



CENTER FOR CIVIL  
AND HUMAN RIGHTS

HUMANITY IN  
ACTION

# JOHN LEWIS FELLOWSHIP

## ESSAYS

The American Program of the Humanity in Action Fellowship in  
Collaboration with the National Center for Civil and Human Rights

Atlanta, Georgia >> July 5 - 30, 2017

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

LETTER FROM CONGRESSMAN JOHN LEWIS .....	4
DIRECTOR'S INTRODUCTION.....	5
ABOUT HUMANITY IN ACTION .....	6
ABOUT THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR CIVIL AND HUMAN RIGHTS.....	7
1960 APPEAL FOR HUMAN RIGHTS .....	8
ASSUMING THE VOICE OF THE GEORGIA GOVERNOR IN 1960, THE 2017 JOHN LEWIS FELLOWS RESPOND TO AN APPEAL FOR HUMAN RIGHTS .....	11
THE NEW APPEAL FOR HUMAN RIGHTS (2017).....	14
FELLOWS' COLLECTIVE CRITIQUES OF THE 2017 APPEAL FOR HUMAN RIGHTS.....	22
FELLOWS' PROGRAM ESSAYS.....	31
<i>Transgressing the Colonial State: On diverse strategies, their dangers, and the power of healing</i> Essay by Roberto Flores .....	31
<i>Reflection</i> Essay by Zelda Feldman .....	33
<i>Restorative Justice: Knowledge, Empowerment, and Resistance</i> Essay by Adam Flaherty Cohen .....	37
<i>A People's History of Atlanta: An Appeal</i> Essay by Alex Mabanta .....	40
<i>How People Can Change Your Life and Make the Best Music in Your World of Silence</i> Essay by Alma Mujanović.....	43
<i>Filling Ditches and Lifting Burdens</i> Essay by Arlette Hernandez .....	46
Essay by Beau Revlett.....	48

Essay by Chandra Dikey.....	50
Essay by Darriel McBride.....	53
<i>Moving on for Social Justice</i>	
Essay by David Werdermann .....	55
<i>The (Im)Possibility of the Restorative Justice: The Example of Bosnia and Herzegovina</i>	
Essay by Ehlimana Memisevic.....	57
<i>When Those Confederate Flags Rise Up High</i>	
Essay by Eliza Rutynowska .....	69
<i>Countering Dominant Native American Narratives and Re-Imagining Community Development</i>	
Essay by Emily McDonnell.....	72
Essay by Esra Karakaya.....	75
<i>Chasing Transformation: Reimagining Human Rights Spaces through Relationships</i>	
Essay by Hope Anderson.....	77
<i>Bullhorns and Dimes</i>	
Essay by Ian Fields Stewart.....	80
<i>(Un)Apologetic</i>	
Essay by Jaz Buckley .....	82
<i>Inspiration</i>	
Essay by Jordanos Kiros .....	84
<i>A Month of Perspectives</i>	
Essay by Konstantinos Koukos .....	86
<i>Back To Earth</i>	
Essay by Lila Murphy.....	88
Essay by Mairi Markaki .....	90
<i>Parallel Realities</i>	
Essay by Malgorzata Hermanowicz.....	93
<i>Criticism and Conversation</i>	
Essay by Pedro Miguel Monque Lopez .....	95
<i>Time and Justice</i>	
Essay by Priyanka Menon .....	98

<i>The Journey Across the Atlantic</i> Essay by Rukhsar Asif .....	101
<i>How Honest Do We Want to Be? A journey through my human</i> Essay by Sabiha Kapetanovic .....	104
<i>A Change is Gonna Come: Understanding Restorative Justice Through the Past and Present Realities of Atlanta</i> Essay by Sara A. Osman .....	107
<i>Subversive Storytelling: Meditations on Memory, Imagination, and Restorative Justice</i> Essay by Seung Hyun Chung.....	109
<i>Reflections on John Lewis Fellowship 2017</i> Essay by Simone Zalla Aumaj .....	112
Essay by Trey Walk .....	115
POEM BY HOPE ANDERSON.....	117
FELLOWS' BIOGRAPHIES AND PICTURES.....	120
2017 JOHN LEWIS FELLOWSHIP STAFF BIOGRAPHIES AND PICTURES.....	130



July 5, 2017

Dear Friends:

It is my pleasure to congratulate and welcome all of the participants of The John Lewis Fellowship Program, a Humanity in Action Fellowship in partnership with The National Center for Civil and Human Rights.

You are an exceptional group of young people. I hope that the knowledge and relationships you gain from this fellowship will develop you into the change agents that our society so desperately needs. We are at a pivotal time in our history. The lessons of the past mean more than ever now. It is my hope that your participation in this incredible fellowship, will spark that light in you that makes you the headlight and not the taillight in the future of our world.

May you have a wonderful time during your stay here in the beautiful city of Atlanta and I wish you continued success in your pursuit of justice and equality for all.

With all good wishes,

Sincerely,

A blue ink signature of the name "John Lewis". Below the signature, the text "John Lewis" and "Member of Congress" is printed in a black serif font.

John Lewis  
Member of Congress

# INTRODUCTION

BY 2017 JOHN LEWIS FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM DIRECTOR,  
PROFESSOR TANYA WASHINGTON

THE 2017 JOHN LEWIS FELLOWSHIP WAS CENTERED ON AN EXPLORATION OF CONTEMPORARY challenges facing and opportunities available to the City of Atlanta. Building on themes developed in the first two years of the fellowship, the 2017 program adopted a restorative justice lens through which to examine both Atlanta's rich and complex past and its promising and dynamic future. The framework for all three years has been the 1960's Appeal for Human Rights, authored by Dr. Roslyn Pope, which serves as both a list of demands that capture the form and substance of human rights entitlements and as a manifesto advancing an agenda marked by progressive inclusion and modes of empowerment. This historic document spawned a movement for human and civil rights in Atlanta and beyond, and it inspired a generation of activists in 1960 to change the status quo and to create greater opportunities and improve the quality of life for those victimized by the system of American apartheid known as Jim Crow.

The fact that the Appeal was written by Dr. Pope at the age of 21, was of particular importance because the John Lewis Fellows are in the same age range, and it reflects the value and power of youth in diving and creating a more equitable path forward for all. The Georgia Governor's response to the 1960 Appeal to Human Rights was introduced to the John Lewis Fellows to highlight the ways in which calls and demands for justice were distorted, diminished and dismissed by those in power wishing to protect and preserve their privilege. John Lewis Fellows were also introduced to a more recent response to the 1960's Appeal, which is the New Appeal for Human Rights, co-authored by Atlanta activist students and civil rights veterans in 2017. This New Appeal, which is an intergenerational charter, highlights contemporary civil and human rights challenges and opportunities for progress. This New Appeal and its authors provide a concrete example of how young human rights advocates, like the John Lewis Fellows, can chart the path forward for the protection and advancement in civil and human rights in today's compelling political, economic and social environment.

The contents of this program booklet map the experience of the John Lewis Fellows in the program. It begins with Dr. Pope's prescient Appeal and the Fellow's response to her Appeal, which they crafted to express what a constructive and promising response should have been at the time the document was presented to the public. Next, the booklet turns to the 2017 New Appeal for Human Rights, followed by collective responses to the New Appeal and the Fellows' individual statements about how their visions and work has been informed, inspired, challenged and transformed by the experience of contemplating restorative justice approaches to addressing human rights priorities. The booklet closes with the biographies of the Fellows and several poems by Fellows describing their colleagues and their collective experience of exploration and transformation during the fellowship program.

I am grateful to the Mellon Foundation for funding this 3-year project in the advancement of human rights. It has truly been a humbling and rich experience to plant seeds in these amazing young people who I am confident will carry forth the best traditions, advocacy and conscientious activism of the fellowship's namesake, Congressman John Lewis, and who will be among the next generation of human rights champions across the globe!

# ABOUT HUMANITY IN ACTION

HUMANITY IN ACTION IS AN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION THAT EDUCATES, INSPIRES AND CONNECTS a network of university students and young professionals committed to promoting human rights, diversity and active citizenship in their own communities and around the world.

Humanity in Action has educated over 1,700 young leaders who now form a unique international community. The annual Humanity in Action Fellowship brings together more than 150 European and American university students and young professionals each summer in programs in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Poland and the United States to discuss, learn and research in international groups. Humanity in Action Fellows meet leading experts and activists to study historical and contemporary cases of institutional violations of human and minority rights. Fellows write research-based articles and develop teaching tools to share what they learned in their programs.

Humanity in Action supports all Fellows financially for the duration of their programs, allowing for the merit-based selection of diverse applicants. Humanity in Action also provides professional development opportunities. It maintains an international network of students, young professionals, established leaders, experts and partners for which it organizes a range of educational and career opportunities, including seminars, workshops, study trips and fellowship positions at leading civic and political institutions, such as the European Parliament, the United States Congress, NAACP, and the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. These opportunities encourage emerging leaders to develop their professional abilities and introduce established leaders to the ideas of the younger generation.

Humanity in Action's network of leaders is a valuable resource to policy-makers, diplomats, educators, business leaders and civic-minded individuals and organizations. By the end of the decade, Humanity in Action will connect over 2,500 professionals working in all sectors, on a range of critical issues, in countries around the world.

Humanity in Action is a non-profit, non-partisan organization with governing and advisory Boards in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Poland and the United States. Humanity in Action's international headquarters is in New York City.

Major supporters of Humanity in Action have included the Ford Foundation; the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation; the Richard and Rhoda Goldman Fund; the Germeshausen Foundation; the Stavros Niarchos Foundation; Open Society Foundations; the Hurford Foundation; Foundation Remembrance, Responsibility and Future (EVZ); the William H. Donner Foundation; the Fetzer Institute; the Dutch Ministry for Health, Welfare and Sport; the Polish Foreign Ministry; and the US Department of State.

# ABOUT THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR CIVIL AND HUMAN RIGHTS

THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR CIVIL AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN DOWNTOWN ATLANTA IS AN ENGAGING cultural attraction that connects the American Civil Rights Movement to today's Global Human Rights Movements. The purpose of the Center is to create a safe space for visitors to explore the fundamental rights of all human beings so that they leave inspired and empowered to join the ongoing dialogue about human rights in their communities.

The Center was first imagined by civil rights legends Evelyn Lowery and former United Nations Ambassador Andrew Young and was launched by former Mayor Shirley Franklin. The effort gained broad-based corporate and community support to become one of the few places in the world educating visitors on the bridge between the American Civil Rights Movement and contemporary Human Rights Movements around the world.

Established in 2007, the Center's groundbreaking 43,000-square-foot facility is located on Pemberton Place, adjacent to the World of Coca-Cola and the Georgia Aquarium, on land donated by the Coca-Cola Company.

# AN APPEAL FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

MARCH 9, 1960

WE, THE STUDENTS OF THE SIX AFFILIATED INSTITUTIONS FORMING THE ATLANTA UNIVERSITY Center — Clark, Morehouse, Morris Brown, and Spelman Colleges, Atlanta University, and the Interdenominational Theological Center — have joined our hearts, minds, and bodies in the cause of gaining those rights which are inherently ours as of the human race and as citizens these United States.

We pledge our unqualified support to those students in this nation who have recently been engaged in the significant movement to secure certain long-awaited rights and privileges. This protest, like the bus boycott in Montgomery, has shocked many people throughout the world. Why. Because they had not quite realized the unanimity of spirit and purpose which motivates the thinking and action of the great majority of the Negro people. The students who instigate and participate in these sit-down protests are dissatisfied, not only with the existing conditions, but with the snail-like speed at which they are being ameliorated. Every normal being wants to walk the earth with dignity and abhors any and all proscriptions placed upon him because of race or color. In essence, this is the meaning of the sit-down protests that are sweeping this nation today.

We do not intend to wait placidly for those which are already legally and morally ours to be meted out to us at a time. Today's youth will not sit by submissively, while being denied all of the rights, privileges, and joys of life. We want to state clearly and unequivocally that we cannot tolerate in a nation professing democracy and among people professing democracy, and among people professing Christianity, the discriminatory conditions under which the Negro is living today in Atlanta Georgia — supposedly one the most progressive cities in the South.

Among the inequalities and injustices in Atlanta and in Georgia against which we protest, the following are outstanding examples:

## (1) EDUCATION

In the Public School System, facilities for Negroes and whites are separate and unequal, Double sessions continue in about half of the Negro Public Schools, and many Negro children travel ten miles a day in order to reach a school that will admit them.

On the University level, the state will pay a Negro to attend a school out of state rather than admit him to the University of Georgia, Georgia Tech, the Georgia Medical School, and other tax-supported public institutions.

According to a recent publication, in the fiscal year 1958 a total of \$31,632,057.18 was spent in the State institutions of higher education for white only. In the Negro State Colleges only \$2,001,177.06 was spent.

The publicly supported institutions of higher education are inter-racial now, except that they deny admission to Negro Americans.

## (2) JOBS:

Negroes are denied employment in the majority of city, state, and federal governmental jobs, except in the most menial capacities.

(3) HOUSING:

While Negroes constitute 32% of the population of Atlanta, they are forced to live within 16% of the area the city.

Statistics also show that the bulk of the Negro population is still:

- a. locked into the more undesirable and overcrowded areas of the city;
- b. paying a proportionally higher percentage of income for rental and purchase of generally lower quality property;
- c. blocked by political and direct or indirect restrictions in its efforts to secure better housing.

(4) VOTING:

Contrary to statements made in Congress by several Southern Senators, we know that in many counties in Georgia and other southern states, Negro college graduates are declared unqualified to vote and are not to register,

(5) HOSPITALS:

Compared with facilities for other people in Atlanta and Georgia, those for Negroes are unequal and totally inadequate.

Reports show that Atlanta's 14 general hospitals and 9 related institutions provide some 4,000 beds. Except for some 430 beds at Grady Hospital, Negroes are limited to the 250 beds in three private Negro hospitals. Some of the hospitals barring Negroes were built with federal funds.

(6) MOVIES, CONCERTS, RESTAURANTS:

Negroes are barred from most movies and segregated in the rest.

Negroes must even sit in a segregated section of the Municipal Auditorium.

If a Negro is hungry, his hunger must wait until he comes to a "colored" restaurant, and even his thirst must await its quenching at a "colored" water fountain.

(7) LAW ENFORCEMENT:

There are grave inequalities in the area of law enforcement. Too often, Negroes are maltreated by officers of the law. An insufficient number of Negroes is employed in the law-enforcing agencies. They are seldom, if ever promoted. Of 830 policemen in Atlanta only 35 are Negroes.

We have briefly mentioned only a few situations in which we are discriminated against. We have understated rather than overstated the problems. These social evils are seriously plaguing Georgia, the South, the nation, and the world.

WE HOLD THAT:

- (1) The practice of racial is not in keeping with the ideals of Democracy and Christianity.
- (2) Racial segregation is robbing not only the segregated but the segregator of his human dignity. Furthermore, the propagation racial prejudice is unfair to the generations yet unborn.
- (3) In times of war, the Negro has fought and died for his country; yet he still has not been accorded first-class citizenship.
- (4) In spite of the fact that the Negro pays his share of taxes, he does not enjoy participation in city, county and state government at the level where laws are enacted.

(5) The social, economic, and political progress of Georgia is retarded by segregation and prejudices.

(6) America is fast losing the respect of other nations by the poor example which she sets the area of race relations.

It is unfortunate that Negro is being forced to fight, in any way, for what is due him and is freely accorded other Americans, It is unfortunate that even today some people should hold to the erroneous idea of racial despite the fact that the world is fast moving toward an integrated humanity.

The time has come for the people of Atlanta and Georgia to take a good look at what is really happening in this country, and to stop believing those who tell us that everything is fine and equal, and that the Negro is happy satisfied.

It is to be regretted that there are those who still refuse to recognize the over-riding supremacy of the Federal Law.

Our churches which are ordained by God and claim to be the houses of all people, foster segregation of the races to the point of making Sunday the most segregated day of the week.

We, the students of the Atlanta University Center, are driven by past and present events to assert our feelings to the citizens of Atlanta and to the world.

We, therefore, call upon all people in authority — State, County, and City officials; all leaders in civic life — ministers, teachers, and business men; and all people of good will to assort themselves and abolish these injustices. We must say in all candor that we plan to use every legal and non-violent means at our disposal to secure full citizenship rights as members of this great Democracy of ours.

**WILLIE MAYS**

President of Council For the Students of Atlanta University

**JAMES FELDER**

President of Student Government Association For the Students of Clark College

**MARION D. BENNETT**

President of Student Association For the Students of Interdenominational Theological Center

**DON CLARKE**

President of Student Body For the Students of Morehouse College

**MARY ANN SMITH**

Secretary of Student Government Association For the Students of Morris Brown College

**ROSLYN POPE**

President of Student Government Association For the Students of Spelman College

# 2017 JOHN LEWIS FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

JULY 15TH, 2017, ATLANTA

DURING THE FIRST DAYS OF THE 2017 JOHN LEWIS FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM, DR. ROSLYN POPE MET with the fellows. She spoke about the historic Atlanta Student Movement and her authorship of the 1960 Appeal for Human Rights—a statement that ignited the Civil Rights movement in the city of Atlanta. The Appeal immediately provoked a response from the Governor of Georgia that he delivered to the public on the radio.

The John Lewis Fellows delved into the heroic Appeal and the Governor's blatant rejection of it. The John Lewis Fellows, in pursuit of restorative justice, imagined and then rewrote the Governor's response. Assuming the office and authority of the Georgia Governor, the fellows crafted the six responses that speak to the integrity, dignity, legitimacy, passion and appeals for justice so boldly expressed in the 1960 Appeal for Human Rights.

# ASSUMING THE VOICE OF THE GEORGIA GOVERNOR IN 1960, THE 2017 JOHN LEWIS FELLOWS RESPOND TO AN APPEAL FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

TO THE STUDENTS OF ATLANTA UNIVERSITY CENTER:

Firstly, thank you for contributing to the democracy to which we strive by challenging your daily realities and voicing your ideas for the improvement of our society. We acknowledge that the grievances listed, and surely many more, harm our shared American values. As governor, I apologize for the injustices created by this society through the systematic abuse of African Americans in this state. Regarding the issues raised on education, jobs, and housing, we would like to propose a dialogue with the African American community in order to derive solutions more acutely representative of our democracy. I thank, once again, the students who have bravely authored this appeal. We at the governor's office look forward to bettering our state and our country.

.....

We acknowledge and applaud the beauty of our youth's efforts in building a collective and inclusive society that sees the humanity in all its citizens. We seek to understand and honor the pain and suffering conveyed by this Appeal, as well as that of indigenous peoples, black people and people from African descent, immigrants from Asia, South Asia, Latin America, poor people, and people with disabilities. Together we have struggled to build this community and we want to build a nation that is progressive, and which takes tangible actions toward the demands enlisted by this Appeal.

.....

I, the Governor of Georgia, having been elected by the people to protect those same people, welcome the voices of the students of the Atlanta University Center to the table. For the atrocities listed in the Appeal for Human Rights, I apologize personally and on behalf of the state of Georgia for my neglect of the current and historic systemic dehumanization of black citizens. These actions are antithetical to the person I am and to the values of this great state. It is never easy to recognize that one's intentions for good have fallen short, but, as the saying goes, the road to hell is paved with good intentions. As Governor, I am beholden to many. Therefore, I would like to offer multiple community gatherings where I and other policy makers of the state may be held accountable not only by the students in the Appeal for Human Rights but also for the inequities written therein. I dedicate myself to making sure that actionable steps will and must be generated at the aforementioned gatherings and will be created and legislatively secured by my administration and the administrations after mine. Human rights should never be optional but instead communally generated, legislatively recorded, and systemically protected. The journey is long, but thanks to you, today the path is clear.

.....

We have read the Appeal for Human Rights, written by Dr. Roslyn Pope and signed by the student body presidents of the six universities of the Atlanta University Center.

We thank Dr. Pope for an Appeal that catalyzed a historical movement for social justice which brings pride to our city and continues to shape it to this day.

The Appeal was skillfully prepared. Obviously, it was written by students who courageously applied their knowledge in an effort to restore the rights of Black communities in Georgia and throughout the nation.

Regrettably, the Appeal did not receive the respect that it merits. We invite opportunities to celebrate both Dr. Pope and the Appeal's significance to the world as we continue to preserve its legacy and acknowledge the urgency of the issues raised.

This Appeal was and still stands as an incredible leap towards creating a more just, equitable, inclusive and dignified Georgia, United States and world.

.....

To the AUC students who drafted this appeal, thank you. It takes great courage, strength, and intellect to dedicate oneself to this important endeavor. There's no avoiding our regretful past as a nation, much less as a state. In this state alone, people of color have been denied access to quality education, safe, decent affordable housing, fair wages and equal opportunity employment, adequate healthcare, unobstructed access to voting rights, and access to the public sphere. Additionally, our communities have been subject to repeated dehumanizing policies, state-sanctioned violence, and abnegation of personhood. We can no longer pretend to live in a country that upholds the principles of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness without addressing the issues stated within this Appeal for Human Rights. As a community, and as a nation, we must not only acknowledge past wrongs, but actively remember the individuals who sought to address these wrongs. It is because of leaders like Roslyn Pope, Julian Bond, Lonnie King, and their fellow student leaders that our society and our nation can further fight for and preserve democracy, freedom, equality, and, most importantly, Human Rights.

.....

My fellow Americans,

I am speaking to you from Spelman College where a group of courageous students stood up to assert their rights as citizens of this nation. At this time, I'd like to acknowledge the courage of Roselyn Pope who channeled the frustration of the Black community into such a powerful document. This nation was supposed to be founded on the ideals of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, and we have astronomically failed in this endeavor.

Our nation is flawed due to the ways we refuse to acknowledge the systemic forms of injustice, racism, and oppression that continues to permeate our society in a country that claims to value justice and democracy. These values addressed by Roslyn Pope and fellow student leaders have demonstrated the need to improve the ways we operate as a nation, state, and a people.

I assure you of my full commitment to the issue of injustice and encourage you to remain vigilant in the face of oppression. Finally, I urge everyone in the community to join me in a meeting at Spelman College so we can begin to lay a solid foundation for meaningful social change. Thank you.

# A NEW APPEAL FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

ATLANTA, GEORGIA, MAY 16, 2017

JILL CARTWRIGHT, Spelman College

ASMA ELHUNI, Georgia State University

VIOLETA HERNANDEZ PADILLA, Freedom University

SERENA HUGHLEY, Spelman College

NATALIE LEONARD, Georgia Institute of Technology

ANDALIB MALIT SAMANDARI, Morehouse College

ALMA OLMEDO-FERMIN, Freedom University

DAYE PARK, University of Georgia

JONATHAN PERAZA, Emory University

MARIA ZETINA, Agnes Scott College

CHARLES BLACK, Second Chairman of the Atlanta Student Movement, Morehouse College

LONNIE KING, First Chairman of the Atlanta Student Movement, Morehouse College

DR. ROSLYN POPE, Author of the 1960 Appeal for Human Rights, Spelman College

DR. LAURA EMIKO SOLTIS, Executive Director and Professor of Human Rights, Freedom University

## PREAMBLE

On March 9, 1960, members of the Atlanta Student Movement published "An Appeal for Human Rights," which denounced the discrimination they faced as black youth in the city of Atlanta. We, as students of conscience from Agnes Scott College, Clark Atlanta University, Emory University, Freedom University, the Georgia Institute of Technology, Georgia State University, Morehouse College, Spelman College, and the University of Georgia, take courage and inspiration from their legacy as we continue the struggle for human rights.

Today, more than 57 years after the publication of the original Appeal for Human Rights, communities of color continue to bear the most severe violations of human rights here in the Deep South. In 1960, black people faced more overt forms of racial discrimination. But racism did not disappear - it evolved. Today, a powerful force underlying the intersecting forms of discrimination young people of color face is the assumption that they are criminals. This assumption takes on structural forms as prisons and immigrant detention centers, where racism is masked as law and order.

We, as students who belong to black, Latinx, Asian, Undocumented, Muslim, LGBTQIA+, and ally communities, form a coalition in Atlanta to assert our human rights and resist structures and assumptions that criminalize our existence. Our coalition is comprised of students who are diverse in race, religion, creed, class, citizenship, gender, sexuality, ability, and background, as a necessary representation of the people we seek to empower. Just as discrimination is intersectional, so is our fight.

Like the students who came before us, we utilize a global human rights framework to assert our rights as human beings, not as subjects of a nation-state. We recognize the full spectrum of political, civil, economic, social, and cultural rights, as articulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 and the growing field of international human rights law. Human rights are often seen as the purview of lawyers. However, we believe that human rights can also be a powerful tool for marginalized people ourselves, helping us to raise consciousness in our communities and mobilize people into collective action.

We recognize human rights as universal and inalienable, as well as indivisible and interdependent. The United States of America, however, only recognizes political and civil rights as worthy of legal obligation and protection, and ignores many of our economic, social, and cultural rights. Furthermore, the United States does not safeguard the rights of marginalized communities, and in many cases, state agencies discriminate and perpetrate violence against them. As young people and students, we have organized ourselves in order to learn from each other and across generations, and mobilize as a united force to defend our common humanity.

Together, we denounce the violators of our human rights and dignity, and we pledge to defend our rights and those of our neighbors. We recognize that human rights are never granted by those in power. They are articulated by common people and achieved through collective action. We denounce the City of Atlanta's appropriation of human rights language for purposes of branding. We simply cannot call Atlanta an "International City" or a "Welcoming City" if we disregard international human rights standards and discriminate against immigrants here at home.

Although we are situated in and concentrate our activism locally in the city of Atlanta, in the state of Georgia, and within the borders of the United States, our solidarity is with all marginalized people of this world who are fighting for their human rights.

Among the inequalities against which we protest, the following injustices in Atlanta and in Georgia are outstanding examples:

#### NON-DISCRIMINATION

Article 7 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the 14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution state that every person has the right to equal protection under the law. In international human rights law, discrimination based on status such as nationality, ethnicity, race, and religion is prohibited. Furthermore, children cannot be discriminated against because of their parents' status. Despite these legal principles, discrimination in Georgia persists in many forms.

Black people are disproportionately targeted by police and face severe discrimination at all levels of the criminal justice system, from juvenile detention, to racial profiling, arrest, prosecution, sentencing, parole, and reintegration into society. The result has been the modern re-enslavement and disenfranchisement of black people through mass incarceration.

Undocumented immigrants also face discrimination by the government, which accepts their labor, but denies their right to vote and equal access to education, social security, and other social benefits. State authorities and businesses use threats of raids, detention, and deportation to discipline and punish undocumented immigrants, in order to prevent

them from asserting their rights. Undocumented youth also face severe discrimination in access to public and private higher education in Georgia. They are banned from Georgia's top public universities and in-state tuition rates, and are the target of punitive legislation such as House Bill 37, the "Anti-Sanctuary Campus" bill.

Georgia also lacks legislation that explicitly prohibits discrimination based on gender identity or sexual orientation. In *Evans v. Georgia Regional Hospital*, a judge ruled in March 2017 that sexual orientation is not a protected class against discrimination, thereby setting a legal precedent for further discrimination against members of the LGBTQIA+ community in Georgia.

## EDUCATION

Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that education is a human right and that access to higher education shall be based on merit. While the United States protects the right to free K-12 education, it does not recognize the right to higher education, leaving undocumented student access to higher education up to individual states. Only three states have an admissions ban against undocumented students, and they are all located in the Deep South: South Carolina, Alabama, and Georgia. In 2010, the Georgia Board of Regents passed Policy 4.1.6 and 4.3.4, effectively banning undocumented students from attending the state's top public universities and from paying in-state tuition throughout Georgia. These restrictions echo segregation laws of the pre-Brown v. Board of Education era, which excluded students based on an arbitrary social status rather than their academic merit. These laws jeopardize Georgia's moral standing in the United States and in the world; they also have severe economic consequences for all Georgians. By banning undocumented students from public higher education through admissions bans and in-state tuition bans, Georgia fails to capitalize on its investment in undocumented students' K-12 education, estimated at \$100,000 per student, and loses \$10 million in annual tax revenues.

In May 2017, the Georgia state legislature passed HB 37, the nation's first "Anti-Sanctuary Campus Bill," which punishes private universities for enacting sanctuary policies that seek to protect undocumented students. The bill was a direct response to Atlanta-wide student protests for sanctuary campuses following the election of the 45th President. Undocumented students of Freedom University and Emory University partnered with documented allies to form the Emory Sanctuary Coalition, strengthening the movement for sanctuary campuses in Georgia. The Emory Sanctuary Coalition defined a sanctuary campus as one that welcomes, protects, and supports undocumented students by: 1) accepting all academically qualified undocumented students, including students with Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and fully undocumented students, and providing full need-based financial aid; 2) protecting undocumented students by requiring a signed judicial warrant for any federal immigration official attempting to enter campus; and 3) supporting undocumented students by granting equal access to health services and legal aid clinics. While Emory administration recently announced its fulfillment of an equal access admissions policy for all undocumented students, it capitulated to threats by the Georgia legislature and failed to declare itself a sanctuary campus.

Undocumented black students face intersectional oppression of both anti-immigrant legislation and anti-black discrimination, and are unable to access sufficient financial assistance at Historically Black College and Universities (HBCUs). For these reasons, we demand that the Georgia Board of Regents repeal Policy 4.1.6 and 4.3.4 and encourage all private universities in Georgia, including Emory University, Agnes Scott College, Spelman College, and Morehouse College, to declare themselves sanctuary campuses and challenge HB 37 in court.

## VOTING

Article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that any government's authority must be based on

the will of the governed. If elected representatives undermine popular sovereignty, or any section of the population is excluded, then that government is no longer fit to serve its people. When the original Appeal was published in March 1960, many counties in Southern states barred citizens from voting based on overt racial discrimination. Thanks to the successful grassroots mobilization in the U.S. Civil Rights Movement, the Voting Rights Act of 1965 declared racially-motivated voter discrimination to be a federal offense. However, just as racism has changed over time, the methods to disenfranchise and disempower people of color have also adapted for modern neo-liberal politics. Today, local movements still fight to obtain and safeguard voting rights in the United States, particularly for undocumented immigrants and the formerly incarcerated.

Undocumented immigrants pay state and federal taxes and contribute to the social security program, but are ineligible to receive the benefits they fund. Each year, undocumented immigrants pay an estimated \$12 billion in taxes. In Georgia alone, \$352 million in state taxes come from undocumented immigrants, where they also contend with vindictive state policies. “No taxation without representation” is a near-sacred tenet of the republic, but in the 21st century, millions of tax dollars come from disenfranchised people. Therefore, it is important to create fair pathways to citizenship and establish voting rights for currently undocumented immigrants in order to fulfill their human right to take part in the political life and governance of society.

Felony disenfranchisement is an injustice endorsed by the federal government and enforced by states, as the U.S. Constitution allows individual states to determine which crimes are punishable by the loss of voting rights. Thus, a criminal conviction in the United States can lead to an individual’s “civic death,” making people more vulnerable to human rights abuses, including not only exclusion from voting rights, but discrimination in accessing decent work and affordable housing. Moreover, Latinx and black populations constitute a disproportionate number of incarcerated people and ex-felons, not because they commit more crimes, but because criminalization of their daily lives and mass incarceration are now the primary means for securing cheap prison labor, disenfranchising people of color, and amassing billions of dollars in profit for private prisons.

In addition to direct forms of disenfranchisement, gerrymandering of voting districts based on race, class, and party affiliation have undermined the democratic process and principle of representative government in the United States.

## HOUSING

Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights asserts that access to housing is a necessary component in fulfilling the human right to an adequate standard of living. Access to housing means access to housing options that are affordable, safe, and sustainable. As the cost of rent rises while wages remain stagnant, Atlanta faces a housing crisis. The lack of affordable housing drives people outside of our city limits or to housing units with deplorable conditions, such as inefficient heating and cooling systems. These conditions, in turn, negatively impact a resident’s health by increasing the risk for respiratory disease, asthma, and heart disease. When combined with increased spending on utility bills and decreased spending on fresh food, unaffordable and inadequate housing threaten one’s economic security and physical health.

Limited affordable housing places residents at risk of homelessness, especially for renters, as the eviction process is much shorter for renters than for homeowners. Landlords can send their tenants a late notice as early as two days after a late payment and can legally seek a court notice for eviction within ten days.

In Atlanta, the Housing Justice League reports that affordable housing has decreased by 5 percent every year since 2012, and 95 percent of newly-constructed apartments since 2012 have been luxury apartments. Planned and recent redevelopment in Atlanta, including that of Turner Field and the Atlanta Beltline, threatens worsened gentrification

and a decrease in affordable housing by excluding long-term residents from the conversation. Furthermore, the City of Atlanta has not emphasized the preservation and restoration of historic buildings, such as Gaines Hall of Morris Brown College, a building with national and statewide educational significance that was damaged by fire under the city's watch. By conducting a survey of Atlanta's historic resources, financial resources and attention could be strategically allocated to ensure the preservation of our city's historic buildings and districts.

Policy for developing mixed-income communities must be redesigned, striking a balance between Atlanta's redevelopment, preservation of our historically significant buildings and districts, and maintenance and provision of affordable housing for long-term residents, especially renters. As affordable, safe, and sustainable housing is interdependent with the fulfillment of working conditions, healthcare, and educational human rights, negligence in providing housing opportunities for all communities and residents harms us in all aspects of our lives. Welcoming Atlanta's growth must be met with respect for human rights.

## HEALTHCARE

Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights asserts that health and access to medical care is a human right. Governments are responsible for providing affordable access for all, including people of low socioeconomic status and people with pre-existing conditions. According to the Congressional Budget Office, 24 million Americans are threatened with the repeal of the Affordable Care Act, adversely affecting the populations most in need of care.

Within the state of Georgia, 1.4 million individuals lack insurance, and only a fraction of the projected need in metro-Atlanta is met by safety net service providers. In Fulton and Dekalb counties, Grady Health System accounts for a disproportionate majority of these safety net services. The Georgia Center for Opportunity recommends the following measures for expanding safety net care: provide financial support from the state government for safety net providers, restore sales tax exemption for safety net providers, promote telemedicine within safety net providers, and update regulations surrounding nurse practitioner care.

Beyond health insurance, underlying determinants of health include the fulfillment of economic and social rights, including access to food and water, safe working and environmental conditions, accurate and informative sex education, and the provision of behavioral, mental, and reproductive health services. In addressing the above disparities, policies and regulations every individual's needs, without discrimination or exception. State and federal governments must be held accountable for fulfilling these human rights.

## LAW ENFORCEMENT

Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that everyone has the right to life, liberty, and security of person. Article 5 states that no one shall be subjected to cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment. As such, human rights are meant to protect people from violence, use of force, and arbitrary or degrading treatment by the state's law enforcement officials. As a result of increased visibility of recorded killings of black people by police and grassroots mobilizations for justice in recent years, the international human rights community has expressed concern regarding police brutality against racial minorities in the United States and an ensuing lack of accountability.

In the United States, law enforcement officials are charged with serving and protecting the public. However, in 2016 alone, police killed an estimated 1,023 individuals in the United States. Moreover, black and brown people make up a disproportionate number of those killed by police. For example, the organization "Say Her Name" reports that "black women and girls are only 13% of the female population, but they account for a third of all women shot to death by police." Law enforcement officials responsible for the killing of unarmed civilians are rarely brought to justice, as demonstrated

by the cases of Alexia Christian and Kevin Davis in Atlanta, and Sandra Bland, Alton Sterling, Jesse Romero, Sarah Lee Circle Bear, and hundreds of others across the United States.

Native Americans are more likely to be killed by police than any other group, when compared to their proportion of the U.S. population. Yet, the press largely ignores the murder of Native Americans, perpetuating the invisibility of our country's indigenous people in the public consciousness. We recognize that the experience of Native Americans is connected to the undocumented Latinx community, most of which shares a mixed-race heritage with indigenous peoples of the Americas, but also experience silence and invisibility to avoid detainment and deportation.

In Georgia, the 2010 passage of HB 87, the "Show Me Your Papers" bill, has legalized racial profiling. Georgia's immigration courts—including those in Atlanta and at Stewart Detention Center—have among the highest deportation rates and lowest grants of asylum and other forms of relief in the country. Four counties have signed 287(g) agreements for their local law enforcement agents to be deputized as immigration agents; other local law enforcement agencies hold and turn over non-citizens in their custody to immigration authorities, even when it is not legally required.

As demanded by #ATLisReady and the Georgia Not One More Coalition, the Atlanta Police Department can avoid human rights violations by training law enforcement officials in deescalation tactics, eliminating practices of racial profiling of black and Latinx communities, refusing to expend local resources in carrying out raids and deportations by federal immigration authorities, and holding law enforcement officials accountable for unjust killings. We stand in solidarity with black Lives Matter and join them in "working for a world where . . . black lives are no longer systematically and intentionally targeted for demise."

## RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the First Amendment of U.S. Constitution recognize the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion. Religious freedom is the ability to express and worship individual beliefs publicly, without the fear of discrimination, threats, or physical violence. Freedom of religion includes the right to have places of worship, preserve dietary restrictions, wear religious attire and head-coverings, and use language of worship for religious expression.

Recently, many Muslim women in Georgia have reported incidents where they have been denied access to government buildings due to their religious attire, such as the use of a hijab. Although worship is permitted on religious grounds, public worship is restricted in certain areas. Georgia has attempted to deny the right to religious freedom by banning the construction of mosques in Kennesaw, Lilburn, and Newton County. This violates the right to worship in a safe space and has increased Islamophobia in the community.

The Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR) states that "Islamophobia is a contrived fear or prejudice fomented by the existing Eurocentric and Orientalist global power structure." Instead of teaching tolerance, Georgia has fostered religious intolerance and prejudice by violating the human right to freedom of religion. Religious freedom also intersects with immigrant rights. CAIR has noted that "fear of Islam is mixed with racist hostility to immigration. Islam is perceived as inherently threatening, and Islamophobia as natural and unproblematic." Georgia should respect the human right to religious freedom, which will help cultivate a diverse and educational interfaith environment that welcomes all religious traditions.

## WORKERS' RIGHTS

Article 23 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights declares that all workers, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, gender, or immigration status, have the right to dignified conditions of work which include, but are not limited

to, a living wage, safe and healthy working environment, opportunities for promotion, and regular breaks and days of rest.

Yet, in Georgia and across the country, workers in the agricultural and food service industries are particularly vulnerable to exploitation and abuse from employers. Moreover, workers in these industries are overwhelmingly people of color and recent immigrants. For undocumented agricultural workers, who are estimated to constitute as much as 70% of all agricultural workers, employers can leverage the workers' legal statuses to threaten them and deter collective action. While the National Labor Relations Act of 1935 establishes the rights of employees to unionize, engage in collective bargaining, and combat discrimination without fear of retribution from their employers, agricultural and domestic workers were explicitly excluded from the NLRA due to racially-based discrimination by Southern legislators, who did not want these workers—who were majority black—to gain rights and power in the workplace. Furthermore, agricultural workers are excluded from the Fair Labor Standards Act, which sets minimum wage, overtime pay, and child labor standards. The absence of human rights has led to rampant wage theft, sexual violence, economic exploitation, and physical violence in these industries. In the most extreme cases, there have been cases of human trafficking and slavery in the agricultural industry. Between 1997 and 2008, for example, more than nine cases of slavery were discovered in Florida and prosecuted by the U.S Department of Justice, leading to the release of more than 1,200 workers from forced labor.

In the food service and restaurant industries, women disproportionately occupy server positions and earn significantly lower wages than their male counterparts, as tipped workers are only required to be paid \$2.13 per hour. Gender inequality is also compounded by race, where workers of color disproportionately occupy the lower tier, "back of house" positions in the restaurant industry, so that their physical presence and the many abuses that they experience are kept out of the public eye. The intersections of discrimination have left considerable pay gaps for women of color. It is estimated that black women earn 61 cents and Latina women earn 57 cents for every dollar paid to white men. Furthermore, in states like Georgia where no laws exist to protect LGBTQIA+ people from discrimination in the workplace, workers from already marginalized communities are especially easy targets for unjust working conditions.

## DEMANDS

Human rights are ours by virtue of our humanity. No government can take them away from us, no matter the color of our skin, the beliefs we hold, or the borders we may cross. It is the responsibility of government to respect, protect, and fulfill our full spectrum of human rights, and it is the responsibility of we, the people, to make clear demands for change if our government fails to do so or perpetuates state-sanctioned violence against us. In this spirit, we demand that our state and federal government, and relevant private institutions, take immediate action to improve human rights standards in the following areas:

1. Non-Discrimination: To ensure the right to be free from discrimination is protected for all people, Georgia must amend legislation that either discriminates or leads to discrimination. International human rights law requires governments to also eliminate discrimination in practice by considering historically disadvantaged groups, taking measures to prevent situations that replicate and maintain discrimination.

2. Education: To protect the human right to education, the Georgia Board of Regents must repeal Policy 4.1.6 and 4.3.4, which ban undocumented students from equal access to higher education based on merit. We encourage private universities to declare themselves sanctuaries that welcome, protect, and support undocumented students, and challenge Georgia's HB 37 "Anti-Sanctuary Campus Bill" in court.

3. Voting: To protect the human right to participate in the political life of one's society, and prevent further

disenfranchisement of marginalized groups, we demand a reinstatement of Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act so that designated states cannot change voting laws without federal approval. We demand fair and comprehensive immigration reform that will provide pathways to citizenship for the 11.2 million disenfranchised undocumented people in the United States. We also demand the reinstatement of voting rights for formerly incarcerated people who have completed the terms of their sentences.

4. Housing: To fulfill the human right to housing, we demand the City of Atlanta provide more affordable housing units, include community-based participation and decisionmaking to prevent gentrification and displacement, and take measures to decriminalize homelessness.

5. Healthcare: To protect the human right to health and medical care, we applaud the improvement of health care access with the Affordable Care Act and demand that access be further improved. We oppose efforts to repeal the Affordable Care Act to increase the profit margin of insurance companies at the expense of the health and wellbeing of human beings.

6. Law Enforcement: To protect the human right to life, liberty, and security of person, and freedom from cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment, we demand that the Atlanta Police Department and police departments across the country prioritize deescalation training for all officers, and that courts hold police officers accountable for unjust killings. We demand the repeal of Georgia HB 87, which legalizes racial profiling that target immigrants and people of color, the elimination of 287(g) programs that deputize local law enforcement agencies to act as immigration agents, and the end of the Secure Communities program.

7. Religious Freedom: To uphold the right to religious freedom, we demand the immediate repeal of construction bans against mosques in Georgia and denounce the federal Muslim travel ban. We encourage private religious institutions to promote a diverse and peaceful interfaith communities that respect human rights.

8. Workers' Rights: To protect economic human rights, such as the right to form unions, to safe working conditions, equal pay, and rest, we demand that the federal government expand the protections of the National Labor Relations Act and Fair Labor Standards act to include all workers, particularly farmworkers and domestic workers, whose exclusion stems from anti-black racism that fueled forced labor in these industries during the era of slavery, convict-leasing, and beyond. We also demand that the United States require employers to provide paid sick days and parental leave, on par with economic human rights standards led by other industrialized countries of the world.

We, as human beings and citizens of the world, possess inalienable human rights as declared in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and reiterated in the 1960 "Appeal for Human Rights." As long our humanity is not treated with the respect it deserves, we will continue to fight for our human rights and make clear demands for change. After all, as Frederick Douglass reminds us, "Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did, and it never will."

We stand in solidarity with each other and will protect each other. To come for one of us is to come for all of us. In honor of the courageous students who previously carried the torch, and those who will lead the struggle after us, we commit ourselves to carrying on the fight for human rights as long as injustice exists anywhere. None of us are free until all of us are free.

# 2017 JOHN LEWIS FELLOWS' GROUP CRITIQUES OF THE NEW APPEAL FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

## GROUP PROJECT PROMPT:

Six (6) groups of five (5) fellows will write a preamble consisting of a paragraph on restorative justice. Then the 5 groups will select (and/or edit) 2 of the 5 preambles to introduce Part 2 of the group project. The preamble will provide a definition and description of the concept of restorative justice, and, in doing so, it will introduce the perspective and approach that restorative justice provides to addressing contemporary challenges and advancing a human rights agenda in Atlanta 2017. The preamble should be 200 words. The groups will be the same groups that produced responses to the 1960's Appeal for Human Rights, during one of our reflection circle exercises.

Select one demand from the New Appeal for Human Rights 2017 and propose a restorative justice approach to achieving or advancing the goal described in the demand. The proposal and supporting analysis should be no longer than one (1) page.

## ANTI-DISCRIMINATION: A RESTORATIVE JUSTICE APPROACH

*Beau, Ian, Priya, Sabiha and Trey*

Restorative justice is a cyclical form of community healing. Central to the process is that the determination of the role played by the party which has inflicted harm centers the needs of the party which has been harmed. To facilitate, a mediator will hear the sides of both parties and determine where and by whom harm has been dealt. When centered as part of Restorative Justice those who have been harmed identify how and to what extent they have been wronged and what rectification looks like; Restorative Justice also calls on the party that has inflicted harm to acknowledge the harm they have caused. Finally, the mediator ensures that remedies to harm are distributed accordingly. If this process is to be applied in Atlanta, it must center those harmed within the city because to deny them a role in the process of their own healing is to deny them self-determination. Because the ongoing injustices in Atlanta are the continuation of past injustices, solutions to the city's contemporary challenges will not be sufficient or just until the city acknowledges its past harms and heals from them.

Discrimination does not occur in a vacuum. Addressing the harms caused by discrimination alone will not solve the systemic injustices that exist in the education, health, criminal justice, housing, employment, and other societal systems. Each of these systems contains injustices that are unique to the particulars of that system that cannot be resolved by addressing discrimination. However, discrimination exists outside of specific societal systems; it functions in a manner that pervades society. As such, a restorative justice approach specifically focused on the general issue of discrimination is important because it gives space for the comprehensive address of these instances, independent of the role of discrimination in specific social and governmental contexts. Finally, it is crucial to address discrimination because only through doing so can people receive recognition for the injustices they have faced and the harm they have endured as a result of their identities.

To achieve non-discrimination, the third party mediator must follow certain rules when defining which group has

harmed and has been harmed. First, the mediator must determine whether, in the instance in question, either individual or community discrimination has taken place. We acknowledge that the categories of individual and community discrimination are not mutually exclusive and leave room within our approach to address both forms within a specific instance.

To determine if community discrimination has taken place, the mediator will determine if a group with a shared identity consistently faces different outcomes from a group with a different identity, where the two identities lie on the same axis of identity. For example, the mediator could review historical information and conclude that there is discrimination if they find that there is a pattern of disparate outcomes between the two groups. For two groups to lie on the same axis of identity is for both to be defined in similar terms and to be mutually exclusive with each other. For example, people who live in Buckhead and Midtown are two groups that lie on the same axis, but people who live in Buckhead and Istanbul are not, nor are people who live in Buckhead and Latinx people.

To determine if individual discrimination has taken place, the mediator will determine if a person has been treated a certain way based on the perception that they belong to a certain identity. For example, the mediator could review the prescriptions given to two patients with similar symptoms but who belong to different perceived identity groups. If the mediator found that one received lower quality prescriptions, this would constitute individual discrimination.

Once the mediator determines that discrimination has occurred, they will then give the harmed a platform to articulate what that individual or community identifies as appropriate redress for the grievance. The mediator will review the harmed party's recommendations and enact a just response.

#### VOTING: A RESTORATIVE JUSTICE APPROACH

*Jaz, Adam, Esra, Arlette and Mairi*

We, as people of the global majority, as people that are complicit in this unequal system, and as people dedicated to social justice have chosen to form a coalition to acknowledge current and past atrocities. In this acknowledgment, we propose a framework for solutions to reconstruct our society as it exists in 2017 Atlanta and elsewhere. By recognizing our responsibility to and for one another, we adamantly believe that the lasting and, in many cases, worsening violence, discrimination, and disparities in the areas of education, voting, housing, health care, law enforcement, religious freedoms, and workers rights represent not merely a lack of funding or political will, but rather an approach to justice that is based on historical distortions and systematic exploitation. We affirm restorative justice as a means towards transformative justice that starts with aiding and educating the community, including both perpetrators and survivors, in order to radically alter the system. There is no singular way to enact restorative justice, but it is dependent upon the following principles and values: truth-telling, empowerment, protection of human dignity, validation, and revitalization. Acting on these principles, we as a community must now commit to a collective process with aims toward healing and liberation for all.

As a coalition dedicated to restorative justice, we cannot proceed without first acknowledging the history of voter disenfranchisement in Atlanta and throughout the United States. During the Jim Crow era, African Americans were systematically obstructed from voting through the use of tactics like poll taxes, grandfather and good character clauses, literacy tests, and white primaries. Each of these seemingly harmless voter requirements intentionally barred black people from voting. As a result of these racist voting restrictions, black people were unable to vote for representatives that made decisions impacting their lives. Though the Voting Rights Act of 1965 was created to put an end to these policies, the truth is that discriminatory voter regulations continue to be enacted nationwide. Between the recent *Shelby v. Holder* (2013) decision and gerrymandering, black and brown people continue to face struggles in the voting process.

The purpose of restorative justice in this specific area is to not only to better understand and acknowledge the injustices of past and current discriminatory voter policies, but also to bring more people into the democratic process and ensure an equal vote for all.

Within the municipal context of Atlanta, the first step towards restorative justice would be to elevate and legitimize the voices of those who have endured past injustices. In order to do so, we ask the new administration and City Council to engage in a year-long process consisting of town hall meetings and focus groups that seek to better understand the systematic and social barriers that result in disenfranchisement and disparities in voter turnout among individuals from distinct racial, ethnic, and geographic communities. The stories revealed through this process should be circulated widely in partnership with local media outlets. Following this process, we ask the new administration and the City Council to formulate a campaign focused on increasing voter participation among groups that have been historically excluded from elections and to increase ways that all citizens, including youth, can participate in the democratic process more broadly.

It comes as no surprise that the oppressive legislative tactics utilized in the post-emancipation and contemporarily eras have significantly reduced the number of poor and marginalized communities that are able to participate in our elections. While the extensive community engagement process outlined in the preceding paragraph should put those who have been affected by such injustices at the center of solutions, we believe the following proposals present the bare minimum actions that must be undertaken by the new administration.

1. The number of locations at which individuals can vote must be increased, with special attention paid to neighborhoods without access to public transportation.
2. Early voting should be open seven days per week for at least three weeks prior to election day.
3. Community-based organizations such as churches, homeless shelters, colleges, and recreational centers should have the opportunity to schedule appointments at local polling stations during which they can bring their members to cast votes. This is especially important within communities composed of individuals who have been historically underrepresented in elections.
4. A local Voting Rights Commission should be established that considers how state and federal laws may result in disenfranchisement and ensures the accessibility of elections to all in the City of Atlanta.

## WORKERS' RIGHTS AND JOBS

*Roberto, Ehlilama, Rukshar, Konstantine and Alma*

We, the change agents, coming from different backgrounds are determined to protect the human rights of all peoples and want to ensure their continuity in the future. As aspiring leaders, we wish to follow the legacy set by Dr. Roslyn Pope, the author of the first Appeal for Human Rights, and the many civil rights leaders of the 1960s.

Looking back at history, we are appalled at the severity of the state's discrimination and the blatant hypocrisy with which inequality was perpetuated. Equally, we laud the brave generations of civil and human rights fighters for their sacrifice in sweat and blood. While many advances were made in the demands addressed by the 1960 appeal, they continue to plague our society. To list a few concerns, restrictions in voting continue to grow, education and healthcare are increasingly inaccessible, and segregation continues to grow through gentrification.

We can begin to repair the harm done by acknowledging the historical and present injustices. Furthermore, the process of planning solutions and engaging in action must start by encouraging advocates and allies to engage with the community and understand their needs. Finally, through educating future generations, we ensure the continuity of the

journey toward repairing injustices.

Firstly, we believe that the discrimination on any grounds from accessing a job is one of the most fundamental human rights violations. Still, it is not only necessary to point out and decry out right discrimination. We must also closely examine the causes for which many people of different races, age, religion, disability, sexual orientation, gender and economic status do not reach high levels of employment. We have witnessed job discrimination. Namely Georgia is one of 28 states that have no laws protecting people from discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. This leads to social inequality as well as a loss to employers from what diverse individuals can bring.

Apart from lack of access to jobs, many employment opportunities and remuneration in today's society rely on a truly exploitative model. While organizations should offer equal opportunities, development and training to their employees regardless their identities, unfortunately this is not the case. In addition, lack of access to proper education as well as proper housing and transportation heavily limits the ability of people of lower incomes, which oftentimes includes people of color due to past structural racism, from accessing jobs that would allow them and their families to escape the vicious cycle of poverty. Among others, a huge issue on the worker's right in contemporary markets is the minimum wage and pay gaps that exist between people. Service workers are not paid a wage that would allow them to live above the poverty line established by the federal government, which is deemed an inadequate indicator of poverty by many.

To ameliorate the current conditions, we wish to consider a few solutions engaging and connecting government, independent organizations, and workers. However, in order to move forward we need to empower people across the state and country to organize themselves and demand strong anti-discrimination laws that protect against discrimination on any grounds and ensure that all people are paid equally for equal work.

Furthermore, we believe that creating government commissions charged with following and preventing discrimination in the workplace would create some level of accountability. Still, these institutions would need to work with independent organizations to empower and encourage workers to point out any instances of discrimination. Thirdly, we demand the creation and fostering of partnerships between government entities, labor unions, and community organizations in order to ensure safe working conditions, fair wages, equal pay and remuneration.

Finally, we suggest that the government, labor unions, and non-governmental organizations encourage employers to actively hire more women, LGBTQ+ people, people with disabilities and others with marginalized identities. It is time to include, embrace diversity and take advantage of the positive outcomes that it can bring to society.

As articulated in "A New Appeal for Human Rights," undocumented students stand at the crux of our educational system's discriminatory policies. Georgia Board of Regents' Policies 4.1.6 and 4.3.4 which prevent undocumented students from attending public institutions of higher learning exemplify an aggressive denial of these students' humanity. We propose a restorative justice approach to addressing this harm. Said approach should account not only for the undocumented students forced to pay out-of-state tuition and denied financial aid, but also include students rejected from Georgia state schools based on legal status and the commensurate personal and economic losses that are likely to result from their exclusion from quality education.

A restorative justice approach to the harm against undocumented students should include:

1. A forum or public commission to hear undocumented students' stories of exclusion.
2. Government-funded research to assess how many undocumented students were unfairly denied, overcharged, or otherwise pushed out of Georgia's public colleges and universities.
3. The creation of a committee and report through which undocumented students publicly express their losses and

articulate desired restitutions from the state.

4. The abolishment of Policies 4.1.6, 4.3.4, and HB 37, as well as legislation that establishes state schools as ‘sanctuary campuses.’ In addition, we propose the adoption of a policy proposed by the undocumented community to establish their equal participation in higher education.

5. Based on information from research and student testimonies, the state must issue scholarships or vouchers to undocumented students who were denied admission.

We applaud the *New Appeal for Human Rights* for demanding access to higher education for undocumented students; the aforementioned actions will be important steps in restoring justice to the undocumented community. However, we believe that the appeal’s critique of education could be broader and address the discrimination faced by other groups when pursuing an education, including:

1. The unequal material and working conditions in Georgia’s K-12 schools, leading to poorer educational outcomes for students from low-income zones.

2. The disproportionate disciplining of black students in the form of suspensions, expulsions and even corporal punishment, which contributes to an early sense of criminalization of black people.

3. The queer-exclusionary climate of many of Georgia’s educational institutions, exemplified by a lack of gender-neutral bathrooms and housing, a lack of representation of queer people’s historical contributions in the K-12 curriculum, and nonexistent antidiscrimination legislation that would protect queer teachers, staff and administrators.

Recognizing a larger spectrum of marginalized students, our restorative justice framework begins by acknowledging discriminatory educational policies against harmed communities. In addition to government-sponsored research documenting the number of students denied or pushed out of higher education through discriminatory measures, we also believe that victims should have access to information and power channels that allows them to safeguard their own rights. This may include workshops, community forums, and spaces for testimony that empowers students to identify oppression within their educational system and propose policy changes. As acknowledgment and empowerment alone are insufficient to forge equity in the educational system, we propose introducing possible monetary compensation or scholarships for marginalized students when cases of school-administered discrimination resulted in loss of higher educational opportunities, expulsion from K-12 schools, incarceration, and emotional/psychological trauma. While we recognize the complexities involved in this complex task, our approach upholds the rights of impacted communities to define the outcomes and nuances of their proposed educational reforms.

#### A RESTORATIVE JUSTICE APPROACH TO THE EDUCATION DEMAND IN “A NEW APPEAL FOR HUMAN RIGHTS”

*Hope, Simone, Malgosia, Pedro and Sara*

The concept of restorative justice is fundamental to advancing human rights. Too often, justice has been defined in ways that (i) emphasize punishment of offenders rather than restitution of victims (ii) de-center victims during the justice process, (iii) fail to address the root causes of violences and thus perpetuate a cycle of violence (iv) disregard the importance of the community in collectively addressing the harm.

By contrast, restorative justice is a community-based model that demands the participation of the victim(s), offender(s), and community in a collective healing process that ultimately aims to reconfigure society to uphold dignity. This process begins by ensuring safety for endangered communities, confronting both direct and structural violence.

Through restorative justice, victims should have access to information channels and mechanisms to hold perpetrators accountable. Both perpetrators and harmed communities engage in public truth-telling, forging accurate histories that center oppressed narratives and platforms for change. Thus, it seeks to acknowledge the perpetrators' inflicted harm and empower oppressed communities to enjoy the full opportunities of an equitable future.

Restorative justice requires a shift from white supremacist narratives, frameworks, and policies toward social systems that uphold the common humanity and dignity of all people in the United States.

As articulated in "A New Appeal for Human Rights," undocumented students stand at the crux of our educational system's discriminatory policies. Georgia Board of Regents' Policies 4.1.6 and 4.3.4 which prevent undocumented students from attending public institutions of higher learning exemplify an aggressive denial of these students' humanity. We propose a restorative justice approach to addressing this harm. Said approach should account not only for the undocumented students forced to pay out-of-state tuition and denied financial aid, but also include students rejected from Georgia state schools based on legal status and the commensurate personal and economic losses that are likely to result from their exclusion from quality education.

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2. Government-funded research to assess how many undocumented students were unfairly denied, overcharged, or otherwise pushed out of Georgia's public colleges and universities.
3. The creation of a committee and report through which undocumented students publicly express their losses and articulate desired restitutions from the state.
4. The abolishment of Policies 4.1.6, 4.3.4, and HB 37, as well as legislation that establishes state schools as 'sanctuary campuses.' In addition, we propose the adoption of a policy proposed by the undocumented community to establish their equal participation in higher education.
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We applaud the *New Appeal for Human Rights* for demanding access to higher education for undocumented students; the aforementioned actions will be important steps in restoring justice to the undocumented community. However, we believe that the appeal's critique of education could be broader and address the discrimination faced by other groups when pursuing an education, including:

1. The unequal material and working conditions in Georgia's K-12 schools, leading to poorer educational outcomes for students from low-income zones.
2. The disproportionate disciplining of black students in the form of suspensions, expulsions and even corporal punishment, which contributes to an early sense of criminalization of black people.
3. The queer-exclusionary climate of many of Georgia's educational institutions, exemplified by a lack of gender-neutral bathrooms and housing, a lack of representation of queer people's historical contributions in the K-12 curriculum, and nonexistent antidiscrimination legislation that would protect queer teachers, staff and administrators.

Recognizing a larger spectrum of marginalized students, our restorative justice framework begins by acknowledging discriminatory educational policies against harmed communities. In addition to government-sponsored research documenting the number of students denied or pushed out of higher education through discriminatory measures, we

also believe that victims should have access to information and power channels that allows them to safeguard their own rights. This may include workshops, community forums, and spaces for testimony that empowers students to identify oppression within their educational system and propose policy changes. As acknowledgment and empowerment alone are insufficient to forge equity in the educational system, we propose introducing possible monetary compensation or scholarships for marginalized students when cases of school-administered discrimination resulted in loss of higher educational opportunities, expulsion from K-12 schools, incarceration, and emotional/psychological trauma. While we recognize the complexities involved in this complex task, our approach upholds the rights of impacted communities to define the outcomes and nuances of their proposed educational reforms.

#### APPEAL FOR HEALTH CARE

*Seung Hyun Chung, Lila, Alex, Eliza and Jordanos*

We, the 2017 John Lewis Fellows, with the power and strength of leaders who came before us, demand an immediate transformation of our society. We will no longer tolerate a fundamentally inhuman system sustained by discrimination. We will advance stories that have been subverted or silenced and will not rest until the oppressive narratives used to mask those unequal realities are rewritten.

Rather than being complicit with the status quo, we choose to fully recognize the dignity of the disempowered and acknowledge the ongoing harm inflicted upon them. Our envisioned society provides access to fundamental resources for all to thrive and frames justice as fueled by actions rather than words. The justice we aspire to is not merely retributive, but transformative.

Our society establishes laws which, rather than maintain order, allow people whose autonomy was under threat to come to the forefront of society and participate in co-constructing a world where everyone flourishes. We want a peace achieved by truthful discourse. We envision reality in which all are approached with humanity and love and consequently, every person constitutes the norm.

Today, in view of the current federal push to repeal the Affordable Care Act, the state of health insurance is in urgent need of action. Over 1.4 million Georgians lack health insurance, with only a fraction of individuals in the metro Atlanta area within access to health care providers and services. The current system of privatized hospitals and care regards patients first for their financial value and secondly for their human worth. Therefore, we must end the era of privatized health care and instead put into place a single-payer system under which the government, rather than private insurance companies, would pay for all necessary care nationally. We propose a paradigmatic shift in how healthcare is ensured and provided in Georgia and the United States, emphasizing a healthcare system built on the principles of restorative justice and human rights.

Firstly, we call for a single-payer healthcare system in which the state, financed by taxes, covers basic health-care costs for all residents regardless of income, occupation, or health status. The premium of an offered policy/health package is equal for each insured, regardless of his health, age or background. The government assures the quality of care through federal legal standards. Healthcare providers, health insurers and insured persons, will determine the implementation. This freedom ensures competition and market forces to incentivize high quality and efficiency. To ensure simplicity of administration, each doctor handles the insurance claim against the provincial insurer. There is no need for the person who accesses healthcare to be involved in billing and reclaim.

Secondly, physicians, caregivers, and healthcare administrators must be trained in the tenets of narrative medicine. Narrative medicine incorporates storytelling as a way to understand the structural, socio-cultural, and personal

circumstances of a patient and their illness. Patients must be able to voice how their illness came to be and the type of care that they would feel most comfortable with. This approach is best carried out through culturally connected physicians and caregivers who can better understand the lives and challenges of their patients. To promote such medical personnel we support federally allocated funds dedicated to bolstering the number of people of color in the field and narrative medicine training.

Thirdly, Georgia's healthcare problems would be mitigated by reforms in health education. The lack of state standards in comprehensive sex education fosters health disparities throughout Georgia. According to the Center for Disease Control, Georgia ranks fourth in the nation for sexually transmitted diseases such as syphilis and HIV and ninth for teenage pregnancies. School districts that implement abstinence-only curriculum deprive at-risk youth in high HIV areas resources and information to lead healthy lives. Georgia must mandate comprehensive sex education, with emphasis on contraception instead of abstinence.

Lastly, a holistic approach to preventative health care is needed above all else. This means improving access to healthy food, water, housing, and education especially in historically underserved areas. To monitor the effectiveness of development on the community's overall health, an annual report would be produced out of each healthcare facility. The report would provide an overview of how the right to health-care is carried out throughout the country, giving basis to administering possible changes and constructively resolving any arising problems. Healthcare professionals providing services would therefore be prompted to comply with established, anti-discriminatory regulations.

No nation can stay healthy without equal and fundamental access to quality healthcare regardless of patient background. Our suggestions outline the initial advances needed to reach this goal.

#### THE INCLUSIVE HOUSING ACT

*David, Zelma, Chandra, Emily, Darriel*

Despite the undeniable progress of the Civil Rights Movement and other struggles for social justice, residents of Atlanta continue to be impacted by structural violence and the denial of their humanity. There is an immeasurable continued practice of discrimination in Atlanta on the basis of race, social class, gender, sexuality, and various other axis which state leadership has relentlessly ignored, despite our failure to uphold our reputation as a "Welcoming City."

We insist on the addressment of the systemic racism and inequalities that continue to be pervasive in our society. In order to restore justice to communities in our nation, we must acknowledge the legacy of inequity and its impact on present communities as well as its detrimental impact on future generations. Restorative justice requires us to acknowledge the ways subaltern groups are entangled in the system of mass incarceration, stripped of their right to an equitable education, health care, housing, and economic resources.

In order for Atlanta to address these inequities, we demand an organized and collective process in which the historical atrocities committed against marginalized communities are acknowledged and rectified through sincere and concrete social, economic, and political action aimed at increasing the accessibility of resources and the practice of inclusion.

The focus of this bill proposal is to address the undeniable housing needs of Atlanta's citizens, residents, and vulnerable populations including the homeless. The Transformation Alliance found that 95 percent of newly-constructed apartments since 2012 have been luxury apartments. Within this bill, affordable housing will be defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's guidelines, which states that affordable housing should be no more than 30 percent of a household's yearly income.

### Affordable Housing:

In an effort to increase affordable housing, 25% of new housing units will be allocated for low-income section 8 voucher residents. This bill also encourages community members to have equal contributions to the decision making process with regard to community development through organized meetings and invitations to conferences in the community. Sustainability will be at the forefront of new housing development as developers are required to create secure and adequate living units. As a part of the community land trust grant, the three highest income brackets as well as corporations residing in Atlanta such as Delta, Coca Cola, and Chick-Fil-A will be required to pay an increased tax that will be attributed to the affordable housing fund.

### Tenants Rights:

Currently, landlords can send their tenants a late notice as early as two days after a late payment and can legally seek a court notice for eviction within ten days. Instead, tenants will be given a minimum of three late payments before a landlord can proceed with eviction. Additionally landlords must wait a minimum of 14 days before pursuing a court ordered eviction notice for a tenant. Landlords are prohibited from discriminating against a tenant on the basis of race, ethnicity, etc. There will be a system in place to deal with complaints of discrimination in order to resolve the issue. If the issue is not resolved through third party mediation legal action will be pursued. Landlords are prohibited from discriminating against residents with criminal records or Section 8 voucher programs. Finally, rent increases will be limited to 50% of the rate of inflation defined by the Consumer Price Index to ensure tenants are not paying rent beyond their means.

### Homelessness:

In Atlanta, statistics show that homeless people are 12 times more likely to be arrested than those with permanent housing. In order to decrease the amount of homeless individuals sleeping in public spaces, we propose an increase in state funded shelters and halfway homes offering job training and mental health services. Furthermore, research done by Lost-n-Found Youth discovered that 40% of homeless youth identify as LGBTQIA+. This organization helps queer youth transition into more permanent housing by providing mental health evaluations and counseling, referrals to educational resources, and job interview training. This bill will expand the work done by this organization through corporate donations, grants, and mandatory taxes would support the most vulnerable members of Atlanta's population.

# TRANSGRESSING THE COLONIAL STATE

## ON DIVERSE STRATEGIES, THEIR DANGERS, AND THE POWER OF HEALING

Roberto Flores

TOURING THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR CIVIL AND HUMAN RIGHTS, MY EXPERIENCE IN THE PROGRAM began with a critical examination of the inclusion of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and non-violence in the narrative of the Civil Rights Movement, while other more militant leaders and tactics were excluded. Thinking of their place in our collective historical memory, throughout the following weeks I began to contemplate the possibility of modern day equivalents of such tactics and their place in achieving liberation.

While this internal conversation began with a mere abstract conception of proper tactics in the struggle for freedom, listening and engaging with Dr. Natsu Saito grounded me in a broader yet more concrete paradigm. In her view, centering the decolonization process of the United States is necessary before any marginalized group can work toward equality, as colonization began a process of racialization and hierarchical rule which informs every crevice of our current system of government and society. Examining reality pragmatically I could only conclude that a variety of tactics are necessary to solve immediate and longer-term injustices.

Yet, I question the value of working within our current system to alleviate unjust conditions while our complicity in the same system continues unchallenged. To some extent, I had previously considered these shortcomings and sought out ways to deconstruct and even attack our present systems. Now, however, I wish to analyze the dangers, limitations, and possible starting points for work that refuses to conform with systems and institutions built on stolen land and stolen labor.

When working in existing institutions, marginalized people must often conform to certain rules of etiquette set by the dominant culture in order to be credible. These rules may include ways of talking or dressing, which would enable a person to be respected in a professional setting. When performing this respectable version of ourselves, marginalized bodies risk being perceived as different from the rest of their groups, presenting a model others can and should follow. The biggest danger in this game many of us must play is adopting and internalizing this narrative, causing us to distance ourselves from our communities and only climb further along in the hierarchical ladder of power. Overcoming this would require all of our work to center the voices and experiences of the most marginalized and vulnerable. This is a simple statement, yet it actually requires a difficult commitment to our communities and a renunciation to the deeply tempting material benefits we gain from aligning with those in power.

While I understood the dangers of working within the system, the conception that work toward equality that does not challenge the colonial state simply reinforces racial and hierarchical rule was personally revolutionizing. For me, this really legitimized the need for the construction of a completely different model of political and economic organization; one that is not built upon principles of domination and vertical power. In imagining an alternative, Professor Ward Churchill's book signing and discussion on self-determination offered interesting insights. Through his work on colonization, he understood the two hundred nation-states recognized by the Untied Nations as unrepresentative of the thousand

of nations on the planet that were consolidated into states through colonial violence. While it would be easy to suggest returning to an original organization of nations, it is both politically and socially impossible. The reality is that through migration and mass displacement over centuries, most people do not exist within a society that can return to its original form if there ever was one.

In the end, returning to a pre-colonial ideal of nations in order to achieve self-determination seems impossible. Yet, I believe that a cultural movement can begin to formulate what our individual nations were and what they could be, even if they are detached from formal institutions. While touring the Clark Atlanta University Art Gallery, Dr. Maurita Poole described the importance of black artists being “in conversation with each other,” including their predecessors as well as their contemporaries. To her, these artists could not fully realize their own image and their own sense of self without a context with which they could compare themselves. I think this is true not just for artists, but for intellectuals and politicians as well. At the moment, I imagine that promoting and legitimizing the arts and culture of marginalized peoples can bring a certain level of unity and lead them forward to a path of real self-determination.

Still, the work of dismantling the system cannot be undertaken with arts alone, and the topic of violence and its place in this struggle is often contested. To that point, I suggest considering limits to the amount and level of violence used in the struggle for liberation, measuring it in anticipation of retaliatory violence from the state. The state often responds to movements for self-determination with violence even when they are completely peaceful. So in reality, any measure that does not work within the system should strategize keeping in mind the violent response of the state, regardless of their use of violent or non-violent measures. In addition, when using violence against the state, we should remain vigilant that the violence does not seep into the movements themselves and attack other marginalized and vulnerable people in the struggle.

Working toward creating a new system can seem to be the only true method in achieving equality and freedom. However, this can be equally as dangerous. I worry that

as marginalized people responding to state violence for centuries, our subconscious internalized those same forms of violence in order to survive. In attempting to rebuild a new more equal system, we may fall back and recreate hierarchical and violent power structures that will not lead to real liberation for all. In a lecture on restorative justice, Dr. David Hooker explored the effect of generational trauma. When faced with violence, exploitation, and even exclusion we respond in defensive ways to protect ourselves. I believe that our inherent response mirrors the violence perpetrated in the first place. While this is necessary and justified, these patterns of response are passed on through generations, perpetually tying us to the perpetrator’s initial way of interacting, which is steeped in violence and power. The process of detaching ourselves from these shackles is disturbingly difficult. However, we can begin to undo this cycle of violence by healing first individually and hopefully collectively in order to imagine a truly fair and just society.

These reflections on the value of different strategies to achieve true liberation are very broad, yet I believe that keeping these principles in mind is necessary to even begin formulating concrete solutions. As time passes by, the struggle for freedom seems to grow harder and those pulling the strings even more evil, calling us to action. But we must remember that it is easy to try to fix a problem and only make it worse. It is difficult and humbling to accept the reality that unless we think and strategize carefully and in community, we risk contributing to the same suffering, which we denounce. Regardless of what our politics tell us of Martin or Malcolm or anyone else in the Civil Rights Movement, their time has passed. The question is, what will we do now?

# REFLECTION

Zelda Feldman

SOMETHING I HAVE BEEN STRUGGLING TO UNDERSTAND IS HOW THE US NEVER MANAGED to acknowledge their history of slavery, human rights violation and settler colonialism. Through talks by scholars such as Dr. Saito and Dr. Anderson, I was introduced to the paradox of the widespread savior narrative in the depiction of the US participation in WW II, flourishing while forced assimilation and land extraction continued to be the reality of native American, and Jim crow and institutionalized racism characterized the South.

Since the program also gave space to excursions such as visits to various museums and memorials I witnessed the way US history has been fragmented and distorted in order to uphold an imaginary patriotic past characterized by unity, horizontality and democracy.

If I were to describe the visit to Stone Mountain in one word, it would be bizarre. I found myself in a world of dinosaurs in pastels, confederate flags, uncritical heroization of discriminatory and pro-slavery historical figures, surrounded by an exquisite natural environment. Even though we had been prepared for the controversy of the place, I was shocked by the way the Confederate Memorial exhibition honored president Jefferson Davis as well as the Confederate generals and their participation in the civil war, without even mentioning slavery and how it played a fundamental role in the conflict between the North and the South. Furthermore, a construction of 'Southern' and 'Georgian' identity seemed to be somehow obvious, yet subtly conducted through the language used to present the confederates.

Robert Lee, the commanding general of Confederate army, was described as one of the South's 'most respected and beloved figures', 'a master military strategist' and 'symbol of accepting defeat with dignity and working to restore the union between north and south'. On top of

this, 'The dream' served as the heading of the section on the ideational ground of the memorial which emphasized how the building of the Confederate memorial 'was the dream of several Georgians'.

In preparation for the program we had to read an article on the controversy of Stone Mountain and after experiencing it, I would agree with Rose, the NAACP chapter president's view on the memorial, as an ahistorical form of government sponsored hate and a monthly meeting place for members of the KKK. Half of the museum was dedicated to portray the process in which the Carved image of the three confederates was created in terms of the work of the artist and material used, rather than portraying how the confederates were fighting to uphold their so called 'state rights', which meant their right to dehumanize and propertize African Americans.

To a certain extent, I did expect to encounter a rather patriotic and one-sided perspective on The Civil War at the confederate memorial. However, my expectations for the Atlanta History Museum were quite different. Ironically the exhibitions I had a chance to experience, which included 'The City of Atlanta', an exhibition on 'Native Americans' and one on The Civil War, seemed to portray rather un-nuanced and glorified versions of history, where slavery, genocide, present day institutionalized racism, displacement, mass incarceration and income inequity seemed to be erased.

A woman who worked at The Atlanta History Museum explained in an apologetic manner, how the civil rights exhibition had not been renewed over the past 20 years, and that they were planning to make some major changes by emphasizing how slavery and the oppression of African Americans played a fundamental role in the war.

## SHIFTING HISTORICAL AGENCIES

I have had a lot of trouble understanding the term restorative justice and the way in which it can be introduced, organized and practiced. However, through group discussions and assignments, lectures and readings I have somehow come to the understanding of what a restorative justice approach might include. A crucial aspect must be an active acknowledgement of the historic and present day oppressive structures. Among other things, a portrayal of history in which the people who has been and currently is ‘invisible’ in popular historical chronicles, should be given agency to nuance and actively communicate the historical narrative, in which their voices, oppressions and livelihood has been neglected.

An example of a place where history is constantly being reclaimed, redefined and deconstructed is the Clark Atlanta University Art Gallery. It was an enriching experience to explore the history of civil rights and contemporary issues characterizing black experience through engaging with exquisite visual artworks. The Curator Dr. Maurita Poole said something relating representation which I found extremely important: “The challenge of curating is to not only present blackness as suffering and violence, but to recognize the rich culture, genius and achievements.” Furthermore, the gallery experience inspired me to reflect upon the unique learnings of this fellowship through drawing and painting (see attached drawings).

## RESTORATIVE JUSTICE IN A DANISH CONTEXT

Reconstruction and airbrushing history is not unfamiliar to me. Even though there has been a widespread acknowledgement and recognition of the holocaust, I would argue that certain aspects of the historical narrative on the Danish resistance against the Nazi occupation has been rather romanticized. It is always told how Danish fishermen, out of solidarity, helped the Jews to go to Sweden. With a Jewish family, part of which had to flee to Sweden. I have, however, been told how they had to pay a rather big amount of money for a leaky boat. Some of my family members sat in water for several hours, resulting in the case of one relative, in decease and death. These fishermen of 1943 could also be portrayed in a similar

way as the human smugglers, who currently ship refugees crossing the Mediterranean Sea for an amount of money.

Having to constantly reflect upon ways in which justice can be restored have made me reconsider how Denmark has treated its highly oppressive colonial past. This year is the 100th year after Denmark ‘gave up slavery’ in the ‘Danish West Indies’, now known as the US Virgin Islands. However, it has to be emphasized that the Islands were sold to the US, which continued the slavery. I was barely taught about Denmark as a colonial power of US Virgin Islands, Greenland and The ‘Gold Coast’ of Ghana in school and the few films I have watched on the issue has been highly biased, for example portraying the colonizers as heroic figures with a passionate love for the women of ‘the other’ and most importantly a part of a fictionalized ‘distant’ history. Furthermore, Denmark tend to bury its hyper-oppressive past through constructing a self-image of being relatively progressive in a broader historical context through priding itself with being one of the first ‘abolitionist nations’.

The Danish prime minister recently attempted to make a public apology to the people of the United States Virgin Islands and the Danish state chose to financially support some scholarship programs at local universities. On this occasion, different museums have chosen to hold exhibitions on Danish slave owners and the history of the former colony. Learning from the US context made me wonder how the situation would have looked like if there were any descendants of the former colony living in Denmark. I personally don’t believe that some temporary exhibition and a small donation to education is comparable to the immense wealth extracted from enslaved labor and natural resources or able to restore hundreds of years of injustice and stolen lives.

Having had the privilege of immersing into the socio-political and historical context of the Civil Rights Movement in the South through the John Lewis Fellowship has inspired me to further investigate the positions of different populations, narratives and historiographies in a Danish colonial context. I’m interested in what has been added and left out, and how actors in the former

colonies relate to and deal with the past and its immense significance for the present moment.

A day of the program was dedicated to exploring restoration. Professor Hooker argued that restorative justice as a tool and approach is a somehow flawed and ambiguous term, since trauma is transgenerational and what has been taken away can't possibly be given back. Furthermore, the descendants of oppressors who are born with the inherited privileges in a system of institutionalized discrimination, will not necessarily understand or feel any responsibility of the harms of the past.

#### IN HONOR OF DR. ROSLYN POPE

Narrow spectacles sliding down to the tip of her nose bringing back fragmented memories of sledding on yellow plastic bags, navigating a landscape of turbid urban snow. Her intellectual eyes are moving in a pace too fast for her deep purple glasses to follow. She has given birth to three PhDs and 'An Appeal for Human Rights.' Like many other women of the movement, her excellence and integrity was too threatening for the androcentric public sphere.

"We just wanted to have the same way of living that was nurtured and protected." She doesn't seem to be interested in answering the three mandatory questions for every female speaker: "how do you practice self-care?", "how do you deal with your own trauma?", "how do you prioritize your own healing?" The air thickens like vanilla cream when her soothing words dance their way out in the crowd. "We knew we were right," she says looking at us as if we were a disruptive mosaic artwork, paying attention to every quirky piece of broken glass, mirror and psychedelic looking plastic. "Justice is restored whenever every human being on this earth is equal". A statement that makes me feel confidently lost in the fourteen demands she persistently typed during a time where authorities simply denied that they could have been written by two youthful hands of color. Several hundreds of seasons later, that same document floats in the sewage of the internet. The demands might have been soaked, but they have not yet undergone the natural process of decomposition, becoming one with

the swamp of macabre semi-anonymous, semi-factual, semi-radical truths. Why could these demands easily seem like a groundbreaking Facebook status from a self-proclaimed progressive millennial?

Hint: maybe because the US denies the premise of its own existence. Maybe because the concept of settler colonialism is treated as alien and faceless as SUBJECTS who happens to be Black, Latinx, Asian, undocumented, Muslim or LGBT+. According to Dr. Saito equal protection symptoms protects white property: the construction of land and the property of personhood. "Equal treatment- theory" establish the 'pure innocence' of those who throughout history, have been comfortably indulging the foam of the cream. It buries the difference between security and privilege, self-determination and affirmative action.



# RESTORATIVE JUSTICE: KNOWLEDGE, EMPOWERMENT, AND RESISTANCE

Adam Flaherty Cohen

MY COUNTRY'S FAILURE TO ACKNOWLEDGE ITS HISTORY OF THEFT, VIOLENCE, AND RACIAL subjugation throughout its existence leaves a formidable challenge for my generation. With each passing year, truths remain in the minds of fewer and fewer individuals while shallow and incomplete narratives continue to get produced in our history textbooks and etched into our built environment. We have a long and significant history of hiding from the truth in my country. For those such as myself, the individuals for whom the status quo works quite well, reexamining history in search of truth seems both terrifying and unnecessary. It may force us to pay for crimes we feel we did not commit and it may require spending significant time looking back at attitudes toward race, religion, gender, and sexual orientation that we believe are progressing naturally by aid of time's invisible hand. We believe our energies are better spent engaging in social entrepreneurship, promoting community economic development, and investing in technological innovation in search of creative ways to bring the historically marginalized into our new, globalized economy.

The John Lewis Fellowship offered me a special opportunity to take part in a civil rights tour of the City of Atlanta. Much of the tour, led by a former driver of Martin Luther King Jr.'s family, highlighted the

importance of "Sweet Auburn" Avenue, once a hub of African-American business and community life and the home of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) headquarters during the Civil Rights Movement. Throughout the Fellowship, we heard from many speakers who reemphasized the importance of this street as a symbol of African American heritage, organizing, and accomplishments in the City of Atlanta. However, a stroll down Auburn Avenue today falls short of revealing the street's legacy. The historic SCLC headquarters is left vacant and unpreserved. The Butler Street YMCA, which housed the first eight African American police officers in Atlanta during a time when they were not allowed into other police stations, has closed. The bar where civil rights leaders socialized is boarded up and decaying without even as much as a plaque noting its former existence. As the National Park Service's website states,

Sweet Auburn [Avenue] was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1976. However, like so many other inner city neighborhoods, Sweet Auburn fell victim to lack of investment, crime and abandonment, compounded by highway construction that split it in two.<sup>1</sup>

What is to come of the block is unclear. In the case of



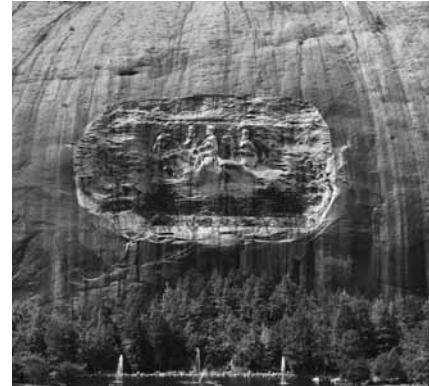
*Despite the small plaque signifying the historic significance of Prince Hall Masonic Building as the former headquarters of the Southern Leadership Christian Conference (SCLC) during the Civil Rights Movement, the building has yet to be designated as a National Historic Landmark. Across the street from Prince Hall Masonic Building sits a vacant building with boarded up windows. Tom Houck, former driver for the Martin Luther King Jr.'s family, described it as a bar where activists in the Civil Rights Movement used to shoot pool and socialize.*

increased funds and political will, historic preservation efforts may succeed, although the highway construction means some damage is likely irreparable. Otherwise, like many neighborhoods adjacent to the new Atlanta Beltline, the neighborhood may gentrify, erasing much of its history for good. The question then for my generation is: so what?

Bryan Stevenson, Director of the Equal Justice Initiative's recollection of the reactions he received when giving a lecture on the American death penalty to German students is so powerful. The death penalty could never happen in Germany, the German citizens were quite sure. The memory of the Holocaust was far too ingrained in the minds of German citizens. Government-sanctioned killings would be "unconscionable." Stevenson also notes that, during his visit to Germany, he could not walk more than 100 meters without seeing a marker on a stone or a monument to designate the places where Jewish families were abducted from their homes and taken to concentration camps.<sup>2</sup> To be sure, significant differences exist between Germany post-World War II, where very few Jews remained, and America post-Civil War; however, one can't help but note the stark differences between the ways the two countries came to terms with their vicious pasts. Just outside Atlanta, Stone Mountain Park, a historic site and tourist attraction, continues to boast the confederate flag alongside artwork glorifying Confederate soldiers for their fight to uphold chattel slavery.

My work in civil and human rights began when I was a freshman in college and was forced to come to terms with the privileges I inherited from my university's expansion in West Philadelphia as part of the city's ambitious plan for "urban renewal." Using federal funds, the city government seized the land where (mostly poor) black families lived, bulldozed their homes, and handed the land over to my university—an effort to combat "blight." Reflecting on the "urban renewal" campaigns of the 1950s and 60s, a *New York Times* article states,

During that era, four units of low-income housing were destroyed for every one new unit that was built. And more than two-thirds of



*At Stone Mountain National Park, Confederate flags line the trail up the country's largest exposed granite rock. Engraved into the rock are three prominent Confederate soldiers.*

the displaced were black or Hispanic, a pattern that was clear by 1963 when the author James Baldwin observed that urban renewal "means Negro removal."<sup>3</sup>

Fast forward more than sixty years to today, some African American families continue to fight efforts by local governments to seize their family homes through eminent domain while many others wait to get priced out of their neighborhoods as a result of publically-subsidized development. Gentrification fits well into the narrative of the exploitation and disposability of black and brown bodies and their labor; however, when Donald Trump speaks of his urban agenda, perhaps the least controversial of his poorly-articulated plans for the country, he and most Americans recognize no such thing.

How many Americans, from any part of the country, can tell you about the history of redlining and racially restrictive covenants, and their significant contributions to the racial wealth divide that exists today? How many Americans know about the more than 2,000 African Americans elected to public office during the Reconstruction period before the Ku Klux Klan, Jim Crow laws, and threats by white employers and landlords decimated the African American vote? How many Americans fully grasp the abhorrent truths that contributed to the removal of Native Americans off the

lands from which we now sustain and profit? While some may reduce the collective loss of historical memory to mere deficiencies in our educational system, the truth is so much more complex. The decay of Auburn Avenue is part of that truth. As Bryan Stevenson states, “There is no redemption without acknowledgement of sin. It’s not bad to repent. It’s cleansing. It’s necessary. It’s ultimately liberating to acknowledge where we were and where we want to go. We haven’t done that collectively.”<sup>4</sup> Indeed, rather than confront our history and acknowledge the ways that we continue to profit off the systematic exploitation of marginalized peoples, we reduce our history and our realities to “things of the past,” “necessary to eventually raise all boats,” or, perhaps most dangerous of all, to the idea that “some groups of humans are more evolved, or ‘more human,’ than others.”

As the most recent class of John Lewis Fellows, we were tasked with considering what “restorative justice,” a term contextualized through Germany’s actions to repent for its genocide and South Africa’s formation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission post-apartheid, might mean in the context of the American South. While both historical examples leave much to be desired, they present frameworks for restorative justice that involve acknowledgement and reconciliation rather than suppression and punishment. While the means through which restorative justice may be undertaken in this country remain unclear, its urgency is more evident than ever. With restorative justice, we may have hesitated before allowing the City of Atlanta to turn the railroad tracks, built by enslaved and imprisoned peoples, over to private developers without a far more extensive democratic planning process. With restorative justice, we may have been more aware as to what was really going on when Donald Trump cried “voter fraud” and formed his Commission on Election Integrity. With restorative justice, we may recognize the importance of preserving neighborhoods, and the people and stories that give them life, such as we have failed to do on Auburn Avenue and in other gentrifying and “blighted” neighborhoods across the country. Truths would remain. Narratives would be reclaimed. Human dignity would begin to be restored.



*Adjacent to the noisy highway that now bisects Auburn Avenue sits vacant buildings that once housed shops and restaurants. Not far from the highway, the historic Butler Street YMCA has closed.*



## NOTES

- 1 “Sweet Auburn Historic District,” National Park Service, <https://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/atlanta/aub.html>
- 2 Bryan Stevenson, “We need to talk about injustice,” TED, [https://www.ted.com/talks/bryan\\_stevenson\\_we\\_need\\_to\\_talk\\_about\\_an\\_injustice\\_\(February\\_2012\).](https://www.ted.com/talks/bryan_stevenson_we_need_to_talk_about_an_injustice_(February_2012).)
- 3 Emily Badger, “Why Trump’s Use of the Words ‘Urban Renewal’ is Scary for Cities, *New York Times*, <https://mobile.nytimes.com/2016/12/07/upshot/why-trumps-use-of-the-words-urban-renewal-is-scary-for-cities.html> (December 7, 2016).
- 4 Bryan Stevenson, “Why the opposite of Poverty isn’t wealth, but justice,” The Ezra Klein Show, <https://www.vox.com/2017/5/24/15675606/bryan-stevenson-confederacy-monuments-slavery-ezra-klein> (May 24, 2017).

# A PEOPLE'S HISTORY OF ATLANTA: AN APPEAL

Alex Mabanta

STONE MOUNTAIN, ONE OF THE LARGEST QUARTZ DOMES IN THE WORLD, STANDS LIKE A scab erupting from the surrounding landscape. Carved into its north face, the figures of three Confederate leaders of the Civil War – President Jefferson Davis and Generals Robert E. Lee and Thomas J. “Stonewall” Jackson – tower over Stone Mountain Theme Park, a site where the “the fun never ends”, according to the Atlanta Convention and Visitors Bureau.<sup>1</sup> Here, children feast on cotton candy at the base of the largest Confederate memorial in the United States. The amusement park complex, replete with a 4-D movie theater, a mini-golf course, and a small water park, sprawls in all directions, with the looming figures of the Confederate leaders ever-present (indeed, visible from most corners of the park). The Bureau encourages family members to gaze into the faces in the monument and ask each other “who are they?” in the interest of “learning a little history.” Absent from the question, worded so innocuously as to imply a political neutrality in naming the three figures, is the inconvenient subtext – “who are they to whom?” and “whose history?” To some in white Atlanta – and to large extent white America – the figures symbolize pride for a particular American history, that legitimizes the institution of slavery and glorifies white supremacy. Yet to Black Atlanta, Stone Mountain is a constant reminder of the dehumanization of African Americans, from bondage to Jim Crow, both old and new. “Let freedom ring from Stone Mountain in Georgia,” Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. urged in his 1963 “I Have a Dream Speech” from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial.

Everywhere in Atlanta, race and historical remembering collide with intense fervor and awkward irresolution. With ambitions as a global destination and the aspirational capital of the American South, Atlanta

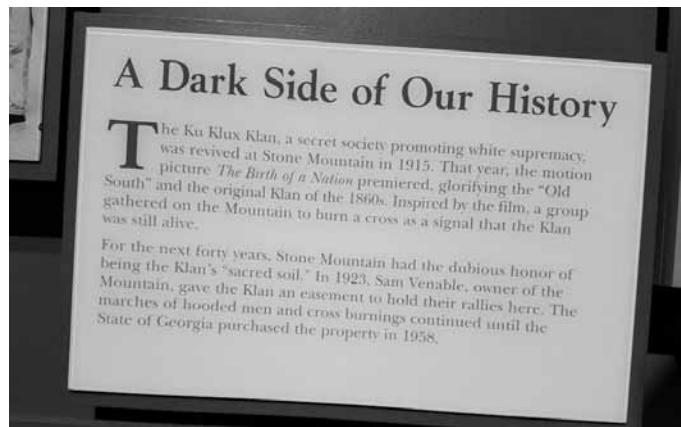


Photo by Seung-Hyun Chung

invites the world to a city which sanitizes the struggles of the many and leaves the past as a for-profit enterprise for the privileged few. Atlanta, the cradle and crucible of the Civil Rights Movement, has renamed numerous streets, buildings and parks in an effort to capitalize on the movement's historical significance. At the same time, Atlanta promotes travel to Stone Mountain, the most visited attraction in Georgia,<sup>2</sup> located only twenty miles northeast of the city center. In Confederate Hall, a museum at the foot of the mountain, slavery, the Civil War, and segregation are all whitewashed in the same tenor. In one exhibit, a display “demystifies” the notion that white plantation owners held an exorbitant number of slaves when, in reality, “the typical farm had four African American slaves”. According to another exhibit, everyday life on Stone Mountain was peaceful until the summer of 1864, when General Sherman began his siege of Atlanta. Fortunately, the display continues, Stone Mountain regained its position as a popular summer resort only two years after. Yet everyday peace omits the brutality of

the Antebellum and Reconstruction eras when African Americans were whipped as enslaved people or lynched as free people. Near the end of the museum, a small display offers the only acknowledgement of Stone Mountain's legacy as the birthplace of the Ku Klux Klan.

Euphemized as a secret society, the KKK is characterized along the lines of an events planning committee, with depictions of gatherings, rallies, and marches. There is no mention of terrorism or terrorist activities, with recognition of cross burnings as the only crime the KKK has committed. In effect, the display walks the tightrope of admitting the erroneousness of the Confederate cause without committing to its deplorability. The museum's eulogy of the Confederacy realizes the cultural capital of romanticizing the aftermath of the Civil War without suffering the consequences of historical revisionism. Rather than purport false narratives, that have no basis in the historical record, Confederate Hall remains silent on objectionable histories, effectively obviating them from public knowledge or discourse.

Atlanta's convulsive past is marked by rebuilding the city on top of the remains of systematic violence without acknowledging the ashes upon which new Atlanta stands. The Atlanta History Center, located in the wealthy and predominantly white business district of Buckhead, offers permanent exhibits on the Civil War, Southern folk art, and the life of golfer Bobby Jones. Yet, in a city that is majority African American, the museum offers no exclusive exhibition of African American history of any era. Instead, the African American experience is encapsulated in the *Gatherround* exhibit, where displays of the Civil Rights Movement and segregation are interspersed between country music records and Coca Cola memorabilia. By presenting the African American struggle for freedom and equality as a discontinuous narrative, the museum dilutes how African Americans were discriminated against across generations. Furthermore, the presentation of African Americans blended with white people throughout the city in the exhibit ignores the racial tensions that fracture Atlantan society. Following the rebuilding of Atlanta after the Civil War, local leaders envisioned a city that would be

a transportation hub for the region. At the same time, local leaders encoded Jim Crow laws to restructure Postbellum Atlanta along the racial hierarchy of slavery. African Americans were concentrated in segregated districts south of downtown Atlanta, which was exclusively white. Yet as Atlanta expanded, Black people began to encroach on downtown, causing white flight from downtown to midtown in an effort to resist neighborhood and business integration. Then, as Black people moved from downtown to midtown, white people fled again north to Buckhead, to remake another oasis of whiteness in the aversion to African American social empowerment.<sup>3</sup> Atlanta's urban geography today reveals how race and income intersect to reproduce segregation. According to Georgia State University Professor Erin Ruel, Atlanta ranks last among American cities for upward mobility.<sup>4</sup> Children, particularly Black children, born in the most impoverished neighborhoods of Atlanta have the lowest chances of becoming high-income earners of any child in the United States. In the city historically "too busy to hate", the conditions of Apartheid are growing for the next generation of Atlantans.

What might restorative justice look like amidst Atlanta's politics of forgetting? In Leesburg, Georgia, a city near the Florida border, a group of African American girls were abducted and incarcerated for marching for the Civil Rights Movement. They were locked in a stockade for two months with little food and water. One girl, Verna Hollis, discovered she was pregnant with a baby boy during this imprisonment. Yet this tragic history, bereft of fiery orators and written appeals for human rights,<sup>5</sup> offers to the Civil Rights Movement no champions to capitalize on. Still the stolen girls march on to Atlanta and to Washington D.C., sharing their under-told story to seek affirmation that their survival had meaning, and, in effect, that Black lives matter. By demanding inclusion and reclaiming history, the stolen girls resist the temptation among Civil Rights leaders and historians that the movement itself is a closed chapter of the American experience, that all the lessons in the movement's pursuit to end discrimination have been learned. "History is a human right", according to Emory University Professor Carole Anderson in a lecture to the

2017 John Lewis Fellowship Program.<sup>6</sup> In view of the social friction surrounding forgetting and remembering in Atlanta, perhaps it is more apt to modify Anderson's statement through the lens of inclusivity – that a people's history is a human right. A people's history of Atlanta, a city retold and remade in the image of the many, may provide the basis for restoring the dignity and humanity to the people of Atlanta and thereby create the justice long denied to the city's forgotten. A city centered on its people's history may provide the foundations for the freedom Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. dreamed about over a half century ago.

Atlanta has reinforced within me the importance of social inclusion across diverse communities in the unfolding stories of cities. Reflecting upon my work as Chair of the Peace and Justice Commission, the city of Berkeley's human rights commission, I realize the urgency of learning and interrogating local history before crafting municipal policy. My summer in the American South has taught me how the politics of memory frames politics entirely. I return to the San Francisco Bay Area carrying these questions – “who has been forgotten in this city?” and “how can we work together to remember and uplift their stories?”

## NOTES

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# HOW PEOPLE CAN CHANGE YOUR LIFE AND MAKE THE BEST MUSIC IN YOUR WORLD OF SILENCE

Alma Mujanović

THE LAST DAY OF AN UNFORGETTABLE AND WONDERFUL EXPERIENCE IN MY LIFE ARRIVED. I will take with me incredible new knowledge, friendships, beautiful people, and unforgettable moments.

For almost four weeks of work and education through the Humanity in Action John Lewis Fellowship program, I realized many things. I began to appreciate what I have, and to think more and more about the situations and the problems in a global sense. Things I want to change in my local community can very well affect the whole world, because everything is connected in life and we are all human beings, essential parts of the planet Earth and the time in which we are right now.

This program is special to me for the sake of difference. Diversity in the world is what makes our lives the way it is: unique, special, unusual, full of needs with struggle, full of support, and new goals. The differences between us reveal that we all have our own shortcomings and privileges, and that we need to be united if we want to change the world.

In the Museum of the Center for Civil and Human Rights, I read the quote saying “They do not know each other because they don’t communicate”.

That is why it was most important for me to communicate with people, even though I was the one who heard more – spoke less. I wanted to hear a lot of new stories and learn a lot of new things about human rights. The thing that bring me joy and made this program even better and more enjoyable is that all the fellows have taken care of me, making sure I can follow the lectures and the

conversation. I didn't feel bad because I'm deaf. More, I became proud of myself and brave enough to say that this is my struggle, just one thing more which motivates me to work hard.

During the four weeks, and through the lectures I had, I was thinking all the time about the song which I wrote in high school. I connected the situation with the minority in America with my own, and I struggled with many issues. I still did not find the answer, but I found people who played the main role in my song.

I was 17 years old when I wrote this song and won the third prize in the competition. Within these months, I have understood why it is so important to me and why I'm trying to put it into my essay. I realized how we people are really complicated, because everything started with us, ordinary human beings.

Selfish creatures of blood and flesh, who did not accept anything different from them, someone with a different opinion, color, or someone with a disability.

That's why I decided to publish this song, as I watched the world through a child's eyes in order to say that there are no differences between us, and that we are all only human beings who have only one special need — love.

It is so normal to be different,  
it's so unique to be yourself.  
But it is not so human to separate peoples  
By their values.  
  
It's so painful to speak about pain,

It's so hard to push out our emotions,  
So insensitive to forget  
That we are the same persons.

Humanity, Humanity, Humanity  
Where is humanity?

Black, black, black is black  
White, white, white is white  
Oh, such so perfect combination  
Of the creation...

What, why, and how  
From where the hatred comes?  
I ask myself every day.  
Humanity, humanity, humanity  
Where does humanity dissapeard?

As Martin Luther King said: "I have a dream", and, I have a dream as well:

*"So, I want to change, yourself, you, world. I have a wish for all people. I want to break discrimination, I want to make the world equal, by giving them equity.*

*I want to make Sign Language a normal language!  
Language which we can have in all schools, in all seminars, in all projects, in social environment, in the whole world!  
And give the opportunity for deaf people to be the same with all people.*

*I want to make it possible to connect deaf and hearing people and be in the same company with others. Impossible?  
Maybe I want too much.*

*I don't know.*

*But, the one only thing which I know is that: "The people who are crazy enough to think they can change the world are the ones who do." Rob Siltaren.*

*Maybe I'm one of those people, enough crazy to think I can change the world but also... I do it.*

*Let's do it...NOW!"*

From all Fellows I felt that we have something in our life which motivates us and forces us to continue with the fight, even if sometimes we feel so tired.

We still feel that the change of the world depends on us. That we are the promoters, power workers, children who don't mind if a face is brown, black, or even white, only that is cheerful, happy, because we are under the same sun!

Lastly, I have to thank all the amazing speakers which gave to us a lot of courage. I have to thank to Tanya who was always inspired me by her storytelling. Thank you Ufuk Thank you Hanane, you made my every moment happier. Thank you, Dr. Roslyn Pope, you gave me motivation to continue to fight for my dream.

Thank you everybody you let me be a part of you and why you created the best music in my life.

Love you everybody!

## SUNCE SE RAĐA ZA SVE NAS

Zašto odrasli prave razlike  
Među ljudima svijeta  
Kada nama djeci to ne smeta?

Zašto je važno da li je lice žuto crno ili bijelo  
Kad je nama bitno samo da je veselo  
Zašto sad smeta vjera različita  
I to koju koju knjigu ko čita?

Zašto sad smetaju kiša i sunce,  
Lišće po ulici mokroj, i pahulje guste?  
Zašto je manje vrijedan  
Onaj koji ima problem jedan?

Onaj koji ne može da čuje i vidi?

Ne čujemo stranca kad nam govori  
Ne vidimo boju ruke koja nas zagrli.  
Ne čujemo ezan, ni crkveno zvono kad zvoni  
Ne primjećujemo boju ruke kojom nam se zbori.

Zajedno gledamo sunce danas  
Uvijek se rađa isto, i za sve nas.

Zašto odrasli prave razlike  
Među ljudima svijeta  
Kada nama djeci to ne smeta?

## THE SUN BORNS FOR ALL OF US

Why adults make a difference  
Among the people of the world  
When kids don't care?

Why is important if the face is a brown, black or white  
When we want just to be happy?  
Why does it matter if we have different religions?  
And which book, you read?

Why bother does it rain or it is a sun,  
Leaves on the wet streets and snowflakes too?  
Why is it less valuable,  
The one who has only a one problem?

The one who cannot hear and see?

We don't hear a stranger when talks  
We don't see the color of the hands which hug us.  
We don't hear ezan, a church bell when it rings neither  
We don't notice the color of the hands which speak with  
us.

Today we look at the sun together,  
It always borns the same way, and for all of us.

Why adults make a difference  
Among the people of the world  
When kids don't care?

# FILLING DITCHES AND LIFTING BURDENS

Arlette Hernandez

TAKE THE RED LINE FROM PEACHTREE CENTER STATION TO LINDBERGH AND ALL THE PEOPLE are white. Men in cloud white shirts and steel grey slacks, gold watches and brown leather shoes shining in white fluorescent lights. Now, take the red line back to the West End and all the people are black. Young men talking complaining about curfews and rules, sitting only a couple of feet away from women with tired eyes and softly nodding heads.

Drive eastward on Courtland Street and look at the rows of men in plastic lawn chairs lined up on sidewalks of grey death. Their elbows hunch over their knees as they watch the speeding cars. The curb is littered with broken glass. Old clothes are strewn over rusted fences. Compare that to the Buckhead whose mansions are built upon hills, each one looking down at curving roads. Terracotta tiles line the roofs and manipulated rows of bushes curve around the house's perimeter.

Like the mansions in the Buckhead and disrepair of downtown streets and metro stations, the inherent racism of this nation stares us down everyday with a menacing glare and at the heart of Atlanta is the reality that the myth of post-racial America is just that—a myth.

In her poem “Tulips,” Sylvia Plath confesses, “I am sick of baggage,” a sentiment to which all of our bodies can attest. From issues of gentrification and voter obstruction to social alienation and education, the baggage of our personal and collective histories weighs us all down. Yet, these same histories also carve pits within our cores, leaving us incomplete.

I picture restorative justice as a hole.

Not too far from all of our homes, there is a gaping

hole that everyday swallows up person after person. One day it claims a blind man, another day, an elderly woman too frail to jump across. The day after next, a child falls in chasing after his red ball and then his mother, consumed with worry, fails to see the cavern’s blackness and she too is swallowed whole. We may not have dug the hole, but it is nonetheless present, always claiming the bodies of those too disadvantaged to protect themselves.

Of course, the logical solution to this problem is to fill the hole. Like Dr. Carol Anderson said, “To restore justice, we must first restore people and make whole those that have been broken.” But before that can be done, we must first acknowledge the existence of the hole, for as Dr. Tanya Washington said, “We cannot reconcile that which we will not acknowledge.” Still, additional questions remain. What happens if the hole remerges? Or a different hole appears elsewhere?

Just as we cannot simply acknowledge the problem, we cannot only “restore,” or replenish that which was once hollow. We must also work actively to prevent and to build around these once empty ditches, beautiful gardens that saturate the air with sweet aromas and oxygen.

For me, this work is done through education, by crafting the classroom into an intersectional environment of empowerment, community, empathy, and vulnerability.

We foster acknowledgement through empathy, we fill holes through empowerment, and we prevent the return of these devastating holes by building communities and exposing our vulnerabilities.

We ignore issues of injustice because we do not see them as directly affecting our lives. This rationale is the result of both emotional and cognitive distancing. In his

piece, “The Drowning Child and the Expanding Circle,” Peter Singer demonstrates how we often allow issues of distance and nationality affect our willingness to donate to charitable causes. Many of us see the famine in South Sudan and the child labor in Thailand as problems too distant for us to undertake. Yet, in the same way that we distance those in other nations, we can also distance those living in the very same city as us.

In the contemporary context of Atlanta, a tendency exists to distance the homeless population and the impoverished communities adversely affected by the BeltLine project. However, when we distance these people, we sever our empathy and grow ignorant to the problem. Providing people with formal education about the problem will do little unless we also cultivate a feeling of outrage and emotional envelopment. As an educator, I plan to foster empathy in my students through the creation and distribution of stories and narratives. Through literature, I plan to expose the humanity of the “other” and decrease our socially constructed distance.

Upon establishing empathy, the next step is to empower. Richard Morton put it most profoundly when he declared, “Life and death is in the power of the tongue.” As an educator, it is my responsibility to speak life into my students and to restore to them the dignity, humanity, and passion that has either been stripped or deprived from them. It is my responsibility to make sure that they see themselves reflected in the curriculum not only as slaves or migrant workers or housewives, but also as leaders and poets and scholars. Educators have the ability to empower their students by acknowledging their worth and pushing them toward their potential. Moreover, educators have the ability to redirect the passions of the more privileged students, driving them to empower their disadvantaged peers.

Writing from his cell in a Birmingham Jail, Martin Luther King Jr. wrote, “All men are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly.” In short, all our histories are intertwined, subjected to a recursive process through which we discover, interpret,

and create new stories, new historical moments that affect one another. We are all connected to one another as if we were one long chain of paper dolls. Whatever affects me, affects those around me as well. This is the sentiment behind community.

As Nora Benavidez underlined, there is a tendency to think that only those who “embody” certain causes get to “own” or “work for” that cause, but this is very much untrue. We can all work for the same cause because we all have a responsibility to one another as members of the same community.

Vulnerability is the adhesive that links together elements of empathy, empowerment, and community. In order to impart these values, both the student and the educator must be willing to be vulnerable with themselves and others. Part of this vulnerability means treating the student like a person and a co-teacher rather than a mere vessel to be filled. In the words of one of my peers, Sara Osman, “I ask questions and facilitate, I don’t teach.” As educators, we must encourage, not lecture. An equal society begins in an equal classroom where everyone is treated with dignity.

My passion is literature. It is reading the words on a page and then transforming them in my mind into images and raw emotion. It is exploring different worlds and minds and concepts. But above all this, my passion is opening these realms for others and using the power of stories to restore the holes in our hearts and souls while also working toward the creation of future where children that look like me as well as those who don’t can feel safe, valued, and above all, human.

# ESSAY

Beau Revlett

DR. DAVID HOOKER BEGAN HIS PRESENTATION BY ASKING THE FELLOWS TO SPLIT INTO GROUPS of about five people. The groups were to come up with a definition of justice. Later in the presentation, Dr. Hooker told a story from his childhood. A neighborhood friend stole his bike. Dr. Hooker, then just David, watched him do it. Some weeks later, the thief rode David's bike to school. When David complained to the principal, the principal refused to force the thief to return the bike. The thief's family moved out of the neighborhood a few years later, and they left the bike in the garage. The new inhabitants of the home also had a child David's age. He began to ride David's bike. David told his new neighbor—and the neighbor's father—that the bike was his. When he explained how it ended up in their garage, they did not believe him.

The new neighbor went on to become the neighborhood newspaper boy. A requirement for the job was having a bike. David had wanted the job, but because he could not afford a new bike, he did not get it. The newspaper boy developed relationships with many people in the neighborhood. Some of them went on to write him letters of recommendation for college. David never got his bike back. As Dr. Hooker told his story, I felt the knot in my stomach that wells up when I witness injustice. Throughout, other Fellows hollered, letting Dr. Hooker know they thought he was treated unfairly. Before he began the story, Dr. Hooker had talked us through some ways that all of our definitions of justice failed. Each definition hit on something, but none was perfect. Nonetheless, we trusted our understandings of justice enough to claim it had been violated in Dr. Hooker's story.

In 1960, Dr. Roslyn Pope wrote "An Appeal for Human Rights." It expressed the frustrations and aims of the burgeoning Atlanta Student Movement. Included are specific demands for improved access to education,

jobs, housing, voting, hospitals, movies, concerts, and restaurants, and equal enforcement of and representation in the law, for black people. Dr. Pope wrote the Appeal at the behest of the presidents of the Atlanta University Center. The presidents had caught wind of the students' plans to march, sit-in, and boycott. At first, they tried to dissuade the students. When the students were steadfast, the presidents asked them to at least warn the city first, to tell them why they felt the need to act.

After reading the Appeal in local newspapers, Georgia Governor Ernest Vandiver issued a response. Governor Vandiver insinuated the Appeal was written by foreign communists. He claimed it was published under the names of black American students "to breed dissatisfaction, discontent, discord, and evil." A Fellow asked Dr. Pope how she and the Atlanta Student Movement persevered despite resistance from people like the presidents and Governor Vandiver. Dr. Pope responded, "If you don't have any question about the rightness of your cause, then that's your protection." Dr. Pope did not doubt the rightness of her cause. And despite our inability to define justice, I do not think any of the Fellows did either.

Our concept of justice is vague. Yet we act based on it. It informs how we vote, buy products, and treat others. Should we act based on such a vague concept? Where does the vagueness come from?

Consider the evolution of homo sapiens. As a species, our formative years—along with most of our history—saw us in small groups, moving from place to place to hunt and gather food. During this time, our ability to reason and instincts developed to make it easier for each human to get enough food to survive and protect themselves. While hunter-gatherers, we worked with other humans to defend our groups against other animals and hunt. If any human failed to protect others and share food, then

each, at some point, would suffer violence and hunger. So, when others failed to protect us or share, we recognized a violation of humanity. Our instincts informed, reinforced, and facilitated these behaviors.

Very recently, humans developed large-scale societies. Our instincts have not changed much since that shift. The traits we evolved—designed to facilitate life in small-scale societies—are insufficient to identify injustices in the societies we now live in. This is not the only inadequacy we inherited from our ancestors. Our love for sugar, for example, is rooted in a world where sugar was hard to come by. It now gives us sweet teeth and increased risk of heart disease.

To avoid eating too much sugar, I can pay attention to food labels and follow United States federal guidelines. Federal guidelines for sugar result from research into the amount of sugar an optimally-performing human body needs. Food labels list sugar content with the same unit of measurement as the federal guidelines. Scientific methodologies and common units of measurement make it easy for food scientists to discern sugar content and communicate it to the public.

Utilitarians propose a similar approach to justice. A just society would emerge from people acting to maximize the happiness—or pleasure, desire-satisfaction, or some other like unit—of all people. For a couple years, I have been wrestling with Effective Altruism. This is a social movement that applies utilitarianism to our world. Because they distrust moral intuitions, Effective Altruists reason closely, carefully, and broadly. They recommend giving to charities that can scientifically demonstrate their impact on human lives and choosing a career that allows one to either directly advance causes with extremely high impact or earn a lot of money to give to charities that do. Examples of causes they advocate are promoting health in the developing world, minimizing the risks of artificial intelligence, and addressing factory farming.

I was first exposed to Effective Altruism after I became an advocate for people experiencing homelessness and food insecurity early in college. Hunger and homelessness are not among the causes Effective Altruists recommend.

Moreover, Effective Altruists claim that working to improve the lives of those in a community as affluent as Lexington, Kentucky, where I go to college, is likely to have much lower impact than focusing one's efforts in more cash-strapped regions. I resisted Effective Altruism. My intuitions told me so. But, because I trust my intuitions only as a call to further investigate my moral reasoning, I interrogated the movement.

I buy the starting point: we should maximize happiness. But I am wary of Effective Altruism's application of this rule. I plan to do research in philosophy of economics to clarify my wariness. But this Fellowship has revealed a gap in Effective Altruism: a recommendation of work explicitly for the change of dominant systems. Fellows here insist on self-determination: society needs to be people-driven; the voice of the abused needs to be centered; the oppressed need to become the powerful. Our world is shaped by a history of certain groups in large-scale societies—for example, white people in the United States—wielding resources as weapons. The weapons are used to exact violence against indigenous people, people of color, and the formerly—and currently—colonized.

This pattern continues today. The failure to recognize and confront it maintains and deepens the everyday suffering of billions of people. Effective Altruism assesses causes along the axes of scope, neglectedness, and tractability. Such an analysis ought to recognize systems change as a high-impact cause. And activism that empowers historically oppressed communities—even in affluent places—contributes to this systems change.

Effective Altruists have missed this. They have missed it for systematic reasons. For example, the units of measurement they use—such as Quality Adjusted Life Years—do not capture things like inherited trauma and challenges to personal identity from societal historical amnesia. I am interested in exploring units of measurement that can capture such subtler indicators of justice. If we find some, perhaps we can clarify our concept of justice. Then we can act more confidently. Maybe then, we can advance toward a society where we have a common language and framework to talk about justice.

# ESSAY

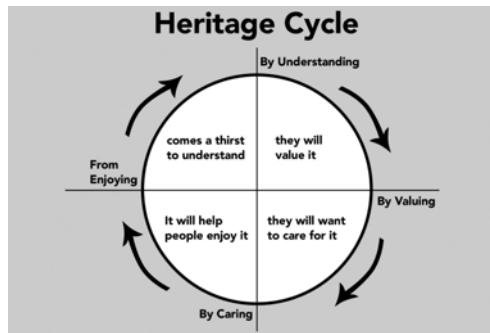
Chandra Dikey

This may not seem like much to other Americans, who constantly move about the country with nothing but restlessness and greed to prod them, but to the Southern black person brought up expecting to be run away from home—because of lack of jobs, money, power, and respect—it was a notion that took root in willing soil. We would fight to stay where we were born and raised and destroy the forces that sought to disinherit us. We would proceed with revolution from our own homes. I thought of my seven brothers and sisters who had already left the South and I wanted to know: **Why did they have to leave home to find a better life?**

– Alice Walker,  
*In Search of our Mother's Gardens*

The quote, I've included above, perfectly describes how I feel about the South, and to an extent, Atlanta. I'm constantly wondering if the South, with its humidity, racism, and glorification of the Confederacy, is a place where I can make tangible efforts in any field. As large swaths of the city equate progress with gentrification, I see my communities being forced out and wealthier, whiter ones being invited to stay. Grappling with my concurrent and paradoxical desires to leave this place and stay is difficult, but ultimately I've realized this struggle is a common narrative amongst Southern black folks.

I grew up in the suburbs of Atlanta, my mom spent half her childhood on the westside and the rest of her adult life in the metro area, my grandmother worked over 20 years at Grady Hospital. I've flitted back and forth between cities, states, and countries for the past 5 years, and Atlanta has turned into a city I have ancestral ties to but a liminal connection with. For the past couple of years, my favorite place in the city has been the airport—because



at least then I can romanticize the city from afar and not deal with its many imperfections. Finishing my fellowship has left the city flooded in a new—yet unforgiving—light. One that marks the importance of cultural memory, and will influence the work I hope to do in the future.

I view cultural heritage, public history, public art as a means by which the public can access history, art, literature and the critiques that accompany it. Furthermore, I believe access to one's history and culture is integral to building one's self esteem. During her personal presentation, one fellow highlighted that access to texts related to Native American culture is imperative for empowering Native youth and combating negative stereotypes portrayed by the media. (Emily McDonald, July 18th 2017) Critical to physical and mental liberation then, is an understanding and acknowledgement of one's history and the art forms that accompany it. During this fellowship, I've realized how spaces such as museums, libraries and other arts related experiences can further empower communities of color.

During the first week of the fellowship we visited the Clark Atlanta Art Museum. The museum is hidden on the second floor of a building also occupied by the admissions and study abroad offices. Unfortunately, the art here is virtually unknown to most of the metropolitan

area, although it is filled with some of the most critical African American art from the mid 1900s. Tina Dunkley, the director emeritus highlighted how she stumbled upon a few pieces when the museum was the university library, and from there sprung her mission to make black art more visible on the college's campus. Visiting the art museum highlighted that doing what you love—especially if it involves the arts—often means creating the time to pursue your passions. I constantly worry about compromising my values in order to create sustainable dreams, and having to work multiple jobs in order to make these a reality. Yet, the work Ms. Dunkley has done has afforded the current director, Dr. Poole, the opportunity to turn the museum into a place where critiques and scholars of black art can have a place to learn. In my future work, I hope to work with or create spaces similar to those at the Clark Atlanta Art Museum, where black artistry is remembered and studied as integral to black historie(s), not an exception to it.

The Art Museum provides communities a fixed space to enjoy and value artistic heritage. Parallel to these spaces are those that are ephemeral, the plays, spoken word events, and dances that require our presence for brief moments but remain with us forever. Audre Lorde stated that “poetry is not a luxury” that poetry allows us to name the unnamable and validate our experiences outside of western frameworks which privilege ‘facts’ over ‘feelings—as if both cannot exist simultaneously. A poetry event we attended titled “Under My Hood” provided us with such a space, and gave 8 different people a platform to share what was “under [their] hood.” Stepping into the minds of others created a space of vulnerability outside of the intellectual theorizing and rhetoric we used daily during our discussions. I think solidifying our feelings through words and sharing them is essential to preserving our histories. Furthermore, doing so poetically gives us the privilege—or necessity—of creating an environment which centers our emotions instead of hiding them behind rhetoric.

However, my experiences with sites of cultural heritage during the fellowship were not all encouraging. Visiting the Atlanta History Museum reminded me that these spaces can also be used to erase the narratives of the

oppressed. One exhibition titled, “Native Lands: Indians and Georgia,” skimmed over the genocide and expulsion of Native Americans in the South, and instead privileged a narrative that focused on the ‘relationships’ between European settlers and indigenous communities. The ways European settlers often tricked Native communities into giving away their lands was never mentioned. Our trip to Stone Mountain Park had the same effect, as the Confederate Flag is heralded as a relic as opposed to a symbol of white supremacy. While uncomfortable and hegemonic, the Atlanta History Center and Stone Mountain Park reified how historical erasure can have tangible effects, and that these spaces need to be held to rigorous standards of accountability.

My time as a John Lewis Fellow has also pushed me to seriously consider the law as another venue to pursue human rights work in my communities. When meeting with the Executive Director of the Southern Center for Human Rights, something she said struck me: “the criminal justice system is working exactly the way it’s supposed to.” (Sara Totonchi, July 17th, 2017) I’ve known this for a long time, but hearing it aloud made me consider how lawyers are implicated in an unjust—but perfectly working—system, and have the power to change it. I’m starting to believe—or acknowledge—that legal frameworks can be used to challenge the United States’ oppressive and discriminatory criminal justice system.

Specifically, Tiffany Roberts Esq, a criminal defense attorney in the Atlanta area, and Nora Benevidez Esq, a civil and human rights lawyer were amazing examples of women of color doing the work most important to them. Roberts showed us a video of *The Mandate by Black Lives Matter Atlanta*, an organized civil disobedience that was not only a beautiful example of black solidarity, but highlighted the importance of having lawyers on the side of activists. Benevidez was frank with us, cautioned us against fetishizing human rights work, getting caught up with titles and losing focus of what truly matters—the work. She emphasized her personal mission of cultivating empathy while interacting with her clients, as opposed to the dehumanizing interactions she saw between other

defense attorneys and their clients. Both women made the law seem like a perfect method—alongside many—which I could use to challenge hegemony and support those organizing for liberation.

At present, I am still inarticulate in regards to what restorative justice means for my work, or how to apply a restorative approach to my future work with conscientiousness and accountability. A panel we attended which placed the leaders of the Atlanta Student Movement in conversation with the writers of the New Appeal for Human Rights assuaged some of my fears. When asked to define restorative justice, Lonnie King—a critical organizer of the sit ins executed by the Atlanta Student Movement during the 1960s—questioned whether “there was anything to restore” for black people fighting for their rights in the 1960s. He recalled that the decades before were terrifying, and eradicating segregationist laws was main focal point of his organizing efforts, not restoring anything from the past. Since then, I’ve considered if the work I’m interested in could instead restore some of the cultural and political dignity necessary for black liberation, as opposed to restoring systems of the past.

My time as a John Lewis Fellow has reinforced my love for museums, the arts, and spaces of learning and reflection. It has also pushed me to consider the ways the law can be used as a tool to protect and create immediate change in individual people’s lives. While I hope to work in spaces centered around art and memory, I am heavily considering the ways the law can be used as a tool for liberation in the most concrete of ways. Overall, being in the heart of the city has inspired and challenged me to place learning and empathetic listening at the forefront of whatever lies next.

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# ESSAY

Darriel McBride

FROM AN EARLY AGE, I WAS ALWAYS PASSIONATE ABOUT MEDIA AND FILM. GROWING UP, I desperately wanted to be an actress, model, and director as a way to escape my horrible reality in the South Bronx. I figured that if I became an actress, I would not have to be that girl. I would not have to be that low-income mixed girl from the Bronx who was statically destined to fail or end up pregnant. To me, being an actress would give me an opportunity to be someone other than myself. Perhaps, even someone better.

For most of my middle school and high school years, I committed myself to pursuing my passion for storytelling. I joined playwriting programs, acted in school performances, and even attended a modeling audition. Yet, once I was awarded the Gates Millennium Scholarship during my senior year of high school, the entire trajectory of my life had changed. Before learning about the scholarship, I never imagined myself going to college, traveling the world, or even doing human rights work. I had never even heard of the word college until I got to high school. Meanwhile, most kids from wealthier neighborhood know what college they want to apply to by the eighth grade. I was not too sure of the world, nor was I sure of myself. However, the one thing that I have always been sure of was my passion for writing.

I grew up in a violent and strict household. My mother, having struggled with various emotional and mental health issues, would verbally and physically abuse me. Despite being the only one of her six children to excel in school, I was treated like the black sheep of my family for reasons that I still cannot understand. I watched my parents' marriage fall apart time and time again. I have even found myself as a tool for my mother to exercise her revenge against my father for his heroin addiction and adultery. I had no real means of escaping these

circumstances, except when I locked myself in the realm of storytelling for hours at a time.

I have been writing short stories since I was about eleven and these stories have always been about real issues. Not love stories or fairy tales, but real issues such as rape, violence, child abuse, suicide, bullying, etc. Even now, I am still surprised at my ability to think critically about issues around me at such a young age. I guess I owe it to television channels like Lifetime. Once I attended college, it felt as though my dream of becoming an actress and director had quickly become a dream deferred. I was under the impression that I had to obtain a degree and get a “real job.”

I was told that my dreams were unrealistic and that I would never be able to support myself financially. I have never been interested in having a job or even a career. I hated the idea of a 9-5 job and still do. I consider myself a free spirit--someone solely motivated by my passions. In college, I struggled to pick a major and ended up settling for something that I was good at: writing. I majored in English with a concentration in writing and spent my entire undergraduate career traveling, collaborating with student leaders, organizing cultural events, discussions, social demonstrations, and even working behind the scenes of higher education administration as a student representative on several administrative committees.

While in college, I struggled with the concept of self love and self care, something I wish I had known about in college. Before I knew it, these issues had taken a toll on my mental health. I had become that stereotypical angry “black girl” After hard battles and pushback within my predominantly white campus community, I decided to completely fall back. I was tired of being the leader of marginalized students of my campus. I was tired of carrying the weight of underrepresented students on my

shoulders. I was tired of feeling unheard. I had become utterly jaded and irritated. Immediately after the election of Donald Trump, I fell into an odd state of depression and indifference. It was the first time I had cried in a long time. It was the first time I had felt legitimately afraid of the future and the unknown. It was the first time that I had said, “Fuck this” I tried to bury my concern for human rights somewhere else, but it always made its way to the surface. Before the end of my senior year, I decided to apply for Humanity in Action, with the hope of having my perception of social justice transformed. I can honestly say that this fellowship has informed my sense of self and my world view.

I have learned so much from the John Lewis Fellowship. From the power of storytelling to the intricacies of using the law to “dismantle the master’s house,” I realize that we all have a role to play. There is no single answer for how to heal the world. I recently came across a quote by Einstein that says, “No problem can be solved from the same level of consciousness that created it” It made me realize that, although I may feel misunderstood, at least I am on the right track in terms of the ways in which I analyze social ills. It has been a pleasure to engage in collective learning and thinking as we try to formulate solutions to the problems that matter to us. I realize that my role within the movement is to uplift the narratives about who people are and the beauty they possess. After spending a month engaging with fellows from all over the U.S and Europe, I realize that although we are all different, we are still connected. I realize that I have been blessed with enough foolishness to believe that I can make a difference in this world, so that I can do what others claim cannot be done-- bring justice and kindness to the world. I realize that I am here to raise consciousness and plant seeds in the minds of the youth. This fellowship has reinforced the importance of intentionality and accountability both of the oppressed and the oppressor. We must hold ourselves accountable as well as each other if we want to seek justice. To me, justice will always be a verb. I will always try to strive for what is just and what is wise. I will always remind myself of the question, “How can we turn theory into action?”

I am currently working through this idea of “inherited trauma” something that Dr. Hooker introduced to us during his lecture. As the program comes to an end, I still have many questions on how to overcome or at least manage this trauma. I cannot help others if I cannot help myself. For now, my writing is truly all I can turn to. Since I was a little girl, I have always wanted to use my writing to change the narratives built around people from marginalized communities. This is something I still want to do because it empowers my people and allows us to claim ownership over history. For me, writing is an intellectual way of bleeding. When I’ve struggled to say how I feel writing was always there for me. Growing up, entrapped by darkness and fear, writing was there for me. As my first lover and friend it would walk me through desolate times. Since the age of eleven, I have found no greater companion. No greater source of expression or clarity. Writing has birthed me. Writing has empowered me. Writing has aroused me. Writing has become my sanctuary where I erupt words that spill out heavy flows of affliction, my ceaselessly obscure thoughts, and the unrelenting commitment of my overzealous heart. I bleed the blood of my ancestors. Of all the things they carried, but before they parted the earth, they passed down this anomalous gift with love and grace-- allowing me to place my spirit on paper. Engulfing me with ability to leave an indelible legacy behind like an angelic troublemaker should.

# MOVING ON FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

David Werdermann

WHEN DONALD TRUMP WAS ELECTED TO THE 45TH PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, I was shocked. An overtly racist and misogynist man surrounded by market fundamentalists and white supremacists will rule the most powerful country of the world for the coming four years? Only a few weeks later, I was impressed and full of hope. I saw thousands of women marching with pink hats for women's rights and human rights. I saw volunteering lawyers sitting on the floor of JFK Airport and writing complaints against the discriminatory Muslim ban and masses of people protesting in front of the airports. And I saw the emergence of socialist ideas that did not come to an end after Bernie Sanders had lost the Democratic Party primaries. In short, I saw a diverse and critical civil society starting to fight human rights violations committed or announced by the new administration. I wanted to learn more about this highly polarized country. I wanted to study its history and learn how the country deals with it today. And I wanted to get inspirations for social movements in Europe. The John Lewis Fellowship of Humanity in Action and the Center for Civil and Human Rights provided a unique opportunity to do so.

## PAST HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS...

The history of the United States is a history of violence. The so called discovery and settlement of the continent went hand in hand with the displacement and oppression of Native Americans. Since the 17th century, African people have been captured and traded as slaves. In the Civil War slavery was defeated to a large extend, but not racism. Former slaves were exploited as share croppers and faced terror by the Ku Klux Klan and other white supremacists. The southern states left no stone unturned to exclude black people from voting. Jim Crow laws led to racial segregation in many states, justified by the doctrine of separate but

equal, although living conditions were anything but equal. The Appeal for Human Rights written by black students from Atlanta 1960 set out the grievances black people were suffering from: They had to attend underfunded schools and hospitals, live in undesirable and overcrowded areas, were partly excluded from public transportation, restaurants and cinemas and were disproportionately maltreated by law enforcement officers.

## ...AND CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES

The structural discrimination and oppression has continued until today in a different outfit. Even though slavery has been officially abolished, it is still reality in the prison-industrial complex that is targeting blacks disproportionately. Segregation is no longer required by law but perpetuated by a economic and social system with low social mobility. Black people are not disenfranchised as obviously as they used to be but the allegation of voter fraud is still used to restrict voting rights and manipulate election results, as pointed out by Carole Anderson in her book *White Rage: The Unspoken Truth of Our Nation's Divide*.

In Atlanta, racial disparities become evident in different ways. People of Color predominantly live in the south of the city which is characterized by inadequate infrastructure and bad transport connection. Since many people cannot afford a car, they are more unlikely to find a job. Since education funding depends on the local tax income, schools in predominantly black areas lack qualified teachers and adequate learning material.

## THE STRUGGLE FOR JUSTICE...

Roslyn Pope who authored the 1960 Appeal for Human Rights and was treated with hostility for this by the Governor of Georgia answered the question of what restorative justice means to her, that it is crucial for her to

dismantle these inequalities. Rather than asking individual reparations, she demands acknowledgement of past human rights violations and dismantling present injustices.

This will not come overnight, but needs hard efforts and civic engagement. Looking back over history is very helpful for this: By knowing it, we can avoid future errors and we can learn from those who have fought against injustice back then. Their activities and strategies can serve as a source of inspiration and motivation for today's generation. To put it in the words of Judith Goldstein, the Executive Director of Humanity in Action: "History is one of the greatest ventures of the human mind and a basic human need. It is a discipline for understanding the past; an investment we make in recording the course of human and natural events; a mechanism to help us know who we were, who we are, how to make sense of the world we live in and how we prepare for the future."

Studying history also means to seek the dialogue between generations, as has been made possible during the program. The talks and discussions with Roslyn Pope, Lonnie King and Charles Black were unique opportunities to learn from veterans of the civil rights movement. Instead of resting on their well-deserved laurels, they assisted a new generation of human rights activists in releasing a new Appeal on Human Rights in 2017.

#### ...AND THE ROLE OF LAW

For me as a lawyer, the role of law in the struggle of justice is of particular interest. It seems astonishing at first glance that the first judgments against Jim Crow laws were already handed down in the 1940's. The Supreme Court Decision *Brown v. Board of Education* that overruled the separate but equal doctrine was a milestone in the struggle against racial segregation. However, it was to take years until these judgments were implemented. This shows that we should neither underestimate the value of the government's adherence to the law nor take it for granted. And it shows that social change cannot be achieved solely through litigation.

Law is always the product and expression of social contradictions. It is always both instrument of power,

by veiling and securing domination, and a potential means of emancipation. The limits of law become clear, when we have a closer look at the recent Supreme Court jurisprudence regarding for example disparate impact based on race, affirmative action, voting rights or the prosecution of police brutality. Natsu Saito, Professor at Georgia State's College of Law, concludes that "there is little to indicate that the Constitution's guarantees of due process and equal protection, or the protections it provides those suspected of criminal activity, will effectively redress the racial disparities and injustices that continue to characterize American society."

Nonetheless, the legal system and the courts offer a forum to address and scandalize social grievances. Therefore, I appreciate the work of activist attorneys and legal scholars such as Thurgood Marshall or Pauli Murray during the civil rights movements and today's organizations like the Georgia Justice Project, the Center for Access to Justice or the Southern Center for Human Rights. Regarding the use of criminal law, it is crucial to note that punishment and revenge is not the goal. The German lawyer Fritz Bauer, who has been persecuted by the Nazis and was later the driving force behind the legal reconditioning of crimes of that time, stated in 1961: "But you have to make yourself aware that these trials don't serve revenge and retaliation. For us the idea is fundamental that we make the past transparent and contribute to Germany's history. Herein lies the deeper sense of all these trials." The same is true regarding the reconditioning of violence against the civil rights movements and police brutality of today.

#### MOVING ON

The John Lewis Fellowship was a unique experience. I was able to get an insight into the US history and its current challenges. The engagement and ideas of former and current human rights activists are a priceless source of inspiration that I want to use in my future human rights activities – in and outside the courtrooms.

# THE (IM)POSSIBILITY OF THE RESTORATIVE JUSTICE:

## THE EXAMPLE OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Ehlimana Memisevic

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE CAN BE DEFINED AS A WAY OF VIEWING JUSTICE THAT PUTS THE EMPHASIS on repairing harm caused by conflict and crime. In this approach crime is not understood as an offence against the state, but rather as a violation of people and relationships and a disruption of the peace of the community, which should be healed.<sup>1</sup>

In order to achieve this goal, it is necessary that victims, offenders and communities participate in finding solutions that seek to repair harm and promote harmony.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, as Zehr and Mika pointed out, restorative justice process maximizes the input and participation of these parties – but especially primary victims as well as offenders – in the search for restoration, healing, responsibility and prevention.<sup>3</sup>



Therefore, restorative justice is collaborative and inclusive and, as a holistic approach, has far reaching effects beyond simply the issue of crime or rule-breaking.<sup>4</sup>

Therefore, three key principles govern the implementation of restorative justice in processes and in systemic reform. First, when crime (or wrongdoing) occurs, the focus is on the harm that has been done to people and relationships. Second, when harm has been done, it creates obligations and liabilities. Third, the way forward involves perpetrators, victims and the community in efforts to heal the harm and put things right.<sup>5</sup>

In order for the goals of restorative justice processes to be achieved the following preconditions should be fulfilled:<sup>6</sup>

1) Invitation to full participation of the victims, offenders and communities

Firstly, the voice to those involved in and affected by an incident of harm should be given and the dialogue among them invited. These dialogues are usually not possible in the formal court setting, but are one of the main processes in restorative justice.<sup>7</sup>

2) Work towards healing what has been broken.

Second, a restorative response seeks to address the tangible as well as intangible harms, resulting from the crime, and to do what is possible to help meet the needs of any and all affected. According to Zehr and Mika, the justice process provides a framework that promotes the work of recovery and healing that is ultimately the domain of the individual victim. The needs of victims for information, validation, vindication, restitution, testimony, safety and support are the starting points of justice.<sup>8</sup>

3) Seek direct accountability.

Third, direct accountability should be sought. Namely, people causing harm should be held accountable for their actions to the people whom they have hurt. Appropriate reparation should be discussed and expected. Obligations to victims such as restitution take priority over other sanctions and obligations to the state such as fines.<sup>9</sup> Unlike taking punishment, on what offenders are used to, taking the responsibility means realizing the harm done by committing a crime and it is the starting point for restorative justice.<sup>10</sup>

4) Reintegrate where there has been division.

Forth, restorative justice should help with reintegration and the repair of relationships where there has been division. Namely, harmful actions often create outcasts, alienation and distrust in the community. Where possible, restorative justice should help with reintegration and the repair of relationships.

5) Prevention of the future harms

Fifth, restorative justice should strengthen the community and individuals to prevent further harms.<sup>11</sup>

#### THE (IM)POSSIBILITY OF RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

But is restorative justice really possible? In order for this processes to be successful all these preconditions and principles have to be implemented. If not, restorative justice, in my opinion, can be used as yet another mean for continuation of the victims' oppression.



Namely, the restorative justice processes in Bosnia and Herzegovina have often been transformed into their own opposite, what will be explained in the following part of the paper. Dealing with the past in Bosnia remains a key challenge. The courts of Republika Srpska have not conducted criminal proceedings for any genocide charges so far. The prime suspects are considered to be heroes in significant segments of Serbian population in Republika Srpska, Serbia and Montenegro. Many members of the formations that directly or indirectly participated in the genocide are even integrated into security structures. Therefore, not only that the crimes and harms done are not acknowledged, but they are denied, which makes restorative justice impossible to achieve.

#### GENOCIDE AND OTHER CRIMES DENIAL IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA<sup>12</sup>

Genocide denial is considered to be the final stage of genocide, which "build on to the complex motivation inspiring the first stage of genocide"<sup>13</sup> and represents "one of the most certain indicators of future genocides".<sup>14</sup>

According to Israel W. Charny, genocide denial conceals horror of the crimes and exonerates those responsible for it.<sup>15</sup> In addition to denial responsibility, denials are celebrations of destruction, renewed humiliations of survivors, and metaphorically murders of historical truth and collective memory.<sup>16</sup> In fact, denial is "double murder" since the deniers kill the dignity of the survived and tend to destroy the memory of the crime, whereby they prevent the wounds inflicted by the genocide from healing. Deborah Lipstadt argues that the denial of an individual's or a group's persecution is the ultimate cruelty - on some level worse than the persecution itself.<sup>17</sup>

In the restorative justice processes acknowledgement of the crimes and the harm done is the key, yet genocide and the other crimes denial is still present in Bosnia and Herzegovina, even though the rulings of the International Court of Justice, the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, and the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina, have shown that genocide was committed over Bosnian Muslims, i. e. Bosniaks in July 1995 in

Srebrenica and its surrounding areas, as well as other numerous crimes against humanity and war crimes across entire Bosnia and Herzegovina. On the other side, these courts along with the domestic courts, limited genocide, both, in terms of time and territory in their decisions. There are no similar restrictions in the other cases of genocide. But, even this restricted interpretation of genocide is denied.

The most frequent reason for genocide denial is said to be the attempt to exempt perpetrators from responsibility for the commission of crime, i.e. non-preventing the commission of the crime.<sup>18</sup> Different mechanisms are used in the course of denial. Some of them also include: denial of knowledge about the genocide, denial of responsibility, denial of victim existence, indicting the suitor and moral indifference to the crime.<sup>19</sup>

Israel W. Charny has pointed at several forms of official genocide denials:<sup>20</sup> and all these forms of genocide denial are present in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Namely, in the official statements of presidents and other officials of Republika Srpska entity (and often Republic of Serbia<sup>21</sup>) it is emphasized that “there was no genocide in Srebrenica, only a crime” (converting the event into some other kind of crime); that “it is attempted to present history in a selective manner” because, for example, “two units of Ustashas, having Muslims as their members, killed 6,000 Serbs...in Brod located at Drina River”<sup>22</sup> (presenting the perpetrator as the victim); that “the unborn Serbian children cannot be responsible for what happened 15 years ago” (distancing the event in time); that “in July 1995, the number of Bosniaks that left Srebrenica and went to Tuzla was greater than the number of Bosniaks that were killed, which means that this is not a genocide” (changing the form of the event);<sup>23</sup> that “Srebrenica is asking for a new approach and new reality assessment that would be accepted by everyone, which may be accomplished through a new international commission”<sup>24</sup> (new research is necessary and/or new research contests genocide charges).

In such circumstances that have all the elements of denial, it is possible that nowadays even those who were



*President of Republika Srpska entity, Milorad Dodik.<sup>25</sup>*

*Former president of Republic of Serbia, Tomislav Nikolić, known for genocide denials.<sup>26</sup>*



not born in the time of genocide are shouting “Nož, žica, Srebrenica!” at public gatherings. “Nož, žica, Srebrenica” (“Knife, Wire, Srebrenica!”) is the slogan which glorifies the genocide in Srebrenica, often followed by another threatening slogan “Bit će repriza!” (“There will be a repeat!”). Besides, the names of indicted and/or convicted war criminals, such as Ratko Mladić, a former Bosnian Serb military leader accused of committing genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), are glorified and shouted during football matches.

#### THE CASE OF PRIJEDOR

In Prijedor, a city and municipality in the northwest of Bosnia and Herzegovina, according to evidence from the nonSerb victim association – ’Izvor’, 3,177 people (3,015 Bosniaks, 138 Croats, 12 Albanians, 8 Roma, 1 Czech, 1 Pakistani, 1 Serb, 1 Ukrainian) were killed or missing (an estimated number of 2,078 people were killed and around 1,099 are still considered missing).<sup>27</sup>

On the last day of May 1992, after a forceful takeover of the municipal government, Bosnian Serb authorities issued a decree on local radio ordering all non-Serbian citizens to mark their houses with white flags or bedsheets and to wear white armbands when leaving the house.

Around 31,000 of those forced to wear white armbands



*Photo of Serbian fans during Serbia-Turkey game, wearing the T-shirts with the photo of Ratko Mladić.<sup>28</sup>*

had been detained in some of the most notorious camps established during the war in Bosnia — Omarska, Keraterm, Manjača and Trnopolje. Many crimes were committed against the detainees in these camps including torture, other inhumane acts, murder, rape and sexual violence.<sup>29</sup> Around 53,000 were forced to flee or were deported from the municipality. In just three months 94 percent of the Bosniak population from Prijedor was eliminated.

Just in 2013 the biggest mass grave in Bosnia and Herzegovina, away from Srebrenica, was found in the village of Tomasica, near Prijedor, a few kilometres away down a dirt track from Omarska<sup>30</sup> about which location Bosnian Serb witnesses kept silent. Witness' statements have already established that this grave originally contained upwards of 1,000 bodies of Bosniak and Croat victims killed by Bosnian Serb forces, when it was dug in the summer of 1992.<sup>31</sup>

The International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) found several Bosnian Serbs guilty of mass killings, detention in concentration camps (Omarska, Trnopolje and Keraterm), rape, deportation, torture, destruction of cultural and religious heritage, and robbery of non-Serbs that occurred in Prijedor, primarily in 1992.<sup>32</sup>

Despite all these efforts of the international tribunal and the domestic courts to hold individuals accountable, establish the truth and contribute toward reconciliation, the political leaders in Prijedor and Republika Srpska maintain

a culture of denial.<sup>33</sup> Political elites as well as citizens, as Haris Subašić observed, refuse to participate in meetings organized with the aim of working towards reconciliation, fail to provide full support to the ongoing search for missing persons and refuse to take part in camp commemorations.<sup>34</sup>

Unlike the monuments dedicated to the so-called “Serbian defensive-liberation war” in Prijedor, as an official collective memory and narrative – a form of political and cultural strategy of denial – the local government in Prijedor does not allow the construction of monuments for non-Serb victims in those areas where concentration camps were located (namely, Omarska and Trnopolje).<sup>35</sup> Moreover, Bosnian Muslims have also been prevented on many occasions from publicly paying respect to their dead. In May 2012. Bosnian Serb mayor – Marko Pavić, of the Serb Democratic Party — the same political party that issued the 1992 white armband decree — forbade a gathering of survivors, who wanted to lay red roses and white bags in the city center in remembrance of 266 women who have killed or went missing in Prijedor. On the orders of mayor Pavić, the police intervened to stop this event and claimed that it would disturb the peace.<sup>36</sup>

At the conference entitled “Bridging the Gap” organized by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, which brought ICTY officials to local communities that were most devastated by the war in order to educate the community about the work of the Tribunal, said that he resisted holding the conference because he believed Prijedor should move on from its dark past to a brighter future without analyzing what happened during the war” (emphasized by the author of this paper).<sup>37</sup>

Notably the same Serb individuals who took control of Prijedor through systematic policies of “ethnic cleansing” – including deliberate killings, concentration camps, mass rape, and the takeover of businesses, government offices, and all communal property – retained total control over key security, economic, infrastructure, and humanitarian sectors of the community after the war.<sup>38</sup>

Is the restorative justice really possible in such circumstances?



*Top: Exhumation from mass grave Tomasica near Prijedor<sup>39</sup>*

*Above: The bodies exhumed from the Tomasica mass grave at the Sejkovaca identification centre, near the town of Prijedor<sup>40</sup>*

#### RESTORATIVE JUSTICE AS A MEAN TO CONTINUE THE OPPRESSION OF THE VICTIMS

As has already been pointed out, the restorative justice processes in Bosnia and Herzegovina have often been transformed into their own opposite. Namely, by not acknowledging the crimes (or their denial) the restorative justice is not possible. Therefore, using the other restorative justice mechanisms only represents the continuation of victims' oppression in the same way as denials of the crimes do.

For example, insisting on the forgiveness for the crimes is yet another way to oppress the victims, accusing them to obstruct the reconciliation process. As Hannah Arendt wrote, "human institutions have no means to judge radical evil and all we know is that there are actions that can be neither punished nor forgiven and therefore transcend the realm of human affairs and the potential of the human being, radically destroying them wherever they appear."<sup>41</sup> Since the aim of the restorative justice is healing the harm done and prevention of the future harms, forgiveness should not be considered as restorative justice

mechanism. Who should forgive? To who?

The Srebrenica-Potocari Memorial and Cemetery shows extermination of the whole families in which there are no survivors left, who could forgive. As Lara J. Nettelfield, Sarah E. Wagner noticed, the cemetery and its tombstones reconstitute families torn apart by the genocide. It is, they have noticed, a gendered and familial reassembling: the male lines of the Srebrenica families, many of whom lost multiple relatives, are restored plot by plot with the returned remains of fathers and sons, brothers and uncles, cousins and grandfathers.<sup>42</sup>

On the other side, as Paul Ricouer observed, it is legitimate question of "on what authority a political leader in office or the current head of a religious community presume to request forgiveness from the victims, with respect to whom he or she was not personally the aggressor or themselves did not personally suffer the harm in question?"<sup>43</sup>

#### LEAVING THE PAST IN THE PAST. IS IT REALLY POSSIBLE?

Moreover, by the international appeals to "forgive and forget," and the expectation to hurry up and "move forward"<sup>44</sup> as the only possibilities for the continuation of the reconciliation process as has often been presented, the victims are oppressed again in the same way as by the denial of the crimes which is said to be "double murder" – since the deniers kill the dignity of the survived and tend to destroy the memory of the crime, whereby they prevent the wounds inflicted by the crimes from healing – or the "ultimate cruelty" – on some level worse than the crime itself, as Deborah Lipstadt famously said.

Unlike the authors, who present anger and resentment as destructive forces and advocate of forgiveness, tying the willingness or exercise of forgiveness to a realization of deep humanity and virtue, philosophers like Adam Smith, maintain that resentment is part and parcel of our humanity (in the normative sense of "being human").<sup>45</sup>

According to Jeffrie G. Murphy "resentment does not stand simply as emotional testimony of self-respect" but "this passion—and the reluctance to transcend it in hasty



Potočari Memorial.<sup>46</sup>

forgiveness—also stands as testimony to our allegiance to the moral order itself... an order represented by clear understandings of what constitutes unacceptable treatment of one human being by another.” Moreover, he adds, “if we do not show some resentment to those who, in victimizing us, flout those understandings, then we run the risk—in Aurel Kolnai’s words—of being “complicitous in evil.”<sup>47</sup>

According to Thomas Brudholm’s analysis of Jean Améry’s views, he (Améry) tries to undo the common assumption that the forgiving and conciliatory victim is realizing or manifesting something more honorable or humane in comparison with the person who retains resentment. His primary aim, Brudholm considers, is to defend moral necessity of resentment in the particular historical and social circumstances. Namely, what should be met with moral resistance, according to Améry, is the social pressure *on the victims to forgive and forget or to accept what happened because it is “already-being-long-past.”* Such pressure is, as Améry states, in itself immoral (emphasized by the author of this paper). Moreover, Améry considers that the “loudly proclaimed readiness for reconciliation by Nazi victims can only be either insanity and indifference to life or the masochistic conversion of a suppressed genuine demand for revenge”<sup>48</sup>. Therefore, urging the victims to “forgive and forget” is immoral and another way of their oppression, even more so when the forgiveness is not asked for or there is no even acknowledgment of the crimes.<sup>49</sup>

## COMPENSATION

Even though compensation as a financial assistance to crime victims can have some positive effects in the restorative justice processes, it can also serve as a tool for continuation of victims’ oppression. As the president of

Nigeria – Olusegun Obasanjo said, ‘the legacies of several centuries of racial discrimination and dehumanisation through slavery, slave trade and colonisation have the deep and fundamental consequences of poverty... and marginalisation of Africans from the rest of the world...’ Therefore, he added “monetary compensation would hurt the dignity of Africans.”<sup>50</sup>

Consequently, paying very often humiliating and disproportionate compensation claiming that the justice is served, would only mean continuation of the oppression of the victims.

For example, by the recent the Hague Appeals Court’s ruling, the Netherlands was partly responsible for the deaths of 350 Bosnian Muslim males during the 1995 Srebrenica genocide. Unlike the lower-court ruling from 2014, the Hague Appeals Court ruled the Dutch state was liable for 30 percent of the losses suffered by the families of those men who were killed.

“Perhaps they would not have survived either in that case, because the Bosnian Serbs would have blocked access of relief supplies (water, food) or would have removed the men from the compound by force, but they would still have had a chance of survival in that case,” the ruling said. “The Court of Appeal estimates that chance to be 30%. The State is therefore liable for 30% of the losses suffered by the relatives.”<sup>51</sup>

Therefore, providing partial justice and compensation based on the 30% possibility of survival and taking 30% responsibility for not preventing the deaths i. e. facilitating perpetration of genocide and the other crimes is renewed humiliations of victims and survivors. On the other side, justified question is how could be the annihilation of whole families in genocidal crimes compensated? To who?

## RESTITUTION

‘Restitution’ is a term which is used in different ways by different authors. It can be taken to refer to the whole process of seeking to rectify historic injustice, and is often used in this way in both scholarly and popular discussion of righting past wrongs. Therefore, the term is used to describe all elements of attempts to right historic wrongs,

"ranging from the literal return of the object that was taken (in whole or in part), through financial compensation based on estimates (somehow reached) of the value of the object, to apologies (or apology-like acts under various names) with or without accompanying compensation."<sup>52</sup>

Restitution in a sense of "righting past wrongs" as many authors define it, is often not possible. For example, how would restitution look like in the cities and the municipalities which are "ethnically cleansed" in Bosnia and Herzegovina in which the individuals, who directly or indirectly participated in the genocide, took part in the deliberate killings, detention in the concentration camps, mass rape and the other crimes, retained total control over key security, economic, infrastructure, and humanitarian sectors of the community?

Moreover, how would the restitution look like in the cases like Pionirska street in the eastern Bosnian town of Višegrad, where 59 Bosnian Muslims were burned to death, after being taken by a group of armed Serbs to a house and set ablaze on 14 June 1992? Or in the Bikavac fire case, also in Višegrad, fifteen days later, on 27 June 1992, when at least 60 Muslim civilians, mostly women and children, were killed after the house in which they were confined was set on fire?

The cruelty of these crimes led the judges to issue especially pointed condemnations in the Milan and Sredoje Lukić judgement:<sup>53</sup>

"In the all too long, sad and wretched history of man's inhumanity to man, the Pionirska street and Bikavac fires must rank high. At the close of the twentieth century, a century marked by war and bloodshed on a colossal scale, these horrific events stand out for the viciousness of the incendiary attack, for the obvious premeditation and calculation that defined it, for the sheer callousness and brutality of herding, trapping and locking the victims in the two houses, thereby rendering them helpless in the ensuing inferno, and for the degree of pain and suffering inflicted on the victims as they were burnt alive."<sup>54</sup>



*Below: The site where house in which around 70 Bosniak civilians were burned alive in Bikavac<sup>55</sup>*

Restitution, through literal return of the object taken or compensation based on estimates of the value of the object would only be the extension of the oppression of victims and ongoing violation of the victims' rights, when there is no even recognition of these crimes.

#### WHERE FROM HERE?

Having in mind all abovementioned flaws, restorative justice is still crucial for the reconciliation processes in post-conflict societies which will enable further development of the societies and moving to a more promising future.

One of the essential restorative justice mechanisms, which contributes to reconciliation, is seeking and establishing the truth. Namely, judicial decisions do not necessarily reflect the historical truth. For example, International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia ruled that genocide in Bosnia was committed in Srebrenica in 1995.<sup>56</sup> While the judges of the International Court of Justice specifically stated that genocide did not occur at other times or places in Bosnia, the judges at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia did not say that genocide had not occurred, but rather *that it had not been proven beyond all reasonable doubt*.

Therefore, apart from these judicially established truths, it is necessary to take into the consideration the historical truths, since wider truth is sometimes lost when focus on the importance of supporting documents is overshadowed by a final verdict. Namely, even if individual criminal

responsibility for genocide, committed during certain periods of time in particular territories, is not established, it is not inherently true that genocide did not take place. It has been conclusively proven by renowned scholars such as Samantha Power in her Pulitzer Prize-winning *A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide*,<sup>57</sup> that genocide was committed in Bosnia during 1992-1995.

In establishing the historical truth, the number of victims will be determined, what will prevent the manipulation of the facts and changing the character of the events.

The other essential restorative justice mechanism, closely connected with the establishing the truth, is combating the past victimization narrative as a tool to justify committed crimes and incite to future violence. This belief system, often incorporated into nationalistic myths, refers to a sense of historical suffering, loss, victimization that sometimes facilitates the persecution of those defined as the former victimizer.<sup>58</sup> According to Alvarez, ideologies that enshrine and glorify a history of victimhood provides a made-to-order justification for violence directed against those defined as the former oppressors.<sup>59</sup>

This was widely used by Serb nationalist during genocide and the other crimes in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Namely, according to the reports of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in East Bosnia, every “ethnic cleansing” was preceded by claims by Serb nationalists about “genocide,” “ethnic cleansing,” “mass rapes” and “cultural destruction” against Serbs in a certain region.<sup>60</sup>

Moreover, at the gathering called “Congress of Serb intellectuals,” which was held on March 28 1992, as Robert J. Donia noticed, “in straining to portray genocide as the central historical Bosnian Serb experience of the twentieth century, the speakers intended to persuade a skeptical public that Serbs were justified in using armed force to ward off alleged imminent threat to Serb people. The speakers also pressed the notion that wartime genocide warranted Serb seizure of much of Bosnia.”<sup>61</sup> He also noticed that “most of the participants spoke extensively about genocide, a term they used in the congress to

characterize the killings of Serbs in Second World War but never accept in reference to Serb actions.”

The same strategies were used continuously. Namely, in the *Letter Dated 24 May 1994 from the Secretary-General to the President of the Security Council* it is mentioned that Simo Drljača, then Deputy Minister of Interior of the “Serb Republic of Bosnia,” in an interview printed in *Kozarski Vjesnik* on 9 April 1993, stated that: “In the collection centres ‘Omarska,’ ‘Keraterm’ and ‘Trnopolje’ more than 6,000 informative talks were held. Of this number 1,503 Muslims and Croats were sent to the camp ‘Manjača’ on the basis of solid documentation of active participation in the fighting against the Army of Republika Srpska [‘Serb Republic of Bosnia’] and also participation in genocide against the Serbian people’ (emphasized added). Instead of letting them get their deserved punishment the powerful men of the world expressing disdain forced us to release them all from Manjaca.”<sup>62</sup>

The continuation of using the same strategies, can be seen in the monuments in Prijedor, which honor those

*Below: Emir Hodzic, standing alone in Prijedor town square on May 23 2012.*<sup>63</sup>

*Bottom: Activists from the Women in Black movement gathered in Serbian capital Belgrade to mark the 20th anniversary of the war. First banner on the left reads “Twenty years of aggression on Bosnia and Herzegovina.”*<sup>64</sup>



who lost their lives to “Muslim extremists in the war of defense and liberation.”<sup>65</sup>

Establishing the truth will help combating these narratives – as a form of justification past and incitment to the future crimes – as well as denials of the crimes – as “celebrations of destruction, renewed humiliations of survivors, and metaphorically murders of historical truth and collective memory,” what will ultimately enable Bosnia and Herzegovina to move on to a more promising future.

Consequently, not only that these mechanisms will encourage the victims to tell their stories in order to preserve the memory, but will help the healing process and bringing the all sides together in the recovery.

These efforts have already taken place across the entire Bosnia and Herzegovina and the region as well. Namely, variously human rights organizations and groups, such as Women in Black, the Humanitarian Law Centre and the Youth Initiative for Human Rights, indefatigably commemorate and dignify the victims of crimes committed in former Yugoslavia, often confronted by ultra-right Serb nationalists.

Despite the local authorities’ obstruction and prohibition of commemoration of victims of genocide and the other crimes in Prijedor (because, according to local authorities, that would “harm the city’s reputation”) Emir Hodžić, whose brother and father were inmates of Omarska concentration camp, started the commemoration by standing alone at the town square with a white stripe on his arm, on May 23 2012. Thanks to Emir’s initiative, persistence and courage, today many people around the world heard about the crimes in Prijedor and commemorate the victims by wearing the white armband on 31st May.

Women in Black has organized several hundred protests against the war and commemorations for the victims of war and crimes, calling for accountability, most of which took place in Belgrade and the other cities throughout the former Yugoslavia since October 1991. Young activist from the Youth Initiative for Human Rights organizations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Serbia, Croatia and Montenegro tirelessly commemorate victims of genocide and the other crimes committed in former Yugoslavia.

Therefore, there are efforts for facing with past and reconciliation which would lead to a more promising future. They should be supported, encouraged and passed to the next generations. The power of every single individual, the power of ourselves, should never be underestimated.

“We have to fight any ideology that has sponsored genocide and crimes against humanity, and is denying the victims the right to remember. There is no idea or ideology that can justify killing children and rape. A murdered child has no ethnic prefix, and there is no ‘but.’”<sup>66</sup>



*Top:* “We will never forget Srebrenica genocide,” Youth Initiative for Human Rights commemoration of Srebrenica genocide in Belgrade, on July 11, 2017. Even though, the activists were protected by the police, they were attacked by the right wing organizations calling them “mercenaries.” Members of right wing organizations were shouting the names of Ratko Mladić and wearing the banners that reads: *Otadžbina pamti genocid nad Srbima* (“Our homeland remembers the genocide on Serbs”)<sup>67</sup>

*Above:* Youth Initiative for Human Rights commemoration of Tuzla massacre of civilians committed on May 25, 1995 in Tuzla known as the Massacre on the Gate (Bosnian: *Masakr na Kapiji*). The banner reads: *Premladi da se sećamo, odlučni da nikad ne zaboravimo* (“Too young to remember, determined not to forget.”)<sup>68</sup>

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# WHEN THOSE CONFEDERATE FLAGS RISE UP HIGH

Eliza Rutynowska

"WE ARE TRUSTING YOU TO UNDERSTAND WHAT IS GOING ON OUT THERE – AND TO BECOME A voice for the voiceless." That quote is the very first thing I remember hearing while listening to opening remarks of the 2017 John Lewis Fellowship in Atlanta. A voice for the voiceless – something I have been aiming to become since I began law school. Trusting us to understand what is going on out there – that part of the speech hovered over me for the rest of the day. How could I possibly be trusted to understand? To understand populists rising in power in so many countries and targeting human rights in the process? To understand hatred that is overflowing from all the Pandora boxes left wide open without any consideration for the future? I felt overwhelmed. But then I remembered I always feel that way before a new, grand challenge, once it opens its gates to me. And so I gathered all the courage I had brought along and took a step forward. A step into the classroom of Atlanta's history and everyday reality. Little did I know how much change I would pick up along the way.

The entrance to the main exhibition of the National Center for Civil and Human Rights includes walking by two wall collages. One marked "white," the other "colored." Of course, I knew about segregation before I came to the United States. "We learn about it in school" is what almost everyone says. And it is true. You do learn about the historical aspects of it, a teacher might even mention the widespread idea of "separate, but equal" which functioned prominently in fifties' and sixties' America. But no matter how many books one may read, nothing – nothing can prepare for the shiver down the spine that will be experienced when participating in the sit-in exhibit at the Center for Civil and Human Rights.

I dislike closing my eyes in foreign places, but complied when requested to do so by the attending employee, who asked me to sit at the fake bar on a fake bar stool and put my hands on the glass table space. I had earphones on, without the possibility of dialing down the volume. For good reason. When black students fought the established reality of segregation they could not ask for the racist slurs to be said quietly. There was no tenderness or compassion in the voices of those who called grown men "boy." The exhibit asked visitors how long would they be able to stand hearing hateful words spoken to them while reenacting a sit-in protest against segregation in public spaces, such as diners. I lasted 1.5 minutes. And then I felt ashamed. Ashamed for ever thinking that I could imagine what it was like to be in the skin of freedom fighters, who would get arrested for sitting at an all-whites' counter. Instead of getting arrested, I got a tissue to wipe away the sudden blurry vision.

Once faced with a very complex subject I often shift to a legal-studies related method, and focus on specific aspects of the case. When thinking about my time in Atlanta I see four words flashing before my eyes. Hatred. Heat. Non-violence. Restorative justice.

**Hatred.** Sometimes it takes direct forms and appears as the n-word, yelled from the open window of a car with a confederate flag bumper sticker. Sometimes it trembles in excitement within that confederate flag above some rural Georgian homestead. Sometimes it twists up into a swastika tattooed over a heartbeat. But hatred takes on disguises too. It calls itself by the name of gerrymandering, disfranchising and it may even curl up in the corner of gentrification, making it sound more like "displacement." It screams "separate but equal" sixty years on. It laughs

when women call for paid maternity leave or demand action against rape culture. It fidgets to the point when it becomes the “but” in the phrases: I’m not a racist, but... I’m not a sexist, but... Don’t think I have something against you, but....

**Heat.** I remember writing memories from the first two days in Atlanta in my diary. I commented on the way my thighs melted together whenever I took a seat outdoors. But during the John Lewis Fellowship heat took on a greater meaning. Bigger than discomfort outside of a Starbucks. It began to mean the uneasiness I felt while walking around the Atlanta History Center gardens, where an 1860s farm was set up. I drowned in it when stepping inside a model slave house, whilst passing by an empty chair, standing next to a barrel of cotton. It was the heat that overwhelmed me, while walking outside the stockade in Leesburg, where teenage girls were held hostage by local authorities in 1963, for protesting against segregation. Heat caused drops of sweat to trickle down my spine as I looked at trees. The trees I used to associate with plantation driveways. The trees that I now knew once grew strange fruit.

**Non-violence.** “We need in every group a group of angelic troublemakers” once said Bayard Rustin, Martin Luther King’s Jr. accomplice. He also said that you have to begin with peace, if peace is what you want to end up with. I remember the blurry vision I had upon hearing those quotes. I was moved. Moved to hear empowering words which spoke of non-violent resistance. I immediately thought of a TED talk given by Pope Francis I recently found online. He called for a revolution of tenderness to sweep through our societies. He called on all humans, regardless of faith and personal beliefs, to acknowledge that empathy and tenderness are not signs of weakness. They are a sign of strength and inner power. By putting all these elements into place I started seeing the possibility of a beautiful revolution. A revolution that would not end in blood on the streets – we, the people of human rights, must rise above than that. We must step out of the destructive circle of violence. We must construct instead.

**Restorative justice.** During the Fellowship this term

has been discussed upwards, downwards and sideways. No precise definition was decided, while more and more questions arose. The word “restorative” clearly implies one would wish to restore something that existed before. Such an approach could possibly be applied when talking about returning artifacts once stolen or rebuilding cities once burned. But can we speak of restoring dignity and lives to those who lost them? Perhaps addressing the current master narrative and changing it, so that it reflects the truth behind world history, may be one way to commemorate victims, honor them, reintroduce their names into our reality? Justice needs truth-telling. It needs acknowledgment of harms done by the oppressors. It also yearns for mechanisms of prevention, so that history will no longer repeat itself, nor rhyme in the least bit.

I am a quotes person. Therefore, when thinking about how I will apply all I have learned in Atlanta into my work back home, I recalled all the voices I heard along the way this month.

“Don’t try to become Martin Luther King Jr. – we already have one. Become you. Become who you are.” Mr. Derreck Kayongo from the National Center for Civil and Human Rights reminded us of on the very first day. I looked at my name placard. And in that moment I knew that my name has to always stay associated with the group of people I was surrounded then. Contemporary freedom fighters.

“All I can say about that is that we were right. We were willing to pay the price because we were right.” That is the answer Dr. Roslyn Pope gave, when someone asked her how did she manage to stay strong through all the hard battles she fought on the forefront of the civil rights movement. And I then thought that we must stay strong too. When all those confederate flags, including the ones rising outside of the United States, want to blind societies, defund non-governmental organizations and demand us to sacrifice our freedom for security reasons – we must stand strong. Strong and unmoved – because we are right.

“The system isn’t broken. It is working exactly the way it is supposed to.” This statement, which I have heard over and over again during this past month, will stay with me for long. I see myself as one of the future policy

makers, therefore I recognize the importance of creating an unbroken system, where all of the society, including present minorities, is determined to see it run as smoothly as possible, exactly the way it was thought up to run. The system cannot be controlled by some and feared by many. A modern democracy must be created by an empowered, educated society. Security forces cannot be associated with violence. They should be associated with stability and safety for all.

“There is nothing more powerful than an idea, whose time has come.” Lonnie King empowered us to move forward by giving us this wisdom. I put it down in both of my journals, so to never feel weak again in challenging times – the times that I know are still ahead. And if I were to ever encounter doubt on my way to seeking justice for the voiceless and those left behind, I know now that I should repeat after Charles Black – “when in doubt, give them hell.” However, what cannot be left unexplained what we, human rights activists, perceive through the concept of “giving hell.”

We know that enemies of the human rights agenda, populists and all others who wish to oppress rather than cooperate, those who want to destroy and not build – all are afraid of numbers. Numbers of bodies marching on the streets. Numbers of roses stuck to police vans. Numbers of books read by those, who they wish would stay illiterate. Therefore giving “them” hell means learning to read, speak and show up.

And wherever they raise their voices – our voices must be louder. Whenever they raise their fists – we must raise the victory sign. Whenever they raise those confederate flags – and they will – our flags must be raised higher.

# COUNTERING DOMINANT NATIVE AMERICAN NARRATIVES AND RE-IMAGINING COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Emily McDonnell

AS SOON AS I RECEIVED AN ACCEPTANCE LETTER FROM Humanity in Action (HIA) for the John Lewis Fellowship, I was overcome with excitement to explore Atlanta's rich Civil Rights history through a series of lectures, excursions, and discussions with my socially conscious peers. As a Navajo born and raised on the reservation, I was particularly thrilled about the opportunity to study Georgia's complex sociopolitical relationship with Native Americans in both a historical and modern context. Although Native American history was a small fragment in the larger Civil Rights discourse within the program, I've developed a wealth of knowledge that has helped me discover how I can implement restorative justice by using narratives as a means to reclaim Native American stories while fostering socioeconomic development. Over the past few weeks, I have been struggling with the idea of what restorative justice is and I've arrived at the conclusion that we as Indigenous people should not wait for the United States to acknowledge us and that we must restore justice on our own terms.

What first peaked my interest in using narratives was the reaction I felt after watching the documentary "The Canary Effect." The film, which addresses a myriad of issues that continue to pervade the Native American community presents an image of Native Americans in a single facet: people dealing with alcoholism, poverty, and the lasting effects of the boarding school era. While this information is critical for people to know, this image is often the only one presented to the majority. As I began to think of an approach to give a more comprehensive overview of

modern Native American life, I quickly thought of the "Under My Hood" spoken word event we attended the previous weekend. Inspired by the various stories, I was immediately drawn to this type of storytelling and hope to implement it within my own community--I want my peers and the general community to have the opportunity to hear multiple facets that make up the modern Native American experience and identity. From that night, I was able to come up with my own narrative that chronicles my journey as a Navajo woman using the "Under My Hood" format.

Under my hood is frustration

It is frustration that spans several generations

I carry the pain felt by my ancestors, for I continue to be told my culture is subpar and my history irrelevant. I am frustrated that my people are seen as relics of the past, as imaginary figures in headdresses and buckskin that only exist in western films and dusty textbooks. If only they knew, I tell myself. If only the world could see what I have been privileged to experience would they finally realize how entrenched we are in modern society while still maintaining our unique identities and culture. This frustration is often exacerbated by comments like "You don't look Native American" or the idea that my education, perspective, and experiences somehow makes me different from other Native Americans. Under my hood is pride. It

is pride in everything society tried to make me feel ashamed of. When I look at my hair, hair my people were forced to cut because it was seen as the mark of savagery, I don't see shame but wisdom. I see the wisdom passed down from my mother and grandmother. I see my traditions, my history, language, and culture society has tried to erase but has failed to do because their greatest mistake is not realizing my people are indestructible. It is a future where my generation stands up and says, "We have had enough!" and we reclaim our own stories that have often been told for us instead of by us.

Finally, under my hood is hope. It is hope that I can use my education to empower my community, give a voice to the silenced, and use this gift to help my people break the chains of colonial oppression. As I continue to navigate this chaotic world I carry the hope that I will be able to successfully walk the tightrope between tradition and modernity, but I am not walking this path alone. I have my ancestors beside me, for I am their greatest dream.

In addition to live storytelling, the belief in the power of our own narratives continued to grow upon my visit to the Atlanta History Museum. I arrived eager to explore the section on Native Americans and Georgia, hoping to expand upon the knowledge I'd already acquired over the years. What I expected was a comprehensive overview of the relationship between local tribes and the U.S., but instead found a simplistic explanation to complex issues whose ramifications are still being felt today.

I suspected this would be the case as soon as I walked into the room and immediately noticed the size of exhibit paled in comparison to other exhibits in the museum. To me, this was the first indication that the exhibit—like other similar attempts at retelling Native history—was something that could be neatly packaged and its complexity quickly absorbed in a matter of minutes. Let me be clear, while I felt the exhibit served as a good introduction to the complexity of U.S./Native American



*A depiction of the Trail of Tears*

relations, it could have done more to offer the affected communities the opportunity to tell their history and present-day culture from a variety of perspectives and through various mediums. This painful, complicated history is not here for the U.S. to distort and present to the masses. By reclaiming our history and saying, "No, this is what happened" or "This is how I feel about \_\_\_\_\_," we are actively fighting against the system that has tried to steal and repackage our narratives.

Finally, if we as Native Americans are going to break free from the shackles of colonialism, we need to focus on sustainable community development. This idea came to me through two events during the program. The first was during the Transformative Alliance presentation on the power of transit where I began to ask myself how I can address the needs of transportation within my own community and how we can use this as a tool to fight against poverty. To give a brief overview, there are still many families on the reservation who live in rural areas far from paved roads, including some who may live several hours from the nearest town, and might not always have access to reliable transportation. As a result this can reduce an individual's ability to find a job, have access to food, water, and other basic necessities, and hinder the ability to participate in community events. In response to this hitch hiking has become common but is not always a safe or reliable option. Post-lecture, I began thinking about implementing a mass transit system within the community, but I question the feasibility of reaching everyone who could benefit from such a system due to how expansive the reservation is as well as the ability of those who live in isolated areas to have access to utilize a transportation system.

Even though I haven't reached a solution, I realize that my generation must have this conversation with our community. Even by starting a dialogue, we are taking the first step in trying to empower our community to become more self-reliant.

The final excursion, which was the STAND UP meeting facilitated by Deborah Scott, showed me the power communities hold to dictate self-determination that many Native American communities continue to struggle with. By holding small, roundtable discussions on topics such as housing, education and youth, employment, transportation, and the elderly, I felt we were able to delve into issues we otherwise would not have been able to have in a larger setting. Through the exchange of ideas, we were able to address the issues the community felt was the most pressing and also discussed how we can hold elected officials accountable for their commitment to sustainable community development. I see this as another form of self-distributed restorative justice because outsiders have been telling Native communities what they need to improve their lives for decades without Native input. To this I say no more. The days of allowing someone who has never lived in our community--let alone visited it--dictate what is best for the people are gone. From here on, we will continue to realize self-determination on our own terms, and thus serve justice that is long overdue.

# ESSAY

Esra Karakaya

FOR ALMOST A MONTH I HAVE BEEN LISTENING TO VARIOUS BRILLIANT SPEAKERS THAT SHARED their insights on the concept of restorative justice and exposed me to many new ideas and perspectives. But there were also many moments when I wondered how learning so much about the US-American context is going to be helpful for my efforts back home. Maybe it is going to take me some time to digest what I have been exposed to and realize the scope of energy this Fellowship has given me to fuel my existence and resistance in Germany.

Nevertheless there is bits and pieces of wisdom I picked up during this one month, that no textbook will be able to teach, that no money can buy.

## TIME AND PATIENCE: "YOU CAN'T MICROWAVE IT!"

Dr. Carol Anderson, Professor of African American Studies at Emory University, rightly said: "It's going to take deep thought, it's going to take nurturing folks, it's going to take being able to have hard conversations with folks that you don't agree with. Change needs time. It means we are fighting, we are struggling but we are moving forward."

I have been impatient, because I become frustrated whenever I think of the work that still needs to be done. I need to deconstruct my internalized consumerism (the urge of instant gratification and satisfaction), and understand that to this work there is no such thing as a quick fix. Being patient and steadfast is key.

## NARRATIVES AND NORM-SHIFTING

Before even talking about restoring justice, there needs to be a talk about a norm-shift of the dominant narrative that manifests what is perceived as right and wrong within a certain society. David Hooker, Professor of the Practice of Conflict Transformation and Peacebuilding at the Joan B. Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies in the

Keough School of Global Affairs at the University of Notre Dame, touched on how this norm-shift is crucial in order to gain a collective understanding that there is currently communities in the "we" that we have systematically abused.

I realize that making myself visible as a TV host within German media landscape can also be understood as a contribution to a norm-shift within discussions around German identity. People of the Global Majority are continuously under- and misrepresented in contemporary German media, which in effect reinforces the idea that German identity is inherently white. The more People of the Global Majority are seen on TV screens across Germany, the easier it will get to understand that Germany is a multi-cultural country. But I also have to keep Dr. Anderson's words in mind, which is that the process of norm-shifting will still involve violence and will not protect me from it.

## STRATEGY AND PRAGMATISM

Shirley Franklin, former mayor of Atlanta, shared many of her political strategies and methods she would use when in office to reach her goal. One of them included being ready to have some discussions over and over again: "In politics there is only a few facts that matter. Don't overwhelm people with facts. Choose a few that get to the core of a problem. Make them understand them, and then repeat, repeat and repeat!" She also stressed to be very intentional in our actions and our language.

While much of the John Lewis Fellowship focused on understanding what restorative justice is and what a possible solutions can be, I appreciated former mayor of Atlanta Shirley Franklin elaborating on the hands-on know-how she has accumulated during her years of experience as a professional.

## HISTORY AND DECOLONIZATION

Even though I am not sure as to how learning so much about the civil rights movement in the US is going to benefit me in Germany, I do understand the importance of knowing one's own real, unapologetic and undistorted history. I realize how I need to educate myself on Germany's colonial history to understand contemporary German challenges, because they are the legacy of the past. Natsu Saito, Professor at Georgia State's College of Law, emphasized how crucial it is to understand how our current reality is so much shaped by our colonial past, and that only with the decolonization of our minds, and ultimately of our system we will be able to restore justice.

# CHASING TRANSFORMATION:

## REIMAGINING HUMAN RIGHTS SPACES THROUGH RELATIONSHIPS

Hope Anderson

I CAME TO THE JOHN LEWIS FELLOWSHIP LOOKING FOR SOMETHING I COULDN'T REALLY put into words. The particular sensations and interactions that I was seeking resist sentimental packaging on the page. You have to be there, ready to feel these moments electrifying the space, shifting the dynamic. One night, as we sat chatted over glasses of hot peach tea, my friend Seung-Hyun captured it. "It's that feeling of coming alive, isn't it?"

Coming alive. It's a phrase I first discovered in my social justice community at college but almost forgotten in the post-graduation haze and pressure to get busy with 'legitimate' adult life. There's a special potency to those words, that idea of 'coming alive.' Picture the moments when you felt at home in an organizing space or a classroom. To feel alive in a learning community, I'm looking for a circle where all of us are free to wrestle with brokenness while sharing the wholeness of our identities and deeply human experiences. I guess I think of human rights spaces the way some folks view the theater or an art gallery. I'm looking for places where 'magic' happens—a sacred space where we are free to reflect, struggle, and rediscover what it means to be human.

I've been privileged to experience communities in which education through human rights is not only possible, but tangibly real and humanizing. But these spaces are far from the normative reality. The deep disparities hit me when Attorney Mawuli Davis reminded me and other fellows that the police are not the only perpetrators killing black and brown youth. In reality, our whitewashed system is just as capable of inflicting violence

and denying personhood in a crowded room of school desks. When questioning what it means to systematically kill marginalized youth, Attorney Davis concluded that it begins "when you refuse to speak life into a young person."

What does restorative justice look like for these students? How do we translate the transformational moments of this program to a system that refuses to let marginalized voices 'come alive'? What would it look like to create and defend human rights spaces within schools and our communities? I would argue that it takes far more than restorative justice to demand the dignity and rights of young people within our educational system. I'm looking for what Dr. Hooker describes as transformative justice—"transforming systems and narratives to create a world in which all can thrive."

I don't hold the answers for this process, nor am I fully convinced that it's even possible. But what I do know is that transformational justice would require us—all of us—to refashion and regenerate our relationships. In this battle, we are not only dismantling systems and seeking their transformation, but questioning our relationship with ourselves, our communities, and those we had deemed 'the Other.' This inner work, the rewiring and reweaving of relationships, goes where policies alone can't take us. The John Lewis Fellowship left me with three praxes to engage when I leave, three tools to begin this transformation in myself and the systems to which I am intimately bound. Retell. Build roots. Reimagine. If we are to fight for spaces of dignity and human rights for young people, these tools are integral to creating relationships that spark change from the inside out.

After a month immersed in Atlanta's civil rights

history and current activist struggles, I left with a renewed understanding of the struggle to transform public narratives in the South. The city's acknowledgment of slavery, segregation, and state-sponsored violence against communities of color remains as damningly absent and desperately urgent as equitable transportation, public health access, or criminal justice reform. When we demand humanizing, vibrant learning communities for ourselves and other young people, it proves impossible to craft a liberating classroom that is divorced from these larger realities. By excavating the true narratives of the South's everyday apartheid and their connection to today's structures of oppression, we empower ourselves and others to claim space and affirm dignity through retelling. Students of all grades and backgrounds not only need access to uncomfortably accurate materials about their history, but educators must create opportunities to connect these histories to students' own experiences. By describing daily realities in their own words, students prove their power to center their communities' histories while shaping a larger arc narrative of human rights struggles in the South.

The praxis of retelling requires us to interrogate our relationships to place—both physical space and ideological groundings—as well as our relationships to our communities. However, transforming spaces for young people requires activists, educators, and youth to question our own identities, refashioning our relationship with the self even as we seek liberatory spaces for ourselves and others. This process of retelling personally proved one of the most powerful elements of the John Lewis Fellowship, as it encouraged me to deconstruct my identity as a white, middle-class cisgender woman within activist-educational spaces. While I entered our learning community with a growing awareness of these privileges, my peers gave me the courage to weave a personal process of acknowledgment into our work of narrative shifting.

As I reflect on transformational justice grounded in relationships, I realize that 'retelling' also means grappling with my own story and questioning my roots, while acknowledging my experience of whiteness in relationship

to human rights spaces. Dr. Carol Anderson sparked these reflections through her book *White Rage*, in which she argues, "What was really at work [in our country] was white rage...White rage is not about visible violence, but rather it works its way through the courts, the legislatures, and a range of government bureaucracies." Anderson concludes, "White rage doesn't have to wear sheets, burn crosses or take to the streets. Working the halls of power, it can achieve its ends far more effectively, far more destructively" (3). While I find it tempting to confine discussion of 'white rage' to our national government, criminal justice systems, and other institutions of white power, this same rage—often cast as fear, apathy, or 'a way of life'—is just as alive in my home community and family circles. If I am to encourage, protect, or seek transformation in human rights spaces for young people, I must persistently acknowledge the everyday violence that my community inflicts on marginalized 'others,' the mechanisms by which this structure benefits me, and work to undo these systems of privilege and othering. For me, this will mean actively educating, organizing, and mentoring white folks to connect to social justice. As we learn to retell and recognize accurate narratives that hold us accountable to marginalized communities, we create a space for dialogue, restorative action, and even transformation as we go from defensive to offensive players in the struggle for racial equity. In his 1965 article for *Ebony* magazine, James Baldwin deftly captures the need for white Americans to grapple with the realities of retelling. "History, as nearly no one seems to know, is not merely something to be read. And it does not refer merely, or even principally, to the past. On the contrary, the great force of history comes from the fact that we carry it within us." As Baldwin concludes, "it is with great pain and terror that one begins to realize this...In great pain and terror because...one enters into battle with that historical creation, Oneself, and attempts to recreate oneself according to a principle more humane and more liberating." By refashioning our relationships with our communities, place, and even ourselves, we make a path to chase for transformation.

This fellowship reminded me that we all have starting

points, a grounding in particular communities, places, and identities. However, our experience in Atlanta showed me that these roots must grow integrally connected with the activism and narratives of others if we are to transform human rights spaces. We seek an ecosystem of resistance with roots so deep, so entangled that they can outlive the forest fire of systematic racism raging above them. To me, this ‘root system’ was breath-takingly captured during our panel with both the original and new authors of “An Appeal for Human Rights.” As I watched civil rights legends like Dr. Roslyn Pope, Lonnie King, and Charles Black dialogue and joke alongside university students and undocumented activists, I saw ‘foot soldiers’—old and young—creating continuity in the movement. To build roots means seeking relationships beyond the fault-lines of age, ethnicity, race and other identities to create struggles that can survive, rebound, and sometimes win. Andalib Malit Samandari, a young black activist from Morehouse College, put it well when he explained “we’ve got to keep these spaces going.” Looking around the intergenerational panel and delighting in the vibrant energy that filled our room, I caught their passion to develop activist ecosystems back in my own city and challenged myself to seek intergenerational mentors. If we seek transformation in human rights spaces, it will be through a process of relationship with others that deepens our roots and resistance in this earth.

Lastly, the final praxis that I learned from the John Lewis Fellowship was the power of re-imagining. As we empower ourselves and other young people to fashion human rights spaces, the question of possibility almost inevitably confronts us. What does it mean to retell the past, engaging the oppressive realities we breathe in, and struggle to build activist communities—all while believing in something better? Here, transformation through relationships grows more undefined and more risky, for we are no longer just interrogating our relationship with structures, communities, and ourselves. Instead, we are engaging our relationship with justice itself, a relationship to something we haven’t quite seen. In her lecture on settler colonialism and ‘seeing beyond’ this system, Dr. Saito introduced me to the idea of dual vision

or a multi-consciousness. She claimed that reimagining must involve a recognition of the normative realities that surround us, while leaving space and longing for another world. Our resistance, our search for something beyond our mere survival, creates a space of possibility. As I continue to fight for human rights education and activist spaces for young people, I look forward to seeing the way that my relationship to transformative justice and ‘the impossible’ grows, even as my dual vision blurs. In her book *War Talk*, Indian author Arundhati Roy offers a glimpse of this reimagining. “Our strategy should not only be to confront empire but to lay siege to it. To deprive it of oxygen. To shame it. To mock it. With our art, our music, our literature, our stubbornness, our joy, our brilliance, our sheer relentless—nd our ability to tell our own stories. Stories that are different from the ones we’ve been brainwashed to believe.” Roy ends with defiance, hinting at a transformation that is already alive in us. “Another world is not only possible, she is on her way. On a quiet day, I can hear her breathing.”

“It’s about coming alive, isn’t it?” My friend and I smile and remember the moments on this program when we felt fully alive and the people who invited us to share this joy rooted in struggle. To move from guilt and despair to meaningful, informed action, it takes all of us. It takes a community where we can be safe while dismantling borders and biases, holding tension while empathizing and daring radically. It’s the spaces where young people are in the driver’s seat, taking authority and responsibility over the way we learn together. It’s the long hours spent in dialogue, disagreement, and meaning-making, while creating space for each other to find our voices and experiences of belonging. It is the praxis of transformation, renewing our inmost selves as we seek change in a weary world.

We are the John Lewis Fellows. We are human. We are committed to a world in which all are free to come alive, remain alive, and thrive within a mosaic of just relationships.

We are chasing transformation.

# BULLHORNS AND DIMES

Ian Fields Stewart

IT IS DIFFICULT TO REFLECT ON WHAT I HAVE LEARNED. NOT BECAUSE I HAVE LEARNED nothing, but rather because I have learned so much and have struggled to remain present so that I may absorb each moment as it has arrived. But what I have learned is that knowledge is not contained in the moment the painter passes their brush across the canvas but instead knowledge is the portrait comprised of those many strokes. With this in mind, I wish to attempt to show you the portrait I have been left with.

In many of the conversations we have engaged with around restorative justice during this program, there has been a strong focus on the “restoration” aspect of this form of justice. For me, the revolutionary focus of this work has never been the irony Dr. David Hooker pointed out which is that “restorative justice indicates that at one point there was a good relationship [between the harmed and the harmers] to return to or restore.” Instead, what makes restorative justice important in my mind is the way in which it centers those who have been harmed in naming and reclaiming their own restoration. I believe that to focus on the restoration aspect of restorative justice without the context of an individual who has been harmed is to reinforce our current structure of justice. However well intentioned I may be, restorative justice and this program have taught me that my intentions cannot be imposed on someone else’s idea of justice. As those fighting for justice, we often cite the experiences of the harmed in our case for retribution, thus turning their stories into statistics and case studies to support a larger fight for systemic change. That fight is necessary, but too often we allow the harmed individuals who make up those numbers to slip through the cracks. Restorative justice is the way we catch those individuals, lift their voices up, and prioritize their healing.

Formally I have been asked to write about restorative justice. And I have given you a glimpse into my understanding. But the gift I truly leave with from this program is my renewed love for the south. I grew up in the Deep South spending so much time looking outside of it I often need reminders of what it means to be southern. But this program has cemented it for me. To be southern, truly southern, is to seek kindness. While we are no strangers to throwing shade, the core tenet of any southerner is the gift of kindness. We offer unprompted good mornings to strangers so they know they are seen. We are willing to share our stories at the drop of a hat because you never know who will be touched by what you have to share. We hold family close and uplift them above all else. To be southern is also to develop a deep relationship with the past. Whether clinging to a flag or reaching for the souls of ancestors who marched the same streets you can now walk in, every person from the south must develop a relationship with where they have come from and how they got there. While not every person’s interpretation of their history is one I would agree with, it is a beautiful thing to be part of a culture that takes the time to look back before jumping forward. The south is not a monolith nor is it without its problems, but regardless of where I call home for the moment or how fast my life may get, I will always be a southerner making fans out of anything I’m holding, taking time to say good morning, and enjoying a moment in which I can just slow down and enjoy the sunshine.

I would be remiss if I did not uplift Roslyn Pope and the many elders and ancestors whose words, ideas, and actions have forever changed the way I see myself in the movement. Roslyn Pope once said to us “Young people, we didn’t have cell phones at that time. All we had were bullhorns and dimes.” With so little, they accomplished so much. Roslyn Pope and the many more beyond and beside her gave me bullhorns and dimes. And with the

push of the button I have the world at my fingertips. The saying has never been truer: “If not me, then who? If not now, then when?” I often experience insecurity about my work as a storyteller. Surrounded by such brilliance in so many different fields, I sometimes ask myself what the point of telling stories at a time like this is. But as I have moved through this program I have realized something: everything is a story. Racism is a series of stories we have told and been told. They are stories that create a value system to human life and imagine and inspire new ways to privilege certain lives over others. As storytellers, we have the power to resurrect the dead, reflect the present, and imagine the future. By studying the civil rights movement, I have found new names, new stories, and new people who have been left out of the pages of our history books. By telling their stories I may begin the work to ensure their legacy is not only felt but also remembered and recognized. By hearing from such incredible leaders currently working in the movement, I now have language for a present that often feels too big for words. As I tell stories and help others to do the same it is my duty to share that language so that we may all name and claim it for ourselves. And finally, because of this program, I have new tools that will craft the future. Just as I now walk with new elders and ancestors whose wisdom guides, inspires, and challenges me so I am now called upon to share these elders and ancestors with the young people I serve.

It turns out it isn’t very easy to paint an entire portrait of a month of long days, new friends, and life changing moments. It was probably an ambitious goal to set for myself. But maybe painting the portrait for you is not what we need now. Maybe it’s more important that I show you the canvas, show you where I’ve painted, and hand you the brush to keep the work going. You have bullhorns, dimes, a paintbrush, and a canvas. Imagine the possibilities.

# (UN)APOLOGETIC

Jaz Buckley

GROWING UP AS A BLACK WOMAN IN THE UNITED STATES GAVE ME A UNIQUE EDUCATION in shame and self-hate. I was made to feel ashamed of my hair and hate its texture. I was made to feel ashamed of my skin and hate its darkness. Each message gathered from media, classmates, and literature became entangled with my identity and my perception of myself. Who I was became something that I could construct from media and insults. Needless to say, my perception of myself was not always positive. I felt that I had to apologize for myself, my existence, and for everything that made me deviant from the norm. Undoing this internalized self-hate was a process that took years and this program has helped me come to the realization that I don't have to apologize for my existence. Through the exploration of systemic racism and activism, I have come to know the meaning of unapologetic.

The first step to understanding what it means to be unapologetic is to explore and acknowledge the blatant atrocities committed by those at the top of the power structure. For starters, to be unapologetic is to act in a manner that lacks shame or remorse. This can look like many things. In the case of the United States Federal government, it looks like the Trail of Tears, slavery, Jim Crow, internment camps, police brutality, Muslim bans, and Transgender military service bans. It looks like setting the bar for citizenship so high that those at the bottom would need to step on each other to reach it. This is a form of toxic unapologeticism that forms the foundation of the American project. In fact, the USFG was founded on the unapologetic oppression of Indigenous people. Dr. Saito beautifully illustrated the ways that white settler colonialists came to an already occupied space, wiped out nearly all of the occupants, and then had the audacity to white-wash their own actions in the retelling. There was no apology to the Cherokee for forcefully removing them from their

land. There was no apology to the children they stole and then forced to engage in the learning of whiteness. These atrocities were committed with little to no care for the lives that were ruined or taken away. However, no one was ever held accountable for these actions or made to apologize for them. So the atrocities continued and became embedded into the fabric of this country. A fabric that is red with the blood of the dead, white-washed of its sins, and blue with the tears of the survivors.

It is easy to study and analyze this type of systematic racism and oppression, but it is far harder to oppose it. Yet, I am so grateful to the unapologetic people that did. In this context, being unapologetic is not a license to harm others, but a rallying cry for activists that want to step up and claim their humanity. The MLK's, Malcolm X's, Dr. Rosalyn Pope's, and Dorothy Height's of the world did their work because it needed to be done. They never once apologized. This ethic of unapologetic activism continues in the face of unapologetic racism. Black Lives Matter, for example, openly calls out the government and the police for their continued murder of un-armed black citizens. In Mary Hooks' "The Mandate: A Call and Response from Black Lives Matter Atlanta," she is very clear about the goals and intentions of Black Lives Matter and does it with a forcefulness that is normally stripped from black women. She was unapologetically black and unapologetically angry. Her anger was tangible, real, and valid. Her words carried the weight of centuries of struggle endured by black women. She personified the pain and anger that so many black woman felt, but were unable to express for fear of becoming the "angry black woman" stereotype. This stereotype is so pervasive that for years black women donned the shroud of respectability just to be heard. I must be clear that I don't say this to diminish the women that used such a tactic. In fact former Atlanta mayor, Shirley Franklin, proved just how useful

it was to sometimes play the game. Rather, I point this out to highlight the fact that such a tactic was necessary at all. The notion that black women, and black people in general, needed to be respectable to be heard is one that is frequently used to denounce protestors today. The awareness of this oppressive concept is what makes the unapologetic anger of Mary Hooks that much more refreshing and freeing.

The unapologetic characteristics of the activists that opposed racist structures, in tandem with the fellows I met through this program, inspired me to explore this word for myself. What would it mean for me to engage in being unapologetic and formally un-apologizing? In my own context, learning to be unapologetic is a form of radical self-love. By that, I mean that it is the act of knowing and loving the most authentic parts of my identity. This would include my skin color, my body type, my gender, the way I think, the foods I eat, and so much more. It's beyond merely liking myself, but actually learning to love the parts of me that I was taught to hate and actively separate myself from. This is important because it forms the first step to restorative justice.

As a concept, this program has made it clearer that restorative justice is not an end goal. Rather, it is a means to an end. Restorative justice, to me, is the process of restoring dignity back to those that have systematically been stripped of their dignity for years. The best way to this is to spread radical unapologetic self-love to the communities that need it most so that they can begin to restore their claim to dignity. From there, we can begin to work on transformative justice, which I would isolate as the true end. Transformative justice differs from restorative justice in its approach to the community and to the past and present. Unlike restorative justice, transformative justice recognizes that there is nothing to really be restored. Justice was never afforded to people of the global majority by white settler colonialists, so it is unclear how they would restore something that never existed. Transformative justice circumvents this issue by acknowledging that the system needs to be transformed in its totality. Embracing radical unapologeticism, then, to

fight toxic unapologeticism is the first step in this process. Dr. Carol Anderson summed this up when she said, "Don't let anyone ever steal your joy." This means unapologetically reclaiming your dignity and your selfhood in the face of oppression is the best form of restorative justice and the only way to achieve transformative justice.

# INSPIRATION

Jordanos Kiros

I WAS EXCITED WHEN I FOUND OUT I GOT SELECTED FOR THE JOHN LEWIS FELLOWSHIP in Atlanta, Georgia. Excited for the opportunity to learn from academics and professionals, but also a bit skeptical for the message they would deliver. Crafted as American speakers are, the message is often beautiful, but unrealistic or even untrue. I was worried to come into a space where the speakers were going to try to sell us rainbows and unicorns about human rights and activism. As I saw it, a few humans in action were not going to change the world. In my mind it was simply not possible, since the world is in the hands of a few unreachable, wealthy and power hunger straight white men. Those men created the corrupt system we live in today and are the ones keeping it in place. A system where colonization and slavery just taken on other forms like capitalism, War on Drugs, War on Terrorism, gentrification, and so on. However, under the notion of "knowledge is power" I applied.

After I heard the first few speakers I was taken aback to say the least. Most speakers were closer to reality then I had expected and their stories and experiences were refreshingly raw. Sara Totonchi spoke some true words that really spoke to me when she said: "The system is not broken, it is working exactly the way it was set up to work." I can honestly say, I have never in such a short time learned so much just by listening to academics and professionals share their knowledge, stories and experiences. I feel inspired in many different ways, and I will share a few inspirational moments.

The first realization I had was that every speaker in his or her way fought and still is fighting the system. I cannot imagine what world we would be living in today if they did not speak up and fight. The Civil Rights Movement had accomplished so much by empowering ordinary people and bringing them together to fight a cause. As dr. Carol

Anderson had put in words so powerful, we need the mass to see the problems, be conscious and most of all be active. So rather than approaching work in social justice as fighting to change the world or the system, I changed my perspective and view it as a tool to bring and keep all kinds of people together to believe and fight for a cause as we have the most power. Hearing these professionals speak made me understand and believe in activism and inspired me to take more action myself.

Secondly, I instantly noticed how many of the speakers were black. It made me realize how we lack black academics and professionals to look up to and identify with. Black professionals who actually contribute to improve society and have a cause that does not only involve making money. It made me wonder what I would have accomplished if I had access to such role models at a younger age. It made me wonder how many young brilliant minds are not being reached, which is the loss of the community. There is a need for more role models that young people of color can identify with. It inspired me to become one myself, since as Richard Morton put it "life and death is in the power of the tongue."

I think this fellowship inspired us all, each in our own way and understanding, to contribute to the fight for justice. In order to achieve all our aspirations we need to practice self-care. We all know, having a hobby outside of work is important, but in this field it is also important to pick your fights. We discussed intersectionality and the meaning of it. In short it means we are a whole that is made up of multiple identities, for example gender, race, social class, ethnicity and nationality. All of these identities can be exposed to systems of oppression, domination, or discrimination in different ways. However, your Intersectionality is not a reason to be a spokesperson for all your different identities. To fight for all identities

is simply unhealthy. We cannot carry all the problems of this world nor should we want to. So sometimes it is just not worth it and you will have to be tactical and pick your fights. That means you will have to make a decision who to be a spokesperson for. I asked myself the following key questions to figure that out: What are my talents? Where can my talents bear the most fruit? Where or for whom can I have the biggest impact? These questions require self-knowledge and constant reflection. During this fellowship there have been many heated discussions, and I believe the cause was the lack of self-knowledge. Some were not able to see that insecurities and the baggage of past experiences fueled their persistence, making it hard to have an intellectual dialogue. So take the time to know your qualities, but also your insecurities and blind spots. It all inspired me to self reflect in critical ways I have not done before.

“Don’t let them take your joy.”

– Carol Anderson

The focus of this fellowship was to approach political and social issues through a restorative justice lens, so we spend a good amounts of hours discussing the definition and meaning of restorative justice. I fully agreed with prof. David Hookers perspective on the meaning of restorative justice. He argued that there is no such thing as restorative justice, because there was no system with justice to begin with. Therefore there is no justice to restore. We are simply fighting for justice. We, the ‘humans taking action’, however are not the oppressors who owe marginalized people an acknowledgement of their wrongdoings, who should be held accountable for their systematically abuse of those people, and who should use their recourses and distribute net worth to give back what has been stolen. What we can do is listen, engage and to contribute within the range of our abilities. Humans in action are a form of resistance. Resistance is seeking justice. In our own unique way we can all restore what has been broken by the system and we can all enable local change. If we have to use the term, restorative justice to me is empowering people within my community. It can be as pragmatic as working as a lawyer for marginalized people or empowering youth through

education. We might not be able to see the world change, but we can contribute to the long process.

Inspired by the great words of Dr. Rosalyn Pope I will end this essay by saying that I have briefly mentioned only a few of the many lessons learned. I have understated rather than overstated my experiences. The John Lewis Fellowship is seriously a beautiful and great contribution to social justice in Georgia, the South, the nation, and the world.

# A MONTH OF PERSPECTIVES

Konstantinos Koukos

WHEN DR. ROSLYN POPE WAS ASKED WHAT KEPT HER AND HER ASSOCIATION CONTINUE their movement against the oppression that made her and her peers feel less of a human, she gave a simple, yet powerful answer: "We were right". These simple words were enough to dismantle most of the academic words and powerful quotes I noted down throughout the John Lewis Fellowship 2017. Dr. Roslyn Pope talked about the Appeal for Human Rights and her experiences and took us on a journey in Atlanta of 1960's. At the same time, though, she depicted Atlanta of 2017. With her words, she painted the history, as she lived it, so that we could acknowledge it. She unfolded the motives, the circumstances, the role of the oppressors and the reactions of the victims, the outcomes of their efforts and their worries that keep hunting today's society. She exposed us to the harm done to her, her peers and the harm that had been done to generations before her. And she demanded actions to restore it. Bold ones. At the same time she gave me the power to ask questions. How can you restore justice? How can you recognize and celebrate the strength of these students while history has not celebrated her and them as she deserved to be celebrated and recognized? How can Greece restore justice in marginalized communities and how can I ensure equal opportunities through my work?

Professor David Hooker asked us once more what restorative justice is. The term itself is an ambiguous one. Who has the responsibility to restore justice? How can you be honest about the harm that has been done? Who do you have to engage and how actions towards justice can be sustainable? These questions do not give simple answers and the reason that this is happening may lie to the fact that the harm done by injustice, is a complexed one, involves many, may be unachievable and is untraceable in the past in most cases. What can be specific though, is the fact that restorative justice needs the power of diverse

perspectives that help analyse what has been done and how you may reach justice. Analysing what has been done is clearly connected to an honest approach of history and its acknowledgment. Apart from history, the knowledge of the current situation and issues of the targeted community is vital in the process of the restoration. Within this process, it is necessary to involve and engage the community where the harm that has been done and initiate restoration.

## THE CASE OF ATLANTA

It can be easy to identify inequalities in Atlanta today. What is hard is to identify the harm done by them. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr once said "A little Progress is a dangerous thing". After decades of movements that paved the way towards advancement of civil and human rights, the city of Atlanta still faces numerous issues that indicate the problematic little progress that has been done and the harm that has to be identified and restored, along with justice that has to be claimed. Spread out all around the city, issues of segregation and unequal access to transportation, housing, healthcare, education, job opportunities, create a city of divisions where, according to Shirley Franklin, former Atlanta mayor, a fair 30 per cent of the population is on the verge of poverty. At first sight, skyscrapers and infrastructures may fascinate. However posing the question: "Who benefits from this?" may facilitate the process of your social understanding. This question, along with the exploration of why, will unfold a reality in 2017 that keeps disfranchising people in various ways end recreating Jim Crow laws to establish in their new forms that keep hunting the society and the black community in particular, around the city.

## PERSPECTIVES

All this knowledge, along with the creative learning process and my background, form my perspective. As a

Diversity and Change Management graduate student I am interested in exploring the role of organizations in providing equal opportunities to diverse identities, include and develop diverse identities and act proactively in the restorative justice process while empowering people. Processes such as recruitment and attraction, development and retention within an organization should be handled with acknowledgment of history of each community that an organization has and identification of unconscious biases that will function as barriers in a person's development. As noted for the criminal justice system from Sara Totonchi, Executive Director of the Southern Center for human Rights, I strongly believe that the business world operates as it is set up to: Full of discrimination, unequal opportunities, in a white heterosexual male world. This clearly leads to disfranchisement of minorities and harm is consistently being done to them with a historical inherited burden. Whether restorative or not, justice will be a priority for me through my perspective after the knowledge acquired from Atlanta, the U.S. and my co-fellows.

This month in Atlanta, gave me questions, provided me with a toolkit of powerful perspectives and different lenses to tackle issues of the communities I am working and would like to work on, the LGBTQ+ in Greece being one of them. The narratives have to be retold and persistence on engaging different stakeholders within the process of protecting the communities has to be established. After all, we have to expect others to be different. Not just accept each other. And the John Lewis Fellowship has been a starting point for a process of restoration and human rights advocacy that will lead my work and actions.

# BACK TO EARTH

Lila Murphy

I DON'T THINK IT WOULD BE FAIR OR EFFECTIVE TO ATTEMPT TO VERBALIZE EVERYTHING THAT this program has meant to me, because I am not yet fully aware of it myself. Due to the richness and the length of our days, I haven't yet had the time to decide what to do with the images flashing behind my eyes or the words swirling around my head. The only thing I can be sure of when I sit into myself is that real connection occurred, connection that is strong enough to support the reimagining of our realities.

I debated whether or not to accept my invitation to this program because, as an artist, devoting a month to intense classroom learning instead of actively producing work felt like a sacrifice. However, I can say confidently that this program has been one of the single most impactful and enriching experiences I have ever had the pleasure of being a part of. The John Lewis Fellowship demanded that participants bring all of ourselves to the table. The work forced us to remain vulnerable because only by being real with ourselves and each other could we begin to address the societal systems and norms that we seek to dismantle. Tiffany Roberts, Esquire perhaps said it best when she recited the end of the Black Lives Matter mandate, stating, "and to be willing to be transformed in the service of the work". You cannot do this type of work without being vulnerable.

The fearless women highlighted throughout this program, led by Dr. Roslyn Pope and Professor Tanya Washington, proved to me the unparalleled strength in purpose that comes from such vulnerability. Former mayor Shirley Franklin's frankness of speech and directness of demands especially inspired me to be unapologetic about my passions. This is not something that comes naturally to me and being around other women who were unapologetic about both themselves and their work was truly transformative. Dr. Pope said it best when she stated,

"If you don't have any questions about the rightness of your cause, then that's your protection". The knowledge instilled in us throughout this month continues to act as a protective force around our passions.

Moving forward, Professor Washington asked of all of us that we continue to "give [ourselves] permission to be beautiful and ugly too", something that I believe the city of Atlanta demonstrates. Atlanta was the perfect city experience this program, not just because of the incredible civil rights histories that have been born from its streets, but because of its realness, and the truthfulness with which it addresses itself and its future. Living and learning from this city and its people inspired me to inspire others, which I believe is the greatest transference of energy that a person can produce.

My journal from this time period reads,

"I want to write about feeling disconnected, about being honest with others and yourself, about criticism and guilt, about getting over it because the work is more important, about getting excited by the worst things because now it makes sense and even though I can't bring the words back into my mouth- no one has ever said it like that before, about truth and power, about being offensive and getting offended, about Atlanta and its beauty, about how living with very different people makes you more of yourself"

The John Lewis Fellowship helped me to see the ideal world, that I used to look towards the clouds for, in other people's eyes, and in the careful intention with which they push words from their lips. Even if our group couldn't agree upon a shared definition of restorative justice or outline a universal method of implementation, I believe that this perspective shift will allow each of us to progress in both

our work and daily lives in a way that restores justice to those we encounter. Thank you to all those involved during this month that forced me to look back towards the earth. The view is greater than I could have imagined.

# ESSAY

Mairi Markaki

I WOULD LIKE TO START THIS ESSAY BY REFLECTING ON A DRAWING THAT CAUGHT MY attention after our visit to Clark Atlanta University Art Gallery. This painting depicts my thoughts on how the perspective that a person chooses to “read” and “interpret” an issue (in this specific case the issue is the painting) can lead to a whole different direction and conclusion.

Having intentionally no information about the artist, the background and the concept of this specific piece of art, it allows me to open my mind and think with freedom and creativity about the message that this picture might represent, as well as the different feelings that could instill to the audience.

On my opinion, this drawing highlights a positive and optimistic message. In the upper, right corner of the picture, we can see a mass of symbols that are small in size and number but they increase significantly in both terms as we are gradually moving to the second part. That said, and as we continue “translating” the painting from the top to the bottom, the symbols become more rigorous and strong in the third part until they reach to the fourth subpart where all of them are transformed to black squares, having the exact same size, color (we no longer experience the existence of 2 different colours) and are integrally connected to one another. Eventually the picture comes to an end with all that symbols taking the shape of drops which, according to my interpretation, represent tears. These are tears of joy and a result of the mature change, the transformation, the evolution and the development that occurred in the first parts until we could finally reach to the establishment of equity and equality.

On my opinion, this painting highlights a negative and pessimistic message. At the very first look, the dominant existence of two colours - black and white - and the absence of more vivid and colorful elements witnesses that



*“Nubia, 2012 - Black and white painting on paper”*

something bad is about to occur. Moreover, I can see that this drawing has 5 parts, an observation which represents division. Inequality is also another obvious substance of this picture as the subparts have different size, number and are structured in their own, strictly well defined spaces. Eventually, the picture reaches an end (“reading” it again from the top to the bottom) with drops that represent the state of bleeding, blood that derives from the inequality, injustice and conflict that took place in the first parts.

On my opinion, this painting symbolizes the different perspectives and the symbols represent the people.

The John Fellowship Program was a fascinating and very constructive experience for me as it was an intellectual, social, psychological and collaborative

learning process which instilled in me the foundations of a future long term procedure of structuring a path towards self development and human rights advancement. During this intense and interesting trip, I came in contact with valuable ideas, ideologies, opinions and facts that were unknown to me so far. This was a result of my exposure to new information, thus gaining broad and precious knowledge, after having controversial discussions with people from different backgrounds and being inspired by but also critical to admirable speakers.

My key takeaway is that everyone should be hold accountable for what happens and what doesn't happen and that there is always an opportunity for a change. This message is itself very optimistic and motivating, either you are the one that leads a movement or by helping and advocating an idea by utilizing any means that you possess. Firstly, it is really important to always doubt yourself, being prepared and willingful to change your mind when entering a dialog, whose purpose should be the establishment of the truth and the implementation of actions that will contribute to the common good. That said, it is vital to talk to people, listen to their thoughts and ask for their feedback so that you will be able to get a better understanding of their needs and current environment, rather than proceeding to false assumptions. Moreover, the perspective that you choose to examine the facts and form an opinion about a specific issue is of great significance and can vary among people depending on their attitude and personality, knowledge and education, self-involvement and past experiences. Therefore, the approach should always be modified so that it can engage both people and their communities more effectively and hopefully address their problems in a more collective and coherent way. For this purpose the observation and analysis of the facts together with the acknowledgement of historical, societal and individual background with respect and empathy should always constitute our main tools. Additionally, I was overwhelmed and I am really interested in identifying and studying the relation between different terms that are integrally connected to the rebuilding of a fair, equal and democratic civic society, in which human rights

would be the center and people would always be the priority. That said, I would like to examine and specify the connection between resistance and fear, as well as the pattern in which truth, mercy, peace and justice could simultaneously be achieved in a proportion that would be both realistically implemented and sustainably maintained. Adding to the aforementioned in terms of how the perspective that you see things can change your holistic approach, it is crucial to realize that some changes and forces, regardless of their nature, cannot be paused or prevented. As there are many different strategies and tactics which can be used to deal with and abandon those narratives, again the perspective that you will choose is decisive, together with the customised approach. This may even include in some cases the utilization of what is regarded as "vulnerability" as an advantage, when used strategically under specific conditions.

In regards to my future social work, this would be concentrated on the effort to contribute to the achievement of a smooth transition in the societal changes that will inevitably happen, so that the process and their final results would be the most beneficial for the parties involved. In this framework, I will give emphasis on the people that are more vulnerable to the potential negative effects, hence more probably to be manipulated or victimized in any terms. I am planning to be actively involved in concrete projects by utilizing the community empowerment tactics that I've learned together with my writing skills and my interest to engage people through innovative means of art and development of safe and creative environments for them to interact and express themselves without any boundaries. Another very important thing that I've learned and I will have in mind in every action that I am going to be occupied, is that you have to study and deeply understand the systematic direct or hidden mechanisms that are mobilized for propaganda as well as for the specific norms to be created, and the basis on where those have been structured on. To be more specific, I will focus on the empowerment of people in order for them to be politically educated and active within the community both by acknowledging their rights and by utilising their skills, crafts and talents to the fullest. Here the importance of

the community is determinant since people have a strong base and can be heard only when they have a strong bond and support by their community. Moreover, I learned that you can't influence positively nor enlighten all people, but what you can do by all means is decide who are the people that you want to help and are open to any change or at least to a meaningful dialog. Under this umbrella, it is worthy to highlight the importance of waiting for and identifying the "teachable" moment. For this to be met, people that are involved in movements as social workers should never lose sight of who they are serving and they should be able to collaborate with them hand in hand while also taking the time that they need to reflect on and taking care of themselves as well. After all, there is nothing more dangerous than always talking to people that agree with you and have the same perspective as you. If you do that, you will lose the chance to engage with people that have different views and test once again yourself in your own self-development process.

In a nutshell, I would like to close this thesis by mentioning a remarkable phrase of a greek poet, Kazantzakis, who said "You have the brushes, you have the colours, draw heaven and get inside".

# PARALLEL REALITIES

Malgorzata Hermanowicz

A FEW WEEKS AGO I READ AN ARTICLE IN THE POLISH QUARTERLY, *PRZEKRÓJ*, ABOUT A WOMAN who decided to start a walking journey. She walked 440 kilometres along the polish coast of the Baltic Sea. She simply took a backpack with some food and clothes, packed a tent and a sleeping bag, and began her journey. She walked barefoot or wearing shoes. She wouldn't mind her looks, manners or status. The walk was supposed to help her find her very own self, give her back sense of humanity, and bring her back to the roots of mankind.

On 16th of July 2017 Eurie Lee Martin, an African American citizen of the United States made a very similar decision. Martin was much more humble than that Polish woman – he just wanted to walk 20 miles in order to visit his family. July in Georgia is usually very hot, and it may be very hard to walk. But, the 58-year-old man simply enjoyed walking, and he just wanted to do so.

It may have occurred because of the weather or because his road led him through small neighbourhoods with inhabitants that happen to be very suspicious; someone informed the police, that there is a man. Walking.

In 2016, 963 people were shot by the police force in the United States. In Poland: only two. In my world, police informed about a man walking would either tell you that it's a man's right to walk and to stop bothering the police – specifically if he's not endangering anyone – or (if they're the nice ones) would come in order to check whether the man is not lost, sick or in need of help. Here in Georgia, Eurie Lee Martin did not survive when meeting the police. He got tased to death. In my world such a situation is unthinkable, almost impossible. Here, it is a day-to-day matter. Someone killed by the police. Again. Wore a hoodie, drove a car, had a gun, was suspicious, taken as a threat. Was black.

So what do we define as *normal*? Things that are

healthy, sane and reasonable or something regular, ordinary, *acknowledged*? There's a certain unbalance between both comprehensions of that word. When does *normal* become unbearable? In our social structures there are different paths that life follows. Normal, regular, daily. What is a daily routine for one does not necessarily have to be routine of somebody else. Police violence in the United States, hate speech in Poland, regular robberies in Brazil, constant inflow of immigrants and refugees to Europe, terrorist threats, lack of housing security, overcrowded jails, devastation of the environment. We just learn ways to live with all these issues; sometimes we seem to forget about them.

But should we agree to live the life in which the color of your skin may pinpoint you out of the crowd as a potential suspect, gangster, homeless, or a beggar? Someone whose black life doesn't matter? In the 1960's separation of white and black folks in the United States, segregation was perceived as a general rule. At some point someone had to say "NO." Dignity applies to everyone and equally. Some brave people looked for solutions and implemented them. That meant changing lives of others.

Somehow in 2017, a country built on immigration, racist discourse, body-shaming and lack of respect for human rights other than the right for property, mass-incarceration, police violence, voting disfranchisement, anti-immigrant policies became a day-to-day thing here. Somehow waving confederate flags does not make you suspicious – the suspicious person is the one who tells you why using this symbol is wrong on so many levels. Things changed and yet stayed the same.

Simultaneously, it is the United States who calls itself the leader of the free world. It called itself that when Jim Crow laws were in full power; it calls itself that now when its president advocates for a Muslim ban. But in fact the

problem is that one third of its citizens are not seen as citizens. Instead they are not seen at all.

There is a great myth of American identity, which markets Americans as open and “mixed” society that differs when it comes to states but is always united as one when it comes to saving the world from aliens. Patriotism of oppressed groups is a highly improbable assumption as there is no definition of who actually is American — Native Americans, African Americans, Latino or Asian immigrants? None of those identities fit into a smiley white protestant portrait. In order to unite those diverse identities under common banner, previous harms would have to be recognized first. That is the point where restorative justice takes the first step. That is the point where all of the changes should start.

The Fellowship opened my eyes to the size of the *American Dream* myth. It allowed me to take one step deeper, scratch the surface, and knock on the door. As James Baldwin wrote: “*The story of the Negro in America is the story of America – or, more precisely, it is the story of Americans. It is not a very pretty story: the story of a people is never pretty. The Negro in America gloomily referred to, as that shadow which lies athwart our national life, is far more than that. He is a series of shadows, self-created, intertwining, which now we helplessly battle. One may say that Negro in America does not really exist except in the darkness of our minds.*” I realized that somehow there is only one narrative to the history, and apparently it is snow-white.

Our minds get easily comfortable in the notion that someone else has already resolved all those issues from the past. We get comfortable thinking that maybe burying damage, vandalism and trauma deep within the darkest corners of our closets will make them fade away. They won’t and they can’t. Instead they multiply and blow up the closet with the entire house. For what it’s worth if somebody does not really believe in justice, he should take that into account.

# CRITICISM AND CONVERSATION

Pedro Miguel Monque Lopez

WE ALL OFFENDED SOMEONE OR WERE OFFENDED BY SOMEONE DURING THE 2017 Humanity in Action John Lewis Fellowship. In several occasions, people expressed criticism of certain groups (the Black Lives Matter movement, Muslim people, the Black Power movement) and of certain ideas (that it is acceptable for art to be offensive, that the label “white people” applies to people from European countries) and their criticism was not well taken by the larger group, to some people’s chagrin and confusion. These criticisms were made in good faith, but they were unnecessarily hurtful.

I offer this essay as a modest, preliminary attempt to clear up some of the confusion regarding when and in what way one should criticize groups that one does not belong to. I also offer this essay with the intention of dispelling the myth that people working for social justice forbid others from criticizing groups to which they do not belong; what is true is that those committed to social justice are often vocal in letting people know when their criticism is inappropriate.

## I. CRITICISM

There is a common misconception that identity politics precludes people from criticizing groups that they do not belong to. We are all too familiar with the insidious caricature of the angry social justice activist who will rage over the fact that a member of group X voiced a criticism of a different group Y. From the stereotypical response of our caricature activist we are expected to conclude that people working for social justice are both dogmatic and fragile: they are intolerant of criticism because they cannot cope with it.

I do not know of anyone working for social justice who rejects criticism of a group by an outsider wholesale. Yet, perhaps it is worth posing the question anyway: Is it

necessary to be part of a group in order to criticize it? Let us consider three arguments why someone might respond in the affirmative.

1. *Outsiders to a group do not know enough about the group they are criticizing to provide valuable criticism.*
2. *Outsider criticism is ineffectual to a group's practices because the outsider does not have any standing within the community.*
3. *Criticism by person A to group B, where A belongs to a group that oppresses group B, reinscribes relations of domination.*

These three arguments reflect possible pitfalls that we must seriously consider when engaging in criticism of a group that we do not belong to. Yet I do not think that they are sufficient to claim that one cannot ever criticize a group one does not belong to. All three arguments can be overcome because: 1) it is possible to become knowledgeable about a group one does not belong to (and sometimes all that is needed to engage in constructive critique is knowledge of a specific insidious practice, like harassment of queer people); 2) outsiders to a group can have moral standing by virtue of things other than group membership, and it is also possible for insightful criticism to have “unforced force” regardless of the speaker’s standing; finally, 3) it is not clear that respectful, humble criticism by a person from a dominant social group must reinscribe domination (although I recognize this is a contentious issue).

By the same token, we must consider that all three possible pitfalls can apply just as easily to criticism of a group made by members of that group: 1) members of a group have varying levels of knowledge about said group; who, then, gets to decide how much knowledge is requisite before voicing criticism?, 2) a person criticizing

a group that they belong to might have very low standing within that group, even if they are one of its members, and 3) members of a group have multiple identities, some of which might position them in a relationship of domination over other members of the group. Hence, it seems unlikely that the previous three pitfalls work to exclude criticism by outsiders of a group exclusively.

So, is it necessary to be part of a group in order to criticize it? In theory, the answer is no.

I believe we can provide further intuitive support to our answer by considering a (hopefully) easier pair of questions: Is it unacceptable to criticize people other than yourself? Or the alternative: Is it unacceptable to receive criticism from others? The intuitive answer to those two questions, I presume, is also no. Partly because few things are as mundane as the fact that people criticize one another (although mundaneness is not in itself a good reason). But, more importantly, because it would be hard to prove that, as far as individual people are concerned, the only legitimate kind of criticism is self-criticism, for one would have to prove that external criticism is always misguided, ineffectual or domineering (the three aforementioned pitfalls) if it comes from anyone other than yourself. Proving that something is always the case is very difficult, so we intuitively assume that constructive interpersonal criticism is possible. In the same way, I find it reasonable to assume that constructive critique across group identities is possible. To prove that said critique is impossible is simply far more difficult than to concede that the three aforementioned arguments can be overcome. We should of course be aware of the difficulties inherent to criticizing groups that we do not belong to, but acknowledging difficulties does not entail eliminating criticism altogether, which would be akin to throwing the metaphorical baby out with the bathwater.

## II. CONVERSATION

In conversation we must see beyond the words being spoken if we hope to understand the realities which are coming into contact. Two people are two distinct universes, each embodying a multiplicity of differing identities,

hence the popular advice to be wary of providing advice to others if we do not know them or their situation well. It is the same with criticism: humility about our knowledge of the situation and of our capacity to help should be at the forefront of what we do.

In an effort to provide tools that might aid with conversation that involves criticism across different groups, I offer this advice (each corresponding to the three pitfalls mentioned before):

*1. Do not criticize another group's problems if you are ignorant about said group or the history and characteristics of the problem they are facing.*

As a rule of thumb, ask yourself: have I read at least a couple books on this subject (or otherwise engaged deeply with the issue) and can I name and explain the work of at least 5 five activists who are working from within the other group to eradicate the problem I have identified? If you cannot do these things, chances are you are not ready to engage in critical conversations about the subject matter.

*2. Do not try to make yourself the source of a critique that has already been made by people belonging to that group.*

Rather, show that you care by working to uplift the voices of the people making the critique internally. You will achieve more this way than by voicing criticism as an outsider.

*3. Know that a history of domination between a group that you belong to and the group to which you are an outsider creates tension, distrust and difficulties when communicating; if nobody else but you can make a certain criticism, and the criticism is important, make sure to acknowledge your positionality and be mindful of not reinscribing a relationship of domination through your words or actions.*

I cannot offer general advice as to what acknowledgment and sensitivity look like because it will depend on the situation; the people who belong to the group to which you are an outsider will be the real experts in how to accomplish these. Finally, I want to share a piece of advice which I found piercing when another fellow

shared it during one of our challenging discussions in which criticism seemed to have gone awry: If you have something to criticize about a group that is not your own, state your thoughts in the form of a question because, more often than not, in the process of answering the question will come recognition of the problem; but even if the question does not lead to recognition of a problem, sit down, and know that you have done enough. When to apply this advice depends on the context: in some situations it might be unconscionable for us to sit down, in other ones we might achieve little by forcing recognition of a perceived problem. Our responsibility as critics is to always get better at telling one from the other.

# TIME AND JUSTICE

Priyanka Menon

AS WE UNDERSTAND IT, TIME EXISTS IN THREE STATES: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE. WE DEFINE these three states in relation to one another. The past is that time which we have already experienced, that to which we cannot return. The present is the current moment, the site of our immediate experiences. And the future is that which is to come, holding within it the experiences we have yet to have.

Ordinarily, we place the past before the present and the present before the future. It is in this order that we as individuals experience time in our daily lives.

For marginalized communities, however, time collapses upon itself. The present stretches indefinitely, homogenizing everything within its reach. By design, each day is the same, a cycle of repetition and stagnation purposefully constructed. The startling symmetry of the demands of the 1960 Appeal for Human Rights and its 2017 iteration highlight the fixed status quo. It seems as if no time at all has passed between the writing of the two documents—it is as if we are stuck in an endless loop, continually asking for the same basic recognition of our humanity.

We even find this idea echoed in the language used to describe our communities—the words demonstrating how we are locked in cycles of violence, cycles of poverty, and cycles of abuse. We experience time and history not as an upwards-sloping linear progression, but as a constant return to the place at which we began. Time, in a sense, halts.

Restorative justice can be seen as an intervention aimed at reverting such a collapse. It links the idea of justice to the passage of time and the narratives we construct around it. Central to the process is the belief that only once the harms of the past are acknowledged in the present can there exist even the hope of a just future.

Thus, we enter into the process of restorative justice

with the intent of eventually moving forward. Though perhaps distant, the future into which the restorative procedure propels us is one in which each party—and every party—exists together in conditions of equality and peace. In this future, we are the ideal community.

To realize this dream of unity, the restorative process begins with the acknowledgement of the experiences of those who have been harmed in the past. The importance of this moment is to recognize within the public narrative the voices and realities of those who have been previously silenced. Such a recognition underlies the notion that only once we have all achieved such a common understanding can the proper address of the harms that took place occur.

It is here that I place my first worry about restorative justice. The past is irretrievable. This asymmetry is built into the fabric of our universe. Even if quantum physics has demonstrated that time itself does not flow in the way we experience it, from its very creation, our universe has been defined, in part, by its asymmetrical nature. What has been broken cannot be unbroken.

By virtue of this asymmetry, our narratives of the past take on a range of existences. Fact exist, yes, but we also receive the past in the form of individual and collective memories, memories whose meaning may resist interrogation by standard models of rationality.

It then seems to me an unwise approach to begin discussion of a previously dismissed, denied, or discredited past with the aim of eventual reconciliation at the forefront of our minds. The past—that which sits at the confluence of history and memory—cannot be summoned solely for the purpose of ensuring some imagined future. It must be allowed to exist in its entirety, with the full variety of voices and realities it represents. It is messy; it is multi-vocal; it is a collective production. In this sense, the past

can never be taken as a given.

To embrace the past as a means to an end is to risk the repetition of the very silencing the restorative process seeks to avoid. Necessarily when we work within the framework of ends and means we admit into our approach a calculus built on compromise and concession—"the ends justify the means." Within the context of restorative justice, I fear we may tolerate the dismissal of uncomfortable narratives in pursuit of our envisioned future. I fear we may quiet memories in the hope of finally achieving equality. When the idea of the future is so tantalizing, it is hard to resist this urge.

Within our current understanding of justice exists the desire for neutrality. Ostensibly, we come together in the state of nature in part to establish an independent—meaning neutral—arbiter to decide the outcome of disputes (or, at least that was Locke's account). That which is just is also in some way neutral.

Thus, we can see the process of restorative justice as an attempt to neutralize a violent past. We welcome it, state it, acknowledge it, and respond to it with the hopes of curtailing the effects of such violence. And on this flattened, defused version of the past, we seek to build our new community, one devoid of the injustices and inequalities of previously visited upon us. The idea is that once we have come to terms with our demons, we can silence (and thus, forget) them.

Here lies my second worry with restorative justice. I am skeptical of the process by which this neutralization occurs. For each act of violence, for each perpetration of a wrong, restorative justice seeks to identify a respective want, need, or preference of the party that has suffered the wrong. Addressing this want, need, or preference is supposed to restore the harmed party, returning them to a state prior to the harm.

This approach to justice presumes that the past exists as something that we can comprehend fully with our current understandings of cause and effect. And I'm not quite sure this is true.

For instance, one of the outcomes of the suspension

of time experienced by marginalized communities is the accompanying lacuna in our knowledge of them. We lack a theory of cause and effect comprehensive enough to accommodate all the ways in which the violence of the past influences the present. The dominant paradigms of these theories were not built with marginalized communities in mind.

Thus, to seek to address the cause and effects of this violence of the past is to impose an incomplete knowledge on an already determined reality. I do not think this binds us to inaction towards past harms. However, I do think this means we must be wary of what exactly such the restorative process can achieve.

My worries with restorative justice are just that, worries. I do not see them as a sufficient basis for the wholesale rejection of the theory. However, I voice with them with the knowledge that no large-scale implementation of the theory of restorative justice of which I am aware has successfully avoided them. Nevertheless, I am hopeful of the process's potential.

In an interview in 2014, the physicist Paul Davies spoke of a current trend in theoretical physics to view time as an emergent, or secondary, property of the universe. One of the outcomes of this view is that there then existed entities pre-time, primordial stuff that allowed for the creation of time itself.

Though I think Davies might disagree with me, I like to think of justice as one of these pre-time entities. In my mind this places justice outside the reach of the human forces of good and evil. This view bequeaths justice with an independent existence, one which belongs to no individual, community, or government. It frees the idea of justice from the potential of suffocation beneath the mounting weight of endlessly collapsing time.

Before coming to Atlanta, I was paralyzed. I could imagine no future when I closed my eyes. The way forward seemed undetermined, lacking completely in any sort of understandable shape. What I had been told was linear had shown itself to be a downward spiral. I had forgotten how to imagine the future.

After a month of learning and reflecting, I am still left without a vision of the future. However, I am no longer paralyzed. Rather, I refuse to imagine the future. My refusal is not meant as a denial of the possibility of one. Rather, it is meant as a step towards viewing time in its entirety, with the hopes of glimpsing the bare face of justice.

# THE JOURNEY ACROSS THE ATLANTIC

Rukhsar Asif

I AM A DREAMER AND AN ADVENTURER. THIS HAS LED ME TO GREAT JOURNEYS. AS EVERY story has a hero and a villain, good and evil, challenges and celebrations – so do my adventure.

## THE MYSTERIOUS GIRL

I was sitting in an airplane after attending a Program in collaboration with the European Commission. Suddenly, a girl appeared in front of me and started talking about a wonderful program that I should attend called Humanity in Action. Due to the 12 hours long bus journey I was confused and exhausted, so all I could think about was: “Who was she and how did she know me?”. What I did not know at that time was how meeting her would lead me to a great journey.

## THE ATTACKS

When I arrived at Copenhagen Airport I saw a bunch of missed calls from my family members and friends. At that point, the same girl approached me and told me that there had been a terrorist attack at the airport that we departed from right after we left Turkey!

Afterwards, I wondered why I had to deal with the media, news and fellow citizens whenever there was a terrorist attack anywhere in the world. A lot of times terrorism is put together with Islam and turned into an ‘Islamic terrorism’ narrative. This marginalizes and discriminates a whole religion which is followed by more than 23% of the world’s population in 2011.<sup>1</sup> It makes me feel sad for all the Muslim families that have lost their loved ones under the same attacks that are addressed by ‘Islamic Terrorism’. It makes the Muslims both a victim and a criminal due to the discourse around Muslims in Denmark and many European countries.



I could have been injured or died that day in Turkey like Aldjia Bouzaouit, Fatima Charrihi and many more under the Nice attack where a lorry drove into a crowd of people<sup>2</sup> or Mohamed Amine Benmbarek in the Paris attacks<sup>3</sup> etc. My family would have lost both a daughter and their value as a Muslim human being, because their religion is connotated with terrorism. It also made me wonder why people are marginalized, discriminated, criminalized and victimized due to gender, religion, race, ethnicity, color etc. and how I can help making the world a better place.

## THE FORGOTTEN PEOPLE

These reflections and experiences made me remember the mysterious girl and her recommendation about joining Humanity in Action. Following her advice led me to my journey across the Atlantic to discover the history of the city where great human rights leaders like Martin Luther King were born. When I talked to people in Denmark about America today in the context of civil and human



rights, many people could not see the relevance behind fighting for these rights in the ‘land of opportunities’ and ‘the American dream.’ However, attending the John Lewis fellowship has made me realize how many people we have forgotten and hence forsaken as a human nation. I have encountered how power structures in society can manipulate and change history to forget about tragedies and neglect injustices that are prevailing due to its history. For example, we saw the movie “The Canary effect” which addresses the structural genocide of Native Americans throughout American history. Moreover, Professor Natsu Saito and Ward Churchill lectured about the current implications of historical attacks on Native Americans, which has resulted in inherited trauma for those remaining. Furthermore, the reservations where many Native Americans live lack basic resources and help to combat this inherited trauma. We also went to Atlanta History Center where one of the exhibits addressed native lands and Indians. It was very disturbing to walk through it and watch how simplified and underestimated the narrative was. I did not see stories addressing the strategic genocide of the Native Americans or the current situation of many reservations as a result of the brutal history.

However, there is hope and there is light at the end of the tunnel because we need to restore justice and be the heroes and leaders that strive for the change we want in society. This case made me think about restorative justice from Doctor Roselyn Pope’s view. She describes it as a

community based effort to restore the harm done. Hence, in this incident it would be giving a more realistic and fair account of history as a museum. Those who go there should learn about what happened so there can be spread awareness about the harm done. This can be a starting point for communities to engage in restorative justice.

#### THE POWER OF NARRATIVES

Doctor Carol Anderson emphasized the importance of changing narratives when it comes to restorative justice. In the case of the Native Americans, providing a just narrative which is true to history, the victims and the descendants could possibly create awareness and understanding about the current situation many Native Americans live in and why they live as they do. Before coming to Atlanta and learning about its history, I only saw America as being the land of dreamers and opportunities, because that was the narrative I was raised with through media, Hollywood and institutions, but this is only part of the story. As every adventure has a happy side, it also has also has its challenges. I did learn about slavery, segregation, Ku Klux Klan etc. in school, but it always seemed so far away since I learned about it in history classes. However, coming to Atlanta and learning about African American History from various museums, professors and activists made me face the challenges of modern day American history. It shows the power of narratives and how they create our perception of people and places.



## THE PRIVILEGED AND THE UNFORTUNATE

I quickly learned about a new way of talking about people, which have been alien for me. Here, you say black, white and brown people, which seemed very discriminating for me in the beginning. I was never forced to think in terms of color. In Denmark, we talk about ethnicity. If I was not exposed to the historical background of America, I would not have understood the current situation of why race relations are an important factor to address in American society when it comes to injustices, racism and inequalities. Therefore, part of the justice must be restored through telling the stories of the voiceless and create awareness about why and how systems function so the injustices can be combatted. As Doctor Carole Anderson addressed, America calls itself a democracy but structurally exclude its citizens to create a them and us. This becomes clear through displacements, disfranchisement and marginalization embedded in race relations. When I put this in perspective to Americas history of hierarchical structures, slavery and white supremacy it makes more sense why black people have a higher tendency in being exposed to disparate living conditions, homelessness and prison systems. A truthful account of America's history show that the effects of settler colonialism are still present and they must be challenged and brought to the surface. This can be done by, firstly, making the masses aware of the structures leading to inequality and secondly as attorney Doug Ammar emphasizes bring folks together to heal the harm. To every treasure there is a key, and likewise there can be found a solution to every problem. I found my key through the notion of restorative justice in the face of changing narratives, which can unlock some of the problems to both marginalized peoples in America and Denmark.

Attorney Tiffany Williams brought a new concept of transformative justice to the table, and she addressed it by focusing on systems that continue to profit from the disenfranchisement of people of color. Preventing the systematic oppression against people of color and exposing this oppression to the masses are key ways to the bunch of solutions we worked with encompassing law reforms, advocacy strategies etc.



## THE DREAM

As a result of this journey, I have been encouraged to lead. There might be many injustices in the world that need to be solved, but we need to start somewhere, and the small steps will lead us to great achievements. I will start telling the story of my journey across the Atlantic. I learned and experienced how narratives can lead to injustices, ignorance and denial, but also peacebuilding. Therefore, my dream is to work with another narrative that can destroy these evils and instead embrace the nuances and address the beauty of diversity and unity to turn the narrative into a beautiful melody rather than noise.

## NOTES

- 1 "Executive Summary" The Future of the Global Muslim Population. Pew Research Center. 27 January 2011. Retrieved 23 July 2017.
- 2 BBC NEWS, 2016. Nice attack: Who were the victims? Retrieved 23 July 2017.
- 3 INDEPENDENT, 2015. Paris terror: These are the Muslim victims of the France attacks. Retrieved 23 July 2017.

# HOW HONEST DO WE WANT TO BE?

## A JOURNEY THROUGH MY HUMAN

Sabiha Kapetanovic

“We all face death in the end. But on the way, be aware to never hurt a human heart.”

– Rumi

### THE NEW APPEAL FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Before I came to Atlanta I decided to be a good student and read the recommended material. The piece that got me was the article about “A New Appeal for Human Rights,” written by a coalition of student activists in Atlanta. In the preamble of “A New Appeal for Human Rights,” the students declared: *“We, as students who belong to Black, Latinx, Asian, Undocumented, Muslim, LGBTQIA+, and ally communities, have formed a coalition in Atlanta to assert our human rights and resist structures and assumptions that criminalize our existence.”<sup>1</sup>*

The New Appeal for Human Rights is a second of its kind. The first one was issued on 1960 written by Dr Roslyn Pope, President of the Student Body of Spelman College, and signed by student leaders of the Atlanta Student Movement.

The moment I read the article, I could feel my heart beating faster as the first thought that crossed my mind was: *“Finally it is happening, finally we are together, finally we are majority!”*

But as we spoke on the first day of John Lewis Fellowship Programme, *“we don’t see the world as it is, but as we are.”* The New Appeal for Human Rights is my subjective wish of how I would like to see the world, but very soon I realized that not everyone shares my opinion and that people—due to their different experiences, different traumas or inherited traumas—can be more closed and self-centred. They often want to heal only through their own community. At first, it came to me as

a “cold shower!” Wow, why are they so exclusive? Why don’t they let me in?! Very soon I was reminded of my own invisibility and started to question my beliefs, wishes and assistance of the restorative justice. There, my journey started. The John Lewis Fellowship became not only a place where I academically upgraded myself, but the place that put me back into the struggle with my inner selves.

### RESTORATIVE JUSTICE<sup>2</sup> = ILLUSION?

While questioning what Restorative Justice is and how it could be achieved, I asked myself: am I too naive, do I forgive too easily to those who harmed my family, my community and me?

Everything depends on our narratives, how we create them, what we want to believe and often, profit from. Dr Roslyn Pope narrated that all the racism she experienced in the United States from white people disappeared during her stay in Europe. In Europe, she was loved and respected by the same white people. It is a state of madness where after questioning yourself what is wrong with you, you start questioning the other side as well. What is wrong with them?

But for the harmed who have been under constant oppression, it is not easy to move to the second question ‘What is wrong with them.’ Very often the harmed side, after being oppressed for a long time, develops the inferiority complex where they see themselves as bad and unwanted.

Once, those who get a chance to leave the “poisoned bubble”<sup>3</sup> and see the other sides of the world, they come to the acknowledgment that they deserve the same respect and dignity as every other human being; they are the ones who carry the fire in their hearts and strength to stand and speak up, such as Dr. Roslyn Pope.

However, that still doesn't give us any sure answer on how to implement Restorative Justice. *Is Restorative Justice just an illusion that tries to "calm down" the harmed side and distract it from its fight?* That is the case in Bosnia & Herzegovina, where war crimes are denied along with the identity of the harmed side.

#### RESTORATIVE JUSTICE IN THE USA

Another reason to think of restorative justice as an illusion, are the problems that the Black community and other minorities in the United States have been facing for a very long time. Now, when a new history is being written it is even less possible to see the restorative justice as something real. Traveling through history with Dr Carole Anderson and learning about all possible kinds of oppression that the Black community has been going through in the South of the United States, from *Good character clause, Literacy test to Poll tax* it clearly shows us as Dr Anderson said "*If there is no laws, there can't be a violation of the constitution.*" Therefore the laws are built according to the perpetrator's needs, ignoring the others, humiliating them and keep punishing them because they educate themselves, because they ask for the equal rights, because they, who are the citizens of the United States as much as every white person, deserve the right to vote. Bearing all this in mind, Restorative Justice is naturally put in the question. Because no matter which way you choose, the perpetrator finds the way to avoid the acknowledgment and if it is necessary represents itself as a victim.

If the real numbers are challenged, than according to what Mr Mawuli Davis said "*the average black family would need 228 year to build the wealth of white family today.*"

How to reach Restorative Justice in this case? Is Restorative Justice just a tool of continuation of the oppression? Would it be correct to let the new generations wash up the sins of their ancestors by simply saying, they were not part of the past time? But the past time is not the past as long as the evil idea keeps living, and that is the biggest issue.

On the other hand it doesn't mean that the harmed side won't inherit the wish of causing the harm as their way of practicing the restorative justice and by that becoming the perpetrator. Prof David Hooker explained, that when

you are being traumatized, when you are in traumagenic circumstances your moral code narrows. This doesn't justify anyone, but explains the outcome.

The fact is that this kind of struggle is very often the one that individuals don't get to choose. Therefore, no matter how hard or painful it could be, if we want to live in a peaceful society that grants us all freedoms; both sides, harmed and harmer need to find a way to a reconciliation. Harmed need to find ways of forgiveness, after the perpetrator acknowledged the wrong doing and once it starts finding the ways of possible restoration.

Is this possible? Is it possible to return the land, to gain the wealth of the white, rich society? I don't have an answer to it. One thing is for sure, it will take a long time, it will take a few generations to come to the reconciliation, if it is possible. The first important thing is to keep moving toward progression is preventing new crimes, helping the hurt community to heal, prevent it from becoming the perpetrator and make sure that the perpetrator is held responsible for its wrong doings. Yes, we all could hate, history shows that is not hard for human beings to hate, but as Rix<sup>4</sup> said, *I can't and I won't.*

#### POWER TO PEOPLE, PEOPLE ARE POWER

The rules, definitions on which humans live upon are imaginary, made by humans and could be changed by humans. However, our imagination in the same time is our reality, it is our paradox from which we cannot escape. That's why there has to be a constant battle of returning the power to people, giving them spaces and voices where they can speak up, be heard, and help them to learn how to listen each other stories.

I want to help my community to go out of our "poisoned bubble" and see the new worlds, the way they function and are being built, I want them to see and hear again, to never deny themselves or let others to deny them. I want them to be ready to hear the other side, because Mother is Mother, and suffering for the loss of her child cannot be measured, no matter to which side they belong.

If it is all an illusion, an imagination that gives us a power to create the world, let it be, let's play, let's create

colours that have never been seen before, let's create music that will destroy every noise.

I came to the end of my journey in Atlanta and I may say, after all questioning, I believe again: "*When You Come For One Of Us, You Come For All Of Us.*"<sup>5</sup>

*To the queen of all of the queens,  
To the person who's love is limitless, towards everyone,  
To my Mother that I don't mention too often.*

#### ODE TO YOU WORLD!

We can relate to everything  
And everyone,  
Yet we end up being accepted for nothing  
As no one.  
Thank you all for making us feel that way,  
And making our struggle harder than it is.  
One of our poets used to say:  
Kako bolan nema Bosne!  
(How do you mean there is no Bosnia!)

If one day we decide to escape to our Narnia and  
Stop trying to become visible  
And loved by you...  
Don't be surprised  
We all need a family to love us  
We all need Love

And if we find a family in a goodness  
That is opposite from yours  
And then you wake up and try to see us,  
Please don't,  
Don't try to go there  
Because things that are invisible to a human eye,  
Are the things that are not meant to be seen anymore.  
So all of you there be aware  
We will always remain.  
But finally inthouchable, finally free  
Far away from all of you  
Who never cared.

May this song lead you through your dreams,  
May reawake you through your dreams,  
May stay with you to remind you  
Of what emphaty is,  
Of what selfishness is  
And of what we, humans are.  
Perfect in our imperfections,  
Beautiful, still sad.

Maybe silly of me, maybe not  
But I have always believed that  
There is one God and we celebrate it in different ways.  
I have always believed that  
There is one race, Human race.  
And what always helped us to remain alive is  
Love.  
Maybe silly of me, maybe not.

Until the time comes  
That every blind person will see again,  
I'll continue to go to craziness  
So I can escape from craziness.

– Sabiha Kapetanovic

#### NOTES

- 1 Atlanta Student Coalition Releases "A New Appeal for Human Rights," <http://genprogress.org/voices/2017/05/16/45533/atlanta-student-coalition-releases-new-appeal-human-rights/>
- 2 Restorative Justice is a way of recognition of the violations through which harmed had passed. Restorative Justice calls out the perpetrator to acknowledge its doings and help harmed not only to restore lost, not only through the material means, but help their wounds to heal on a higher level, where they will be sure that they will be treated with the respect without any further discriminations and violations. (Sabiha Kapetanovic)
- 3 Your own community in which you have been prisoned.
- 4 Under my Hood Truth Experience
- 5 Atlanta Student Coalition Releases "A New Appeal for Human Rights," <http://genprogress.org/voices/2017/05/16/45533/atlanta-student-coalition-releases-new-appeal-human-rights/>

# A CHANGE IS GONNA COME:

## UNDERSTANDING RESTORATIVE JUSTICE THROUGH THE PAST AND PRESENT REALITIES OF ATLANTA

Sara A. Osman

“There are still forces in America that want to divide us along racial lines, religious lines, sex, class. But we’ve come too far; we’ve made too much progress to stop or to pull back. We must go forward. And I believe we will get there.”

– Congressman John Lewis

The Southern heat always manages to take me by surprise but somehow I’m always even more struck by the hospitality and kindness that meets me here. As someone who does not live in the South, there is an unrecognizable unease that seeps under my skin upon the thought of being here. Perhaps this is because of the history I’ve been taught to digest through my public schooling. This month has allowed me the space to push back against everything I’ve been taught to believe as true. From meeting civil rights legends to hearing from elected city officials, we’ve had the opportunity to see the inner workings of Atlanta in a way that we never would have otherwise. And it has been an amazing honor.

After meeting Dr. Shirley Reese and hearing about her account about being held captive in a stockade in Leesburg, Georgia, I’ve been thinking about how we are kept from the truth in history. In an era of alternative facts, what does it do to the collective memory of a society when there are no accurate accounts of history properly recorded? And what does it in turn do to students of history who want to better understand the truth? I think there is much importance in seeking out knowledge through unconventional sources and routes in order to paint a clearer image. To some extent, the information that we are taught in the public education system is largely manufactured. There are many truths that are omitted because it does not serve those

in power so they rearrange the truths. If ideologies and belief systems cannot be questioned and hold absolute power, the people must organize to stand against injustice wherever it appears. The time for shaping our new realities is today as we draw on the wisdom of the past and build on the vision for tomorrow.

Before my month in Atlanta, to say I was skeptical of civil and political engagement as a legitimate tactic would have been an understatement. I knew no reason why my energy should be directed towards systems and institutions that I’d been told would not bend for me. However, after spending a great deal of time in the presence of Dr. Rosalyn Pope, I began to question my lack of imagination. We’ve been talking a great deal this month about restorative justice and what that entails for the city of Atlanta. But I’d created boundaries within myself and forced limitations on what could be. By writing and publishing an appeal for human rights at a time when that was inconceivable, Dr. Pope dared to break free from the restraints of limited existence. She saw the world not for what it was, but for what it could be. How was I not able to do the same? Upon my return to the Twin Cities, I hope to become more actively engaged with ensuring young people are aware and actively participating in our civic processes. I am excited to work with my community in assuring we are better represented and are demanding our seat at the table.

Throughout the month, we experienced a number of trips and panels that have deeply impacted me. One specific excursion this month that has left me quite inspired was our trip to the Clark Atlanta University Art Gallery and the tour with Dr. Maurita Poole. It was an amazing opportunity to tour a space with such rich art and

to learn about the history of the pieces through Dr. Poole, Tina Dunkley and the young people we met. Prior to this fellowship, I was thinking about ways to use art education as a tool of teaching resistance. I am deeply interested in making visual and written arts accessible to young people as a way to process their realities as well as honing in on their storytelling capacities. The visit to the museum and the tour left me with all the right questions and answers to further my project in art education.

Being in Atlanta has also allowed us a great deal of access to historical context that we would not have otherwise. We have had incredible conversations and panels with respected civil rights leaders that have shifted my entire worldview. It is more than a little frightening to find yourself with new beliefs and ideals within the time span of a month. But it is even more frightening to recall a time when you did not have these principles to guide you in this world. It is easier to study history through flippant interactions with textbooks. It is much harder when history is alive and surrounds your every step. The city of Atlanta is holding two different realities, one being the rich past of the civil rights movement and the other being a southern metropolitan ready to take on the world. Through the different issues we've discussed such as gentrification, indigenous rights, mass incarceration, Islamophobia and immigration, we've seen the massive issues and concerns that face Atlanta. But through speaking with Tiffany Williams Roberts to Nora Benavidez, we've also been exposed to the wonderful work being done to change the narrative in Atlanta. From the diversity of perspectives and approaches we've been exposed to, I have no doubt that this city is in good hands.

The question that has been the elephant in the room the entire month has been around the concept of restorative justice. We were tasked with coming to a concrete definition but have left with more questions than answers. The work I do back in the Twin Cities is directly related to restorative justice and yet I have never been able to articulate what it is. I can only say what it feels like and what it looks like. As someone who uses circle storytelling with young people as a form of restorative justice, I can

say that I believe in the power of people coming together to heal. The power is always with the people, particularly young people. So using restorative justice as a mechanism to have folks reclaim their truths and feel validation from cultivated communities has been powerful work for me. We've discussed the notion of restoring human dignity and allowing individuals to shape their own lives and I strongly believe restorative justice is an important tool in doing so. We can critique restorative justice and the very real shortcomings but we must be able to take away from it the key parts that allow us to shift and change the world.

The Humanity in Action John Lewis Fellowship has given me a new set of tools to use in my line of work. I am walking away with so much more than I arrived, including a newfound community of change makers who've changed my worldview. And although I am no closer to grasping a firm definition of restorative justice than I was when I arrived in Atlanta, I have no doubt that I have experienced the healing that occurs only when different people share a common goal of liberation for all. After sharing a space with Dr. Rosalyn Pope for a month, I want to believe that movements don't die, they just take breaks between generations to regain support and regroup. If the end goal is the same, the revolution must go on. There are so many lessons that I am walking away with and for that I am eternally grateful.

# SUBVERSIVE STORYTELLING

## MEDITATIONS ON MEMORY, IMAGINATION, AND RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

Seung Hyun Chung

NUMB. THAT WAS ALL I COULD FEEL WHEN I WALKED INTO THE ABANDONED STOCKADE IN Leesburg, Georgia, where fifteen young Black girls were incarcerated 54 years ago. For two months, the girls had no proper drinking water and ate only four hamburgers each day. The toilet didn't work. Only concrete floors and bare walls characterized the squalid insides of the stockade. They had merely participated in a peaceful protest to buy movie tickets at a whites-only entrance of a theater during the Civil Rights Movement. 12-15-year-old kids trying to buy movie tickets. How subversive.

Flies kept distracting my attention as Dr. Shirley Reese and Dr. Carol Barner-Seay, two of the 15 incarcerated girls, guided us into the stockade. The unbearable heat and discomfort overwhelmed any sentiment I had. I imagined the girls sleeping on the cold-concrete floor. "There was no light, so we couldn't even see each other at night," Dr. Reece said. I felt guilty for wanting to desperately leave. How could anyone—let alone a child—survive in such conditions for two months? As Dr. Reese continued explaining the horrid conditions of the stockade with calmness and conviction, I briefly forgot that she had been in this space as a prisoner. It was as if the traumatic memories of this place didn't affect her. No, that's not right—they did affect her. That was why she was here, guiding us through this painful history forgotten—or really, never written—within the American collective memory of the Civil Rights Movement.

The French philosopher and sociologist Maurice Halbwachs defines collective memory as a "continuous current of thought, of a continuity that is by no means artificial...[but] conserves nothing from the past except the parts which still live, or are capable of living in the

conscience of the group." Indeed, collective memory is not simply of the *past*, but a living manifestation of the present—a state of constant becoming that affects the way a community tells its history and thus, behaves. Both deliberate and accidental choices on what to remember and what to forget shape collective memory, which ultimately becomes the foundation of a community's collective identity. For Dr. Reese and Dr. Barner-Seay, to voice the story of this painful memory was a subversive act to revise this collective memory and restore what was lost—their very own dignity as human beings. "I only started talking about this two years ago," said Dr. Reece. That it took half a century for them to speak on their experience testifies to the way trauma roots itself deep in one's consciousness, staying hidden and silent as a form of defense mechanism. Not all the surviving girls could voice their experience as Dr. Reese and Dr. Barner-Seay did; they mentioned of another girl who became the first woman police officer in their district and had worked with the very people who had incarcerated her. I wondered how that must have felt—how angry, how sorrowful it must have been to endure. During lunch, I asked Dr. Barner-Seay if someone could write a story about this incident and whether that would help her heal. "I've already written the story," she said. "Go read my book."

Stories. When I envision restorative justice, I define it as an aspiration to create counter-stories that complicate the collective memory of a community and a nation. It centers the victims' voices and the rights to dictate their narrative(s), giving the agency to uncover and reveal truths of their internalized struggles on their own. Restorative justice is not simply cathartic. It requires another layer of struggle for true healing, a confrontation with trauma

that needs courage and the birth of a new self to defy past isolation and loneliness. Restorative justice, of course has its limits. Restoring one's dignity does not feed the person or provide housing. Reparations, if agreed upon, require the perpetrator's acknowledgment of the violations and crimes; they may help, but cannot restore the centuries of inherited trauma and inequality. Indeed, healing on its own cannot directly secure these basic human rights for victims nor dismantle the very system that has enabled such inequities and traumas to occur. But it can start the larger process toward those rights and accountabilities. Meeting Dr. Reese and Dr. Barney-Seay illustrated this critical aspect of restorative justice—to transmute trauma to empowerment and storytelling that can uplift new voices to the forefront. Stories are powerful—and dangerous—for their capacity to evoke emotions beyond what we intend. They mediate lived experiences through their own demand to be *felt*. I think of stories as worlds with borders, and where we put those borders can expand and reduce one's capacity to empathize, to connect. Storytellers are simultaneously curators of memory and identity, juxtaposing hidden pasts with possible futures.

My play, tentatively titled *Nighthawk Café*, reflects the same aspirations as that of Dr. Reese and Dr. Barney-Seay: to change the public narrative, to revise the cultural imaginary and give recognition to marginalized identities and experiences. *Nighthawk Café* comes from my own exploration of memory and my identity as a Korean-American male, questioning boundaries of body-hood, gender performance, and racialized trauma. Though I wrote the initial draft of this play before the Fellowship, I realize that what I tried to do while writing this was exactly the process of restorative justice—confronting my trauma through creative expression and the unique tenets of theatrical performance. My goal as a writer and performer, however, is not simply to retell the stories and memories that define my identity. I have a responsibility to re-imagine another story, an alternative reality that takes trauma and transmutes them to more inclusive possibilities. I want to foster a restorative imagination, a process that engages the memories of trauma and reimagines new connections and entanglements across

multiple bodies, communities, and identities. My play ultimately is not simply about my Asian-American identity; it is about how Black and Asian bodies are appropriated to negotiate Whiteness and how my own Asianness rises in relation to all bodies and identities. It is about connections that frame us beyond the usual tribes and communities we belong to, and that change cannot happen until we recognize these continuities and relations. When the fellows and I performed the script as my final presentation, I felt another type of connection that I did not envision when I wrote the script. The power of theater is precisely that—performing the connection enables a new bond, a connection of trust.

So many questions. So many feelings that have yet to be named. Language fails me as I reflect on the John Lewis Fellowship—a myriad of stimulations, encounters, and lessons that I am not quite sure how to process, let alone carry them beyond this jam-packed month. I have only touched on one experience within this fruitful period, and even with that, I do not feel I have done justice to it. I am so grateful to have experienced Atlanta for the first time, to have met Dr. Roslyn Pope and the student leaders who have paved the way for new leadership and growth, and most of all, the fellows that have shared their vulnerabilities and stories with me. The multitudes of identities I've encountered throughout this fellowship are no longer what I usually would've thought of as *others*. They are my companions, therapists, and friends that I will stand next to and defend in spaces in which their voices are not included; I hope they will do the same for me. It is in this space that I've truly recognized how powerful the sharing of vulnerability actually is—a process involving discomfort and tension that may offend us more than they we want them to. However, those uncomfortable feelings open the possibility for new understandings and validations, a reckoning that we must learn to embrace tension as part of our fight for civil and human rights.

After the screening of *A Trek to the River's Edge* at the Center for Civil and Human Rights, I had the chance to briefly speak with the director and creator of the film, Althea Brown. As I spoke to her that I was losing

faith in what I could achieve as a writer and storyteller, she grabbed my arms and gazed straight into my eyes. “Honey,” she said, “stories are how we communicate. It’s how we understand and recognize the common humanity within us. Other people can say what power structures we have and what not, but stories can change that. They connect us together.” I felt the genuineness in her voice as she asked if I understood now.

“I do,” I said. I do.

# REFLECTIONS ON JOHN LEWIS FELLOWSHIP 2017

Simone Zalla Aumaj

I STRUGGLE IN FINDING WORDS THAT COULD ENCOMPASS ONE OF THE MOST MOVING, thrilling, exciting beautiful, but also challenging and difficult experiences I have been allowed to possess. I feel honoured and privileged for taking part in the John Lewis Fellowship of 2017. The main theme of the fellowship was restorative justice and as an Afghan – and Muslim woman who lives in The Netherlands, having been able to discuss, debate and collaborate with twenty-seven bright, intelligent and driven people of diverse backgrounds has been a restorative experience for me. It has not only been restorative, but a transformative experience as well. Having learned about the way in which people can change the judicial system has made me consider going to Law School after having pursued my studies in Cultural Anthropology.

Coming to Atlanta has added colour to my definition of segregation and the way in which it systematically works in the United States. As a European fellow - I have never experienced the categorization of black and white in such a static way and what I mean by that is its constitutional roots. The way in which the categorization of black operates in a Dutch context, usually refers to a predominantly coloured environment, rather than solely black. I would, however argue that the colour-blind discourse that fluctuates within the United States context is comparable to the Dutch colour-blind discourse – both societies blatantly deny the existence of racism. Racism is present in both societies, but hard to dismantle due to the colour-blind approach that has put a cloak on racism. The danger of colour-blindness, however, is its denial of oppression along the axes of race, ethnicity and in some cases religion. Dr. Carole Anderson has been a great

inspiration, but more importantly a support in helping us dissect racism in The United States and providing us with strategies to continue to dissect and dismantle oppression. Within a European context the terms *white privilege*, *white supremacy* and *whiteness* are concepts that are hardly discussed outside of classes focussing on critical race theory. In the United States, this vocabulary seems more ingrained in the language, something I wish was more present in Europe.

The idea I have struggled most with is America's settler colonialist history – they have colonized a land that was not theirs to take, but continue inhabiting it. This settler colonialist history has been forgotten and highly under illuminated. Settler colonialism has been discussed by Dr. Natsu Saito, a professor who has challenged my conception of international law, by confronting me with the construction and origin of the "Western world." Dr. Saito posed the question: "Who is a sufficiently 'civilized' state in deciding who was part of the Western world?" This idea has confronted me with the fact that international law does not only serve to protect, but can also be used as a tool to oppress. She has challenged us in thinking about restorative justice of the indigenous population by confronting us with the non-existent concept of property within Native American communities. A fact that has highlighted the limitations of Western solution-driven thinking in a Restorative Justice context. This leads me to another struggle in thinking about Restorative Justice: who do you hold accountable?

Ultimately, I don't believe in that all the harm done could ever be restored. I do however believe in Restorative Justice as an aspirational approach in empowering marginalized and oppressed communities, an approach



*Kintsugi (source – This Is Colossal)*

that has been brought forward by Dr. Judith Goldstein during our fellowship. Restorative Justice will remain to be a complex concept for me to grasp, but as a tool to help me visualize a restorative justice approach, I drew an analogy between humanity and a broken vase. When you break a vase and glue it together, you can still see the traces of where it was broken. When you buy a new one, you diminish the harm that was done and enter a space of cultural – and historical amnesia.

Restoring the vase urges you to carefully analyse the broken pieces and acknowledging the fact that all that was broken cannot be fixed, because the glass splinters will be invisible for the human eye. When glass breaks, you can glue it together, but it will never be the same vase as it was before, the vase will carry visible and invisible scars. There is a Japanese art form called Kintsugi, in which they fix broken ceramics by gluing it together with silver, platinum or gold. Adding more value to what was broken, without undermining or forgetting about the history of the formerly broken ceramic piece. I think this idea could be further explored in thinking about contemporary forms of Restorative Justice, even though oppression is part of someone's identity, it should not have the authority to define it.

During the Stand-Up meeting, a meeting where citizens of Atlanta came together and brainstormed about questions they had for the elected candidates of the City Council of Atlanta. I met an admirable woman, who might not have been a well-known figure in the Civil Rights Movement, but her words will always stick with me and I will always remember her face if I ever feel discouraged: "My knees are hurting from all the marches I have

attended." Her name is Geri Chatmon and she continues to fight for rights, that are unfortunately very similar to the rights she was demanding during the Civil Rights Movement. I cannot end this reflection without praising Dr. Roselyn Pope a true (s)hero, who will continue to inspire me throughout my life, who had the courage to not ask, but demand rights that were hers.

I want to end this reflection with a poem I have written called chains. And a piece of art called: "The Road to Hope" by Fatih Hassan, exhibited by the Clark University Art Gallery. A piece a part that has touched me and has continued to stay with me during the fellowship. This piece of art embodies the beauty and the ugliness of a road of mobility and progress while touching upon contemporary issues in a confronting manner.

#### CHAINS

Chains ...

Clenched, wrenched and tight around our bodies  
Visible, invisible or deeply rooted within our souls  
Like entrenched and ineradicable marks  
Disciplined onto our physique with whips  
That enforce cultural and historical amnesia  
Oh how they have a grip on us,  
But we will not submit.

Chains ...

Dangle from the streets of Atlanta as I pass  
From North to South  
From Wealthy to Poor  
From Gentrification to Gentrified  
From Privileged to Oppressed  
From White to Black

Chains ...

Hide behind prison walls  
Where a quarter of the US-population resides  
Where physical chains make place for symbolic ones  
In case a prisoner gets out  
If they ever do  
Why?

Because the neo-liberal system has allowed  
 For prisoners to become a profitable commodity and  
 promote modern day slavery  
 And please don't tell me that the system is broken  
 Because it is doing exactly what it should

Chains ...  
 Have put a lock on history books  
 That present an inconvenient truth.  
 Jim Crow might have fallen  
 But the unequal and political dichotomies are very much  
 alive  
 There is no place or space  
 In hegemonic discourse for the intersecting entities  
 That construct or define human identity  
 A burden:  
 People of Colour  
 People of the LGBT+ Community  
 People with different abilities  
 And all people who deviate from the status-quo  
 Unfortunately, need to carry

I suffocate while realizing that the American Dream:  
 "Democracy, Rights, Liberty, Opportunity and Equality"  
 Are merely a myth  
 But, actually one of most ugly, destructive and oppressive  
 truths that are ever  
 At least to my knowledge, told

The borders of this country are drawn  
 With blood that was spilled by the extermination  
 Of ninety-eight percent of its indigenous population  
 The soil of this country has been fed by tears  
 Produced by culture, violence, trauma and death

I speak these words with a raged tongue  
 Still struggling in finding my place between nuance and  
 anger  
 I have learned that at points I will be the bridge  
 Fluctuating between being educated or educating  
 In the process of educating, however  
 I have learned while borrowing from poet Rushin's

eloquent, but accurate words:

"I'm sick of filling your gaps,  
 Sick of being your insurance against  
 The isolation of your self-imposed limitations."

So is there hope to this story  
 Or will justice never be served?  
 I might not know how these chains will dissolve  
 I might now know if they ever will  
 I do however, find strength in Lonni King's words:  
 "Our democracy does not run on cruise control"  
 Democracy acquires people to participate  
 So, the only advice I can pass on is  
 Use the advantages you have  
 To participate in spaces and places within society  
 While trying to unlock the chains by resisting, voicing,  
 claiming and demanding  
 Rights that are ours

*Fathi Hassan -  
 Road to Hope*



# ESSAY

By Trey Walk

“The great force of history comes from the fact that we carry it within us”

— James Baldwin

Restorative justice is about healing. It is a process of acknowledgement which seeks to heal communities and individuals that have been harmed. I settled on this definition after a month of frustration at not knowing confidently what restorative justice means, let alone what it looks like day to day. Although I cannot yet give a Unified-Field-Theory of Restorative Justice, I can name elements of the process that seem particularly useful to me and my work moving forward.

Restorative justice recognizes the inescapable gravity of history. I do not believe that we are bound to our pasts, but every day we breathe in the smog created by our fathers' sins. Restorative justice is about clearing the smog and freeing us from the toxicity that remains when we don't fully acknowledge the harm that individuals and communities have endured. Based on my understanding, restorative justice seeks to correct public memory to be more honest and inclusive of those who have been harmed.

As a historian, I think regularly about the power of the stories we tell ourselves about our past and who we are as a people. Our teaching of history often falls short in many ways, but the most glaring error is that we don't talk about the ugly parts of our history. One of the other fellows, Adam Cohen, asked, “what would happen if all Americans knew about the full brutality of slavery? What would happen if Americans knew about the black political zenith during Reconstruction? What would happen if Americans knew about the history of redlining, suburbanization, and housing exclusion?” I think these questions are helpful in thinking through the importance of public memory. Not only does acknowledging past harms help to legitimize

the pain that many individuals have endured, this practice also shapes our public memory which will in turn change how we think about crafting policy moving forward.

In addition to expanding our public conscious to heal the harmed and laying the framework for better policy-making, we should tell more accurate histories to acknowledge those who have come before us. Throughout the program we visited several history museums and our group continually asked, “Who is being left out of this narrative?” I think often about heroes who were not hyper-visible but laid down their lives in service of the Movement nonetheless. Leaders like Dr. Roslyn Pope, Bayard Rustin, Pauli Murray, Modjeska Simkins, and many many more whose names deserve to be known. To restore justice to these activists is to make their names known, to learn from their examples, and to continue fighting for justice in their honor. While in Leesburg, Georgia, Dr. Caroline Seay said to our group, “We have paved the way for you, now what will do you with this paved way?”

I believe in the power of restorative justice to heal individuals and communities, but I also recognize one of its most glaring shortcomings is that it cannot fix systemic inequality. Restorative justice will not undo white supremacy and untangle it from the American political and economic systems, but it is a prerequisite to breaking down larger systemic injustice. In the words of Dr. Martin Luther King, “On the one hand, we are called to play the Good Samaritan on life's roadside, but that will be only an initial act. One day we must come to see that the whole Jericho Road must be transformed so that men and women will not be constantly beaten and robbed as they make their journey on life's highway. True compassion is more than flinging a coin to a beggar. It comes to see that an edifice which produces beggars needs restructuring.” Some of the problems facing our society and marginalized

communities are so deeply entrenched into our systems that we must think about how to restructure these systems. Restorative justice then, is a first step on our journey and not the destination.

Another important element I am taking from restorative justice is the idea that while we are working to create more just systems, we must center those who have been harmed. Restorative justice, is about empowering communities and giving people their dignity and their voices. When this happens and people who live in the margins of society share power, our future will necessarily be more equal because people at the margins see the world differently and have the capacity to imagine a world that is much freer for all.

This program has challenged me to think about how to center those who have been harmed and to empower communities to create solutions for their future. The principles of “centering” and “self-determination” that are inherent in restorative justice are some of the most important tools I will be taking back to my work. I want to continue to organize communities and empower poor people and black people to mobilize for policy solutions that improve their communities. This is what restorative justice feels like to me. In addition to doing community organizing and thinking through issues around housing and community development, I would like to do more work in the expansion of democracy. Carole Anderson’s lecture on the history of voter suppression in America struck me and reminded me of the power of expanding access to democracy to all people. “Giving people their political voices back and teaching them that their opinions matter is powerfully restorative.”

In closing, the month-long fellowship in Atlanta has given me a sense of urgency. I am leaving this fellowship with more theoretical frameworks, interpersonal competency, and practical tools to create change. Each part of me has been challenged during this program and I am better, fuller, and stronger for it. In the words of the Humanity in Action video, this moment in time “needs us to speak out with fire in our blood. Lightning pouring out of our mouths. Wheels spinning above our heads.” The

John Lewis Fellowship has equipped and inspired me to do these things. I am going to continue to work to honor those who came before me. I will continue to do this work so that people who come after me will be able to say that there were people in my generation that didn’t fold: who dared to struggle.

# BECAUSE I KNEW YOU

By Hope Anderson

To you, this crazy family. To us.

Because I knew you,

I know what reimagining looks like.

Or maybe what it feels like.

See, we came into this room already knowing how the ‘real stuff’ works.

Some folks call it a zero-sum game,

Other call it slavery, apartheid, Jim Crow, mass incarceration, re-segregation or just life.

Reality in 2017.

Only so many points in the court, only victors and the crushed.

On this slick hardwood floor called life, your loss is my gain.

And that’s the way the ball bounces.

But because I knew you, I’ll never forget that moment  
when I realized that we’d win someday—

Not us, future others, but still a part of us bound up in the struggle.

Us the people, this family of strong hearts and loud-mouthed hopes.

In a world of scarcity, fighting for all that is shattered and left behind,  
we are bound to break the game.

You knew the rules, but you broke them.

Made the game falter, if only for a the faintest of seconds.

Picture that ball, spinning with sweat and fury on the wood-paneled floor,  
and just for a moment, the game stuttered.

The hand twitched. The ball spins off-center,  
bouncing the quiet tap of a different rhythm in the space of a raspy breath.

Because the game never envisioned the fullness of you, couldn’t handle your resistance.

Couldn’t imagine your reimaging.

Because I knew you, I’m learning to see in double vision.

That blur between now and the world just outside our eyesight.

Look for it. Wait for it. Don’t dare to blink or you’ll miss it.

The moment the refracted light splinters. That bare split second when the soul next to yours overwhelms the pixels of possibility and even your retinas’ desperate agility can’t keep up. Because we’re seeing something new. Something we haven’t even named but know at the core.

I don’t have to see it to know it’s true.

Cause I saw you and you were enough.

Because I knew you.

I saw Roslyn Pope, our doctor in residence, shining with a radiance all her own.

“We’ll just keep working on it,” that’s what you said. Cause of you, we’re seeing beyond.

I see Alma, fighting for her place under the sun. You’ll find it, cause you deserve the world.

I see it in Lila’s movements, your resilient art, the way you dance in protest.

I see it in Esra’s explosive mind, filling up whiteboards and rooms with electric brilliance.

I see it the proud way Jordan carries her body and the stories of her people.

I see it when Sabiha speaks truth through tears and laughter.

Because I knew you,

I’m also learning to hear beyond, to listen beyond vibrations for the new world you’re making.

I hear the reimagining, the ripples running against the tide.

Hear it in Mairi’s jokes and Konstantin’s Beyoncé quotes.

I hear it in David’s questioning and Ehlimana’s storytelling.

I hear it in Emily’s language, as you speak your passion for a people indestructible.

I hear it in Alex’s joyfully rebellious snapping.

I hear it in Ian’s voice, singing “A Change Is Gonna Come” and knowing that you’re not waiting You are doing it, living it, breathing it now.

Embodying all the multitudes our world hasn’t yet learned to hold.

Because I knew you,

I don’t know where we’re headed, but I know how it’ll feel if we get there.

I feel it in Roberto’s deep kindness, transcending everything in your path.

I feel it Ufuk’s and Hanan’s kinetic energy, wrestling through space and time to see what kind of chaotic magic we’ll make together.

Feel it Zelma’s unstoppable joy running riot in the room and

Rukhsar’s unabashed hope, don’t you ever lose it.

Maybe when we get there, it will feel tender and whole like Pedro’s heart,

Maybe it will feel like lost hands finally finding each other in the dark.

That day when reimagining means we all come home.

Because I knew you,

No one can tell me I dreamed it up. It was too real, to alive for anyone to call it a daydream, this world of possibility that you’re creating everyday. No denying it cause I knew you.

It’s the way that Simone’s heart leaps from the page, breaking the distance, pulling you in.

The way Malgosia’s soft reflections and her Polish poets rock your world for half a second.

It’s Arlette, binding us with pipe cleaners and words, because sometimes that’s all we’ve got.

It’s Beau, going back to plant gardens and seeds of something different in Kentucky ground and Adam helping others fight for four walls and roof called theirs.

It’s Eliza, coming back every day with persistence and insistence.

It’s Darriel, keeping yourself and others alive with words that speak fire.

It’s Jaz at the podium, heels and all, energy radiating through the mic.

Speak truth to the power, or really, screw their power and speak your own.  
It's Priya at the whiteboard with Dr. Hooker, making math subversive, "Can I have that marker?"  
It's Chandra, showing me how to transgress boundaries with library cards, museums, & yourself.  
It's Seung Hyun—not Daniel—your imagination and wonder woven into your plays, reminding me how good it feels to come alive.  
It's Trey, never afraid to hold space, daring to step up or step back to amplify a neighbor's voice.

It's Tanya, using the law to make music in this cacophonous symphony we call life.  
It's Sara, refusing to let any power on this earth steal away your joy.  
Your bedrock of resistance, your grounding in hope.  
Because I knew you.

Because I knew you knew.  
We'll make our home in impossible. Ok if we never get there cause maybe the march is worth it.  
You tell me, "that's just me being me. This is who I am." But that's it.  
Your life, your voice, your full being breaking apart the smudged glass of our windowpanes until I can see outside, the unfiltered light in that space called tomorrow. Or never. Or just not yet.  
Because I knew you, I can live with that.

Some say justice is like calculus, spinning on axioms and time-old equations.  
Some say justice is like love, a force that embraces us as quickly as it abandons.  
But what they didn't tell me, what your souls had to show me,  
was that justice is alive in you.  
Your power, your imagining, and daredevil reimagining.  
Imploding the present. Retelling the past. Touching eternity.

Because I knew you.

# FELLOWS

## HOPE ANDERSON

Southern Methodist University

Born and raised in Dallas, Hope Anderson is a graduating senior from Southern Methodist University with a triple major in Human Rights, Sociology, and History. Hope's passion for human rights led her to intern with global nonprofits like the International Rescue Committee and International Justice Mission, as well as local anti-poverty organizations like CitySquare. Hope also studied human rights challenges through the SIT International Honors Program, where she conducted research on the relationship between NGOs and forced migrants in Nepal, Jordan, and Chile. At SMU, Hope served as a student coordinator for the Embrey Human Rights Program, where she led and organized trips focused on civil rights history and the death penalty. This unique program sparked her love for social justice education and community dialogues. In the coming years, she hopes to work with other scholar-activists and young people to create human rights initiatives at more universities in the South.

## RUKHSAR ASIF

University of Southern Denmark

Rukhsar studies Market and Management Anthropology at the university of Southern Denmark and hopes to become a global leader that can shift the focus from the current material world to the world of the people. She cooperates with different politically active organizations, where she helps to organize demonstrations, do public speeches and participate in debates. She also has her own reality-show, which gives insights in how Muslim girls live in Denmark to clarify various stereotypes. She manages the international department in a voluntary organization, where she initiates Erasmus+ programs in cooperation with EU, which gives her the chance to help people. Moreover, she works with different municipalities to help them integrate projects that build bridges between minorities and majorities. She also works as a peace-ambassador, where her job is to prevent racism within anti-sexist discourses.

## SIMONE AUMAJ

Utrecht University

Simone Zalla Aumaj is an undergraduate student of Liberal Arts and Sciences at Utrecht University in The Netherlands. She majors in Cultural Anthropology and included a minor of Gender Studies within her programme. Studying oppression and privilege from an intersectional perspective have made her own experience as a Dutch citizen with Afghan roots more tangible. Even though Simone describes her societal position as an experience in which she is flowing between contradicting discourses, she acknowledges that her Dutch citizenship and Afghan ethnicity constitute a meaningful dialogue. From the age

of nine and onwards she has been involved in the advocacy of human rights, stimulating youth participation and lobbying by working together with multiple organizations, among which: Jeugdnu, KinderrechtNU and Gender Concerns International. Next year she will do three months of anthropological fieldwork abroad and is hoping to pursue a masters in Gender Studies .

#### JAZMINE BUCKLEY

Mercer University

Jaz Buckley is a junior at Mercer University where she studies Political Science, Women and Gender Studies, and French. She is a nationally ranked parliamentary debater and has Won several tournaments across the country. Additionally, Jaz is a leader in other areas of debate. She the captain of Mercer's debate team, judges high school tournaments, and coaches at a high school in rural Georgia. In the summer of 2016, she helped created debate programs at primary schools in South Africa. Jaz is also active in several activities related to diversity. Jaz has interned at a human rights NGO in South Africa and has worked with student government to increase campus diversity. Through programs like campus Flag Parades and Diversity Week, Jaz has helped make campus more inclusive. She hopes to continue to advocate for minority rights as a civil rights attorney and specifically address issues related to race and law.

#### SEUNG HYUN “DAN” CHUNG

University of Pennsylvania

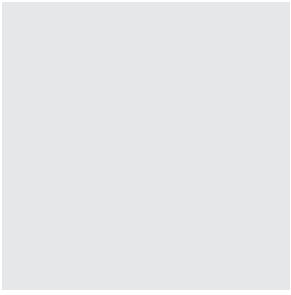
Born in Busan, South Korea and from Cypress, California, Seung Hyun is a rising senior at the University of Pennsylvania with a major in English and minors in Fine Arts and Asian American Studies. An aspiring artist and writer, Seung Hyun has used his storytelling practice as a way to affectively articulate issues of minority mental health, refugee trauma, hybrid identity, and collective memory. Seung Hyun also serves as co-chair of the Asian American Studies Undergraduate Advisory Board at Penn, fighting for the program's continued existence and working to increase student engagement with critical discourse in minority and ethnic studies. While he is refreshingly uncertain about his postgraduate plans, he hopes to continue using creative media as a way to inspire a culture of human rights.

#### ADAM COHEN

University of Pennsylvania

Born and raised in Maine, Adam Cohen graduated from the University of Pennsylvania in 2016 with a major in Urban Studies. Throughout his time as an undergraduate, he worked extensively in West Philadelphia's public high schools helping to provide college and financial aid counseling services to aspiring firstgeneration students. His research focused on the effectiveness of different Housing First models in improving the wellbeing of people experiencing chronic homelessness, the impacts of local procurement efforts by large anchor institutions, and the role of universities in revitalizing historically disadvantaged

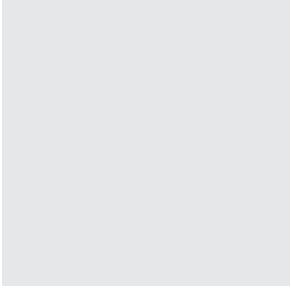
neighborhoods. During his senior year, he served as the chair for his university's Netter Center for Community Partnerships Student Advisory Board. Adam recently finished an internship with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and is now completing a fellowship with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. In 2015, Adam was selected as a Harry S Truman Scholar.



#### CHANDRA DICKEY

Scripps College

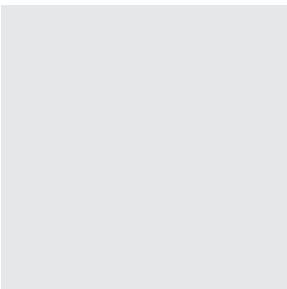
Raised in Stone Mountain, Georgia, Chandra Dickey has spent the past year as an English Teaching Assistant in France. She is passionate about making cultural institutions more accessible to communities of color and studying the African Diaspora in the Francophone Atlantic. In 2016, Chandra graduated cum laude from Scripps College in Claremont, California with a dual degree in History and Politics. There, she was a Questbridge Scholar and student organizer for various issues regarding institutional support for students of color. Her time at Scripps led her to study abroad in Nantes, France, where she studied France's involvement in the Transatlantic Slave Trade, and the significance of the country's increasing immigrant population. Upon graduating, Chandra interned for the Library Company of Philadelphia where she conducted research and special projects under the African American History Program as a Mellon Scholar. In the future, she plans to pursue a degree in Public Humanities.



#### ROBERTO FLORES

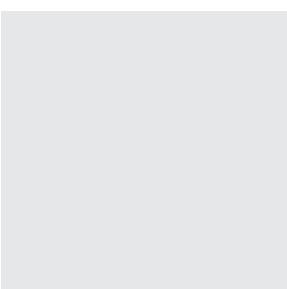
Florida State University

Born in Mexico City, Roberto moved to south Texas at the age of ten. They currently attend Florida State University with majors in Piano Performance and Interdisciplinary Social Sciences and a minor in Economics. Throughout their college experience, Roberto served as a mentor and facilitator for various leadership development programs, seeking to inspire low-income and minority freshmen and high schools students. As the Assistant Director of the Pride Student Union, Roberto worked to empower LGBTQ+ students by helping them lead their own events and workshops. In addition, Roberto led their own leadership development program specifically for LGBTQ+ students. Working with community and campus partners, Roberto also coordinated free STI and HIV testing events, providing resources and education to an often neglected high-risk population. In their spare time, Roberto loves to explore new compositions from Mexico and seeks opportunities to perform the music of Latin American composers.



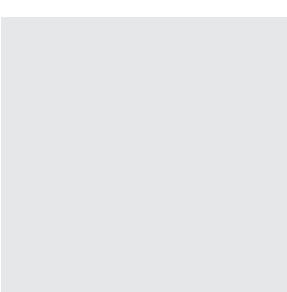
MAŁGORZATA "MALGOSIA" HERMANOWICZ  
Warsaw School of Economics

Małgorzata "Malgosia" Hermanowicz is a Double-Degree Master Programme student at the Warsaw School of Economics and NOVA Lisboa SBE in Management. Academically she's focused on Latin American countries (specifically Brazil), sustainability and socio-economic development. Professionally, she's been working on some cultural projects featuring topics of new media, international exchange of audiovisual archives, creative industries and film. She's very keen on international cultural relations and sees it as an important enabler of growth and sustainable development.



ARLETTE HERNANDEZ  
Washington and Lee University

Arlette Hernandez was born in Havana, Cuba to parents of Spanish and African descent. She has lived the majority of her life in Florida, but has spent the last three years attending university in Virginia where she majors in English with minors in Creative Writing and Africana Studies. She has spent a semester abroad in Bath, England, where she studied English literature and conducted an independent research on issues of class, race, genre, and marketing. As a Mellon Digital Humanities student fellow, she has spent the past year working on a project A project that uses postcolonial theory to highlight the misrepresentations of African peoples and the continent within archival materials. Arlette hopes to participate in the Teach for America program before pursuing a Ph.D in postcolonial literature. One of her goals in life is to teach a college level seminar on black sitcoms, hip-hop music, and issues of imperialism.



ESRA KARAKAYA  
Humboldt-University Berlin

Esra Karakaya is a music and media scientist, journalist and grassroots activist. As a daughter of Turkish and Korean immigrants she has been involved in various minority communities for many years in her hometown Berlin. Esra is a seeker and always on the lookout for the sound that makes her heart sway.

**SABIHA KAPETANOVIC**

Ege University

Sabiha was born and raised in Sarajevo. Once she received the scholarship to study in Turkey she moved to Turkey where she completed her BA in International Relations from Ege University in Izmir. She spent a semester at Maastricht University, European Studies as part of her BA studies. Shortly after she received her BA degree she won the Schuman fellowship at the European Parliament, Policy Department for Western Balkans and Turkey. Sabiha has been involved in many different projects, organisations that are promoting social equality and social mobility. The latest activities were related to a fight against unpaid internships. As part of the fight she directed the short documentary named Colours of Unpaid Youth. Currently she works at EUROCONTROL trying to improve their traineeship programme and make it more transparent. She likes to fight using different shapes of art such as applied theatre and contemporary dance.

**JORDANOS KIROS**

Vrije universiteit

Jordanos Kiros, Master of Laws, 27 years old, born and raised in the Netherlands. In December 2016 she graduated the master Private Law, with a specialization in contract law, labour law and migration law. Over the last few years, she has mostly been learning about people, history, politics and culture abroad. She took part in an exchange program in South Africa, did an internship in Indonesia and travelled and worked in parts of Australia, South East Asia and Africa. As of January 2017, she is the president of the Eritrean Association in Amsterdam and surroundings. Her goal is to encourage the Eritrean diaspora and refugees to meet their full potential within the Dutch society while keeping their Eritrean identity. In the future she plans to pass the bar and be an advocate for employee rights and human rights.

**KONSTANTINOS “KONSTANTIN” KOUKOS**

Copenhagen Business School

Born and raised in Athens, Konstantinos holds a BSc in Marketing and Communications from Athens University of Economics and Business. In 2016 he moved to Copenhagen to pursue Master of Science studies on Business, Language and Culture with concentration on Diversity and Change Management. He has working experience in Project Management, Human Resource Management, Marketing and Communications in firms and has been part of several NGOs and teams. Some of the projects were developed in the social entrepreneurship field, the promotion of human rights and diversity, the battle against youth unemployment and discrimination through the use of the new media and network creation.

ZELMA FELDMAN LEWERISSA  
University of Copenhagen

Born and raised in Copenhagen, currently studies anthropology at Copenhagen University. At the age of 16, Zelma moved to India to attend United World College for 2 years. One of her main interests is theatre as a tool for social change. At UWC she started a social theatre project with young girls from a local Maharashtrian village. Currently part of the theatre group 'De Sceneste', initiated by the Danish Royal Theatre, and aims to involve more young people in Danish theatre world. As response to xenophobic discourses in the Danish media, she attended the course 'Opinionmaker against Discrimination' and became a part of the 'Dialogue ambassadors', a group of young Jews and Muslims who aims to combat islamophobia and antisemitism and encourage coexistence. As a student job she writes and performs monologues about social issues and minority experiences for the Socioeconomic theatre company C:ntact.

ALEX MABANTA  
University of California, Berkeley

Alex Mabanta graduated the University of California, Berkeley, with a double major in Political Science and Rhetoric and minor in Human Rights. With a passion for social justice, Alex chairs the Peace and Justice Commission, a legislative body charged with crafting human rights ordinances for the city of Berkeley. As a student, he also directed the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program, a pro-bono tax assistance organization that serves low-income families across the San Francisco Bay Area and founded the Financial Literacy and Economic Justice Conference (Flejcon), the first campus-wide studentorganized and student-oriented financial literacy conference of its kind. Together, Alex is drawn to public service and empowering people. He hopes to lead a career advancing inclusive social policies for diverse communities throughout the United States.

MAIRI "MARY" MARKAKI  
Harakopio University

Born and raised in Greece, Mairi regards herself to be a vivid spirit and a multifaceted personality with various interest and passion to meet different people and live valuable, constructive experiences. She holds a Bachelor degree in Nutrition, but later on she decided to turn to other fields that would fit better her professional identity and personal aspirations. After attending seminars and publishing articles based on innovation, action and disruption, she participated in an Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs program, living in Berlin for 6 months. This came as a result of her interest in entrepreneurship and in projects with added value and social impact which is her main goal. She works in the Sales/Business Development Department of a Greek startup, as she loves communication, believes in team work and wants to help others reach their personal development. She loves running and dancing as they feed one's soul, mind and body.

**DARRIEL MCBRIDE**

Marist College

Darriel is a senior at Marist College studying English Writing with a double minor in Video Production and Global Studies. Darriel grew up in the South Bronx. She is the first in her family to attend college as well as the first Marist student to study abroad in Western Samoa where she spent a semester traveling throughout the Pacific Islands. During her study abroad program, she conducted independent research on education policy implementation in Samoan public schools. Darriel is a leader on her campus, where she organizes various cultural and social events in order to promote inclusion and unite her campus community. Darriel is a 2017 Fulbright Fellow and will be teaching English in South Africa in January of 2018. She is also a Gates Millennium Scholar and hopes to pursue her Masters degree with the realm of Education Policy upon her return to the United States.

**EMILY McDONNELL**

The University of Arizona

Born and raised on the Navajo reservation, Emily studied public policy and American Indian studies at the University of Arizona. As a Navajo and convert to Judaism she was active in both Native American and Jewish student organizations throughout college where she held leadership positions. She currently runs the Moishe House Without Walls program in Tucson where she hosts and organizes social and religious programs for Jewish young professionals. While in college Emily became passionate about educational equity, particularly in relation to Native American education and plans to pursue a joint degree in public policy and a law degree. This year she had the opportunity to teach social studies to middle school students in a Native American school.

**EHLIMANA MEMISEVIC**

University of Sarajevo

Ehlimana is currently a PhD student at the Faculty of Law, University of Sarajevo. She received her B.A. in Law from the University of Sarajevo in 2009, and an M.A. degree in 2013. Since 2009 she has been working as a teaching and research assistant, and since 2014 as a senior teaching and research assistant at the Department of Legal History and Comparative Law at the Faculty of Law. Her research interest include legal history, comparative law, the relationship between religion and law, transitional justice, human rights with the special focus on women's rights etc.

PRIYANKA MENON  
Harvard University

From Ann Arbor, Michigan, Priyanka Menon is currently a Humanities Fellow at Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection in Washington, D.C. She graduated from Harvard College in 2016, where she studied mathematics and history and was involved with the Harvard Political Review and the Scholars at Risk program. She is interested in the ethical foundations of group decisionmaking and applications of this to the law. Next year, she will pursue a joint JDPhD at Harvard University.

PEDRO MONQUE  
St. Olaf College

Pedro Monque is a Bilingual Resource Specialist for the Madison Metropolitan School District where he works with underserved English Language Learners and their families. He is also Teacher Aide at community empowerment program Trail to Success – High Ridge Trail, and Facilitator for Empoderando a Latinoamérica, a youth-led program whose goal is to empower emerging Latin American community leaders. Through these positions, he has engaged children and youth in discussions about social justice and community engagement. Pedro was born and raised in Venezuela. He holds a B.A. in Philosophy from St. Olaf College and will join the Ph.D. program in Philosophy at CUNY Graduate Center in the Fall.

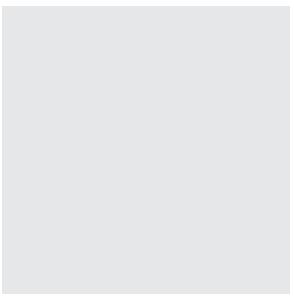
ALMA MUJANOVIC  
The University of Sarajevo

Alma Mujanović is born in Montenegro. Currently, lives in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina. Student of Faculty of the Health Sciences, in field of Radiology Technology, University of Sarajevo. She works with people who fights for break a discrimination, especially people with disabilities. Since 2010 she began to actively engage in the issues of human rights and participating in many fields of non-formal education and integration in the social environment. Currently, she is member of many organisations. Her hobbies are photography and writing. She often writes about human rights and inclusion of people with disabilities. She was participant in many educations in BiH and Europe (Norway, 2015, Italy, 2016, Albania 2016, Switzerland 2016, Youth Exchange in Greece 2016, European Forum Alpbach, Austria, 2016). For her, the motivation is to be in the socializing with people and she loves to be among the people with whom she is feeling happy and fulfilled.

LILA MURPHY  
New York University

Originally from Philadelphia, Lila Murphy is a rising junior at New York University concentrating in Politics, Rights, and Development, with a minor in both Dance and Spanish Language. Prior to attending university, Lila traveled extensively throughout Latin America and South Asia observing localized methods of community development, education, and

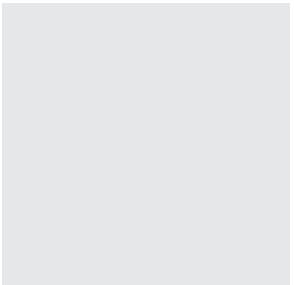
agriculture. She is a firm believer in the power smaller communities yield towards greater social change, and has worked in community development in many different capacities. In addition to her academic work, Lila is an artist who aims to challenge social stigmas through contrary visual representations. She plans on furthering her work in the arts after graduation, infusing her work with her passion for social and policy change.



#### SARA OSMAN

University of Minnesota Twin Cities

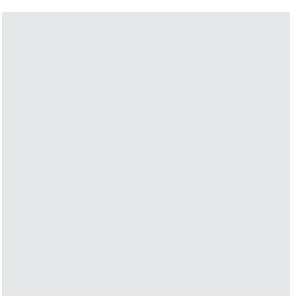
Born and raised in Minneapolis, Sara Osman is a Global Studies and Afro Studies double major, focusing on human rights on the continent of Africa, at the University of Minnesota. Sara spent a semester abroad in Nepal, Jordan and Chile studying comparative human rights. She serves as the Community Liaison/Direct Action Coordinator for the Young Muslim Collective. She is also a community organizer and works as a Youth Leader for the American Friends Service Committee in St. Paul. In her spare time, Sara is a writer, a photographer and a diversity training consultant. After college, Sara hopes to stay in Minnesota and develop programs for young Somali women in the Twin Cities to better prepare them for higher education.



#### BEAU REVLETT

University of Kentucky

Beau Revlett is a rising junior philosophy major at the University of Kentucky. He grew up in Georgetown, KY with his loving family. He is the leader of two student groups at UK. One focuses on homelessness in Lexington, one on oncampus food insecurity. He often works with Arbor Youth Services, an emergency shelter for at-risk youth, where he serves on the Board of Directors. He has recently been working with a small group to find good ways to improve how the needs of youth in Lexington are met. At the moment, his academic interests are primarily in philosophy of science and logic. Before HIA this summer, he will be doing research with Dr. Julia Bursten on causation in philosophy of science. He likes analytic philosophy quite a bit and hopes to study it in graduate school. His friends often accuse him of disagreeing just for the sake of disagreeing.



#### ELIZA RUTYNOWSKA

University of Warsaw

Born in Warsaw, but raised both there as well as Maastricht, the Netherlands. Fourth year Law and first year Internal Security student of the Interdisciplinary Individual Studies in the Humanities College at Warsaw University. Paralegal at the Polish Society of Antidiscrimination Law. Passionate about criminal justice and human rights, graduate of the “Innocence project—preventing wrongful convictions” workshop at the University of Warsaw. Eliza is currently a member of the University’s Legal Aid Clinic, providing legal advice for the needy.

**IAN STEWART**

Illinois Wesleyan University

Ian Fields Stewart (pronouns: they/them/their) is a black, queer, and gender nonconforming New York based storyteller working at the intersection of theatre and activism. A native of Birmingham, AL, their work is centered in deconstructing mainstream media forms and rebuilding them to amplify and include the voices of marginalized people in our local and global communities. Ian's work has been published and seen across multiple mediums including The Journal of Community Practice, Buzzfeed, MoveOn.org, the United Nations, and many performance venues in New York City and beyond.

**KEITAVIOUS "TREY" WALK**

Duke University

Born in the small town of Gray Court, South Carolina and raised in Greenville, Trey Walk is a rising junior at Duke University studying History with a concentration on Human Rights and Social Movements. Trey is interested how policies lead to structural inequality and how society—stitutions and everyday people—responds to these inequalities. He is involved with Community Empowerment Fund, a nonprofit in Durham and Chapel Hill that works to combat homelessness and poverty. He is also involved with several organizations on campus at Duke. Trey loves music, dance, literature, film, and theatre and has recently become more interested in how art is used to heal, provoke, and inspire social change. Eventually, Trey would like to get a J.D. and an M.P.P. to enter into public service.

**DAVID WERDERMANN**

University of Freiburg

After graduating from high school near Münster and volunteering as a human rights observer in the Philippines, David Werdermann studied law in Freiburg, Germany, focusing on public international and European law. He completed his studies in 2016 and is currently working as a research associate at the Institute for Staatswissenschaft and Philosophy of Law at the University of Freiburg, where he is teaching constitutional law. He is planning to write a PhD thesis about constitutional rights of immigrants. David is author of various articles and political activist focusing on fundamental rights, migration policy and education. He is active member of the “work group of critical lawyers” (Arbeitskreis kritischer Jurist\*innen), an association of left-wing young lawyers, and the “Forum ‘Active against Exclusion’ Freiburg” (Freiburger Forum aktiv gegen Ausgrenzung), an organization supporting Roma from the Western Balkans.

# FELLOWSHIP STAFF



TANYA WASHINGTON  
John Lewis Fellowship Program Director

A native of Washington, DC, Tanya Washington is a professor of law at Georgia State University College of Law and the Program Director for Humanity in Action's John Lewis Fellowship in Atlanta. After earning her J.D. from The University of Maryland School of Law, she clerked for Judge Robert M. Bell on the Maryland Court of Appeals. In the years following, Tanya completed the Albert M. Sacks Fellowship, the A. Leon Higginbotham Fellowship and earned her LL.M. at Harvard Law School. Tanya has been widely published in law journals and periodicals across the nation. A self-professed activist scholar, she has worked collaboratively to ensure that legal scholarship has a practical and positive impact on vulnerable individuals and communities. Tanya believes deeply that the true value of the law lies in its capacity to improve the human condition. As such, she has co-authored several amicus briefs with the Supreme Court, including in the recent same-sex marriage cases, highlighting the harmful impact of exclusionary marriage laws on children in same-sex families.



UFUK KÂHYA  
Associate Program Director

Ufuk Kâhya serves as Humanity in Action's Associate Program Director for the John Lewis Fellowship. Ufuk has an academic background in Public Administration, Political Science and International Relations. Ufuk currently serves as the Leader of the Green Party at the City Council of Hertogenbosch in The Netherlands and as a senior advisor for Kompass, the Dutch civil rights and liberties organization. Ufuk has experience as a senior trainer for United World Colleges on leadership, conflict transformation, community building and inclusion. He worked with diverse groups of youngsters internationally, such as the indigenous youngsters of the Marowijne, Suriname. Ufuk has served as a policy advisor to Congressman A.L. Hastings and is a member of the Transatlantic Inclusion Leaders Network of the GMF. He serves on several boards, is a Global Shaper at the World Economic Forum and a Fulbright Alumni. Ufuk focuses on intersectional approaches to social change and inclusion throughout his political, professional and pro bono efforts.



FARYN WALLACE  
Program Assistant

Faryn Wallace is an Atlanta Native and a recent graduate of Georgia State University College of Law. Before attending law school, Faryn received her bachelor's degree in World History from Kennesaw State University. During her time at Georgia State Law, she worked as a Graduate Research Assistant under the direction of Professor Tanya Washington, and assisted Professor Washington in drafting an Amicus Brief that was filed in support of the Plaintiffs' position in *Obergefell v. Hodges* and cited by the United States Supreme Court as a persuasive authority in this landmark Marriage Equality decision. Faryn also participated in a Refugee and Asylum Law Practicum – where, under the Third Year Practice Act, she worked closely with clients seeking asylum in the US. Additionally, Faryn has experience in personal injury law and criminal defense and currently works as an attorney for the Manely Firm P.C.'s Justice Café, where she practices landlord/tenant law and family law.



HANANE LOTFI  
Program Intern

Born and raised in Heerlen, the Dutch equivalent of Texas, Hanane moved to Amsterdam in 2000. She attended the VU Amsterdam University to obtain her BA degree in Political Science. In 2014 she attended the University of Amsterdam where she obtained her Master's degree in Political Communication. She has been involved in numerous youth civic engagement organizations, such as Mosa (youth radio and debate) and Hi5 (now IZI solutions). Hanane is also a Fulbright Summer Institute Alumni and has worked as technical manager at Kieskompas (Election Compass), a company specialized in developing Vote Advice Applications. In her spare time she also co-organized Django Girls a free coding event for women. In the future she is hopeful to find meaningful and effective ways to contribute to social justice and positive change.