

# THE QUARTERLY

MASTER OF ARTS IN LIBERAL STUDIES  
DARTMOUTH COLLEGE



FALL 2011



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### **MALS *Quarterly* Mission Statement**

The Dartmouth MALS *Quarterly* is the journal for the Masters of Arts in Liberal Studies program at Dartmouth College. The publication is broad in scope, and accepts submissions of any scholarly or creative work from current MALS students and all MALS alumni. It is a priority that all work is accessible to a full disciplinary range of MALS community members.

Our primary goal is to publish the best current work being done in MALS from the four tracks: Globalization, Cultural Studies, Creative Writing, and General Studies. Through publishing this work, we intend to initiate and encourage scholarly dialogue within the MALS community.

*Submissions may be sent to:* [MALS.Quarterly@dartmouth.edu](mailto:MALS.Quarterly@dartmouth.edu)

## CONTRIBUTORS

**Joni Cole** majored in Journalism at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. She is a MALS alum, whose published books include *Toxic Feedback: Helping Writers Survive and Thrive*; and *Water Cooler Diaries: Women Across America Share Their Day at Work in This Day in the Life*. She is a 2011 Pushcart Prize nominee for 'Strangers on the Train', from the newly released *Another Bad-Dog Book: Tales of Life, Love, and Neurotic Human Behavior*.

**Kathryn Alexa Moritz**, originally from Pennsylvania, moved with her family to Kirby, Vermont when she was six years old. Homeschooled until 4th grade, she enjoyed all the education their small sheep farm and the rural lifestyle had to offer. She started school around eleven and since then her academic experience has been anything but average. She finished middle school and then tried several different high school experiences, such as private, public, alternative, and further homeschooling. She finally graduated from Danville High School and then continued to the University of Vermont where she majored in English and fell in love with 20th century literature. She has traveled in India, the Dominican Republic, and Italy and currently works as an Assistant Manager for her family's business, an assisted living home for seniors. Although she has always told stories, she has found that her time at MALS has allowed her to really focus on craft and further creativity.

**Julian Fenn** is a sixth term current MALS student on the Globalization Track.

**Nina Godiwalla** earned her B.B.A. from the University of Texas at Austin and her M.B.A. from The Wharton School of Business. A MALS alum, she is the bestselling author of *Suits: A Woman on Wall Street*, which *The New York Times* describes as the Devil Wears Prada of investment banking. She is also the CEO of MindWorks, which provides stress management and meditation training to corporations and other professional organizations.

**Keri Wolfe:** After growing up in southern New Hampshire and attending the University of New Hampshire for my undergraduate degree, I swore that I would get out of this state the next time I made a big move, but alas--here I am! And, surprisingly, I couldn't be happier. I've been working in early childhood education for the past four years, and I was already living up in the area when I discovered the MALS program. I wasn't quite sure what I wanted to pursue in graduate school (nor am I still!), so the interdisciplinary, general liberal studies approach really appealed to me. I started in the fall of 2010, and am just a part-time student, as I still work full-time during the days. I love working with kids, and adding academia into the mix brought forth an enjoyable balance in my life between two of my passions.

While I change my mind constantly about what I would like to study, so far I seem to be leaning toward the Globalization track. I wrote this piece on Lebanon's Cedar Revolution for Professor Edsforth's class, Global Diffusion of Democracy, in the spring of 2011.

**Isabella R. Price**, a Dartmouth alum, took a year off between her junior and senior years to explore her career interests. During her year in the Caribbean, she studied business, accounting, and trained to become a rescue scuba diver. She hails from Seattle, where she worked in her family's downtown restaurant since the age of 5. A lover of the natural world, she continues to reside near forests, now in the White Mountains of New Hampshire. There she gardens, mountain bikes, and skis. She currently studies writing in the MALS program. She plans to teach, and concurrently gain footing as an entrepreneur.

**Cinnamon Spear** is a fifth term MALS student.

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# STRANGERS ON A TRAIN

## AN EXCERPT FROM *ANOTHER BAD-DOG BOOK*

JONI B. COLE

Normally, I sleep peacefully through much of the eight-hour train ride from my home in Vermont to my mom's house in Pennsylvania. I wake from one nap and the scenery is open farmland. Minutes, or maybe hours, later I doze off again to a backdrop of graffiti-scarred warehouses. It's as if I'm unconsciously absorbing America's Northeast Corridor in all its splendor and squalor, similar to how I used to go to bed with a dictionary under my pillow in the hopes of improving my vocabulary.

But the last time I took this eight-hour train ride my sleep was fitful at best. The day before my trip, I experienced the worst hangover of my life, either that or a case of food poisoning. I had gone to a Midsummer's Night dance party under the stars. The food and drink table was poorly illuminated, just a row of Tiki torches to help me stumble my way to the multitude of open bottles of wine.

Around two in the morning as the party was winding down (or maybe I was the last to leave), I stuffed down a hoagie from the picked-over sandwich tray. My reasoning was that this would offset any effects of the alcohol. Not that I was drunk, I told myself, as I sang my way to where I thought I had left my car.

On the train thirty-six hours later, my right eyeball still throbbed and my stomach continued to spasm, although by now it felt as hollow as a dried gourd. For the first time ever, I was painfully aware of the train's confined quarters. The air smelled stale, like a close talker with a medical condition was exhaling in my face. A man seated nearby slept with his mouth open, his face bore the dull sheen of gummy bears. The woman next to him scratched her forearm, and I could see the spray of dead skin cells circulating my way. It was as if I had developed super-sensory powers, only these were the kind of super powers you would be given in Hell.

I tried gazing out the window, but instead of the usual soporific effect, the flashing scene-scapes only made my head hurt worse. A phlegmy cough erupted from somewhere behind me. Across the aisle, a woman bulging from her tube top faced me in one of those backwards seats. She tore open a Snickers bar and took a bite. Too late, I averted my eyes. With my new super powers, I could see in my mind's eye the chocolate nougat (packed with peanuts!) filling the indents of her molars, then mixing with the half-digested contents of her stomach, still identifiable—ugh!—as the Meat Lovers Platter at Denny's.

All my life I have suffered from a too-vivid imagination. To offset the mental havoc



this can cause, I often try to soothe myself through deep breathing. Inhale through the nose. Exhale through the mouth. Today, unfortunately, this tactic was of no use, given that I was trying not to breathe at all. I needed another relaxation technique, something to empty my head of disturbing images and calm my overactive gag reflex.

Halle Berry!

Halle Berry's face popped into my mind, maybe because she had recently graced the cover of *People* magazine. Looks-wise, I have always thought she is the most perfect person on the planet. Toffee-colored skin. Silky hair. A dazzling smile with any hint of saliva airbrushed away.

Halle Berry... Halle Berry... Halle Berry... I fixed her image in my mind and eventually managed to doze.

As the train approached Hartford, Connecticut, the conductor requested that all passengers sitting alone remove their belongings from the seat beside them. We needed to make room for the new arrivals. Groggy, but feeling more myself, I grabbed my purse and laptop bag from the overhead rack and deposited them on the empty seat next to me.

Out of the corner of my eye, I watched the travelers file past, a parade of inner thighs rubbing beneath too short shorts, pot bellies hanging over belts, a grungy teenager in a tank top and sweatpants. Just the word—sweatpants! I tried not to be judgmental, after all, my own thighs rub, but the world was still too much with me.

A Muslim woman wearing a heavy black veil and robes paused beside my seat. I stared down at my sneakers, hoping she wouldn't sit next to me. It's not that I have a problem with Muslims or their faith, which likely holds more logic than my own belief in some omniscient power that remains benevolent, as long as I knock on wood or don't get too full of myself.

What I can't fathom, however, is the way certain religious types dress. I grew up in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, Amish country, where it was hard enough during the hot, humid summers to look at the women in their black, aproned dresses and stockings and not feel vicarious heat prostration. But Muslim women! Covered from head to toe in so much cloth, Muslim women make the Amish look like streetwalkers.

Thanks to my new guardian angel, Halle Berry, or maybe the fact that I was still experiencing tremors in my hands, this particular Muslim woman thought better than to ask me to move my belongings, and took a seat a few rows ahead of me in the train car.

By the time we reached New Haven, I couldn't wait any longer. I needed to go pee. My lingering dizziness and the sway of the car forced me to grip the seatbacks on my way to the bathroom. En route, it occurred to me that, for all my lack of knowledge of the human anatomy, the one thing I wished I did not remember was that skin is the biggest organ. I could just feel the germs—viruses, flesh-eating bacteria, e-coli—permeating my palms. Worse yet, in the bathroom I was forced to grip the handrail as I squatted above the toilet, either that or risk direct contact with the backs of my thighs.

Call it exhaustion or post traumatic stress disorder, but when I returned to my seat I managed to pass out for a time, until the screech of brakes woke me when the train pulled into New York City's Penn Station.

"Is this seat taken?" A forty-something man wearing a summer business suit and trendy eyeglasses directed the question either to me or the person on his Bluetooth. New Yorkers, of course, can see through clever ploys like faking a seatmate, so I had no

choice but to move my belongings and allow him to sit beside me. Thank goodness he was a metrosexual, one of those impeccably groomed males who are not afraid of nose hair clippers or pore-reducing skin toner.

At first, the man ignored me, the way only New Yorkers can ignore people who don't matter. But then he stood up to retrieve something from the overhead rack and there, eye level, not two feet from my face, was the front panel of his tan, linen trousers—his zipper at half mast.

Sexual pheromones aside, when it comes right down to it, certain male body parts are not attractive, at least not when you are recovering from a hangover-slash-food-poisoning. With my new super-sensory powers, I could see right through the lightweight fabric of his dress pants and designer briefs. The man sat down just a few seconds later, obscuring his lap with his New York Times, but the image of his private parts nestled in a pallet of pubic hair had already imprinted itself in my mind.

Halle Berry! Halle Berry! Halle Berry!

This time, the image failed to comfort. My stomach gurgled, bringing back all-too-vivid memories of yesterday, and how much of it had been spent dry heaving over our ill-conceived low-flush toilet. Today, however, I had managed to drink plenty of juice and eat a personal pan pizza from the café car, all without incident. But had I been too optimistic? Just the idea of being sick and stuck in a window seat convinced me that I needed to throw up. Under normal circumstances, I would have bolted for the bathroom, but this meant squeezing past my seatmate and his metrosexual package.

By now, my super powers had kicked into overdrive. Every sensation, every image, every aspect of the human condition felt magnified. I needed to empty my mind, to create a mental space devoid of sensory stimulation and the vagaries of my own imagination. A few rows in front of me, the Muslim woman stood out among all the other bare-headed passengers. I rested my gaze on the back of her black veil and, for once, saw her head covering not as sign of suppression, but as a relief from having to look at everybody else's exposed hair.

By the time the train reached Philadelphia, my metrosexual seatmate was nowhere to be seen. Apparently, he had slipped away quietly after I had drifted back to sleep. Now it was time for me to leave the train, too, to complete the last leg of my trip to Lancaster. I stood up, feeling considerably steadier on my feet. My right eye no longer throbbed and my stomach felt settled. What's more, everybody, everything, had returned to normal proportions. My super powers from Hell were gone.

I retrieved my belongings from the overhead rack and started walking down the aisle toward the exit. Next to the Muslim woman's seat, I hesitated. Normally, I would have passed right by her, this strangest of strangers on a train whose life seemed so remote from my own. Instead, I felt a sudden urge to connect, to thank her for being there in my time of need, or at least ask her how she was holding up in the heat. But of course that would have been too weird.

I was a Western woman with modern proclivities. I drank alcohol and cavorted under the stars. A sheik could offer me ten million dollars and I still would not cover my head and body in the name of religion. Still, before I left the train, I tried to catch the woman's lowered eyes, hoping to exchange at least a smile.





# THE CEDAR REVOLUTION: FAILURE TO MOVE BEYOND THE STATUS QUO IN A CONSOCIATIONAL DEMOCRACY

KERI L. WOLFE

## Abstract

*This paper focuses on Lebanon's Cedar Revolution in 2005, which reflected deep divisions in the country that are still resounding in Lebanese politics today. A modern history of the country will be provided, as its events influenced the environment in which the political elite and mass movements involved in the Cedar Revolution occurred. A description of the Cedar Revolution's activities will follow. Emphasis will be made on areas in which the revolution showed weakness or lost its strength, as the movement failed to produce many changes in Lebanon's political system overall. Extrapolations will be made regarding the current situation in Lebanon since the revolution's movements deteriorated. The surge of Hezbollah's power in the past decade leaves the possibility of another civil war, as Lebanon's procedural democracy is still too weak to overcome the serious political factions dividing the country. Unless the country moves away from a consociational form of government, Lebanon will likely continue to experience bouts of extreme political instability in between unremarkable periods of time in which little more happens than the pure maintenance of the status quo.*

## Lebanon's Modern History, 1920-1990

At the end of World War I, the polity Lebanon was placed under French command when the Allies divvied up the lands that had been under the Central Powers' control. The former Ottoman territory contained a multitude of religious and ethnic groups, all of which had little in common to claim as a unified identity. Despite this, Lebanon engaged in a series drawn-out negotiations with France in the later 1930s, resulting in the country's independence; Lebanese sovereignty was officially recognized by European and Arab nations in 1941. The country maintained its constitution that had been formed under French rule, which had established a parliamentary democracy, and virtually no structural changes were made to the Lebanese government immediately.

The first major alteration was made in 1943, by Lebanon's Prime Minister Riad al-Sohl and President Bishara al-Khoury. Because Lebanon's citizens represented a wide variety of backgrounds and interests, Sohl, a Sunni Muslim, and al-Khoury, a Christian Maronite, derived an agreement that would share the state's power among its largest population groups. This agreement, known as the National Pact, included two main components. The first part detailed how the executive positions in the government would fall along demographic lines, and a set ratio of parliamentary seats would be allocated to specific sectarian groups.<sup>1</sup> The pact designated a Christian Maronite as the president of the republic-

<sup>1</sup> In Lebanon's case, elections held along demographic lines meant the leaders would be chosen representatives of their sectarian communities. In "Reflections on Lebanon" in *Lebanon: Liberation, Conflict, and Crisis*, William Harris states that there are currently 17 different religious sects in Lebanon, all of



lic, a Sunni Muslim as the prime minister, and a Shi'ite Muslim as the head of parliament. Christians would also hold a higher amount of parliamentary seats, based on census data from 1932. However, despite favoring the Christians in the structural arena, the second component of this agreement concluded that Lebanon would possess an "Arab face," in how it would portray itself to the rest of the world (Young, 2010). Out of respect to its differing communities, Lebanon would not take part in any Arab unity movements, and it also would not allow Western powers to use the country as a way to infiltrate the Arab world.

With this National Pact, the two political leaders had created a consociational democracy, which Danilo Di Mauro describes as "a political system with a fragmented political culture governed through democratic rules by an elite cartel that is aimed to maintain stability" (Di Mauro, 2008, p. 454). Such a system presented Lebanon with a viable option for sustaining political equilibrium within the country at the start of their new republic, but it did little to create a national identity that encouraged cohesion. The National Pact worked well for a little over a decade, but by the end of the 1950s, external forces began to pry upon the divisions in Lebanon's society. Hostilities between the various sectarian communities began to strengthen in the 1960s, and by the 1970s, small militia started to form around the country. Tensions grew between Lebanese Christian and Muslim groups, culminating in the April 1975 assassination of a Lebanese Christian politician, Pierre Gemayel. In retaliation, a Christian paramilitary group fired upon a bus containing Palestinians, 26 of whom died.<sup>2</sup> A civil war ensued that lasted fifteen years.

In June 1976, Lebanon's neighbor Syria entered the country with the support of Christian militias, as both Syria and the Christian coalition feared a Palestinian/ Muslim victory in Lebanon could result in war with Israel. When Israel did enter southern Lebanon in 1978, their forces left after just three months. Yet despite the aversion of a large Israeli-Lebanese skirmish, Syria did not withdraw from the country because the internal civil war still continued.

In 1986, Syrian troops increased their presence in Lebanon, in response to growing disorder caused by warring Muslim militias in the city; even the Muslim and Christian fronts were beginning to break down after a decade of war and chaos. Many praised Syria's intervention and efforts to keep peace, both internally and externally. Finally, in 1989, the United States of America and the Arab League were able to arrange for the remaining members of Lebanon's parliament to meet in Ta'if, Saudi Arabia. Here these politicians created the Ta'if Accords, a document that was intended to change the dynamics of power-sharing within Lebanon slightly, such as by restructuring the amount of parliamentary seats from a 6:5 ratio to a 50:50 ratio. In addition to this, the president would no longer appoint the prime minister; instead, the prime minister would be appointed by and responsible to the legislature directly.

Those who met at Ta'if also hoped to end what is known as confessionalism within Lebanon, meaning that one's participation in politics is largely based upon one's sectarian which are either associated with Christianity or Islam. However, in *The Ghosts of Martyrs Square*, Michael Young claims that there are 18 religious communities in the country. Both sources agree that the three largest religions are Sunni Muslims, Shi'ite Muslims, and Maronite Christians.

2 After years of third party players entering Lebanon's political atmosphere, the two sides had become aligned with outside powers. Lebanese Muslims supported armed Palestinian groups moving along the Israeli border in southern Lebanon, whereas the Christian population sympathized with Jewish Israel's plight. Because of these connections, the Christian paramilitary group knew that an attack on a Palestinian bus would be seen as an attack Lebanese Muslims as well.

allegiance (Kurtulus, 2009). Because of Lebanon's confessional nature, the average Lebanese citizen more greatly values the needs and desires of his or her religious community more than the needs of the state, which can lead to situations such as a civil war. However, as these politicians did not set a timeline as to when they hoped to abolish this practice, nor did they formulate a plan as to how they would change the system, the Ta'if Accords essentially solidified and clarified the consociational, confessional divisions already in place (Hirst, 2010).

The agreement alone did not set an end to the civil war. Again, third party interference played a large role in the meeting at Ta'if, as the United States and some members of the Arab League backed Syria's continued presence in the country (Hirst, 2010). This support allowed Syria to again increase its role in Lebanese politics so that rule of law could be restored. This—Syrian imposition of the rule of law in 1990—is what truly ceased the fighting. Unfortunately for Lebanon, a return to their procedural democracy, as established in their constitution and further clarified through the National Pact and Ta'if Accords, could not overpower the warring factions in Lebanon's society.

### **Building Syrian Opposition, 1990-2005**

While many accounts of the Cedar Revolution begin with the assassination of Rafiq al-Hariri, it is important to remember that revolutions are rarely, if ever, spontaneous. As with many other movements across the world, Lebanon's case involved a long history of political strife, civil war, and outside intervention, which was a key component of the growing discontent in Lebanon that resulted in both the political elites' and people's power movements in 2005.

Ever since Syria had emerged as a strong influence in Lebanese politics in the 1980s, there had been political leaders who expressed opposition to the country's intervention. For example, Rafiq al-Hariri, who was elected as the prime minister-designate in 1992, was strongly opposed to Syria's presence in Lebanon. He was still in this position in 2004, when Syrian-backed President **Émile Lahoud** was **supposed to finish serving, according** to the Lebanese constitution's premise that a president could only serve one six-year term. Syria's President Bashar al-Assad feared that a new president in Lebanon could derail Syria's power in the region, so he pushed for his Lebanese parliamentary allies to propose a constitutional amendment that would grant an extension for Lahoud (Young, 2010).

With knowledge of Assad's intervention in the affair, Hariri turned to his own connections in France, requesting that they apply pressure to Syria somehow. In response to Hariri's plea, the United Nations Security Council issued Resolution 1559 on September 2, 2004, which was co-sponsored by France and the United States of America. Resolution 1559 called for four requirements: that all foreign forces withdraw from Lebanon immediately; that all Lebanese militia surrender their arms; that all political parties must comply with these commands fully; and that, in this new environment absent of foreign intervention and the threat of attack by internal militia, free and fair elections be held. Despite this United Nations mandate, the Lebanese parliament passed the constitutional amendment two days later, on September 4, 2004. Lahoud's presidency was extended another three years, until 2007.

Hariri resigned from his role as Lebanese prime minister in January 2005 because he was so frustrated with the political atmosphere, especially once Syria successfully at-



tained the extension for Lahoud. Shortly after his resignation, Hariri was killed in a truck-bomb attack in Beirut, on February 14, 2005. Twenty-one other people also died in the massive explosion, and many Lebanese—both civilians and political leaders—were more than eager to blame Syria. Even just speculation alone was enough to incite both political elites and mass groups of Lebanese citizens to action.

### The Cedar Revolution

While the Cedar Revolution, as perceived by the press worldwide, seemed to be a movement at the intersection of people's power and an elite cartel's efforts, a closer dissection of the events reveals otherwise. The two groups functioned autonomously throughout much of the month following Hariri's assassination, but their efforts combined together on March 14, 2005, to produce the most powerful nonviolent rally Lebanon has ever experienced (Hirst, 2010). Yet after this date, the people's movement quickly sputtered to an end, while the political elites resumed their work in the typical arena of politics. Ultimately, neither group, neither alone nor together, ushered in drastic changes in Lebanon's regime, aside from the withdrawal of Syrian troops in April 2005. At face value, the Cedar Revolution accomplished nothing more than to turn the balance of power over to Lebanon, which allowed the country to experience its own sovereignty once again.

### The People's Power Movement

The phrase the Cedar Revolution came from an American government official, who coined the term based on Lebanon's well-known natural resource, cedar trees. At the time of the Cedar Revolution, there were many popular movements in former Soviet states that had earned similarly memorable names, such as the Orange Revolution in Ukraine or the Rose Revolution in Georgia (Kurtulus, 2009). By allocating this name to Lebanon's February and March 2005 events, the United States and Western media attributed a push for democracy as the driving factor behind the movement.<sup>3</sup> From an outside perspective, the term the Cedar Revolution seemed to symbolize the people's power and demonstrations in the squares that began on February 16, 2005, as Hariri's funeral drew hundreds of thousands of Lebanese to Martyrs Square in Beirut (Hirst, 2010). The square had been a battleground during the Lebanese Civil War, as it divided the city's Christian and Muslim communities via an East/West divide, and the location was symbolic because Hariri had helped restore the area during his time in office as a way to help Lebanon grapple with its bloody past (Young, 2010).

Not only did the popular movement successfully choose a site that attracted participants for emotional reasons, but Martyrs Square also served the mass demonstrations well in many other ways. Its location allowed for easy contact with the media, to ensure that the press would pass along their message to the outside world, but the especially important connection was the protest's locale in relation to Lebanon's leading newspaper Al-Nahar (Young, 2010). The newspaper's building was just a short distance from Martyrs Square, and one of its main publishers, Samir Kassir, was an instrumental player in planning

<sup>3</sup> This connection was not made accidentally, either. In an address to Georgian citizens in May 2005, President George W. Bush said, "The world has marveled at the hopeful changes taking place from Baghdad to Beirut to Bishkek. Your courage is inspiring democratic reformers and sending a message that echoes across the world" (BBC News, 2005). In viewing the Cedar Revolution as a democratic uprising in the Arab world, the United States could better justify its own approaches in the area, as it could claim it was supporting and maintaining a democratic agenda originating from within the region.

the protests. As both a journalist and professor at St. Joseph's University in Beirut, Kassir's jobs placed him in close contact to a large array of people, especially students and other journalists who were vocally questioning Syria's role in Lebanon. He and the owner of Al-Nahar, Gebran Tueni, allowed the newspaper's building to serve as a place for the movement's leaders to meet, plan, and rest.

By February 27<sup>th</sup>, the Lebanese army was ordered to prevent any more protestors from entering the square, but tens of thousands of protestors arrived by the following morning to successfully render the army useless, as their commander, the now current President Suleiman, insisted that his men should not fire. However, his decision to peacefully allow the nonviolent demonstration was not influenced by morals. He knew that commanding his men to fire would divide his ranks and support, which would just create even more chaos and tension (Young, 2010). Because of Suleiman's decision, the February 28<sup>th</sup> protests were able to grow so large that Prime Minister Omar Karami recognized the limitation of his government to maintain any semblance of rule of law, and he resigned at the end of the day. The victory of the February 28<sup>th</sup> nonviolent rally also showed the mass movement that they could congregate again in the future, with little risk of physical harm.

### **The Independence Intifada**

On the evening of Hariri's assassination, over one hundred political leaders met together in Beirut and drafted a statement intended for Syria and Prime Minister Omar Karami's government. These leaders called for three things, two of which were not new requests. First and foremost, the leaders wanted an independent, international investigation conducted regarding Hariri's assassination. Secondly, they demanded that Syria to withdraw before the parliamentary elections scheduled for May and June of the same year. Their last command reiterated a part of Resolution 1559: the forfeit of arms by internal Lebanese militia.<sup>4</sup> These men also called for a three-day general strike, to begin on February 18, 2005. With this agreement, these political elite began their initiative, calling themselves the Independence Intifada.

The Arabic word *intifada* generally describes something less substantial than a revolution—it is more like a revolt or a protest (Young, 2010). Originally, this group of political elite had not thought very far in terms of what reforms they desired, especially as their biggest demand was the removal of Syrian influence in Lebanese politics. However, some of these leaders had chosen slogans, ideologies to assume, and methods of protest to utilize prior to Hariri's assassination, similar to how other revolutionary movements plan action (Young, 2010). Although this elite cartel had planned on using these tactics during a campaign for the 2005 parliamentary election, Hariri's assassination simply provided a venue even more appropriate for these strategies. The use of Martyrs Square afforded the opportunity for these political elites to work with civil society leaders, such as Kassir, in order to merge their methods with the mass demonstration's sheer force in numbers.

### **The March 14<sup>th</sup> Demonstration**

Despite resigning at the end of February, Karami was reappointed as prime minister within just a couple weeks, on March 10, 2005. In addition to this, Syria still had not pulled out of the country, and Hezbollah had led an uprising on March 8<sup>th</sup> in support of and in gratitude

<sup>4</sup> In 2005, the Shi'ite political party Hezbollah, most often an ally of Syria's, was the only armed militia within Lebanon, so this demand for disarmament was aimed specifically at them.



to Syria, which involved as many participants as the first anti-Syrian movements did (Kino, 2008). Because of this, the key political figures in the Independence Intifada saw this as the right time to join forces with the popular movement. Both political and civil leaders called for a mass, nonviolent rally to take place on March 14, 2005, and up to one million Lebanese participated in the demonstration (Hirst, 2010).

Even though the protest experienced great success in drawing a large crowd and much attention to the opposition's presence, this event signaled a change in the Cedar Revolution's complex dynamics. In *The Ghosts of Martyrs Square*, Michel Young refers to March 14, as the "day when the youths were forgotten" (Young, 2010, p. 53), as the mass people's power movement slowly lost momentum and dwindled to little more than a memory of momentary united action. When Karami resigned yet again on the eve of the protest, and Syria withdrew its forces in April 2005, the Cedar Revolution's proceedings moved away from the country's unprecedented nonviolent rallies to the status quo of decisions and alliances made by Lebanon's political elite. These political figures then stopped focusing on unified efforts, and instead, they again continued to base their actions on what would best benefit themselves and their communities, just as they always had.

### **The Failures of the Cedar Revolution**

Although Syria physically removed itself from Lebanon at the end of the Cedar Revolution, overall, the movement brought forth little change in Lebanon. Some of Hariri's political allies had already planned oppositional tactics prior to his death, but the majority of the revolution was charted as the movement carried on. Essentially, "there was no political platform, no political agenda, simply a euphoria created by the frustrations of 15 years of occupation for some, and six years of bitter rivalry with the president for others," as Halim Shebaya says (Shebaya, 2007, p. 272). Because Hariri's assassination was a monumental event that seemingly deserved a great outcry, both the elite opposition and grassroots movement took on too much with too little time for proper preparation. This would cost them, as it rendered them ineffective in accomplishing substantial goals.

One of the strongest characteristics of the Cedar Revolution was the rhetoric of nationalism that showed in the signs, chants, and flag-waving of the demonstrations, as the anti-Syrian movement rallied around a desire for Lebanese sovereignty to be restored. Political actions by government and parliamentary figures also pushed for a lessening of Syria's power over the Lebanese state, an issue of sovereignty at its core. However, Lebanon's various factions and sects made it difficult for Lebanese to feel connected, as there was a lack of common characteristics to bind the citizens through self-determination (Kurtulus, 2009). The cohesion of the revolution suffered greatly, as political leaders and grassroots leaders were unable to create a Lebanese identity under which their participants could unite.

Along with the absence of a unifying identity, the popular movement and the elite cartel did not have common goals. The grassroots members wanted to push Syria out of Lebanese politics, just as the political leaders did, but many of them, especially the younger participants, also wanted to see changes to the state, structure of society, and the government's weak, ineffective institutions (Hirst, 2010). However, they could not set clear, defined goals, nor could they convince their older counterparts of the need for these reforms, so their demands carried little weight. As Kurt Schock says in *Unarmed Insurrections*, a "challenge must undermine state power," to effect change, but the only way a

movement will succeed in doing so is if the movement has presented a unified front and gains enough support to disrupt the state's typical functions (Schock, 2005, p. 49). Clearly, the grassroots movement alone accomplished neither, yet the political elites hardly helped in bringing the revolution closer to success.

As the elite leaders came from different political parties, they represented many interests, and therefore, they too had a difficult time solidifying as a group. At the same time, this was not the elite movement's biggest failure; their biggest challenge came from their inability to commit to major demands. The political figures started off by simply serving as a visible opposition to Syria's role in Lebanon and the extension of Lahoud's presidency. By the time they wanted to push for bigger stipulations, such as internal government reform or the strengthening of the country's procedural democracy, they had missed their opportunity (Young, 2010). Because of this, the political leaders could only accomplish their first objective: "preserving the status quo as long as possible" (Choueiri, 2007, p. 35). Many argue that Syria only withdrew from Lebanon because of the pressure from third party countries, and the Cedar Revolution amounted to almost nothing in the end. The only success the movement can really claim is its manifestation of how deep sectarian divisions in a society intertwined to show the weakness of a consociational democracy in modern-day politics.

### **Indicators of Lebanon's Current Environment**

One cannot consider the consolidation and endurance of a new regime in Lebanon, in regards to the Cedar Revolution, as the regime largely did not change, so indicators and assessments of the governmental system that had already been in place are the best way to evaluate if the Cedar Revolution had an impact at all. However, a look into the indicators of Lebanon's political arena before and after the movement reveals that the country's overall political atmosphere has actually worsened, instead of improved. These statistics alone leave little room for optimism, and indeed, as we will consider in the last section, Lebanon's current prospects for a stable, democratic society seem dim, at best.

Freedom House's 2011 report on Lebanon rates the country as just "partly free," for three main reasons: corruption and voter fraud is high, the media is only partly free, and the country has not granted full political and civil liberties to refugees living within the country (Freedom House, 2011). While Freedom House's first two reasons are important considerations for this paper, the latter regarding refugees reflects little about the Cedar Revolution's efficacy, or lack thereof. Corruption, especially in terms of voter fraud, most affects the level of freedom and fairness in elections; a high level of fraud means that a country does not experience a true democracy. This is especially true of Lebanon, which has only experienced a procedural democracy, or periods of suspended political rights, since the inception of the country's constitution. Lebanese Transparency Association's 2009 ratings support Freedom House's claim about corruption as well, as the country is ranked 120<sup>th</sup> out of 180 assessed for their levels of corruption (Lebanese Transparency International, 2009).

The focus on the freedom of the press reflects a country's need to have unbiased, informative sources for its citizens to engage in active civil participation. Freedom House states that Lebanon's media is only partly free, despite having an article in the constitution that is supposed to ensure "freedom of expression and freedom of the press" (Freedom



House, 2010a). Lebanon's media is subject to the loyalties and profit desires of its owners and readership, as there is no public, government-supported source available to citizens. This means that in reality, Lebanon will not have a completely free press, even if an amendment allows for it. In addition to this, political instability in the country threatens journalists' safety, as the assassination of Samir Kassir in July 2005 revealed (Young, 2010). As Freedom House shows, the press is just another example of Lebanon's procedural democracy that does not translate into reality.

In yet another report, on "Women's Rights in Lebanon," Freedom House covers the atmosphere women encounter within the country, as of 2010. While men and women both participated in the grassroots demonstrations in the Cedar Revolution, women had little power among the political elites. The movement also did not push for significant changes in the lives of Lebanese women, so for the purpose of this paper, it is sufficient to say that Freedom House's ratings for women's freedom in the country have improved, but the difference is fairly negligible (Freedom House, 2010b). In this same vein, human rights will not be discussed here, as neither the grassroots movement nor the political elite cartel pushed for improved human rights conditions.

Freedom House's figures provide useful information about the country's overall environment, but the World Bank Institute's "Worldwide Governance Indicators" better exemplify the important changes within Lebanon since 2005. Here we can deliberate the meaning of lower government effectiveness, decreased rule of law, and significantly lower political stability as they relate to the Cedar Revolution. The variations in these three components demonstrate just how much Lebanon's political environment has deteriorated in the recent years since the Cedar Revolution.

The "Worldwide Governance Indicators" show that Lebanon's overall political stability has lowered significantly in just five years; the country currently falls under the tenth percentile rankings, as opposed to the 20 percent it experienced in 2005. The government's effectiveness also dropped by ten percent after the Cedar Revolution (World Bank Group, 2010). As we have already seen, the movement revealed deep factions within Lebanon, but this data suggests that the revolution actually magnified these divisions so that they gained prominence in Lebanese politics. Not surprisingly, Lebanese rule of law also decreased drastically after Syria left (World Bank Group, 2010), as the country was not fully ready to govern itself, despite its demands. Instead of progressing the country forward, the Cedar Revolution actually set the political landscape back. The Lebanese regime's weakness that it uncovered, in an increasingly unstable environment, created a void, one that would prove harmful to Lebanon's future attempts for democracy and peace.

### **The Persistence of the Status Quo**

Since the end of the Cedar Revolution in 2005, the political party Hezbollah has gathered considerable strength within the country, starting with a short 34 day in July 2006, between Hezbollah and Israel. The war ended quickly—not because of external pressures on either side, but because Hezbollah was able to prove to Israel that, for once, it had the potential of winning (Hirst, 2010)—and this served as the party's first momentous gain in the country. Then, in November 2006, Hezbollah successfully pushed the government into stagnation for eighteen months, which completely undermined what little legitimacy the regime had. In 2008, the party laid siege to Western Beirut, and its presence in the city

lasted a few months. Most recently, Hezbollah has now claimed much of the government's official power, in a move that many in the country are calling a coup (BBC News, 2011). As it had done in 2006, on January 11, 2011, Hezbollah's ministers resigned, bringing the government to a standstill. This forced a vote in the parliament to select a prime minister-designate, and Najib Mikati<sup>5</sup> was again chosen to lead the interim government until a new, "national unity government" is formed (BBC News, 2011). This most recent move is said to be in response to the Special Tribunal for Lebanon, which is investigating into Hariri's assassination. While indictments were decided upon in early January, the results are not yet public, and the speculation is that Hezbollah and Syrian members will be named as suspects. As this situation continues to unfold, I would be surprised by neither civil war nor stagnation, as both are equally possible and occur with similar frequency in Lebanon.

In each of these episodes, Hezbollah has capitalized upon a weakness within the state to propel itself forward, and this method of preying upon weakness has actually been how Hezbollah has gained strength all along. The party first functioned as a political group in southern Lebanon, the region furthest away from the capital, and it was able to flourish there because of the weakened state's inability to provide for its citizens located so far away from the central government.<sup>6</sup> Hezbollah, however, could. Within Lebanon, the organization is just as well known for its needed welfare services in southern Lebanon as it is for its militant side (Mattar, 2007).

A crippled government is just one of the many problems associated with a consociational government, but the biggest issue of all lies in the fact that a consociational government rarely endures without episodes of extreme political strife. As Di Mauro claims, "The fact that consociational elements have been present during periods of stability does not demonstrate that they produce a stable system" (Di Mauro, 2008, p. 467). Di Mauro is correct in pointing out that the existence of two things at the same time does not necessarily mean there is correlation or causation, but I would like to carry his comment one step further: "The fact that consociational elements have been present during periods of stability does not demonstrate that they produce a stable system," and in fact, it is these same consociational elements that are most likely to produce periods of great political instability. While Kurtulus (2009) states that a consociational system that continually reflects the changes in demographics in a given country could provide an enduring democracy, I believe the solution lies elsewhere.

A consociational government leaves little possibility for growth and progress, and too much room for political divisions to tear the regime apart. Lebanon's most optimistic, peaceful future depends upon the formation of a united identity, a bond for all Lebanese based upon whichever characteristics both political and civil society leaders choose as the best cohesive traits for the Lebanese community at large. Only then will the country be able to move beyond its confessional politics, so that a consociational form of government

<sup>5</sup> Nijab Mikati was elected to serve as the prime minister-designate immediately following the Cedar Revolution, and he produced no policies that resulted in significant change. It will be interesting to see if a new situation will spark a different, new response from him. However, the prospects of such seem unlikely thus far.

<sup>6</sup> Originally, one of the biggest contributor's to the government's inability to act was its low amount of revenues pulled in from taxes, as many members of the wealthiest class evaded their taxes each year, with no consequences. As government institutions lost efficacy, Lebanese citizens turned to their civil society organizations to provide for them. Most often these organizations were sectarian-based, such as Hezbollah, and they later morphed into political entities. For more information, see Mohammad F. Mattar's chapter entitled, "Is Lebanese Confessionalism to Blame?" in *Breaking the Cycle*.



will not be necessary.

However, this moment is probably still far off. While Hezbollah's secretary-general, Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, has said that he would like his "national unity government" to leave sectarian-based politics behind, such a drastic change will take more than one political leader's urging. Also, as Nasrallah has spent twenty years in charge of Lebanon's current leading political party, he seems like an unlikely candidate to now push progress forward in this manner. It would truly be a revolutionary change, which usually requires a new generation of political and civil society leaders, who have grown weary of their state's weaknesses, and who have considered alternative forms of government. Until then, Lebanon's long-time status quo prevails, as Lebanon's sectarian loyalties remain stronger than the Lebanese desire for real democracy and political stability.

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# TRAINING

AN EXCERPT FROM *SUITS: A WOMAN ON WALL STREET*

NINA GODIWALLA

As I walked to JP Morgan, I didn't see anyone around except the sidewalk food vendors. At every third corner, a massive semi would drive up to a street corner and a vendor would hop out, open the back of the truck, and push his little rectangular steel food cart down the ramp. I kept pace with the ColdSodaWaterSnapple guy, the Shish Kebab guy, and the Nuts 4 Nuts guy. They were a global collective—Pakistan, China, and Guatemala—who had adopted New York as their new home, paving the way for their kids' futures. I was on my own journey from Texas, off to conquer Wall Street.

I walked from Thirty-fourth Street and First Avenue to Wall Street. A purposeful walk four miles to work solved this issue of navigating the daunting subway system and also gave me an outlet for my nervous energy. I was an hour and a half into my trek when my Payless heel got stuck in a steel grille. I'd spent at least a half hour at Payless Shoes choosing these sensible heels—not too high, not too low, not too thin, not too thick. How could they be the precise size of a hole in a New York City grate? It was lodged so tight that I could not get it out. Not now, heel. Not today. I struggled desperately, and now I was covered in the sooty smoke that angrily erupted from the drain. Leaving the shoe in the grate, I hobbled into the only store open, Larry's Fish Market, and was instantly hit by the smell of fish guts. The first three guys in white aprons splotted with blood never looked up from gutting fish. There were no smiling faces welcoming me with, "Good morning, miss. What can I do to help you this morning?" I guessed what they said about New York was true.

"Can someone help me? My shoe's stuck in the sidewalk grate," I said, walking across the cold tile floor on my tiptoes. I anxiously waited for a minute before repeating myself. At first I thought they might not speak English, but it soon became apparent that they were blatantly ignoring me. "My shoe's stuck!" I shouted. "I can't go anywhere until I get it out!" The fourth man wiped his sweaty forehead with his arm. I waited for several minutes before he looked up and took in my pathetic state—one pantyhosed foot standing in fish blood and the other foot wobbling in a heel made for a grown-up. Someone, please help me. He shook his head. "What!" he screamed at me with an accent that reminded me of a Corleone from *The Godfather*. "You really can't get your shoe out?"

"I can't!" I whined desperately. "I came all the way from Texas. And I'm going to miss my first day," I said, balancing on one foot—one shoe on, one shoe off—and squinting



so that he wouldn't notice that my eyes were starting to water.

He rolled his eyes and slammed his sawtooth knife against the fish table to let the excess blood fly off. "Where is it?" he said, sprinting out of the store.

I hobbled behind him like someone who was just coming off an all-night bender.

With one sharp slash, he took his knife and sliced off part of my heel, letting it fall through one of the slits in the grille. The heel splashed into a pool of black sewer water. He threw the shoe toward my feet, splashing blobs of fish juice and blood onto my left calf. He walked off with his stiff arms swinging side to side, his shiny knife splashing blood and fish juice onto the sidewalk.

"Thank you, sir!" I said in my sugariest Southern hospitality pitch. "Thank you!" I yelled out to him. "Thank you so very much, sir!"

Thirty minutes later, the JP Morgan skyscraper towered over me. Outside the building, stock exchange traders stood sucking on cigarettes, anxiously pacing back and forth. They wore bright-colored vests and jackets labeled with investment bank names. Just being around their intensity excited me. With the confidence of an everyday Wall Street banker, I fiercely pushed the full-glass revolving door and was instantly faced with two people at a desk who looked like miniatures in front of the two-story deep green marble panel towering behind them. Is that real marble? "I'm here to meet with Gail Grover," I informed the woman with a CIA headset at the desk.

"That's 60 Wall," she corrected me.

"Okay," I said standing, waiting with a friendly smile. I can't wait to get an ID card.

She repeated, "It's 60 Wall."

"Which way do I go?" I asked, overwhelmed by the numerous elevator banks.

"Out the door," she said, pointing to the revolving door.

"But I'm working for JP Morgan." What is it with these New Yorkers?

"Congratulations," she said with a smile. "So am I. But, honey, we're in 15 Broad. You want 60 Wall Street. JP Morgan is a big company with many buildings. Go out the door and take two rights."

I shook my head at my reflection as I pushed the revolving door. The New York soot clung to my sweaty face, and loose strands of my low, tightly pulled ponytail were hanging messily. Don't forget to pull back your shoulders and smile when you walk in. I had only seen the New York Stock Exchange on television. I felt minuscule as I stood before it. I covered my mouth to contain an uncontrollable smile and wished someone could take a picture of me. My parents, who were both of Persian descent but had grown up in India, would take it to a Persian-Indian function and pass it around before dinner as the samosas were being served. A magnet from Manic Uncle's law practice would hold it to their fridge at home, and my grandparents would get a blown-up five-by-seven-inch copy in India that they would carefully protect in a quart-size plastic baggie and pass around at friends' dinner parties. All of this would confirm my success on Wall Street—or at least that I'd gotten there.

I'd researched so much about the history of Wall Street and JP Morgan that snippets of information ran through my head like a built-in tour guide. The old JP Morgan building on the corner of Broad and Wall Street still bears scars from the 1920 terrorist bomb that exploded and killed many people. Broad Street is so narrow that just to see the

building's familiar ornate triangular pediment supported by the white Corinthian columns, I had to bend my head way back like a howling coyote. I stared at the central female figure, Integrity, with her arms outspread, dressed in a flowing gown and winged hat. To her left and right are nude males who represent Work. "Integrity Protecting the Works of Man," I mumbled, suddenly remembering the name of the sculpture. As I rocked on my butchered heel, I wondered why work and integrity were represented separately.

Though I was familiar with the iconic stock exchange building, it was unclear to me what these Wall Street people actually did. Why are so many of them wearing fancy sunglasses? I had a curiosity that many of my friends from Texas, content to stay close to our small suburban community, didn't quite share. It seemed only right to escape to be part of something bigger than Texas. Popularity throughout school and being one of the best students in college were only small victories—Wall Street was much bigger than that. There was an importance to these suited characters who walked in fast, measured strides. Later I'd learn that their crinkled foreheads and scowling faces represented nothing more than the expressions of busy people lost in their thoughts. Even though I enthusiastically tried to make eye contact, they were oblivious to my smiling face. I didn't understand what they were screaming about on the stock exchange floor, or the meaning of the flying papers and the mechanical hand gestures that looked obscene, but I knew I was exhilarated by the idea of being that important.

Toward the end of my long walk, I briskly turned right onto Wall Street and was immediately bombarded with tourists' video cameras. Today I smiled as they all eagerly recorded my conservatively suited body. By the end of the summer I would impatiently dodge them like my other colleagues did.

After finding the right building, I entered the boardroom, crooked, salmon-spiced, and salted in sweat. I was immediately intimidated by the high ceiling, forty-foot gleaming mahogany table, and the twenty or so heads that turned my way, eager to check out the competition. The table sparkled with the reflection of bright ceiling lights and was neatly lined with green bottles that I'd later learn to recognize as Perrier bottles. By the heavy scent of musk cologne, I assumed I wasn't the only one trying hard to make a good impression. Even so, I got the feeling of walking into a fancy restaurant and sensing that others realize you don't belong. Less than a year ago I'd been a cashier at a rundown grocery store in Houston.

Before I could fully take in the scene, I was greeted by someone who looked my age and yet walked up to the door to meet me like a butler. "Hello, I'm Alan." "Hi! I'm Nina," I said with a broad smile. Is he an intern or one of them? I gave him the firm handshake I had practiced in career training sessions many times. And now, the small squeeze. Career service representatives told us in their hearty Texan voices that "soft, slimy fish handshakes" wouldn't do.

"Do you work here?" I asked, confused by the aggressive greeting.

"No, I'm an intern," Alan replied. Later, one of the other interns explained to me that he was a hard-core networker who was certain that we were being videotaped. Alan stared at the blood splatters on my pantyhose, and in smooth downward motions, he stroked his tie with the delicacy one might use to pet a rare Persian cat. He then abruptly



flipped his tie briskly, yet carefully enough to advertise Armani. "From Princeton," he clarified.

"Nice to meet you," I said, self-conscious about my appearance. Why is he the only one standing? And so close to me.

"It's a pleasure to meet you too," Alan replied. "Where are you from?"

"Texas," I said as I looked across at the closely packed interns already seated at the enormous shiny boardroom table. I must have been the last one there, but luckily there were no JP Morgan representatives to note it.

"I've never met anyone from Texas," Alan replied.

"Me neither," another intern said, tapping her JP Morgan pen. "I don't think I've been friends with anyone south of Pennsylvania." Seriously?

"So you went to school close to home?" Alan asked.

"Yes," I answered. "Isn't anyone else from Texas?" I asked hopefully, feeling an urgent need to belong. Were we told to only wear black? I don't remember them writing that in our welcome letter.

"And you went where?" Alan asked, ignoring my question.

"UT Austin," I said. After seeing vacant stares, I remembered I was no longer in Texas. "University of Texas."

"That's a good school," Alan said, nodding his head. He turned around to face the others, who started to join him in nodding.

"Oh yes, UT is a great school," another intern informed me.

"So you must have a good GPA?" suggested an intern who had her hair pulled back in a tight bun and wore a black cameo brooch that reminded me of my grandmother.

I shrugged my shoulders and smiled politely. "Don't we all?" might sound too obnoxious.

"So, Nina," Alan asked in a talk-show-host tone, "what year are you?"

"I'm a freshman," I said, unaware that I might be the only one.

"How did you get here?" one guy in an all-black suit at the far end of the table demanded.

"I just interviewed," I responded.

"Interviewed through connections?" Alan suggested.

"No," I said. "Through recruiters." Why so many questions? I already had my interview.

"You don't even have a Texas accent!" the guy at the far end of the table said as he stroked his chin and squinted his eyes.

"Hey, I thought everyone from Texas had big blond hair. Were you born in Texas?"

"Born and raised," I said, wanting to be proud. "I'm from Houston. It's a big city with all different kinds of people," I said, hoping he wouldn't press it any further so I could avoid the whole "you don't look Indian" conversation. No need to stand out even more.

I only had four suits, just short of one for each day, and two pairs of shoes for the whole summer. I'd already devised a schedule as to when to wear each suit so that my shortage would not be so obvious. My Texas friends said no one would know the difference, but it was already clear that these people would. My full polyester houndstooth TJ Maxx suit stood out like sweatpants at a wedding.

I sat down at the far end of the board table, where interns mingled, talking ner-

vously to one another, trying to look busy, as we all anxiously waited to be greeted by a JP Morgan representative. To my right were three Yale students talking about their operations professor and to my left were two Dartmouth students reminiscing about their annual Polar Bear Swim. I rummaged through the Kmart briefcase my parents had bought me as an “our daughter is going to Wall Street!” gift. I was about to take out my binder before I realized that some might find the plastic burnt orange folder out of place on the table neatly lined with Italian leather notebooks.

Exhausted by the long morning, I leaned my forehead, which I had carefully waxed the previous night, into my cupped right hand. I stared past all the eyes and Armani ties and focused on the three enormous paintings that hung on the wall. Each was a six-foot-by-six-foot monochromatic canvas—one red, one orange, one yellow. How odd for them to be in this room; they belonged to the Texas warmth. I hoped to meet some friendly Southern faces soon, even though just weeks ago I’d been eager to break away from them in search of something new and exciting.

Sitting at the boardroom table, I thought back to the job fair in Texas, where I spoke with a JP Morgan recruiter who was hiring a few juniors for jobs in New York City. Assuming I was a junior, she enthusiastically described the challenging positions in vibrant New York City. She sensed my eagerness and was disappointed to find out that I was a freshman.

“This is really out of the question,” she said. “Come back in two years.”

I followed up by reading *The House of Morgan*, *J.P. Morgan: The Financier as Collector*, and *How to Read the Wall Street Journal for Pleasure and for Profit*. Money and prestige? I was sold. I sent the recruiter an essay explaining why I was as capable as any junior. “It’s less about my specific finance knowledge and more about my ability to thrive in a fast-paced, frenetic environment. With my natural curiosity and unparalleled determination, I have no doubt I can do this just as well as a junior.” She replied that in the past they had only hired freshmen who attended Ivy League schools and had family connections. After her session, she said to me, “Let me see what I can do.” After a month, an offer showed up in my mailbox. I was the only freshman in the department hired that year.

In due time, I found out that my fellow interns were mostly from Harvard, Wharton, and Yale. I was entirely unfamiliar with many of the other schools’ names, including Brown, Amherst, and University of Pennsylvania. But I would learn that these names were clearly as important as JP Morgan and Morgan Stanley.

My first impression of my fellow JP Morgan interns was as startling as theirs of me. Initially they judged me harshly since I wasn’t one of them. But I’d learn soon that it wasn’t personal. Most of them were used to being around people just like them, and so their natural tendency was to box outsiders into categories before they could get to know them better. Once I got to know them, I met several with whom I got along well, but only during the workday, mostly over lunch at JP Morgan’s free cafeteria. After one dinner with this money-is-no-object crowd, I learned that this was where the real bonding took place, but I couldn’t afford it. Our evening started at Harry’s, a café and steakhouse and a self-described “Wall Street institution.” Once I saw that most of the entrées were well over twenty dollars, I opted for an appetizer and purposely drank only tap water even though multiple bottles of



Perrier and wine were ordered for our table of twenty. When the bill arrived, a guy at the far end shouted, “A hundred and thirty dollars a person.” “I didn’t even drink,” I announced in shock. The intern next to me said, “I only drank two glasses of wine, but let’s not make this complicated.” “Yeah,” another fellow intern agreed. This was my first lesson: In these crowds bills would be split evenly—not like the Texan practice where the bill is passed around and each person pays his or her own portion. While everyone else headed to a dance club with a thirty-dollar cover, I went home.

My JP Morgan team was small—two women and three men—mostly older, senior officers who analyzed operational processes. None of them was your stereotypical banker. They’d worked in more frenetic divisions of the bank and then moved on to this more analytical, almost academic group. They valued their personal lives and were eager to get home to their families before 9:00 p.m. I was their first intern, and they were determined to make sure I had a good experience. They paired me with a mentor in another group, with whom I’d meet weekly to make sure my experience was going well. They were impressed by my ambition and charmed by my innocence. Peter, the head of the group, told me that he’d worked there for twenty-five years, and he was amused when I blurted out, “That’s before I was even born,” mistakenly thinking he’d feel like an expert rather than just “old.” Almost immediately after I arrived, there was a tickertape parade to celebrate the Rangers’ winning the Stanley Cup. I stood at the window in awe for hours as more than twenty tons of paper snowed down from our Wall Street skyscrapers. Peter laughed as he watched me frantically run between floors to see the parade from all angles. In moments like this, New York’s inconveniences of no free Coke refills or easy-to-find public restrooms vanished. That day, I announced gleefully, confident that I was now part of history, “I can’t imagine anyone would want to live anywhere other than New York!”

While my group at JP Morgan considered me a young dynamo, I still had to work on fine-tuning myself in networking situations. Early on in the summer, we were at a lunch event. Three interns were invited to the top floor, to the elite private dining room available only to a select group of senior bankers. We were surrounded by walls of windows that left us with no place to hide. We towered over Wall Street, reducing it to the width of an Excel spreadsheet cell. The dining room was filled with artwork. Behind me sat a large horse sculpture from the second-century Eastern Han dynasty. Our host, Mr. Stevens, the head of one of the bank’s major divisions, informed us that we came at a good time since the Louvre had just returned several of JP Morgan’s works.

I was relieved when Mr. Stevens steered the conversation from art to the firm’s history and future strategy, since I had done a lot of extra reading about JP Morgan. For the other interns, it was expected that they, as the top students in their economics classes, would work at the top Wall Street firms. For me, this internship was a chance of a lifetime that I couldn’t screw up. I could hear my dad reminding me, “A solid American job, with good benefits. Plus, prestige. Be loyal to them!”

“One of the conversations we as senior managers are having,” Mr. Stevens began, “is how to take advantage of the potential repeal of the Glass-Steagall Act. Now, you are all too young to know about the 1933 regulation, but loosening it could have a major impact on the banking industry.”

The other interns stared at him, waiting for him to explain the act, but I jumped in. “The current regulation is far too strict and can be loosened without compromising the

safety of consumers' deposits." I paused, taking a moment to explain to the other interns, "The act restricts commercial and investment banks' affiliations, and loosening restrictions will allow banks to offer a much broader range of services."

Mr. Stevens and I debated the issue back and forth, dominating the conversation. I was at my peak by the time my poached pear with champagne cream and lavender shortbread arrived.

"So," I went on excitedly, "do y'all see . . ."

Before I could finish, Mr. Stevens choked on his port wine and spurted it onto his napkin. "Wow!" he said, "I didn't know y'all really said that." He shook the entire table with a sudden thunderous guffaw. On command, the other two interns followed. Between Mr. Stevens's lulls, each intern would try to give out the loudest hoot, rocking the table, eager to be the best supporter. Mr. Stevens stomped his foot and let out a piercing scream, which attracted all the other diners, who were now jealous of our table's fun. To be part of the team, I too joined in their laughter. But as they watched each other, I looked down at the champagne sauce spilling out of my violently joggled pear.

Mr. Stevens stopped as abruptly as he began, and, following protocol, our last chuckle was in unison with his. He took a sip of his port and looked at me. "Sorry, go on and ask your question."

After we left the dining hall another intern patted my back sympathetically, leaned in, and whispered, "Nina, why did you do that to yourself?"

With the exception of Mr. Stevens, I'd learn that my team at JP Morgan was much more tolerant of differences than other bankers at the company. But I only had to slip up at a few events like this to learn very quickly what to lose—anything Southern or middle class. Luckily, I was a quick learner. It was the same skill that made me popular in high school—copying other people's behavior to fit in. Since my friendly Southern demeanor could easily be interpreted as flirting in this emotionless atmosphere, I lost it. I used the right lingo, like "i-banking" and "B-school." At the close of a phone call, I now said "take care" instead of "talk to you later." I began talking much faster and with a more serious tone that commanded attention. I walked the halls with purpose. And my "middle-America" habit of happily eating at chains like Olive Garden or TGI Friday's was quickly scrapped. The small dangling pearl earrings and the few more suits I invested in enabled me to look as much like them as possible. At the time, all this felt like quite an adjustment for me, but I had no idea how small an adjustment it would be until I gave up so much more to fit in at Morgan Stanley.

By the time I started my second summer internship at Morgan Stanley, my junior summer, I was much more polished. It was easier to impress this Wall Street crowd once I had a better idea of what to hide. I could have returned to JP Morgan, but Morgan Stanley had started a minority program a few years earlier that provided a scholarship in addition to my salary. Plus, Morgan Stanley's investment banking division was considered stronger than JP Morgan's. After an intensive application process and many long grueling interviews, I was accepted into the Morgan Stanley Scholars Program.

Like JP Morgan, Morgan Stanley spent an extraordinary amount of time wooing



their interns. While JP Morgan focused on treating us to Broadway shows, Yankees games, and elaborate meals in order to seduce us with a certain lifestyle, Morgan Stanley matched these fringe benefits and then took it to another level. As corporate events, we took field trips to our executives' summer and fall mansions. Their vast homes were outfitted with golf courses, tennis courts, vineyards, and nearly Olympic-size pools. There, we met their families, who seemed to dwell on all their other homes around the globe that they tried so desperately to visit. They would explain how little time they spent at this mansion while showing us pictures of their Italy and Fiji homes, "which are much bigger than this one." Like skilled game-show hosts, they played to our hunger.

I was in awe. Everything I was experiencing was foreign to me. It was as if someone had flung me into one of my grandmother's soap operas, but unlike her, I didn't believe Americans really lived like this. I found myself looking at their children, wondering what it was like to eat fresh-baked chocolate-filled croissants for breakfast instead of Pop-Tarts; have your own nanny to treat like a servant; and spend weekends ordering banana splits with chocolate, vanilla, and strawberry ice cream at country clubs that didn't allow you to wear shorts. With every new place we went, I knew I was out of my element, but my curiosity and excitement for the extravagance I wouldn't see otherwise kept me hungry.

At the time, most of us didn't realize we were being sold something. We believed what they chanted: "You're here because you are the best of the best."

It was irrelevant to my teammates or officers that I was a Morgan Stanley Scholar, since most of them weren't familiar with the program. To them, I was just another intern. Through an extremely competitive process, the Scholars Program chose about twenty minorities in the country and provided us with a two-year scholarship as long as we interned with them. As Scholars, we got to meet senior officers for lunches over the summer, most notably the chairman of Morgan Stanley. There weren't many University of Texas alumni available for networking, so Morgan Stanley became my alumni register.

The few senior-level minorities had been at Morgan Stanley for most of their careers and had learned to conform to the rigid corporate culture. Their years spent fighting to succeed left many of them hardened, yet they realized the need to offer a hand to those who would follow them. At the beginning of the summer they collected us for a meeting in conference room 32A. "As a minority you will be scrutinized. And if you are a woman, expect ten times the challenge. If they drink, you should drink less. Don't think you can do whatever they do. They look at you differently than they do themselves. You will be required to prove yourself. You DO NOT get the benefit of the doubt. One slipup can cost you years of hard work." Their faces were fixed with stern grimaces, but you could see in their eyes that they were speaking from painful experience. We interns looked at one another with fearful brown eyes: Are they sure they want us here?

During one of our lunches, one intern made the mistake of complaining to a senior officer about the cafeteria food. This prompted another collective meeting so we could all witness his public humiliation by one of the senior minority officers. "These are not the people you whine to about mundane things. Use every minute you have wisely. And remember, if one of us looks bad, we all look bad!" she announced, furious that she had to spend more time stressing something that she'd already made evident. It was lesson enough for me to carefully script what I said. Before we had lunch with the chairman, there was another meeting where we were groomed with rehearsed conversations. As I looked around

the room I noticed that a good number of the minority Scholars could pass as white. I'd heard officers say, "We get so many bright people during interviews that it's less about their résumé and more about a good corporate fit." Did lighter skin help with the good corporate fit? I wasn't dark-skinned enough to be asked, "Did you grow up in America?" like other Indians were. And officers seemed to be comfortable saying many unflattering things about minorities in front of me, as if I were one of them. This voyeurism was new to me: In Texas it was clear I was a minority and wouldn't be privy to such comments.

I still remember the chairman's charismatic smile as he welcomed us into the formal dining room. "Tell me all about your experience here at Morgan Stanley," he said. "I'm dying to hear about you all. Please, just relax and be yourself!" But we were all too scared to ask the questions we really wanted to ask: Why do we have to be like everyone else to fit in? Why are you so much friendlier than everyone else? Were you once like them? Though the chairman was genuine, his casual demeanor read like a trick. We minorities weren't naïve enough to slip up and ask embargoed questions. Instead, the half-white, half-Spanish guy started off in a shaky voice asking one of our scripted, approved questions: "Given talk of a potential merger, what is your vision for retail banking?"

The chairman was the only powerful person I remember who seemed interested in knowing how he could make our experience better rather than in telling us what we needed to change to fit into their culture. He even looked like he was interested in what we had to say on the topic. To him, we were a gesture toward diversity; the burden fell on those who organized the program to justify its existence. The Scholars Program was quite new and was just making its way. While few knew about it, those who did were aware of its prestige. Even today, the program is still going strong.

During the summer, most of the minorities hung out together, partly because we had more in common: immigrant parents or middle-class lives. Maybe twenty percent of our class was composed of minorities, which was considered a lot, since there were hardly any senior officers who were minorities or women. At the end of the summer, one of my fellow Scholars told one of the program directors that she didn't have a good experience because she couldn't deal with the condescending way analysts, especially women analysts, were treated. She went on to tell me about her conversation with that director: "Instead of asking me what made my experience bad, she just stared at me with annoyance. She may as well have just screamed, 'You are so ungrateful! Do you know what I had to put up with fifteen years ago? You are lucky to be here. No one singled me out and offered me a hand up.'" But this Scholar, along with many others, wouldn't get an invitation to return for a full-time job. In fact, some of the Scholars didn't perform well, but it was hard not to notice that several of them were the more outspoken ones who tried to change the culture rather than conform. Again, I made this brutal cut.

It wasn't until my full-time experience in corporate finance that I began to understand why women and minorities didn't seem to stay in the department very long. It often felt like there was more to give up than to gain.

My education as an intern soon turned into the real thing. A five-week training course provided the bridge between that world and the world of a full-time employee at Morgan Stanley. All the Morgan Stanley analysts worldwide—about two hundred bankers fresh out



of college—gathered together for this training, but only about half would stay in New York City for the real Wall Street experience, while the rest would disperse throughout the world.

The three of us—Luis, Michael, and myself—would join a group that conducted major financial transactions (initial public offers, mergers, and acquisitions) for the country's largest bluechip companies. We interacted with CEOs and CFOs from the most prestigious corporations. Competing for groups was difficult, but my performance during my prior year's internship landed me in this group. I was thrilled when I was told that I performed so well that I could choose any group I wanted. However, I didn't realize until I started working in the corporate finance division that I'd be the only female in a group of about twenty-five men.

Even though I had the extensive advantage of my varied internships, I still felt a little threatened by Michael. I knew that each group had an unspoken star analyst and I had a hunch that he was the chosen one. His credentials were all too perfect compared to my Southern public school pedigree. Since the age of ten, he had been groomed by his parents to fit into investment banking culture. His upbringing included a prep school whose alumni would cringe at anyone who referred to it as a "school" rather than an "academy" and required students to wear their shield on their cuff links; tuna tartare appetizers; a deft backspin onto the green; friends whose names ended in III or IV; and a place in Yale's most prestigious secret society. Every evening by 6:00 p.m. the vodka would be adequately chilled for his parents' gimlets, and after dinner they would all go into the study and debate the issues raised by that morning's New York Times. Given this education, Michael knew to laugh before a superior even made the joke and how to discuss a 1966 Balvenie single malt's complexity. When people mentioned they were spending the weekend at their summer home in Bar Harbor, Nantucket, or Martha's Vineyard, Michael knew to befriend them immediately, whereas to me, these names didn't register at all—they sounded more like hokey generic grocery store brands.

To top off his credentials, Michael was as good looking as he was smooth. Many of our colleagues found his face as attractive as his chest—a combination we all agreed was hard to find. Typically, you get one or the other, and at Morgan Stanley this was definitely the case. He highlighted his lacrosse player's chest by wearing thin white dress shirts without an undershirt, revealing just enough to confirm his nipples had a healthy pink shine.

Our second colleague, Luis, was from Johns Hopkins. He had studied in American International schools and spent his childhood in gated expatriate compounds around the world. Since his parents were both diplomats, he had no distinct sense of home. From his heavy-handed, spicy cologne and unique mix-and-match suit style, I got the feeling he spent a good amount of time in Europe. It was a challenge for him to be conservative in the office, especially if an officer was around, but at heart he was a metrosexual, spending extra attention on riding the line between aristocracy and Eurotrash. He was hired by one of our nostalgic senior officers, Ken, who wanted to relive his college years at Johns Hopkins. Like Michael, Luis would make it a priority at work to enjoy the luxuries it afforded while making sure his friends remembered where he worked. His thin face and overly visible cheekbones were remedied by his carefully styled hair, but his emaciated body was hardly saved by his stylishly loose suits. Growing up in Texas, I had learned to appreciate the bodies of linebackers. In sunny practice fields, they worked out so much that their efforts made them

look bloated. Early on I knew I never wanted to see Luis without clothes. His jutting pelvic bones would soon discipline my eyes to not wander any lower than his shoulder blades.

Lack of attraction aside, there was something about Luis's lack of identity that connected with me. He had picked up bits and pieces from all the countries where he'd lived, but he was hard-pressed to settle on a hometown; he couldn't pinpoint a place where he belonged. In New York, I was considered a Texan. In Texas, I was an Indian. In India, I was a Persian. All the labeling felt isolating. Not everyone needs to fit in, but I wanted to. My family believed in an almost extinct ancient Persian religion, Zoroastrianism, which has fewer than two hundred thousand followers left in the world. There was still a small population of Zoroastrians in modern-day Iran, but they were culturally very different from our Persian-Indian community, which had spent the last thousand years in India. When I tried to get a visual feel for where we came from through BBC documentaries or research online, I'd find ancient ruins in modern-day Iran and the former Soviet republics—nothing that satisfied my curiosity. Not having a real sense of where I fit in, I tended to blend into new environments, hoping to find somewhere to belong.

After five weeks of crantinis, Tahitian crème brûlées, and front-row Rent tickets, we Morgan Stanley full-time analysts found it hard to believe that we had all been college students just a couple months ago. The courtship was over and the transition from our training to working was abrupt—from late nights of clubbing to late nights of number crunching. Soon we would begin our long, two-year analyst program.

Early in our training, Michael, Luis, and I stopped by our new group to mingle with our numerous soon-to-be bosses. "Training is secondary," they assured us. "Just have a great time! Drink and enjoy life as much as you can," they warned.

"Sweet!" Michael said, lifting his hand to Luis for a high five. He took a moment to pat down one of Luis's hairs. They always kept an eye on each other's sticky hairdos. "Is that for real?" Michael asked, trying to confirm that we didn't have to take it seriously.

"We have tests," I said, tightly grasping my Morgan Stanley training manual.

"Trust me," our future colleague, only a year ahead of us, said. "It doesn't matter."

"Are you sure?" I clarified. "I don't want to screw up."

The veteran looked at his co-worker, and they laughed at the conscientious novice. "Have fun!"

Almost every night of our training was spent at a dinner or a party hosted by the firm. That night we were at Au Bar. A place that described itself as "more than a nightclub—an institution," Au Bar looked like an old castle library; its main clientele consisted of nouveau-riche Russians who sat at bottle-service tables dropping at least three hundred dollars a sitting. Huge mirrors and European paintings covered the walls. The large club was divided into several smaller, cavern-like rooms in an attempt to create multiple sitting areas with an intimate setting similar to a living room. It was decorated with Victorian flowered velvet couches, sprawling Persian rugs, chandeliers, and countless fireplaces. High arched ceilings were supported by roman columns, and the walls were full of rare books on tall mahogany bookshelves. In a forced attempt to create a sensual aura, the lighting was so dim you had to squint to see; I had come to learn that this was a New York—chic trademark.

A dozen half-drunk dirty Chopin martinis and French cognacs were sitting at our table. Most people kept forgetting where their drinks were, so they would return again and again to the open bar to order another two or three. Women were more cautious: Fewer



women were drunk than men. I was overly careful. At the University of Texas we were instructed to politely decline drinking at any meeting, party, or business anything.

“It is a test!” the career services office representative, Ms. Spencer, warned us with her bright red roller-curled hair and slight drawl. “It is always a test. They will try and make you feel comfortable and assure you it is okay,” she said as she paused to look around the classroom of unseasoned future corporate executives. She explained all this in the same cautionary tone we Morgan Stanley interns would get from officers prepping us to meet with the chairman. “But,” she went on, “just like adding salt to your food before you taste it, and having your fingernails too long, or worse, too short,” she railed, “it is a test!”

But after a few internships in investment banking, I was acclimated and knew not to fall into the “no thanks” trap. Having already learned these lessons, I was now an advisor to those who were about to begin banking cold turkey. At Au Bar, Scott followed me around like a curious monkey. Like Michael, Scott had graduated from Yale, but he had none of Michael’s airs. These two were some of the better-looking guys in our analysts’ class. Scott was naturally striking, while Michael was a mass-market product. At first sight, they were similar—copper skin, bright blue eyes, and light brown wavy hair with blond highlights. However, Michael’s glowing skin was airbrushed on by technicians at Bliss Spa, his eyes were enhanced by FreshLook two-week disposables, and his hair was highlighted and waved quarterly. If you were standing close enough, you would choose Scott, though they were both second-glance guys.

If you knew Michael well enough, you would learn that he used his charming “buddy” and “pal” labels to flatter. Everyone who could get him anywhere was a “close buddy” and anyone who had potential was a “pal.” On our first day of training we got an Analyst Facebook, a spiral-bound notebook with each analyst’s picture, background information, and personal interests. Morgan Stanley copied the concept from schools like Phillips Exeter Academy and Harvard. Michael listed his favorite magazine as *GQ*. Next to most, especially Michael, Scott came off as naïve. He looked white despite the fact that his mother was half Cherokee. Though they were wealthy, it was her idea to teach him the value of money by lending him tuition for college that he would eventually have to pay back at the prime interest rate discounted by two percent. I related to Scott. He asked all the questions I wanted to ask when I started, though I didn’t have anyone I trusted to ask.

“So did anyone scream at you?” Scott asked me.

I stared at his thin black leather strand bracelet covered in red and yellow beads. It reminded me of jewelry sold on the Drag in Austin’s outdoor market. I could hardly see it, yet it was visible enough to show that he wasn’t familiar with this environment.

“What’s that?” I asked.

“Oh, thanks,” he said, smiling as if I’d complimented him. “I worked for a program teaching future environmental concerns, and one of my students gave it to me,” he said, so caught up in his fond memories that he needed human contact. He reached over and touched my arm and said, “I haven’t taken it off since he made it.”

“Sounds like an interesting program,” I said, touched that he had something he was passionate about but concerned that he didn’t understand how quickly officers would label him. “But the bracelet looks a little voodoo,” I warned. The word voodoo was what my summer associate used to describe my Persian necklace. “Be careful with that,” my associate said helpfully. “It looks like a marijuana symbol, and we wouldn’t want our clients to think

we condone that.”You’d often see colleagues policing each other, hoping to save one another from later embarrassments in front of senior officers.

“Voodoo?” he said, crinkling his nose so that his freckles squelched each other. “What does voodoo look like?”

“Like that,” I said, pointing at his bracelet, trying to help him but not exactly sure how to explain the requirement of conformity that was expected if you wanted to do well. “You don’t want people to get the wrong idea about you. Officers really want us to look very corporate,” I warned. “Anyway, I haven’t had anyone yell at me, but I’ve heard stories. If they scream at you, they’re doing it because they want you to get better. Last summer I didn’t use the right font on one of our presentations to our clients. We only use Times New Roman 21 for the headings—memorize that.” I paused and took a long slow gulp of whiskey. “I’d been there pretty late that night. The head of our group took my presentation and circled all of the headings and left me a note saying, ‘This is not a small mistake.’ At first I got really upset about it, but then I realized the importance of Morgan Stanley as a brand. You have to be perfect here, but that’s part of the challenge.” As I spoke, I nodded my head, surprised at how I had already come up with stories to justify all the actions I had originally found appalling.

As I spoke to Scott, I was trying to convince myself of everything I was saying. I looked down with a smile, distracted by the clashing powder blue and maroon Persian rug. I looked as if I was engrossed in thought, but I couldn’t control my relief as I watched Scott anxiously play with his bracelet. I could already imagine officers ripping him to shreds because of his polite demeanor; the bracelet would just be an excuse for them to attack him. I looked up and went on: “Over the summer, I worked in capital markets on the trading floor, where the desks are lined up right next to each other like a cafeteria table. A senior officer sat next to me who was always getting upset. He would lift his phone receiver and hurl it across the trading floor at the slightest frustration while screaming, ‘Fucking idiot!’ The people in the row in front of him quickly vacated their desks whenever he got on the phone, but the row in back soon learned to jump up and get out of the way too, since the phone’s cord might boomerang back. After a while, most of us just looked up when he started screaming, to make sure that we weren’t in his line of fire. Over time, you just got used to it. You’ll learn,” I said, glancing at his gaping mouth. But I was torn between my calm explanations and the twinges in my gut. The more money people brought in, the more the company seemed to tolerate their bad behavior. They became invincible, and they knew it.

“Although I’m sure this doesn’t happen often, this happened to me last summer, so I should warn you. There was a bomb threat in the building. They announced it on the speaker several times, and they asked everyone to evacuate immediately. My advice is, don’t go. It sounds crazy. At first, you panic and want to leave. But you need to watch everyone else’s lead. Almost no one left on my floor. Business went on as usual. A pregnant woman left and so did another intern. That intern wasn’t invited to return full-time. You just want to watch yourself because they are watching you.”

Michael staggered over to our table in a drunken-looking state. “Oh my God!” he said, “The bar just gave me two glasses of Cristal Roederer. Nina,” he said, sitting close to me on the couch and offering me a glass, “celebrate with me.”

“That’s okay,” I said, shaking my hands in front of me so that he couldn’t force a



glass on me.

“You don’t like it?” he said, sounding as offended as if he’d harvested the grapes himself. He leaned his elbow on the headrest of the couch and turned his face toward me. His stare was accompanied by a smirk that he must have thought was irresistible. “Ninaaa,” he whined.

“I just don’t want any right now,” I said, looking over at Scott and raising my eyebrows. I had to balance looking like a bore and looking too wild. I knew not to say I had never tasted such a champagne or, worse, to admit that I had never heard of it.

“I’ll take it,” Scott said, trying to pacify his drunken colleague.

“You have to have it,” Michael said, handing me the glass. “Let’s get Luis and make a toast to our group’s new analysts.”

“Luis!” Michael screamed several times. Finally, he got up and went to get Luis off the dance floor.

Two of our colleagues walked by—Daniel and Bryan. We had hung out a few times the night before, and Bryan had made a much better impression on me than Daniel. I couldn’t place it, but there was something about Daniel I didn’t trust. There was a consistent nervousness to him that made me feel like he was hiding something. Earlier in the week, I’d heard him crunching loudly on chicken bones during one of our dinners. It didn’t bother me because when I was little my mom would crack meat bones open and tell my sisters and me that it was a treat to suck out the marrow. But when I looked up at Daniel, he gave me the weirdest look, as if I’d caught him red-handed.

“Cheers,” Bryan said, holding out his bright blue drink. We all haphazardly clinked our glasses.

“Nina,” Daniel said, pointing his glass toward me, “we were just talking to one of the officers in your group.”

“Which one?” I asked. “There are about fifteen of them.”

“I know,” Daniel said, “and they’re all good old boys. I’m pretty sure every officer over forty who’s spent his whole life at Morgan Stanley is in your group. You’re screwed! With those two clowns,” Daniel said as he laughed and looked toward the dance floor at Michael and Luis, “and that many officers generating a bunch of bullshit work.” He paused and shook his head. “Just so you know, most teams have about four officers. I expect that the next time we see you will be in about two years.”

“Yeah, that schmoozer in your group,” Bryan said, moving his head in Michael’s direction, “thinks he’s a celebrity here. And I’m sorry to say that even though he’s not Rockefeller’s son, he’ll get away with it because he is crazy connected. I hung out with him last night and he knows everyone. There must be one of those guys in every class, because we had the same kind of dude at Merrill last summer.” Bryan shook his head. “It sucks because the rest of us will be working our asses off. Didn’t you intern here last summer?” he asked me.

“Yeah,” I responded as I shifted in my seat, suddenly much less confident as I realized how little I knew compared to them. “But I was in capital markets. Corporate finance sounds like it will be different.”

“Take capital markets and raise it to the tenth power. Don’t worry, I’m screwed too,” Daniel said. “I’ve got a real celebrity on my team,” he said, pointing to the son of one of Morgan Stanley’s biggest clients. “While he’s off at dinners with the Kennedy family, I’ll

be covering his ass.”

I'd later learn that they spread out the celebrity kids across groups since it was understood that they wouldn't do much work and the other analysts would have to pick up the slack.

“I interned in corporate finance at Merrill last summer,” Bryan said. “Money trumps everything. Because corporate finance officers have the relationship with the client, the company lets them get away with murder. If they lose the officer, they may lose the client's millions.” Bryan looked at Daniel and they both laughed.

“Cheers,” Daniel shouted in a loud, sarcastic voice as they both walked away.

I let out my breath after realizing I'd hardly been inhaling while Daniel spoke. I was losing my confidence, and the more Daniel said, the more I realized that even though I had interned before, this corporate finance department switch was more than I had banked on. I could feel Scott staring at me with a small smile. “Scared?” he asked.

“A little,” I said, even though I looked at him with eyes that were clearly fearful.

Michael finally came back with Luis, who was sweat-sopped. “Oh, man,” Luis said, still on a dancing high, “this music is outstanding. I think I heard it in Ibiza.” He unbuttoned his fitted Euro shirt, revealing his thin, freshly waxed chest, and took a deep breath. “Seriously, why are you pulling me off the dance floor? We should be dancing,” Luis said, thrusting his emaciated hips from side to side.

“Because,” Michael said, “we're drinking to our future!”

“Michael, we are going to have tons of work to do,” I said, laughing at his idea of fun.

“Oh my God, it is going to be so intense,” Luis added. He wiped his forehead and looked down as if just thinking about it exhausted him. “Did you guys even understand that LBO model they showed us today? Because I have no idea,” he said, swiping his hands across each other, then opening them wide with so much enthusiasm he looked like a baseball referee calling safe. “None!” he reiterated.

“We aren't going to learn anything now. We've got to just hit the ground running when the time comes,” said Michael.

“I didn't even get that Treasury method stuff they were doing,” Luis said. “Does the Treasury really buy back the shares?”

“Yeah, I pretty much got that stuff,” Michael said. “They don't really buy it back. I'll show you later. Don't worry about this now. We are going to have such a great time over the next couple of years. My secret-society buddies totally helped me out during the interview process. They'll make sure we're taken care of,” he said as he slapped both of us on the back. “You guys, we're going to have such a sweet time! This is so amazing. Luis, did you see that they have Cristal Roederer?”

“No way, dude. I love that shit,” Luis replied.

“Here, take Nina's. She's not drinking it.”

“Seriously!” Luis said. “Nina, are you okay?” he asked and looked at me as if taking note of my early symptoms of insanity.

“I'm fine,” I said. “I just didn't want to mix it with whiskey.”

Luis took a long sip as he used his other hand to stroke his chest. His Barneys shirt clung to his sweaty totem-pole figure. While looking at Michael, he nodded his head and said, “Niiiiice.”



Ken, one of the VPs from our group, came around with a tray of tequila shots. I knew I shouldn't turn them down since those who did were silently eyed as non-team players. "These are my new kids!" Ken announced loudly as he approached the three of us.

"Come on. We're the toughest! Three shots for each of you!

"Luis," Ken said, caught up in a college drinking memory, "do people still go to Charles Village Pub? Do they still have that big sign behind the bar?"

"I don't think so," Luis replied slowly while he considered lying to appease.

"I'll be back," Ken said as if forgetting he'd asked a question. "Only take two tequila shots," he instructed us. "I'm going to go get Goldschläger and Jägermeister."

I looked down at my watch and tried to remember what time we had class the next day. I knew my limits—five gin and tonics or three vodka martinis or two and a half whiskeys straight up or three tequila shots before I would buzz. I made a mental note to check the alcohol content of Goldschläger and Jägermeister, which I hadn't planned on drinking. Estimating, I tried to translate how many gin and tonics would equal two tequilas. As I calculated, Ken interrupted me.

"Nina, can you handle it?" he asked, touching my shoulder in a fatherly way.

"Of course," I answered, embarrassed at being singled out.

"Ken," Michael called out after his last shot. "Can you get a picture of us?" he asked as he ran his fingers through his crusted hair.

Luis nervously looked across the room at a mirror and squinted, trying to make sure his hair was styled properly. "Oh God, I've been dancing for hours, Michael. I'm drenched in sweat," he complained, giving himself leeway for an unflattering shot. Luis often got away with comments that most American guys wouldn't have, reminding us of his Euro origins, which demanded that men have style.

"So what. Smile!" Michael demanded, taking out his new palm-size handheld camera. I sat in the middle and put my arms around their necks.

Michael pointed across the room in the mirror's reflection, "Hey, look, we're a perfect team!"

"Okay," Ken said. "Say MORGAN STANLEY!" On command, all three of us smiled. Even though I tried to fight it, I soon felt the alcohol. My head grew dizzy and my body slowly started to go numb. In unison, we screamed out, "Morgan Stanleeeeeeeeeeyyyyyy!"



*Lake Champlain*





*Portsmouth*

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# BLOOD

So you would deny yourself your heart  
He asked  
If you fell in love with a non-Native?

Well, yes.  
I'd have to  
Not for me but for my unborn babies  
And their babies, who will grow to be women  
And too, will have to choose

These numbers  
    Five thirty-seconds  
    Seven thirty-seconds  
Fail  
To sing the songs  
To speak the language

These numbers  
    Thirty-five sixty-fourths  
    Fifty-three sixty-fourths  
Fail  
To reflect our hearts  
To capture our essence

They are white forced dilution  
We must do fractions before we multiply  
Calculate the blood of your grandchildren's children  
Selfishness doubles the weight of your daughter's burden

It's not about race  
It's about legality  
A right to the roll  
A right to the land

Native hearts torn  
Blood  
Love or legitimacy  
Passion or preservation



## ANPEWI (SUN)

Befriend her, they said  
She can hurt or help you  
Raise hands open, palms up  
Love the pain but long for pity

Be strong.

Dance	for sickness
Suffer	with a smile
Bleed	to give thanks
Sweat	until you can't
But above all	pray

For the people.

Cold dirt and dew kiss bare feet before the June sun rises  
Cedar smoke purifies, suffocates tired lungs  
Four hard, beautiful days sacrificed the Old Way

September brings college, clocks, concrete  
Prairie breeze traded for painted brick  
Noise.

Pressure to succeed, achieve  
On a bench in the street watching money creep by, staring

Quick tempo, selfish world  
Cold shadows so far from home  
Alone.  
Eyes to the sky

Anpewi,  
My friend.

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# SOME MORAL ASPECTS OF SOCIAL WELFARE IN AMERICA: A HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

JULIAN FENN

*“Here is the case of the woman employed in the manufacturing department of a Broadway house. It stands for a hundred like her own. She averages three dollars a week. Pays \$1.50 for a room; for breakfast she has a cup of coffee; lunch she cannot afford. One meal a day as her allowance. This woman is young, she is pretty. She has ‘the world before her.’ Is it anything less than a miracle if she is found guilty of nothing worse than the ‘early and improvident marriage’ against which moralists exclaim as one of the prolific causes of the distress of the poor? Almost any door might seem to offer welcome escape from such slavery is this.”*

*-Women’s Work, 1890 (Patterson, pg. 3)*

Trattner defines social welfare as a term that “embraces those Social Security, social service, and health programs, activities, and organizations, public and private, intended partly to promote the well-being of individuals who society felt needed and deserved help” (pg. xix). Understood in this sense, the history of social welfare in America goes back to the country’s very inception, and even before that under Elizabethan colonial law. It is a complex history, involving myriad forces and changes over time that have affected millions of American lives in one way or another. It has been guided by a number of paradigms and motives. One such guiding force has been morality, ground mainly in the traditions of Christianity and natural rights. Moral insights and doctrines have played a large role in creating social welfare institutions and affecting the way poverty and welfare are understood by experts and laymen alike. This paper will explore several ways in which morality has affected social welfare in America. Specifically, it will address: changes in the federal government’s policies and attitudes towards social welfare and the poor; the debate between personal and structural factors in understanding the poor; and the idea of obligations to the fortunate versus the rights of the poor. It will conclude by addressing morality in a broader sense and connecting these facets within the larger framework.

## THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Federal intervention into matters of social welfare has always been a complicated issue with great moral claims and implications. Its history illustrates changes in attitudes and practices concerning the poor, and serves as a good lens through which to understand the history of American social welfare more broadly (and so it is the first issue to be addressed in this paper).

When the United States was founded in the late 18th century, the country was



almost exclusively agrarian and the federal government was nearly non-existent. Life was lived locally. As such, it makes sense that social welfare, (which pertained to the blind, insane, elderly, paupers, and dependent children) was handled at the local level. Based on the Elizabethan poor laws and amended in 1787, the law made the township the administrative unit for welfare with appointed overseers to implement the statute (Trattner, pg. 41). Under this system:

if a needy family had a home and was able to help itself but unable to support itself completely, the overseers might give it an allowance or arrange to pay its bills at the store or its rent. This was called 'home relief' or, if the family got food, rent, or medical care rather than money, 'relief in kind.' If families or individuals were unable to care for themselves or needed supervision (in the case of the mentally disordered, for example), the overseers fitted them into some functioning family unit and paid their host for the service. If there were many such cases, the overseers would seize upon a time when the community was likely to assemble (election day, perhaps) and conduct an auction or 'vendue' to dispose of their charges (Leiby, pg. 41).

In 1824 the County Poorhouse Act shifted the responsibility for public assistance to the counties who began a movement towards the institutionalization of the indigent. Thirty years later, Dorthea Dix convinced Congress to give federal lands to the states for resale in order to pay for said institutions. The measure, however, was vetoed by Franklin Pierce who defended his action in saying "I cannot find any authority in the Constitution for making the federal government the great almoner of public charity throughout the United States," thus setting the precedent that social welfare was not the responsibility of the federal government (a notion later upheld by Grover Cleveland). From there, "practically all legislation touching social welfare—poor relief, health, education, labor, crime, the family—was state legislation" (Trattner, pgs. 66, 202) (Leiby, pgs. 25, 222). Private charity also played a large role during this period.

It was not until 1909, during the so called "progressive" era, that this stance began to change. That year president Taft convened the White House Conference on Dependent Children, which was considered an "about face from the concept elaborated more than a half-century earlier by President Pierce" (Trattner, pg. 202). This conference resulted in the creation of the first federal welfare organization, the Children's Bureau, in 1913 (The United States Social Security Administration). The response by politicians and the public revealed the intense popular notions about federal aid at the time. The Illinois State Medical Society argued that the Bureau "will...be the ruling power in the United States. This bureau, headed by one woman, will become the most despotic influence in the country imposing a yoke that will annually become more unbearable in its crushing burdens" (Trattner, pg. 207). While this obviously took things to the extreme, it illustrates the intensity with which some people wished to keep the federal government out of welfare services, leaving it to the states and localities. Others, however, pushed for greater government involvement, though they were in the minority. In 1912 the National Committee on Charities and Correction demanded, Among other things:

a living wage and industry; minimum wage commissions in each state; and a hour day in a six day week; factory legislation and inspection; legal standards for housing, especially tenements; prohibition of manufacture in the home, that is, sweat shops; legal standards for camps for migratory workers; no wage labor for children under 16; proper accommodation for 'the unemployable' in labor colonies and industrial training for those who could use it; and compensation or insurance for industrial accidents and disease, old-age retirement, and unemployment (Leiby,

pg. 142).

It took the Great Depression to change the minds of the majority. The market crash in 1929 put millions out of work and led to the worst economic conditions in U.S. history. Suddenly, people began to change their stance on federal aid, recognizing that “the relief problem has ceased to be a local one. It is natural in origin [and]...national in scope.’ It needed a national response!” (Trattner, pg. 259). President Hoover, however, stuck to old notions about the role of the government:

“for [Hoover], relief was a moral, not merely an economic, matter; private charity (such as he had distributed in war ravaged Europe) was fine, but public aid, especially from the national government, was a ‘dole’...Hoover opposed federal aid for a variety of reasons. In his opinion, it would delay the natural forces at work to restore prosperity, it impaired the credit and solvency of the government, it stifled voluntary giving, it was inflexible and could not respond to local needs, it established politicized bureaucracies, it undermined free enterprise, it was illegal -- a violation of local responsibility and states’ rights -- and it ultimately endangered democratic government: ‘you cannot extend the mastery of government over the daily lives of the people without at the same time making it the master of their souls and thoughts,’ Hoover declared” (Trattner, pg. 260).

Under his leadership, the masses were left to rely on drastically insufficient local aid, leading to massive poverty and the creation of “Hooverilles” in the nations’ capital and other large cities (hooverilles—history.com).

The big change came in 1933 when Franklin Delano Roosevelt took over the presidency and immediately set to work, throwing the federal government heavily into the business of aid of various types under the auspices of the “New Deal”. His goal was to jumpstart the economy and provide relief for common people like the one who wrote to him, “those in charge of relief have never lain awake at night worrying about unpaid rent, or how to make a few groceries do for the seemingly endless seven days...it is always the people with full stomachs who tell us poor people to keep happy” (Patterson, pg. 51). In “the first hundred days”, Roosevelt put in plenty of work, creating among other things the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), and the Public Works Administration (PWA) in order to put people to work which was deemed better than straight relief (US Government Info—Resources). This was the beginning of a new attitude towards federal relief as “it marked the beginning of a policy of federal aid to the states upon a permanent basis for regular, recurring social work, closing the door on three centuries of the Poor Law and its principles of local responsibility...hence, the American welfare state was born” (Trattner, pg. 276).

And so began a new era. As Patterson points out, “by 1934 FERA (Federal Emergency Relief Administration), CWA (Civil Works Administration), and CCC which employed young men in a variety of forestry and conservation projects, reached nearly 8 million households or 28 million people. This was 22.2% of the population—a high in public welfare for any time in American history” (pg. 56). This, clearly, was a far cry from Hoover’s let-the-market-solve-the-problem approach to the Depression. Roosevelt was not without his own reservations about federal relief, however, leading him to remark in 1935 that, “continued dependence upon relief induces a spiritual and moral disintegration fundamentally destructive to the national fiber. To dole out relief in this way is to administer a narcotic, a subtle destroyer of the human spirit...the federal government must and shall quit this business of relief [to the unemployed]” (Patterson, pg. 58). As such, FEMA was



disbanded, though a permanent equivalent was later introduced (Leiby, pg. 227). Thanks to the passing of the Social Security Act in that same year, Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), the program most closely associated with “welfare”, came into being (Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, HHS). It would go on to be the most controversial and expensive social welfare program in American history. With the coming of Roosevelt, federal responsibility for the welfare of its citizens had become a reality virtually overnight, and it has been to varying degrees ever since.

However, it was WWII, and not the New Deal which eventually pulled America out of the depths of the Depression, putting millions to work in wartime industries and increasing spending substantially. Between 1940 and 1945 the workforce increased by 10.2 million workers reflecting a renewed wartime economy and between 1940 and 1946 the federal budget skyrocketed from \$9 billion to \$64 billion reflecting the blossoming of a vast bureaucracy whose goals included increased welfare services to GI’s and average citizens alike (US Bureau of the Census) (Patterson, pg. 80). Both of these trends would continue after the war, through the remainder of the 1940s and the affluent 1950s as evidenced by a 10% increase in real GDP and a ten fold increase in OASDI (Social Security) and a quadrupling of the number of people on AFDC during that period (GDP-Real United States) (Patterson, pg. 83).

As a result, poverty was largely under the radar until it was “rediscovered” in the early 1960s during Kennedy’s presidency, at a time when the welfare system was under close scrutiny. As was his way, Kennedy was proactive about the changes in welfare and hopeful that it could be improved. In particular, he and his staff promoted programs for rehabilitation, as Patterson writes:

“[Secretary of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare] Abraham Ribicoff especially promoted rehabilitation. America, he wrote Kennedy in 1961, must re-orient ‘the whole approach to welfare from a straight cash handout operation to one in which the emphasis is on rehabilitation of those on relief and prevention ahead of time.’ This cry for rehabilitation also appealed to Kennedy. The needy, the president said, must get more than a ‘relief check... such a check must be supplemented, or in some cases made unnecessary, by positive services and solutions... emphasis must be directed increasingly toward prevention and rehabilitation -- on reducing not only the long-range cost in budgetary terms but the long-range cost in human terms as well” (pg. 127).

Though Kennedy was killed in 1963, his cause was taken up by Lyndon Johnson, who swore to wage a “war against poverty” as the massive civil disorders (stemming largely from inequalities and racism) of the late 1960s reared their ugly heads despite decreasing overall poverty. Among other things, this war meant the creation of Medicaid for all welfare recipients and others that were medically indigent (Leiby, pg. 305). The results of this great experiment, however, were mixed at best. As Trattner put it, “more than any other program of Johnson’s so-called Great Society, the War on Poverty accentuated doubts about the capacity of social science to plan, and government to deliver, ambitious programs for social betterment” (pg. 303).

When Nixon took office in 1969 he shared many of these doubts. He:

“cultivated a popular sentiment, nationalistic, anti-Communist, honoring the conventional religion and proprieties, hostile to what he regarded as an elitist and liberal intellectual establishment that subverted the national interest. In welfare policy this sentiment tended to be moralistic and punitive toward people on public assistance, suspicious of ‘welfare fraud,’ and

racist” (Leiby, pg. 322).

Indeed in his 1971 State of the Union address he called welfare a “monstrous, consuming outrage” (Patterson, pg. 167). This seems ironic as both the number of people on welfare and its cost exploded during Nixon’s tenure despite his rhetoric (though he did lessen cash assistance, increasing in-kind aid). Between 1969 and 1974, 4.7 million people were added to the rolls (from 6.1 million to 10.8 million) and the expenditure on in-kind benefits rose from \$10.8 billion to \$26.6 billion (Patterson, pgs. 160, 166). Nixon also made food stamps available to anyone who could pass a means test, regardless of welfare status (Patterson, pg. 163). This explosion put excessive strain on the budget, especially as the economy started to slip in the mid 1970s and helped speed up the retrenchment of the welfare state—a project begun under Reagan and carried out by Bush, Clinton, and Bush.

Ronald Reagan, the father of the neoliberal revolution, was no friend of welfare. In fact, he was even more hostile towards it than Nixon had been—and unlike Nixon he turned his beliefs into hard policy, drastically reducing the number of people eligible for welfare benefits. Trattner sums his ideology up well:

“Reagan believed that it was essential to reverse the historical trend that had gotten Washington heavily involved in the area of welfare -- that the key, in other words, to solving the welfare problem was not only cutting back on assistance but also removing responsibility for the needy from the vast federal bureaucracy, where, in his opinion, waste and inefficiency abounded, and returning it to the states and localities” (pg. 332).

Reagan, then, championed a return to small government and a rejection of the idea that the federal government had an obligation to ensure the welfare of its citizens, echoing arguments from the 19th century. His “pull yourself up by your bootstraps” mentality ran counter to nearly a century’s worth of social scientific research and theories stressing structural impediments to social mobility, however it was quite popular and in line with the Protestant ethic that runs deep in the collective social conscience of America. His dream was to see an end to federal welfare, and under Clinton, one could argue, this dream came true.

The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act of 1996 sealed the coffin on AFDC, replacing it with the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program. This program put the responsibility for welfare back on the states, who act as the program’s administrators using federal block grants (Peterson, pg. 517). It added “work participation requirements” that must be fulfilled in order to remain eligible for aid (Peterson, pg. 517). It also lessened the number of families receiving cash public assistance by 9 million over 8 years, forcing many to pursue other avenues in order to get by (Peterson, pg. 517) (Cancian et al. pg. 200). Like Reagan’s philosophy and policies this change was accepted (in fact embraced) by many Americans:

“Most Americans near the political center -- Clinton included -- continue to believe that the government should confine itself to the promotion of equality of opportunity, not guarantee greater equality of condition. They are confident the people who have such opportunity -- mainly through education and job training -- will find work and soon move ahead. This deeply held faith in work -- and in the work ethic that a presumed to strengthen -- remains at the core of American definitions of the Good Society. It testifies to the still little force of the American dream of social and economic mobility” (Patterson, pg. 244).

If aid is needed, Clinton believed, it should be voluntary and come from private sources—another throwback to the 19th century (Marx, pg. 371). This comes as a bit of a



shock when one considers that the 1990s saw the strongest economic growth in American history.

George W. Bush vowed to “stay the course” of his predecessor, Reagan, and picked up where Clinton left off. When the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act was up for renewal in 2002, Bush not only extended it, but made it even more punitive by increasing work requirements for individuals and states as an aggregate. The new plan put pressure on the states to ensure that at least 50 percent of their welfare recipients are working at least 30 hours a week (Schmidt, pg. A2). Groups like the National Governors Association encouraged these actions, claiming that “the emphasis on work should continue to be paramount in welfare reform” (Schmidt, pg. A2). The result was a 26 percent increase in the number of people living in extreme poverty between 2000 and 2007 and a widening of the gap between the rich and poor, despite a large increase in welfare spending over the same period (Gumbel).

President Obama has thus far put welfare back on the priority list. This year he will spend \$953 billion on welfare services, a 42 percent increase over Bush’s last year in office (Bradley), though he has not changed the basic structure of the system as created in 1996. With his first hand experience with poverty as a community organizer, it is likely that Obama will continue to expand the welfare system in hopes of securing a better life for the nation’s most vulnerable citizens.

Since the founding of the nation, welfare has slowly but surely expanded from a local responsibility to a federal one. This phenomenon has both moral roots and implications. Its roots can be traced back to the Christian idea of charity and of natural rights. Its implications concern the rights of individuals in a capitalist country. What started out as a necessary aspect of rural community life grew into a battle for the health and well-being of the less fortunate in an industrial and post-industrial society. As the structural aspects of poverty slowly came to light, so did measures to protect those afflicted, first through insurance, and late through direct aid. This transformation clearly had a humanitarian component. Many, if not most welfare reformers over the years acted on the principle that equality and a decent standard of living were the rights of all citizens, even if they were not recognized as such. So, as the need for assistance reached proportions only the federal government could handle, it was forced to play the role of the “great almoner” so much despised by President Pierce. While the government’s actions have largely been directed by necessity rather than altruism, the final outcome has been a drastic reduction in poverty and a better standard of living for even the poorest of citizens.

## **PERSONAL VS. STRUCTURAL CAUSES OF POVERTY**

Another theme that runs deep through welfare history is the debate surrounding the causes of poverty and its relationship to morality. This debate goes back at least to the late 19th century when observers of society began to notice of the non-personal or structural factors that encouraged poverty. Prior to this, the common notion about poverty was the Christian one which put the burden of guilt on the poor themselves, as Leiby writes:

“in the history of American social welfare this revivalist spirit [of the second Great Awakening of the first half of the 19th century] is important because it emphasized the personal and inward looking side of the Christian tradition. It tended to see adversity as a test or challenge to character, a consequence of bad habits, perhaps, and it looked for a personal response to remedy the

situation. The response properly began, it was thought, with trust in God; where there was trust in God there was a potent will, resourceful and ingenious; where there was a will there was a way to become self-sufficient or socially useful, or at least to minimize one's dependency or difficulty. From this viewpoint is easy to interpret social problems as defects in personal morality rather than in social organization: if everyone, fortunate or unfortunate, would only act like a good Christian, any problem could be solved. It is plausible to argue that if people lack good will, if they do not really want to help and do not really want to be helped, any scheme of helping is likely to fail; therefore the heart or will is important" (pg. 15).

This, then, was essentially the attitude that characterized most charity workers in the latter half of the 19th century as the Reverend R.E. Thompson demonstrated in writing in his *Manual for Visitors Among the Poor* that "the best means of doing the poor good is found in friendly intercourse and personal influence. . . gifts and alms are not needed but rather sympathy encouragement and hopefulness. . . in fact nothing will so much interfere with. . . proper work as to be recognized as an. . . almoner" (Trottner, pg. 96). Along their attitude, this paradigm for understanding the poor reflected the methods of charity workers in that period:

"this method of dealing with needy people on a personal basis in an attempt to reconstruct their lives, rather than the social and economic conditions under which they lived and worked, was not novel. The charity organization societies and their friendly visitors had a personalized approach to social welfare. But because they knew little of the human personality -- psychology was still in its infancy and there was a paucity of knowledge about emotional problems -- and because they had a moralist approach to the needy -- they made decisions on the basis of judgmental attitudes and middle-class values and sought to distinguish between the 'worthy' and 'unworthy' poor -- friendly visitors provided little or no real treatment. They merely investigated the needy and on occasion attempted to manipulate them, to get them to change their way of life are rid themselves of 'bad' influences (this pressure layout call her bad associates), in the long run relying upon the shaping power of the environment. In their hands, 'casework,' as it came to be called, was basically a device for stooping, refusing appeals for help, or attempting to control the needy. No wonder it came under heavy attack" (Trottner, pg. 240).

However, it was during this period that another attitude started to develop in the settlement houses (of which the best known is Hull House—founded by Jane Addams). The settlement houses were very different from mainstream charity in that its workers actually lived amongst the poor, setting up shop in nearly 400 large spaces in rundown neighborhoods in the larger cities (Leiby, pg. 130). Living amongst the poor allowed the settlement workers to better observe them and understand their plight such that "whereas the agents of the organized charities felt that poverty could be obliterated by moral virtue alone, settlement house residents turned to social change" (Trottner, pg. 168). This was followed up by books and articles supporting the structural view of poverty—particularly Amos G. Warner's *American Charities* (1896) whose "conclusions indicated that social factors were more important than personal ones in causing dependency" (Trottner, pg. 100). In other words, the argument ran, "the basic causes of poverty were not personal weakness but two deeper problems: an economy insufficiently abundant to provide subsistence for all the able-bodied, and a social order that inequitably distributed what wealth there was. In these fundamental ways poverty was then and continued to be a structural, not a moral, matter" (Patterson, pg. 6).

This perspective (despite being that of the minority) was particularly important because it led to the conclusion that "since individuals were largely products of their envi-



ronment—for the most part, in other words, they were not free moral agents who willingly chose to break the law, as has been believed previously—when someone was charged with committing an illegal act it was not merely a personal, but also a community, matter,” an idea whose influence would be seen in community programs in the 1960s and 1970s (Trattner, pg. 127). For the majority, though, an individualized response to poverty stemming from the Christian tradition remained the primary mode of operation and understanding, especially among professionals in the field. “the social workers’ enthusiasm was to individualize the case; relate the problem to personal, family, or social disorganization; and arrange a kind of help that would be rational and specific. They recognized the factor of impersonal or social causes of individual distress and advocated social reforms, but that was not central” (Leiby, pg. 220). This became increasingly true as social work developed into a true profession:

“to paraphrase two students of the subject, in outlook, from viewing the needy person as largely a product of impersonal social and economic forces, social workers came to see him or her as primarily a product of personal impulses. In practice, they went from concern with social reform and preventive legislation to preoccupation with individuals and with methods and techniques to help them become adjusted to their environment” (Trattner, pg. 239)

And continued to be the dominant paradigm well into the late 1950s:

“basically [several amendments to ADC in 1956] reflected social workers’ renewed concern with casework -- the belief that the poor needed not just, or even primarily, financial aid but rather psychological assistance and other forms of counseling; they had to ‘adjust’ to being single parents or to life in the city; they need instruction on how to keep house and manage their meager resources in order to make ends meet; they needed to learn how to make friendships and develop self-esteem; above all, of course, they had to be taught how to secure and retain jobs. In reality, then, the new approach was an old one: attributing the needy’s problems to personal shortcomings and providing ‘counseling’ or advice, in order to promote participation in the labor force... A clear shift away from the many cash (and public Works) programs of the new deal” (Trattner, pg. 300).

The pendulum swung back in the direction of structural thinking during the tumultuous late 1960s and early 1970s, as Dr. James G. Emerson illustrated in 1968, writing: “the situation is not just a matter of persons of problems, but rather of whole areas afflicted with social ills. If the individual is to be helped, someone has to deal with the complex of social ills that bears on the individual, not just on the individual himself. We are convinced that an approach that focuses primarily on individuals may help some people, but will not really alleviate the basic problems of the sick community. Instead of starting out by saying that the individual is the client, we’re going to say the community is the client.” (Leiby, pg. 321)

By the 1980s individual ‘blame the victim’ rationales began to dominate the scene once again, particularly in politics, and that is essentially the position the United States has been in ever since. Today, these perspectives both have a following—generally divided up along political lines with conservatives focused on the faults of individuals as the cause of poverty and liberals blaming structural issues such as distribution of wealth and institutional racism.

Morality plays a pivotal role in the distinction between personal and structural views of the causes of poverty. In fact, the ‘personal’ camp has often invoked moral shortcomings as a primary source of dependence and deprivation. In their view, if individuals

simply adhered to the Protestant ethic and played by the rules of the game (both morally and legally), they would find themselves out of poverty and on the road to social mobility. This is the fit moral outcome for proper moral choices. In the 'structural' camp, morality exists only in so far as it acts as a catalyst for social change. Morality itself does not play a significant role in poverty, which is the product of forces beyond the control of the individual. Such is the debate that has been raging for nearly 150 years, the answer to which probably lies somewhere between the two extremes.

## **OBLIGATIONS OF THE FORTUNATE VS. RIGHTS OF THE NEEDY**

Another theme in American welfare history is the contrast between obligations and rights to and of the poor. Both of these ideas can be traced back to Hebrew culture, in which "the needy had a right to assistance, and those who were better off had a duty to provide it" (Trattner, pg. 4). In the 19th and 20th centuries, however, these two concepts remained largely separate from one another and came from different angles. In fact, over time a transition occurred in which emphasis on obligations to the poor gave way to the rights of the poor themselves. This is largely the result of the secularization of society and the bureaucratization of social welfare.

As with the emphasis on the individual as the source of poverty, a Christian influence dominated ideas about charity throughout the 19th century. Leiby explains this succinctly, writing:

"the point is not simply that charity is an evidence of righteousness and a sign of grace, but that Christ Himself is present in 'the least of these my brethren.' Clergymen preaching charity sermons would sometimes dramatize the lessons by presenting to their congregation are particularly repulsive retching asking, Would they turn their back on the Christ, the divine element, in him? So the Christian duty of charity was related not only to salvation but in a very concrete way to the belief that there is a dignity -- something precious and worthy -- about all humans, however lowly or loathsome they may seem to be. The divine spark gives 'the least of these' a potential for merit and service" (pg. 20).

In other words, then, Christian doctrine emphasized the duty of the able-bodied to assist those in need, particularly those who cannot care for themselves. It was this obligation, then, which powered the philanthropic machine of the era and this characteristic which set it apart from 20th century endeavors:

"the religious charity had a quality that was decidedly inward and antiformal. 'When thou doest alms,' Jesus taught, 'let not thy right hand know what thy left hand doeth' (Matthew 6:3). This dictum was intended partly to keep the giver from sinful pride in his good deed and partly to spare the recipient from the humiliation of his position. It was contrary in spirit to the later secular and scientific interest in method, system, and deliberate social change for worldly ends. They look backward to mutual concern, the fellow-feeling of communal life, not forward to rational social planning and formal, responsible bureaucratic agencies." (Leiby, pg. 75)

One could call this "supply side welfare", whereas aid through rights could be called "demand side welfare".

Around the turn of the 20th century, as "charity" morphed into "welfare" and social work became professional, secular, and bureaucratic, the idea of obligations to the poor lost its potency and the gap was filled by progressives fighting for the rights of the poor. The idea first found expression in the national discussion in 1918 when the National War Labor Board "passed judgment on wartime wage disputes, [and] affirmed 'the right of



all workers, including common laborers, to a living wage...in fixing wages, minimum rates of pay shall...ensure the subsistence of the worker and his family in health and reasonable comfort" (Leiby, pg. 157). It was the New Deal, however, which firmly entrenched the idea of welfare rights:

"for the first time in the modern period, the American people as a whole accepted the assumption that a large number of people had a right (which could be legally enforced) to public benefits, or at least that failure to provide such benefits was socially and economically shortsighted. In either case, the charitable and temporary gave way to the just and the permanent, and the dominance of private charity over public welfare came to an end." (Trattner, pg. 276)

Ten years later, these rights were enshrined in the Economic Bill of Rights of January 1944, in which Roosevelt argued that "All citizens, deserve useful and remunerative jobs; income to provide sufficient food, clothing, and recreation; decent lodging; medical care; protection against the hazards of old age, sickness, accident, unemployment, and a good education" (Patterson, pg. 90).

By the 1960s both the federal government and the poor had embraced these rights and pushed for their expansion. As one OEO report from 1966 states, "the time is coming when the American people will accept a guaranteed minimum income at the poverty level as a right in a wealthy country, and we propose to start moving in this direction now" (Patterson, pg. 183). Meanwhile, the poor took to the streets demanding, among other things, "an adequate guarantee annual income; curtailed investigatory practices, especially with regard to 'man in the house' rules, violations of privacy, and midnight raids; the right to earn additional income without reduction in assistance payments until inadequate minimum was reached; respect for recipients; legal rights; improved day care for children of working mothers; higher clothing and furniture allowances; more adequate medical care; and elimination of all residency requirements" (Trattner, pg. 319). Since that time the welfare rights movement has grown weak and disorganized. One could argue that an era without (substantial) obligations or rights may be on the horizon.

In looking at these two views and how they reflect the social realities of the past 150 years, it is clear that appreciable progress has been made on behalf of the poor with regard to equal rights and equal opportunities. This is evidenced, as Patterson points out, by the fact that definitions of poverty have grown steadily more generous over time (pg. 11). This is further evidenced by the fact that "some 40 percent of people defined as poor in 1992 owned their own homes, 64 percent had cars and 91 percent owned a color TV" (Patterson, pg. 228). So, one could argue, the expansive movement from obligations to ever increasing rights has been a morally positive development. By giving the poor greater rights, they found themselves empowered—they had the power to create "demand side welfare" rather than rely on the conscience of those humble Christians who found themselves better off. Thus, these two perspectives reflect broader changes in America and industrialized democracies around the world, and illustrate one aspect of the welfare picture.

## CONCLUSION

As stated above, these ideas are but small facets of a very large and complex system that extends far beyond the scope of this paper. It is hoped, however, that it has achieved the goal of presenting a few of the ways in which social welfare in a capitalist country can be strongly linked with moral issues. Those presented here are all part of general

trends that reflect and reinforce one another. The growth of federal power and the idea of welfare rights go hand in hand while arguments about the nature of poverty undermine or reinforce the legitimacy of those rights and public welfare institutions.

The future of the welfare state in America is dubious to say the least. The retrenchment of welfare services in the past 30 years has taken its toll on the strength of the welfare system and the poor themselves, reversing a positive trend extending over two centuries. And so it must be asked—is welfare morally just and an important institution? Both of these ought to be answered in the affirmative, based on the facts above. Will the future uphold what justice demands? Only time will tell.

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# AN ARGUMENT IN EARLY EVENING

KATHRYN ALEXA MORITZ

For some time now Alan Moser had been planning on taking down the old goat shed beside the pond. It was merely an eye sore, brown flecked in red, it sagged on the sides and roof and barely did its only job of keeping outdated gardening tools dry. Every year the condition of the shed worsened. It became soggy and soggier from the mist of the pond and the shadow of the sheep barn. Yet, for a few hours a day, it stood alone in the sunlight, its timbers drying, its rusted roof somewhat twinkling. It was at this time of the day that Alan couldn't help but notice the estrangement of the dilapidated structure. The barn, the car-port, the farmhouse, they all seemed as if they were no longer invested in its care. The goat shed was their forgotten child, neglected and unloved.

The morning Alan finally decided to rid his property of the structure, it was hot and dry. The house was quiet for the first time in what felt like many weeks. The woman he was living with, Marie, was working the day shift at Northeastern Vermont Regional Hospital and her fourteen year old son, Jeffrey, had stayed the previous night with his biological father the next town over. Marie's seventeen-year-old daughter, Alexandra, was still in bed sleeping. Alan felt a deep pleasure in at least feeling alone.

Over his breakfast he tried to organize his thoughts. While he drank his black coffee and swallowed his Rice Krispies in big horse gulps, he wondered what his adopted seven-year-old daughter was having for breakfast. He shook his head, forcing her away because thinking of her was pointless and only pushed him into a downward spiral. After refilling his coffee mug, he began trying to come up with a different antibiotic for Mrs. Kennan. She was having a bad reaction to what he had prescribed for her two days earlier and needed something to really knock out her kidney infection.

After Alan finished reading an article about cardiovascular disease in his latest issue of JAMA, he went to put away the pans that were overcrowding the drain board. Marie had not put them away last night. Was it possibly she was still upset over what had happened several weeks ago? As he quietly stacked them inside the oven, he himself tried to forget. He'd punished himself enough with mentally reliving the experience.

Marie's son had been making pizza. He had forgotten it was in the oven. The pizza had turned black and the smoke detector (thank god Alan had replaced the batteries a few weeks prior) had interested his reading of the latest biography of Lincoln. He had come running downstairs, all 6'6" of him, carried loudly down the wooden steps on wide boney feet. Under different circumstances he would have been self-conscious. He would



have worried that Alexandra would have noticed how mooselike he looked when he moved quickly, when he stretched his legs and arms out all the way. But as flames burst forth from around the oven door, such trivial matters fled his mind. He grabbed the extinguisher, no longer concerned with how ridiculous he looked. He did not want his farmhouse, the one in which these two teenagers now lived, to go up in flames and smoke.

After Alan had completely extinguished the fire, he turned to Jeffrey, who stood off to the corner, smirking. How dare the little devil smile! His hand covered in soot and white foam, riding a rush of fear and embarrassment and anger, Alan stepped across the kitchen in one eager stride, grabbed the boy by the shoulders, and gently, so very gently, slapped him across the face.

As Alan closed the oven, he also closed his eyes, hard, as if blacking out his vision would stop the memory. How terrible he had felt afterwards. He had sat for an entire night alone, staring at a wall. Alexandra had held Jeffrey to her chest like he was some small child, then packed his and her bags and left. She never once looked at Alan as she slammed the door on her way out. As for Marie, she had been out of town taking care of her mother's cancer. Alexandra had probably called her immediately. When Alan answered Marie's call he could not speak. He had nothing to say. He had no words. He had figured Marie would leave him but she didn't. She was mad and upset, but seemed to understand, seemed to take his side, which made it worse, made it his struggle and not theirs.

Alan left the farm house and stood for a moment in the sun, leaning back so that its rays hit him on the face. He tried to smile. He tried to get excited for the day. He was finally getting rid of that terrible goat shed. He figured the best way to begin would be to pry off the remaining sheets of metal on its side and roof. Then he could go about prying off the boards. It would be a process but he was okay with that because he liked processes. It made him feel as if he were accomplishing something. Usually it kept his mind busy. Sometimes it did not.

He entered the garage to grab his hammer and some gloves and noticed his daughter Jae's pink plastic shovel and bucket on its side, in front of his tools, cracked down along the middle. There was still sand in one corner of the bucket and half a clam shell snagged in the ridge at the bottom. It must have been from their family trip to Maine the previous summer. Jae had loved the beach. Alexandra, who claimed proudly to dislike children, had been so good with her, holding her hand and squatting with her to examine shells, seaweed, driftwood. Aside from the fact that Jae was from China, they looked like siblings.

He pushed the plastic toys aside carefully with his booted foot and grabbed the hammer and gloves from their hooks on the wall. He thought for a moment of turning the radio on so that he didn't feel so alone as he worked but decided against it. He really did love the silence, to hear the panting of his breath when he exerted himself. He then began his short trek up the grass flattened road between the pond and the barn, up towards the goat shed, trying to ignore the weight of his guilt.

Although the judge had awarded Alan and his ex-wife shared custody of Jae, he had given up the struggle of fatherhood. He used to feel a shame as hard as stone when he wondered why he felt no genuine affection for his own daughter but in truth she was foreign in too many ways. The structure of her face, the slant of her eyes, the rhythm of her voice, none of it seemed familiar. Simply put, there was none of him in her. But still, still,

still he should have tried. He should have fought.

A few hours later Alan had peeled all the metal scrapings off the ugly rotten frame. It looked worse stripped of its protection, like even the beams that held it up right did not want to be seen doing so. When the sun started to feel too hot, Alan retreated for a brief break into the belly of the beast. While he galumphed over to the corner and grabbed a stool to sit on, enjoying the feeling of sweat rolling down his back, he knocked over a rusty rake which in turn slid down along the cross beams and landed with a thud against a hornets nest. He sprang out of the shed, flailing his arms. It took him two minutes of thrashing about in the hot sun, sweat burning his eyes, for him to realize only a few hornets buzzed around the nest. Irritated but unsure where their attacker had gone, they did a few loops around the interior of the shed and then disappeared back up into their grey papery dome. Alan saw no other option but to get rid of them as well.

An hour later it seemed the world of the farm had bloomed. Trees swayed like timid dancers, softly, secretly within their nest of branches. The sky, although still cloudless and severe, seemed to marvel at its own blueness, blue building off of blue until it became the white glint that tinted every inanimate object in gold. Fish plucked at the surface of the pond, their lips occasionally breaking the surface to seductively lip at the legs of insects.

Alexandra was up and reclining on the dock, her long lean body pale and reflective. She had the buds of her Ipod in her ears and she nodded along with her music, her toes tapping the air, keeping beat. With her shades covering her eyes, she submerged herself into the world of Salinger, or Steinbeck, or maybe Garcia Marquez and seemed to ignore Alan completely.

For the past hour, however, Alan had been hard at work plotting to remove the hornets. He had taken an old hoe handle and wrapped the end in a thick turban of rags. He then doused it in lighter fluid and, in his excitement, lit it to see how it would look, to feel how it would feel to hold such a huge torch. The air around him became hot as the ball of rags burst into hungry flames. As they climbed higher and higher, he felt like a warrior. Suddenly he remembered the reason he created the torch, and ran towards the goat shed.

When he got to the structure he spared no time. He thrust the primitive tool beneath the nest, sweating and grinning and excited to see what would happen next. Would they swarm out in one massive black cloud and attack him? Would they panic and, in their frenzy, be unable to find the exit and burn alive in their home? He held one moist elbow over his nose and lips, his eyes narrowing. It was then he noticed the roof which had dried out in the hot morning sun beginning to smoke.

He quickly pulled back, nearly falling over. He ran from the shed, down to the pond where he speared the torch into the water and then, in exhaustion, threw himself down in onto his knees in the green-grey muck of the pond's rim. He was panting. He felt sick, overwhelmed, sad. He couldn't believe that even this rejected structure could still win in the end. He was a fool for thinking he could get rid of it so easily. Perhaps he should have tried instead to fix it up and make it better. Either way, he was a fool and there was nothing he could do about it.

Alexandra was sitting up across the pond watching him in all his ridiculousness. Her shades hid most of her face and her brown locks hide her cheekbones, but still he could see it, the pleased curl of a smirk.



Later that evening Alan decided to try to get along with Marie's children. It was the least he could do, really. He loved Marie very much, couldn't, in fact, believe she was actually dating a man like him. And so instead of diving into his new Roosevelt biography or practicing cell up in his bedroom, he joined Marie, Alexandra, and Jeffrey on the screened in porch for some hamburgers and lemonade.

Once he was comfortable in one of the wooden pine green lawn chairs, he watched Marie run back and forth from the grill to the kitchen. She looked beautiful, her blonde hair wrapped up in a messy bun, her skin moist from the heat. He could smell her sweat and the cucumber hand lotion she used on her face. She said she liked it better than face cream because it made her skin soft. He agreed. As she prepared the food she told him about her shift at the hospital, about a patient who had a terrible fever throughout the day, how she was getting too old for nursing, how, at fifty, she really ought to be thinking of something else to do, that nursing was just too much. He listened, content, his ears swallowing her words, his eyes falling on her back, her exposed shoulders, the full feminine curve of her calico thigh.

It was then Jeffrey came out onto the porch and plopped himself down on the wide floorboards. The outdoor cat left its post by the grill and ran up to his slanted knee. It affectionately pressed its speckled forehead into him, begging for a pet. Jeffrey rubbed a hand over its bumpy back while he flipped through some antique comic book his father had bought him that morning. He was all about antiques these days.

"So Jeffrey, how was your day?" Alan tried, but Jeffrey shrugged and flipped a page. Alexandra fluttered out onto the porch, much like her mother, barefoot and slightly sunburned.

"Hey Dave." she forcefully muttered. Then pirouetted, her boney back the only part of her willing to face him at the moment. She placed herself carefully into another green lawn chair, all grace and attitude.

"How are you Alexandra?" He tried, smiling awkwardly.

"Fine. Trying to read every book in my library."

"You know, when I was a little older than you, I holed myself up in my bedroom for two years and did nothing but read the encyclopedia."

Alexandra glanced up at him, one eyebrow curling sarcastically.

"Wow, that must have been enlightening."

He didn't know how to respond and so he crossed his legs daintily, and looked away, out through the screen of the porch, over the lawn, out to the pond and the cursed goat shed. It still stood only now it resembled the carcass of a chicken after the dinner guests had picked it clean.

Once Marie finished putting the burgers on the grill, she dragged a chair out from the kitchen for Jeffrey, and then sat in the remaining lawn chair beside Alan. He was really impressed by how kind and how warm she was. She was always warm, her skin, her face, the way she spoke. She had a warm look and she would cock her head to the side and smile without showing her teeth, her eyes wet with affection.

She ruffled Jeffrey's hair.

"So, Joe, are you and Alex going to have a fire tonight? I think it'll be a perfect night for it, a little cool but still enjoyable." Jeffrey shrugged. Alexandra placed her open book face down on the wide armrest and answered for him.

“Yeah, we were thinking of having one in the old fire pit though. You know, the stone one behind the goat shed.”

“Oh that’ll be great. It’s so pretty over there by the pond.”

Marie tucked a thick strand of blond hair back behind her emerald studded earlobe. She did it so gracefully, her blue eyes almost a mystery color when accented with the green. Alan uncrossed his legs and scooted his bottom further back in the seat so that he sat more erect.

“I really don’t think that’s a good idea. Those structures are really dry right now and if the grass caught fire, it could travel very quickly to the sheep barn and then to the chicken coop and then to the house and before you know it this whole place is up in flames.”

Alexandra and Jeffrey looked at him as if this is exactly what they were expecting. Jeffrey shook his head but only slightly, barely detectable. Alan was sure Marie hadn’t seen it. Alexandra’s nose crinkled the way it did before she broke a smile.

“Oh Dave, you worry too much!”

As Alexandra said it, she flicked her wrist at him, as if she were royalty and he a mere peasant. And there it was, the smile, breaking open her freckled face.

“Why don’t you just relax for once. Take it easy?”

She cocked her head sideways, much the way her mother did. That got to him the most. How could she come from Marie? How could she come from someone he felt he could not live without? And here she sat, mocking him, laughing at him, belittling his judgment, his feelings. And although Alan was not a violent man, he still wanted to grab her by her bony shoulders and rattle the teeth in her mouth. He wanted to slap her and push her. This was his property, his house! They were eating his food! He was paying for her bills, he had built the dock on which she had laid out on all day. He bought her books for her birthday.

But he did not show his upset. He stood and walked out through the screened door, across the lawn, towards the dirt road on which his little farmhouse sat.

As he walked, Alan tried to distract himself with the geometry of the natural world. Oh how beautiful certain trees were! Some leaned at 45 degree angles from each other; why they were forks, forks of wood and height! Young children would probably love to play around them, climb up onto them, their tummy pressed to the slant as they attempted to pull, their fingernails scraping the bark, higher and higher. And the dirt road seemed so peaceful, as if none of his problems held material weight but were constructs within his own mind. He loved what was concrete, what was solid right under his feet or swaying beside him with a gentle woosh. Leaves were real, they had veins and color, texture his fingers could encounter but did not struggle to understand or make meaning of. They were what they were without his struggling to make them so. Beauty in the highest form! And why could not his personal life be the same? If having a family were to be as natural and beautiful as the wooded grove, the dip of the dirt road, the corner of swamp where he often found moose and herons and beavers, why was it so hard? So miserable? All he got was complaint, sarcasm, meanness. All he felt from those terrible teenagers and that Asian brat was awkwardness and failure. And wasn’t it supposed to be great? To feel like a man? To feel powerful and respected and most importantly, loved? Who did they think they were, bossing him around, telling him he worried too much! Taking advantage of how sensitive he was! It was



then he turned and began marching back to the house. He had had enough.

When Alan arrived Marie was in the kitchen washing dishes. Jeffrey must have gone to his room. Alexandra sat at the kitchen table, her ankle resting on her thigh, thumbing through one of his JAMAs. When he entered she leaned her face away from him, giving him nothing but the edge of her jaw.

“Ya know, I could be a doctor, mom.”

Marie nodded while a cup slipped out of her hand and made a loud wet thud in the sink.

“You can be anything you want, Kitten.”

Alan felt his blood pound in his temple at their inane conversation, at their casual manner. Like nothing was wrong!

“Alexandra, a word please. Outside.”

Alexandra slammed the journal closed and stood without comment, her head held high. Such a proud little brat, he thought.

He followed her through the screened in porch, outside to the front lawn. She stood straight and firm, her bare feet planted in the warm grass, facing him, ready and before he could find some lame excuse to apologize he began, his voice shaking but still loud.

“Telling me I worry too much is none of your business. This is my house, my property, and I make the decisions. You were out of line for the way you spoke to me earlier and if you are going to continue to give me this attitude, well, you’re just going to have to find someplace else to live.”

For once he was glad of his height. He must have seemed overpowering, intimidating. She looked down at the grass for a moment, probably embarrassed. When she looked up a few seconds later, he saw he was wrong.

“You can’t tell me what I can and cannot say. I may not be allowed to have a fire, which I don’t understand seeing as you almost burned down that goddamn goat shed today but I am allowed to call you whatever I want. And if you get upset over it, then that’s your problem. Not mine. Maybe that’s something you need to work on.”

She paused to take a break. He was not fast enough to jump in.

“I don’t really give a shit whether you went to MIT or Harvard or wherever the hell you went. You think you’re so great, so above us all, like nothing matters but your music and your books and your pointlessly busy tasks. Taking down the goat shed? Please!”

And that was it. He raised his voice and began to yell, something he could not remember ever doing. He bellowed and waved his long lanky arms. He threw back his head to feel the words ripple in the ridges of his lengthened throat. And then he spewed them out, spewed out all the anger and resentment, all the times he had felt utterly inadequate. Out of his stomach, out of his mouth, up into the grey, he yelled about fairness and kindness and respect. And she? She yowled back, her hair tangling in her fingers as she placed her hands up over her ears like a child. She screamed about change, about compromise, that he should just try, try, try to understand. And when both were hoarse and exhausted, their brows beaded in sweat, Alexandra turned and left him there, standing alone, barefoot, the dusk leaking through the clouds like ash, down over the tree tops, into the fields of the farm, while Alan just continued, softly now, to whimper on and on about loss.

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# EXPLORING PROFESSIONAL PURPOSE THE JIMMY BUFFET WAY

ISABELLA PRICE

The start of my senior year at Dartmouth College presented the exclusive opportunity of corporate recruiting with some of America's most prestigious financial institutions. The sole motivating factor for my pursuit of an Ivy League education had been job stability. Though holders of a MBA and MEd respectively, my father and mother had a discontinuous career path I planned to avoid by attaining a more prestigious diploma than their humble upbringings in 1960's Oregon had afforded (Dartmouth still hadn't even opened doors to females at that point). Though I doubted I would be tempted by the corporate lure, I wanted to consider Dartmouth's unique corporate recruiting opportunity thoroughly, since I was still in the process of professional self-discovery.

My unique mode of exploring career interests evolved into a choice to retreat temporarily from the ambitious and overzealous path of my secondary and collegiate experiences. I arranged for a long-term one-year leave from the College, and began exploring St. Thomas, United States Virgin Islands online. I phoned several scuba dive shops inquiring per internships. After email correspondence and a phone interview, I set up an internship at a scuba dive shop. I flew to St. Thomas in October and immediately began my dive training in seventy degree water. Hailing from the deep waters of the Pacific Northwest, I knew well to respect the frigid, dark Pacific Ocean, and its inhabitants: octopi which span eight feet, whales, and enormous sea lions which live in packs on local docks. Chilling, but scenic ferry trips across the Puget Sound enable one to intuitively understand that one can only survive a few minutes of the Sound's cold embrace.

Living in the tropics provided a new vista of opportunities above ground and below the waters. A common Caribbean shark, for example, only stretches a couple feet. Virtually, as long as a diver keeps their fingers tucked safely next to their body-- away from potentially crouching eels--scuba diving is a safe underwater marine biology adventure. Suddenly, a new body of the world became available for exploration.

I swam with a dive partner through coral reef tunnels and maintained an astounding log book of the dozens of eye popping creatures I observed. On my first night dive, the group



spotted a four-foot-wide sea turtle. The headstrong dive leader pushed too closely towards the turtle, which startled the wild creature, but enabled the audience to see the sea turtle move with maximum velocity. I relished seeing the turtle dart away from the pack of humans. Forty dives later in rescue diver training, I discovered firsthand how deep diving (lower than seventy feet) impairs mental functioning. My trainer challenged me to calculate computations and answer logical questions on a water-proof pad on the ocean's floor; I was surprised to see that my reasoning skills did not honor me that day.

At sunrise, a handful of elderly individuals engaged in a local custom of wading out into the ocean in their swimsuits to start the morning off with the view of St. John's rolling green hills in the distance. I personally explored the waters by guiding hotel tourists as they sailed and jet skied. Living the Jimmy Buffet experience had its perks. I perused local coves and ventured through eight-foot ocean swells so I could enjoy the breathtaking views of nearby islands in the horizon. At night I relished the warm air in a t-shirt amidst the relaxing sounds of the ocean beating upon the rocky coasts below. On Sunday mornings and evenings I attended my first ever church services, drawn in by the island beats and the effervescent vitality of the local flock. "Amen, Jesus!"

After months of dive training, beach labor, and church revivals, I explored opportunities at the University of the Virgin Islands, located at the far side of the island. I registered for a full load of business and accounting courses. I learned from a business classmate that the university's women's basketball team needed additional players. A product of a decade of competitive year-round sports play, I made the team easily after an open tryout. The league competed against Puerto Rico's university system. We took the 50 minute flight in a prop plane five times for weekends of road trips around Puerto Rico to its five universities. After the games (all of which we won in league play), the Latina athletes would re-emerge from the locker rooms clad in platform heels, miniskirts and hoop earrings, often with a large family in tow.

On most of our trips to Puerto Rico, my female teammates and I enjoyed the company of the men's team. Since our entourage rented several minivans, the coaches needed additional drivers of the extra vans and chose male athletes. A continuous stream of calypso, reggae, and Caribbean hip hop flowed from the speakers at all times. Moreover, the passengers all moved and bounced naturally and casually. I'd seen this before: at the Carnival festival in St. Thomas, a half-dozen double-decker buses of steel drum performers (K-12 local students) danced captivatively as they beat their steel rhythms.

After returning to the mainland States at the year's end, I reflected on how my experience enabled me to loosen up regarding my professional ambitions. Donning socks for the first time in a calendar cycle, I realized by comparison how exquisite free toes feel. Compared to my life history of self-improvement and self-actualization professionally and mentally, self-compassion for my own metamorphosis from a professional career-explorer to a professional maestro felt, "*Alright, man.*"

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