

TOM WANTS TO KILL YOU.

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“THE SENATE DECIDED TO IMPEACH HIM”

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REPORT AND INTERVIEW

REMOVAL OF AN ENGINEERING SENATOR SPARKS
CONTROVERSY

By AUIS VOICE

On April 16, the President of Student Association (SA), Sherzad Rahim, announced on SA's Facebook group that Engineering Senator, Niyaz Mustafa has been impeached from the association by the senate's majority of votes.

"The reason behind the impeachment was a misunderstanding and carelessness in not paying attention to the works of SA such as the reports and issues were working on," Rahim said. "We informed him about these issues he had. We tried to fix them, but he denied and emphasized on what he did. Therefore, the Senate decided to impeach him constitutionally," he added.

The impeached Engineering Senator and

many students protested the decision. Mustafa claimed that the real reason behind the impeachment was "personal". Many students started a support campaign with the hashtag #We_Want_Niyaz_Back.

"My impeachment was totally something personal. They tried whatever they could do to make a weak point on me and make everyone else [Senators] agree to impeach me, so they can do everything much easier," Mustafa wrote April 21 on Facebook's AUIS Issues group.

Mustafa believes that the Senate and the President were not happy with him being a criticizer of the association's policies and actions.

"When the Senate gave him an ultimatum to apologize for

an un-collegial behavior and gave him multiple chances to do so. He refuses and as a result seven out of nine Senators decided to impeach him," Rahim told AUIS Voice.

"Niyaz was not aware of the Associations' activities, he did not read a report that we delivered to the university president and started criticizing our activities without any prior investigation," English, Freshman, MLS Senator, Diwan Bakr Mustafa told AUIS Voice.

"We asked Niyaz to write a post on Facebook groups and apologize for what he did against us but he refused. Therefore, with the majority of the votes, we decided to impeach him based on the

constitution," he added.

The impeachment was protested by many students on campus, especially the Engineering students.

"They have essentially kicked-out a democratically elected Senator because he has criticized the way the organization is run," Engineering Student, Hasar Ali, told AUIS Voice. "They have set a terrible precedent for what is considered worthy of impeachment. Freedom of speech, especially for someone who represents the students, is crucial and is of paramount importance," he continued.

Ali believes that this impeachment will affect the performance of other Senators in the future, pushing them toward not sharing different

ideas in fear of being impeached.

"If sometime in the future a Senator says anything controversial for the sake of the students --like speaking out on how the organization is not doing what it is supposed to do, criticizing university staff or services, or any number of reason-- then the Student Association has already set precedent to be able to kick-out a Senator. Senators' voices should not be censored," he said.

According to Article VIII of the Student Association constitution names Impeachments the majority votes of the senate can impeach an officer of the SA giving time on the floor to defend themselves.

'FIREND IS SOMEONE WHO IS A TYPICAL REBEL WHO AFTER
HIGH SCHOOL TOOK 3 YEARS OFF JUST TO FIND HIS WAY.'

By Sureen N. Abdulmajeed

Who is Dr. Firend Alan Rasch?

AlRasch: Firend is someone who is a typical rebel who after high school took 3 years off just to find his way. During those three years, I worked in many places as a typical teenager. Then I decided to go back to school and continue my undergrad degree in business administration. Since going back to school was my decision; I took it very seriously which made a very huge difference in my life. It made me immerse and love my major. After that, I worked in a couple of industries like investment bank industry and management consulting industry which really shaped my experience. My experiences helped me in gaining my higher education degrees (master and Ph.D.) because they needed real experiences and applied to learn. Applied learning is bringing a problem from industry and trying to solve it.

How did you decide to live in Sulaimany?

I have spent quite a little bit of time in the middle east. I was in Qatar and Dubai. It wasn't very strange for me to be here, I always wanted to come here since my wife is half Iraqi. When I was young I spent three years in Iraq which helped me to have a real vision about living in this nice place.

Can you tell us briefly about "Business Model simplifies with examples from global companies"?

AlRasch: I already have 3 other publishes but I consider my new book as a crown. Because the data that I accumulated is from five years ago when I was consulting in Southeast Asia for one of the top 5 global consulting firms. I gathered a lot of data over time and I realized such data can be publishable in a book format. The main goal of publishing this book is for everyone in industry or academia can learn from different methods, models and their importance that are used by known companies that are described in this book. I wanted to highlight

the success and failures that are derived from structures of business models. Through this book, I accumulated a lot of data

Based on what did you chose the companies that you explained in this book?

AlRasch: I specifically chose large and known companies that people, in general, are familiar with them across the world. By highlighting big companies' business models hopefully, it will strike a code with people and they will be easy to understand.

How the models are different and how they are similar?

AlRasch: The businesses that are able to change and adapt with their business models frequently, they get to succeed, and those who frequently examine their business models and adapt fast enough to avoid marketing inertia they are able to succeed in the long run.

As a Business expert, what's the potential for businesses in the Kurdistan region?

AlRasch: Sky is unlimited as long as there is a commitment in willingness to invest and open up for foreign direct investments and to revamp rules and regulations.

What do you think of the Business department in AUIS?

AlRasch: I think it is one of the areas of strength, it is unique because of the people in the department and everyone in the department is unique in their own ways and they all bring a great vision to the department to make it to school in near future. They are all assets and valuable pillars of the department. Our department is a unique place in our university if we are given more time and resources we could do more success, definitely, but we cannot do it alone without the help of students so we tried to capitalize on the strength of good students who are Unique and capable and we derive a sense of purpose

from their strength

Do you feel AUIS students will have the ability to work in a "competitive market" in post-graduation?

AlRasch: Sure, definitely it's all up to the individual student and we can see the ability in some students and we caused a change in their life to achieve more success.

As a foreign professor, what are some of the "weaknesses" of the Business students?

AlRasch: the weakness is a lack of discipline and lack of willingness for working hard and staying in their comfort zone. The ones that make it really well here are the ones that are willing to modify and adopt new ways and take risks.

Your last words?

AlRasch: I like and love everyone here. I think people have great potential here. I am here to help everyone to realize a new future together.

OPINION

TRUMP IS UNDERMINING DEMOCRACY IN VENEZUELA

By Hasar Ali

On January 23rd, Trump recognized Juan Guaido as the legitimate president of Venezuela, a Latin American country with the largest oil reserves in the world. Even though 81% of Venezuelans have never heard of him, Guaido swore himself into the presidency after he got the green light from Trump's Vice President Mike Pence (on January 22nd). The European countries, the right wing block of South America, and Israel joined the US in recognizing Guaido as the president, while the remaining 75% of the world does not; they recognize the democratically re-elected president Nicolas Maduro.

Guaido is portrayed as the restorer of democracy and public will in US mainstream media but he is far from that. As De Zayas, an ex human rights expert in UN that has produced a report on Venezuela, put it, "we are swimming in an ocean of lies." Guaido is a part of the most radical right-wing opposition to the government. He has led many violent campaigns against the government. He is more popular internationally than locally, and his party is accused of distorting the opposition voice in Venezuela.

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has been touring Latin America echoing Trump that all options are on the table if Maduro continues his rule. As United States' attempts in asserting Guaido locally have fallen flat, there are talks of a military intervention to put Guaido in power. Tensions between Venezuela and the US have been high ever since (he 2002 US supported coup to remove another democratically elected president, Hugo Chavez. To understand this conflict, one must take a step back and understand the history between the two countries.

Hugo Chavez came to power democratically in 1999 and since has dramatically decreased poverty and increased literacy through government programs. Chavez is a populist and his policies largely benefited the poor who composed 80% of the population. There was a coup in 2002 on Chavez's government that the United States supported. This coup was led by the private media that conspired with the coup plotters. The media's role was so prominent in this coup that

locally the coup is referred as the media coup. Two days after the coup, when the public realized what is actually happening, there was a popular uprising that reinstated Chavez as the president and foiled the coup plotters' plans. Chavez went on to grow the GDP 94.7%, cut poverty by half, cut unemployment by half by 2008 while the opposition hindered him in any way they could.

It is important to recognize the role of the United States in funding the opposition. According to the Independent, "documents obtained under the Freedom of Information Act reveal that, in 2002, America paid more than a million dollars to those political groups in what it claims is an ongoing effort to build democracy and strengthen political parties." In addition, "Washington has been channelling hundreds of thousands of dollars to fund the political opponents of Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez—including those who briefly overthrew the democratically elected leader in a coup two years ago."

Chavez passed away in 2013, his vice president Maduro took over as acting president, held elections, and won.

Immediately following Chavez's death, hyperinflation of currency rose because of flawed economic policies that lead to corruption. One year into the Maduro rule, oil prices went down, and economic sanctions were put on some Venezuelan officials by Obama. These sanctions further crippled the economy as financial transactions and imports became more difficult; The Trump administration has been hitting Venezuela with waves of harsh sanctions that have cost Venezuela 36 billion dollars since 2013. The latest of these sanctions was implemented on April 17th. The Trump administration have compared these economic sanctions as the grip of Darth Vader on someone's throat.

The recent pro-Guaido protests is an attempt to pressure Maduro out of the presidency. Guaido's party, Popular Will, have been boycotting election after election claiming they are fraudulent, and they have also boycotted the latest one that re-elected Maduro as the President. John Pilger, an Australian journalist and BAFTA award-winning



documentary filmmaker, writes,

"on election day [2018], I spoke to one of the 150 foreign election observers. 'It was entirely fair,' he said. 'There was no fraud; none of the lurid media claims stood up. Zero. Amazing really.'"

And, to show these boycotts are baseless and are frustrated, desperate attempts at legitimacy, I quote Pilger's article again,

"of the 92 elections that we've monitored,' said former President Jimmy Carter, whose Carter Centre is a respected monitor of elections around the world, 'I would say the election process in Venezuela is the best in the world.'"

The protesters who oppose Maduro rule are the upper middle class and the elite of Venezuela as they have the most to gain from United States neoliberal policies. The elite have been opposed to Chavez ever since 1998 when he won 60% of the votes. Even though two-thirds of the economy is still capitalist, and private institutions have done very well under Chavez's rule, there is a lot more to be gained if the government's control over the country's oil were to be released. Reuters has confirmed that Guaido has drafted a plan to privatize the nationalised oil economy in Venezuela, opening it up for international corporations. John Bolton, National Security Advisor, has also stated US intent to open up the oil economy to private investment on Fox Business.

US and the opposition exploit and produce public unrest. Protesters often sabotage strategic roads to hurt goods distribution and further

cripple the economy. There has been power blackouts across the country. There are leaked memorandums from 2010 that encourage Guaido's associates to capitalize on the "likely" failure of the power sector. The Venezuelan government has accused the US of sabotaging their turbines that has caused mass blackouts.

There is a lot of fuss in US, and its allies' mass media about how Venezuela is refusing desperately needed humanitarian aid from the United States. Well, and you might not be surprised, it is not because Maduro is a tyrannical dictator. Maduro is skeptical of the humanitarian aid shipments because United States has been known to hide guns in humanitarian shipments, as Elliott Abrams, the current U.S. Envoy to Venezuela, did sending "aid" to Nicaragua. De Zayas has also criticized US in an interview with AntiDiplomatico: "It is not possible to be a major cause of the economic crisis — having imposed... sanctions, financial blockades and economic war — and then mutating into a good Samaritan." Venezuela has accepted aid from United Nations, Russia, China, Turkey, India and Cuba. Venezuela recently agreed to accept aid through the Red Cross and Red Crescent.

Apart from the oil, there are a number of reasons why United States wants to get rid of Maduro who is continuing Chavez's policies. Venezuela, ever since the coup, have had deteriorating relations with United States. After US refused to sell them spare parts for F-16s in an effort to twist Chavez's hands after the 2002 coup, the Venezuelan

military invested in Russian and Chinese arms to dissipate its dependency on the US. Venezuela also gave loans to other South American countries. This undermined the role of the IMF, which in turn undermined the influence of the US. The government has also started pricing their oil in Chinese Yuan in response to the sanctions.

If President Trump, the humanitarian champion of the free world, is so concerned about humanitarian crisis, he could have not vetoed the recent resolution to stop the heavy, and active role US is seeing in the war in Yemen, the war that a senior UN official described as "the largest humanitarian crisis since the creation of the United Nations [in 1945]" and, according to Save the Children, have resulted in the death of 85,000 children due to starvation. If dictatorship is what Trump is worried about then he should start with the ones US currently supports; according to Freedom House, the United States supports over 73 percent of the world's dictatorships. In the United States, the media has been pushing the story of how Russians have meddled in the 2016 presidential election, and how it is an assault on democracy with no evidence for two years. Here is an assault on a nation's sovereignty, and instead it is met with not an ounce of criticism and skepticism from the mass media. We should all be aware of how United States undermines the national sovereignty of nations around the world for their short sighted interest, and voice our disapproval, for whatever it is worth.

FEATURE

JORDAN PETERSON'S FANS ARE ON THE RISE AT AUIS

By Hedi Rasheed

Dr. Jordan Peterson, the contentious psychologist from the University of Toronto. Newspix via Getty Images.

I have noticed that there are students who follow Jordan Peterson on internet passionately while it was not the case before. I do not judge whether it is a bad or good “phenomena” since I believe that students are free to follow and listen to who they want.

So, who is Dr. Jordan Peterson? Dr. Jordan Peterson, a Canadian clinical psychologist and a professor of psychology, has become one of the most controversial public figures in recent years and periods. His “Big Break” was when several videos were posted on YouTube on how he had been adamant that he did not want to use preferred pronouns and criticized the Canadian government’s Bill C-16. He believes and argues that white privilege, patriarchy, and wage gap do not exist. He has criticized gender identity politics and leftism, and the questions and doubts the notion of

climate change. His book ‘12 Rules for Life: An Antidote to Chaos’ became a bestseller, and it also has been translated to Kurdish! Currently, he has more than 1 million and 9 hundred-thousand YouTube subscribers with more than 60 million views and over 1.16 million followers on Twitter.

His “fans” are interested and attracted to him for different reasons as they told me: “He is against compelled speech.” “He puts the case of why he does not use preferred pronouns forth.” “He is intelligent.” Beside those comments, what I found and noticed that they particularly focus on him while talking about gender identity politics and women’s issue. Almost all of the students have taken courses in which they more or less heard patriarchy, white supremacy or privilege, equal payment, gender categorization are socially constructed, et cetera, et cetera. If they have not taken a class, at least, they have heard of those notions inside the campus.



This case or phenomena has a twofold effect, albeit opposite to each other. First, AUIS, as a liberal arts university, has failed in instilling some notions, which it wants to promote, into the students. They include gender equality, the dark side of patriarchy, genderqueer, et cetera. This situation persists even after a center for research on gender relations, equity, and parity with the aim of improvement, has been established. Those students have actively started opposing and denying the very main arguments and ideas put forth by the

feminists at AUIS. For that, they borrow extensively from Peterson and the right-wingers.

However, AUIS also promoted, advocates, and teaches the idea of freedom of expression. Such basic core foundation of AUIS is partially responsible for the fact that such right-winger-fans of Peterson are on the rise in the campus. Just like the feminists and others have been adamant, keen, and incessant in putting forth their ideology, the mostly-male fans of Peterson are making a comeback, standing up to the past silence. I can say

that this university has provided an environment for the students to express themselves as they want.

One has to admit, that at AUIS, expressions of such right-wing thoughts that are hostile to feminism, were almost a taboo, just like the expression of Kurdish nationalism. Behind the façade of freedom of expression hid individuals who didn’t tolerate any ideas counter to their own left-leaning, feminist ideology. As there is a space for everyone at this university, I hope that that space is not reduced to only a certain group of people.

TOM WANTS TO KILL YOU

By Geoffrey Gresk

I was asked by the Voice Editors to write a few words about what I learned during my time as Dean of Students here at AUIS. The most important thing I learned is this: it is not about me; It is about you. And because it is about you, I must warn you: TOM wants to kill you.

You see TOM every day. He is famous. He is on your TV and on your phone. Some of you have him on your Facebook timelines and on your key chains. He lives in Sulaimani and Erbil and Baghdad and Najaf and Cairo and Rome and Beijing and Washington, D.C. He is everywhere. TOM is a member of your family. Many of you want to be TOM one day.

A few of you already are. “TOM” refers to Traditional Old Men. Most of the leaders of most of the political parties in Kurdistan and Iraq and America are TOMS. TOM is always conservative and usually religious. (Not all religious people are TOMs, though.)

TOMs are not intentionally evil. They want what they think is best for you. They want you to be happy. They also want you to be content, quiet and vote the way you are told to vote.

TOM can come in many forms. Some TOMs are women. My own grandmother was a TOM. I have acted like one a few times, I am sad to say.

TOM will not say “I am

going to kill you.” He may not even realize that he is doing that. He tells himself he is protecting you from yourself, that he knows best. He asks – he insists – that you trust him, as a child trusts a father. He wants you to stay a child for your whole life.

TOM loves patience. TOM knows that democracy is great, and, sure, he wants to live in a democracy, but says “Our society is not ready for democracy yet.” Let’s wait. We should delay the election. Maybe next year.

TOM respects women very much, and he shows that respect by protecting women, as you would protect an expensive car or a beloved pet dog. TOM thinks

that control of a woman’s sexuality passes from her father to her husband when she gets married. At no point does she control her own sexuality.

TOM rarely uses physical violence, though it has happened. Many suspects that TOM ordered the killing of the student journalist Zardasht Osman in 2010. The security officers around the world who violently end non-violent protests may or may not be TOMs themselves, but their superiors almost always are.

If you ask him, TOM will probably say he is modern. Look, he has a smartphone and a Land Rover and an Instagram account. Tom thinks that “modern” refers

to things you can buy. He does not spend much time thinking about social justice, human rights, clean elections, or a free press. Trouble-makers think about these things.

What are you going to do about TOM? Some AUIS students see no problem with TOM, and they have a right to their own opinions. Other AUIS students say that we should fight TOM, pull him down and throw him out. Others say that we just need to wait for the old generation to pass and then we replace them. My worry is that the last generation said the same thing. It seems to me that the first way to fight TOM is to not become him.

ESSAY COMPETITION WINNERS

NAWAL EL SAADAWI'S "IN CAMERA"

By Tara Burhan Mohammed

Junior/Senior winner

Nawal El Saadawi was born in, 1931 in Kafr Tahla, Egypt. She's a feminist writer, activist, and psychiatric. She's an advocate of women's rights, often described as "the Simone de Beauvoir of the Arab world" (Nawal El Saadawi). She was educated in many universities including Cairo University 1955, Columbia University in New York 1966, and Ayn Shams University 1972-74. In 1966 she became the director of the Health Education Department in the Egyptian Ministry. Later in 1972 she was expelled from the position because she wrote a book called "Women and Sex". Saadawi was condemned by the political and religious forces, and she was jailed in 1981. She wrote in her book *A Daughter of Isis* "I had been born a female in a world that wanted only males". Saadawi dedicated her writings to challenge the stereotypes of the patriarchal society. She challenged the notion of the roles and nature of women in the culture. In her short story "In Camera" Saadawi focuses on viewing the institutions of patriarchy and how they oppress women in Egypt particular and in the Middle East in general, she gives voice to the voiceless women, and portrays the limitation of women's role in the society.

In her short story "In Camera" Saadawi depicts the story of a female protagonist called Leila Al-Fargani. Who is on a trial for expressing her beliefs on the corruption of the patriarchal government. She was arrested for calling the president who is remained unnamed "stupid". Leila faces gang rape from the police while she is in prison "ten men raped her, one after the other" (Saadawi 3006). Leila's thoughts while sitting in the courtroom is being described throughout the story. Also, her Mother's thoughts and her Father's thoughts take a part of the story during the trial. At the end of the story the judge and his aides have a conversation and decide to put Leila back in prison.

Throughout the story Leila is resembled to animals. "remained like a small animal incapable of uttering the simple words" (Saadawi 3000) "No animal could sit like the way she could, if it did, what would it do with its four legs?" (Saadawi 3001). Through the previous quotes Saadawi views women's degradation in the society by resembling Leila to animals. According to Ortner women are being identified with something all cultures devalue which is "nature" (Ortner 72). Animals are considered as a part of nature, and by that they are viewed as inferior. In the same sense women are considered a part of nature. Women are identified as inferior due to their biological sex which makes them closer to nature. Saadawi highlights one of the issues women face which is degradation. By showing how Leila thinks of herself as an animal Saadawi displays that Leila has unconsciously obliged to the culture's view of her. All her life she has been given the sense that she is inferior and she has been related to nature many times.

Saadawi uses beauty imagery to show the value of women within the society at that time. She does so by showing a conversation between Leila's Mother and Grandmother. The first thing Leila's grandmother said when she was born "A girl and ugly too! A double catastrophe!" (Saadawi 3004). As if to say the only good thing about a girl is her physical beauty. As if a girl's beauty is the only valuable thing she can possess. Viewing women as images of physical beauty was the case in 1950's American women and it is still going on till this day. According to Betty Friedan the suburban beautiful housewife was the dreamy image of the young American women. Large sized pictures of beautiful women were shown in magazines and advertisements. Women dyed their hair blonde, and ate chalk instead of food to get thinner. All of that was

done to fulfil the expectation of the society that the true "feminine" value of women is her "beauty" (Friedan 17-18). Furthermore, this statement made by Leila's grandmother shows women as agents of patriarchy. Also, women, in this society, were viewed as the weaker sex, or the "Other", who gave power to men which were considered as the "One".

Moreover, Saadawi represents the voiceless women in the society through Leila and her Mother. Leila's mother remains unnamed through the story. She describes her sadness for her daughter's suffering, thinking to herself, "How, my daughter, did you stand so much pain?" (Saadawi 3004). Then she reflects how Leila was capable of doing anything, and how strong she was inside of her making movements inside of her womb "shook me from inside, like a volcano shakes the earth" (Saadawi 3004). All the previous statements we hear from Leila's mother are represented in her own thoughts. Her voice is never heard. In addition, Leila's thought about the corruption of the government are shown when she thinks "And what inner corruption! She wished at that moment they would give her pen and paper so that she could draw that corruption," (Saadawi 3001). Both Leila and her mother are a representation of the women in the society who have no voice. Saadawi portrays their emotions and expressions within the privacy of their thoughts. Their voices are not heard like many other women in the society.

Correspondingly, Leila is told many times by her parents not to get involved in politics. Her mother told her "What's politics got to do with you? You are not a man" then she continues to say girls in her age should only think about marriage (Saadawi 3002). This quote confirms that Leila's mother believes in the limitations society set for women. Instead of encouraging her, she is

following the system's beliefs that the only occupation for a woman is as a "Wife". In one of her books Saadawi mentions the limitations the society set for women in playing a role outside of their domestic environment. She states "a woman's life is very narrow it doesn't step out of the family and the children's issues, it does not live up to the bigger public political and humanistic issues" (Saadawi 148). Also, Leila remembers her father telling her "Politics, my girl, is not for women and girls" (Saadawi 3006). Both her mother and father have become a part of the institutions of patriarchy. An institution that limits and devalues women starting from the family unit to the government and powerful institutions. In the same sense, Leila remembers when she first heard the word court when she was a child from a conversation between her mother and her aunt. Her aunt said "The judge didn't believe me and told me to strip so he could see where I'd been beaten" (Saadawi 3000), and when she refused to strip for a strange man the judge refused her claims and told her to go back to her husband. This shows another patriarchal institution not in support of women which is the "Court and Law". Due to the existence of these hidden mechanisms there is no space for women's resistant. They make it very difficult for women to succeed in their revolutions, unless they get help from the outside it's not possible for them to go against the patriarchal society. This was the case for Leila it was not possible for her to resist with all these institutions the court, law, police, and family holding her back.

Saadawi focuses on how the society views women as sexual objects. One of Leila's rapists told her "This is the way we torture you women—by depriving you of the most valuable thing you possess", and this was followed by Leila's angry response "You fool! The most valuable thing I possess is not between my legs, you're all stupid.

And the most stupid among you is the one who leads you" (Saadawi 3007). This conversation shows that the women in the culture were reduced to bodies. Men only looked at them as sex objects, in order to violate their honor. According to Simon de Beauvoir a woman's body is her enslavement to the species (Ortner 74). Women's body seems to doom her due to the possibility of violating her honor through it. What Leila did by stating her opinion was bringing shame to her family. According to the culture she did not only lose her honor, but in fact, she lost the family's honor.

In light of the men through "In Camera", we notice that they are the only characters who can speak loudly, and exercise their power freely. In the courtroom, the judge often showed his power with his large hammer, and by reading the charges of Leila out loud. Leila's father has two stands and perspectives in the story. At first, when the judge announces loudly that Leila called their leader "Stupid", everyone in the court starts clapping. His heart started to beat quicker when the crowd clapped for what his daughter said. He thought to stand up and say "I'm her father", then he continues to say "Men like us live and die for one moment such as this" (Saadawi 3006). What he means is for others to recognize him and applaud for him. As if for him to be proud of his daughter he needs the people to confirm it, by clapping and congratulating him. He goes on to say that he has suffered pain with her and what happened "Now I have the right to enjoy some of the reward and share in her heroism" (Saadawi 3006). He wants to share that moment of pride, and to enjoy how others praise his daughter once. Soon after this, gossip starts to go around in the court. Things like "They trampled on her honor and on her father's honor" "her poor father" "maybe he can't face people after his honor was violated" (Saadawi 3006). Her father here shows his

ESSAY COMPETITION WINNERS

CONT'D

quick reaction and how he changed from a proud father to one who is ashamed. His thoughts sum up the patriarchal society, instead of sympathizing with his daughter he is ashamed of her. He thinks if she had been a man, he would not be suffering now the way he was. The attitudes the men in the story have towards women is that of their own culture. Women are not honored, they are devalued. They view women as the carrier of the family honor, and by losing it she loses all her value. She is no longer a

full human being, not even a victim, only someone who has brought shame to the family.

Towards the end, the judge and his aides went into the conference chamber. The accusation shifts ironically on the judge because he repeated what Leila said about the leader in the court. He is told that the people applauded because he said in public what is said in private and it was “confirming a fact rather than an accusation” (Saadawi 3007). Moreover, they tell him that the worst label to stick on a man is

“stupid” because it means he’s mindless “That he’s an animal” (Saadawi 3008). Here Saadawi shows that the biggest fear of men is to be called stupid, because it would relate them to animals. As it was mentioned before animals are closer to nature, and men are afraid they will be degraded to it. Because men consider themselves as “Culture” they always need “Nature” to give them a sense of superiority. In the end, Leila is brought back to the place she was before. That’s how the institution of law “the men” exercised

their power over Leila to show her inferiority and confirm their superiority.

In conclusion, Saadawi depicts the patriarchal institutions in the society. She repeats strong implications of criticism through the story towards the government, law, police, and family. Saadawi views women’s devaluation to physical beauty, sex objects, and animals close to nature. She gives voice to the unheard women in the culture by viewing the thoughts of Leila and her mother. Moreover, Leila’s attempts to get into a field

she’s excluded from gets her into trouble. In the eye of the public Leila has brought shame to her family, but in the eyes of the narrator she is a victim of patriarchy. Saadawi makes it clear that it is difficult to triumph through patriarchy with all these obstacles in the way. Leila resisted the system and expressed her thoughts about the corruption, but ended up being raped and sent to prison. For a woman to resist patriarchy is difficult, she needs the help from other institutions to overcome the patriarchal ones.

BETWIXT AND BETWEEN

By Yalda Al-Ani

First year/Sophomore winners

Liminality is a transitional stage in which a person experiences difficulties, nervousness, unpredictability, and intense disorientation as the normal rules of society or reality no longer apply (Abbas). This stage comes between two different stages--a preliminal stage and a postliminal stage--and is a path of transition from the former self to a new identity or personality. Individuals in a liminal stage are referred to as “liminals, that ‘are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial’” (Rumelili).

An example of liminality is the initiation camps in some traditional tribes where

“the boys are taken from their villages and families to a comparatively remote ‘ritual site’ where they are subjected to various ordeals or humiliations and trained by older men” (Trubshaw). The male children are taken between the ages of thirteen and fifteen and kept at the ritual site for weeks or months. The purpose of these camps is to “toughen them up emotionally and physically” (Abbas) and make them ready to take

responsibility, to encounter danger, and be independent. “Often the boys are considered to have died and been reborn as men... Only after completion of the initiation ceremony can the neophyte be eligible for adult relationships such as marriage” (Trubshaw).

In *Night* by Elie Wiesel, Elie was a thirteen-year old boy devoting himself to religious study: “I continued to devote myself to my studies, Talmud during the day and Kabbalah at night” (Wiesel). Even though he was serious, his father told him he needed to be at least thirty “before venturing into the world of mysticism, a world fraught with peril.” Even after the ghetto experience and the torturous train ride, when they arrived at the camp, “Confidence soared..[and they] gave thanks to God” (Wiesel). Arriving at the camp, Elie maintained his faith in God.

Elie entered a liminal stage between naive boyhood and manhood when the selection occurred the first night at Birkenau. First he was separated forever from his mother and sisters. He was terrified when he saw the crematorium chimney. “Over there will be your grave...You sons of bitches!,” Elie was

told (Wiesel). Elie, with the other prisoners, was “stunned and petrified”. The panic he felt made him wonder if this was real or if he was dreaming. He saw humans being treated as badly as insects which people would get rid of. He saw people burned! “Yes, I did see this, with my own eyes...children thrown into the flames” (Wiesel). A thirteen year old boy who had believed God was merciful, saw children being thrown into fire! Elie’s father saw that the world was turned upside down. “Today, everything is possible,” he moaned (Wiesel). His terror, losing his mother and sister, the uncertainty, and pretending to be eighteen made of him an older man.

After the liminal stage of the selection, conflict formed in him about the reality of the merciful God when people were reciting Kaddish. He was wondering why people would thank God. He said, “For the first time, I felt anger rising within me. Why should I sanctify His name? The Almighty, the eternal and terrible Master of the Universe, chose to be silent. What was there to thank Him for?” (Wiesel). The young religious boy whose life was dedicated to

religious studies was angry at God. Actually, he knew the change his personality underwent. When they were beaten and demeaned by the kapos, he realized how he changed. He thought, “I too had become a different person. The student of Talmud, the child I was, had been consumed by the flames. All that was left was a shape that resembled me. My soul had been invaded—and devoured—by a black flame” (Wiesel).

In *Things Fall Apart*, Achebe shows Okonkwo as a strong, successful leader whose courage all people admired. “Okonkwo saw clearly the high esteem in which he would be held, and he saw himself taking the highest title in the land.” He honored his traditions and ancestors and was ready to sacrifice even his children for that. Because the traditions demanded it, he killed his adopted son, Ikemefuna, with his own hands. When his son, Nwoye, converted to Christianity, Okonkwo disowned him and told his other sons “You have all seen the great abomination of your brother. Now he is no longer my son or your brother” (Achebe). Also, as soon as he heard about the white men entering Abame, he said the reason they

could not fight them was that Abame’s people were “weak and foolish” and his people would fight and save their land from those men (Achebe).

Okonkwo went through two liminal stages, transitioning from the tough man who was admired and feared to the man who experienced humiliation and finally made himself an abomination to his traditions. The first began when Okonkwo and the leaders with him were imprisoned by the District Commissioner. When they were invited by him, they thought they might be able to solve the problem through an honorable negotiation. However, they were imprisoned, humiliated and demeaned there in a way they would have never expected. What they went through was even worse than Ibo war. They were deceived and tricked by the white man. The men were depressed and did not know what to do and “even when the men were left alone they found no words to speak to one another” (Achebe). They did not eat and they were not given anything to drink. They were disoriented by how badly they were treated.

ESSAY COMPETITION WINNERS

A SON OF EARTH

By Mohammed Mustafa Imran Haider

As a half Kurdish half Iranian person who was raised in an Iraqi Arabic city (Baghdad) and got a mixed culture of Kurdish and Arabic, Nationality and citizenship were not easy concepts for me to deal with. Actually, it took me years and years to fully understand them or to think as if I did.

It all started with the concepts which they were teaching it to us. The concepts of “loving our homeland”, “loving our country”, and “defending on the land”. These were very regular, normal, and simple for most (if not all) of the students. They may like it and believe in it or they may not like it and simply ignore it because most of them didn’t really think about it seriously. But I was different (or at least I think I was). I simply asked myself, why? Why I should love, defend, and care about a land like any other land? Why would I care about a piece of dirt and sand? People usually answered my questions nearly the same way. They used to say “Because you’ve been born here and this land gave you food protection and life”.

Their answer, however, wasn’t satisfying for me. Actually, it was the opposite.

The answers which people gave me made feel as if being born means being cursed by your country to serve it for your whole life. I thought in that way because my country didn’t give me anything worth mentioning except catastrophic wars and distraction, sounds of bombs and guns, pictures of death blood and sadness. Yet, I got used to all of that. I got used to the pictures which they showed on the TVs. Pictures of areas of conflicts and explosions, pictures of injured, and dead bodies. I got used to the sounds of helicopters, to the American soldiers when they come to our small cities, to their vehicles when they accidentally but carelessly cut the electricity wires of our houses. Again and again. When I say I got used to those things I mean they didn’t make me feel nervous anymore, but it was still an annoying life full of mess and chaos. After all that, a teacher comes to our class to tell

us about loving our home and serving our country.

In the classes of history, they always taught us (and still) about how we “were” a strong nation fearless, and courageous in our battles against the evil, coward enemies of us. How they lost and how we won. I sometimes used to think, did our “enemies” think the same about themselves? what was their aspect of our history, and what does their history say about us? Of course, when they (the educational system) had to mention the times when we were weak and lost, they made sure to show us as the brave angles who fought until the end and to show the enemy as the giant devil. I didn’t attack our history. I was just wondering, what was the point of view of the soldiers of the opposite camp?

These ideas made me realize if I accept these concepts of “you have to love and serve your country where you’ve been born and raised” I’ll just be blinding myself from seeing the reality. If that concept is right, it means there is no bad side and good side in any conflict. It is only a matter

of aspect. Everyone will think he is the right side. There will only be our absolutely right ideas and their pathetically blind ideas. People will only see the good in them and the bad in the others Which is clearly a dangerous illusion. Iranians may tell you how strong their civilization was, an Iraqi will tell you that his land is the origin of civilizations, Egyptian people may tell you how their civilization deserved to be called the mother of all nations, a Saudi will talk to you about the greatness of the emergence of Islam from his land. All proud of things they didn’t do nor helped in doing them at all. They are each proud of the history of their own home, just because they were born in that specified bordered region. It is clear (from my own point of view) that if any of these people were born on different lands, he/she would have a different thing a different history to be proud of. These ideas made me less and less connected to my country, to my land.

When I entered middle school, God willed to be a school full of different students from different

cultures and backgrounds. The first person I met in that school was Christian. His name was Mutaz. And he was the first christen I meet. Actually, he was the first non-Muslim person in my life. There was something very strange about him. He looked exactly like a normal human.

Meeting a lot of different students of from different cultural and religious backgrounds (Sunnis, Shiites, Christians, non-religious, Arabs, Kurdish, a Canadian, and even a British) made me understand more and more about how we (humans) are all similar in nature and close to each other. And how ignorance can make us look different and put us far from understanding the others. Then, I realized the truth about the Arabs, the Kurdish, the Iraqis, the Iranians, the American, the Egyptians, the Saudi and all of the other people from different nationalities and backgrounds. The truth was we are all the same, just with different environments. We are all brothers and sisters, and that

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