

MERCER STREET

CONTRIBUTORS

Sandra Burlaud, '20, studies Computer Science at the College of Arts and Science. Originally from France, she moved to Miami, Florida, in 2011. Her essay “Your House Is Not a Home” encouraged her to explore the concepts of home and familiarity as they evolve over a lifetime. The subject became thought-provoking and surprisingly relevant for a readership distanced from family and home for the first time. Sandra enjoys traveling and learning languages, as well as writing fiction and claiming to know how to play the piano.

Mark Chen, '20, from Syosset, New York, is a Mechanical Engineering major at the Tandon School of Engineering. A fond and lifelong interest in science and technology has inspired his many pursuits, including writing. The increasingly important role of technology can be seen in his essay, “The Duality of Intelligence,” which highlights the current state of artificial intelligence and its potential impact on our future lives. In his free time, Mark enjoys reading science fiction, lounging around on the Internet, and looking forward to his next travel destination.

Mary Colussi, '20, studies Dramatic Writing at the Tisch School of the Arts. Born in Australia, she moved with her family to the Boston area in 2001. At Tisch, she has been encouraged to test the boundaries between the artist as an individual and as a member of a larger public. Her essay, “Searching for Solace in a Lemon Peel,” stems from this investigation. It asks what the objects we choose to surround our-

selves with say about us and our communities. Mary hopes to write for television and the stage.

Andrew Galanter, '20, is pursuing a double major in Film and Television at the Tisch School of the Arts and in Linguistics at the College of Arts and Sciences. Originally from Tappan, New York, Andrew counts among his interests language and humor. The intersection of the two inspired his essay, "Humans and Dogs and Fishes! Oh My!" In it, he asks what makes something "lifelike." He insists that writing it constituted the most time he has ever spent thinking about mackerels. In his free time, Andrew enjoys praising the compositions of Stephen Sondheim and William Finn, reading the work of Philip Roth, and arm wrestling anyone who disputes Noam Chomsky's Theory of Universal Grammar.

Milo Hudson, '20, from Portland, Oregon, majors in Politics and minors in Economics at the College of Arts and Sciences. His roots in Quakerism and in the recreational enjoyment of silence led Milo to critically explore sound, sense, and spirituality in his essay, "That We May Hear." Milo espouses brevity (sometimes forgoing it) and disdains grandstanding (occasionally practicing it). A black man from America's whitest city, he has come to appreciate diverse communities and challenging perspectives. Beyond his studies, Milo is an avid news reader and television connoisseur.

Jaehyoung Ju, '20, is a rising sophomore in the College of Arts and Sciences. His essay, "On Dog Meat Consumption and Regulation," proposes a plan to address the inhumane conditions of Korea's dog meat industry.

Charlotte Kahan, '20, is a Public Policy major from Ridgewood, New Jersey. She is drawn to the way law and political decision-making can be used to alleviate poverty, reduce crime, and improve educational opportunities for underserved communities. Her essay "The Poverty Link" shows how local public school funding plays such a major role in exacerbating a critical education gap between wealthy and poor students. Charlotte hopes that her focus on the far-reaching

consequences of underfunded schools will offer a more nuanced explanation for why poverty seems so inescapable. Charlotte volunteers at Rikers Island, helping incarcerated individuals with their academic assignments and public speaking skills. She intends to study law in the future in order to further her passions for debate and public service.

Audrey Larson, '20, is a Film and Television major at the Tisch School of the Arts. Hailing from Sharon, Massachusetts, Audrey started her own youth filmmaking organization as a teenager and has written and produced multiple award-winning short films. She has studied ballet, piano, and acting, and has performed in community theater and in various films. Homeschooled since the second grade, Audrey considers herself a lifelong learner. Her passions also include antiques, history, geography, and a dream to travel the world. "Playing with People" was motivated by the desire to unravel the many themes in Charlie Kaufman's work: perspective, the self, and human connection.

Christina Louder, '20, from Queens, New York, studies Applied Psychology at the Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development. After only a short time at NYU—a predominantly white institution—Christina began to fully understand the importance of black voices, especially young black voices. Therefore, when given the opportunity, she decided to use her writing course as a platform for speaking about something that meant a great deal to her: being black in America. The passion she channeled to write "We Gon' Be Alright" is the same that fuels Christina's dedication to finding a way to combine all of her interests into a fulfilling academic experience at NYU.

Alice Lu, '20, grew up in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and later moved to the suburban parts of New Jersey. Now she lives in New York, where she studies Computer Science. Alice has a profound interest in Integrated Digital Media and Cognitive Science. As a web developer at the Stern School of Business and as a freelance graphic designer, Alice has cultivated a passion for learning how technology plays a role

in the arts and human cognition. This curiosity inspired her to write “The Language Spoken by All,” an essay focusing on photography and its influence on society.

Amelia Milne, '20, is a rising sophomore in NYU's College of Arts & Science. Her essay, “No Longer a Passive Subject,” explores how modern photography can empower female self-representation.

Martina Pagliari, '20, originally from Rome, Italy, is a Film and Television major in the Tisch School of the Arts with a minor in Russian and Slavic Studies. Although mainly focused on pursuing a career as a filmmaker, Martina has an abiding interest in the study of foreign languages, her gateway to different cultures and modes of understanding. Social and political issues also play a main inspirational source in her work. The urge to address such issues inspired her to write “The Tragedy Underneath: Satire and Reality,” which examines satire as an instrument of social critique.

Nick Panoutsos, '20, is a Jazz Studies major in the Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development's Department of Music and Performing Art Professions. Pursuing a minor in Media, Culture, and Communication, Nick is also fascinated by the process of crafting and consuming news media. He seized the opportunity to investigate the public dialogue surrounding the Keystone XL Pipeline in his essay, “This Land Is Your Land.” Through his research, Nick discovered the news media's role in establishing corporate accountability. As a freelance musician and magazine writer, Nick hopes to continue balancing his musical aspirations with journalism, both in his hometown of San Jose, California, and here in New York City.

Anthony Parks, '17, grew down in Brewster, New York. At the Gallatin School of Individualized Study, he built a concentration in “Queer world-making practices with nonfiction writing and Spanish literary translation.” Maggie Nelson is among Anthony's favorite thinkers, and his essay “And On and On” came pleausurably, without pause. The essay was written for Professor Bruce Bromley's “A Spectrum of Essays” course, which profoundly impacted Anthony's

undergraduate studies. Anthony enjoys slasher films, well-lit rooms, and exaggerating. He hopes for a future filled with delicious food, sharp prose, and redistributed wealth. He also hopes you have fun with his essay.

Emma Patton, '20, is in the College of Arts and Sciences studying Sociology. She was born and raised in St. Louis, Missouri, where she attended an all-girls Loretto high school that ignited Emma's passion for feminist issues and led her to explore the writings of Leslie Jamison at NYU. Jamison's essays reckon with the concepts of female pain and empathy. Topics that resonated with Emma's feminist and sociological interests and inspired her to write "Blood, Ink, and Pain: An Excavation." Emma is a College Leader, a Writing Tutor in the Expository Writing Program, an intern for Loretto at the UN, and a member of the CAS Student Council, serving as interim CAS Sophomore Class President.

Duc Minh Pham, '20, often finds himself in peculiar positions between different ideas and perspectives. He is pursuing a Computer Science major at the Tandon School of Engineering. He is also interested in politics and history, and participates in the NYU Model UN Club. Growing up in Saigon in conservative and traditional Vietnam, Duc sees both the importance of exploration and curiosity, as well as the promise of how different and even conflicting views can elevate each other. Thus, he tries to give his essay, "For the Vietnamese Youth," nuance in order to see the world through alternate standpoints. Duc is inspired by classroom discussions and influential instructors.

Elijah Scott, '20, is a rising sophomore studying Global Public Health/Nutrition and Dietetics at the Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development. Elijah grew up in the Washington, DC area and has also lived in Beijing, China. Her love for city living played a huge part in her decision to attend NYU. She loves film and its ability to illustrate human behavior and expose societal fault lines. In her essay "A Network of Lies," she analyzes the sociopathic news stringer Lou Bloom from the film *Nightcrawler*.

Her essay compares the antagonistic role of the fourth estate to other figures in media-critique films, like *All the President's Men* and *Network*. Today's "fake news" controversies are not hard to recognize here.

Gabriela Serpa, '20, was born in Miami, Florida, but has been a New Yorker since she moved to Manhattan at the mere age of 30 days old. Gabriela's parents are from Bogotá, Colombia, where her family lived as of 2011. There, she received her high school degree and discovered her passion for the visual arts. Gabriela's expansive interest in mediums of self-expression brought her to NYU, where she is a student in Gallatin's School of Individualized Study. Her preoccupation with the relationship between imagination and reality—particularly in the realms of fairy-tales and theater—often resurfaces in her sculptures and written pieces. Writing "*Birdman: Where Reality Takes Flight*," was thus a very intriguing and personal endeavor.

Saianna Solomon, '20, studies Neural Science on the pre-dental track at the College of Arts and Sciences, and hopes to one day provide free dental care to refugees and in third world countries. Born and raised in Trinidad, West Indies, she brought with her to NYU an undying spirit of volunteerism and zeal for social justice. Spending an NYU alternative spring break giving aid in refugee resettlements in Clarkston, Georgia, Saianna met people from what seemed like entirely different worlds. This enlightening experience, coupled with her innate curiosity, challenged her to undertake a journey into these foreign worlds. Her essay explores the possibilities and limitations of empathy, and was inspired by her realization that empathy should not be reserved only for special occasions, but can be just as worthwhile as a daily practice.

Brennan Spector, '20, is a Drama and Musical Theater major in the Tisch School of the Arts' New Studio on Broadway. An actor from a young age, Brennan would spend his mornings in his hometown of Skillman, New Jersey, before going to Manhattan for rehearsals and auditions later that night. His essay "Reflections" arose from a deep fascination with art that blurs the lines between real life and perform-

ance. Weekly outings to museums and the theater have proven to be his most valuable research.

Aidan Stanley-Coughlan, '20, from Rochester, New York, is pursuing a degree in Social Work at the Silver School of Social Work. In "Sex Work and Social Welfare: Anti-Oppressive Social Work Practice," he seeks to examine those schools of thought which have shaped the services that social workers provide to New York City sex workers. It concentrates on how contemporary social work and scholarship perpetuate oppressive systems. Driven by a passion for radical politics, his essay was written in an effort to contextualize critical consciousness, and to do this within social work practice with a historically at-risk and frequently silenced population. In his free time, Aidan likes to read, teach health classes in public schools, and explore the colorful neighborhoods of New York City.

Phionna Teo, '20, is an Anthropology major in the College of Arts and Sciences. She hails from sunny Singapore. Her interest in social justice and cultural constructs drove her to Anthropology, and inspired her piece "A Writer's Occupation," an essay that questions the line between occupying and liberating. As a hopelessly irreligious individual, she found herself drawn to the study of Medieval Mysticism in hopes of understanding the driving forces behind extreme behavior inspired by religion. "The Significance of Food for Mystics in the Middle Ages" was the result. In her free time, Phionna can most often be found on the road, in pursuit of new places and passions.

Chloë Thorburn, '20, from Lexington, Massachusetts, is a Drama major in the Tisch School of the Arts. From babysitting in her teens to working as an America Reads literacy tutor in NYC, Chloë has been captivated by the way children often think far more critically and maturely than they are given credit for. "Dr. Seuss, Leader of the Resistance" stems from Chloë's belief that the autonomy and wisdom of children are too often undervalued. She seeks to analyze and challenge how our culture strives to raise children as successful future citizens while simultaneously suppressing their freedom to develop as

free-thinking individuals. A child at heart, Chloë used this essay as an excuse to revisit some of the most beloved picture books of her childhood.

Benjamin Wang, '20, grew up in the lovely town of Northfield, Minnesota. He studies Drama at the Tisch School of the Arts. His writing process blends all the dubious earnestness of your philosophy major uncle with the gung-ho, loose-cannon courage that can only be riled at 3am the night before the deadline. He has long struggled to understand why people are so susceptible to anger towards strangers. His essay, "Wrestling Blind: Groping an Elephant in Three Acts," is not meant to be an "answer" to this problem, but rather a representation of his thoughts on the subject. Mr. Cohrs and Mrs. Mucha may be surprised to find a refreshing lack of snark in Benjamin's writing, a feat which has just been thoroughly betrayed.

Taylor Whitehead, '19, originally from San Jose, California, is an Applied Psychology major in the Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development. She was driven to write "Boys Who Cry Saint" by an enduring interest in feminist theory and social psychology. Maggie Nelson's *The Argonauts* was also a strong influence. She is interested in how binary thinking can limit interpersonal relationships, and seeks to reconceptualize these notions through her writing. In her free time, she volunteers as a health educator for Peer Health Exchange and enjoys watching sitcoms.

Xiaolu Wu, '20, from Shanghai, China, is an Art History major in the College of Art and Sciences. Her interests include art and literature, religious studies and philosophy. Rebecca Solnit's essay collection, *A Field Guide to Getting Lost*, therefore attracted Xiaolu. For her, writing "A Digressional Guide" was a process of peeling away the complex layers of thought in Solnit's literature and putting these scraps of evidence together to create a literary theory of her own. "A Digressional Guide" also expresses Xiaolu's own belief in the meaning of life through Solnit's language. Besides literature, Xiaolu is deeply passionate about art, and loves going to museums.

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NOTEWORTHY ESSAYS

Partly Cloudy on Memory Lane

Alexandra Fong

Through the Eye of the Needle

Alexandra Gruzinova

The Entire History of You

Vic Lee

Clocks: The Modern Memento Mori

Kyle Mariano

The Comfort of Comfort

Jonathan Sassoon

The Eraser Sheds: Audience, Application, and Context
in the Battle of Big Art vs. Little Art

Julian Towers

Writing As Rioting, Writing As Righting

Shihan "Sarah" Wang

Collapse of Distance

Lihan You