not make a habit of it, okay?”

56
A Day with Evan

Alex Vargas

The Monday begins like any other; I start my mundane routine: check in with the office clerk, sign in the volunteer book, and sit in the waiting room while little Evan gets plugged into the machines. They stand there beeping every five seconds or so constantly monitoring countless aspects of Evan’s body - any sort of abnormality and they give an ear-piercing screech to alarm the nurses. It’s a very punctilious task; if one thing goes awry, and the machines overlook it, he’s sent into a state of shock with no guarantee of coming back to this world. You’d think he would be nervous, having those needles inserted into his skin and being hooked up to the machines that keep him alive. They sit there ever so carefully, watching, reading, recording his heartbeat, blood pressure, oxygen levels, all of the necessary vitals. The machines play God, but even God himself can make mistakes. It doesn’t faze him though. He has been through this process so many times it has become a monotonous regimen. He is completely immune to any sense of fear for his life. Every day I come in I don’t know if I should admire his courage or agonize over his disinterest in the delicacy of his own life.

After a few minutes Steph, the nurse, comes and gets me from the waiting area. She stands roughly five foot four; her light sandy brown hair that is always perfectly straightened complements her hazel green eyes and flawless light tan complexion. Every time I see her I stand in awe of her unprecedented angel-like beauty. She is the gatekeeper of the pediatric dialysis room; she looks at me for a moment and grants me entrance so I can sit with Evan. It is a rather lonely room with only two other beds that almost never see patients. The ceiling is bright with fluorescent lights and white styrofoam ceiling panels. The floor is dimmer; a slight grayish tint from wall to wall stained from the chemical cleaning products that wash away the tears and spills each day. Towards the back of the room are three machines that stand five feet high. The back exterior of the machines are jet black, the front ghost white, when the two meet in the middle they create an ivory color. The machines look state-of-the-art with their touch screens and
intricate gadgets that I can’t begin to understand the purpose for. On the machines’ left side are three tubes that connect to Evan. Each serves a specific and crucial role. The first filters out his bladder because his kidneys fail to do so by themselves. The second filters his blood, again because his kidneys can’t. The third is connected to an armband that is wrapped around Evans right arm. It periodically inflates and squeezes Evan’s frail bicep to check his blood pressure, making sure he is not at risk for a heart attack or some sort of bodily malfunction. The gatekeeper summons one of her helpers to escort me to the back left portion of the room where I find my gray stainless steel chair next to Evan’s bed. I sit down and get my lesson plan out for the day.

Being Evan’s tutor, I am eager to get the day started with some simple math problems or some easy short stories. Today he is defiant: anytime I bring out a worksheet or begin to talk about something school-related, he shuts down. Refuses to respond or even make eye contact with me. I try to explain to him that we need to do this homework so he doesn’t fall even more behind in school than he already is. Still no response, just some demands to the nurse to bring him some saltine crackers. I try once more to plead with him to do just one reading assignment. He finally acknowledges my existence with a glare and looking me straight into my eye he shouts “No!” This catches me off-guard for a moment. He has never yelled at me before. I sit there taking in, analyzing what just happened. After some careful observation of Evan’s condition today I realize I can’t blame him for not wanting to do his work. His usual vibrant olive colored skin is now a dull pasty white. His light blue eyes, that are always buoyant when I walk in, are dismal and melancholy. They had to perform surgery on him yesterday. They inserted a catheter in his left arm to help filter his blood when he is not in the hospital and he is still getting used to it. He winces every so often when he looks down and sees part of the catheter protruding from his skin. To make matters worse his lower lip is swollen, twice the usual size, and inside looks as if it were charred. They had to rip off some skin for a test I do not understand and can’t even pronounce. It is an unusual scab; I guess that is what it looks like when it is on the inside of your lip. Today we would get no homework done during his dialysis. Instead we will just hang out, as I try to make him feel like a normal twelve year old kid and try to alleviate his sorrow for a short time.
I sit there looking at Evan, wondering what I can do to try to make him feel normal. I tell him a joke, “What is worse than finding a worm in your apple?” He replies sarcastically, “Having to eat an apple.” I chuckle a bit and say, “No, finding a half-eaten worm in your apple!” He laughs and for a moment he shows signs of life and happiness. It is short-lived, however, and once the laughter subsides, the sorrow always returns. It is much like a child at the beach who is near the bottom of the shore building a moat around his sandcastle to draw the water away. For a time it works, but the tide always rushes back in with a vengeance defeating the now pathetic moat and drowning his work. Bringing it to a depressing crumble. It mercilessly continuous to return, dragging the sand back down with it, and taking it down to the deepest darkest depths of the ocean floor where even sunlight is afraid to travel. I can’t blame him for feeling this way. Over the years he has conditioned himself to avoid most positive feelings. Positive feelings lead to hope, but the anxiety that comes with waiting for a kidney donor crushes and destroys any form of hope. Evan was the first of three dialysis patients to be diagnosed and admitted into the hospital, but he is the last to receive a kidney. He used to start each day off by asking the nurse “Hey Steph, any donors today?” he would always be eager for a positive response but Steph would sadly respond with a frown and a shake of her head. It hurt her too, having to crush Evan’s spirits. You could see it in her eyes when she is fighting back the tears that begin to accumulate at the bottom of her eyelids. It is not fair to Evan, but then again neither is having a dysfunctional body.

Attempts at casual, non-school related conversations with Evan are often futile. Every child I have had to babysit or tutor has had some sort of sporting background. Evan does not; his body can’t handle the stress that sports entail. I try to find an alternate topic, I ask about his friends, he bluntly replies “Don’t have a lot of them, I am never at school”. Desperately I change the subject, “Do you like any girls?” I playfully asked. Irritably he looks at me and says, “No, girls don’t like me”. Trying to salvage any sort of conversation I respond with “Sure they do, you just have to try”. Evan resorts to the silent treatment again, blankly staring at the wall ahead. As a final resort I bring up the only thing I really know, sports. “Got any favorite athletes?” Finally acknowledging me again he says, “Yeah, (Lionel) Messi, but it doesn’t matter. I can’t play soccer even if I tried. My heart would explode or something.”
That statement really cut me down deep. My heart sank, and I could feel the muscles in my cheeks go numb. I quickly regained my senses and told Evan I would be right back, I had to go to the bathroom. I walked out of the room and the second the door shut behind me I collapsed to the ground. I could feel tears starting to build up and it took everything in me to fight them back. My whole life has been revolved around sports and this boy will never be able to experience the exhilarating rush of scoring his first points or winning his first game. It got to me, but I couldn’t let Evan know. I had to look strong for him. After a few minutes I stood up and gathered myself. I could feel my heart slowly fading away the deeper it sank into the gastric acids my stomach started to create, but I had to remain poised. I returned to the room and sat next to Evan silently. Desperately trying to listen for my depleted heartbeat.

“Steph , my stomach hurts. Fix it now!” Evan commands. I try to tell him to use his manners and say please and thank you but he replies with, “How about no.” Under normal circumstances I would discourage a behavior like this, but today I couldn’t find it in me. I just sit here and watch this verbal abuse take place. I don’t think I could handle yelling at a child who has so many problems to begin with.

I do what I can to help Evan, trying to empathize with his condition. There is no real way of understanding however. People like me, like most of the population who are blessed with a fully functional body will never feel the agonizing pain kids like Evan have to endure. No twelve year old should have to get up earlier than the sun and be able to wish the stars goodnight as they fade away and the sun begins to creep up over the fields ahead. He has to do this because it is the only time his mother can drive him over to the hospital in order to get his kidneys filtered for four hours. Evan wants to sleep in and go at a later time, but he has no choice in the matter. It is the only time that aligns with his mother’s work schedule. So I sit here every Monday trying to not just be a tutor, but a friend. I can see that he appreciates it, but it only helps so much. It is hard to find the joy in things when you live your life not knowing if today is going to be your last.

My time with Evan has finally come to an end and the nurse opens the door and permits me to leave and enter the real world. As I left the room today something in me was either left behind or died all together. It takes a toll on you, having to stare into
the eyes of a twelve-year-old that doesn't deserve this misfortune. I hate seeing him struggle to read at a second grade level when he is supposed to be in fifth. If only he could participate in life like a twelve-year-old should: playing sports, hanging out with friends, going to school everyday, testing boundaries. I want to be able to say that by tutoring him and seeing how fragile life really is that it makes me appreciate my own life, but sadly I can’t. It’s not Evan’s fault, but as I teach him his math and reading skills he teaches me how cruel and unfair life really is. As I walked out of that hospital during the brisk fall morning colors seem duller, the sun didn’t shine as bright, and the birds didn’t chirp as loudly or beautifully. As I stand here at the bus stop waiting I see a leaf that is now wilted and frail. Something inside me makes me walk up and crunch it under my foot. I heard it crackle beneath me and shatter into thousands of pieces. The wind picks them up and whisks them away, never to be seen again.
Las repercusiones del colonialismo para los escritores africanos

Kate Will

No existe ningún espacio lingüístico neutro para los bilingües – cada conversación requiere que el hablante negocie las convenciones sociales como el escenario, el tópico de habla, y los trasfondos lingüísticos del otro hablante y otros oyentes. La selección de una lengua en cualquier contexto identifica al hablante como un miembro o un forastero de una comunidad. Puede señalar la familiaridad o la distancia del hablante o escritor. La selección puede mostrar poder, autoridad, o la sumisión al poder colonial. Cada lengua lleva las connotaciones positivas o negativas sobre el nivel de educación y el estatus social. Esta selección es particularmente compleja para los escritores bilingües porque determina su audencia y quien puede leer su obra. Es más problemático para los escritores bilingües verticales de los estados postcoloniales. Los bilingües verticales son los que saben una lengua mayoritaria y otra minoritaria que están relacionadas jerárquicamente en una manera lingüística o geográfica. En los estados postcoloniales, escribir en la lengua colonial, generalmente lenguas europeas, denota poder, prestigio, y un nivel de educación alto. A la vez, se refuerzan los vínculos con la comunidad internacional académica. Escribir en la lengua minoritaria se asocia con menos educación y autoridad formal, mientras se fortalece las conexiones con la comunidad local. El escritor bilingüe en el estado postcolonial siempre negocia sus alianzas. Los escritores africanos Ngugi wa Thiong’o y Chimamanda Ngozi Adiche demuestran opiniones conflictivas sobre el uso del lenguaje en su obra. Thiong’o es un escritor multilingüe de Kenia donde el inglés es la lengua estándar y se habla gĩkũyũ, una lengua indígena. Adiche es una escritora de Nigeria en una comunidad en la que el inglés es la lengua mayoritaria y el Igbo es la minoritaria. Los dos escritores representan los lados opuestos del espectro en relación con este debate.
Thiong’o propone que los escritores africanos deben escribir en las lenguas indígenas como una forma de solidaridad. Por el contrario, a Adiche, no le importa la lengua de su obra, solo el contenido, y como tal, escribe en la lengua de los colonizadores, el inglés.

Ngugi wa Thiong’o es un novelista, poeta, cuentista, dramaturgo, y teórico con renombre internacional. Sus obras más celebres en el inglés incluyen novelas, autobiografías, guiones teatrales, y cuentos cortos. También ha publicado ensayos teóricos en inglés. Su obra típicamente examina la violencia del colonialismo a lo largo de la historia africana. Creció en una comunidad rural de Gĩkũyũ en Kenia durante del gobierno colonial de la Gran Bretaña. En su libro, “Decolonising the Mind”, Thiong’o relató su historia lingüística. Recuerda los cuentos de sus antepasados y la tradición oral de su comunidad. Gĩkũyũ, una lengua indígena de África, representa su lengua materna, pero después del estado de emergencia en 1952, el inglés se convirtió en la lengua oficial de Kenia. El régimen colonial de la Gran Bretaña tuvo el control del sistema educativo, y el inglés se convirtió en la lengua de instrucción. El cambio del poder rompió la armonía entre la lengua de su educación y la lengua de su cultura (Thiong’o 1981, 2914).

El medio de narración se convirtió en escritura formal en vez de la tradición oral. La literatura británica representaba el centro del foco en sus clases, mientras se devaluaba la literatura africana. Leyó las obras de escritores europeos como Dickens, Chaucer, y T.S. Eliot. El Gĩkũyũ no solo era devaluado, adentro era prohibido completamente. Si un estudiante era pillado hablando su lengua materna, recibiría los castigos físicos, las multas monetarias, o la vergüenza ante sus pares. Mientras tanto, el éxito en el inglés resultaba en el prestigio, los elogios, y los premios. Durante de la era colonial, hablar la lengua del poder era clave por el acenso social y el éxito académico. Las habilidades de la escritura, la competencia del inglés, y notas buenas en cursos del inglés eran necesarios para la educación superior. Thiong’o describe el inglés como “the official vehicle and magic formula to colonial elitedom” (Thiong’o, Decolonising the Min).

A pesar de los estándares coloniales, él tenía éxito en la escuela y recibió un título en inglés con distinción, y luego recibió una maestría en inglés de una universidad británica. Creció durante un periodo de opresión lingüística en África, pero logró tener éxito académicamente. Todavía su éxito correspondía con el sacrificio de su lengua materna. Su
trabajo como un teórico postcolonial solidificó su postura crítica sobre el colonialismo y eventualmente incitó su conversión en un escritor gĩkũyũ. Su conversión provocó mucha controversia dentro de sus pares académicos.

La naturaleza opresiva de su educación y la ausencia obvia de la literatura africana en el currículo causaron a Thiong’o a dudar la posición del inglés en las escuelas africanas. Durante de la era colonial, el inglés gozaba una posición central en el currículo. Otras influencias literarias como el francés, el Swahili, y otras lenguas africanas eran ignoradas y minimizadas en el currículo. Los programas de la literatura Africana existían solo como departamentos satélites y nimios, siempre como una extensión del departamento del inglés. Thiong’o propuso la abolición del departamento del inglés en una proposición por la Universidad de Nairobi. Él criticó el departamento de inglés por negar las raíces históricas múltiples en África mientras trataba de favorecer las raíces europeas. Propuso la fundación de un departamento de literaturas africanas a su sitio. No negó la importancia de la literatura europea, pero rechazó su prominencia y dominio en la escuela. En una Universidad Africana, él dijo, la literatura Africana debe representar el centro del foco. Propuso un programa que examinaría la tradición oral, la literatura Swahili, la literatura francesa e inglesa, y la literatura moderna africana. Justificó el programa como una manera de “proclaiming loyalty to indigenous values... to embrace and assimilate other thoughts without losing its roots” (Thiong’o 1972). El reconoció que la historia europea era una raíz clave en la historia Africana, pero no representaba la única raíz. En conclusion, él dijo, “after we have examined ourselves, we radiate outwards and discover peoples and worlds around us. With Africa at the centre of things, not existing as an appendix or a satellite of other countries and literatures, things must be seen from the African perspective” (Thiong’o 1972). Después de graduarse, Thiong’o empezó a criticar la organización del currículo. Propuso que la función de un departamento de literatura existía para “illuminate the spirit animating a people” (Thiong’o 1972). El argumentó que el programa actual fallaba a animar la gente africana. África era un estado bilingüe, pero el sistema educativo solo favorecía la lengua colonial. El inglés representaba la lengua de poder en el departamento, y la relación entre el inglés y las lenguas indígenas como Gĩkũyũ era asimétrica.
Thiong’o actualmente escribe toda su obra creativa en gĩkũyũ pero ofrece traducciones en otras lenguas. Reserva el inglés para sus ensayos teóricos. Su conversión en un escritor Gĩkũyũ recibía crítica en el mundo académico. “Why have you abandoned us?” era la actitud expresada por otros escritores. Thiong’o muchas veces tiene que defender su decisión a escribir en gĩkũyũ, y él claramente delinea sus motivos en su artículo “On Writing in Gĩkũyũ”. Su motivación se originó de su tiempo trabajando en el Kamũrĩĩthu Centro de Cultura y Educación de la Comunidad con un programa que usaba el teatro para promocionar la alfabetación en la comunidad Gĩkũyũ envolvente. Mientras escribía un guion para el programa, Thiong’o y sus colegas debatían sobre la selección de la lengua para escribirlo. La lengua representaba un estorbo comunicativo entre las élites educadas y las personas de la comunidad. El uso del inglés por los escritores los distanciaba del auditorio local. A pesar de sus habilidades limitadas en escribir gĩkũyũ, eligió esta lengua para hacer la obra más accesible para el público local. Por el primer tiempo, los miembros de la comunidad podrían contribuir a la obra porque fue escrita en su lengua maternal. Thiong’o observe que, “there was no mystification about the play’s message... the final script of the play was really a community product”(Thiong’o 1985,152). Escribien gĩkũyũ efectivamente entabló una conversación con el audiencia local. El régimen de Kenia prohibió la obra por contenido subversivo y Thiong’o pasó algunos años en la cárcel. Durante su tiempo en la cárcel, él decidió convertirse en un escritor Gĩkũyũ para solidificar sus conexiones con su comunidad nativa. Cuando otros escritores internacionales preguntan por qué evita el inglés, él responde que “I felt I had to write in that very language that was responsible for my imprisonment”(Thiong’o 1985, 153). Escribir en gĩkũyũ representa una manera de subvertir el poder colonial y expresar solidaridad con sus raíces indígenas.

Otros escritores multilingües temen que publicar sus libros en una lengua minoritaria sería menos lucrativo. Se propone que el mercado por estos libros es más pequeño que el mercado por los libros de lenguas mayoritarias. Sin embargo, Thiong’o comprobo que los autores no necesitan escribir en las lenguas coloniales para ser exitosos. Su primero libro en gĩkũyũ, Caĩtaani Mũtharaba-ini, fue vendido por completo en un período de un mes. Se vendió el máximo de copias en comparación con cualquier libro en cualquiera lengua en el mismo tiempo, “a record in the sale of any novel or play – be it in English or any other language – for the
Su éxito demuestra que escribir en lenguas minoritarias no es un caso perdido. Escribe toda su obra creativa en gĩkũyũ, pero también traduce su propia obra en lenguas mayoritarias. Se asegura que su obra es accesible a los lectores africanos antes de ofrecer traducciones para los lectores internacionales.

Sin embargo, la perspectiva de Thiong’o no es compartida universalmente con todos los escritores africanos. Otros consideran su perspectiva como pasada de moda. En el estado postcolonial, muchos escritores de la nueva generación favorecen el uso del inglés en vez de las lenguas indígenas. Gavin Esler, el presentador del telediario del programa HardTalk en BBC critica su posición en una entrevista. Cita el ejemplo de la escritora Chimamanda Ngozi Adiche, una novelista contemporánea de Nigeria que prefiere escribir en el inglés (HardTalk 2012).

En contraste con los escritores citados anteriormente, Adiche, quien representa una nueva generación de escritoras africanas, ofrece una perspectiva opuesta sobre el papel del inglés en su escritura. Ella es una escritora creativa de la región Igbo en Nigera oriental. Creció en Nsukka donde ella fue educada exclusivamente en el inglés. A diferencia de Thiong’o, su padres ambos son graduados en vez de campesinos. Estudiaba las comunicaciones y las ciencias políticas en Eastern Connecticut State University, y eventualmente recibió la maestría en escritura creativa de John Hopkins Uniwersity. En ese momento, se matricula en el programa de los estudios africanos en Yale University. Ha ganado premios numerosos por su obra, incluso el Premio de Booker para Mujeres y el Premio de Escritores de la Commonwealth (Azodo 2008).

Su historia académica era claramente concentrada en el inglés. En una entrevista al Caucus de la Literatura Africana de Mujeres, ella explicó el papel del inglés en su obra. Ella dijo que tenía más fluidez en el inglés porque era dominante en el sistema educativo, “English is not a choice, because the idea of choice assumes other equal aternatives”(Azodo 2008). Solo tomó una clase singular en la escritura Igbo. En consecuencia, ella no puede expresar sus ideas claramente en el igbo. Aunque Igbo no era prohibido, hablar la lengua era disuada. En lugar de imponer la lengua colonial, los estudiantes elegían a hablar el inglés. No había ninguna fuerza externa para imponer el inglés, pero los hablantes africanos lo afirmaban como el suyo.
Ella cree que el contenido y los temas de su obra son más importantes de la lengua usada para expresarlos. En contraste de Thiong’o, ella usa en inglés para conectar auditores africanos. Confesa que muchas nigerianas no pueden hablar ni escribir en igbo tampoco. Aunque Thiong’o propone que escribir en gĩkũyũ es una manera de conectar con auditores africanos, ella cree que usar igbo solamente distanciarse ella misma de los lectores, “many Igbo people would not be able to read it... many educated Igbo people I know can barely read Igbo”(Azodo 2008). Dice que su generación es multilingüe, y por esta razón, escribir solamente en inglés o una lengua indígena no puede expresar totalmente la experiencia africana, “writing in [exclusively] in igbo cannot capture our experience but limit it”. En contraste de Thiong’o, ella cree que el inglés representa una lengua africana igualmente como las lenguas indígenas. Además, el inglés hablado en África es una variedad distinta de las habladas en Gran Bretaña o los Estados Unidos. Propone que Gran Bretaña ya no puede asegurar su posesión del inglés, se ha convertido en una lengua global con variedades regionales numerosas. Ella asegura que la variedad del inglés hablada en África moderna es igualmente africana y europea. Verdad, el inglés muestra evidencia del colonialismo, pero el colonialismo representa un parte intrínseca de la historia Africana. Concluyó su entrevista diciendo, “English is mine... I have taken ownership of English”(Azodo 2008). Ella rechaza la opinión de Thiong’o que el inglés no sea una lengua africana.

Thiong’o y Adiche mantienen opiniones diferentes sobre el papel del inglés en su obra, pero comparar estas perspectivas es injusto porque ninguna opinión es más valida que la otra. Sus posiciones contrastivas resultan de sus propias historias personales contrastivas. Los dos autores crecieron en comunidades diferentes en las que valoraban las lenguas en maneras distintas. Thiong’o es el hijo de campesinos de la clase baja, y por el contrario Adiche creció en un pueblo anglohablante con dos padres graduados y académicos. Sus propias familias valoraban las dos lenguas de maneras diferentes. Para a Thiong’o, gĩkũyũ representa su herencia familia, pero Adiche no comparte la misma historia lingüística. Thiong’o experimentó el colonialismo británico directamente, pero Adiche solo experimentó las repercusiones indirectas. A pesar de sus experiencias distintas, sus posiciones respectivas son lógicas.
Ninguna perspectiva es más valida o correcta. Para el escritor bilingüe en África, la selección de la lengua es una reflexión de su propia historia lingüística y las repercusiones del colonialismo. En una entrevista, Thiong’o confirma que “all languages are wonderful human creations, or human achievements” (HardTalk 2012), y en la misma entrevista asegura que la obra inglesa de Adiche y otros escritores anglohablantes de África es válida y brillante. No es verdad que el inglés es un envilecimiento de la literatura africana. Solo critica la jerarquía que existe entre las lenguas por consecuencia del colonialismo.

Bibliografía


How I Write

Bailey Zaputil

I have a love-hate relationship with writing. For the most part, a solid 65%, I dislike it and will do anything to avoid it. The other 45% of me enjoys it and finds fulfillment in it, but when you are constantly writing and reading for class, reading for pleasure is the last thing you want to do at home. Thus, I am a total brat when I am forced to actually sit down and pump out five-ten pages at a time. I can do it, but I don’t like to, and usually the quality is suspect. I’ve been trying to space out my writing process more, because I’ve noticed that it improves quality, but life gets in the way of life, and usually I only have time to start a paper right around when it’s due, because I’ve just finished other things at their deadlines. For example, it’s almost 2am, and this paper is due in thirteen hours, and I still couldn’t find the self-control or care to start it until now.

I find that for me it’s easiest to write when I’m in comfy clothes, but like, all of the clothes. If I’m not wearing pants, I have no incentive to do homework. I like to work in public spaces more, such as the library, because I tend to be more focused and don’t get distracted as easily. Also, the distinct lack of bed means I can’t tap-out the moment I get tired and take a three hour nap. Which I did today. Anyways. The problem with this is that now I live half an hour away from the campus library, walking. And on weekends, the city bus takes at least 45 minutes to get from my place to downtown, and the cambus only stops once every half an hour at the nearest bus stop. If I stay past 10 downtown, Nite Ride takes me home, but that always takes at least an hour because they drop off east side girls first. So my incentive to actually write lately has been pretty moot, especially when I know I’m going to waste AT LEAST two hours getting from point A to B and vice-versa. I’m starting to pay for it now, but hopefully I can get caught up before November. Probably not. Oh well.

I like drinking coffee, tea, or water when I’m writing. I don’t mind snacking, but it can’t be anything heavy, or I get sleepy and lethargic. On tough assignments, I write a lot of my ideas and central comments or passages on paper. I also prefer to make
outlines on especially complex prompts. But if it’s a one or two-pager, I just pound that baby out. But for the most part I like to have an idea of the resources I’m going to utilize before I start writing, because if I don’t, there’s a chance I might learn something during the writing that would change or affect my entire argument. Which has happened before, and it is awful. So I learned the hard way to avoid that little shortcut.

I don’t like getting advice from people on my paper unless it’s my mom or the teacher assigning. People are well-intentioned in their advice, but half the time, it’s so general or they try to tell you what to write, which is not the kind of advice I’m looking for. Or the kind of feedback they give doesn’t have anything to do with the content but has to do with the grammar and syntax, which is extremely annoying, because a lot of the time their comments are stylistic choices. So, usually, I just avoid the feedback process altogether.

I never feel complete when my paper is done. I always feel like there was more I could have done or written or rewritten and that the entire assortment was plainly inadequate. It’s not a fun feeling, which is actually another reason I don’t like writing sometimes, because very rarely do I ever actually feel satisfied. It takes a lot for me to look at my final paper and say, “hey, this is actually good”, instead of “thank god that’s done”. But that’s why I continue to write, I suppose. Maybe one day when I have more time I’ll start earlier on my drafts, and have more of those “hey, yay me!” moments. But life gets in the way of life, so I’m sure it will be a very long time until I have such a continual moment. But until then.