Welcome to Spectrum 2006

*Spectrum* is an annual competition designed to honor excellent essays written for undergraduate courses at Saint Mary's College. Submissions are read by a panel of judges and cash awards are given at the end of each spring semester. Winning essays are published in *Spectrum* the following fall.

The judges seek essays that represent a wide range of academic disciplines and writing styles and which exemplify intellectual ambition, depth of insight, and eloquence. All undergraduates at Saint Mary's College are encouraged to submit essays written as part of their coursework for consideration (maximum length: 5,000 words).

Submissions for the 2007 contest may be sent via campus mail to Professor Sandra Grayson, c/o the English Department, as an email attachment to sgrayson@stmarys-ca.edu, or may be placed in the zebra-striped *Spectrum* box on the 3rd floor of Dante Hall, near the elevator. All submissions should include a cover sheet with the author's full name, phone number, and email address, as well as the name of the faculty member and course for which the paper was written.

Thank you to all those who submitted their work and to the professors who encouraged them. We received nearly eighty submissions this year and the overall quality was superb. Please keep those essays coming from across the curriculum—we can't publish this annual anthology without you. Many, many thanks also to the faculty who generously volunteered to serve as judges: Saundra Alassio, Glenna Breslin, Reid Davis, Ron Olowin, Jennifer Robbins, and Mary Volmer. Very special thanks also to Gail Drexler, English Department Administrative Assistant, for all her help coordinating the contest.

This year our judges have chosen five essays on topics ranging from Don Quixote to AIDS. Their illuminating perspectives and compelling insights make them a pleasure to read. Enjoy! Note that styles of documentation differ from discipline to discipline and that these essays come from across the curriculum; each essay employs the conventions taught in the course for which it was written.

The cover photograph is “The Bridge” by Melanie Linney, originally published in *riverrun* 2006.

Carol S. Lashof
Faculty Moderator for *Spectrum* 2006
SPECTRUM 2006

First Prize

Theresa Isidro, “Las Casas: Singing the Brown Man’s Burden”
*Collegiate Seminar 122: Renaissance and 17th-18th Century Thought*
Instructor: Alex Green

Second Prize

Kyme Hersi-Sallid, “How Could I?”
*LEAP 176: Writing for the Major*
Instructor: Anne Hawthorne

Third Prize

Katherine Chang, “Don Quixote: Chapter LII ½”
*Collegiate Seminar 122: Renaissance and 17th-18th Century Thought*
Instructor: Carol Lashof

Elizabeth Cruz, “New Traditions: My Experience as a First Generation College Student”
*January Term 66: Setting the Foundation*
Instructors: Dana Herrera and Phylis Martinelli

Jenise Phelps, “The Beginning of an Epidemic—History of AIDS in America”
*Biology 139: Immunology*
Instructor: Jennifer Robbins
Las Casas: Singing The Brown Man’s Burden

By Theresa Isidro

Men live peacefully so long as their old way of life is maintained and there is no change in their customs... so long as you do not deprive them of their property or their honor, the majority of men live happily... (Machiavelli, 1984: 9-61).

Las Casas would have agreed with Machiavelli’s statement above-- indeed, in defense of the Indians subjected to Spanish imposition and forced religious conversion in *The Devastation of the Indies*, he writes:

... if pagans find themselves first injured, oppressed, saddened, and afflicted by the misfortunes of wars, through the loss of their children, their goods, and their own liberty... how can they be moved voluntarily to listen to what is proposed to them about faith, religion, justice, and truth? Or how will they be able to adhere to what has been preached? (Sanderlin, 1971: 41)

Throughout the course of its study, it may unmistakably be noted that history is grossly saturated with accounts regarding religious conversion and quite similarly, colonization-- for the common denominator of the two is that both (more often than not) are inflicted upon their victims by force. Arguing against such a method, Las Casas writes that to apply force only drives the victimized to refuse to accept that which is forced upon them-- as opposed to persuasion “through reason and by gently attracting or exhorting the will,” which serves as the only correct and moral approach (Sanderlin, 1971: 37). A particular historical event that accurately illustrates Las Casas’ argument is the colonization of the Philippine Islands by the U.S. at the close of the 19th century.

Prior to the eruption of the Spanish American War in 1898, the United States had little to no knowledge of the Philippine archipelago. Upon the arrival of the U.S. Pacific Fleet in Manila Bay (which had plans to destroy the Spanish fleet there), the
wealth of benefits for U.S. expansionist interests offered by the Islands were immediately apparent. In addition to “advancing the Anglo-Saxon cause,” the Philippine Islands would allow the United States to promote business interests and facilitate trade with China (San Buenaventura, 1998: 3). They also offered an abundance of natural resources, as well as the potential to establish a strategic military outpost overseas (San Buenaventura, 1998: 3). Needless to say, if not for the Spanish occupation in the Philippines, the islands would have been overlooked as just another country on the eastern shore of Asia as opposed to the pearl of the Pacific fortuitously discovered by the United States.

The arrival of the U.S. Pacific Fleet in 1898 found the Philippine archipelago in the midst of revolt against more than three centuries of Spanish colonial rule. While the United States appeared to support the Philippine ambition of self-sovereignty and political independence from Spain, the reality of the matter was that the U.S. had its own ambitions of establishing power in Asia, and saw the perfect opportunity to accomplish this through the Philippines. Thus, the Islands’ inhabitants quickly found themselves betrayed; dismissed from Spanish colonial rule and turned over to the United States, who purchased the Islands from Spain for $20 million.

Sentiments towards the colonization of the archipelago varied. For those in favor of American expansion and imperialism, the motive to colonize the Islands was deep-seated in a national belief in the “God-given right” of the American Anglo-Saxon civilization to flourish and lead in the world” (San Buenaventura, 2003: 3). This notion was further prompted by negative perceptions of Filipinos as a “semi barbarous... backward, inferior race which had to either yield to progress or face extermination” (Van Ells, 1995: 602). Indeed, many (but certainly not all) believed that it was the duty of the
United States to "civilize and enlighten" these "dark" nations by imposing what they saw as the reform of social, political, and economic systems of the Philippines, which was by no means embraced by the Philippine natives (Van Ells, 1995: 602). In one of his poems, for example, the British poet Rudyard Kipling expressed his support of the possession of the Philippine archipelago by the United States:

Take up the White Man's burden
Send forth the best ye breed
Go bind your sons to exile
To serve your captives' need;
To wait, in heavy harness,
On fluttered folk and wild
Your new-caught sullen peoples'
Half devil and half child
(qtd. in Pimental, 2003: 3).

Mark Twain on the other hand, wrote, "The White Man's Burden has been sung. Who will sing the Brown Man's?" (qtd. in Pimental, 2003: 3).

Had Las Casas been around to witness the misfortunes of American imposition in the Philippines, perhaps he would have been able to provide the voice that Mark Twain so longed for-- indeed, he devoted much of his time to providing a voice for those afflicted by the cruelties of the Spanish imposition throughout his career as a theologian. Perhaps he would have reminded white and brown men alike of his belief that inferiority did not exist within the human race; that "all men are equal in their human dignity and their potentiality for development through education" (Sanderlin, 1971: 47). In defense of the native inhabitants of the Philippine Islands who were so often referred to as "barbarous," Las Casas would have repeated his views on such an ignorant classification, inspired by the Spanish conquest of the Indies in the late 1400s:
... a man is apt to be called barbarous, in comparison with another, because he is strange in his manner of speech and mispronounces the language of the other, and also because they do not suit one another in conversation. But from this point of view, there is no man or race which is not barbarous with respect to some other man or race. Thus, just as we esteemed these peoples of these Indies barbarous, so they considered us, because of not understanding us (Sanderlin, 1971: 32).

The underlying theme of this argument is that the notion of barbarism is glaringly relative. Any person of any nation, culture, or ethnic background is subject to being called barbarous not only as a result of the inability to understand that person due to language barriers or to the triviality of his/her manner of speech, but moreover, as a result of the inability to understand the idiosyncrasies that constitute the nation, culture, or ethnic background that the individual represents. Las Casas draws attention to the notion that as a result of such idiosyncrasies, conquest is often beckoned as “an undertaking of the ‘white man’s burden’ of forcibly uplifting an ‘inferior’ race” (Sanderlin, 1971: 33). Furthermore, what many seem to overlook and/or forget is that such a manner of perception is not a one way street— as much as the Spanish felt and truly believed the Indians to be a barbarous people due to the traditional and customary practice of rituals such as cannibalism and human sacrifice, such practices were probably as normal for them as the enslavement of innocent people was for the Spanish. In other words, it is without a doubt that the Indians found it equally strange and disturbing that the Spanish, who claimed to be a God-loving people, would force and subject them (or anyone) to the cruelties of slavery as a method of conversion. Likewise, it doubtless was unnerving for the inhabitants of the Philippine archipelago to find that the motives of a nation they initially trusted turned out to be completely duplicitous, while the U.S. applauded itself for its smart political move to bear the gift of civilization to this nation of “backwards
savages," while at the same time, taking advantage of the wealth of benefits that the Islands had to offer (Van Ells, 1995: 609).

Over an entire century later, it is difficult to imagine how much different the Islands might be in the absence of American occupation-- indeed, although the Philippines was finally granted independence from the United States in 1946, the American influence still continues to thrive, even until today. On a personal level, I wonder how much different my identity might be as a Filipino-American, born and raised right here in California-- if it would be more or less complicated, if I would be less obsessive about my "flat Filipino nose" (as opposed to the "pointed and prominent" nose of the white American that is so highly coveted by so many Filipinos), and what it might feel like to not be considered "whitewashed" or even, dare I say it, "not Filipino enough" by extreme nationalists who frown upon people like me who do not speak Tagalog fluently. According to Las Casas:

... the entire human race is one; all men are alike with respect to their creation and the things of nature, and none is born already taught. And so we all have the need from the beginning, to be guided and helped by those who have been born earlier. Thus, when some very rustic peoples are found in the world, they are like untilled land, which easily produces worthless weeds and thorns, but has within itself so much natural power that when it is plowed and cultivated it gives useful and wholesome fruits (Sanderlin, 1971: 49).

Las Casas was right-- among all human beings is an equal capacity for greatness. Yet although he is applauded for devoting so much of his career to speaking against the immoralities of conversion in the Indies, the above arguments (as well as several others) run counter to his purpose and he falls into a bit of a contradiction. Because whether or not it is executed by force, the immorality of conversion is implicit in its purpose alone.
Whether or not it is carried out by individuals who believe themselves to be superior to those they attempt to convert, the idea of conversion always bears the threat against human dignity. Conversion implies the need for change, and the need for change implies alteration in order to make way for improvement, something better. No one has the right to impose that opinion upon another. It is a personal choice that should be facilitated only by free will and not by the discretions of others. Although this was immediately realized in the case of the Philippines but overcome by the force and the power of the colonizer, the Filipinos of that era did not cease to put up a fight for themselves and their beliefs—a fight that lasted well over three centuries. The unfortunate sequel to this story, however, entails still more fighting; only this time it's among the global community of Filipinos themselves, accusing and pulling one other down with the most juvenile revilement and tirade, ridiculing who or what to them is "FOB" ("fresh off the boat"), "whitewashed," "coconut," or "banana," just to name a few. While we Filipinos should be enjoying the benefits of independence and rebuilding an identity free of Spanish and American colonial restraints, we busy ourselves instead with petty, insignificant accusations such as who is "more Filipino"—a measure of authenticity and thus, superiority (in the eyes of Philippine extremists), which our predecessors worked so hard to do away with in the first place. These very sentiments fuel the rapid production of the very "weeds and thorns" mentioned by Las Casas himself, that only destroy the unity of a people who have finally gained the independence that is so rightfully theirs; an independence won by our predecessors that was not meant to be corrupted once again by the kind of inequality that they fought so hard to get rid of. Thus, Las Casas was correct in his assertions that we learn from "those who have been born earlier," but he was wrong to insist that we "have the need" to. Because while some may call it a stretch, I truly
believe it would be safe to say that the notion of superiority demarcated by authenticity that infects the global Filipino community today may very well have been learned from colonizers who set a really poor example to those they meant to "uplift"-- an unfortunate and ironic repercussion of finally achieving independence.
References


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A recent graduate of Saint Mary's College, Theresa Isidro earned her BA in Anthropology and Sociology this past May, 2006. A true Gael at heart and a lover of Lasallian pedagogy, she hopes to continue her education at SMC to pursue studies in the Counseling Program. She would like to give special thanks to Professors Dana Hererra and Alex Green for inspiring her to write “Las Casas: Singing the Brown Man’s Burden,” as well as to the professors of the Anthropology and Sociology Department at SMC for making her time at St. Mary's so rewarding, self-defining, and memorable.
How Could I?

By Kyme Hersi-Sallid

Twenty-four years ago, I left college at the end of my freshman year with the belief that one day I would return. Life took hold, along with my career, and now twenty-four years later I am in the process of completing my degree. Two months have passed since I resumed this pursuit, and I have come to realize that I am a changed person. Through the required reading for my course, and the research for my Annotated Bibliography, the importance of earning a college degree fills my heart and mind. Though I have always known about the struggles that some African Americans have endured to receive an education, my recent research opened my eyes to information that has magnified my grasp of the issue. The right to receive an education is a privilege African Americans fought and died for. A deeper understanding of this struggle, along with my belief in sharing my blessings with those less fortunate than I, has intensified my desire for an education.

When my classmates and I read an excerpt from Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave, there was not much in the story that was actual news to me. Though I had not read this particular book, I had a general knowledge of Frederick Douglass, his early life struggles, and his many accomplishments. I have always had a healthy knowledge of African American history, and therefore have had a great respect for Frederick Douglass.

This excerpt was called, “How I Learned to Read and Write.” The story tells us how young Frederick, through the instruction of Mrs. Auld, his master’s wife, began to spell three or four letter words (Douglass, 1987, p.50). Frederick tells us these lessons were short-lived when his master, “…forbade Mrs. Auld to instruct me further” (p.50). In the antebellum south, it was against the law to teach a slave to read. Law or no law, Frederick Douglass’s master knew that if a slave learned to read he would eventually acquire the full knowledge of his condition, and become “discontented and unhappy” (p.50). Could his master, or any master not see that slavery itself created discontentment
and unhappiness? Learning to read would just magnify a slave’s desire for freedom. Frederick Douglass eventually taught himself to read and write, and discovered that there was a world out there that abhorred slavery.

When a person learns to read, he is exposed to a world that exists beyond the boundaries of his sight. Young Frederick could not know there were other white people who felt slavery was wrong and inhuman, but the ability to read informed him of this fact. “What I got from Sheridan was a bold denunciation of slavery and a powerful vindication of human rights” (p.52). Douglass’ desire to read had led him to the hidden treasure. The treasure of literacy, and the treasure of knowing there were allies in his quest for freedom. Yes, his freedom from physical bondage, but also his freedom from the bondage of his mind. As a young boy, Frederick Douglass knew if he could understand the letters on a paper, and have the ability to write those letters on that paper, he would find his “pathway from slavery to freedom” (p.50).

Frederick Douglass’s story represents the struggle of African-American slaves and freedmen to have the right to an education. Living in my 2005 world, it is hard to imagine a world where it was against the law to read or write. It is hard to imagine, but not impossible. The racial climate of the United States during slavery, and beyond the Emancipation, supported the logic of certain whites in keeping African Americans illiterate.

When slavery ended, ninety to ninety-five percent of blacks were illiterate (Nieman, 1994, vii). After the Civil War, there were many northern black teachers who went south to open basic schools of learning. Ronald Butchart (1988) states, “…here may be found the greatest heroism” (p.32). They gave up their homes and lives to help their people at the risk of losing their own lives. Many school buildings were burned, while teachers were attacked and chased out of town.

One of these, a northern black preacher who came south to open a church school in Aberdeen, Alabama, was brutally beaten and chased out of town by a white mob. The mob let him know, “the land belonged to them and no d---nigger would preach or teach school there” (Nieman, 1994, p. viii). We are talking about teaching people to read and write, not the theft of someone’s property or the murder of their children. This story represents so many other heart-breaking stories. While I sit in front of my computer and
write these words, I envision all who fought and struggled for me to have a right to use these words. I question what kind of insanity fosters the kind of violence and hatred that was directed towards my people? It is the insanity of white supremacy. It has existed a very long time in this country, and African Americans have survived against all odds. Frederick Douglass knew that, “[w]ithout struggle there is no progress” (Foner, 1970, p.8). He clearly taught this to the masses he touched, but it is also evident that this lesson was taught in his home.

Charles Douglass of Rochester, New York was the son of Frederick Douglass. Charles served in the Civil War and later accepted an appointment as a clerk in the War Department. He also taught school for a year in Washington D.C. (Butchart, 1988, p.38). Since Charles was the son of Frederick Douglass, it is clear that he was raised in the north as a free man. Why go south to the land from which his father fled? Under his father’s influence, Charles understood the struggle, and the obligation to help those less fortunate than himself. There were many who followed in his footsteps.

When northern white teachers arrived in the south, many times they found schools started by literate freedmen (Nieman, 1994, viii). These freedmen were terribly impoverished people, but they knew the importance of an education. African Americans knew that they had to stick together and help themselves: “Despite their poverty, African Americans generously supported schools” (Nieman, 1994, viii). Along with their support for elementary schools, African Americans helped to establish many schools of higher learning. Black churches, free northerners, and former slaves found or contributed to the founding of approximately twenty historically black colleges and universities (Jackson & Nunn, 2003, Pp. 6-13). Many white northern churches and philanthropists also founded and contributed to historically black colleges and universities. Did these white contributors believe that blacks could be educated to become an integral part of society and the government, or was their objective to control the former slave? This question led me to discover the late 1800s issue of industrial education versus a liberal arts education.

Prior to the start of this course, I must admit that I did not have a full understanding of a liberal arts education. My classmates and I were assigned a course reading from the CQ Researcher, by David Masci called, Liberal Arts Education (1998). The article questioned whether liberal arts should continue to focus exclusively on Western
civilization, or expand the curriculum to include the diverse cultures of the world. It also questioned if it were better to enter college focused on a major, or was it best to receive a well-rounded liberal arts education before you chose a major. We were assigned an essay to express our opinion on these issues as they related to our modern world.

The Greeks “were influenced by the rich cultures of the Mediterranean and Africa” (Masci, 1998, p.317), but that influence is not acknowledged in the Western curriculum of liberal arts. Masci cites Martha Nussbaum when she contends, “Plato…alludes frequently to the study of other cultures, especially those of Sparta, Crete and Egypt” (Masci, 1998, p.317, 318). During the inception of the contemporary university, in the latter part of the eleventh century, Plato’s philosophy of inclusion seems to have disappeared (Masci, 1998, p.326). Somewhere along the line there must have been a clear decision to not acknowledge or include the influence of other cultures in the liberal arts curriculum.

When I came to understand the concept of a liberal arts education, it helped me to conclude that the study of the humanities, sciences, and social studies were important to develop a person who is capable of learning. A liberal arts education teaches a student how to learn, although there is room for improvement through the incorporation of other cultures. I also concluded that focus on a specific career as an undergraduate, could limit your mind to one area of learning. I agree with Moses when he states, “Most of us will have four or five careers in our lifetime” (Masci, 1991, p.330). I am currently working on my second career, with many years ahead of me. I am confident that my liberal arts degree will prepare me for whatever the future may bring.

Little did I know, the discovery of the importance of a liberal arts education, would relate to research I would conduct two months later. I do not think that I would have understood the impact of this research if I had not read the article in the CQ Researcher. Alvin Schmidt states, “the aim of a good liberal arts education should be knowledge. ‘Education is about freeing and liberating the human mind from the shackles of ignorance’” (David Masci, 1998, p.320). “Shackles.” Wow! I cannot believe his choice of words in his vision of a liberal arts education. I also learned “[t]he term ‘liberal arts’ is taken from the Latin phrase ‘liberales artes’ (that which should be known by a free man) (Davis Masci, 1998, p.320). When I read these quotes two months ago, the words did not
have an impact. Now, after researching historically black colleges and universities, these sentences mean everything in the context of an industrial education versus a liberal arts education. My understanding of the purpose and the standard by which a liberal arts education is held gave me insight to the minds of the white supremacist after the Civil War.

Many historically black colleges and universities were established during Reconstruction (1865-1877). Seventy five percent of the historically black colleges and universities operating today were founded between 1865 and 1899, and about ninety percent are in the South (Johnson & Nunn, 2003, p.3). I have established the African American contribution to the founding of these institutions; now let us examine the white connection.

White Christian churches and organizations also helped to found and support historically black colleges and universities. They believed that, "there is no barrier in structure of the Negro’s brain or in the faculties with which he is endowed in the way of the most advanced education" (Martin, 1981, p.320). Without their help and belief in the intelligence of former slaves, many schools would not have been established or had the resources to survive. These colleges and universities were based on a liberal arts curriculum (Finkenbine, 1986, p.6). They thrived and produced leaders, educators, writers and doctors to represent the black race. This time of prosperity was cut short by the election of the Democratic president, Rutherford B. Hayes, and the removal of Federal troops from the south. He and others who supported white supremacy found a spokesman for industrial education in the accommodationist, Booker T. Washington.

Washington was a graduate of Hampton Institute, now known as Hampton University. Hampton stressed industrial education and manual training. Booker T. Washington modeled his Tuskegee Institute after Hampton (Nieman, 1994, p. x). The post-Reconstruction era returned southern white supremacists to power and ripped away the opportunities that had existed for blacks from 1865 to 1877 (Peeps, 1981, p.257). Washington saw industrial and agricultural training as a way of "leading his people slowly to a level of parity and brotherhood that for now he cautioned them to defer" (Peeps, 1981, 259). Today’s historians see Washington as an accommodationist who believed black people should put intellectual pursuits aside to pacify southern white
leaders. With Washington as the spokesperson for manual training, the path of funding for liberal arts schools would be diverted for the next two decades (Peeps, 1981, p.257).

Along with the support of northern white Christian churches and societies, historically black colleges and universities received philanthropic support from the Peabody Fund established in 1867, and the Slater Fund established in 1882. Following the scientific racism of that time, which believed that blacks did not have the intelligence for a liberal arts education, these Funds diverted their contributions to Hampton and Tuskegee in the 1880s and 1890s. “Accompanying that basic racist vindictiveness was a new quasi-scientific movement called Social Darwinism. . . . Blacks were simply thought to be a genetically inferior race” (Peeps, 1981, p. 358). Those who were determined to oppress African Americans believed, “an attempt to develop the Negro skull into that of a Caucasian is just as idle, not to say absurd and wicked as would be the education of apes” (Wasto, 1897, p. 115). If a liberal arts education were the standard for Western civilization, white supremacists would find a way to keep that standard away from African Americans.

There was one man who led the fight against this inferior belief: W.E.B. Du Bois. Du Bois had received his education from Fisk University, a liberal arts black college, and his bachelor’s degree in philosophy from the prestigious white Harvard University. Du Bois was against everything that Booker T. Washington represented. He believed, “Black equality meant developing black leadership...to the same level of intellectual, social, and political education as whites” (Peeps, 1981, p. 260). Members of the Slater and Peabody Funds expounded the belief that “Black education in the liberal arts would merely breed discontentment among members of the race and ill prepare them for their role” (Finkenbine, 1994, p. 81). Discontent. The same word Fredrick Douglass’s master used to prevent him from learning to read. Decades later, Du Bois would follow Douglass’s example, and not accept less than he and his people deserved. I would not have the opportunities that are afforded me today if it were not for Du Bois and those who had the courage to stand with him. How could I turn my back on an education that so many people fought and struggled for me to have a right to receive?

Du Bois, like Frederick Douglass, fought for the rest of his life to gain equality for African Americans. Whether it was in the form of protests, or by the might of his pen, he
persevered (http://www.pbs.org/itvs/fromswastikatojimcrow/blackcolleges.html). He understood the importance of service to others. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. wrote of Du Bois:

Though he held degrees from Harvard and the University of Berlin, though he had more academic credentials than most Americans, black or white, he moved South where a majority of Negroes then lived. He deliberately chose to share their daily abuse and humiliation” (Foner, 1970, p. 13).

All of these men understood that they had an obligation to help those who were less fortunate than they. The location could not determine their action or inaction; they had to help. They realized they had been blessed with the knowledge of truth, and had to deliver that truth to those who were suffering. Du Bois wrote, “be the truth what it may, I shall seek it on the pure assumption that it is worth seeking—and Heaven nor Hell, God nor Devil shall turn me from my purpose till I die” (Foner, 1970, p.3).

Plato speaks of the prisoners in the den, and their ascent into the light in *The Allegory of the Cave*. He compares their leaving the shadows of the cave and heading towards the sun with “… the journey upward to be the ascent of the soul into the intellectual world” (Plato, p.10). Once these students have acquired their knowledge in the upper world, Plato suggests “… they must be made to descend again among the prisoners in the den, and partake of their labors and honors, whether they are worth having or not” (Plato, p. 12). I compare this allegory to those freedmen who returned to the south to help their brothers and sisters towards their truth and intellectual potential. Frederick Douglass, Du Bois, and even Booker T. Washington, though misguided, knew “… that there will be no injustice in compelling our philosophers to have a care and providence of others” (Plato, p.12). I respect and relate to these men and their need to give back, though my contribution is on a far lesser scale.

I have spent the last twenty-four years in a profession that has blessed me financially and enriched my knowledge of the world. Giving back is important to me, and I have always followed through on my charitable commitments. My commitments came in the form of checks in the mail. It was not until eight years ago that a life changing experience showed me that I was not giving of my soul. To do this would require me to leave my comfort zone and provide time and personal care to someone less fortunate than I. Like
Du Bois, I needed to leave my north and go south to help those who are left behind. My journey placed me in South Central, Los Angeles. Shortly after the birth of my daughter, I started to volunteer at a center in the heart of South Central where I have taught dance for the last eight years. Though this evolved to a paid position, the small monetary compensation could never compare to the wealth my soul acquired. I teach children who come from crack addicted homes, gang houses, and some situations that you could not imagine. Taking dance class a few times a week has proved to be an oasis for many of these children. My work with these children awakened my soul. Plato states, "... the instrument of knowledge can only be the movement of the whole soul," just as "... power and capacity of learning exists in the soul" (Plato, p. 11).

The capacity to learn exists in these children in spite of their situation, just as the capacity to learn existed in the freed slaves. After the Emancipation, the freedmen went from ninety percent illiteracy, to becoming college graduates, teachers, doctors, lawyers and leaders (Nieman, 1994, p. vii). Working with these children and seeing their transformation has changed my life, and these last few months as a college student has shifted my awareness once more.

I am deeply touched and inspired by the men and women who not only paved the way for my right to an education, but also for my place in American society. How could I think that earning a degree was unimportant? How could I trample on the graves of those who died or struggled their entire lives so that I could go to a school of my choice? How could I not set an example for my children and the children I teach each week? How could I choose not to live up to my potential when my ancestors had to fight against the comparison to apes? How could I? I now have the determination of Douglass, Du Bois, and all who cleared the way for my success. In my mind I see myself in a cap and gown as I accept my liberal arts degree, knowing that along with my family, the ancestors are smiling. I will accept that cherished piece of paper with the responsibility of finding another den to enter and a new way to share my knowledge and my soul.
References


Kyme Hersi-Sallid is a wife and mother who lives in Los Angeles, California. She returned to college after twenty-four years and an extensive career as a dancer, singer, and actress. This career has garnered her roles in three Broadway shows, an NAACP nomination for a lead role in a film, and guest star spots on such television shows as 24, E Ring, The Guardian, NYPD Blue, and many more. Kyme believes the completion of her Bachelor of Arts Degree from Saint Mary's College will surpass all the accolades she has received across America and abroad. Kyme would like to thank Professor Anne Hawthorne for the submission of her paper, "How Could I?" along with LEAP's amazing Program Director Mark Baird. She would also like to thank all of her professors who have inspired her growth and fortitude. Most of all, Kyme would like to thank her children for their support and patience, and her husband for his never ending support and love.

[LEAP is Liberal Education for Arts Professionals, an innovative Bachelor of Arts degree program designed for professional dancers, offered through the School of Extended Education at St. Mary's College of California.]
Don Quixote: Chapter LII ½

By Katherine Chang

The following scene takes place near the end of Chapter LII, after Don Quixote has broken his shoulder in the skirmish with the priests, and the party made up of the curate, the barber, Sancho, Rozinante and Don Quixote himself depart for his home town of La Mancha...

In which Don Quixote finally encounters and battles with the magician Frestón.

At this time the sun began to set, and the party began searching for a place at which to stop and rest for the night. Taking a left turn, the road opened up to reveal a large valley, mostly fields, tinted amber from the glow of the setting sun. As he rode in the cart, Don Quixote squinted in the bright light, putting up a hand to shield his eyes. It was then that the party spied a great herd of sheep at a distance, approaching them from the opposite side of the road. Among them was the tall robed figure of a shepherd, silhouetted by the brilliant rays of the sunset, calling his flock home for the night.

Immediately, Don Quixote saw this as an opportunity reserved for him alone as a knight-errant. “Ah ha!” he cried to Sancho as the cart rattled along, “Fortune has guided me right to the doorstep of my enduring rival Frestón, the roguish magician who robbed me of my study and has caused me such abuse from enchantments during my quests as a knight-errant! Fate knows of my quest to return home and has granted me one last grand battle to defend my honor before my homecoming.”

At this, Don Quixote attempted to dismount the cart. The curate and the barber protested greatly to this, and Sancho, who came running to his side, attempted to reason with the knight: “But your arm, master! It is not yet fully healed. Your eyes, once again deceive you to see what is not there. That is but a shepherd and his sheep. Do not be hasty, if not for your sake, but for mine, for what good is a squire without a master to serve?”

Don Quixote replied with indignation at this, greatly insulted: “I may not have much use of my right shoulder, but my left is surely sound! See how he shakes his magical staff at me and shouts incantations! What honorable and worthy knight-errant can back down from such a challenge? No, I go to battle even if it is to the death!”
What mighty anger surged in Don Quixote’s chest as he, with great laboring and without much help from the curate or the barber, who continually tried to pull him down from his ass, heaved himself from the cart and onto Rozinante’s back, gripping his sword in his good arm. With an almighty roar of excitement, Don Quixote clapped spurs to Rozinante and hurtled forward toward the unsuspecting shepherd and sheep, shouting, “O deceiving scoundrel, ill-mannered, sly and vulgar thief! Enchant me no more! You will now pay for your unkindness and trickery and feel the wrath of Don Quixote, the knight-errant of justice and righteousness! Stand forth and do battle!” The knight and his ass thundered into the valley with as much speed as poor Rozinante could muster, and with Don Quixote shouting insults and abuses the entire journey down. However, the mighty knight’s charge was blocked by the great herd of sheep that refused to either part or move to allow Don Quixote to approach close enough to assail the magician.

In fury and frustration, Don Quixote shouted, “Oh insolent, foul-mouthed conjurer of chaos! Even now you bombard me with your minions disguised as bleating sheep! Away you vulgar creatures of darkness and deception! Enchant me no more!” At this, he attempted to swing wildly at the flock of sheep with his sword. In sudden panic, the sheep quickly scattered away in fear of the crazed knight and his menacing weapon.

The shepherd was so agape with shock and confusion at the stranger who had disassembled his flock, that he toppled over backwards onto the ground and cried, “Heavens above! Sir, what have I done to offend?” Don Quixote angrily wielded his sword above his head, and in reply shouted “He who steals my packsaddle steals trash, but he who steals my books of chivalry steals honor itself! Stand and fight! And leave your enchantments!” He then lunged forward with his sword, intending to pierce the bewildered shepherd through and through. Unluckily, the shepherd was quicker and blocked the sword’s course with his wooden staff. This greatly infuriated Don Quixote who again tried to stab the shepherd, who this second time twisted away most swiftly, barely dodging Don Quixote’s able sword. And without a second glance backwards, he hastily scurried to his feet and ran for his dear life, chasing after his rapidly fleeing flock.

At this time, the shepherd’s wife came running out to see what the shouting was about. Upon seeing Don Quixote brandishing a sword and her husband running headlong
after his herd, she began shouting, “Thief! Madman! Come to steal our sheep! What can you want from simple shepherds? Begone and take your pilfering and chaos with you!”

Don Quixote, quite taken aback by this reaction, replied: “Noble lady, forgive me for causing such commotion so late in the evening, but fear not! I had no intentions to alarm your ladyship but to vanquish the wicked magician and free you from your prison! I see now that you must be enchanted, as I have many a time before found myself in the same condition. A lady of such fine dress and gentle disposition as yourself in such an unbecoming place must be a princess of the sort I have read so often of, taken at birth from your rightful parents by this vile magician and forced to be a servant to him. But I release you now from your lifelong enchantment!” Once Don Quixote had finished this long-winded speech, the shepherd’s wife, who was now convinced that Don Quixote was indeed mad, turned and ran off after her husband to reclaim their herd.

The curate and barber, who like Sancho had rushed into the valley after Don Quixote, attempted to conceal their obvious amusement at his confusion. But Don Quixote’s confidence was not shaken nor was he disheartened by this, and he exclaimed, “The evil enchanter has vanished! And good riddance from his trickery and tomfoolery! He has no doubt gone to inform the knight that he favors of my daring and skill at battle. He fears that I will conquer his knight, but what he fears is Fate, for it has already been ordained by God on high that I will come away from that fateful battle victorious with everlasting honor and renown! Therefore, I think this will not be our last meeting with the crafty magician. Mark my words, Sancho, on my honor as a knight-errant I swear before you now, that if Fortune would be so kind, I will one day defeat the wicked magician.”

“Thanks be to God, that you were not injured worse in this last conquest,” said Sancho Panza, as he slowly helped Don Quixote back into the cart, “That is well, master, and I will be by your side that momentous day of battle as your faithful squire. That is, when you are fully recovered and nursed back to health. It is foolish after all to attempt such an important battle with a shoulder broken to pieces and exhausted from a long journey.”

“Ah good squire, your loyalty to your master has grown since our journey began. I am very pleased. So be it then. Take me home so that I may be well-rested and renewed
for future battles and continue on my way as a defender of the innocent and declarer of the order of knight-errantry.”

And so, the party of four continued on to their hometown of La Mancha . . .

Analysis

In the new episode I created for Cervantes’s Don Quixote, I focused most on trying to effectively capture the author’s true voice. In terms of the storyline, I took real ideas and characters that Cervantes put forward in his book and drew the loose ends together to form my scene. The magician, Frestón, was one such character that, while mentioned often in the actual novel as the cause of Don Quixote’s enchantments, was never in fact encountered. For example, in reply to Sancho on his attack of the windmills, he replied:

Moreover, I am convinced, and that is the truth, that the magician Frestón, the one who robbed me of my study and books, has changed those giants into windmills to deprive me of the glory of victory; such is the enmity he bears against me. But in the end his evil arts will be of little avail against my doughty sword. (99)

This claim by Don Quixote becomes true in the scene I have described, in which Don Quixote finally confronts the magician with his spirited sword from which the magician has no protection. Similarly, the knight that Frestón favors that I mention is also of Cervantes’s creation. In describing why the magician would steal his books, Don Quixote replies to his niece:

He is a wise enchanter, a great enemy of mine, and looks upon me with a malicious eye, for he knows by his skill and wisdom that in the course of time I shall fight in single combat with a knight whom he favors, and I shall win, in spite of all his machinations; so he tries to do me all the hurt he can. (95)
By including these characters in my final scene, the storyline ties back to the beginning of the book, where Don Quixote first discovers his missing study. Additionally, they illustrate the theme of fictional medieval characters being made into reality in Don Quixote’s world. In this way, I was able to weave a little bit of Cervantes’s imagination with my own to create a scene that is more true to the original work.

Similarly, I tried to imitate Cervantes’s portrayal of Don Quixote’s bold and cavalier nature. His tendency to charge headlong into dangerous situations despite warnings from others is evident throughout the book, such as in the case of the windmills in Chapter VIII, the barber and his bowl in Chapter XXI, the religious procession in Chapter LII, as well as many other examples. By stepping up to the challenge to fight Frestón with only one shoulder intact, Don Quixote also shows his devotion and dedication to the art and life of knighthood, another important running theme in the actual text.

Yet another theme is the value of gallantry and chivalry towards women. In all cases in which he encounters women, Don Quixote treats them with utmost courtliness and politeness, whether the women are in fact inn-keepers or prostitutes. This illustrates the quixotic characteristics of pursuing romantic ideas and being winningly naïve. In fact, Don Quixote believes so strongly in chivalry toward women that at one point he gives Sancho an ultimatum for his rudeness toward the lady Dorotea:

O baseborn scoundrel! Ill-mannered, vulgar, ignorant, ill-spoken, foul-tongued, insolent, and audacious backbiter! Do you dare to utter such words in my presence and in the presence of these distinguished ladies? (466)

On this same note, I also attempted to imitate Don Quixote’s rich vocabulary at name-calling in my own scene but discovered that it was difficult to match Cervantes’s colorful and creative insults. Also, in his reply to the shepherd’s wife, I tried to capture Don Quixote’s flowery language and tendency to give long-winded speeches, such as when he defends his of books of chivalry to the canon (Ch. XLIX, p. 492-494).

I also wished to briefly depict the growth of Sancho’s loyalty to Don Quixote, as was true of the original text. Since this scene occurs near the end of the book, we see that Sancho’s loyalty at this point is no longer to material wealth and title, but to Don Quixote
instead. As in the text, Sancho longs to become a good and trustworthy squire to a master that he has grown to care deeply for: “If you get into a rage, master...I’ll hold my tongue and omit saying what I am bound as a good squire and an honest servant to tell you” (466). In fact, when Sancho thought that Don Quixote had been killed in battle, he weeps genuinely for the loss of his master:

O flower of chivalry, one single blow of a cudgel has
finished the course of your well-spent years! O glory of
your race, honor and credit to all La Mancha, and even to
the whole world, which, now that you are gone, will be
overrun with evil-doers, who will no longer fear
punishment for their iniquities! (512)

This contrasts greatly with Sancho’s attitude toward Don Quixote at the start of the journey, where he cared more for the land he would gain from his position as squire than his allegiance to Don Quixote.

By bringing forth both Cervantes’s and my own original ideas into a single work, I hope to have put together a scene that captures both the true essence of each character as well as the more important themes of the novel. Played out in a different setting, the characters described in the scene remain consistent with their true behavior while illustrating character development as well as significant themes from the original text. In this way, I hoped to have successfully imitated Cervantes’s voice and prose in his remarkable telling of the story of Don Quixote.
Work Cited


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*Katherine Chang* was born and raised in San Jose, California. She is currently a junior in the Saint Mary's College/ Samuel Merritt College Intercollegiate Nursing Program. Katherine would like to thank Professor Carol Lashof for providing her with the opportunity to express her creativity in writing the essay "Don Quixote: Chapter LII ½." She would also like to thank her academic advisor, Christa Kell, for her unfailing guidance and support, both on an academic and personal level.
New Traditions: My Experience as a First Generation College Student

By Elizabeth Cruz

Elizabeth Cruz
Date of Birth: July 22, 1987

Jan. 66: Setting the Foundation: Articulating the Experiences of First Generation College Students. Professors: Dana R. Herrera and Phylis C. Martinelli

Definition of First Generation College Student

My functioning definition of the term First Generation College student states that the children of parents who did not attend college in the United States are first generation college students. That is so, because although one or both parents are college educated in another country, they are not knowledgeable of the American school system and college process. Having a sibling that may have gone to college before the subject does not disqualify the subject as first generation; the sibling may not have been a resource to the subject, thus leaving the subject to experience the college process alone.

Family Completion of Education

Jesus O. Cruz, 55, father, completed a second grade education in Mexico.

Maria de la Luz Cruz, 48, mother, earned a vocational degree in Bookkeeping in Mexico.

Samantha I. Cruz-Fletes, 25, sister, earned her high school diploma equivalent at Liberty Adult Education in Brentwood in 1999, and completed her degree in Medical Assisting in 2005 from Mt. Diablo Adult School in Concord.

Karla L. Villaseñor, 22, sister, earned her high school diploma form Liberty High School, and was a commuter student at California State University Stanislaus for one semester in 2001. Mid 2005, after getting married and having a baby, she began attending Los Medanos Community College in Pittsburg were she is currently a part time student.

Natalie M. Cruz, 10, sister, is currently a fifth grade student at Ron Nunn Elementary in Brentwood.
**Family Background.** My father, Jesus Cruz was born July 14, 1950 in the small town of El Capulín, Michoacan, Mexico. The family lived in extreme poverty for many years. Seeing the desperate situation in which the family found itself, my father and his older brother took it upon themselves to provide for the family; consequently, my father had to stop attending school. He attained a second grade education. My father worked as a laborer, until a back injury forced him into retirement. My mother Maria de la Luz Godinez Bravo was born December 1, 1957, in Briseñas, Michoacan, Mexico. My mother lived, what by most standards would be considered, a normal childhood. Although my grandfather was uneducated, he was able to obtain a position working for the Mexican government overseeing the building of roads. Still a laborer, his steady income and benefits put the family on a higher social status. My mother recalls that the family identified as a highly respected middle-class family. My parents met in Mexico and were married after a few months of dating. As patterns demonstrate, most immigrants come to the United States with the American Dream in mind, that is “that promise of freedom of choice, education, economic opportunity, upward mobility, and a better quality of life.” (Parrillo, 1) My parents came with the same mindset. Upon arrival, my parents both held blue-collar jobs. My father was a laborer and my mother worked domestic jobs. My mother experienced what Professor Phyllis Martinelli describes as “downward mobility.” Instead of experiencing upward mobility—an increase in socioeconomic status, she shifted downwards. Her background of a middle-class and highly respected family was not applicable in the United States.

**Family Educational Background.** The article titled, “The Power of Black and Latina/o Counterstories: Urban Families and College-Going Processes” defines entry point as “roles and experiences of how families are involved in their children’s college going process.” Although my father was not able to help me with college applications, fees, and loan applications, he was able to provide me with an example of a life without education. According to anthropological theory, my father’s counterstory served as an entry point for me.

In many conversations, my father would tell me that he enjoyed school. He had a special interest in math and was developing an interest in reading when he was
interrupted by a need to provide for his family. He expressed that he would have wanted to continue with his education but as the oldest had to make sure the family ate instead. He and my Uncle Hector sacrificed their education to ensure that opportunity for the younger siblings and to ensure that the family had a source of income. My father has never been a man of many words. Looking back on his childhood was often painful for my father, yet he did on occasion. Once, my father told me the heart-wrenching story of his migration to the United States:

When I left, to come here [to the United States] I had nothing. I only had the blessing of my mother. I was seventeen years old when I left. The first time I crossed, I crossed in the motor of a truck. I had blisters so big on my arms. I knew that if I came here I would have a good job and help my family more. But here, the only way to have a good job is to go to school. I want all of you to finish school, to be professionals, to always have money in your wallet, to have a nice car. I don’t ask you girls to give me and your mother anything, if you girls finish school, that is enough.

Because my father did not have an opportunity to be educated, he encouraged my sisters and me to take advantage of this country’s benefits. While having those conversations, my father was already planting a seed in me. Many first generation students who come from working class families often have similar counterstories. Working-class students carry the struggles of their parents with them constantly. They are always faced with the choices of staying in school or having a life like their parents. Although the stories are often depressing, they are also inspiring to first generation students. These students come from families where the educational system did not allow them equal access to resources and opportunities, and now the students have an opportunity to change that. The students will carry the success of the family upon their success.

My mother had a much different experience than my father. My grandparents wanted their children to go to school instead of work. My grandfather communicated high expectations of all his children. He would consistently remind them to aspire to a better and more comfortable lifestyle than the life that he and his wife had. My mom and her siblings always had clean clothes and never lacked school supplies. My grandparents created a home where the children did not have stressors other than that of their school
work. This allowed the children to focus on their studies instead of working to support
the family. My mother went to a vocational college and earned a degree in Bookkeeping
by the age of seventeen. She maintained a well paying job at a bank for a few years.
However, despite the fact that my mother was a well educated woman, when she
migrated to the United States, she was not able to apply her degree to a profession in
America. Instead, she worked in domestic jobs most of her life. My mother identifies as a
first generation college student. Her parents’ counterstories of back-breaking work and no
education were her entry point to college. My grandfather was the only one of his family
that encouraged his children to go to school. Many of my mother’s cousins were
forbidden to attend school—women were made to believe that they were stupid and
paying for an education was a waste of money. Although my grandfather’s ideas were not
popular among the family, my mother took a greater appreciation for the opportunity that
was given to her.

Family Support. During our First Generation College Student Panel, I found that
panelist Norma Lopez’s story was very similar to mine. Our families were laborers,
immigrants and uneducated. Because of those factors, the level of support that they could
offer to their children was very limited. Children of these families often have to rely on
themselves to complete tasks and understand that their parents have no capability of
offering them more resources or support.

The existing language barrier really discouraged my parents from actively
participating in school activities. All school events were conducted in English, and my
parents not only were confused, but also felt unwelcome in the school community. My
mom attended parent-teacher conferences only because I would be present to translate.
Along with a language barrier, there existed a cultural barrier. In Mexico, teachers are
held in very high esteem, which is partly why my parents never established a parent-
teacher relation. My parents thought that if they went to the school to talk to my teacher,
they would be disrespecting or invading the teacher’s space and, furthermore, questioning
their abilities to teach. Thus, by not establishing a parent-teacher relationship, they were
respecting and showing trust in the teachers to give students what we needed to be
successful.
Although my parents were unable to be active in my educational experience, they are still great parents. I could never expect my parents to revise my essays, but instead, they would show support by allowing me to stay after school and get help. Both Norma Lopez and I have realized that there is only so much that our parents can do for us. For students with our background, providing love, food, a home and telling their counterstories provides a solid beginning.

*Experiencing American Schools.* My preschool and first elementary school were extremely diverse. The teachers were familiar with family situations, and the staff and faculty were also diverse. They understood that many children came from immigrant and low-income families and parental support was mediocre. I had many friends, all from different nationalities and backgrounds. My family moved to a new town when I was in the middle of my first-grade year. My new school was not as diverse. The majority of the students were middle-class white students and the others were low-income Mexican students. The teachers were predominately white and lacked knowledge dealing with low-income bicultural students. Because of the existing gap between the teachers and myself, the responsibility for my learning naturally fell on me. I became responsible for translating at parent-teacher conferences, translating documents, and keeping track of my school lunch account. I had to be aware at all times of school events and which events required my parents’ signature or money. Having these responsibilities was the norm for students like me. When I was younger, I never had the need to sit and reflect on my responsibilities. Taking ownership of my education was the only way I could succeed in school. I was practicing a level of responsibility that my some students do not know exists until they are adults. Meanwhile, I began using organization, time management, and resources such as public transportation—all by the age of seven. The development of such skills continued to be important throughout all the years of my education.

*Bicultural conflict.* I began to see the cultural distances between myself and non-Mexican peers in middle school. I began to realize that because I was Mexican, I was treated differently. One memory in particular transformed in many ways my perspective of myself, school and the adults involved with the school. The name of the administrator has been changed to protect confidentiality.
At my middle school, there was only one dance per year, which took place during school hours; it was the Valentine's dance. I remember all of my friends and I were so excited. During that time, the in-fashion was fake leather black blazers. Most of my friends had their parents buy them these jackets for the dance or had them before. On the day of the dance, all of the girls wore black jackets, and I followed my routine, which was my free nylon jacket, with name of the company my father worked for. We were out on morning break and were huddled in a circle talking about the dance that was going to take place later that day. We were approached by the principal, whom we all knew well. She said, “Well what’s going on here.” We said, “Nothing, just talking.” She was ready, “Hmm...So did you guys call each other up and plan to look alike. All of you wearing the same thing. What are you all, Cholas? You girls watch it; I don’t want to see this again.” We were really confused, if we looked the same was because there was one store cheap enough for everyone to shop at! I said, “Mrs. Rogers, what don’t you want to see again?” She looked straight at me and said, “If you are all wearing the same color, I’m going to think you’re a gang, and I don’t want gangs in my school! Don’t you girls plan this again!” I was mad. I was so mad that my stomach hurt and I had a huge knot in my throat. I was puzzled and did not know what to do. Mrs. Rogers walked away and I turned to look at the rest of playground. Immediately, I noticed a group of white girls all wearing pink and red. Mrs. Rogers walked over and told them how cute they all looked! Why didn’t she assume that they were a gang, red was a gang color. I hadn’t even heard of a gang claiming black. Then it sunk in. The difference between us and those girls was that we had less money and were all Mexican. They were cute, white and rich. Tears fell down my cheeks, and at that moment I became a very bitter little Mexican girl.

This experience changed many things for me. Up until that point, I never viewed my differences between myself and my peers as negative. I had also felt that adults in school liked us and cared for all of the students. As Mexican-American students, my friends and I had all done our best to be responsible for our own studies, since our parents were limited in their involvement. At that time, there were no teachers or school
administrators at our school who could be a bridge between our homes and the school. When this occurred, it did not even cross my mind to tell my parents. There was nothing they could do, they could not even speak English! When Mrs. Rogers accused us of being a gang, she failed to ask questions first to be able to take our standpoint. Feminist theory states that when analyzing a group of people or a person, one needs to look at life through their experiences. This calls for the development of a double consciousness. Double consciousness means that one would have to be aware of one’s own life as well as to be familiar with the culture and lifestyle of another person (Martinelli, January 9, 2006). Had the principal done that she would have realized that it was customary for our families to shop at this one store because prices were fair. She would have also realized that I wore that jacket everyday for weeks before that and that was because it was given to my family free of cost. Mrs. Rogers’s approach was extremely ethnocentric. That is, she was using her limited views in really studying why we all had on black jackets. As an educator, she was also unfair. She was only concerned with the Mexican kids, who stereotypically were all gang members. We were all great students and were simply trying to become part of the school community by participating in the school dance.

Following this event, I thought I had no need to be a participant in my school. I would do my homework to avoid trouble at home, but that was it. I did not see a need to behave well, because the white kids were going to be favored anyway. Mexicans were only going to be seen as gang bangers so I might as well act like one. I no longer trusted teachers. I now only saw that they were white and had no idea what being Mexican meant and the things we had to deal with. I developed a fatalistic view of myself. I believed that I was just a poor Mexican chola who would never fit into their world. I began to think that everything that was not Mexican was white, and if it was white, it was bad. I believed that all white people were rich and mean and that they didn’t like Mexicans, and if you were a Mexican who only had white friends, you were whitewashed and a huge disgrace to your people. I was angry, had no voice, and I was scared. It was me against the white world. Sociologist Patricia Hill Collins would name this way of thinking as binary thinking. This thinking is best described as an attitude of something versus everything else (Martinelli, January 19, 2006). In my example, it was me and people like
me versus those different from myself. This way of thinking was extremely isolating—
unfortunately it followed me until my first year of high school.

*Asset Building.* My junior high experience was a positive pivotal time in my life. Due to the lack of guidance at home, I began to seek mentors to help me along with school. I was extremely lucky to have had the mentorship of an eighth-grade teacher and club advisor, Kiko Ceja; and former Brentwood Union School District counselor and Liberty High School counselor and currently a Professor at Sacramento State University, Dr. Rose Borunda. I met them both through my involvement in a Chicano/Latino support group started on our campus. This program brought in high school students and teamed them up with junior high students to build positive relationships and encourage education. We went on frequent field trips to many college campuses and spoke with Latinos who once found themselves wondering about school. This club provided many opportunities for me, such as leadership responsibilities and insight into a world that was completely foreign to me: college.

I had heard of college a few times, but most of the information I received was from Mr. Ceja and Dr. Borunda. There was an immediate trust between myself and these adults. They shared a similar background, shared the same native language, struggles and values. They became my refuge, they were my voice in the school system, and helped my find my own. My mentors and I had many conversations in which we would sit and cry together. They would look me straight in the eye and tell me that I was different from other students my age. I had a fire inside me, I had a gift. I did not always understand it, I could not see how I was special or really smart or how they could call me a leader. However, they were doing something that, according to Sandria Rodriguez, author of the ground-breaking book, *Giants Among Us: First Generation Graduates Who Lead Activist Lives*, is called “special status” and “positive naming”:

Closely aligned with being singled out as special is positive naming, which two-thirds of the participants discussed as significant forces in their lives. Interviewees who indicated that they were influenced by positive naming described a situation in which someone who cared about them or knew them well helped them to discover their potential. (Rodriguez, 101-2)
I began to buy this idea that I was different and capable of great things and soon began to gain the respect of many adults. I still was hesitant of different people and slowly stepped out of my comfort zone. I began to form friendships with peers that before I labeled “the enemy.”

I approached high school the same way. By then, my early community, school and activist work had been discussed at Liberty High School. Teachers were waiting to meet the girl that was raising questions that made white board members shake in their pants during a board meeting when I explained that visiting an indigenous university was important to Mexican students because their textbooks lied or did not include our history. Dr. Borunda played the key role in my transition to high school. She introduced me to my teachers before school started and had already spoken to many about me. Once in high school, I was surrounded by friends who were not helping me to reach my full potential. I was also trying to gain validation and upperclassmen, and partying and bad attitudes were the way of accomplishing that. Yet, inside, I heard the advice of Ceja and Borunda. I knew that I wanted to continue to help other people and get good grades and be someone that people would remember. I wanted more than a baby at fifteen, and no high school diploma. Towards the end of my first year in high school, I left my friends and came to school with a whole different agenda.

*College bound.* I decided that my calling was teaching and that was where I was needed. I joined an Academy on-campus that helped to gear students in that direction. I was also a part of the Academy’s leadership, the Student Government leadership, City of Brentwood’s Youth Commission, Youth Representative to the Board of the Brentwood Police Activities League, among many other groups, organizations and causes. I found my identity in each one of those efforts. The culture of activism was the one in which I found my cultural citizenship. It was not about me being Mexican or not being white, but instead it became about helping students find their voice. I had the opportunity to visit and speak at college classes about the changes that I made in my life to succeed. I worked up to two jobs, maintained a grade point average of 3.5 and above, helped my family, all while trying to save the world. I realized that there were still so many people that were being underrepresented, and I had to help them. I felt the need to become a teacher so that
I could influence other students to aspire to more. I wanted all students to know that if they wanted something good to happen in their lives, they had to make it happen. There was no other option than to go to college. Teachers, counselors, family, and community members were waiting for me to go to college and see me grow into something amazing. I had the entire town behind me. Now, all I needed to do was catch my family up to speed.

First Generation College Student. My family was proud of the work I was doing. They knew that it was important to me and thus allowed me to be out of the house so much. However, we had not sat down and had a talk about college and moving away, nor did we discuss the money. When I tried, my father did not want me to leave home. He argued that I could go to a community college and live at home. I gave up trying to talk to him for a while. I told myself that I was going to go to a four-year institution whether he wanted me to or not. I had done everything else alone, I would do this too. I applied for financial aid, completed the applications alone, paid for my fees and made phone calls alone. Not a single person from home helped me. I did not expect my parents to be involved, they had no clue of what to do either. When I received my acceptance letter from Saint Mary’s College of California, along with a letter saying that I was being awarded an academic scholarship, I felt so proud. I cried for hours. I finally had to the courage to show my dad. He looked at it and said, “What is this?” I told him the letter said I had been accepted and I got a scholarship. He gave it back to me and said nothing. He grabbed the remote and turned the TV higher.

I was angry. I had worked so hard for so many years and he could not say a word. I was determined to show him that I was worth this opportunity. I got my elder sister Karla to help me. In one day, I was invited to two award ceremonies and since he usually never attended, my sister and I dragged him along. He sat in his chair and listened to people read off a list of things that I had accomplished. For the first time, he too saw the amazing young lady that others were marveling about. He finally told me that he was proud of me and was willing to talk about college. He and my mother agreed to come to orientation and agreed that Saint Mary’s was a great choice. I was still on my own in many ways. I moved in alone and still deal with financial aid and paperwork alone.
One may be confused by the term first generation college student. The term is defined by Saint Mary’s “as the student who is the first in their family to attend college in the United States.” Others define first generation students as those who are the first in their families to receive any college. Although my mother is college graduate, I still identify as a first generation college student. Although both my parents are smart people, they lacked knowledge of the American school system. They did not have the tools to help us directly to succeed in American schools. My mother was still unfamiliar with the college requirements and the application process.

I have been able to include my family in my college experience. I have begun to explain to them key factors, hoping that the experience for my younger sister will be easier. I do not blame my family for not being more involved. Instead I thank my parents because they instilled great values in me and taught me to work hard for what I wanted. I came to college with an impeccable work ethic and with my mind set on what I wanted to do. I am independent and self-reliant. I am proud that despite all the struggles I had to overcome, I was able to do it well and still get to college. I bring an experience to Saint Mary’s that is unique, it is my story. I feel that it is important for people to know that first generation students are not broken and consist of a long list of deficits. I developed many skills in dealing with my challenges that are positive contributions to my college community.
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A first generation college student, Elizabeth Cruz takes pride in bringing her family and community with her through her college experience. Education is Elizabeth’s strongest passion which has motivated her to become a high school English teacher. She has enjoyed her first year at Saint Mary’s and is humbled by the amazing opportunities offered to her by the learning environment. She would like to thank the entire High Potential Program for their support and guidance in surviving her first year; and she gives special thanks to Dana Hererra and Phylis Martinelli for an unforgettable Jan Term. "Being in their presence was empowering and enlightening."
The Beginning of an Epidemic—the History of AIDS in America

By Jenise Phelps

The first known outbreak of one of the worst plagues to hit the world began right here in the United States of America; it took the nation, and the world, by surprise. Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) is now well-known for the havoc it has wreaked in third-world countries far away from our country; however, many people have forgotten that the disease did not hit these poverty-stricken countries first, but instead hit our own. This disease frightened and confused many living in America. It was discovered here and it comprised well over half of the 200,000 worldwide cases as late as 1990. The history of AIDS in America is a greedy, prejudiced, politicized and desperate one; and it begins in homosexual communities in large cities like New York, San Francisco and Los Angeles.

The attitude of homosexual communities in these and other cities across the nation was one of rebellion and freedom. For decades homosexuals had found themselves the victims of extreme discrimination and prejudice. Many had been forced to leave their small home towns and head to the big cities where large homosexual communities existed. Unfortunately, they did not leave prejudice behind when they came to these cities. Police discrimination against gays was present everywhere and was the driving force behind one of the most important homosexual rebellions in history. On June 27, 1969 New York police raided Stonewall—a homosexual bar. These raids were a common practice and the people patronizing the bar were complacent until it appeared that police would be making arrests. The patrons did not take this peacefully and a large riot broke out that continued for days. The Stonewall riots, as they came to be known, started a revolution among homosexuals. This incident was inspiring to homosexuals across the country and many people began organizing within their local communities. However, for many years, this was the only level of organization; no national gay community was present. This left those who lived in small towns out of the revolution unless they moved to a large city.

The assassination of two important leaders in San Francisco helped to unite gays nationally. Mayor George Moscone and city supervisor Harvey Milk (who was openly
gay) were both shot by Dan White, another city supervisor. A heterosexual jury found him guilty of voluntary manslaughter because he was judged to have a decreased mental capacity due to eating too much junk food (this is known as the "twinkie defense"). The idea that a man could get away with murder because of a twinkie overdose was ridiculous and most saw this as veiled discrimination. After this breakdown of the justice system, outraged homosexuals began to unite on a national level. On October 14, 1979 over 100,000 people came to Washington for the first National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights. Homosexuals had started to "come out" and reveal their pride in their lifestyle and their disgust with their societal status.

Against this backdrop of discrimination, riots, and revolution more and more people began to be openly gay. A culture of rebellion began to form in the major gay communities. For most, this rebellion included a new need to embrace the gay identity; in many areas a gay identity had already been formed. This occurred most notably in the Castro, a largely homosexual district of San Francisco. The famous gay chronicler Randy Shilts wrote that, "Gays no longer came to the Castro to create a new lifestyle, they came to fit into the existing Castro Street mold." This mold included practicing a very promiscuous lifestyle. In fact, promiscuity became a part of the gay identity. The level of promiscuity people practiced became almost equal to how comfortable they felt with their homosexuality and it was used as a measuring stick for their sexual freedom.

This promiscuous lifestyle was a direct result of the discrimination experienced by many homosexuals. Their response to accusations of freakishness and perversion was to embrace and display the very things that society found perverted. With these rebellious intentions the gay community unknowingly created the perfect environment for the spread of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). The bath houses that many gay men frequented were spots for unprotected anonymous sex. It was not uncommon for men to have hundreds of sexual encounters a year. The prevalence of STDs became uncontrollable, but they were seen only as an interruption to sex and not as a serious health problem. In fact some men even embraced these STDs as battle wounds in the sexual revolution and they wore these wounds proudly. Some of the prevalent STDs included cytomegalovirus (CMV), Epstein-Barr virus, Amebiasis and Hepatitis B (which mutated from a solely blood-borne disease to a sexually transmitted disease).
It was into this culture of rebellion, sex and freedom that AIDS dropped. In late 1979 and 1980 the first few cases of AIDS appeared in Los Angeles. These cases baffled the physicians who treated them; AIDS had not existed in the United States, or even in the world, until the 1980s. This was a new disease but it was appearing as a variety of other rare and unusual diseases. Dr. Michael Gottlieb of the UCLA Medical Center treated one of the first patients in 1980, a thirty-three year old gay man with a severe respiritory infection. Gottlieb diagnosed him with *Pneumocystis carinii* pneumonia (PCP). This was extremely odd because this disease was normally found only in those with compromised immune systems: newborns, cancer patients, and the elderly. *Candida albicans* fungi and cytomegalovirus were also found in this patient. Gottlieb was confused saying, "This is a red flag for something. This patient has no prior history of illness that should predispose him to *Pneumocystis*. It makes no sense." He ran blood tests and found that the patient had almost no T cells. Another Los Angeles physician, Dr. Joel Weisman, had noticed similarly strange infections in one of his homosexual patients. This patient was admitted to the UCLA Medical Center and treated for *Candida albicans* fungi and PCP as well. Gottlieb had three more gay patients with PCP admitted to his hospital. Because of the similarities between these patients Dr. Gottlieb decided to write up a report and he sent it to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). This report was published in the *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*. More and more strange cases amongst the homosexual population began to show up. In 1981 a San Francisco patient was diagnosed with Kaposi's sarcoma, a rare form of cancer. The CDC had received reports of twenty-six cases of gay men with Kaposi's sarcoma (KS). They published a report about the strange links between homosexuality, PCP and KS.

Various theories circulated about the cause of this strange disease amongst gay men. Some speculated that the "poppers" gay men used as sexual stimulants were the cause. Others thought that sexual practices like "fisting" and "rimming" could be the culprits. Due to the prevalence of CMV in many of these KS and PCP patients some people thought that this usually harmless virus was to blame. Still another theory, the lifetime theory, proposed that the diseases were due to a cumulative effect of the various STDs that the men had been exposed to. In New York Dr. Joseph Sonnabend decided to conduct research to test the lifetime theory. He collected blood samples and performed
tests to see if there was any correlation between T cell counts and promiscuity. Using a fluorescence-activated cell sorter (FACS) to separate the cells it was found that the more promiscuous a man was, the lower his T cell counts tended to be. In fact they also found that the men with this disease had low levels of a specific type of T cells—T helper cells. Because of the virtual absence of T cells in gay men with this disease it came to be known as Gay-Related Immunodeficiency Disease (GRID).

Sonnabend and gay pop-singer Michael Callen took this information and tried to spread it to the people it affected. They both spoke against promiscuity, in an attempt to stop GRID from affecting more people. However, this attempt only created a backlash against them as the people they were trying to help accused them of being anti-gay. This backlash was not without reason; homosexuals were used to being mistreated by the medical community. It was only in 1973 that the American Psychiatric Association had removed homosexuality from their list of mental illnesses. Compounding the problem was the fact that many gay doctors were afraid of speaking out against promiscuity because this was also a part of their lifestyle. They did not want to be labeled as hypocrites or as a part of the antigay medical establishment. There was a distrust amongst homosexuals of the medical field and this lack of trust played largely into their decision to not heed the warnings of Sonnabend and other physicians.

The bath houses stayed in business, gay men continued to have many sexual partners and the number of new GRID cases continued to rise. It was obvious that there was a need for more research into GRID in order to prevent its spread to other individuals. Autopsies of individuals who died from GRID showed that many different opportunistic infections had invaded their bodies. Many times these illnesses were not usually harmful to humans. Dr. Gottlieb analyzed the immune system of some of his PCP patients and found that their B cells and their antibodies seemed to be fine. As before, their T cells seemed to be the ones harmed by this disease. They were lacking T helper cells (T\(_H\)) and the less T\(_H\) cells they had the worse their health. The lack of T\(_H\) cells allowed infectious agents that were usually not harmful to destroy the patient's body. In 1981 Jim Curran of the CDC asked for $833,800 as a budget for research on GRID from the Assistant Secretary for Health. He was denied. By 1982 the number of GRID cases began to increase to frightening levels. Of the 310 people diagnosed with
GRID, 180 had already died\(^2\). That was an astounding number considering that the first cases of the disease emerged only two years earlier. Although physicians and scientists continued to underscore the importance of this disease there was no money given for research. The National Institutes of Health (NIH) did not dispense any research money for GRID until 1983\(^2\). Epidemiologist Andrew Moss tried to show how dire the situation was and searched for funding to research GRID; he was continually met with denials. Moss was fed up with the lack of attention to this disease, "This is an actual nightmare! The sky is falling, we know it. You tell them it's falling but nobody listens.\(^2\)

The lack of funding was not surprising considering the main population that GRID affected. Although other types of individuals had been infected, most of the GRID cases occurred in homosexual males. President Reagan was very conservative, as were most of his appointees, and his supporters. This meant that many people were not concerned with a plague affecting only gays. The Surgeon General, Everett Koop, was forbidden to make any public statements about GRID\(^2\). As Congressman Henry Waxman pointed out, Legionnaire's Disease affected less people and was less fatal than GRID, yet it received more money and was less stigmatized, "What society judged was not the severity of the disease but the social acceptability of the individuals afflicted with it.\(^2\)

Meanwhile scientists were busy trying to prove that GRID was a sexually transmitted disease. The CDC had begun noticing links between sexual partners and the occurrence of opportunistic infections. In 1982 they published a report about clusters of homosexuals with KS and PCP in Los Angeles. The CDC makes note of the sexual associations between people with GRID\(^4\). Dr. David Auerbach and Bill Darrow, two CDC researchers, were following a trail of sexual encounters linked with GRID cases. This trail led them to a French Canadian flight attendant, Gaetan Dugas. Dugas had KS and had been very sexually active. He estimated that he had about 250 sexual encounters in one year. He had symptoms of GRID before anyone had noticed the disease (in the 1970s). Dugas was labeled Patient Zero by the CDC because he was connected with many of their other cases. Many took this to mean that he was the first to bring GRID to the US. However, when the latency period of the disease was discovered and taken into account it was believed unlikely that Dugas was responsible for the spread of GRID into

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the homosexual population of America. His sexual encounters with the men he was accused of infecting were likely too late for him to be the cause of their infection.

Soon physicians began discovering that GRID was breaking out in heterosexual groups. Groups of Intravenous Drug Users (IDUs) seemed to be afflicted with the disease. Many of these people were heterosexual and a few were women. The spread of the disease within this group suggested that GRID could be spread through the blood as well. Another group of non-homosexual people also began to become infected with GRID. Haitian immigrants in New York and Miami were found to have symptoms of GRID. They showed the same opportunistic infections and T cell deficiencies as the affected homosexuals. Most of these people were heterosexual and were not IDUs. A third group began to show infection with the disease; hemophiliacs receiving injections of Factor VIII in unaffected parts of the country showed symptoms of GRID. The first three cases were reported to the CDC, two of the patients had already died from PCP and the third was critically ill. They were all heterosexual males. Factor VIII contains the clotting factors that a hemophiliac's blood does not have. Thousands of donors are required to have enough of the clotting factors necessary for the hemophiliac's blood. This would expose hemophiliacs to the blood contents of thousands of donors every time they received a Factor VIII injection. The fact that these people were showing symptoms of GRID further suggested that this disease could be carried through the blood. Because of the increasing occurrence of GRID in non-homosexual people, the CDC changed the name of the disease to AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome).

What was it that was connecting all of these seemingly unrelated groups? Heterosexual Haitians, IDUs and hemophiliacs were all getting the same disease as homosexual males; this seemed random and inexplicable. However, there were possible connections to be found within these seemingly separate communities. A few of the IDUs were also homosexual; these people could have spread the epidemic from the homosexual community to IDUs. A number of homosexual men also vacationed in Haiti and these men could have spread the epidemic to the Haitian population. The hemophiliacs were connected by blood to the people already infected with AIDS; the Factor VIII they received probably contained clotting factors from the blood of people with AIDS. Other people connected to AIDS patients by blood were also beginning to
show symptoms of AIDS. A baby at the UCSF Medical Center that had recently received blood transfusions was being treated for various opportunistic infections. It was later discovered that one of the blood donors was diagnosed with AIDS. Soon more cases of infants with AIDS began to pop up. Most had mothers that fit into AIDS risk groups and all came from areas highly affected by AIDS. These cases, together with the hemophiliac cases, provided more evidence that AIDS could be transferred by blood.

However, the strong evidence that AIDS was transferable through blood products was not strong enough to convince blood companies to change their policies about blood donation. It was a common practice for blood companies to pay blood donors, and especially common for them to pay plasma donors. This practice attracted a certain demographic to blood donation; namely drug users looking for money to pay for their next fix. Dr. Frederick Siegel, a New York physician, asked that blood companies stop purchasing blood. They did not respond. The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute informed Congress that it would not provide money to research the blood supply until the end of 1984. The National Hemophilia Foundation (NHF) met with blood bank representatives in order to find a way to protect the Factor VIII supply for hemophiliacs. The only organization to support the NHF was the CDC. The blood industry was not convinced that AIDS could be passed through blood; in order to take the decrease in profit that they so feared, they wanted proof that AIDS was passed through the blood.

Bruce Evatt, of the CDC, suggested that a new test for the presence of Hepatitis B be used to detect the presence of AIDS. Because the risk factors for both diseases were very similar it was thought that many of the infected blood donations could be removed by screening out those positive for Hepatitis B. Efforts by the CDC and the FDA to create a safer blood supply were stalled by the blood industry representatives. In 1983 the Assistant Secretary for Health, Edward Brandt, recommended but did not require, “interim measures to protect recipients of plasma, blood and blood products until specific laboratory tests are developed to screen blood for AIDS.”

It was not until the virus responsible for causing AIDS was discovered that a true test for the disease could be performed upon the blood supply. The discovery of this virus has a complicated, political and controversial history itself. However, three different virus isolates were discovered around the same time. Robert Gallo discovered
HTLV-III, Luc Montagnier of the Pasteur Institute discovered LAV, and Jay Levy discovered ARV. Each of these isolates was virtually the same, and as a result there was a long dispute between Gallo and Montagnier over who actually discovered the virus first. Ironically, in the end, neither virus was actually the naturally occurring form. Levy's group had managed to isolate the natural form of the virus. These three isolates were all collectively named the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). After the discovery and analysis of the virus, scientists were able to devise a blood test for the presence of HIV. In this way they could test the blood donations for HIV and prevent its spread to hemophiliacs and the receivers of blood transfusions.

A large part of the reason for the start of AIDS in the homosexual population was caused by the biology of the transmission of the virus. HIV is now known to be transferred through sex, exposure to infected blood/blood products, and from mothers to infants during birth and breastfeeding. The majority of the homosexuals with symptoms of the disease probably contracted it through sexual intercourse. The high level of promiscuity amongst the homosexual population during the 1970s and 1980s would have allowed many different people to be exposed to the virus. Also, the high number of STDs present amongst the population could have led to an increase in the possibility of becoming infected with the virus. It is actually rather difficult to become infected with HIV, but the occurrence of other STDs increases the possibility of infection when exposed to the virus. This is because STDs often lead to open sores which can provide greater exposure to the virus.

The form of sexual intercourse that homosexual men often practice can also increase their possibility of being infected with HIV. The practice of anal sex causes much more tearing of the skin than vaginal sex and consequently leads to a much higher incidence of HIV infection. The rectum is a mucosal tissue and because of this there is a high number of dendritic cells present in this area. These cells present antigen (in this case HIV) to the T cells so that they can begin proliferating and mount a response the antigen. Recent research shows that dendritic cells might play an important part in HIV infection. These cells express a molecule known as DC-SIGN, which seems to play a part in HIV infection of T cells. When the DC-SIGN molecule is inhibited the HIV does not seem to spread to other immunological cells quite as easily. This is possibly
occurring because the DC-SIGN molecule protects the virus from being destroyed by the endocytic pathway when it enters the cell. This is very dangerous because the dendritic cells are presenting HIV to the very cells that it can attack.

Another problem with the transmission of the virus is that it is latent for so long in the body. A person can be infected with HIV for years before showing any symptoms; the lack of symptoms is extremely dangerous in the transmission of the disease. HIV+ individuals may not know they are positive for the virus until they reach the advanced stage and are diagnosed with AIDS. At this point the person has had the virus and the ability to spread it for years without knowing.

AIDS is a very frightening disease. It is not simple, it is not exclusive and it is not going away. The danger of this disease is that everyone has the ability to contract it but without medical testing individuals do not know that they are infected with the virus until they show symptoms of AIDS. This causes people, ignorant of their HIV+ status, to spread the disease. At first glance it would appear to be an easy disease to conquer because it is completely preventable. However, prevention is made extremely complex by the vast number of sociological issues that affect people’s behavior. It would be easy to look at the initial spread of the disease amongst the promiscuous homosexual population and to blame them for their own plight. However, once one looks at the history of this community and the societal attitudes present at the time, it becomes easier to understand why these behaviors were practiced and why it was so difficult to change them. As KS poster boy Bobbi Campbell said, “There’s this need to focus on these aspects of the disease—so people can put the victims at arm’s length from themselves, so it doesn’t hit close to home.” AIDS is unique in that it seems to prey upon already existing social problems; poverty, discrimination, depression and addiction all play a huge part in the AIDS epidemic.

The sociology of the disease has also changed drastically in the last twenty years. Phil Wilson, founder of the Black AIDS Institute said, “This epidemic came about in 1980, and that epidemic was seen as a gay epidemic. And then following the protease inhibitors, the epidemic came to be seen as a global epidemic.” Wilson has worked to educate the black community about the entire disease, not just prevention. He decided to found the Institute after seeing the lack of progress in the black community. It would be
easy to lose all hope in looking at the future of the world with this disease. However, it is precisely that hope that will help to bring about the change needed to end this plague; people like Wilson (who was diagnosed with AIDS) can help to inspire and to bring hope to others. If the stigma of the disease was removed, then there would be more people willing to accept their diagnosis, acknowledge it publicly and then avoid spreading the disease. More people would be willing to give money for research and more people would be willing to listen to medical treatments and advice. If greed was removed, then there would be more research in those countries most affected by AIDS. Treatments that are more effective for those cultures could be obtained and the spread of the disease could be stemmed by more research into prevention. Through hope and persistence we can increase our odds of stopping this epidemic.

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Jenise Phelps is a biology/chemistry split major and will spend 2006-2007 teaching chemistry at Castilleja High School in Palo Alto while applying to medical schools. She hopes to build a career as a physician helping underserved communities.
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