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A Stream of Thoughts

Christine E. Ohenewah
Macalester College, cohenewa@macalester.edu

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Stream of Thoughts

by Christine Ohenewah

Imagination

I want to be back in that field I have always dreamed of. The place where my mind dwells in the midst of all of my troubles, all of my endeavors. I want to be enveloped by the breeze that blows the smell of sweet barley through my nostrils. I want to be lying back in that field of undeniable gold. The field that takes away all of my sorrows and leads me to embrace the unknown purpose of my life. The field I see as my final destination when I have accomplished all that I have desired. In this field, I manage to love my enemies and cherish my hardships. I manage to let go and just breathe, and everything unites as one in serenity. Smiles appear in the bright blue skies above me, and pink and red wild flowers proceed to bloom. White mourning doves hover at my feet and sing a precious melody that heals the deep crevices of my heart. In this moment I am more alive than I have ever been, and the enlightening sensation of being at peace has never held so true. In this moment I am me.

Race

Half of me wanted acceptance. The other half of me wanted to defy the stereotypes that are usually placed on Black individuals as being lazy, uneducated, and poorly dressed. Each day I walked through the blaring sunshine of my school hallways, I carried myself properly with my head on straight. And in the back of my mind, I thought that I was achieving something by letting my peers know that not all Black people fit the stereotypes mentioned above; hoping that they would be slower to make judgments. In turn, I thought I was earning myself protection from such upsetting beliefs. Now I know that the only thing I achieved was to make myself the “exception.” Thus, being the exception led to my inappropriate tolerance for Black jokes, which was derived from the fear of being labeled an angry Black woman, had I opposed them. Eventually, this tolerance paved the way for someone to feel comfortable enough explaining to me why I was not “the N word” and why another Black boy whom I knew, essentially was. In a way, the fault was mine. And I know that where race is concerned, the world still has a very long way to go.

Education

Each time I stepped into Ramsey Junior High, loud yells, piercing screams, and an occasional slap or shove would greet me as I passed by energetic young students, making their way to their next classes. And even more peculiar was the sight of security guards

roaming through the corridors. My middle school experience was nothing like this. Yet I could not help but notice that a majority of the students were African Americans, and still, self-segregation was apparent among Black, White, and Asian children. I always saw a student sitting in the office, silently waiting to be scolded. I always saw teachers yelling at kids, or suspicious security guards monitoring their every move. Were these adults there to inspire children or to make them feel punished? Because I know that Destiny in particular did not feel as if her math teacher cared about ensuring that her students were able to understand their lessons. It never occurred to me how jaded my view of education in America was until I began tutoring. And in Ramsey, it felt as if I had entered in an atmosphere where hope had been let go of—hope for America’s future, which resided in these children. It saddened me greatly.

Friendship

My Dearest Old Friend, I miss you. I hope that everything is running smoothly and that life isn’t presenting itself as unbearable in any way. Right now, I am in the cafeteria of Macalester, typing away furiously on this thing that you call “a box.” In fact, I am sitting right next to a window, observing students walk by in rain coats and umbrellas of all sorts amidst the pouring rain. The sky is a mellow gray, but in the distance you can see that the sun is beginning to set, painting its horizon with an orange tinge. The trees are swaying steadily and have begun to lose their luscious, green vibrancy, which makes for the perfect fall scene. And in all this, I somehow think of the first conversation we had approximately a year ago. It was on a gray, windy day like this.

Feminism

It is difficult for women to assume their positions as autonomous beings while also accepting the roles of their painted feminine destinies. The roles of being caring mothers and subservient wives, who, laden with work are additionally expected to maintain a heightened ideal of femininity. In a world where men are granted the most power and entitlement, women are given little liberty and claim to their fate.

Thus, the journey to not only discover but embrace their true identities as individuals with personal dreams and mindsets is colored with the anxiety of societal disapproval, diffidence, and estrangement not only from their communities, but most importantly from themselves.

Homosexuality

Homosexuality has been in existence for as long as the human race has thrived. And for as long as it has been in existence, it has been considered to be an obstruction from the general perception of what is considered to be natural. My Christian upbringing has taught me to look at homosexuality with a disapproving eye and to pity those who engage in such detestable acts. Their souls will burn in Hell for it. But as I have grown older, I have begun to question why the “holy” individuals whom I have known all my life would hold a terribly demeaning view of their fellow “brothers” and “sisters.” Would God approve, after all? The answer to that question is who knows exactly what God would approve of. But when it comes to respecting each individual and holding their human dignity in regard, it is not a question of what religion each person belongs to. The respect of human dignity is a universal value that comprises of honoring each individual’s personal rights, despite any differences they may hold. It should not be contingent upon religious affiliation.

Defiance

I stood in the dressing room, observing my own reflection. My eyes were red and distraught with disappointment. I wanted to wipe off that pathetic red lipstick I was wearing and wipe off my blush. I hated wearing this kind of make-up, it was not very flattering on me. In fact, I just wanted to take off my entire costume. My dress, my earrings, my heels, everything. Yes, I was begging for a death wish because my director surely would’ve murdered me, considering that we were about to perform *Cinderella* in ten minutes. But I didn’t do it, of course. *Smile. For God sakes, smile*, I told myself. *Quit crying, it’s not worth it. Get over it, and focus. This is your last performance, so suck it up and be the meanest stepmother ever. Would the stepmother ever cry over an idiot? No, because she’s tougher than that and so are you. Smile.* Sometimes I hated my conscience. It was a more assertive version of me at times. But right now, it was right, so I listened and smiled. I never stopped smiling that night. □