Ayisha Yahya

Growing up I listened to Whitney Houston and Mariah Carey, Tupac Shakur and Biggie Smalls. I loved the Cosbys and the Fresh Prince of Bel Air. Yet I did not spend my childhood in the US—my hometown is Nairobi, Kenya.

My life is a testament to how integrated the world has become through the media and processes of globalization. More and more, we share a common global popular culture, drawn mainly from the Western world; we watch the same movies, listen to the same music, and wear the same clothes. More and more, diverse nations’ political and socio-economic systems revolve around a common capitalist market system.

We must question the ways in which we are becoming the same, as well as what makes us different. This debate between homogeneity and heterogeneity is what led me to study the emergence of Kenyan hip-hop in Nairobi for my master’s final project.

**New Genre in Kenya**

In recent years, young Kenyans began making music influenced by American rappers and hip-hoppers. The genre is extremely popular among the youth, but it also raises important questions about its significance in the local context. Is it unique, or does it merely imitate Western forms? And how is it representative of urban Kenyan youth identity as a whole?

I traveled home in summer 2004 for 10 weeks, where I talked to musicians, music producers and music consumers. I listened to the music and observed young people in their daily lives. I wanted to get not only a sense of what this music means, but of how young urban Kenyans perceive their own lives.

Graduate student Ayisha Yahya presents her findings at the April 21, 2005, conference sponsored by the UO Center on Diversity and Community (CODAC). Yahya received a CODAC grant last year to help fund her summer 2004 research in Kenya.

I discovered that the music industry is thriving, despite challenges such as lack of investment or government regulatory bodies to curb piracy and aid in moving the industry forward. My findings also reflect that we are, indeed, becoming homogenous in many ways—just a look at how young Kenyans dress is enough to reveal the similarities between Kenyan and American youth.

**The music reaches out across different demographics, serving as a unifying element.**

Yet underneath the dominant currents of Westernization and globalization are alternative trends that seek to reaffirm a unique Kenyan youth identity. Young Kenyans are composing hip-hop-inspired music in local languages and addressing themes that are relevant to their lives. With their catchy rhythms and creative lyrics, they assert that they are “proudly Kenyan.”

And while acknowledging the impact the West has had on them, Kenyan musicians have not resigned themselves to just accepting what the West has to offer—they are creating their own fusions from the materials they have appropriated.

While some people criticize the new music as mere imitation, others recognize it as an inimitable cultural product. Many love the music, and Kenyan artists have gained celebrity status in a nation where, until a few years ago, it was rare to hear local songs on radio.

We have a new brand of role models that give us another reason to be proud of our nation. Moreover, the music reaches out across different demographics, since it is not made for a particular ethnic group, serving as a unifying element.

Kenyan contemporary music represents the position young Kenyans occupy, negotiating local ideals and Western influences. We are finding spaces in between that are a blend of values and perspectives. We are cultural hybrids, with a unique urban identity, and Kenyan hip-hop mirrors our hybridity.
Message from the Director

Dennis Galvan

On behalf of the International Studies Program faculty and staff, a hearty congratulations to all of our students: those graduating this spring, those continueing in the Program, and those who've finished but remain a vital part of ISP's "extended kinship group." Over the years it's been our great pleasure to work with an amazing range of bright, talented, energetic and passionate students, grad and undergrad. Some of you are working your way through the program now, injecting your enthusiasm and curiosity into the courses and conversations that are International Studies. To those who have already left your mark, we are grateful for your legacy and for the impact you now have in the wider world.

International Studies thrives because we are a community of engagement: a cluster of scholars, students and citizens of a globalized world who share a commitment to deep knowledge of other regions and lifeways, to opening minds and hearts to ideas, beliefs, practices and values at first distant and unfamiliar, later enriching and empowering. We as faculty, students and staff know that international diversity, bridging cultural, racial, religious and regional divides, and overcoming ignorance and mistrust with knowledge and empathy are vital as we make our way through the complexities of a shrinking global community. While we strive for this in our classes and activities here in leafy, comfortable Eugene, our greater task is to take what we learn out into the wider world and to bring the lessons of internationalism back home to enrich and transform this place, too.

Thanks to all of you for your commitment to International Studies, for staying in contact with the Program, for sharing your accomplishments and joys, and for standing with us as we continue to make the University of Oregon and Eugene examples of cross-cultural understanding and openness to the world beyond our shores.

Sara Albee

It was a bright, sunny Sunday in Tamil Nadu, South India. I was enjoying my day off from an internship at a local NGO in Auroville, Tamil Nadu, near Pondicherry.

The moment of the tsunami, the morning of December 26, 2004, I was only a few kilometers from the Bay of Bengal, talking to my family (it was Christmas evening in the US). Near the end of our conversation, a Tamil Indian woman came into the shop. She was quite upset—even hysterical—but I couldn’t understand what had happened. Showing such emotion in a public place is very unusual.

On my way home I witnessed hundreds of families, mainly small children (so many children), walking on the road in front of my house. They were traveling inland from two of the worst-hit seaside villages by foot, bullock cart, anything available. They said that their houses were full of water and that many people were dead. I was surprised, because it wasn’t raining, but then I heard that the ocean had risen up and that there had been an earthquake. Power was down most of the day, so nobody could get access to news.

I went to the beach to see what was going on; maybe a little crazy, in retrospect. Others had the same idea, and what was left of the beach was crowded. The ocean was about 20 feet farther inland than usual, and the first 30-40 feet was dirty brown, with random things floating in the water. This stream of brown extended for many kilometers north and south. That was about 11 a.m. The tsunami had hit at about 9 a.m.

The devastation was heartbreaking. Along the 20 km stretch where I was (north of Pondicherry), more than 300 people had died and many lost homes and fishing boats. But in the face of this devastation people and organizations helped in dramatic ways. Indians brought food and clothing from all over India. Inland villagers gave everything they could. People united to help, regardless of caste or other affiliations.

The corruption and bureaucracy of the government was widespread and sickening in the face of so much loss. I witnessed this while helping deliver rice and cooking pots to one of the worst-hit areas on the Indian coast, Nagapattinam, six hours south of Pondicherry. We were held up by the police for several hours and then forced to give our donations to a political party that, supposedly, would distribute it. (The political parties were often accused of selling the rice, and even if they did not, they used the donations to gain votes). Wealthier villagers who weren’t affected by the tsunami could pay bribes to get government aid. Granted, even they don’t have much and are simply trying to survive. But all this can cause extreme frustration for those trying to help.

Despite this, people and organizations are helping in significant ways. Less than an hour after the tsunami struck, Auroville (the international township in which I was staying) began what would become a large relief effort, working in 24 tsunami-affected villages. Auroville is now involved in long-term rehabilitation work.

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Continued on p. 8
Ngugi wa Thiong'o  
Kenyan writer and scholar speaks to UO audience on the significance of language in colonial settings.

Amanda Bird  
Kenyan novelist Ngugi wa Thiong'o gave a public lecture at the University of Oregon on March 30 titled “Planting African Memory: The Role of a Scholar in a Postcolonial World.” The address was co-sponsored by the International Studies Program; ISP graduate student Ayisha Yahya, a native of Kenya, introduced the acclaimed scholar.

One of Ngugi's concerns is the role of language in colonization and neocolonialism. In 1977 he was detained in a maximum-security prison for producing the co-written play *I Will Marry When I Want* in the African language of Kikuyu. The play was staged in a village about 100 km from Nairobi at the initiative of Ngugi and some of his colleagues from the University of Nairobi. They chose Kikuyu because it was their language of the community and they wanted to connect with the villagers.

"You name, You own."

Displacing Memory  
Colonizers, Ngugi said, have invariably imposed their language on the colonized. They thus control both land and language. "You control the memory of that community....You name, you own," he says.

He cited, for example, place names such as Queenstown, Williamstown, New England and New York. Presumably, he observed, these places had names before the Europeans came. By imposing their own names, the Europeans were “planting one memory over another.”

Ngugi says colonialism continues when scholarly practice implies that the understanding of the history or culture of a people must be mediated by English; the message is, “knowledge is real knowledge when it is coded in English.”

Ngugi described European field workers who employ a local informant. Usually, notes are taken in English; if they are not, they are translated into English and the original, he said, is destroyed. The English document becomes the “primary source.”

"This is upside down. We are continuing the colonial project...not because we are using English or French, but because we are placing one language over another."

Ngugi discontinued composing in English because “I had to find a way of connecting myself to myself.” He calls African scholars to take up this process of connecting themselves with their memory.

For European and American scholars, Ngugi urged sensitivity to the existence and validity of other languages.

Ngugi’s past teaching positions include Yale University, Amherst College and New York University. He has been a guest lecturer at many other universities and received numerous prominent awards.

Faiz Ahmed Faiz (1911-1984) was born in Sialkot, Pakistan, but his poetry is admired in both Pakistan and India. He studied English literature and philosophy in Lahore and lectured in English at Amritsar. After World War II, he became a journalist, eventually editing The Pakistan Times. He was sentenced to four years in prison in 1951 on political charges. While in prison he wrote Dast-e-Saba and Zindan-Nama.

In his poems, Faiz intertwines themes of romantic love and contemporary social issues. His poetry has been translated into Russian, and he received the prestigious Lenin Award for Peace from Soviet Russia. His poetry collections include Naqsh-e-Faryadi (1943) and Dast-e-Tah-e-Sang (1965).

Translation by Amarah Yasmeen Niazi. Amarah is a first-year graduate student in International Studies. She is from Pakistan and has a Master’s in Defence and Strategic Studies from Quaid-e-Azam University Islamabad, Pakistan.


Last night came into my heart your forgotten memory
Like spring sprouting out on barren land
Like fragrant breeze blowing on a desert sand
Like a patient getting unexpected solace out of misery.

The students and staff of the International Studies Program would like to express appreciation to those who have contributed their financial support in the past year:


If you would like to help support the International Studies Program, donations can be sent to:

UO Foundation
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Please specify whether your contribution is for the Clarence Thurber Endowment (dedicated to student scholarships and professional development) or the International Studies General Support Fund.
Awards ...

Thurber Grant for Philippines Research
Michael Viola

I am a second-year graduate student in International Studies. In 2004 I received a Thurber Grant that enabled me to spend three months in the Philippines studying Tagalog and exploring potential graduate work. While there, I not only formed close connections with University of Philippines faculty, who helped direct my research in imposed forms of “development” and colonial education, but also linked up with Filipino community groups actively engaged in campaigns for social justice and self-determination.

My trip was associated with the Philippine Studies Program. This extensive research program is developed by Philippine Forum, a nonprofit organization that collaborates with the University of the Philippines. After I returned to Eugene, six of us who had participated in the program began to discuss how we could do more than just learn about the Philippines through our research and graduate work.

We decided to organize a conference with the focus of “advocating, educating and celebrating,” addressing issues relevant to Filipinos in the US and abroad. The conference took place at California State University, Dominguez Hills, Feb. 18–21. It was a success; students, activists and individuals from all over the US attended workshops and listened to guests speak on “Turning Knowledge into Action.” Specifically, speakers advocated for Filipino World War II veterans in the US who, instead of receiving military benefits, are to this day receiving welfare checks. Speakers also discussed Philippine culture and its history, marked with colonialism as well as resistance.

With the academic and financial assistance of the International Studies Program I have been able to network and build relationships with scholars, activists and community members who are working to create positive changes within Filipino communities in the US and abroad.

Fulbright and College of Arts and Sciences Awards
Cortnie Shupe

My majors are International Studies, German and Spanish, and my minor is in the Honors College. I studied abroad winter 2003 in Seville, Spain, and have participated in two international internships offered through the U of O. The first took place summer 2002 in Ludwigsburg, Germany, with a cross-cultural training firm. I assisted with orientation seminars, researched issues of cultural conflict specific to the countries handled in the orientations, marketed to potential clients over the phone and served as an office assistant. Last summer I interned with FINCA Peru, a communal banking organization in Ayacucho.

I am particularly interested in studying international development aid and am writing my Honors College thesis on a comparison between USAID and the BMZ (German aid ministry). I have received a Fulbright grant to continue this research in Berlin next academic year.

George and Susan Fugelsang Scholarship
Elizabeth Rose Sprauer

I am a junior International Studies major, with a concentration in International Education. My minor is Spanish. I recently returned from studying abroad in Querétaro, Mexico, for six months. It was one of the best experiences of my life! I am extremely close to my Mexican host family, and we e-mail each other a few times a week. In fact, I’ll be visiting them sometime this summer and next Christmas. I fell in love with the Mexican culture and people.

I grew up in Woodburn, Oregon, which is an extremely diverse community. My mom is an Old Believer Russian, so I grew up in two different cultures: the Old Believer culture and mainstream American culture. I would like someday to live abroad and teach in international schools.

After graduation (June ’06), I hope to participate in the Teach for America program, as well as join the Peace Corps. I really love opening myself up to new ways of thinking and living.

My sister, Sasha, is one year younger than I and also a student here at the U of O. In my free time (when I have any!), I like to read, watch movies and spend time with my family and friends.
Alumni

Notes from all over ...

Kitte Chen (BA ’01)
Kitte is teaching special education in California with the Teach for America program.

Agatha Schmaedick (BA ‘00)
March 9, 2005
"I’m still busy in the workers’ rights world; I now live in Washington DC and work for the Worker Rights Consortium, though I spend about half of the year in Southeast Asia. I’ve been doing factory assessments, mainly in Indonesia, Thailand, and the Philippines, and just recently helped get the WRC’s program in China started. I miss Oregon, though.”

Miguel Olivares (MA ’93)
August 13, 2004
"I have been with the Department of Commerce for seven years as an International Trade Specialist. I thought I might share my gratitude for having been with the International Studies programme!"

Excerpt from the Export News for Florida, US Export Assistance Centers, August 2004:
“Miguel moved to the Ft. Lauderdale US Export Assistance Center after six years with the Department of Commerce’s International Buyer Program in Washington DC, where he partnered with several major US trade exhibitions to maximize their international attendance and exposure. As part of the Ft. Lauderdale team, Miguel brings his promotional skills to help local firms find international partners and increase their export sales. The industry sectors he is working with include: Education and Training, Sporting Goods and Fitness Equipment, Consumer Goods, and Apparel.”

Kim Giusti (BA ‘04)
May 1, 2005
"I am interning for five months at the Deutscher Bundestag (German Parliament). There are 95 interns from 21 countries (including 10 Americans) living together in East Berlin.

Each of us is working for an individual representative, writing speeches and letters, attending meetings and doing any other work necessary to keep the Bundestag representatives on top of the current political situation in Germany. I am working for Representative Ulrich Adam, from the CDU party. Over the next three months, my main task will be to research the Office of Homeland Security in the US, translate that information into German and help the Chief of Staff in my office write a strategy paper on the topic. This paper will be submitted to the Bundestag for discussion and might very well lead to creation of a similar office in Germany.

Other aspects of the program include a trip to the constituency of the representative, a “Laenderabend” (a party that each country will put on to represent its culture) and invitations to many events here in Berlin.

After the internship ends on July 31, I plan to travel for the rest of August, and then I’ll be moving to Vienna to start a teaching assistantship year on a Fulbright Grant. I was also accepted to the MAGES program at Georgetown University and plan on attending that the year after to get my Master’s degree in German and European Studies.”

Judith Friedman (BA ‘05)
May 3, 2005
"Since January I have been in Quito, Ecuador, working for UNIFEM’s Andean Regional office. A letter I wrote last week...

The tire burning, gas throwing, highway blockades, horn honking, massive marches and rioting seem to have subsided in Quito today. Last Wednesday (April 13th) the people of Quito went on strike to protest (now ex-presidente) Lucio Gutierrez. Roads were blocked, water was turned off, public transportation came to a halt, and Lucio declared a state of emergency in Ecuador.

Our staff was reduced to those who could walk to work (five of us, I was included). Things continued to escalate in the following days...buses and buses of indigenous people were brought in by the government, essentially bribed to support Lucio and his cronies—though interviews revealed that they had little idea of what they were supposed to be doing in Quito. Though the international press has neither accurately captured the subtleties nor the intensities of the situation, the provocative images of Quito with fires, police, army, gas and chaos are quite real.

In a nutshell, the president was overthrown...congress was ousted, and now the vice president is attempting to appease el pueblo ecuatoriano. In spite of the singed streets, the barricaded buildings, the ruined government offices (el ministerio de bienestar social was burnt down), the heavily armed police and army patrols, and the general animo de la gente, things are calm here again.”
UO Receives Grant for Undergraduate African Studies Expansion

Amanda Bird

The University of Oregon recently received a grant of $160,000 from the federal Department of Education to be used during the academic years 2005–07 to expand its undergraduate African Studies initiative.

The grant proposal, composed by ISP professors Stephen Wooten and Dennis Galvan, calls for addition of African studies classes, acquisition of African language study materials, enhanced library holdings and study abroad opportunities, and expansion of intellectual resources through lectures, seminars and an artist-in-residency.

Maram Epstein, head of the Oregon Consortium for International and Area Studies (OCIAS), comments, “This grant will make it possible to establish a certificate and perhaps minor in African Studies, so that interested students can take full advantage of our faculty and study abroad opportunities.” The African Studies initiative consists of a committee composed of professors with expertise in various subjects related to Africa.

Misenga Makambo, fourth-year undergraduate student from the Democratic Republic of Congo, hopes the new classes will heighten students’ awareness of the issues facing Africans. She feels solutions, not merely facts, are important: “It’s not just about knowing where Africa is, how poor people are, how many people are dying of AIDS.” Rather, how do the activities of NGOs and foreign governments impact the political situation in Africa?

The first year will see addition of two classes, with three more planned for the near future, “Africa in Oregon” will help students see and appreciate the local influence of African culture. “African Experiences” will enable students who have participated in overseas study and internships to explore and discuss their experiences.

In addition to Swahili language courses through the Yamada Language Center, tutorials in Bamana/Dyula and Wolof, two West African languages, are to be established.

In order to sustain initial developments, the initiative will need to obtain funding from donors, foundations and endowments. Wooten says one criterion in determining Title VI grantees is the likelihood of sustainability, and he is confident that the programs to be established will invite investors.

Wooten says the program is “good for our diversity. To have a truly international and diverse campus, we really need a focus on that part of the world. It’s a great step forward for us.”

International Studies Program Adds Faculty Members

Amanda Bird

Three UO professors joined International Studies this year. Bruce Blonigen, Carlos Aguirre and Richard Kraus have been advising students and assisting with program operations since summer ‘04.

They also serve on graduate thesis committees and help manage Block C professional concentration areas. It is hoped that in the future they will each teach one ISP course a year.

ISP Director Dennis Galvan feels the addition of Blonigen, Kraus and Aguirre increases the program’s intellectual collaboration with other departments. He says they have already contributed significantly, assisting in expanding and redesigning summer course offerings and revisiting undergraduate course requirements.

Carlos Aguirre

Carlos Aguirre is associate professor of history and director of Latin American Studies. He has taught at universities in Peru, Puerto Rico and the US. He has published two books, and his awards include an American Philosophical Society Research Grant (’97), a John Simon Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship (’99) and the UO Ersted Award for Distinguished Teaching (’02).

Richard Kraus

Richard Kraus is a professor of Political Science and director of the UO Honors College. He has published three books and spent six years in China, living in Fujian, Nanjing, Taiwan and Hong Kong. He has taught in six US institutions since 1974, including the Johns Hopkins University-Nanjing University Center for Chinese and American Studies (1995–97).

Bruce Blonigen

Bruce Blonigen holds Knight Professorship in the Economics Department. He is also a Faculty Research Fellow with the National Bureau of Economic Research and associate editor of the Journal of International Economics. Blonigen’s awards include two National Science Foundation grants (1998–00 and 2004–06) and the UO Ersted Award for Distinguished Teaching (’03).
Life and Dance in Brittany

Stephanie Chappell

The Soul of Dance

Some people call it le redoutable pouvoir de la danse, “the irresistible power of dance.” The value of a dance can be reduced to its choreography to the same degree that the value of a word can be reduced to its spelling. We must look at its soul. Dance can convey the everyday life of individuals, their sense of organization in society, the range of their feelings, their most profound secrets and instincts.

The occasions for dancing in Brittany are many, but we will concern ourselves here primarily with dance and work. It is worth mentioning that farmers dance a great deal!

Families in Brittany frequently help each other with farmwork, lending one another manpower, tools, animals and much more. The beneficiary is only required to treat the assistants as well as possible. There is much joy and pleasure in such “work parties.” Participants think more about the pleasure than about the hard work awaiting. Music and dancing are provided during and after the work day. Some specific examples:

- Les battages (cutting of the hay and straw): Every day ends with a dance, often a ronde, or “ring.”
- Les récoltes de Betteraves et de pommes de terre (harvesting of beets, and potatoes). This could last a whole month.

Music and dancing are provided during and after the work day. Some specific examples:

- Les battages (cutting of the hay and straw): Every day ends with a dance, often a ronde, or “ring.”
- Les récoltes de Betteraves et de pommes de terre (harvesting of beets, and potatoes).
- In lower Brittany, the l’ambleudadeg ed du consists of trampling the spelt with bare feet. In some places it is done solo, but of the dancers to the sound of gavottes, jibidis and jabadaos. It is a very intricate, long and hard process. At the end the workers/dancers are served a meal, along with wine, cider and more dancing!

In the winter people also gather to make baskets and clothes, always incorporating much dancing and singing.

Through dance, people have a sense of belonging to a family, a clan, a village and the land. It is a ceremony in which ties between people are manifested and strengthened.

Dancing is part of raison d’être in Brittany, especially among the farmers. Neither the youth of some participants nor the drinking of cider suffices to explain the trances people enter while dancing. Women, 70 years old of age, marked by years of exhausting field labor, already carrying under their hats the face of death, can be seen letting go to the dancing drunkenness and freedom.

On my last journey to Brittany, one warm night, I entered a Fest-Noz in a small village in the south of Brittany. I soon found myself surrounded by people of all ages, holding hands or elbows and progressing to the sound of the bombarde and the biniou. With arched backs, agile feet and precise foot steps, the elders led the ronde and took the youth into another realm of life. It truly was the extreme experience of community and culture.

Stephanie Chappell is an undergraduate International Studies student. Originally from France, she has been raising her son, Romain, in the US. The two of them are devoted to urban homesteading, until they find their way back to the countryside. Stephanie is passionate about folk dancing, gardening and working with children.

Bibliography:
Galbrun, Erwanez. La danse Bretonne. 1965.

Sara Albee recently returned from more than a year interning at an Indian NGO addressing village water issues. She is writing her senior thesis on Auroville’s relief program. She can be reached at jessabella@poetic.com. For more information on Auroville see www.auroville.org.

Tsunami, continued from p. 2

I worked in the livelihood aspect of this work and assisted in creating a proposal for a high-quality vocational training institute that made more than 130 seats available to tsunami-affected villagers. A major concern among them, especially the youth, was obtaining alternative jobs. Fishing is scary now for many of them. The livelihood project coordinated and helped improve several existing training centers in the area. I liked this project; it addressed immediate needs of those affected by the tsunami as well as long-term needs of the whole area.
Mi Crónica

Por Álvaro Llanos

En mi estadía en Eugene he construido mi pequeña diáspora donde leo los diarios chilenos en Internet y conservamos parte de nuestra cultura. Vivo en una suerte de casa-chilena-bicultural. Por favor amigo, no se imaginen esas películas en las que los inmigrantes tienen la casa llena de banderitas, artesanías y recortes alusivos a su terruño. Lo respeto pero no va conmigo (sorry). Tampoco se imaginen que tomo tequila y que escuco rancheras (Ijole, no). Tampoco piensen que hablamos español como en las telenovelas y que yo grito “recorcholis” cuando me golpeo un dedo o algo me sale mal. No tengo tan mal gusto como para poner una Venus de Milo de yeso en el living ni colgar banderitas chilenas y mantelito de plástico como decoración de fondo. Nadie puede...digo yo.

En mi relación matrimonial no soy el típico machote de Jalisco. Soy afortunado. Estoy casado con una mujer atractiva, independiente e inteligente, no con la “chilindrina.” Con los niños tengo una relación más horizontal que la del padre autoritario. Mis hijos saben que son chilenos y que aquí son extranjeros y parte de una minoría. Se los suelo recalcar. Ellos se comunican en inglés y yo con ellos en spanglish o a grito peleado (depende de como se estén portando). Hablamos – como sea- y eso es lo que vale. Se educan acá y han asimilado todas las costumbres de la cultura dominante norteamericana. Yo he tenido que transar un poco. No puedo ser tan “cuadrado” en el sentido de educarlos “a la chilena” y que sean los “gansos” de la clase (ya conmigo se copó la cuota de gansos en la familia). Ellos a su vez han tenido que ajustarse a sus papás que ponen ciertas reglas y les hablan un inglés con cinco vocales (atroz). Por mi parte, he tenido que acostumbrarme por ejemplo a la manera como comen los gringos, mezclando dulce y amargo en el mismo Plato, costumbre que mis hijos han asumido. Mis papás son por el contrario tan fijados en la forma. Se desmayan si los ven tan agringados o si nos vieran los domingos comiendo frente a la TV viendo películas.

Mi esposa y yo somos técnicamente estudiantes no tradicionales. Somos padres lo mejor que podemos en un horario a veces de locos. Cuando yo era chico el almuerzo, y no es hueveo... [Beep], era un casi un rito. Mis papás le ponían tanto color que cualquiera diría que almorzábamos con la reina Isabel día por medio. Mi mamá adoctrinaba primero a las nanas, que había que retirar la mantequilla y lo salado antes que viniera el postre etc. Mis papás le ponían tanto énfasis al uso de los cubiertos, a la loza, al “servicio a la redonda” a la derecha ¡Nuestros almuerzos parecían una copia tercermundista de Versalles! Ciertamente no había mala intención en eso. Cada uno trata de hacerlo lo mejor posible. Con mi mirada de adulto les doy las gracias por todo lo que me dieron. También porque nunca pasé ninguna vergüenza por malos modales mientras comía con extraños. Honestamente para mí el almuerzo o cualquier comida uno tiene que aprovecharlas para compartir lo que ha pasado en el día, lo bueno y lo malo, también para hacer planes y ver como están los niños. Me encanta llegar a la casa y conversar con mi esposa, a veces comer sentado en mi sillón regalón. Este es un momento de relajo donde incluso temas difíciles pueden encontrar solución. Y bueno, como papás hay que esforzarse para que el cansancio no nos gane y podamos ser modelos para nuestros hijos. El tiempo pasa tan rápido que no vale la pena perderlo en detalles! He dicho!


Glossary
recorcholis—“Oh, my gosh!” Commonly used in the captions of the North American films instead of the “f” word.
nadie puede—“Oh, my gosh!” Very popular during the 1990s.
Cuadrado—jerk
ganso—nerd
hueveo—Chilean verb: “I’m telling you the truth” (foul language).
Ijole—“Oh, my gosh!” In the Mexican movies from the 1940s.
chilindrina—Mexican female comedian.
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