

# THE VOICE

Vol 28 Issue 28 2020-07-17

**Online Learning & Cheating**  
Is it Easier to Cheat On Your Online Courses?

**No Body Left Behind**  
Reflections on the Easing of COVID-19 Restrictions

**Inheriting Trauma**  
Epigenetics in Action!

*Plus:*  
*The Instant Fix*  
*Til Debt do Us Part*  
*and much more!*



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# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



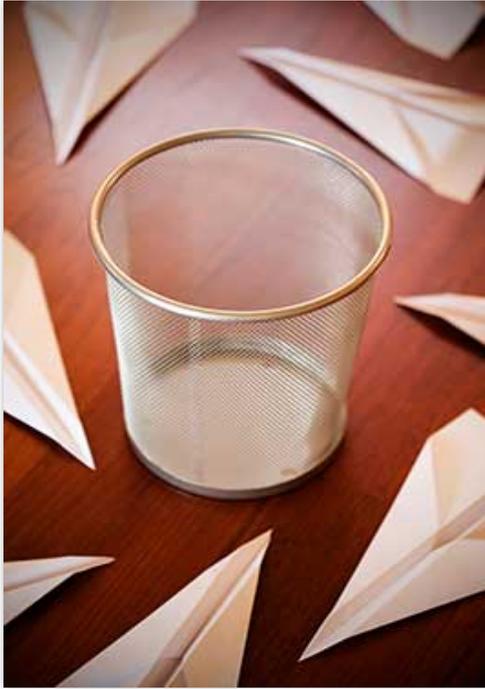
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## Editorial Back To It!

Karl Low



My head has been in the medical space this week, not in small part because part of last week's vacation was spent in hospital (thankfully not as a patient myself, but just being there to support my partner during a small surgery.)

Coming away from that and I see that the debate between physicians and our UCP government is heating up yet again. The Alberta government claims that it simply must reduce the amount of money it spends in the medical space. The AMA offered rates that amounted to about a 5% cut in their overall wages, but that was not good enough for the UCP, in part because it would have made it difficult for them to push forward with their real objective, seeking to provide more room for private enterprise to profit from people being sick.

It's very tempting for governments that have no willingness to tax and no ability to control their ideologic spending on chosen industries, to simply stop providing funding for the services that people need, and hope that the magical fairy of the free markets will sort everything out without needing any financial, or worse, mental resources from them.

Can you tell I'm annoyed?

I make no bones about being of a progressive lean myself, but I usually try to find a fair way to present issues. Unfortunately, there's no angle I can look at the issue of our current medical system and what the UCP government is attempting to do to it that doesn't strike me as the worst of crass self-interest from politicians – right down to the level of possible corruption, as it has been well reported that the current Health Minister, Tyler Shandro, has an interest in a company known as "Shandro Holdings Inc." which is a company that manages employee benefit plans and brokers supplemental health insurance from various providers, including private ones. The ethics commissioner has said there's no issues here since Mr. Shandro's shares are held in a "blind trust", but his wife is the director of the corporation, and he has responded to mail from Shandro Holdings Inc. using his government email.

I'm not sure how it can be considered a blind trust when directorship is held within the same immediate family, but I'm not the ethics commissioner so don't get to make these decisions.

Since then the government has gone on to adjust not just the wages, but the billing codes so as to make it more difficult and not profitable under the public system for public doctors to deal with more complex issues. A cynical person might wonder if there is some sort of ulterior motive for that.

Some physicians have responded by deciding that, since those patients make up a significant number of their cases, it's simply not worth continuing to work in Alberta. Minister Shandro's reaction has been to contact the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Alberta and ask them to somehow put a stop to doctors deciding they no longer want to work. Again, a cynical mind might suggest this is because it's happening too fast, and private industry hasn't had the chance to set up yet so that it can take the dollars of all these people who need medical care, thus making the UCP government look bad. Which, let's be honest, it is.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karl". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping tail on the letter "l".

## Does Online Learning Make Cheating Easier?

Adrienne Braithwaite



As Canadian universities are preparing for virtual learning for the Fall 2020 semester, post-secondary courses are being adapted to fit an online learning environment. Virtual courses present a plethora of challenges for professors, including how to prevent a spike in cheating. Multiple choice tests, online exams and the number of students enrolled in a course can all increase occurrences of academic dishonesty. Cheating can diminish the learning process and, for individual students, lead to expulsion from university. The challenge with trying to discourage cheating is it is caused by a vary of factors and is as much a problem with students' behaviour as it is about testing methods.

### Why students cheat

When and why are students more likely to cheat? Pressure, stress and opportunity are all cited as reasons why cheating might be the rise. Cheating can be as much about the pressure for high marks as it is about having the opportunity to cheat. Statistics indicate over 80% of students (including university students) will cheat at some point during their studies (Woolfolk, Winne & Perry, p100).

Rudy Peariso, a student completing a Master of Distance Education at AU, wrote a thesis about internet facilitated plagiarism: When Online Student Discussions Become Cheating: Perceptions of Academic Integrity (2010). Peariso's (2010) research reveals a growing disconnect between students and academic institutions and what constitutes academic dishonesty when using online platforms. Students engage with course content through chat rooms and social media which can lead to misrepresentation, borrowing of ideas, or accidental plagiarism (Peariso, 2010, p.1). One recommendation to counteract academic dishonesty is to address cheating before it happens; be upfront with expectations and consequences for not handing in original work. Prevention is key and universities can promote awareness about academic integrity and set clear expectations for students' behaviour.

### Is cheating more prevalent in online learning?

A recent CBC article claims there has been an increase in cheating because of the switch to online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Is cheating actually more prevalent in online learning? Studies show students are actually less likely to cheat when participating in online learning than in-person. Online courses might appear to make it easier for students to cheat, but with proctored exams and the absence of peer pressure, students have less opportunity to cheat when participating in independent learning. Online learning reduces the interaction between students which reduces collaborative cheating, the most common way for students to cheat.

### Changing assessment methods can reduce academic dishonesty

Universities can make cheating harder and encourage academic integrity by focusing on preventative measures. One recommendation is for educators to phase out traditional exams in

favour of more authentic assessment methods. All assessment methods present opportunities to cheat, but studies indicate cheating can be reduced by asking students to perform tasks which are meaningful and relevant to them (Harrison, 2020). Authentic assessment includes having students demonstrate their learning through writing, creating, or presenting. In his book Preventing Classroom Discipline Problems: A Classroom Management Handbook, Professor Howard Seeman suggests teachers use short answer questions instead of multiple-choice or true or false questions. Short answer questions require students to synthesize the information they are learning into their own words which reduces the ease of cheating off another student.

### **Building resiliency**

Universities will be making many adjustments to the Fall 2020 semester making student life feel very different than it has in the past. I hope we see universities use this as an opportunity to make positive changes in the way students are assessed and they will consider the unnecessary pressure placed on students to achieve high marks. I believe post-secondary education should be a process and both a time of discovery and transition. Often, we place on ourselves an unnecessary pressure for excellence which can override the experience of learning. As students we can be resilient by acknowledging the pressures of academic studies and knowing when it is time to ask for help. Asking for help is a natural part of the learning process and is how we grow and understand. As a starting place, I recommend AU's e-Lab which offers students tools, resources and tutorials on a wide selection of topics.

### **Further Resources**

Acadia University's 10-minute video on how to avoid plagiarism (2020):

<https://library.acadiau.ca/research/tutorials/you-quote-it-you-note-it.html>

Tips for educators on how to prevent cheating (Seeman, 2003):

[https://www.educationworld.com/a\\_curr/profdev/profdev045.shtml](https://www.educationworld.com/a_curr/profdev/profdev045.shtml)

Online Education and Authentic Assessment by Douglas Harrison (2020)

<https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2020/04/29/how-discourage-student-cheating-online-exams-opinion>

AU's Student Academic Misconduct Policy:

[http://calendar.athabascau.ca/undergrad/current/student-code/index.php#acad\\_misconduct](http://calendar.athabascau.ca/undergrad/current/student-code/index.php#acad_misconduct)

“Fostering resilience among students: a little stress goes a long way” (2018) Kim Hellemans  
*University Affairs*

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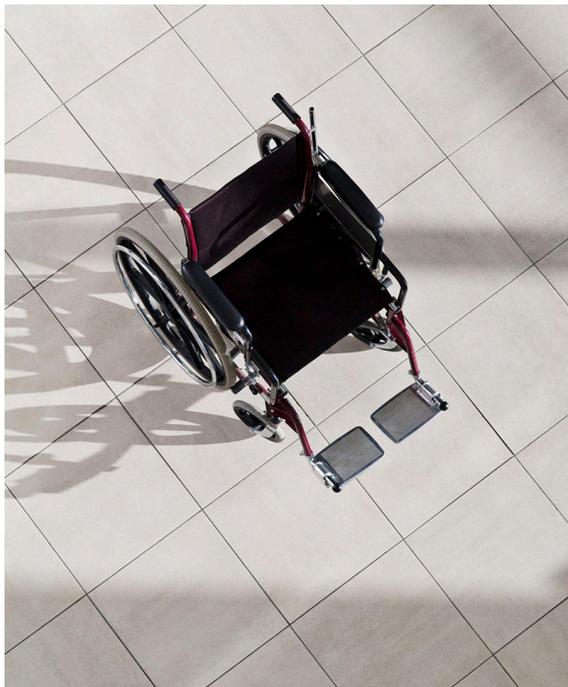
*Adrienne Braithwaite is completing her After-Degree in Secondary Education at AU. She has a passion for literacy and cultural studies and hopes to pass on her enthusiasm to secondary students in the future.*



## No Body Left Behind

### Reflections on the Easing of COVID-19 Restrictions

Natalia Iwanek



Throughout this pandemic, I have found myself becoming increasingly preoccupied with societal attitudes and inadequate medical standards.

Amongst those who comprise the chronically ill, the disabled, the elderly, the “essential” but expendable, the migrant, and the poor, there is a sense of being sacrificed for economic reasons. I am angry at the dismissiveness of precautions, at the refusal to wear masks, and at the flippancy with which people refer to the small percentage of those who may die. Newspaper headlines debate who is truly worthy of care, while lifesaving medications are becoming inaccessible due to hoarding. I am part of this small percentage whose immune system is not strong enough to risk COVID-19 and whose monthly medication supply remains precarious. My anger stems from knowing the ease with which society has finally found the means to become increasingly accessible in educational and job opportunities and the fear that it will just as easily be taken away. I am also envious that life continues for

most, while my isolation remains.

Increased reports of people unable to recover fully from COVID-19 within prescribed timelines rings eerily true of my journey to diagnosis and treatment, as doctors fought amongst each other, disagreeing as to why I continued to deteriorate despite their standards. Many of us exist in a liminal space, not quite fitting into outdated regulations and inadequate research, while growing sicker by the day. The medical system’s failure to keep up with rapidly evolving illnesses and the sheer magnitude of the COVID pandemic fills me with fear for those affected.

I often joke that I came out twice in my life, first as queer, and recently, as disabled. However, this laughter is often a coping mechanism. For many, coming out is often difficult and traumatic, as individuals are forced to choose between living one’s truth and, if possible, living in the relative safety, but also shame, of denial. Coming out can also often lead to violence and loss of community. I have struggled for years with queer identity in the Eastern European diaspora, and now I struggle coming out into hyper-visibility as a cane user in my thirties. Although my health had been deteriorating for many years, it truly fell apart in 2018.

But humans have an incredible capacity for survival, and somehow we rebuild and continue to rebuild despite tragedy and complications. Despite the joy I feel as the world began to open up to me once again, it is simultaneously devastating, not as a result of my illness, but by the constant societal reminder that I am less than, that I am somehow damaged and broken.

I sense my presence causing discomfort, as friends drift away and strangers refuse to make eye contact in public spaces. As if my state were too much of a reminder of the fragility of life and of our bodies, that we can all become disabled in an instant, that we will all age, that we will all die. As if disability were something to be ashamed of. As if disabled bodies were not a source of pride, a source of joy, a source of beauty. Despite the struggles, I am fortunate because I am surrounded by those who broke my fall and provided me with shelter and safety. I am fortunate

because, despite what I have endured, my privilege has allowed me to make it this far. And slowly I make my home in this new, albeit changed, body with a newfound understanding and respect.

My education continues thanks to Athabasca's online format and ProctorU. Many chronically ill and disabled students are often forced to discontinue their education as a result of lack of accommodations, exclusion, and bullying. Years earlier, I had to leave school because of health; this time, my education continues around my medical schedule.

When I began my freelance career, I made the decision not to hide my illness, fully aware that it would affect my hire rate, that people would doubt my competence or my ability to be productive. Although this body allows for many things, it does not allow for a typical job. Those who require accommodations deserve flexibility to contribute in our own way, to sustain ourselves and lift ourselves out of the endless cycle of poverty and systemic abuse that illness and disability often bring. Despite this knowledge, I often hide how ill I truly am, as I continue to produce work, not only to support myself, but also, subconsciously, to prove that my life has value. A lifetime of societal and internalized ableism under a labour-centric economic system is difficult to overcome.

July is National Disability Month in the United States, a movement that has spread unofficially to Canada as well. According to Statistics Canada, disabled individuals make up 22% of Canada's working age population and 6.2 million Canadians live with at least one disability. Despite varied bodies, minds, and experiences, we are the world's largest minority, and our voices matter.

### **Models of Disability**

Various models of disability exist, two of which include the medical model and the social model. The medical model links an individual's disability with the limitations caused by physiological or cognitive health problems, often characterized as deficiency or abnormality, and seen as something that must be treated or cured. In contrast, many disability justice advocates and individuals subscribe to the social model of disability, which sees society as disabling individuals from full participation through a lack of accommodations.

### **Increasing Economic Struggles**

The majority of chronically ill and disabled Canadians live well under the poverty line. Disability benefits are often difficult to obtain and keep recipients in a cycle of poverty. In Ontario, the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) is \$1,169 per month, while many others survive on Ontario Works (OW), where a single person receives \$733 per month with a \$200 exemption before the government begins clawing back 50% of earnings. ODSP has not been substantially raised for decades and both programs fall under the poverty line. The government has only recently eased restrictions on assets, with a limit of \$10,000 for OW and \$40,000 for ODSP. 1.6 million Canadians with disability are unable to afford required prescriptions, aids, and devices. In many countries, those who get married are further penalized, often resulting in unequal power dynamics and abusive situations.

Pre-pandemic, these amounts were almost impossible to live on in most Canadian cities, including major cities, with their close proximity to hospitals, appointments, and specialists. During this pandemic, CERB and CESB payments from the federal government have been treated like income for ODSP and OW recipients, with 50% of the provided amounts cut back from ODSP and OW payments after the first \$200, despite rising food and household supply costs, special diets, medications, and inaccessible transit, while many are simply ineligible.

## Disability History

The long and complex history of the disabled community is often difficult to track, as many individuals were simply excluded from the historical record. The record does include the barring of “undesirables” or those who could not support themselves (Nielsen 100) during immigration and industrialization, the rise of forced sterilization and increased institutionalization (Nielsen 66), and the so-called “ugly laws” seen in the United States in which forbid “any person who is diseased, maimed, mutilated or deformed in any way, so as to be an unsightly or disgusting object, to expose himself to public view.”

Despite successes and society’s proclamations of progress – especially increased rights, deinstitutionalization, and independent living movements, and overlap with the civil rights, queer, and feminist movements (Nielsen 160–162) – a great deal remains the same, including the criminalization of any sort of apparent difference in the eyes of society, including disability, mental illness, poverty, and skin colour.

When the disabled community is represented, it is often as a source of derision, as a source of pity, or as a foil to abled-bodied individuals. Often, the disabled community, in its countless manifestations, is expected to be inspiring and motivational, as opposed to simply being human. We are all familiar with the countless inspirational memes that ask, “What’s your excuse?” juxtaposed with an image of someone in a wheelchair performing extraordinary feats. The implications are clear; disability is only acceptable if it inspires, reduced to simply existing for the sole purpose of making abled bodied individuals grateful for their lives. It also implies that disabled individuals could “overcome,” if only we truly made an effort.

In her memoir, *Falling for Myself*, Canadian author Dorothy Ellen Palmer sums this up succinctly as she reveals the “real function of inspiration porn: to assert narrative control. Ableism only accepts two stories: disabled people can either die quietly or ‘individually triumph over’ disability ... [It] cunningly plants the lie that all disabled people can individually overcome disability, if they really want to, if they just work hard enough, it absolves people of any responsibility to see systemic ableism, or to fight it with us” (Palmer 180).

The constant reminder that you do not belong, that you are less than, that you should not take up space remains. I feel this acutely when I leave my home; as if I dared to break some sort of code that people like me should be hidden from public view, so our bodies do not offend. I have found myself being addressed in infantilizing voices; I have well-meaning, but ultimately harmful, people taking away my agency by deciding for me that I need help, as opposed to simply asking. I have struggled with the term disabled, as a result of my own internalized ableism, the privilege of living many years in an able, albeit, rapidly changing body. I struggle to this day, feeling as if I do not deserve to claim it at times; despite the fact, every aspect of my life has been altered, despite the fact that the world is now full of limitations and accessibility concerns.

## The Disability Justice Movement

As a movement, disability justice evolved from work by the queer disabled community of colour, including members of Sin Invalid, a disability justice-based performance project, who stress, “Disability exists in every sector of society: in immigrant communities, in prisons, in religious and spiritual communities, among veterans and homeless folks, among children and elders and everyone in between, so every movement has to advance disability justice, and vice versa.”

Chronically ill and disabled individuals are often treated as an afterthought, a burden on able-bodied society, despite transcending age, race, ethnicity, and gender. Disability justice means justice for all. Our pandemic has truly brought our shortcoming as a society to the forefront. We live in a society in which our judicial systems continue to fail to tackle issues of race, poverty,

mental illness, and disability without resorting to violence. Nearly half of all those killed by police in the United States are disabled, with a majority, people of colour, with systemic problems apparent in Canada as well. Our economic system is on the brink of collapse from consumers simply buying only necessities during the pandemic, and many of us live one paycheque away from financial ruin. As a society, we continue to prioritize individualism initiatives over the health and lives of the most vulnerable in society. We vote in governments that defund education, health care, and social safety nets, that refuse to create increased rehabilitation services, safe injection sites, and access to therapy, but prop up transnational companies and violent institutions.

Cries of “all lives matter” coupled with the refusal to wear masks and vaccinate to protect vulnerable communities, despite the knowledge that Black and Indigenous lives in Canada face disparate rates of systemic violence and medical racism, especially those who are disabled and trans. These communities are dying from COVID-19 at disproportionate rates as a result of historical and current systems of oppression. Calls for straight pride month and white pride month, without understanding that prides exist to celebrate triumphs and acknowledge struggles, many of which continue to this day. Human rights for those most marginalized in our communities does not equal less rights for the majority. Only when dominant power structures celebrate and protect all lives will the need for pride affirming the very right to exist become superfluous. Refusing to acknowledge the struggles and celebrations of the overlapping disabled, queer, and BIPOC communities simply reinforces the idea that, in our society, many lives do not matter.

When those individuals who refuse to wear masks speak of their rights and freedoms being taken away with thoughtless comparisons to oppression and tyranny, I wonder if this is the first time, many have been told that the world is not theirs for the taking. As the closure of the world's borders have shown, passport privilege exists, and like many of the world's citizens, Canadians now acutely sense the absence of ease with which we crossed borders for vacations and relied on the global South for resources. For the majority of the world's citizens, borders are obstacles, and often-terrifying ones.

As a society, we need to come from a place of believing those who come forward, whether those facing health issues, or women during #MeToo, or those currently in #BlackLivesMatter. We know how difficult and unforgiving this world can be, so when someone confides that they are being harmed, we believe them. Believe survivors; believe women when they are in pain, in particular Black and Indigenous women who die in disproportionate rates because of medical racism. Despite my privileges, I too was dismissed and undiagnosed for years, until my illness rapidly progressed.

### **Moving Forward**

I ask those who have spent these four months of these pandemic-living-modified, increasingly impoverished and uncertain lives, to understand that this is daily reality for many chronically ill and disabled individuals. Keep in mind the added uncertainty and fear brought by this pandemic, and lack of adequate medical care that has exacerbated the situation for many.

Although I am angry, I am not bitter, and I continue, because my life has value, as do the countless lives of those in our communities. We are all worthy and pointing out difference is not, as some say negativity and divisiveness; pointing out difference and inequity is hope because it gives us the option to redress historical and current injustices. Change is not possible, until we first acknowledge that our society is fundamentally flawed.

So I say, go enjoy your summers and your lives, but remember that this pandemic has not ended. I am not asking you to feel guilty, only mindful and careful. Remember those of us at home who do not cannot as easily access the often unearned privileges that many enjoy. I only wish to be protected and included in fair and equitable ways, which is what everyone deserves.

I leave you all with a quote I often think of during these uncertain days. Above a photograph of Black disabled activist and artist Leroy Moore, one of the founders of Sins Invalid, a caption reads, “All bodies are unique and essential. All bodies are whole. All bodies have strengths and needs that must be met. We are powerful not despite the complexities of our bodies, but because of them. We move together, with no body left behind. This is disability justice.”

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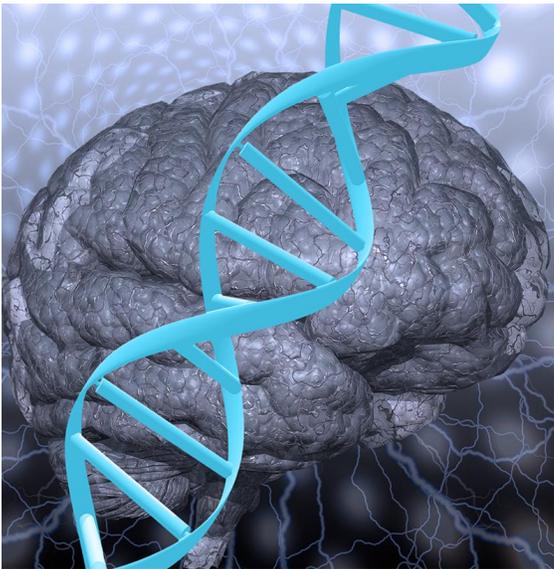
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## Inheriting Trauma Exploring Intergenerational Consequences

**Alek Golijanin**



The ripples of trauma are like the ripples of tsunamis: they both eventually recede, but not without creating long-lasting damage. In humans, these ripples are the lived experiences, particularly the traumatic ones, of our ancestors, and it may have contributed to some of our psychological and behavioral dispositions. Research indicates that trauma can be inherited over multiple generations, so it might be time that we adopted a type of trauma lens as we look for answers to today’s mental health crisis.

### **The Uniqueness of Trauma and Its Intergenerational Consequences**

What makes trauma unique is that it is rooted in how a person experiences an event, and not in the event which occurs. Trauma happens when an individual experiences a distressing situation that threatens their sense of safety or security (CAMH, 2020). These events can range from violent to non-violent, but they are best described as a body/mind experience. Because of this, no two people experience trauma the same way, and so each experience of trauma is as unique as a fingerprint.

It is believed that trauma is inheritable, and that it can be passed down multiple generations and the connection to mental health and overall well-being is undeniable. One of the first documented examples of inherited trauma occurred in Canada during the mid-1960s. Children whose parents were Holocaust survivors were being referred to child psychiatrists in disproportionate numbers. This was happening three times more frequently than the number of children referred from parents who had not encountered trauma during the war.

Inherited trauma can be the result of varying situations, including extreme poverty, domestic abuse, sexual abuse, and slavery. What adds to the mystery is how some individuals seem to sail through life's adversities almost unaffected, while others appear to be more vulnerable when things go wrong. Scientists are still exploring these connections and it is believed that they are linked to different gene combinations (Yehuda, 2015).

### **How Trauma Is Embedded in The Canadian Identity**

In 2017 we celebrated Canada's 150<sup>th</sup> birthday, approximately five generations removed from the proclamation of Confederation on July 1, 1867. If we look deeper into those 150 years, many of them were rife with hardships such as famine and war. Of the immigration waves that happened to create the Canadian fabric throughout those 150 years, many of them were rooted in seeking refuge and the pursuit of a better life, but all of them carried trauma. This may serve as one explanation to the findings that were put forward by the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, that more than 6.7 million Canadians struggle with mental illness and that one in two Canadians have – or have had – a mental illness by the time they reach 40 years of age.

Canada has a rich history of providing hope to hopeless immigrants; a land that has been largely populated by immigrants over time, it continues to provide that shelter to families fleeing warzones. The current approach to aiding newcomers focuses on ensuring access to the essentials such as shelter, food, and clothes. This is believed to be the formula for success when diagnosing the immediate needs of any newcomer. But the problem with it is that it ignores the long-term needs of newcomers. It seems there is a link between trauma and mental health, and our current approach fails to consider that traumatic experiences may be biologically inheritable (Yehuda, 2015).

The World Health Organization has stated on record that the world is on the verge of a mental health crisis. Without a comprehensive approach that prioritizes social support networks and simplifies access to services, this crisis will overwhelm us.

### **The Best-Case Scenario**

Even though we live in volatile, unpredictable, complex, and ambiguous times, we can breathe a sigh of relief because it is possible to free oneself from the bondage of trauma. The key is to identify the root of the trauma, often found in one's family history. Once identified, it is important to have an experience that is powerful enough to override that trauma response and to keep practicing those feelings. The purpose of this response is to break the sequence of events that are linked to the trauma by weakening the foundation on which the trauma cycle operates.

It may be that the best way to view traumas is as stories that need exploring. Through the exploration of these stories one can bring an end to the story of trauma, and so then can begin to write new stories of oneself.

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## The Instant Fix

Julie Day



Scrolling through Instagram one day, I realized that the feed that I so diligently limited to people I really cared about seemed to be shrinking under the volume of ads. The “gravity defying” sports bra, anti-aging magic cream, fountain of youth elixir, tools for creating the world’s greatest selfie and the list went on.

What became shocking was how many times I was checking out an adorable picture of my niece or a video of my nephew practicing his soccer skills, then, bam!, three minutes later, my brain was telling me that I could permanently remove my neck wrinkles with the power of a super-cream! “*Could that actually work?*” I considered pensively.

We live in an instant-world. Instant coffee, instant photos, insta... gram. What happened to contentment? According to Merriam-Webster, contentment is: “*the quality or state of being contented.*” Contented: “*feeling or showing satisfaction with one’s possessions, status, or situation.*” When was the last time you felt truly contented?

Being content used to be a virtue. Oh man, that makes me feel like a Granny, complaining about how the world has changed. I understand that, nowadays, contentment can be seen as a buzzword for apathy, for turning a blind eye, for being satisfied with the status quo. That doesn’t work in today’s political climate and I don’t suggest that it should. Still, however ambitious, however driven, however “girl/boy boss” you are, could there be a piece missing? When does the striving cease? There is a point at which the human soul must come to rest.

Last night, a movie I was watching finished and I left the TV on. Suddenly I found myself enraptured with a sort of vacuous twilight zone called, “Real Housewives of Beverly Hills”. Someone who once resembled Denise Richards was agitated that her teenaged daughter had called her out for her loud laughter over a threesome. I she wagged her finger at her “bad influence” friends. I was captivated by her face. Paralyzed as it was, I couldn’t tell if the Wild Things actress was really angry. Why did it appear to hurt to speak through her protruding lips? I was captivated, I couldn’t look away.

She was one of the most stunning actresses in her prime. Now, plastic surgery has stolen all traces of “aging gracefully.” Every day on social media, I am told the same thing about myself: you’re not pretty enough, “old” isn’t beautiful, your lips are too thin and your eyebrows move too much when you talk and the Mariana Trench on your forehead... giiirrl! Do something about that!

My mom just turned 69, and I think she’s still beautiful. Her hair is coming in a classy white-silver colour and my Dad still calls her, “the prettiest girl he has ever seen”.

For a moment, let’s just close our eyes, take a deep breath, and think about what it would feel like to stop striving. No, not give up all your goals. Just to rest. To look in the mirror and see someone complete and not lacking in anything. Grateful for who we are and proud of those hard-earned

wrinkles—especially the ones made from smiles and laughter and empathy and joy. Would the ads streaming constantly past our pupils shrink to nothing with our disengagement?

I scroll back to my beautiful niece on Instagram. She just got her long, thick, rich brown locks chopped to donate to Wigs for Kids. I'm so thankful that she is being raised to resist vanity in the name of greater good. My heart would be set at ease if I knew she could look in the mirror with her pixie cut bob and see nothing but pure perfection. A powerful young girl, not lacking in anything.

I am so grateful. And gratitude may just be discontentment's instant fix.



## The Study Dude

### Four Tips for Life—Changing Study Habits

Marie Well



Do you want to get a degree, or do you want to get a degree, a new wardrobe, a bigger home library, and a host of new skills? By making tiny tweaks to your habits, you can do more than this. You can even double—or triple—your study time—in no time—and reward yourself handsomely.

James Clear, author of the bestseller *Atomic Habits* tells us how to make tiny tweaks to our habits for big changes. Here's a taste of his book:

#### Tip #1: The students who stick to studies get the degrees.

According to *Atomic Habits*, “changes that seem small and unimportant at first will compound into remarkable results if you're willing to stick with them for years” (3%). If you stick with your studies, you're bound to get your degree.

Even when you're an amateur, stick with developing your skills. One day, it'll dawn on you that you've leapt from newbie to master. James Clear says, “Small changes often appear to make no difference until you cross a critical threshold. The most powerful outcomes of any compounding process are delayed. You need to be patient” (9%). Ice stays icy at temperatures below zero. But as soon as the temperature rises above zero, the ice starts to melt. It crosses a critical threshold. You can cross a similar critical threshold from a novice to master student. Just keep studying.

#### Tip #2: But don't do the same old. Up your game a notch every day.

James Clear argues, “if you can get 1 percent better each day for one year, you'll end up thirty-seven times better by the time you're done. Conversely, if you get 1 percent worse each day for one year, you'll decline nearly down to zero” (5%).

At university, I felt pumped when I got near perfect grades in most every math course I took. So, I strove to up my game: whenever I walked from class to class, I'd memorize what I'd just learned. I set out to minimize or eliminate any idle thought.

I also got crafty with note-taking. During lectures, if the professor recited a list, I would quickly come up with an acronym and jot it in the margin. I'd also circle anything in my notes I thought would be on the exam, such as when the professor slowed down her speech or raised her voice. To ensure I was actively listening, I'd scribble down the lectures word for word, but often with symbols and abbreviations, such as "b/c" instead of "because" or "~" for "similar to."

Seek any edge you can find to make yourself a better student. Do mental rehearsal as you walk to your car. Memorize your lectures as you fall asleep. You'll become a brainy rock star when you fill up every moment with academic, professional, or personal development. Isn't that the goal of top performers?

Imagine studying a mere one minute more each day for a year. By the end of the year, you would be studying 6 hours and 5 minutes more each day. Now, imagine studying five minutes more each day for a month. By the end of the month, you would be studying 2 ½ hours more each day.

Ah, little changes add up big time. Why not add 5 minutes of studies each day for two weeks and watch what magic happens. That's 1 hour and 10 minutes more you'll spend studying.

*Atomic Habits* states, "Accomplishing one extra task is a small feat on any given day, but it counts for a lot over an entire career. The effect of automating an old task or mastering a new skill can be even greater. The more tasks you can handle without thinking, the more your brain is free to focus on other areas" (6%).

### **Tip #3: Study hard or pay the price. Make a habit contract.**

According to James Clear, "Just as governments use laws to hold citizens accountable, you can create a habit contract to hold yourself accountable. A habit contract is a verbal or written agreement in which you state your commitment to a particular habit and the punishment that will occur if you don't follow through. Then you find one or two people to act as your accountability partners and sign off on the contract with you, says James Clear (2018, 55%).

Inspired by this, I created a habit contract in Excel. Across the top row, I listed six tasks along with the minimum time I intended to spend per task on any given day. Underneath that row, I listed how much I'd pay my friend if I didn't do each task. For instance, if I didn't spend a minimum of 15 minutes on design, I owed my friend \$1. I entered how much I owed my friend in each column (either \$0, \$1—or \$5 for bigger tasks).

So far, the habit contract has worked like a charm. I've quickly become twice as productive. You can make a habit contract to help you stay focused on your studies, too. Say you want to study for three hours minimum a day. In your habit contract, you can commit to pay your spouse or child \$1 for every 15 minutes you skip on studies.

With my habit tracker, if my list of tasks is too easy to finish, I add a new task. My goal is to make my time so well-spent that I have no time for idle thoughts.

You can also make a habit contract where you reward yourself \$1.00 for every 30 minutes extra you spend on a task. Put that reward in a savings account and plan to buy something spectacular. Your productivity will skyrocket.

James wisely advises, "Once a habit has been established, however, it's important to continue to advance in small ways. These little improvements and new challenges keep you engaged" (61%).

**Tip #4: Make friends with boredom.**

“What do the really successful people do that most don’t? ... At some point it comes down to who can handle the boredom of training every day, doing the same lifts over and over and over,” says James Clear (2018, 62%).

When I scored the top grade in most every math class, I lead a dull life. All I did was study math in silence. I had no social life outside of tutoring friends in math. One of my friends would talk about her passion for some math topic. Another guy would draw 2D polygons on the chalkboard. I didn't feel any of that passion for math, although I wish I did. My only passion was getting a perfect test grade, which I often achieved. And I did so in sheer boredom.

Make friends with boredom, and you'll achieve your goals. James Clear (2018) says, “stepping up when it’s annoying or painful or draining to do so, that’s what makes the difference between a professional and an amateur” (63%).

But you can sprinkle in fun, too. For every hour you spend on studies, follow up with fifteen minutes of a hobby or skill development.

With that said, I challenge you to commit to a social contract—and reap the rewards. Why just get a degree when you can get a degree, a new wardrobe, and a host of new skills? Indulge—because you earned it!

*Reference*

Clear, James. (2018). *Atomic Habits: An Easy and Proven Way to Build Good Habits & Break Bad Ones: Tiny Changes, Remarkable Results*. New York, NY: Avery. [Kindle]. Retrieved from amazon.ca.



## Scholarship of the Week

Digging up scholarship treasure for AU students.

**Scholarship name:** Yes 2 Me Scholarship Program

**Sponsored by:** Schizophrenia Society of Alberta

**Deadline:** July 30, 2020

**Potential payout:** up to \$2000

**Eligibility restriction:** Applicants must be residents of Alberta, currently enrolled in a post-secondary education program in Alberta, with one or more terms completed, and be diagnosed with schizophrenia.

**What's required:** A completed online [application form](#), including academic and financial information, a minimum 500-word essay about you, your recovery, and your goals, and a reference contact (who must also complete a separate online [reference form](#).)

**Tips:** Read the [Scholarship Criteria](#) carefully.

**Where to get info:** [www.schizophrenia.ab.ca/](http://www.schizophrenia.ab.ca/)



## Student Sizzle — AU's Hot Social Media Topics

### Following What's Hot around AU's Social Media Sites.



#### **AthaU Facebook Group**

Selena wonders how to find out a course's exam layout; responders point to several possible places to find it. Several posts about what's up with paper exams and how/when to request/take an online exam. Melissa asks about the rule for multiple assignments submitted close together; an AU tutor jumps in with specific info on marking timelines.

Other posts include student loans, overwhelming course loads, MAIS programs, assignment formats, and course registrations requiring prof approval.

#### **reddit**

A cluster of course-specific posts on COMM 243, ECOM 320, FNCE 401, MATH 265, and MATH 315.

#### **Twitter**

@AthabascaU tweets: "Enter to win 1 of 5 [#PowerEDbyAU](#) courses! Here's how: Once you completed Navigating Extraordinary Times from [#PowerEDbyAU](#), you're able to claim a badge that you can share with your network. [t.co/HWtHBI3EHD](https://t.co/HWtHBI3EHD)."

@austudentsunion tweets: "We know it's stressful trying to manage your studies, work, family, and deal with a pandemic. We want to help. AUSU students can get FREE prescription delivery, anywhere in Canada and savings on pharmacy costs. Switching over is fast and easy. <https://bit.ly/2Y0tZul> [#igo2AU](#)."

## The Struggling Student Rants Till Debt Do Us Part

**Angela Pappas**



Typical Western society refuses to talk about money in its raw form. We may discuss the abstract concept of wealth and the financial state of our local economies, but when it comes down to the nitty-gritty we have learned to zip it. This topic, just like politics and sex, is so taboo we won't even discuss it at the dinner table, even amongst our family and friends. This is where I like to jump in and shake things up a bit, whether it's at five-o'clock cocktails with coworkers, the annual barbecue with friends and family, or even a highly-politicized convention filled with mundane small talk and niceties. It's not that I like to be a shit-disturber—well, depending on my mood I do, but

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that's irrelevant—it's that I'm genuinely interested in the topic of finances, budgeting, and building wealth.

I don't see a better or faster way of reaching billionaire status other than talking about it with others, without holding back. By talking about it, you can compare, take notes, and see where they gained the most and where they went wrong, so you don't repeat the same mistakes. What value is there in meeting people from different walks of life if you can't walk away from a conversation knowing you learnt something worthwhile, that you can utilize. So, a word of warning: don't be surprised if we ever meet in person and I start talking salaries, household budgets, or ask what you think of the current financial state in your industry. Sure, I'll engage in small talk, for a maximum of five minutes; however, if you try to change the topic on me, I will walk away from any uninspiring chit-chat, sooner rather than later. Ain't nobody got time for that.

Most people I've encountered tend to avoid these topics with fervour; I sometimes get the feeling they would prefer to be the object of a firing squad. During my younger years I couldn't understand why people I knew well would much rather exchange recipes or talk about the weather than discuss about what's good for their pockets.

I've listened to countless hours of coworkers sharing way too much information about their relationships or baby-daddy drama, all the while smiling and listening with patience. But the minute business ideas, stock market picks, salary ranges, and emergency funds are brought up everyone looks like deer staring at headlights or remembers they have somewhere to be. It took me years to understand the root of this reaction. The reality is, money and finances provoke extreme emotions. It's not about "money" at all, very few people find plastic sheets of paper, accounting classes, or numbers on a screen intriguing... it's more about self-worth. You either have six or seven figures in the bank and are ashamed to spend it however your heart desires in fear of being taken advantage of or seen as "that rich bastard," or you barely scrape by and are ashamed or fear being labelled a "lazy bum" or "lower class." Our society has, unfortunately, made us believe that the difference between being a wonderful person vs. an asshole is often determined just by how much cash you carry.

I understand not wanting to discuss your monthly grocery budget with the kid at the Tim Hortons drive-thru but what happens when you don't discuss finances with a love interest, a relationship in its early stages, or your other half? It could be either because you yourself are the culprit and avoid the topic. It could also be that any attempts at discussing these matters with your partner results in avoidance, miscommunication, or even a full-blown argument. Hearing about couples separating due to non-stop arguing about the in-laws, infidelity, or who does the dishes isn't out of the ordinary. We've all heard about it and possibly been through it. What we don't hear about very often are the epic fights between couples arguing over finances, despite knowing that it happens amongst most families, behind closed doors.

Dew (2011), alongside a few others, have researched the matter to a great extent. Dew noted that, "because researchers only began earnestly studying the association between normative financial issues ... and relationships in the early 1990s, ... very few studies have examined whether these

issues are [directly] linked to divorce" (p. 555). Dew (2007) also mentions that consumer debt tends to predict any increases in arguments (pp. 89–104) and that, "because consumer debt leads to less choice, spouses may argue about the desirability, necessity, and practicality of assuming debt ... [which can] strain marriages ... especially if one spouse assumes the debt despite the objection of the other" (p. 93). Amato and Rogers (1997) also revealed that jealousy and spending money foolishly lead to divorce much quicker compared to other variables they used in their research, such as irritating habits and drinking or drug use (p. 620). The overall theme, among these researchers, seems to be that fighting over money affects a marriage way more than fighting over other issues. It's easier for Jill to forgive Jack for having to attend Aunt Betty's horrible annual BBQ's and dealing with the family insults, rather than Jack spending Jill's lifetime savings to buy that Porsche he's been drooling over.

It makes sense to me, then, to have these discussions earlier on in the relationship and without holding back, before it's too late to back out of any arrangement. Rose-coloured glasses aside, all relationships are arrangements, a type of give and take. It's better to enter into any arrangement or partnership cognizant of who you're dealing with, rather than waking up and discovering ten years down the line that the other person has completely different beliefs, values, and strategies than you do, or that they have none at all. The other person may simply feel that living life day by day is what it's all about.

There's nothing wrong with that—Hakuna Matata as Pumba and Simone says. What is wrong, however, is not making informed choices, which means we must learn to talk openly about money. If you're not yet comfortable discussing finances on a first date, that's normal. Just don't shy away, before walking down the aisle, from discussing both of your debt loads, savings and retirement accounts, and, most importantly, the other person's finance strategy—how they view and deal with money. Prior to these conversations and before you make your final decision, you should always watch, listen, and observe the other person's actions, reactions, and words, that is, as soon as you stop grinning like a fool every time they text you.

The question, then, is how to observe and what to look for. Do they take two-month vacations in Fiji every six months, while working part-time hours as a Pokémon connoisseur? There's obviously something else going on here. Are they Chief Financial Officer at a Fortune 500

## AU-thentic Events Upcoming AU Related Events

### **Bannock and a Movie July Edition - Inuit and Inuk Stories**

July 1 to July 31

Online

Hosted by AU Nukskahtowin  
[news.athabascau.ca/events/bannock-and-a-movie-inuit-inuk-stories](https://news.athabascau.ca/events/bannock-and-a-movie-inuit-inuk-stories)

Access through above link

### **The Grad Lounge**

Fri, July 24, 1:00 to 2:00 pm MDT

Online via Microsoft Teams

Hosted by AU Faculty of Graduate Studies

[fgs.athabascau.ca/news/events/index.php](https://fgs.athabascau.ca/news/events/index.php)

No pre-registration necessary; access through above link

### **2020 AUSU By-election**

#### **Call for nominations**

July 24 to August 7, 2020

[www.ausu.org/governance/elections/](https://www.ausu.org/governance/elections/)

Visit above link for more information

*All events are free unless otherwise noted.*

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company but refuse to order the overcharged Chateaubriand, because it goes against their principles? In that case, feel free to stay, if you enjoy the *Little House on the Prairies* minimalist lifestyle. Both types may seem attractive, or even entertaining, but they obviously have issues that have not yet surfaced, and you need to be fully aware of these before you commit. If you think love conquers all and trumps money any day of the week, you're either inexperienced or a plain fool. I guarantee the butterflies in your stomach won't be there when you two decide to move in together and discover they like to splurge on a \$10 kids' meal at McDonalds on a Friday night, in their high-rise penthouse, while you prefer weekends in Vegas—or vice versa. Or imagine moving in with a person who makes six figures, only to discover they refuse to order pizza more than once every six months, "because we got food at home and it's a waste of money." True story... I'm frugal enough as it is, but nobody messes with my pizza!

There are as many different personality types, when dealing with financial behaviour, as there are creepy-crawlies in my neighbour's compost bin. Everyone is different within their habits, inherent behaviours, and external influences, no matter how strong-willed of a personality they are. External influences include things such as meddling family, personal financial savvy, peer pressure and behaviour (you are who you hang out with), susceptibility to advertising, marital status, income levels, and the list goes on. However, Donnelly et al. (2012) explain that the root of all these problems stems from the fact that people tend to fall into three broad financial personality types: those who save; those who borrow; and those who buy compulsively (p. 1129).

Those who save tend to be hardwired to equate financial stability with survival. These people are fixated on saving, meeting financial goals, and avoiding future financial problems. Their main concern is making enough money to pay the bills, pay off any debts, and save for retirement. This is because having enough [money] means the difference between a luxurious lifestyle; a comfortable lifestyle; paying the bills and putting food on the table; or ending up homeless. While decades-old, Goldberg & Lewis (1978) still make a valid argument in noting that, "The more money [these types of people] have, the more confident they feel in coping with the "dangerous" world around them. Money helps to stave off anxiety. It becomes an emotional lifejacket, a bulletproof vest, a security blanket" (p. 86). This safety-compulsion can turn into paranoia and an obsessive, uncontrollable craving without even realizing it, staved off by refusing to even to buy necessities. I've personally witnessed these personality types, sometimes up close and sometimes from a distant social circle, and I say with conviction that while these self-proclaimed wealth-hounds may genuinely be content with the cash under their mattress their family is not. Everything in moderation, as Aristotle so truthfully said.

On the other side of the coin—pun intended—those who are more materialistic tend to have poorer financial management skills (Garoarsdottir & Dittmar, 2012; Walker, 1996). These types of personalities tend to spend without second thought and lean more toward the here and now. Donnelly et al. (2012) again explain that these are the financial ostriches, because their "pursuit of happiness through material consumption may lead to less money management" (p. 1138). Feelings of anxiety and sadness are dealt with through spending and seen as a way to bring about a different emotional state. We all know, or may be, these types of personalities. When feeling sad, this person will bring the entire baked-goods aisle from Sobeys home to try and cheer

themselves up or make their family or partner feel better. When anxiety kicks in due to the bills piling up from their behaviour, this person will book a weekend getaway at a five-star hotel in Vegas to recharge their batteries. It's the "my diet starts on Monday" syndrome, as I like to call it.

At the end of the day, both extremes are unhealthy but most humans in the Western world exist somewhere between the two. Self-realization is the key to balance, as well as taking off the rose-coloured glasses we all wear when excited with new beginnings and facing the truth as it is—before it bites us in the butt. Money, or the lack thereof, doesn't determine our personality, it simply emphasizes the good, the bad, and the ugly, and puts our priorities and values on full display for everyone to see. We each bring the stereotypes to life, depending on how we deal with the truth. Will I be a rich bastard when I become a billionaire, I wonder? Either way, I agree with Françoise Sagan, "I'd rather cry in a Jaguar than on a bus."

#### References

Goldberg, H., & Lewis, R. T. (1978). *Money Madness: The Psychology of Saving, Spending, Loving, and Hating Money*



## Where to Begin with Classic Literature

Faye Lilley

### The Brits

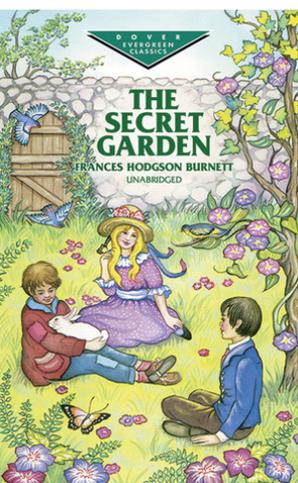
I read a lot of classic literature. I've been obsessed with it since I was a kid, and it's the main reason I'm here at Athabasca University pursuing an English degree. So, as an obsessive reader of classic literature who is pursuing an English degree, there is one question I hear more than any other, "Where should I start if I want to read classics?"

This question used to leave me flummoxed, because there are hundreds of amazing classics out there, and who am I to decide which ones should get bumped to the front of the line? However, after years of encountering this question everywhere I go and studying the reactions of people I have guided on their classics quest, I have settled on a pretty solid set of recommendations. With apologies to everywhere else in the world, my recommendations usually begin with British literature, since those are generally the most well-known and easily read, yet still somewhat challenging classics for beginners. So, without further ado, I present to you the seven classics every classic-lit newbie should read.

### The Secret Garden, by Frances Hodgson Burnett

You might think it's strange that I begin this list with a children's classic, but if you haven't read *The Secret Garden* as an adult, you haven't really read it. There is so much in this book for a discerning adult mind, and I will forever stand by the opinion that it is one of the most beautiful and inspiring books ever written. I also believe that it is the perfect way to prepare your brain for the marvellously rich writing of the nineteenth and early twentieth century classics.

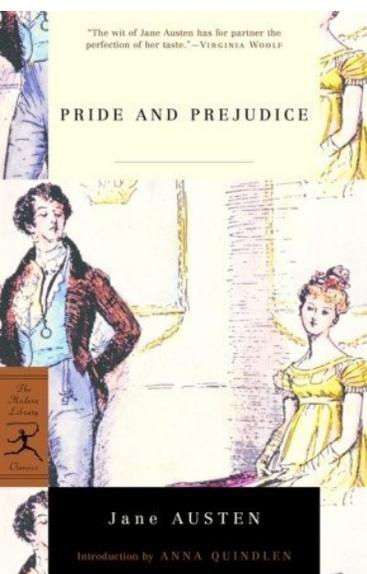
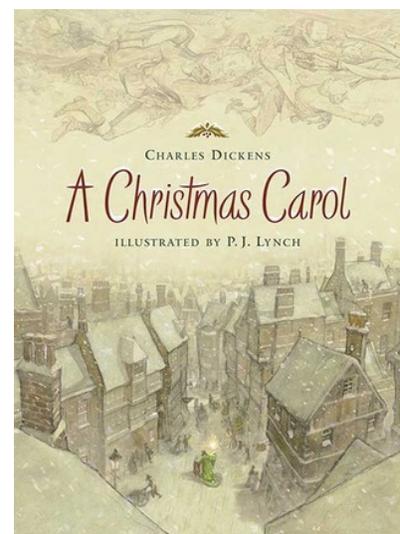
Synopsis: Mary Lennox, an English girl born and raised in India, finds herself transformed overnight from a spoiled little rich girl to a somewhat neglected orphan on a boat back to England. She is taken to live with her elusive uncle, Archibald Craven, in his creepy manor on the Yorkshire moors, where she becomes intrigued by the mystery of a secret, walled-in garden. Originally published in 1910.



### **A Christmas Carol, by Charles Dickens**

I debated for years which of Dickens' works should be read first, but then I realized how few people have actually read *A Christmas Carol*. This is hands-down the best place to start if you have never read Dickens before (or if you were forced to read one of his longer novels in high school and hated it). It's a novella that was designed to be read aloud in one evening, so it won't take up much of your time, but it is also hugely entertaining and moving and wonderful, so you might find that it leaves you wanting more. The story is exactly what you think it is, since most Scrooge adaptations stick fairly close to the source material, but it will give you a sense of Dickens' writing style and show you that he is not to be feared but to be enjoyed.

Synopsis: Much-loathed miser Ebenezer Scrooge spends one memorable Christmas being visited by several spirits who teach him that there is more to life than money and meanness. Originally published in 1843.



### **Pride and Prejudice, by Jane Austen**

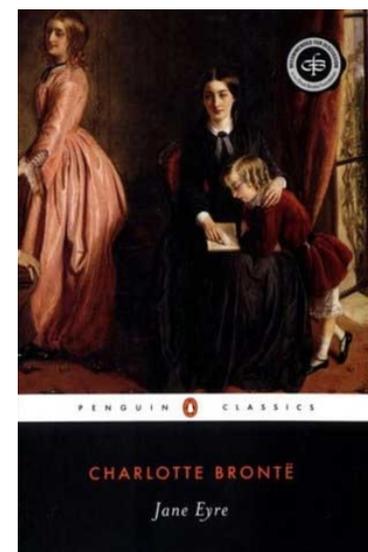
If you have never read *Pride and Prejudice*, approximately half of the pop culture references you have ever heard have gone over your head. Okay, maybe that's a slight exaggeration (is it, though?). However, this is undeniably one of the most popular, beloved, referenced, and retold classics in existence, and for good reason. Its wit and satire have inspired countless authors in the 200+ years since its publication, and the entire romantic-comedy genre owes many of its tried-and-true tropes to this novel. The prose is also very approachable for a beginner. It's a must-read for anyone who is interested in the classics.

Synopsis: Elizabeth Bennet is the eldest of five sisters, all of whom are under significant pressure, especially from their mother, to marry well. When a rich bachelor moves into the neighbourhood, he and his friend, a certain Mr. Darcy, cause a bit of a stir among the local unmarried ladies, but Elizabeth is having none of it. Or is she? Originally published in 1813.

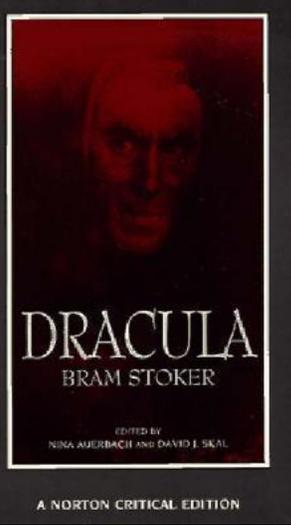
### **Jane Eyre, by Charlotte Bronte**

I love Jane Eyre. I really, really love Jane Eyre. I have read it many times, and I will read it many times more. It was one of the first "adult" classics I ever read, and I largely credit it (along with Charles Dickens) for my love of Victorian literature. I think it has one of the most gripping plots ever written, and some of the best characters ever created. However, there are parts of this book that seem to be unimportant and drag on forever. Please stay with it! I promise, those parts are not unimportant, they do come to an end, and the book as a whole is wonderful and very much worth the effort. I firmly believe that this should not be the first classic that anyone tries to read (I struggled with it myself the first time around, but it was smooth sailing when I went back to it a couple years later), but if you have read my first few recommendations and feel you're ready for a meatier literary diet, this is a must-read introduction to intermediate-level classics.

Synopsis: Jane Eyre has a rough childhood between an abusive aunt and a neglectful school, so when she becomes a woman, she is determined to be independent and content with whatever comes her way. But what comes her way is a position as



governess at the mysterious Thornfield Hall and an ill-advised attraction to its brooding master named Edward Rochester. Originally published in 1847.



### **Dracula, by Bram Stoker**

This one can be a bit controversial, but I personally love *Dracula*. It's quintessential Victorian gothic horror, which is enough of a draw right there, but it's the focus on the teamwork between the main characters that makes this book the standout classic that it is. Forget everything you know of Dracula from the movies and TV adaptations, and definitely forget everything you know about modern vampire stories. This is a story of Good vs Evil, of friends becoming family, and of Abraham Van Helsing being the coolest nerd in history. The story plays out through letters, diary entries, and newspaper articles, so you as the reader are able to piece together what is happening long before the characters do, which adds an extra level of tension to an already creepy tale.

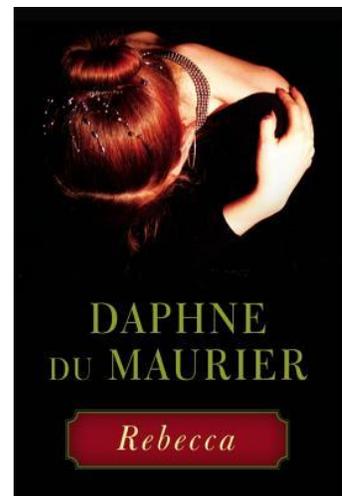
Synopsis: Jonathan Harker unwittingly aids the mysterious Count Dracula in leaving Transylvania, the country he has terrorized for centuries, and finding his way to England, where the Count begins to prey on Harker's fiancée, Mina, and

her best friend, Lucy. It will take the courage and moral fortitude of a motley crew to take Dracula down. Originally published in 1897.

### **Rebecca, by Daphne du Maurier**

This is another gothic novel, but it was written a few decades after the Victorian era. The most fascinating and genius thing about this book is that the title character is technically not even in it, yet she is present on every single page. Are you intrigued? You should be! I have no hesitation in saying this is one of the best books ever written, and every book lover should read it. It's one of those books that stays with you long after you've put it down, and you will always wish you could read it again for the first time.

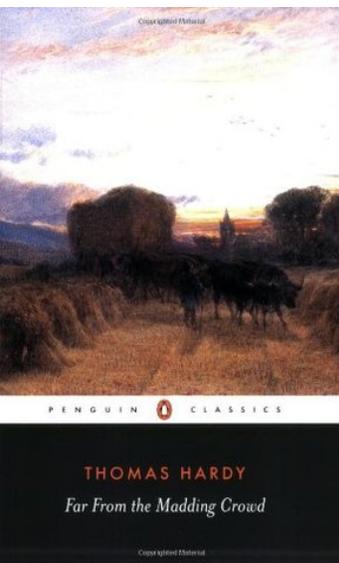
Synopsis: A young woman known to us as simply Mrs. de Winter tells us the story of her days at Manderley, her husband's country estate. She is newly married and doesn't know much about her husband's past, but she soon comes to realize that his late first wife hasn't lost her hold on her husband or his household quite yet. Originally published in 1938.



### **Far from the Madding Crowd, by Thomas Hardy**

If you've made it this far down the list and feel in need of a bigger challenge than I have yet presented, you might be ready for some Thomas Hardy. Hardy is one of the greatest British writers of all time, many of his books are in the classics "canon," and few male writers of the period gave such an empathic insight into the plight of women, but I feel I should warn you that he has a tendency to rip a reader's heart out, stomp on it for a while, and just when you think he is picking it up to mend it and apologize for being so cruel, he feeds it to you. And it's delicious. And you can't wait for him to do it again. That said, *Far from the Madding Crowd* is one of his best but also one of his least heart-ripping novels, so it's a fairly gentle place to start with this sadistically wonderful writer.

Synopsis: Bathsheba Everdene is a headstrong, independent woman to whom men would rather propose than have as a boss when she inherits her uncle's farm. Gabriel Oak is a shepherd who has vowed never to propose to her again



after being turned down the first time. Naturally, their paths keep intersecting while she experiences one disastrous relationship after another. Originally published in 1874.

*Faye is a writer, literature nerd, and TV addict who rarely sets foot in the real world. Thanks to AU, she is overcoming health-related obstacles and pursuing her lifelong dream of an English degree.*



## Fly on the Wall Battle of the Boyne Day

Jason Sullivan



### Long Ago and Far Away But Part of our Cultural DNA

Calendars can be a hobby in themselves. Different ones present different key dates and these furnish gilded corridors in which our imaginations can play. As our AU selves traverse private realms of course contract dates, our inner calendar can seem out of step with the outside world. We can take comfort, though, in knowing that other cultures and peoples have different seasonal rhythms to their lives; like a diaspora, we're not alone in marching to schedules that differ from

our peers. There's a moral to this calendar relativism: every day is a day for celebration somewhere in the world!

There is no single series of key dates that all calendars in the world possess; what counts as a holiday depends upon culture and politics. July in Canada is a case in point; after Canada Day, the rest of the month is lovingly known for its remaining thirty chances for summer fun and shady studying away from the monotony of our bunker closets or other scholastic sanctuaries. But as it happens, July 12 has a serious holiday associated with it that involves more baggage than we'd usually pack for a July vacation. Battle of the Boyne Day combines historical binarism of belief with something we at AU know all too well: the baggage of shared psychological experience. We've each had past educational learnings that form our reactions to the concept of school; so it is with cultures and their religious and political histories

### Boing! Boyne Day Pops Into View

Boyne Day was a family affair, literally and figuratively. It was fought in 1690 between "William of Orange, a Dutch protestant who had recently been jointly crowned monarch of England, Scotland and Ireland during the "Glorious Revolution" and his uncle, the Catholic James II." ([Sabur R.](#), 2018).

At the broader level it was about the struggle for Irish independence from Anglo domination and about the Loyalist Northern Irish desire to remain associated with the Crown. Much had been up in the air and contested in Europe since Martin Luther had stapled his famed 95 Theses to the front door of the Cathedral of Wittenberg back in 1517, setting off the Protestant Reformation. And all of this was tied to the printing press that, from the 1400s onward, expanded its techno-realm, thus allowing for flyers and pamphlets, not to mention translated Bibles, to be distributed everywhere. In a world where the written word was king in a way more literally real than ever

before, a battle such as happened at the Boyne seemed to be about whose side God, and his word, was on.

### **What Would Anne of Green Gables Say?**

While I suspect that many of my peers at AU aren't living a daily struggle between Protestant and Catholic sentiments in their family or village life, the spectres of past political disagreement are not far behind in the rearview mirror of history. It wasn't so many years ago, for instance, that I visited Anne of Green Gables' homeland and was told that UPEI was once two separate and distinct universities. One was for Protestants and one was for Catholics and never the twain were to mix. Apt growing conditions for Romeos and Juliets to sprout, no doubt.

Fast forward to 2020, historical hindsight being what it is. In largely Protestant Northern Ireland Boyne Day is a huge celebration, confirming as it did the hegemony of forces opposed to the Irish Catholic majority on the Emerald Isle. Canada wasn't immune to these cultural convulsions then, and we certainly aren't beyond the pale of ideological disagreements today. Long centuries of conflict about religion have arguably morphed into secular political worries within the dominant 21st century consumer theology that, naturally, implicates us at AU. Our pay-to-learn experience of distance education maps onto Catholic indulgences paid as get-out-of-hell-or-penance-free cards that set off the Reformation in the first place. Who hasn't faced skeptical questioning about the validity of our classroom-free studies? Are we short-cutting our way to academic heaven by not paying our brick and mortar dues vis-a-vis classroom professors and their office hour visitation confessionals? I'd argue that we're simply making the most of conditions as we develop a personal relationship with new intellectual realms.

The binary framework of each historical epoch translates into the present in obscure ways; whatever we're fighting for in our schooling is about something we see to be as a greater good. That's a commonality in battles large and small although our worst enemy is often within ourselves. What's certain, regardless of our reasons for returning to university, is that if we're taking courses to assuage some sort of guilt, or to impress someone other than ourselves, then we probably won't have the academic gods of motivation on our side. At least not for long. We can't hide from our true selves, conscience or beliefs and that's a personal reality worth remembering. Like the Battle of the Boyne, the battle for academic success is about conflating multiple related versions of our lived reality.

### **Do We Have the Tools for Learning; It's Up To Us to Learn Them!**

In the end, James lost to William for the standard reason of being poorly equipped. While his Irish cavalry were stellar, many of his infantry consisted of untrained peasants, in some cases armed merely with scythes and other farm implements. That'd be like entering a distance education class without knowledge of time management and the ability to not only minimize but actually close one's distracting computer tabs.

Contrast James with Williams, whose army had the latest flintlock muskets and commanded eight times as much artillery as James. Where motivation is concerned it's not necessarily the size of our intellectual guns but the sheer mass of our desire in terms of purpose, stamina, and attack. Few battles and few classes are won without concerted exertion. Maybe at the younger levels we'd get an easy A now and then but at AU we have to actually get all our mental boots on the ground. And that begins with inspiration, the secret weapon of success if ever there was. Our minds, with their intricacies and armouries of critical thinking, are our best weapons after all. And maybe, just maybe, we require a sprinkling of faith in our powers. Perhaps the greatest lesson we can take from Boyne Day is that throughout history people fought not only for earthly

reasons but because they believed in what they personally held to be true. Here at AU that means believing in a future best possible self as a goal worth fighting for.

### **Our Life is Not Only Our Own; We Live History And Carry It Along**

Meanings and motivations can be latent or manifest; in any moment there's many reasons why we do what we do. At AU there's no sense in guilt-tripping or patronizing ourselves into doing coursework; negative motivation is only going to drag us down in the long term. After all, our schooling is a microcosm for all of our lives; when we succeed it's because we chose the narratives and beliefs that worked for our productivity.

Sometimes the same battles repeatedly emerge in different form. Two hundred years after the Battle of the Boyne some Irish republican militia invaded Loyalist New Brunswick. These were known as the Fenian raids and their origin was overseas on the island of Eire: "Irish society suffered a blow in 1865 when Britain crushed the Ireland-based independence movement, scattering its leaders. That situation created bad feelings toward Britain among many American Civil War veterans of Irish heritage, and their membership in the Fenian movement quickly grew to about 10,000 men.

Chief among the Fenians' goals was Irish independence, but they were divided on the question of how that could be achieved. Some advocated staging a massive uprising in Ireland, while others favoured cross-border military action against Canada". The Fenian raids are usually taught as one of the causes for Confederation.

What sounds like a US invasion of Canada was a wager worth far different stakes at the time; people were still living through the struggles of their countries of origin and bringing the battle to what to them was a new world. To the Fenians, Redcoats symbolized their old oppressors. This is a reminder that baggage we're unaware of can seep into our study consciousness. Think here of the double-edged sword that is our shiny blue screens of word processing power. Each moment we sit down at the machine is rife with distractions; indeed, the very technology that allows us to cut and paste, rather than type and white-out, also ladles dollops of dalliance onto our scholastic plate. Personally, I find that I'm most productive when only my course texts and note-taking documents are open on my screen; anything else, like social media with notifications that feign importance, leads me down a road of domestication by the present tense.

Just because something is current and new doesn't mean it's more important or true; to think clearly and creatively is to think away from a momentary realm while being aware of historical and personal antecedents. So wherever we're at on our course calendar, and on the big map of our life narrative, it helps to remember our motivations and how they got that way.

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*Jason Hazel-rah Sullivan is a Masters of Integrated Studies student who loves engaging in discourse while working in the sunny orchards and forests of the Okanagan.*



## The Not-So Starving Student DIY Wontons

Xin Xu



Wontons are a delicious staple in Southern China where a bowl of Wonton soup could be found in street food markets. I remember growing up with my grandma who always made wontons on weekend afternoons and asked the younger children in the household to help out. Making wontons was a communal activity in our family, as everyone leaned over the dining table dabbing their fingers in the powdery flour.

Wontons directly translates to “swallowing a cloud”, which is quite an accurate expression of the joy of biting into a freshly prepared bowl of wontons. While I no longer live with my grandma, I still occasionally sit down with my younger cousins teaching them the step by step method of preparing wontons.

The perfect wonton boasts a thin, doughy exterior filled with freshly ground pork with hints of ginger, Shaoxing wine, and scallions. When I first invited my significant other to prepare these with me, he believed that it would be a handful of work that he was not ready for. However, he soon discovered that it was simpler than some of my

baking recipes, and, from start to finish, takes less than 15 minutes (depending on the amount of ingredients used). If you're looking to learn a new recipe without having to order take out wontons that may be soggy and MSG-packed, then preparing this classic Chinese entree is worth a try.

Preparation time: 15-20 minutes

Cooking time: 6 minutes

### Ingredients: Wontons

- 40 wonton wrappers purchased from asian supermarkets (also available at Wal-Mart)
- 1-2 lbs Lean ground pork
- 1 tbsp chopped green onion
- ½ tsp salt
- 1 tsp soy sauce
- 1 tbsp finely chopped ginger
- 2 tbsp shaoxing wine (can replace with mirin or white wine)
- 2 tsp cornstarch
- 1 tsp all purpose flour
- 1 glass of water

### Ingredients: Wonton soup

- Seaweed flakes to taste
- 1 cup of Chicken broth
- 1 tsp chopped cilantro
- 1 tsp soy sauce
- 1 cup of cold water

**Instructions:**

1. Mix lean ground pork with green onions, salt, soy sauce, ginger, wine and cornstarch in a large bowl. Can use manually or with an electric mixer.
2. Marinade mixture for 30 minutes in the fridge if desired for better tasting results. However, non-marinated mixture is also adequate.
3. Take wonton wrapper and place a teaspoon of filling into the centre of the square wrapping
4. Fold the wonton wrapper in half (into a rectangle) as shown in the image
5. Pinch the edges of the wonton wrapper as shown in the image to create a rose-like shape



6. Set aside on a plate coated with thin layer of all-purpose flour



7. Repeat until either the wonton wrap or filling is used up

**Cooking instructions:**

1. Boil 1 cup chicken broth and 1 cup of water in a large saucepan
2. Add seaweed flakes, soy sauce into the boiling broth
3. Add wontons to saucepan and cover the lid to simmer for 4-6 minutes or until wontons rise to the surface of the water
4. Serve immediately

*Xin Xu is a post-graduate health-science AU student, aspiring clinician, globe-trotter, parrot breeder and tea-connoisseur.*

## Scholars, Start Your Business Production & Distribution

Marie Well



You've got a great idea for a product. Or maybe you want to sell anything that'll pay the bills. But who will buy your product? What's more, who will sell it? Fear not. There are many options at your fingertips. Let me introduce two. They sound stuffy, but they can make you wealthy. These two options are direct and indirect distribution.

With direct distribution, you sell your product or service directly to the customer. Indirect distribution has you selling to a middleman, such as a retail store.

But why do you need a distribution channel? Well, "you have to figure out how to get [your product or service] from you to the person who will actually use it — so you have to decide on one or more distribution channels" (Dagys, Kerr, Kurtz, et al, 2020, 9%).

Let's explore these two channels:

### **You're in Good Hands with Direct Distribution:**

A simple definition of direct distribution is this: "The product or service goes from your business to your buyer (most services and products take this route)" (Dagys et al, 2020, 9%).

(If you choose to sell a service, it's easy sailing. Selling a product is trickier: you'll need to build something from scratch or resell an existing product. But I digress.)

Here are two ways you can sell your goods directly to your customers, according to Dagys, Kerr, Kurtz, et al. (2020): "[1] Face-to-face: In your retail store or your office. [2] Facelessly: Through an order system that uses a website, e-mail, mail, phone, or even fax. If you choose this option, remember that you'll need a place to keep your inventory, such as a room in a warehouse, and you'll need a delivery system, such as mail or courier" (9%).

If you want to set up an online e-commerce store, Shopify is easy to learn. If you know WordPress, Shopify is a cinch. If you don't know WordPress, WordPress, too, is a cinch.

I thought of selling books by building a WordPress Website and printing the books locally. But I had nowhere to store the books. I thought of buying indoor storage space and placing a wooden flat on the floor to elevate the books. Paying for storage seemed a hassle. With that said, if you've got a basement, you've got a handy, free warehouse.

Direct distribution can be a no-fuss choice.

### **Indirect Distribution: Another Wise Choice:**

Here is a definition of indirect distribution: "The product or service goes from your business to another business to the buyer. Although your target market is the buyer, your customer is the 'middleman' business" (Dagys et al, 2020, 9%).

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According to Dagys, Kerr, Kurtz, et al. (2020), “Middlemen include retailers, wholesalers, or distributors — who in turn sell to retailers, and sometimes to the general public. [Other middlemen include] re-packagers — who also sell to retailers after — you guessed it — repackaging the products they buy from you” (9%).

Amazon is a great example of indirect distribution. Amazon itself doesn't buy your product. The customer on Amazon buys it, and Amazon takes care of packaging, shipping, and paying you. That's if you buy Amazon's warehousing service, called Fulfillment by Amazon.

But you can ship your Amazon sales yourself if you want. I saw videos on a guy who'd frequent Walmart sales. He'd see what the Walmart sale items cost on Amazon. If he stood to make a decent profit, he'd buy every single item in all the Walmart stores in his city—and in neighboring cities, too. Then he'd list his items on Amazon, package his sales, and make money. He made a decent living.

Amazon is fantastic for selling books, too, of course. I created Kindle books directly through Amazon's print-on-demand publishing service. Publishing on Amazon was once as simple as uploading a Word file with a table of contents. Now, Amazon offers an easy software to tidy up your book. No sweat!

### **But who will manufacturer your solid-gold idea? Alibaba!**

If you need an easy manufacturer for your company, consider Alibaba. According to Software Advice, you can find a manufacturer on the site Alibaba: “In this forum, anyone can post CAD [computer aided design software] schematics for what they want built. Contract manufacturers willing to make it happen respond with a bid to take it from concept to product.”

I've been wanting to design jewelry boxes. But I don't know how to build with wood. If you like woodwork, electronics, metalwork, or any homebuilder craft, then consider designing a CAD prototype. An Alibaba manufacturer might bid to build your design. You can even design your product so that middlemen can brand them with their own logos. You'll make a killing.

Some Alibaba manufacturers may even dropship for you. That means, whenever a customer buys from you, the Alibaba manufacturer takes care of shipping and gives you a percentage of the sale. I saw a video where a guy bought watches from Alibaba, slapped his logo on them, built a Shopify website, and boosted the price of the watches. They looked like \$5 watches without the logo; \$2000 watches with the logo and website. Super sweet!

### **What software should you use to design your product?**

You'll likely need a computer aided design (CAD) software to design your product.

A list of industrial quality computer aided design (CAD) software can be found at All3DP. For information on what design file formats you need to give your manufacturer, check out QualityInspection.org. For the cheapest (student edition) industrial quality CAD software I could find, look at Clever Bridge.

With industrial quality CAD software, you can design even houses and sports cars. Learn how to design using CAD software, and employers will line up to hire you.

With that said, which path will you choose to sell your goods: direct or indirect distribution—or both? Whichever you choose, I bet you make a decent living.

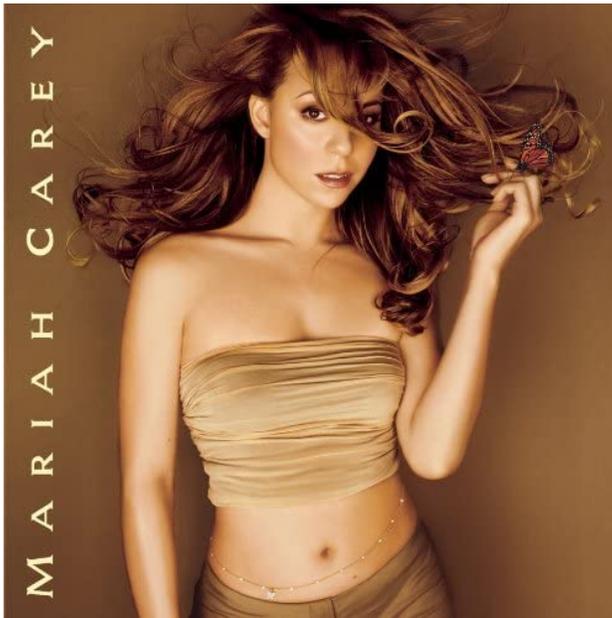
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## Beats from the Basement

### Mariah Carey

Milica Markovic



**Album:** *Butterfly*

**Artist:** Mariah Carey

Thanks to her multi-octave vocal range, Mariah Carey has maintained her status in the renowned vocal trinity alongside Charlemagne native, Céline Dion, and the late Whitney Houston for approximately three decades. Music listeners have yet to officially decide on replacements for the current generation.

Given the overwhelming praise artists like Beyoncé, Lady GaGa, and Adele receive for their powerful vocals, it seems strange to keep the original trio intact when we're apparently not as attentive to their legacies as we once were.

In Carey's case, I've usually heard others compliment her melismatic singing ability and how she can reach the whistle register while largely neglecting her songs. It doesn't help that "Fantasy", "We Belong Together", and "All I Want For Christmas Is You" are her only hits to see consistent radio play when she finally gets her turn.

A mostly forgettable discography doesn't bode well for the longevity of anyone's singing career, let alone vocally demanding repertoires and work schedules that can weaken the voice later on without rest or proper technique. As a pop culture icon, I think Carey is lucky to have been riding on her success in the 90s for this long.

But I don't mind when she isn't being overly ambitious. I generally prefer diversity in my music, but Carey is one of those singers that doesn't need it, and her 1997 album *Butterfly* succeeded in this regard. It marked her transition into R&B and hip hop, neither of which requires a spectacular presentation. Carey still sounds mesmerizing, but toning down the vocal acrobatics allows her to express herself in a more tender and intimate way.

From melting whispers to escalating high notes, the listener connects with Carey's lyrics, which poignantly describe her vulnerabilities in love and self-identity. She doesn't always enunciate, however, and it makes tracks like "Honey" harder to engage with. The funky piano, at least, renders it memorable.

Ballads are where Carey truly shines, and "Butterfly" is easily her finest on the eponymous album. The soft beats create an atmosphere oriented on her performance, with gospel woven in naturally so it doesn't take our attention away from her.

An issue I have with "The Roof", on the other hand, is that the beats distractingly compete with Carey's vocals. The combination of her harmonies and the string section is otherwise heavenly, and the piano subtly chiming in stops the production from becoming monotonous.

Although much of *Butterfly* is musically safe, that doesn't mean it's devoid of magical moments. "My All" is one such moment; it takes us on a tropical moonlight stroll using a slight Latin influence.

But again, we shouldn't expect an innovative direction and just enjoy the performer for all she's capable of. If Carey were to strictly record some form of elevated lounge music, I doubt anyone would complain. If you're craving a relaxing sound, look no further than *Butterfly*.

*Milica Markovic is a Toronto AU student enrolled in the MA-IS program with a BA in criminology and political science.*



## Homemade is Better Toasted Green Beans



## Chef Corey

We've been under a new normal for a few months now, and the number of people who have decided to garden has been understandably increasing, why not start a new hobby? My family and I finally got around to turning our weed patch into something useful. We planted carrots, corn, onions, peppers, cucumbers, zucchini, chives, lettuce, tomatoes, strawberries, and an apple tree. Our garden already had raspberries, so this year we are just managing them. So far everything is doing great, but so are the weeds; it's a lot more work than it seems. But, if you are adventurous enough to have planted green beans, or know someone who has a plethora of them, then here is a little recipe for you to enjoy them.

Store bought fresh beans are perfect as well. I usually cut off both ends, rinse them, and toss the ends into our compost bin.

### Toasted Green Beans

#### Panko Bread mixture

- 2 TBSP Panko breadcrumbs
- 2 tsp parmesan cheese
- 1 tsp Kosher salt

#### Green Beans

- 1 lb fresh green beans
- 1 TBSP canola oil

#### Directions

- 1) Preheat the oven to 350F.
- 2) Cut off the ends of each beans and wash them.
- 3) Put the beans in a bowl and drizzle with oil and mix.
- 4) Place the beans on a sheet pan and sprinkle on the bread crumb mix.
- 5) Roast for 5 minutes and turn over the beans.
- 6) Cook another 5 minutes.
- 7) Remove from the oven and serve.

*Chef Corey is a student in business management who first graduated from NAIT's Culinary Arts Program in 2007*



Dear  
Barb

Barbara Godin

## Sibling (Re)Connections

Dear Barb:

*Hi, I enjoy reading your weekly column. I am in my late thirties and have been working on my degree for 10 years. That seems like a long time, but I am a single mom who also works full time, so haven't had a lot of time to focus on it. That's what leads to my question.*

*Since I have had such a busy lifestyle, I have not had much contact with my siblings. In fact, we have really grown apart. I have two older sisters and one younger brother. My dad has passed away, and my mom is living in an assisted living facility. My two sons do not know their cousins very well, and I would like to change that and reconnect with my family.*

*I spoke to one of my older sisters about getting together and she seemed almost uninterested. I don't know whether I should pursue this, or just let it go. I haven't had any major issues with any of my siblings, it's just that we got busy with our lives and seemed to grow apart. What is your opinion? Should I just let it be, or maybe arrange a get together at my home? I was even thinking of seeing if my mom would be able to join us.*

*Looking for a second opinion, thanks, JoAnne.*

Hi JoAnne:

Great topic! As we age, sibling relationships become more important. In the early years we are close, then, through our teenage years, we have our own friends and interests or may go away to school. Then we marry and have families and again become busy with life and do not take the time to see our siblings regularly, especially if we live in different cities. As our children grow and move forward with their lives, we may find we have more time for sibling relationships. Also as our parents age, siblings are brought together to care for them. This is where you seem to be JoAnne.

I don't think you should just "let it be". It's never a good thing to lose contact with a family member. Sibling relationships are the longest lasting family ties we will have. As adults most people describe their sibling relationships as like best friends. Troubled sibling relationships are often a result of parents choosing favorites, resulting in jealousy and resentment that carries on through life. There is a lot to be gained through a sibling relationship, such as learning how to resolve conflict with others and interact with peers and coworkers.

You could begin with a family gathering, at a mutually agreed place and begin your journey towards reconciliation. There is usually one person in a family who takes the lead in these situations, and it looks like it will be you.

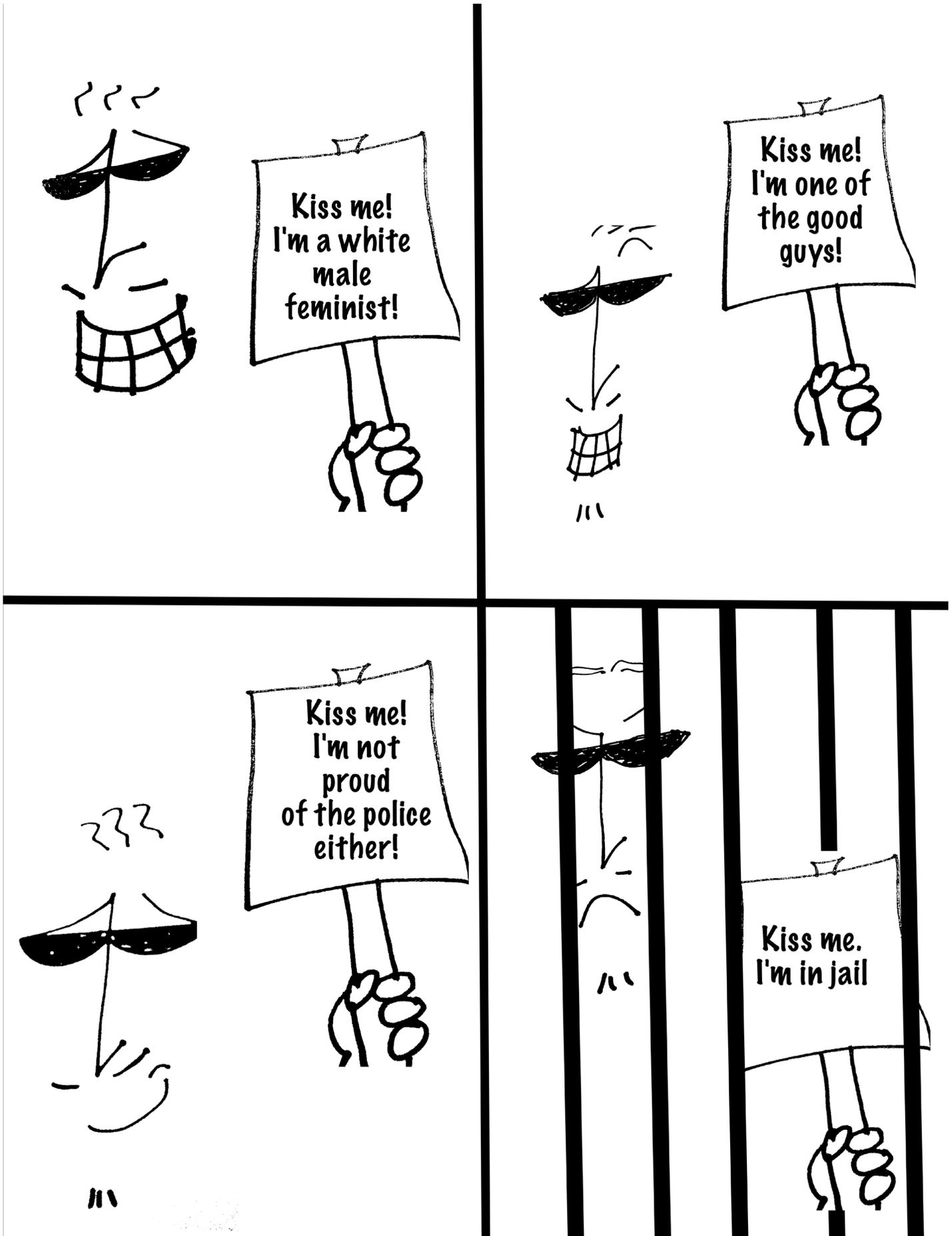
Best of luck, JoAnne, and thank you for writing.

*Email your questions to [voice@voicemagazine.org](mailto:voice@voicemagazine.org). Some submissions may be edited for length or to protect confidentiality; your real name and location will never be printed. This column is for entertainment only. The author is not a professional counsellor and this column is not intended to take the place of professional advice.*



**Chazz Bravado**  
**Protesting Too Much**

**Wanda Waterman**



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## IMPORTANT DATES

- **July 24:** [Call for Nominations for AUSU By-Election](#)
- **Jul 30:** [Deadline to apply for course extension for Aug](#)
- **Aug 10:** [Deadline to register in a course starting Sep 1](#)
- **Aug 15:** [Sept degree requirements deadline](#)
- **Aug 19:** [AUSU Public Council Meeting](#)
- **Aug 25:** [AUSU By-election](#)

## AU and AUSU Birthdays!

It's been an exciting Month for birthdays!

### On June 25, Athabasca University turned 50!

We celebrated the 50th Anniversary of Athabasca University by joining in the drive-by, pop-up event on the AU campus in Athabasca, Alberta.

AUSU President Natasha Donahue and Executive Director Jodi Campbell went up to Athabasca to join in the festivities and represent the AU Students' Union.

### [Check out our video of the event!](#)

### On July 16, AU Students' Union turned 28!

We were incorporated on July 16, 1992, and were the first Students' Union in the world dedicated to advocacy and support for distance education students.

Thank you to all of our amazing students and student leaders that keep our organization going strong, and here's to many more years to come!

### [Check out our birthday video!](#)



## AUSU Mobile App

The AUSU Mobile App is a great way to connect to your fellow online AU Students!

Download the app, make an account, and join the campus discussion!

Chat with fellow students about courses, share study tips, support your peers, and get quick access to services available to you!

So far in 2020, over 20,000 messages have been sent and hundreds of friendships made on the app!

Get the AUSU Mobile App [here](#) (or search "AU Students" in App Store)



## AUSU By-Election

AUSU currently has 4 vacant council seats, so we will be holding a by-election in August, 2020 to fill those seats! The call for nominations will go out on July 24, 2020.

This will be a great opportunity for students to get involved with their students' union, gain some great experience, and represent their fellow students.

Visit our [website](#) for more Information.

Stay tuned for the Call for Nominations next week!

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# CLASSIFIEDS

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Contact [voice@voicemagazine.org](mailto:voice@voicemagazine.org) for more information.

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