

# *Litterätus*

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Morehouse College  
Honors Program  
Spring 2010

## Before We Start...

Remember to never split an infinitive.

The passive voice should never be used.

Do not put statements in the negative form.

Verbs have to agree with their subjects.

Proofread carefully to see if you words out.

If you reread your work, you can find on rereading a great deal of repetition can be by rereading and editing.

A writer must not shift your point of view.

And don't start a sentence with a conjunction. (Remember, too, a preposition is a terrible word to end a sentence with.)

Don't overuse exclamation marks!!

Place pronouns as close as possible, especially in long sentences, as of 10 or more words, to their antecedents.

Writing carefully, dangling participles must be avoided.

If any word is improper at the end of a sentence, a linking verb is.

Take the bull by the hand and avoid mixing metaphors.

Avoid trendy locutions that sound flaky.

Everyone should be careful to use a singular pronoun with singular nouns in their writing.

Always pick on the correct idiom.

The adverb always follows the verb.

Last but not least, avoid clichés like the plague; seek viable alternatives.

- *William Safire*

## Some Notes On Writing

# Litterätus

Spring 2010

This issue of Litterätus is dedicated to John Hope Franklin, who possessed our past,  
and to President Barack Obama, who carries our future.

# Staff and Contributors

## **Staff:**

Editor-in-Chief: Gregory Davis

Assistant Editor: Kevin Morris

Honors Program Club President: Brandon Myers

Honors Program Director: Dr. Jocelyn W. Jackson

Honors Program Coordinator: Ms. Ora Horton-Drayton

## **Contributors:**

Harry Bowden, Biology '09

Lamont Cobb, Urban Studies '10

Gregory Davis, Psychology '10

Seth Fowler, '12

Alonté Johnson, Business Administration & Finance '11

Kevin Morris, Political Science '10

Vann Newkirk, Biology, Philosophy & Public Health '10

David Roberts, Biology '10

Seth Fowler, Business Administration & Finance '12

John Torrey, Philosophy & Spanish '09

Jonathan Wall, Sociology & Political Science '12

Charlie Williams IV, English '12

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# Editor's Note

The dual themes for this year's edition of *Litterätus* are 1) place and 2) identity. Looking at *The New York Times* or the *Maroon Tiger*, any African American today can see that we are at a substantial and critical crossroads right now. We as a people have so much history and culture to look back on (identity) and so much work to be done to get to where we need to be (place). The important and salient influence on our existence these centuries has been progress. The 2009 *Litterätus* is a testament to that progress.

It is fitting that this year's journal be dedicated to both a great man who has just passed on, Dr. John Hope Franklin, and another great man who has just come to us, Pres. Barack Obama. Although neither man - to this date - is significantly associated with Morehouse College, both are uniquely and deeply connected to the African American spirit and heritage. Franklin's *From Slavery to Freedom*, first published in 1947, is still a powerful and faithful testimony to African American progress and sentiment. President Obama has taken and internalized the spirit and struggle of African Americans past and present, and strived to become the most powerful man in the world. Obama's grace, dignity, and unapologizing love for all people set a new standard and goal for people of color everywhere, from convicted felons in prisons all around the country, to struggling and pressed-for-time literary magazine editors in their dorm rooms.

This year, we have featured some of the best that Morehouse Honors Program students have to offer: poetry, prose, essay, recreation, art, and photography, all in their most creative and critical viewpoints. There is work in this magazine from already-and-soon-to-be published authors, scientists and politicians, and potential pillars of law, medicine, industry, and education. As a demonstration to the best Morehouse College can offer, I can think of no better evidence than *Litterätus*.

Until Next Year,

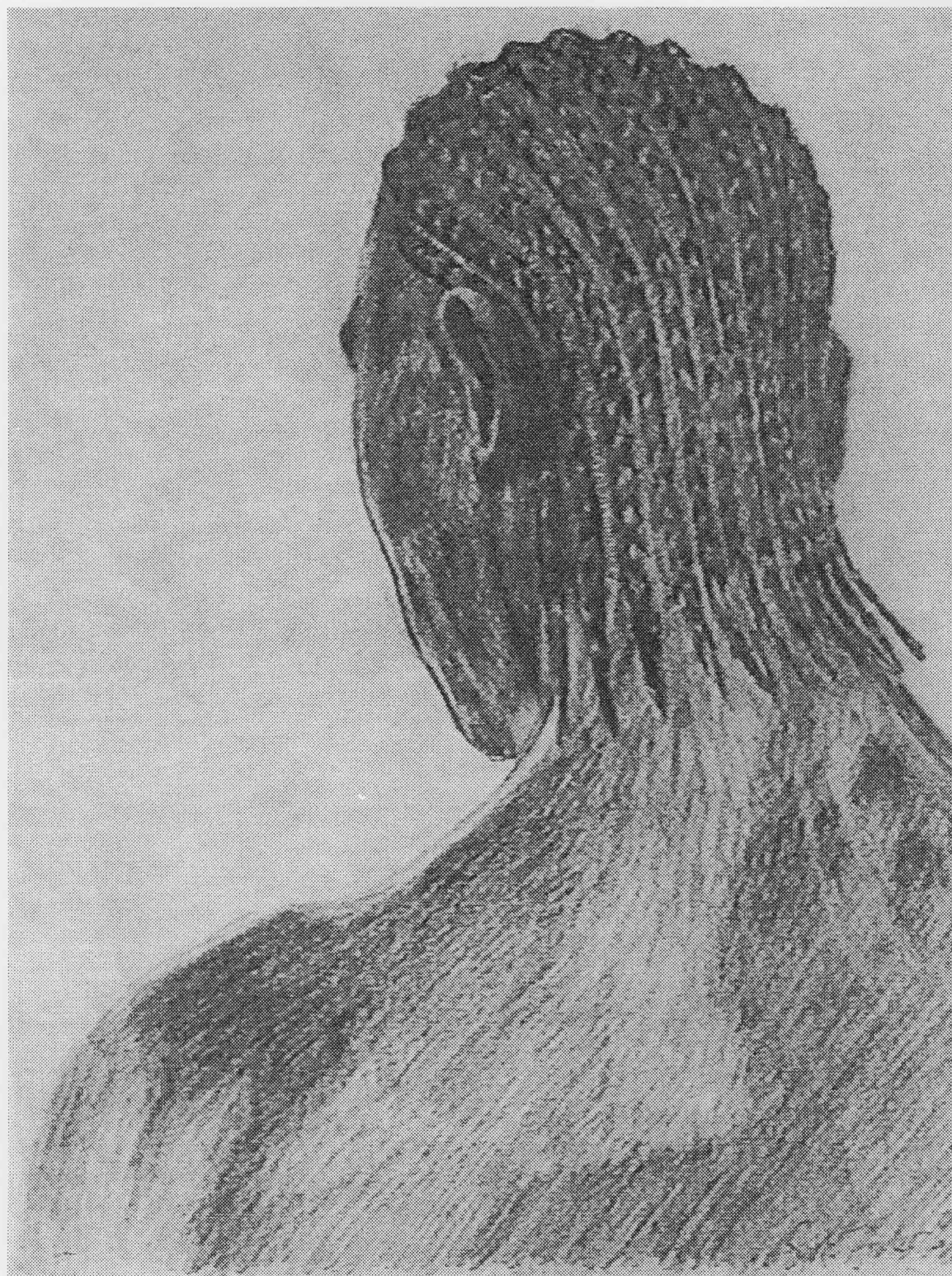
Gregory K. Davis,  
Editor-In-Chief  
*The Litterätus*

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# Identity – Where We Came From



# [soul mate]

## by Alonté Johnson

you remain that untapped soul  
the one that always gets away  
because no one could hold you  
feel you  
understand you  
even i can't comprehend you  
so i marvel in your beauty  
bask in your intellectual glory  
forever wrapped in your words  
as you tell endless stories of  
love's lost and soon to come  
and i wonder if he was ever me...  
was i that lost love or  
one to be found  
never given the chance  
because conversations never make it past a smile  
so you remain that untapped soul  
and i still marvel in you  
the beauty of your soul  
grace in your movements  
clarity in your heart  
purity in thought  
you have never gotten away from me  
forever on my mind  
in my thoughts  
spilled out for the world to see  
because keeping you would be selfish  
i simply want your soul  
so i can one day be whole...

# Driving

## by Gregory Davis

When I walked into class - right on time - I felt the sting in my teacher's eyes as I moved swiftly to the back of the room, sat, and immediately put my head down. There were still two free seats up front, more in the second row, but I didn't care. I didn't know anything about psychology and I didn't care to know. It was the first day of junior year, and while the rest of W. Blitzer High School was busy comparing school supplies and raving about that summer trip to Disneyland, I put my head down in the very back of psychology. I had had a long night.

I had just got my driver's license the month before and kind of wished I hadn't. My mother, too busy to get her own alcohol nowadays, sent me to the store every other day to "pick up some groceries". At first, it was cool, because I liked to drive, and Barry, the liquor store owner, was really nice to me since he knew my mother so well. The first time I told him who my mom was, he laughed for a good minute, and told me how she used to come in and buy my granddad's liquor for him when she was eight. Barry was really old and my grandfather had liver cancer, so I believed him.

Every time it was the same: I would drive to the store, walk in and tell Barry hello. He would take a quick look around to see if anyone with morals was around, and then ask me for my stuff. I would hand it to him. It always said the same thing. He'd put the wine in the bag first, then the vodka, and then the blackberry schnapps. "Your mother wants some..."

"Diet Coke?" I would finish, before running to the back refrigerators, fishing in my pockets to handle the car keys, wishing I could get back in the car. Usually, I would come back with the two-liter bottle, which would somehow fit in that brown paper bag. Barry would say, "\$67.17." I would give him the money - three twenties and a ten - pocket the change and drive home.

Yesterday was not a usual day. I went to the back to get the Coke and noticed the potato chips. There was a new flavor of Doritos's out, Mesquite Ranch, and I went to get a bag. Getting to the chip case, I could overhear that Barry was talking to somebody. I turned to look over at them and I could see clearly.

"The alcohol? Oh, it's for me, officer." Barry's voice sounded slightly garbled, and he huffed a little as he said it. "I just wanted to take some home. Is there a crime against that?"

"No, sir," the police officer said. He looked older than Barry, if possible, but also as if he was a lot. "You bought the drinks; they're yours to do what you want. But why do you need a handwritten list to pick them out?"

Slowly, I walked up to the cash register. Barry took the bag with the alcohol and tucked it behind the counter. "Just these two items, then?" he asked me. I nodded, not wanting to talk. I could feel the eyes of the police officer behind me. I just knew that this wasn't the end of it.

"That's a lot of Diet Coke, isn't it, son. Is that all for you?" His hand was on his hip, near his gun. I looked over and noticed how big it was.

"Yes, sir," I said, no longer looking at him. "It's wrestling; I have to keep my weight down."

He laughed, very loudly. His laughing was so loud in my ear that I almost didn't hear Barry say, "\$3.49." I gave him the ten, and left without my change.

The drive home wasn't the same. I didn't enjoy the rev of the engine or the pulse of the gas as I accelerated down the street. I was two blocks down before I realized I had run a red light. I just had to get out of there.

Before I knew it, I was in my driveway. The light was on in my mother's room; there was an empty bottle in the windowsill. When I opened the door, I could see that a lamp had been knocked over. I was happy to see that it wasn't broken; I hated to sweep.

I walked up to my mother's room, making sure not to make too much noise. Her door was open a little, and the drone of the Channel 2 news found its way into the hallway. I had to knock on the door pretty hard - she had fallen asleep.

"You... you got my groceries," she said, waking up.

"There was a cop there and... and, Barry didn't let me buy any alcohol." I could see that the situation was working itself out in her head. "I bought your Diet Coke, though," I added.

She sat up surprising fast. "What do you mean?" she slurred, rising out of bed and stumbling slightly. "I told you to get me those groceries. You are the only one I have left in the world. I asked you to do one thing, and you failed." She had two tears running down her face, and she reached for her purse. "Give me my keys, I'll get it myself."

I couldn't let her have the keys. I knew that she would be back and that I'd get to drive to the liquor store the next time, but I didn't want to give them to her. Something told me that giving her the keys meant giving up to her. My mom always said that she would drink to get comfortable. I had realized some time ago that the opposite was true. I wouldn't let her turn me into her errand boy, then her bartender, then her drinking buddy, and then another version of herself. I kept the keys and ran out of the room.

"Stop!" she screamed, coming after me. "Give me those keys right this minute. If you leave out that door, don't come the hell back." I got down the stairs and to the door. My mother got to the bottom of the stairs quickly but sloppily, she then took a nearby glass and hurled it toward the door. She missed me widely, but some of the shards hit my ear.

I opened the door widely and stepped out. "Don't leave me," she panted. She seemed to have fallen to the floor. She was kneeling at the doorframe, bleeding on her forearms and legs, cursing and yelling. I didn't really hear her. I got in the car and drove away.

I had driven 20 miles before I realized I was going in circles. I needed to go somewhere, so I went to the school. Classes would be starting the next day, and I had nowhere else to be.

I pulled into the parking lot and turned off the engine. It was the first time I could remember being early to school.

I looked over and noticed that the bag from the store was still on the passenger seat. I never even brought it into the house. I was pretty hungry, so I took out my potato chips and began to eat them as the radio played.

I looked in the bag to get some of that Diet Coke. I always thought it tasted nasty, but the chips were surprisingly hot, and I needed a drink.

I pulled out a glass bottle - it seemed that Barry slipped my mother something that would get her by until the next day. The vodka bottle opened easily. The first swallow burned; my nostrils could barely handle the smell. I coughed a little, and took another swig. It still tasted better than Diet Coke. I ate the chips and drank the vodka until I fell asleep.

\* \* \* \*

"Somebody wakeup that young man! Sleeping in class on the first day..."

I felt the hard poke of somebody's hand on my shoulder. I lifted my head and half opened my eyes. "What?" I said.

The teacher was standing in front of his desk, and everyone's eyes were on me. The stares reminded me of the cop's, which reminded me that all I had in the world that minute was my mother's \$60 change and her car. The scowl on my teacher's face brought me back to reality.

"You must already know everything about psychology, since you decided to sleep in my class. So I asked you what the side effects of a drug overdose are." He seemed mad.

I looked at him, and could only think about how useless this all was, and how I had so much more stuff to do.

I opened my mouth to speak, and could feel it coming. I opened my mouth, and threw up all over the desk and onto the floor.

# Liberia Waits

## by Ora Horton-Drayton

Clothed with majesty and splendor  
She sits under the West African Sun  
She sits amidst an array of colors  
Colors that only Africa can wear

Along her coasts beats a beautiful rhythm  
The rhythm of the waves splashing from the  
Atlantic  
bathing her with salty tears

From her belly she brings forth life  
She is fertile and the life she creates gives back to  
her life

She is content  
She is at peace  
The God she worships is good to her  
He breathes on her ...warmth...dry warmth  
She receives warmth for a season and then sends  
showers to cool the warmth  
This is also for a season  
She is happy that her seasons are constant and she  
will thrive because of this constancy

She is wealthy. Her wealth shines bright and she  
smiles as she displays her riches. She is proud to  
show them off. She is swollen with pride because  
of her gold, silver, malachite, diamonds, rubies,  
iron ore, rubber and all of her rich minerals.  
She also has hidden treasures known only to her  
and her God. She knows of the oil and beautiful  
jewels deep within her belly. She is beautiful and  
she knows it.

Her people are strong, they are brown, they are beautiful and they are wise.

They have kind hearts, trusting hearts, hearts made to love. They are at peace.

It is good that they trust in themselves and that they trust one another. Friendship is their anthem. Love is their law.

One day, poison crept unto her shores. It came disguised. It wore a cloak of friendship, love and trust. It smiled at her and she smiled back. She allowed it to look at her beauty, she displayed her wealth, she showed off her riches, she shared her warmth, she shared her showers that cooled her warmth. She allowed it to bathe in the salty tears that washed her shores and she showed it her trust.

It was fascinated with the fruit of her belly. It mingled with her people and it deceived their trusting minds. It came in the form of a friend because friendship is their anthem.

Her people believed in it and it slowly worked its way into their hearts pretending to love them because Love is their law. It worked its way into their minds.....it stole her riches, it stole the fruit of her belly, it took away everything from her.

It took the minds of her people and twisted them to be as its own. All the while it was disguised. The hearts of her people were changed. It took away their trusting hearts, their peace, their belief in her God.

and now,

She lies weak. She has been stripped to the very core of her being. She is tired. Her people are scattered to all ends of the earth. She cannot be happy. She cannot be content. She is sad. She lies very still. She does not feel the warmth; she does not feel the showers that cool her warmth. The tears of her people mingle with the salty tears of the Atlantic as they bathe her shores. Her belly has not given forth the life as it has in the past. She lies still and she waits. She prays that the God who gave her life in the beginning will come and revive her again. He will hear the cries of her people. He has promised to heal their land. Liberia waits!

# From the Field to the White House by Charlie Williams IV

*A commentary on the ascension of Barack H. Obama to the Presidency of the United States.*

This is a process that has taken centuries. 389 years to be exact. From the Gold Coast in Africa, to the plantations of the South. Many have tried, died, and selflessly given up their lives so that we could see this day. As my friend Aaron said "we are the hopes and dreams of our ancestors" Black people all around this country have never experienced such jubilation and hope. As Obama reiterated last night, this election was not about him, it was about YOU, ME and the AMERICAN PEOPLE. Who would have ever thought this day would come? Not by the slimmest of margins, no recounts or re-dos; A DECISIVE 338-163 (3 states still pending) win in the Electoral College. This is the Democratic, Representative form of government at it's highest peak. The PEOPLE have spoken loudly from sea to shining sea, from the depths of Florida to the coalmines of Pennsylvania and everywhere in between!

Politically it was a massacre. McCain won no state worth more than 11 votes OTHER than Texas, which will probably always be Red through and through. Obama swung 7, COUNT THEM, 7 RED STATES to be BLUE; a feat, which has never been accomplished. The Senate and House are OVERWHELMINGLY Democrat, thusly giving the Democratic Party a CLEAR MANDATE for change.

I feel something trickling through my body, and it's not blood. It's pride...self-worth...change...power....and most importantly...HOPE...THE HOPE that we will become once again the most powerful nation on the planet. THE HOPE that we will rise from the ashes of black on black crime and ignorant gang violence. THE HOPE that there will be FULLY EQUAL public schools, regardless of demographics. THE HOPE that any child will be able to pursue a college degree if they put in the time, work, and dedication necessary; and money will not be a deterrent. And finally, THE HOPE & PRAYER that the fundamental system of politics has forever changed in this country and will move in a positive, Bi-Partisan, REPRESENTATIVE direction.

IN THE END, Barack Hussein Obama has the weight of a nation, NO, of a race, NO...OF MANKIND on his shoulders and I personally could not think of another Human being who could carry it so gracefully.



# Glen Loury & The African-American Tradition

## by John Torrey

The African-American condition has always been dual-edged. We were both people and property at one point in our American history. We were freed from shackles and chains and left to economic bondage. And still today, the famous double consciousness that W.E.B. Dubois stressed still exists; a middle-class black has "forgotten" who he is and where he came from all because he is no longer letting himself be a victim. These are the issues that Glenn Loury attacks in his book, One by One From the Inside Out. He opens quickly and with conviction, defending every point he makes from page 1.

The main idea Loury presents in the first section of his book is that problems blacks face in the United States cannot be completely pinned on racist whites. Loury stresses that black people should begin to shoulder some accountability and responsibility rather than continue to play the victim. He speaks on civil rights leadership and how they continue to actively play the victim, giving blacks an example to follow. He says that the civil rights leaders claim that the reason African-Americans are in such dire straits at this point in time is because of white racism. This claim is a bedrock of his argument; that blacks do not take enough responsibility for our own presence by becoming more self-sufficient rather than waiting on orders from others, whether they be black or white.

Loury appears to have a firm grasp on certain methodologies to uplift blacks in America. He would like full equality, not just material equality. He defines equality as "...more than an approximately equal material provision. Also crucial, I maintain, is equal respect in the eyes of one's fellow citizens." (Loury 22) He feels that the time to advocate for civil rights has ended and that black America should move past that, and that we cannot while these black leaders continue to proudly paint our race as victims of racist whites who care about nothing more than seeing African-Americans in a subservient position. The civil rights leaders have "too much the story of discrimination, repression, hopelessness, and frustration and too little the saga of uplift and the march towards empowerment whether others cooperate or not." (23) Loury asserts that blacks rely on affirmative action so much so that we cannot feel proud to have jobs; we always feel that we are a product of affirmative action and that when we do not measure up to whites in a certain standard that it is due to unfair practices of some sort. This is where Loury begins his controversial behavior.

Loury is right when he says that blacks need to begin their quest to uplift themselves. He very quickly removes the notion that racist whites contribute to our overall position in the United States. Both racist and merely ignorant whites actively and passively assist in the persistent problems that the black race in America faces. There are many instances where a white man hires an under qualified white man over a qualified black man and nobody can deny that race is the deciding factor in that decision. Loury's motives for describing the plight of blacks while downplaying whites is to reinforce his notion that he shares with author Shelby Steele that blacks need to stop blaming whites for their problems and waiting on those same whites to fix said problems. This is an idea that

that has plenty of validity. African-Americans all too often blame whites for their socioeconomic situations when there are other factors involved that outweigh "the man's" involvement. Loury seems to pardon whites in how he describes the state of black America, and their involvement cannot be forgotten nor pardoned. He accepts their involvement, but adds a disclaimer to their involvement: "Now blacks have in fact been constrained by a history of racism and limited opportunity. Some of these effects continue to manifest themselves to the current day. Yet now that greater opportunity exists, taking advantage of it requires that we accept personal responsibility for our own fate, even though the effects of this past remain with us in part." (29) A large amount of what he says here can be agreed with; blacks *do* need to take greater personal responsibility for their futures. But the centuries of brutality, constraint, racist aggression, denial, and all around oppression cannot be dismissed with one sentence. The effects do not just linger on into today; they are ever-present. Loury does not wish to admit that, otherwise his proposal to black America loses a leg.

Loury maintains strong points regarding Civil Rights leaders, black leaders and black activists. They tend to keep the focus and the blame on what whites have done and could do instead of what blacks are doing to each other. He asserts that "only blacks can effectively provide moral leadership for their people." (41) Loury maintains a steady attack on black leaders, seemingly claiming not just ineptitude, but an inability to lead our people. The onus does not fall solely on black leaders when black on black violence takes place daily in the inner-city; it remains a problem that can be dealt with on an individual basis. A black person must understand where he or she is and what can be done legally to get themselves into a stronger socioeconomic place. Black leaders could be doing a better job, which is very true. Loury uses the example of black politicians focusing on police brutality rather than blacks being prosecuted at a much higher rate than whites. Both are difficult issues; however the latter issue requires more political investigative power to figure out why this is so. The same thing goes for academic performance disparities.

Loury's contention that black leaders do not focus on relevant issues creates a problem. He earlier made the claims that for blacks to begin the process of uplifting themselves they must stop blaming white people and racism on everything negative with black society. In that same vein, Loury has done the same thing with black leaders, blaming them for not doing what he feels should be done. Loury himself insinuated that all the blaming that whites do put themselves in a position of being a victim, enabling blacks to ask for "handouts." By attacking a vast majority of black leaders, Loury has not done anything productive. Placing blame on a certain group or groups of people does not help the situation. If Loury wants to dispel the problem that blacks and black leaders in particular appear to have, blaming a different group is not the most productive way to go about it. Motivating black leaders by presenting different options on helping the black community pull itself out of the hole we were thrown in does much better than attacking black leaders by claiming their method has been horrendous.

Loury enjoys displaying what he calls "fundamental failures of black society." (52) He mentions again how poor blacks are in a pit that they cannot seem to get out of, academic problems among black youth, black on black crime and the shocking rate of teenage pregnancies among black youth. He again takes a shot at black leaders, saying that if black leaders admit these failures then they admit their professional demise. While this may be true, Loury does not provide any solution to these problems. This is troubling, if Loury feels he can critique and comment on problems in black society he should provide answers to these problems. He provides accurate commentary, black children are often dissociated from their parents, many blacks are dependant on the federal government to provide funds for them, and many black children fail the public school standardized tests. Loury seems to refuse to give reasons for why these situations occur. His martyrs are black leaders, which is greatly unfair to those black leaders. Indeed, they promote the negative aspects about black life in America; however that is to get black people thinking about how to improve their quality of life in the United States.

Loury brings to the forefront the ever-present Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. DuBois debate about which way for blacks to progress. Dubois thought education and lobbying for civil rights was the best way, Washington advocated black business and gaining financial security and power as a vehicle to gaining political power. Loury, not surprisingly, backs Washington's view of things. Blacks need to take personal responsibility; if the government is controlled by whites, why would they drastically alter their ways and create laws that will significantly improve black life? That is something that blacks in America do not have much control over, so it makes more sense to do the things that we can control: start business, become employed, earn money. Fighting a capitalist society on a moral basis will win some battles, but not the war. This is how blacks like Dubois have been fighting the war for equality. Their moral basis is sound and in an ideal situation would be the basis for gaining political representation and equality in the United States. This is, however, a very monetary society - everybody's got a price. Putting a price on rights is ridiculous; nobody has proposed that. Earning money and earning rights, as foolish as it sounds, is how Washington and Loury feel we should go about gaining our equality. "...when the effect of past oppression is to leave a people diminished, the attainment of true equality with the former oppressor cannot depend overly much on his generosity; it must ultimately derive from an elevation of their selves above the state of diminishment." (73) Loury has gotten it right again here. Blacks cannot continue to rely on the "handouts" from whites and wait on reparations for the centuries of brutal treatment and the aftermath we suffer from now. If we really want rights, we will not wait on laws; we will go take what we were born to have and deserve. Passing bills into laws that assist blacks is not something to be forgotten, however merely advocating through politics cannot be the sole method to gaining true equality in the United States.

Ultimately, Loury promotes self-help. He appears to be a man frustrated with what his people are doing to each other and the image we have presented to the world. We kill each other, rob each other, undermine each other, and do little to help anybody. Loury used this book to take a lot of cheap shots on black leaders, including Al Sharpton. In the process he reinforced a notion that has been downplayed in the black community - climbing out the hole instead of being pulled out. We have been waiting on another Martin Luther King to pull us out of this hole we seem to be in and digger ourselves in deeper. Loury advocates that we stop waiting and start climbing. We need to educate our children. We need to cut down on the black on black crime, and the crime in general that blacks have become notorious for. We need to focus on the advances our race has failed as points to surpass rather than continue to marvel at them as we fall further and further away from those goals. We need to try a new method to getting a positive message out to black youth that they *can* make it in this country. Loury promotes these ideas, and this is where many people will agree with him. He sets up this section of the book very convincingly, downplaying white involvement to capture a reader and perhaps anger him, then providing an insight as to what blacks can start to do for themselves. Ultimately, no matter how controversial Loury continues to be, he says very clearly that blacks need to empower themselves to start to climb out of the hole.

# I Pray

## by Kevin Morris

When the night is still,  
And there's a calm in the air.  
I fall to my knees and pray,  
A prayer for all to hear.

I pray for our guardians;  
Our fathers and mothers.  
I pray for our charges;  
Our sisters and brothers.

I pray for our families;  
All the ones that we love.  
May you forever have favor,  
In the eyes of God up above.

I pray for our friends;  
Who've stood by our side.  
Through the joy and the sorrow,  
All of it taken in stride.

I pray for our lovers;  
Who eternally stand,  
Beside us and remind us,  
Always to hold is your hand.

I pray for those who've lost their lives,  
I pray for those who teach us, heal us, defend us.  
I pray for those who fight far away;  
Whose dedication, whose courage is endless.

I pray for those with no food or shelter,  
I pray for those with nowhere to go.  
I pray for those who've lost their way in faith,  
I pray for those who just don't know.

I pray for the meek, the sick and infirmed;  
I pray for those beyond cure.  
I pray for those with hatred in their hearts;  
May their souls one day be pure.

I pray for loved ones passed away,  
And loved ones yet to come.

I pray for those held in bondage,  
May they one day see the Sun.

I pray for our leaders;  
Through their wisdom, our dreams unfurl.  
I pray for our children,  
May we leave them a better world.

I pray for those we loved and lost;  
Whom we never got to tell.  
Those who taught us to cherish the ones we still have,  
And never miss a chance to wish them well.

I pray that you all know how much I love you,  
And this message I send:  
My life may pass quickly;  
But for you, my love knows no end.

# Something Has GOT to Give

## by Jonathan Wall

Sometimes you witness situations and happenings which you always knew existed, but never grasped the severity of. Things that make you take a step back and realize that everything can't just be pushed aside with cliché's like " life isn't fair". Sometimes things are not right. I just wanted to take a few minutes, and write about what I witnessed yesterday, that will change my life forever.

The inequalities in education are something that I've always been passionate about understanding, and identifying the underlying factors of. Going to predominantly white schools on one side of town for grades K-8, and a predominantly black school on the other side for grades 9-12, helped me see more clearly the dividing line of educational quality. But yesterday, Saturday, March 28, 2009 I saw firsthand the overwhelming disparities that now plague America's public schools.

As some of you know, yesterday I was a judge at Georgia Mathfest. Georgia Mathfest is an event where over 5,000 1st-8th graders from all across Georgia , come to the Georgia Convention Center , in College Park , to engage in a full afternoon's worth of mathematic activities, games, and all around fun. One of the main events in Mathfest is the Math-bate event. A combination of math and debate, Math-bating is an event in which students from competing schools get into teams of 5, are given 7 scenario's, and have to analyze and solve the scenarios mathematically. They also have to think critically about the various situations and apply reasoning and logic. Once they solve a scenario, they would give a 3-4 minute presentation in front of me and my fellow Morehouse brother and friend Bryan. We would then give them a score based 5% on the correctness of their math, but 95% on their ability to explain their reasoning and the general fluidity of their presentation. Once they solved one scenario, they could go back and try another, before the hour allotted for the event was over. Bryan and I did this for about 8 hours yesterday. What we witnessed was disheartening.

There were about 20 teams on each grade level, 1st-8th. Being in the state of Georgia , about 15 of the teams were completely Caucasian/Asian/Non African American, 2 or 3 were completely African-American and 2 or 3 were a mix. There were tremendous gaps in the speaking and reasoning ability of the African-American groups vs. that of the groups of other races. The Caucasian/Asian groups would stand in front of us with confidence and pride, stating the scenario, looking us in the eyes and using immense vocabularies consistent of words far beyond what I THOUGHT the average kid their age understood. They were always very eager to present, and were the first ones to finish. Some of the Caucasian/Asian groups got through 3 or 4 scenarios before the African-American groups got through 1. The African-American groups were significantly less prepared while presenting, sometimes all looking in different directions, getting a majority of the problems wrong, and having one or two students who would do the talking while the others just stood there. Not because they didn't want to speak, but because they didn't know the information. Some even struggled to read the instructions, which were consistent of vocabulary from their grade levels' curriculum. The intended fun of the event was not felt by these students. The math-debate was just another exercise in which African-Americans saw their Caucasian peers outperform and win.

Being a judge, I had an obligation to be fair, impartiality, and neutrality, no matter what the circumstance. I would search and search for reasons to give the African-American groups a few extra points, so the scores would look respectable, but my searches came back empty. I didn't

quite realize to the full extent what I was witnessing until the event was over and the winners had been crowned.

I cannot even begin to describe the feelings and thoughts that raced through my heart and mind as I walked group after group of kids to the podium to be awarded their first place plaques. There were 8 grades participating, so there were 8 teams of winners. Each team consisted of five students, so there were 40 individual winners. Out of those 40 winners, only 3 were black. And two of them were on the same team.

It troubles me that both America 's Public Schools AND PRIVATE, but that's another are still unequal and lack not only diversity, but equality in the distribution of education. Some try to blame it on the intellectual capacity of the kids, but that is definitely NOT the case. It all trickles down to the unequal distribution of educational RESOURCES. There is no reason for there to be such a wide gap in the academic skill-set of students in the same grade, in the same state.

Something must be done. Disproportionate education IS injustice.

I really could go on and on, about this, but for the sake of you reading this note, I'll wrap it up. I just wanted everyone to know what I realized about why most racial statistics regarding academics are still unbalanced. Everything starts with a foundation. The roots, if you will. Elementary/Middle schools are the roots from which we sprout up during high-school, college, and life. When a root isn't getting the proper nutrients that it needs in order to grow, it shrivels up. It still grows, but sprouts sideways and curls up. It wilts and folds until eventually it dies. It may be harsh, but if we don't make a change, this is what will continue to happen to generation after generation of our youth. There has got to be a better way. And we are all in charge of finding it.....

Something has GOT to give

# Sambo Lives in Your House: The Capitalist Promotion of Black Deprecation and Exclusion from Popular Culture by David Roberts

The cameras are rolling. Howard Stern sits in front of a pink hued background tossing his mess of shaggy brown hair and peering at his guests through a large pair of sunglasses. He is being filmed for his show, Awakenings. Roger Ebert and Gene Siskel, distinguished movie critics both, sit across from him waiting to be interviewed. To Stern's right is his co-host Robin Quivers, a beautiful woman with short dark hair who is dressed in a green business suit that would cry "take me seriously," if it had the mouth to do so. She is the only black person on the set. Stern begins his interview by questioning Ebert about his girlfriend; she's a black woman he's heard. Hhow progressive.' Quivers smiles and Stern continues. The host has always had a fantasy about black women. He admits, a desire to role play a slave and master relationship. Quivers begins to laugh uncontrollably, she makes eye contact with no one. "If a woman was good to me, I would take her back to master's quarters...I could breed all these women." Quivers continues to laugh off screen. It is her only contribution to the segment (Howard Stern Channel 9 Nine Show - Awakenings A Waking Up Part 2/2 Siskel Ebert Review).

The preceding anecdote reflects the common role of the black person in much of American popular culture today. She is the sidekick, the peripheral token representation of her race. If she is lucky this curious witness is the uninteresting side plot in a story otherwise too big and important for her black britches, and if she is unlucky and complicit like Robin Quivers, she is a grinning Sambo doll whose smile is apt to draw a grimace. If one considers the full spectrum of American popular culture today, it is no wonder that the appearances of blacks in television, comic books and movies have left so many wanting. Our portrayal reflects a pattern of racial bias in which black characters have routinely been excluded from positions of import in these media. Conversely, Caucasians are spread ubiquitously throughout pop culture, seen in a wide variety of media, playing a tremendous cross section of roles therein. This should come as no surprise, given the capitalist system that exists in the United States, a system that is protected and perpetuated largely by wealthy, heterosexual, non-disabled, white males, and one that employs racism as a tool to stay in tact. These people, true capitalists, use difference to dominate those members of society who do not precisely fit their capitalist mold, and in so doing destroy the possibility of cooperation among those whom they disenfranchise. The exclusion and depreciation of blacks in popular culture then, represents one facet of the tool that is racism, and this tool is used with acuity to protect capitalism.

When considering television today, we find it difficult to name a single program with a predominantly black cast that is consistently present among America's weekly top ten most viewed shows. If this task sounds impossible that is for good reason, in 2009 no such program exists (Nielson Wire). Yet not very long ago this was not the case. Programs such as The Cosby Show, Family Matters, and The Fresh-Prince of Bel-Air demonstrated through their Nielson ratings that America has previously been willing to watch shows with black leading actors (Nielson Wire); so why has there been such a regression since the 1980's and 90's, when these programs originally aired?



One answer as described in a study conducted by Dr. Darnell Hunt of the University of California, Berkeley, suggests that America's television Network heads may be directly to blame (344). In his 2001 study, Hunt found that blacks made up slightly less than 12% of all television characters present on the major television networks (ABC, CBS and NBC), and disturbingly that more than half of the black characters who received in excess of 10 minutes of screen time weekly appeared on shows that aired on either Monday or Saturday nights, the latter being the least-watched television night of the week (343). It may not come as a great surprise that the president of each of these networks is a wealthy, heterosexual, non-disabled, white male (344). Is it an improbable extrapolation that these men are perpetuating a system of racially biased black exclusion through their very scheduling choices? Certainly not; "sure we'll put a few blacks on TV," the network heads must smile, "We'll just do it when no one is watching." The result is that few blacks are seen on television, and through this purposeful exclusion, capitalists artificially stratify society. This stratification perpetuates racism by empowering whites through inclusion and conversely leading blacks to believe that they are of a lower social stratum by their exclusion. The two races are left to feel at odds with each other because of the creation of this difference, and working together to end the system under which both groups suffer seems impossible. After all, why would the empowered whites relinquish the privilege associated with their race when it allows them to feel that they are 'better' than blacks (and indeed other minorities), even if they feel underprivileged compared to the capitalists who manipulate them? The answer is that they would not, and this is precisely the outcome that true capitalist desire, because the creation of racial bias protects their own privilege by misdirecting the underprivileged from the problem of capitalism to the fabrication of race.

Such bias is no less prevalent in print media, specifically comic books, in which the statistics related to black exclusion and deprecation are even more telling than those from television. John Jackson Miller's comic sales report for January of 2009 demonstrates that there was not a single black character present in the casts of the month's top ten most sold comics (Comichron). In the industry's primary trade magazine, Wizard, there was not a single black creator ranked within the top ten lists of artists or writers for the same month (Gomez 113). Neither of these facts should come as a tremendous surprise, because in 2009 no comic book being released by the major publishing houses (Marvel and DC) features a black lead character, and neither publishing house presently employs a single black creator to work on any of their flagship titles - titles it must be added, that are consistently among their most sold monthly. Unsurprisingly the heads of these companies are heterosexual, non-disabled, white males as are the top ranked creators (Gomez 114). Immediately then there is a striking parallel between television and comic books, for just as racial bias dictates the prevalence of white characters and creators in the former medium, so to does it dictate their prevalence in the latter. Perhaps it may be argued that the racial bias perpetrated within the comic book industry is reflective of the bias that exists among comic book enthusiasts. After all, the majority of comic book readers are white males, ages 16 to 34 (Comichron), and these men wish to see themselves reflected in the heroes of the stories they read. The publishers and creators are only giving these men what they want; so is this truly the same type of insidious, racism-creating, capitalist behavior exhibited by television networks? It absolutely is, because by excluding blacks (and women, and homosexuals, and the disabled) the comic book industry sends the message that their white, male, non-disabled heroes are 'normal,' and that people not possessing these traits are to be excluded because they are somehow lesser. Certainly the comic book reading demographic in America would change to become more representative of the great variety of people who exist in society if there were more heroes that reflected this variety, but such a demographical change would

not serve capitalists. Indeed while the comic industry would certainly benefit from the expansion of its audience in terms of books sold, the capitalists who dictate how the industry is to function benefit more from the racism that can be generated through comics. Indeed by naturalizing the idea that white, non-disabled, heterosexual America is a rung above everyone else in the country, capitalists establish difference and limit the sort of inter-group communication and appreciation that could threaten capitalist privilege.

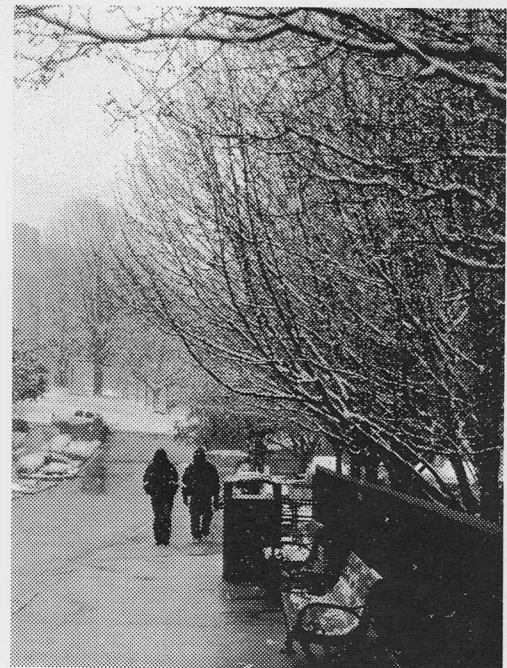
Cinema is another avenue in which blacks have been excluded and deprecated to a tremendous extent. This could be argued in a variety of ways, from the niche, ghettoized roles that blacks seem to predominantly occupy on movie screens to the limited praise that talented black actors and directors have received within the industry. Why is it that Denzel Washington's villainous, criminal role in American Gangster led the film to sales in excess of 265 million dollars (Box Office Mojo), while the uplifting, positive role model he played in The Great Debaters contributed to the paltry 30 million dollars that movie grossed domestically (Box Office Mojo)? Both films featured predominantly African American casts, but the former was produced solely by wealthy, heterosexual, white males with a budget of \$100 million for filming and advertisement, while the latter was produced in large part by African Americans and had a budget of only \$15 million (Box Office Mojo). To make it clearer as to how these budgets affect a film's being watched, "American Gangster" opened on over 3000 American movie screens when it was first released while "The Great Debaters" was seen on only slightly more than 1000 (Box Office Mojo); clearly budgets and advertising - which contribute to the exposure of a movie - are as critical to its success as a good plot and believably portrayed characters. Given these statistics the message from the capitalist elite of Hollywood to the black community seems clear. "Be who we tell you to be - the treacherous, the unscrupulous, the sinister - and we will work with you. Seek to portray yourselves in lights that threaten our privilege by negating the ways in which white America perceives you, and we'll have no part in your projects." There is a measure of helplessness created in blacks as a result of this attitude, because to survive in the capitalist system our choice is to acquiesce and work within it, or produce change by cooperating with those who belong to groups distinct from our own. This cooperation is a difficult feat because maintaining a hierarchal structure of difference empowers the otherwise underprivileged whites with whose aid true change could be manifested. Indeed this demonstrates, as all the examples have thus far, that the maintenance of racism is an act of self preservation among underprivileged whites trying to survive in a capitalist system. One can almost hear such whites sigh, "better you than me," in their racist actions toward blacks. They are merely playing their part in a piece written and produced by capitalist America.

Ultimately a consideration of American pop culture yields a pattern of racial bias against blacks perpetuated by capitalists. While some differences among people are factual - black people are not white people in history; appearance or culture -- the interpretation of such differences has been skewed by capitalist America to create distrust and hierarchy between blacks and whites. Unfortunately, changing the paradigm of capitalist privilege and power in America is a viciously circular matter, because without the capital - both influence and monetary - that comes with power, redistributing it would seem impossible. Furthermore, sans cooperation the capitalist system is likely to be maintained in its present form indefinitely. By cunningly ensuring that underprivileged whites maintain a higher social position than all blacks, capitalists provide such Caucasians with little incentive to change the system; why 'rock the boat' so to speak? Whites reaping the social benefits of racism are not apt to find a good answer to this, yet until society refuses to allow capitalists to exploit difference, no true change can be afforded and Sambo will sit patiently in the houses of this nation, dancing when called on to do so but frowning behind grinning lips.

# What Makes This House a Home by Lamont Cobb



Driving along Westview Boulevard, one is immediately flanked on both sides by people of different shades and hair styles, men in suits and women in flowing dresses, baseball caps worn low, and crisps polo shirts of every color. Indeed, what you see when driving into Morehouse is a community. The school does not have the financial resources to support the grand master plans and building schemes that you find among similar liberal arts institutions, but it makes up for it's dearth of design through the outdoor, public spaces throughout the campus. The beauty and peacefulness of the green outside of Graves and Robert Halls can be contrasted with the bombast and power at the top of the steps of Kilgore. King Chapel presents the viewer a sense of thoughtful respite and regality. The road from the Parking Deck to Graves Hall is lined with simple benches that foster interaction and communal spirit among the students.





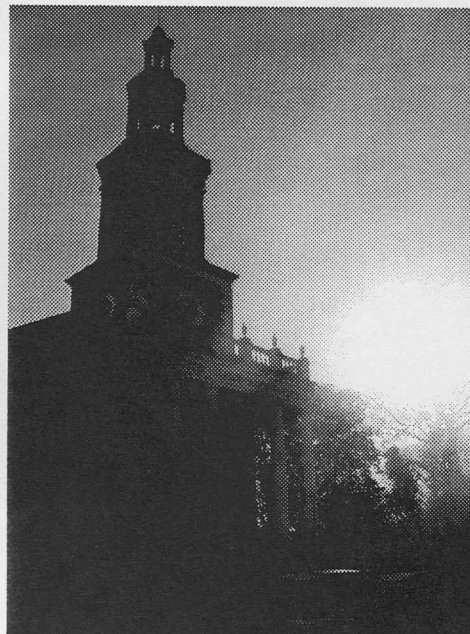
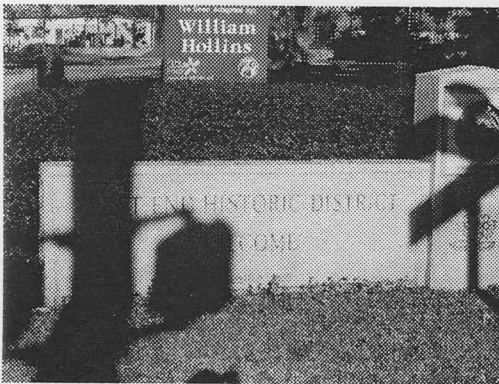


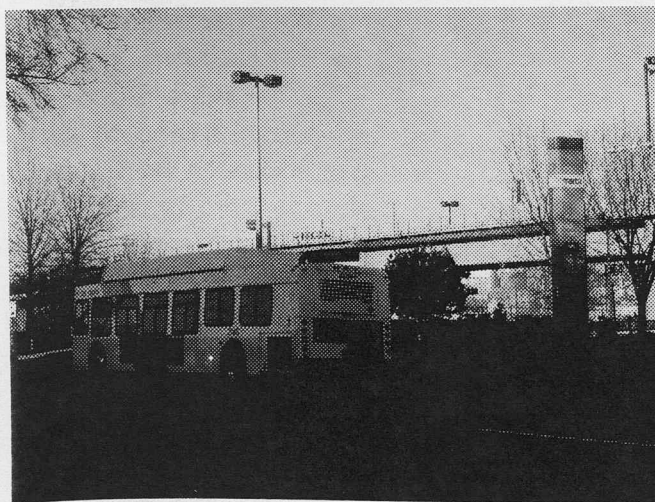
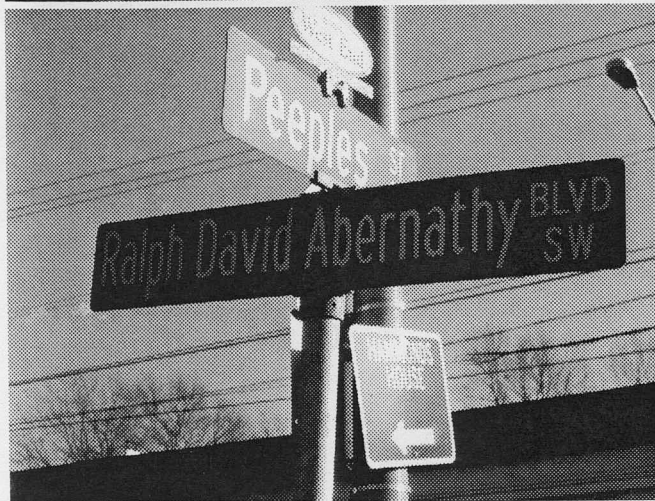
# Place – Where We Are Going

# The West End You Don't Know

## by Lamont Cobb

"Watch your step before you cross that bridge ..." referring to the Lee Street Bridge that connects the Atlanta University Center Schools to the West End. This is the furtive warning given out to hundreds of unknowing Atlanta University Center freshman students during freshman orientation. From then on, the West End takes on a mysterious and hostile meaning in students' minds. Rumors of crime, blight, abandonment, and more paint a desolate picture of a once great central city neighborhood falling into neglect. Many students spend their college experience coddled within the gates of their schools, unaware and immune to the challenges and the promise of the neighborhood around them. The West End Historic District is one of Atlanta's oldest neighborhoods, started in 1835, at the former intersection of Whitehall and Gordon St (now Lee St. and Abernathy). *Continued on Next Page*





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The neighborhood was home to many Atlanta elite in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century, but demographically changed with the first wave of streetcar suburbs in the 1920s and later white flight in the 1960s. The area was hit hard by the crack epidemic of the 1980s, but active and community-minded residents of all races have begun to gentrify and change the area. The former Whitehall and Gordon St. intersection was once home to successful business chains such as Sears, Piggly Wiggly, Goodyear, and Firestone but today is dominated by hair salons, barbershops and discount stores. Like many central city neighborhoods, West End faces many challenges as urban population trends point to a migration back to compact, denser urban core neighborhoods. Everyone seems to have plans for the area. The leaders of NPU-T have a plan, as does the City of Atlanta, the "gentrifying" new residents, the AUC schools, MARTA, even the residents of John O. Chiles homes. We hope that all of these competing plans will translate into something real and tangible for West End that will incorporate a better quality of life for new and old residents alike.

# [untitled]

## by Alonté Johnson

im just a boy  
trying to tell a girl  
that he cares for her  
how much he "hearts" her  
how she makes his soul smile with the sweet splendor of hers  
and how the heavens craft harmonious gospels when she enters the room  
and how [when she permits]  
our bodies will make romantic rhythms  
that allow heaving hearts and strumming souls  
to give way to silent songs shared only by us  
i stand hoping that the love that we once shared  
has not faded  
like the dimming light of the evening sun  
bringing the chill of night and thoughts of loneliness  
seeking her warmth  
like the moth drawing nearer to the flame  
that is she ...  
better yet, let me be that flame  
that shines so brightly until its very last moment  
existing only to bring her near  
but have no fear... Cuz she'll never be burned  
simply a means of guiding her  
back to the soul that longs for her  
the heart that beats for her  
the life that's incomplete without her  
that boy...  
standing...  
ever so reserved  
pigeon footed  
hands in pocket  
head bowed  
but eyes forever gazing into her soul  
no longer trying to tell her how he cares for her  
or how he "hearts" her  
because right now  
im just a boy ...  
telling a girl...  
that he loves her



# Who's Killing the Mystique?

## by Vann Newkirk

I'm using this note as an opportunity to open some dialogue on an issue which has recently become a major topic at Morehouse College: what seems to be a large increase in the number of flamboyantly *feminine* (I say feminine and not homosexual here because the issue stems not from their supposed or realized sexual orientation but their emulation and adoption of feminine fashions, styles, and appearances).

**\*\*Disclaimer\*\*** This note is not about gay bashing and I, Vann Newkirk, carry the same amount of respect for men and women of all sexual orientations and preferences. It is solely meant to open up dialog on the matter addressed.

To my argument, Morehouse has always had a reputation of taking in black male youth and molding them and culturing them to become strong responsible black Men. I believe that the Morehouse "mystique" really refers to the unique brand of masculinity and culture that a Morehouse Man carries with him, something which should be instilled in him during his undergraduate years. To this end, Morehouse has always made great efforts to supplant the dominant stereotypes of black men of the era with a rare positive image of Christian Black men in the mold of Martin Luther King and Howard Thurman -- men who would be at ease in the social, political, and business spheres among any racial group.

Whether fighting the negative stereotype of the black work hand who was too dumb to learn (by teaching him how to read and philosophize rather than teaching him simply how to work) or fighting the negative stereotype of the black hoodlum (by teaching him how to be a scientist rather than a hustler) Morehouse has always railed against what it perceived as negative portrayals of black men. To this end, certain initiatives dealing with the image of Morehouse students have been affected. The requirement of certain classes to dress in business attire or the (unenforced) rules regarding attire at crown forum or the (also unenforced) "no sagging initiative" have all sought to mold the image of the Morehouse Man to one of classic masculinity and professionalism. However, the recent explosion of men who wear purses, heels, women's clothing and even those undergoing physical and biological changes to appear more feminine seems to undermine the mission of Morehouse and is, in my mind, a problem that the school must combat to the best of its abilities.

Don't get me wrong, I have nothing against homosexuals or people outside the grounds of this school who feel the need to express alternate gender-sex complexes by cross-dressing or becoming transgender. By all means "do your thing." However, I do have a problem with people who come to this school, a historically all-male school, and attempt to dress in a way befitting of women and those who actually change their appearances to be more feminine. People, especially those who seem to be in charge of the Maroon Tiger criticize people like me and say that we are closed-minded, that

we hold onto antiquated notions of masculinity and that accepted gender roles are changing. However much these statements are true in the general population, my rebuttal is that *Morehouse College* has never been the place to go to embrace whatever gender role or view of man is *en vogue* but has always been a place (and one of the only places) that has taught Black men to be strong, vital, professional, and definitively masculine in a way that will allow us to positively represent the entire black population. In my mind, a flamboyantly feminine man is absolutely *none* of those things.

As I have stated ad nauseum I have no problem with feminine men outside of this school, but I feel like with what Morehouse is trying to do and with the already fading image of a strong, positive, successful Black Man resting almost squarely on our shoulders, something has got to give. It is my firm belief that a man wearing lipstick is as utterly incompatible with the direction we need to be headed in as men who sag and tries to bang in school. It is ludicrous. Just like we made the controversial decision to try to stop people from dressing like thugs, we should do the right thing and stop people from dressing like women. It is all about the image.

# An Ever-Evolving Mystique

## A Rebuttal to *Who's Killing the Mystique?*

### by Gregory Davis

Well it seems that no one is coming to your ideological defense, Vann, and that is upsetting. I will not come to your defense either, but it would be nice to know that someone agrees with you.

All kidding aside, I applaud you for at least attempting a dialogue amongst different minded, yet (hopefully) respectful peers in the AUC. Not enough people are doing it in a free form, real-time format, which I think is most beneficial.

As a queer identified person who happens to be very hetero-normative, I feel a strong desire to defend my brothers (and self- or physically-identified transgender sisters) who find themselves on the receiving end of a cultural mini-war. In my mind, when you attack the "flamboyant" - for their supposed purses, make-up, what have you - you are attacking me for my identity and community, albeit indirectly or accidentally. At that, I take great offense. Since it is not my responsibility not my particular wont to legitimize myself or my community to nonmembers, I find that for my more "obvious" brethren, they are on the receiving end of a bamboozlement that they are not prepared to defend themselves for because they shouldn't have to.

As previously stated, showing scorn toward them is showing scorn toward me, and as a person at least a little equipped (I conduct my research on identity development in sexual minorities, and I am literally on both sides of the aisle), I feel I can contribute to this conversation, at least as much as I can.

I digress.

I think that in discussing this issue, especially as it pertains to the Morehouse College campus and community (including the oft-shallow pocketed alumni who suddenly matter and have some say as to how I should best represent them when they are not especially appreciating the value of my future degree), it is important to look at the past.

From my limited understanding (talk to Drs. D. Jackson and D. Klenbort for more info, if it so pleases you), in the mid-to-late 1960s, Morehouse's campus and community found itself at the precipice of a cultural transition. Two grand forces found their way onto this very campus, and they shook up a lot of people who, for lack of a better term, likes things the way they were. These two forces were Islam and Black nationalism/radicalism.

Before that time, Morehouse College was just finding itself as a non-Christian (in name only) institution. While Benjamin Mays was here, a strong sense of what it meant to be a Morehouse Man, and - more importantly - what each Man of Morehouse had to sacrifice and destroy themselves to become for the betterment of the school was being cultivated in the hearts and minds of the students. This is not unlike what is happening on Morehouse College's campus today.

In the air of the 1960s, the world was figuratively turning upside down; expectations and livelihoods were changing quickly, and for Blacks, there was much focus on the upward mobility of our community (again, not unlike now). In that midst, at Morehouse strong cultural forces were simultaneously connecting us (Civil Rights then; Obama and 'hope' today) and dividing us (religion and conformity then; sexuality and conformity now).

When Morehouse saw its first Black Panther, or when Spelman saw its first fully hijab'ed woman, can anybody believe that no heads were turned? That no one tsk-tsk'ed and boo-hoo'ed? These displays of true identity and community were extraordinarily out of place at the time, not to mention against the Christian rhetoric of our "illustrious" institution, fully engaged in the development of all (re: some) Black men.

The lesson the past presents to us should be the roadmap for the cultural storm that we find ourselves in the heart of at the moment. Instead of letting issues of gender identity and expression divide and tear us from each other, we should remember that when Islamic and Black nationalists/radicalists students first walked to quad and refused to attend church services, they were asked to change, asked to walk away and leave their true selves behind, all in the vein and pompous guise of protecting the reputation and image of Morehouse and the Morehouse Man.

Fortunately for them and for the college, they did not change and conform; they stood up and presented themselves as who they were. They made contributions to this school that have never been done since or before. They changed the face of this college and added - not distracted from - Morehouse's reputation. Precisely because they refused to be what Morehouse wanted them to be, they became just that - true men.

The parallels between the "nonconformists/outside/dissenters" of yesterday to the ones of today are common and deep running. And the possibility that they too can change Morehouse for the better is just as great as theirs. Morehouse can become the premiere institution for ALL Black men, including those who are not in line with our own bloated and dated sense of masculinity.

In this school, we not only have the next Malcolm X's and Martin Luther King, Jr.'s, but also the next Bayard Rustins and Harvey Milks. I ask out of love for my community, that if Martin Luther King, Jr. had a higher pitched voice or an affinity for long, straight hair, would he have not moved the world toward that rightful path of justice? Would have he been quelled or expelled, as I have too often heard about with our alternative gender-expressive brothers and sisters? And, more importantly, would MLK's quieting down have been for the best?

To conclude, I ask my straight, hetero-normative, and conservative peers to think twice before turning their backs on people, before asking others to cover up themselves and not be who they are. I believe that the quieting of the few is the quieting of the masses. The only line that can be drawn is an unequal and unjust one Morehouse cannot philosophically, economically, meta-physically, or spiritually lose more people than it already has.

# Desire

## by Kevin Morris

Beauty should be a sin,  
When wielded by your hand.  
To you belongs a lovely face,  
Beyond the reach of any man.

Soft, sensual lips,  
Smooth, sweet, and lush.  
A great longing desire,  
To be graced by their touch.

Eyes alight with morning hues,  
Their splendor burns within my heart.  
The wonderful image of your eyes,  
Lingers even when we're apart.

Skin like silk and hair like golden-brown velvet,  
My fingers cannot resist.  
The voices in my head are wondering,  
What kind of goddess is this?

The shape and curves of your body,  
A glamorous masterpiece to show.  
Your body is truly perfect,  
Perfection: Head to Toe.

You are all that I dream of,  
And all I desire.  
Simply looking at you,  
Sets my heart and soul on fire!

All you need to do is ask,  
And I'd venture into the abyss.  
Trust I would give you all the world,  
In exchange for just one kiss.

# My Eyes

## by Charlie Williams IV

I see the world through eyes that can't be duplicated  
Never can a person perceive like I do  
Their experiences will never match mine  
A single parent home is nothing like  
The one with the fence which is white  
Not having a male role model has shape my views  
Actually, making my world very skewed  
I don't blame anyone, but it could have been easier  
Not living the hardship of seeing gushing tears  
Fall from her eyes as she tries to remain strong  
But knowing she can't do all she wants for me  
It's the lack of funds and it hurts her terribly  
She wishes to give me the globe, but can only afford a small piece  
Pleas for Jordan's, jeans, and jerseys  
Hear responses of no, no and no  
While notebooks, pens and paper always show  
Even though I really don't care about that stuff  
It is her who helps mold my view and realize  
Those are the things that prevent life from getting rough  
Never will I be the black man who is not a father  
Never will a son of mine hang up a phone distraught  
Because his father doesn't answer the phone  
Never will a woman be furious at me  
Because I cannot handle responsibility  
In it's simplest form of providing  
For that which I helped create  
Yes, this "home" has made me who I am  
But it is a curse, which I have come not to hate  
Yet, something I cherish and will never duplicate  
So no seed of mine may never experience this fate.

# sometryemegasm by Harry Bowden

if i had to want anything, it would be for ribbons  
to cross brightly lit paths kissing all the way to  
their destinations ...

reciprocity/

i had a dream one day that everything,  
everything, is all in a bucket of rosewater, and  
sunk beneath a mass of limes ...

kaffektion/

tundraed graces bless the forest with a trusting  
eye. knowing the foreverness of history, celestial  
balances off root the busy minds of gorian ...

KluvK/

basicalitys flutter slowly about the creaminess of  
subjection. abstraction, malaysian coffee, rustic  
patterns know no bounds of settling away from  
nothing. gollum. kasnectreK/

blasey

# Time To Say Goodbye

## by Kevin Morris

A day feels like a lifetime,  
And a lifetime feels like so much more.  
So this is the feeling that makes it  
So hard for me to walk out this door.

Don't ask why we can't stay together,  
Because I honestly do not know.  
And no it's not fair,  
To offer no explanation before I go.

I broke your heart, you toyed with mine;  
So why is this so hard?  
A sadder fate I could not find,  
For a lover whose soul I guard.

We've shared so much, it seems unreal;  
Yet somehow it's so.  
The Sun's warm glimmer of hope is gone,  
But it has left the fog, the rain, and snow.

I held on way too long,  
When I knew you'd never change.  
For after a while, all those words lost meaning,  
They became so hollow, awkward, and strange.

Outside one can appear so strong,  
But inside the soul is crying for release.  
Someone who has love but taints it,  
Turns beauty to vicious beast.



They say that when your body cries,  
Your heart it cries as well.  
So our relationship has been unhealthy,  
It's given both our hearts so much Hell!!

We had our share of tests and trials,  
But the good memories are all I'll keep.  
I will dwell upon them night after night,  
And let them lure me off to sleep.

SO I've loved you from the start,  
I will love you 'til I die.  
But like the Sun that sets,  
It is time I said goodbye.

I can't tell you what art does and how it does it, but I know that often art has judged the judges, pleaded revenge to the innocent and shown to the future what the past suffered, so that it has never been forgotten....

*- John Berger*

# Some Parting Words