



StoryLine Issue 3 Fall 2021

Coastline College's "Arts and Letters" Magazine

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Call for Submissions

- Are you an aspiring visual artist? A potential photographer? A possible poet? Send us your best work for Coastline's literary magazine, due out each fall. Emerging essayists, sagacious short story writers, and daring digital storytellers are also encouraged to submit. (Examples of digital stories can be found at [Storycenter](#).)
- Please send your submission, along with the genre in which you are submitting, to [Oceana Callum](#) by July 1 for consideration in that year's issue.

Guidelines:

- **Art** (drawings, paintings, graphic designs): scan images and send in high-res .jpg format
- **Photography**: send up to 5 images in high-res .jpg format
- **Poetry**: send up to 5 poems in one or multiple Word documents (.docx or .doc) or PDFs
- **Essays**: 2,500 words maximum as a Word document (.docx or .doc) or PDF
- **Short stories**: 2,500 words maximum as a Word document (.docx or .doc) or PDF
- **Digital stories**: send a link to a YouTube video (must be correctly captioned)

Contributor Bios

Javier Alcala

Born and raised in Santa Ana, California, Javier was fortunate to have also spent many of his summers with his grandparents in Huejucar, Jalisco, Mexico where later in his teens he would always walk around with a Pentax K-1000 camera around his neck and a native sack made by the local Wixarica people filled with black and white film. His greatest inspirations were his close friends, who also were photographers, and artists like Manuel Álvarez Bravo, Josef Koudelka, Diane Arbus, and Henri Cartier-Bresson. He studied at OCC, GWC, and Coastline and as an avid film lover, Javier went to San Francisco to pursue a B.A. in Film Studies at SFSU. Upon his return to Orange County he began working in the International Student Program at Golden West College and pursued a Masters in Public Policy and Administration while employed there. Now, continuing his love of working with international students, he is part of the Admission & Records team at Coastline College. On his days off he enjoys taking photos (now on an iPhone), exploring dark antique shops, gardening, and studying Japanese Tea ceremony.

Rosie Coleman

My name is Rosie Coleman. I'm attending Coastline to get my AA in Entrepreneurship and Business Management to hopefully open my own business in the future. I've taken a few basic art classes before, but I am taking DGA 100 Intro to Digital Art and Media to get a better understanding of digital media and how to use the software. I really love art, and I think this class will help me develop a skill I can use in the future when advertising or creating anything for the brand of my business.

Elizabeth Cragg, Guest Editor

Elizabeth Cragg is a Coastline alumna who is currently pursuing her Bachelor's degree in English with a minor in Rhetoric at the University of California, Berkeley. She is an interdisciplinary creative who utilizes poetics as driving force for political innovation and social reform.

Sean Curfman

My name is Sean and I am 60 years old. I have had few brain injuries which have changed the way I take pictures, not physically but mentally. I see things that I didn't see before, like a manhole cover, detailed and beautiful. Almost three years ago, a friend gave me a camera, and I've been hooked ever since. I have a Canon Rebel T6, a Canon 75-300mm, and a Canon 50mm.

Ja'net Daniello

Ja'net Daniello is the author of *The Song of Our Disappearing*, a winner of the Paper Nautilus 2020 Debut Series Chapbook Contest. Her poems have appeared or are forthcoming in *Mid-American Review*, *Radar Poetry*, *The Ilanot Review*, *DIALOGIST*, *Gulf Stream*, *Frontier Poetry*, and *2River View*, among other journals. Originally from Queens, NY, she teaches at Cerritos College and lives in Long Beach, CA with her husband and her dog. You can find her at www.jdaniello.com.

Scott Davis

Scott Davis teaches composition and critical reasoning at Coastline College. He plays a couple instruments, has a broken jump shot, and wonders when the taco truck will get here.

Lisa Dowling

As a fourth generation Californian, I have a deep affinity for the landscape, lifestyle, and cultural offerings of the Golden State. Just as my home state offers extremes of experiences: desert to ocean, snow to meadow, redwoods to Salton Sea, my creative interests follow suit. Always a voracious reader, I filled my childhood with books and music. Writing poetry helped me to make sense of the tiny details in life that seemed to stand out to no one else but me, and finding a way to make the mundane beautiful was a thrill. Find me at

lisadowling.weebly.com

Kat Gerber, Guest Editor

Kat Gerber is an aspiring writer who is currently working on her English degree. She lives in Huntington Beach and works for an Environmental Consulting firm as a Business Manager, where she performs technical writing, proofreading and serves as editor for environmental reports. She loves literature and can usually be found engrossed in her favorite book, the Norton Anthology of Short Fiction.

Thi Ha

My name is Thi Ha. I am from Vietnam, and I have two little boys. I am currently living in Garden Grove, California. My major is Biology. Hopefully, I can complete all biology classes at Coastline Community College and transfer to CSU or UC to pursue a Bachelor of Science degree in the health care field. My goal is to become a Postpartum Registered nurse in the future. Helping others is something that I have always enjoyed doing, and seeing what difference healthcare worked can make in someone's life is such a rewarding feeling. I love cooking, traveling, and reading, especially reading the children's book for my two little kids.

Darby McDougall

My name is Darby McDougall, and I have always loved art and would really love to turn it into a career. I have always loved art and creating things. I would love to learn more about graphic art and design! I love to dance, do art and crafts, play guitar, ride horses, and I'm looking to learn all that I can about design. The last book I read was Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince. Harry Potter is my absolute favorite book series, and the movies are also incredible. Coastline's DGA Intro to Digital Art and Media is the first art class I've taken. I am taking this class to see what digital art is really like, in the hopes that I will be able to soak up many new concepts and understand more deeply how to use the software.

Riley Mcmann

My name is Riley Mcmann. I am an aspiring graphic artist trying to earn certificates and get into the art festival scene. I live in Huntington Beach with my dog and best friend Kola. I took an intro to drawing class and I have always been inspired by the visual arts since I was just a kid. This is my first time taking online classes and I think I'm already feeling more comfortable with this type of learning at Coastline. My goal is to use everything I learn from these courses and make live visuals for live shows. I chose to take this DGA 100 Intro to Digital Art and Media class to get started on my journey to create visual art and make a career out of it.

Kate Mueller

Kate Mueller is the Vice President of Student Services. She joined Coastline in November 2017, and has been in the Coast District since August 2001. The photos shared (untouched!) come from 6am hikes in Santiago Oaks, and there are no better days than when begun with these kinds of views and 1000-foot elevation gains! Kate looks forward to hiking with her 6-month old Akita, once she is a bit better on a leash and can go the distance. In the meantime, Kuma's (the puppy) adventures are in the garden/backyard and around the neighborhood.

Zeldash Myst

Kanav, pen-name Zeldash Myst, has travelled around the world taking inspiration from nature and the universe for his work. With keen observation, his unique perspective allows him to bring the scenery in harmony using words. Never thought about being a writer, his talent preceded his passion. He published his poetry collection book while living in Orange County. Some of the work was inspired from local attractions, like the poem "Scattered Pastels" depicts the landscape of Newport Back Bay reserve. He is a Science & Business Major and tutored at the Student Success Center.

Kimberley Reteguiz

My name is Kim Reteguiz. I'm a Military Student Advisor and have been working for Coastline College out of Jacksonville, FL/NAS Jax/NS Mayport Naval Bases since 2010. I'm also a working musician and have been on the Florida music scene since my college days at the University of Florida. When I'm not working and am at home, I love to build furniture and paint EVERYTHING! It's my creative outlet! When the world and my family was falling apart due to Covid-19, I turned to what always grounded me...my roots, my LATINO BORIQUA heritage, and memories of my family back home in Guaynabo, Puerto Rico. Bomba y Plena is our national dance and music that combines our Spanish, African and Taino roots all into one form of physical and audible art. When I was a child, this and many other styles of music and dance were a part of our everyday lives in my house. The significance of the three colors of women in the painting represents the fact that because of our unique DNA as a whole island, these beautiful skin colors all exist within our own immediate families; therefore, we have no room for racism and colorism in our culture. This painting is rather large in person sizing at 40x40 and is acrylic paint on canvas. The waves of the skirts are pallet knife brushed so that you can feel the folds and texture of the skirt should you touch it.

¡Somos Latinos!

Gaby Torres

My name is Gabriella Torres but I go by Gaby because it is easier to remember and pronounce. I am an aspiring artist with many hobbies like hiking, playing guitar, reading, knitting, and manicuring. I have taken art courses before like

Drawing fundamentals and oil painting; This is my first time doing only online courses. I have always loved to draw since I was a little kid and I've picked up on other things like ceramics and painting. In my free time, I also like to read and one of the most recent books I have read is, "The Outsider" by Stephen King. I definitely recommend it if you are a fan of horror and suspense. I decided to take DGA Intro to Digital Art and Media because I'd like to learn more about digital design and improve my skills.

Jenna Seo

Thank you to the donors for making this award possible, I think my essay topic was fitting, and I hope it opens up the conversation for future policy changes surrounding higher education. These [essay contest] funds will ultimately go towards my education as I transfer to UC Berkeley for the coming fall and will definitely help lighten the burden that comes with the cost of a four-year university. I hope to major in social welfare and eventually continue my education and get a Master's degree in social work. I am passionate about educating others and serving underrepresented communities, and I hope to continue helping others as I pursue my professional and educational goals. Thanks again to the donors and Coastline College for providing this amazing opportunity for their students.

Joel Woodard

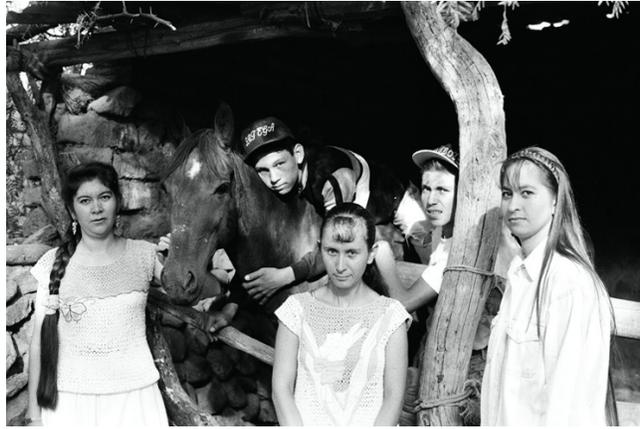
What are we? Who are we? Where are we going? How will we get there? My work is a convergence of graphic shapes, patterns, symbols, gestured abstraction, and is driven by an obsessive search for unfamiliar and uncanny imagery. I'm continually interested in how the variety of texture, the unpacking and navigation of color, and automatism informs the anatomy of that uncanny imagery. I let as many different possibilities emerge as I can, and I challenge myself with the limitations of traditional media. The work is inspired by the philosophical questions of where human society is going in our fast-paced and technologically driven world, explorations of the primitive, and fascinations from evolution. I've been a student of art and a working artist for over 20 years. Born and raised in Northern California, my interest in art took root in the mid-90s with my many visits to art museums and galleries in San Francisco. Eventually moving to Southern California, I earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Drawing and Painting from Laguna College of Art and Design, and a Master of Fine Arts degree in Art from California State University, Long Beach. I also have 20 years' experience working in various capacities at Laguna Art Museum where I currently serve as the Director of Operations. I have also been involved with the art dept. at Coastline Community College. Beginning in Nov. of 2017 as an Embedded Art Tutor for drawing classes, then on to an English Writing Tutor through 2018, until finally being offered to teach Art History online in the spring of 2019, which I have done every semester since.

Dennis Zaldana

I was fortunate to have a safe environment and even more grateful to have a 1-bedroom apartment with a small patio during early lockdowns in 2020. To be completely honest I took the patio for granted. It wasn't until my world went from 60 to 0 miles an hour when I began to take appreciation for the space. I began planting seeds and photographing the process. With all the hustle and bustle, it's easy to lose a sense of what is important and for me it was patience and the small details in my life. The up-close image you see, is my first blooming Tiger Lily.

Javier Alcala, Three Photos





Scott Davis, "An Idea of Autumn"

An Idea of Autumn

is spilled gold unspun

a time lapse shot with lens cap on

is Caspian gate, Castilian pass

violoncello but not sax

is pressed bean with cinnamon

as chiffon yields to gabardine

is pine needle down but hair updone

navigable unnamable – between

is vowel and umlaut, an O of lips (whistle or)

before the shiver

Kimberly Reteguiz, Bomba y Plena



Dennis Zaldana, Tiger Lily



Patrice D'Enbeau, "The Chosen Whites"

Undeniably catchy, hard riffs on a guitar. The build-up to a commanding scream of an angry lyricist. The beat of the drum demanding people to march

along. The bass backing all this up with a consistent demand to stay engaged. The anger can be felt through the speakers as Zack de la Rocha screams at anyone who will listen about the atrocities of a corrupt police force. Music has been used as a protest tool for decades, with “Killing in the Name” calling for a generation to no longer stand for the status quo. Rage Against the Machine has called out the United States police force's historical relationship with the Ku Klux Klan in an undeniable musical tirade that demands listening.

This song begins with the typical complex guitar arrangement for which Rage Against the Machine's guitarist, Tom Morello, has come to be known. In a series of eight notes, Tom Morello has captivated the listener to begin moving to the beat. It remains impossible to not at least tap a foot as you get ready to march to the catchy guitar riffs backed with an assertive bass section. When the music abruptly stops, the listener is interrupted by the first line of the song spoken quickly yet assertively, “killing in the name of.” De la Rocha speaks this line with a somewhat distorted sound. As the music begins again just as it was before, the feeling of the song becomes impossible to ignore; it is a feeling of persistence.

Some of those that work forces, are the same that burn crosses. This line is stated four times in order to instill the importance of what is being said. De la Rocha is referencing a widely accepted fact that Southern law enforcement has historically been riddled with Ku Klux Klan members. However, this song, written in 1992, was referencing a racism that doesn't hide behind a hood, but behind a gun. This song could have easily been written in May of 2020, immediately following the brutal killing of George Floyd.

"Killing in the Name" references the brutal killing of Rodney King in Los Angeles as a climactic event of the systemic racism that is built into American society's obsession with law and order. “Some of those that work forces, are the same that burn crosses,” De la Rocha says again, and again, and again, slowly building until—finally—he lets out a loud scream as Tom Morello's guitar brings us back to that beginning riff once again, reminding us why we are marching. De la Rocha repeats, “killing in the name of,” as a rally cry before quieting down once again, bringing the marching down to a whisper, the silence before the protesting storm. De la Rocha never finishes the sentence; instead, he stops and allows the listener to decide. Killing in the name of...G-d, of country, of liberty—it is up to the listener.

At this point, the listener is in the moment with Rage Against the Machine, fighting against accepted racism within the police force of the United States. De la Rocha starts at a whisper, “Now you do what they told ya,” with a jab of the guitar and then, “Now you do what they told ya,” again, repeating this four times before picking up speed. De la Rocha continues to repeat this line louder every time while Morello's guitar quickens in tempo and increases distortion. The repetition of this line over a dozen times instills the fear that an individual will feel when faced with an organization riddled with members of the

Ku Klux Klan. Once again, De la Rocha is shouting at the listener, who has commenced to marching once again, protesting the arrogant racism of the United States police force.

The repetition of the line, “Now you do what they told ya,” feels robotic, evoking a cult-like chanting, coupled with the distortion and mechanical jab of the guitar. It feels as if De la Rocha is commanding his listeners to stray from blind respect for authority or conformity of any kind. He is demanding his listeners think more deeply about why they are conforming and whom they are so blindly respecting.

At the two-minute mark exactly, the listener has made it to the chorus of the song, the climax. De la Rocha is now shouting against a rough guitar riff which is backed by an assertive drumline. “Those who died are justified, for wearing the badge, they’re the chosen whites,” is a somewhat ironic line, insinuating that violence, regardless of the perpetrator, should be condemned. De la Rocha quickly gets back on topic with small twist on this line: “You justify those that died, by wearing the badge, they’re the chosen whites.” The change from “Those that died are justified,” to “You justify those that died,” transforms the chorus into an anti-racist anthem. De la Rocha has stated that the police force is justifying the killing of people of color, primarily black people, with their badge, as they did immediately following the brutal killing of Rodney King. Once again, he repeats the line four times to ensure that the listener has heard his anthem. He ends each line with, “they’re the chosen whites,” reminding the listener of the association the Ku Klux Klan has historically had with the police force.

At the end of the chorus, the listener is reintroduced to the first refrain: “some of those that work forces, are the same that burn crosses.” De la Rocha quiets down this time, repeating the same line with slightly more assertiveness for this refrain. The frustration in his voice and in Morello’s guitar becomes palpable after the fourth refrain, just when De la Rocha quickly lets out a strong guttural, “uh!” before launching into a second refrain of the previous robotic scenario.

However, this time De la Rocha adds in a twist for the listener: “(Now you’re under control) and now you do what they told ya.” The change no longer allows for questions from the listener as to what De la Rocha is insinuating. With the quietly building up, robotic nature of the first refrain, the additional line, and the final, guttural scream, De la Rocha has taunted the listener into a rebellion march, handing them his words as a rally cry that takes the listener immediately into the final chorus and launching us into a wailing guitar solo.

With one minute left, De la Rocha has one line left for the listener, an undeniable refusal of the blind acceptance of authority. “F*k you, I won’t do what you tell me,” he repeats quietly at first, almost mumbling, building into the final crescendo while the guitar builds up with him. The final eight refrains of this line are screamed with that original catchy guitar riff in the back, before he

finally yells, “Motherf*ker,” and the song quickly ends. This abrupt ending leaves the listener ready to march with their rally cry in hand.

Rage Against the Machine is a band aptly named. The “machine” can be a plethora of things; in this case, that machine is the police force, its relationship with the Ku Klux Klan, and its undeniable pattern of police brutality against people of color. De la Rocha calls out the blind acceptance for the status quo and demands his listeners to fight back: “F*k you, I won’t do what you tell me.” He demands his listeners to recognize the authority for what they are, “the chosen whites.” He demands the acknowledgement that the police force is not only the police force, but has been aligned with other organizations, “some of those that work forces, are the same the burn crosses.” The listener is no longer able to stand back, as the song continuously insists through both music and lyrics: the listener must march; they must act; they cannot sit idle. This song is the rally cry for a generation to no longer stand for what has always been, but to create what could be. This song was that cry for a generation of fighters in 1992, and it’s time to turn the volume back up for the new generation of fighters in 2020.

Kate Mueller, "Santiago Oaks Sunrise" and "Santiago Oaks Mustard in Bloom"





Zeldash Myst, "Scattered Pastels"

The green grass
And the yellow flowers
Below the blue sky
On the mustard trail,
In front of indigo mountain
Behind the silver stream
Running around red squirrels
Storing the grey seeds
Inside the brown bark.
Swollen purple berries,
Gliding cream birds
Sliding in turquoise marsh.
Magenta worms on pink blooms,
Violet rays coming from the orange sun,
And many other shades of spectral white
Seen by a Black eye.

"DGA Students Make Sparks"

This assignment allows students to select a topic – something they enjoy doing like photography, pets/animals, cosplay, dancing, Minecraft gaming, working out, gardening, cooking, drawing, painting, ceramics, ancestry etc. In this first introduction to the Adobe Spark video application the students include titles, voiceovers rather than blocks of text, photos, videos, artwork and other creative content to enhance their story.

DGA C100 is an introduction to fundamental concepts, practices, and theories of digital art and media. Topics include the integration of traditional design, color, and compositional principles with contemporary digital tools. Demonstrations of digital image capture, image manipulation, illustration,

layout, animation, 3D, and emerging technologies. The course is offered yearly in Coastline's Digital Media fall course rotation.

--Angela Gomez-Holbrook

Darby McDougall, "What's the Pointe?"

What's the Pointe?

Gaby Torres, "Drawing with Procreate"

Drawing with Procreate

Rosie Coleman, "What Cooking Means to Me"

What Cooking Means to Me

Riley McMann, "My Best Friend, Kola"

My Best Friend, Kola

Jenna Seo, "College is Too Dang Expensive"

As of late, there has been a meme floating around Twitter about a university student achieving what every college student in America could only dream of attaining, and that dream consists of getting run over by a campus bus. While the rumor has been shut down by the respective university, the tweet alluded to the "American dream" many students yearn for, which is getting hit by a campus bus in hopes of receiving free tuition as somewhat of "hush money" ("UI Refutes Rumor"). Many students found the tweet humorous regardless of whether it was true or not, yet other students realized the dark truth to this morbidly humorous tweet. The harsh reality of the situation is, American college students are willing to put themselves in physical harm in order to pay off their student debt. However, that is not all students are willing to do in order to pay off their student loans. In an article titled, "Plus Ça Change: Earn While You Learn," the author Lara K. Couturier reports a variety of unconventional ways students are paying off their student debt, which include selling marijuana during a time when it was not yet legalized, seeking sugar daddy arrangements online, and taking up a more mild-mannered job of a janitorial position at a church (1). Despite the wide range of work students are taking on, all of these occasions point to the fact that the cost of higher education has grown at an exponential rate, and unfortunately, students continue to carry the burden.

To combat this crisis, the government has a vital role it must take on by offering free college or at least take on some of the student debt through increased government funding in an efficient and mindful manner. Otherwise, people will deem higher education too costly for its value, and as a consequence, the U.S. may face another market crash similar to the Great Recession of 2008. Although there are potential drawbacks of free college, and some argue that the expense should fall on the individual as higher education is hardly a necessity, many do not recognize that higher education also improves the lives of people other than the person receiving said education. Many students apply to college in hopes of securing a stable job after graduation, but when they enter the competitive job market with crippling debt, it causes prospective students to doubt whether or not college is worth it for them, which in turn can weaken the already fragile economy.

Among the general public, the appeal of receiving a higher education is mostly based around its extrinsic value, meaning the majority of people do not attend college just to gain more knowledge for the sole purpose of gaining more knowledge. Instead, students enter college for advanced career options and the socioeconomic stability a college education brings. But when the financial payout does not live up to its expected return, people will stop investing in college, which can affect the economy negatively. Interestingly enough, some have even compared the rising cost of tuition to the housing market crash of 2008. According to a letter to the editor by Scott Snair, "the value of a college education, like the value of a home, is perception-based. If the perception of value goes away, all hell breaks loose" (par. 3). In other words, due to the high price tag attached, people will no longer see the value of receiving a college education, which can lead to another bubble bursting like that of 2008.

But that is not all Snair brings up; he continues to state, "Higher education, like real estate, is purchased largely on loans, with the federal government heavily involved in those loan programs" (par. 3). If Americans were to experience another market crash due to skyrocketing tuition rates and students were to default on student loans as a result of this, it would possibly cause irreversible damage to the economy and affect millions of people worldwide. That is why it is imperative for the government to take action and invest in higher education in order to prevent this worst-case scenario from ever coming to fruition. Incidentally, for-profit private universities such as the infamous University of Phoenix further perpetuate the claim that a degree is worth significantly less than its hefty price tag by failing to provide substantial degrees that will hold up in a professional setting. It was found that students who attend these for-profit private universities such as the University of Phoenix, "are more likely to default on their loans, representing 44% of the federal student loan default rate" (Wimberg 9). Having said that, the government plays a large role in preventing a full-blown market crash by either erasing tuition fees altogether, increasing state funding for universities, or providing government-backed loans only for accredited universities. Despite endless ways of alleviating the current student loan crisis, implementing all of those suggestions and granting free tuition does not come without its costs.

While proposing free college for all seems ideal, many bring up the idea that it may not paint a rosy picture after all by pointing to the numerous downfalls European nations that offer free college currently face. In addition to that, what many people fail to realize is that free tuition is not actually free. The costs would essentially be offset by having taxpayers foot the bill, which brings up the argument of why should the costs now have to fall on them? Stephen Krason agrees with this opinion and asserts, "what possible right or prerogative does one have to ask others to pay for him to go to college? Higher education is hardly a necessity" (1). Basically, Krason is questioning why students should receive a free ride to college when ultimately, taxpayers would be liable for financing someone else's education without being able to reap any of the monetary profits themselves. This sentiment is based on the evidence that, in the end, the students receiving the free education would receive financial gains such as in the form of "higher salary, increased lifetime income, and better quality of life" (Dennison 12). Also, aside from the fact that free college is actually wildly expensive, it has been demonstrated to create more problems than originally thought, with European countries uncovering masked struggles with degree attainment and retention rates. In Mary Amselem's article, "Europe Has Free College. Here's How It's Working Out," she argues, "Given the increased tax burdens placed on taxpayers (...), the significant overcrowding, and high dropout rates, European-style free college should largely be considered a public policy failure" (par. 16). The essence of Amselem's argument is that by subsidizing college for all students, it would leave too much room for people to take advantage of it and abuse the system. This would realistically create a scenario in which colleges would simply not be able to handle the amount of incoming students and end up wasting limited resources on students who end up dropping out. While all of these worries are valid concerns, there are still ways to combat the issues that stem from providing free higher education and still come out of this with the benefits outweighing the costs. While offering free college certainly does not come without its flaws, the bigger picture reveals that it can be done if the government just chooses to prioritize education over other matters. The fact of the matter is, the government is consistently allocating less money towards education and more towards correctional facilities instead.

In a report from the U.S. Department of Education, the data reports that "over the roughly two decades, between 1989–1990 and 2012–2013, state and local appropriations for public colleges and universities remained flat, while funding for corrections increased by nearly 90 percent" (par. 7 Report: Increases on Corrections). When comparing the two sectors side by side, it is apparent that spending more on our future leaders would prove more useful in the long run, and that can easily be done by just making college more accessible. There was also a study done by the National Bureau of Economic Research that disclosed the effects of education on crime. While the focus of the study was on the correlation between high school graduation and crime, the material proved that "by raising earnings, education raises the opportunity cost of time spent in prison. Education may also make individuals less impatient or more risk-averse, further reducing the propensity to commit crimes" (Lochner and Moretti 30). These findings illustrate that investing in education not only aids the individual but also helps society at large by averting overall crime. Additionally, when this information is coupled with the statistical evidence that the U.S. incarceration rate is the highest among OECD countries, in fact, it is more than double all of the OECD countries, it paints an eye-opening picture (Duffin 1).

On that note, perhaps taxpayers should acknowledge the belief that higher education is not just a mere privilege but also a fundamental right due to its societal benefits. Moreover, making budget cuts on education is an inefficient use of a tight budget when research indicates that an educated population has more perks than just lower overall crime rates. Although there is a myriad of ways higher education serves other members in a community that are harder to quantify, it does not mean that it is any less valuable than its quantifiable counterpart. Thus, the government should aim to reverse current public policies set in place that privatize higher education, considering that a college education contributes more to the public than to the individual obtaining the degree.

In his article "The Tip of the Iceberg," Philip Trostel maintains that, "higher earnings associated with higher education create additional tax revenues, and these additional tax revenues benefit others by financing public services" (13). With that said, the government would be able to spend the increased source of tax revenue in other areas that need it more, making higher education a more viable option to support. Trostel pushes matters further when he explains, "there appears to be a significant philanthropy externality from college attainment. This is seen in at least three dimensions: volunteering, employment in nonprofit organizations, and in cash donations to charity" (14). It would simply be ignorant to deny the tremendous rewards a college education brings the nation based on the information Trostel provides.

College-educated individuals also have a greater tendency to participate in democratic and civic engagement compared to high school graduates based on the grounds that college graduates have significantly higher voting rates and are more likely to have contacted a public official to voice concerns (18% compared to 7%) (Trostel 16). These key findings alone should be enough to sway citizens and convince them that the government should invest its revenue more responsibly and make college more affordable for students. When it comes to the topic of higher education, most people will readily agree that the prices have gone up to an exorbitant amount. Where this agreement usually ends, however, is on the question of whether the government should take on the tab or if the bill should be handed down to the person who is actually receiving the education. Whatever one's stance may be, the general public needs to be aware of the economic ramifications the prevailing student debt crisis may have on the market. And while many contend that free college is wasteful of government funds and produces subpar results, they do not recognize the far-reaching attributes and opportunities it brings the community in other ways. Either way, it should stand that the ongoing state of affairs in regards to higher education is not sustainable. Unless steps are taken to mitigate it, America will be headed towards a budding disaster.

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Joel Woodward, "Pixel Confetti," "Raver," and "Sugar Data"







Sean Curfman, Two Photos



Lisa Dowling, "Nepenthe," and "Toasting the Missing Moon"

Nepenthe

Just before they uncap the needle, I fidget
with the filmy hairnet and tug at thin gown
strings, then warn the anesthesiologist
I am a cheap date. One drop and I'm yours;
don't juice me up until you slip me onto
the surgical table. I'll sing, pretend I'm a mermaid,
ask you for sushi, and reveal my bank codes
as I drift, so take notes. Sometimes they laugh,
unused to patients with gallows humor poking
fun as a surgeon chooses the blade best
for flesh or bone. Some don't believe me
and inject *just the one to calm you first*, then go
wide-eyed as I slip off the face of a cliff with
a single blink. I love the ones who lean in to
really look at me, the ones who trust that when
a woman speaks, she might know her mind.

They say, *done this a lot, have you?* And I nod.
Once, I asked how many times I could be put under
without frying my circuits, and the woman holding
the dram assured me that there wasn't
a countdown clock where the buzzer at the end
meant peace out. I'm still not sure. Each time I
fight back up through the salty layers, moving
from the trenches to sunlight zone where surging
tides draw me swiftly back to shore, I wonder
how long I can hang there in the darkness, body
rent open along some seam, stilled but not dead,
brain blindly floating. Each time they lay me
down and fill me with forgetting, I lose fragments
of myself. When I wake, my husband laughs
in the recovery room as nurses recount tales
I told while swimming up or down the benthic layers.
One young trainee with an octopus tattoo on her tanned
arm even scrawled on my release papers with a smiley
face: *Mermaid, let's go get drinks and laugh some more.*
You sang as you swam. You sank, but didn't die.
--Lisa Dowling 2021

To Toast the Missing Moon

One month after the lockdown began
he watched her walk out her front door
with a glass of wine and find the double
yellow lines in the middle of the boulevard.
The night air was warm, wind rising
from the direction of the sea to slide down
the street toward the hills. Sodium vapor
streetlights winked against the lip
of her glass and she stood for many minutes,
looking one way and then the other; not
a single car or human traveling either way.
The city was stilled, people tensed
on the edge of knowing and fear as they
waited for the virus wave to wash over.
She walked over reflective dots a few yards,
her skirt swirling in the breeze, and just as he
had decided to go out to see if she was ok,
she lifted her glass to the sky, black-orange
dome devoid of constellations, and she toasted
the night. Startled, he reached for his glass,
whiskey melting a single cube of ice,

and from behind his window he toasted her back, though he wasn't sure if her gesture was a fanfare or farewell, social reflex moved him to reflect the act. He wondered what she saw that he did not. No planes flew, no one scurried from work to home, nothing but coyotes and nightbirds moved among the shadows. In another time he would have stepped out, exchanged neighborly banter, complained gently about the surreal act of stopping everything. But her toast seemed like it may have been a prayer, the lifted glass a supplication rather than a blessing, and he drew the blinds to let her make her offering to the concrete and silent stars in peace.

--Lisa Dowling 2020

Ja'net Danielo, "Julia"

JULIA

--After Julia Louis-Dreyfus, when she walked the red carpet at the 2019 Emmys after having a bilateral mastectomy with reconstruction

I saw it when
you wore that gown
at the Emmys, gold-
spangled, plunging
neckline: soft frowns
above your breasts—
mark of a hollowed-
out woman stuffed
& reshaped into
a beautiful thing.

I know
the dark curve
of space & time
a knife leaves
behind, the weight
of its collapsed
& hungry stars.

I saw it
in your chest,
on your skin—
gold-flecked
& bright,
your body

a galaxy burning
with a million
reborn stars.

Thi Ha, "The Ideal Society"

Having an ideal society is always the dream of people in the world. Although people know that an ideal society is a utopia, they still hope and try to make it a reality. Each person holds a different perspective on what a perfect society should be. Some hope for no gap between rich and poor. Others expect the entire community to be a crime-free society. A good life is a life that can make happiness for all people. Therefore, an ideal society must not only be a peaceful place to live without war or racial discrimination. It must also be a perfect place to stay with no unemployment, crime, no environmental pollution, and no health or education costs.

The first desirable factor in building an ideal society would be a peaceful society without war. War is mainly caused by human greed and ambition. War is an "armed competition between two independent political units, using organized military forces, in pursuit of national or tribal policies" (Jack, 2015, p.50).

However, for me, war is blood, tears, pain, and life. War has killed millions of lives and left millions of families separated in the past: wives lost husbands; children lost fathers. Because of war, thousands of houses and infrastructure have been destroyed. Because of war, people fall into poverty and disease due to environmental pollution. Because of war, the dreams of millions of children with a good education are hopeless. War can be described as a demon that destroys everything in the world. Therefore, peaceful society is a desire of all people: "Peace is the virtue of civilization; war is its crime" (Hugo, 2013, p.1) is accurate. In a peaceful society, people have the opportunity to live and develop in the best conditions, not suffering the pain of loss, dispersion, and separation like in war. Thus, eliminating war is the number one factor contributing to building an ideal society and creating a happy life for everyone.

The second desirable factor in building an ideal society would be one without racism. Racism is a type of prejudice used to justify the belief that one race is superior or inferior to others (Keirns, 2015, p.228). Recall the success of Martin Luther King Jr. in the movement to eliminate racism in the 1960s. Racism seemed to have been abolished, however, in reality, it still exists. When a person is born white, he (or she) is automatically given a privilege and power from society. In the article "An invisible knapsack," Peggy, who is an American feminist and anti-racism activist, has succeeded in using the "knapsack" to describe invisible racial discrimination. A knapsack, which contains all kinds of benefits like education, opportunities, and credit of white privilege, is the leading cause of racism discrimination that occurs in everyday life. People with white skin can go shopping alone most of the time, pretty well assured that they will not be followed or harassed (Peggy, 2007, p.189). It often happens in reality; if

someone is not white, they will be monitored by the staff, with the assumption that people who are not white in skin color will be coming to steal something. Whites have the right to freedom of speech, but people with different skin colors do not have that right as Peggy said: "I can speak in public without putting my race on trial" (Peggy, 2007, p.190). Nobody wants to live in conditions of contempt and discrimination. It is terrible to live in such a racist society. As human being, everyone should learn to respect each other and not disregard another's values. If everybody did so, we would have an ideal society. An ideal society that makes all people happy is a society without racial discrimination. The third factor in building an ideal society is that everyone has employment opportunities and a crime-free community. Crime is one of the most worrisome phenomena affecting economic development and social welfare (Jonathan, 2010, p.1). There is a study in 103 Italian provinces on the relationship between unemployment and crime; the unemployment rate has a positive correlation with all crime rates (Nino, 2014, p.1). People cannot deny the need for money to meet the necessities of life. When people do not have jobs, they do not have money to fulfill their needs, such as paying for housing, food, bills, medical care, and education. Therefore, people will tend to do anything illegal, such as murder, robbery, theft, or fraud in order to solve financial problems. Another study of race and criminal activity indicated that crime occurred because of racial discrimination and these crimes were committed between non-white people of color (Alex, 2002, p.1). These people develop criminal tendencies because they are frustrated with society. The bottom line is that they are despised and discriminated against because of their skin color. Therefore, many of have become criminals as a means of survival. To improve these situations, the government should fulfill their needs by having the right employment opportunities and excellent care for them. Besides that, residents have to change their attitude; they must be friendly, respectful, and help people around so that society is safe and developed to be a crime-free society.

The fourth important factor in building an ideal society is the pollution-free environment. We all know that the environment is an essential part of our lives. A clean environment is necessary for a happy and healthy life. The atmosphere is the surrounding nature that helps humans, animals, and other creatures to thrive. However, today our environment has been polluted by various sources such as fuel, industrial waste, chemicals, waste, deforestation, and exhaust fumes from vehicles and factories enter into the environment. One of the leading causes of pollution is industrial oil because it directly affects the environment if handled improperly (Kumar, 2013, p.1). Any disturbance in nature affects not only human life, but all living things. Therefore, we need to protect our environment from now on with every small step taken by everyone every day. Planting trees, reducing waste, and disposing of waste properly is the best way to prevent environmental pollution. Consequently, in order to have an

ideal society, we need to protect the environment. If we protect our environment accurately, we are protecting our life.

No medical and educational expenses are the ultimate desires in an ideal society. Indeed, education plays a vital role in creating a good future for everyone globally, especially children (Anne, 2017, p.452). However, not everyone can enter school because of the high tuition fees. In some developing countries, low-income families cannot afford to send their children to school. Therefore, children are illiterate due to poverty. A study of Sunita in Delhi (India) shows that "family poverty is the main factor preventing children from going to school" (Sunita, 2011, p.19). Thus, to prevent illiteracy for children, the government must set up a free education system for them. In the United States, with the "No Child Left Behind" program, the U. S government has successfully achieved the goal that all children can attend classes (John, 2011, p.1). As for health, the poor cannot afford high medical costs if they are seriously ill. It is unfortunate for a person to die from a common disease such as high blood pressure or diabetes due to a lack of treatment (William, 2016, p.1). Therefore, the government should pay attention to medical costs and, if possible, create free options the poor. Consequently, no medical and educational expenses will bring a happy life for everyone in the world.

Based on the above details, we can conclude that an ideal society that fosters the greatest happiness for people must have all five: no war, no racism, no unemployment or crime, no environmental pollution, and no medical or educational costs. However, in real-life, society would never be perfect enough to have it all. While racism is the hardest part to stop, criminal activity is also a tricky part of solving in reality. Nevertheless, if each person can unite together with determination and effort, they can make the impossible become possible. Humans are intelligent; we believe that soon, a bright society will appear before our eyes. We have to believe in ourselves, and we can do it.

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