

Ritwik Dutta
Mr. Accorsi
August 14 2014
Autobiographical Essay

Autobiographical Essay

My name is Ritwik Dutta. I am 15 years old (to be 16 in September 2014), and I live in Sunnyvale in California. My family is originally from India (particularly Calcutta, in the West Bengal region), although I was born and raised in California. My family does not have very many traditional customs (that I know of), although my mother and sister probably would be more fitting respondents of that particular question.

The most important thing that I have learned in life so far is a cliched yet still quite relevant rule: never lose sight of what is important. Though trite in the swirling vortex of American popular culture, it still provides the guidance that I need to help keep me on track.

For my “island” book, I have a certain proclivity towards *Ender’s Game* by Orson Scott Card. I first heard of it and read it during 3rd grade, at the tender age of about 8. Needless to say, some of the deeper intricacies of the novel were lost on me, but as I re-read it over the years (and even to this very day), I began to appreciate it more and more. Today, it is one of those books that is timeless in its message and its style. As for my “island” meal, I would have to choose my personal favorite - a simple and delicious meal: chicken nuggets and chocolate milk. Although there is nary a shred of sophistication to my choice, it is that “comfort food” which bares itself against all criticism because it is that wonderful combination of tastes and smells which brings one home. My favorite films (I simply *cannot* choose just one) are *Wayne’s World* and *The Cable Guy*. There is something about the comedy of the first that I simply love - although I quite enjoy the darker humor of the latter.

As for personal interests, in my case they invariably tend toward the persuasion of technology in one way in another. During my free time, I normally work on some sort of programming project (ranging from the daily facade of web programming to the deep intricacies of the complex systems that support it all) or some sort of computer science problem (usually of an algorithmic variety). Since the age of nine or so, my selection of college major has been set in stone - computer science with a focus on artificial intelligence and computing theory. There is something about the field of

computer science that draws me in - that distinctive feeling that defines your purpose in life.

However ready I might be for college, I have a bevy of personal idiosyncrasies, some of which help me out along the way, and others that hold me back. I'm usually quite a fast learner, although I tend to do better with concepts that require more understanding. When it comes to memorization by rote, I am honestly quite awful. A larger detriment is my distaste for tedium in my work and my tendency toward procrastination. I also have an inclination toward more logical and numeric subjects, and I can grasp logical concepts easily.

The people in the world the most vital professions are scientists and engineers (whether from the disciplines of computers to biology, or materials to chemistry). The frontiers of the world have expanded immensely due to science. From Gutenberg (the printing press), to Da Vinci (ball bearings, parachutes, diving suits, tanks, perspective, hydraulic machines, and more), to Galileo (the solar system), to Newton (gravity and calculus), to Babbage (computing machines), to Bell (the telephone), to Tesla (alternating current and lightbulbs), to Marconi (the radio), to Farnsworth (the television), to the unknown government scientists of the 1980s (the internet), to Tim Berners-Lee (the World Wide Web, web pages, the HTTP protocol, the URI/URL spec, and the HTML markup language), to Jobs/Gates/Fortune 500 engineers (desktops, laptops, smartphones, tablets, and massively scalable internet infrastructure), every major life improvement of the last half millenium or so has come about because of brilliant scientific thought. Naturally, America is no exception to the rest of the world, so the most important people are similarly scientists or engineers.

One thing that makes the US such a wonderful country is freedom. The oft-repeated holy grail of the US, the American Dream is most definitely a reality, despite the innumerable differences between the modern incarnation and the original white picket-fence idea. Anyone in this country can do anything they want as long as it does not harm anyone else.