

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Thursday, June 26, 7:30 PM.** Monthly Meeting. We meet at the Caltech Y, Tyson House, 505 S. Wilson Ave., Pasadena. (This is just south of the corner with San Pasqual. Signs will be posted.) We will be planning our activities for the summer. Please join us! Refreshments provided.

**Tuesday, July 8, 7:30 PM.** Letter writing meeting at Caltech Athenaeum, corner of Hill and California in Pasadena. In the summer we meet outdoors at the "Rath al Fresco," on the lawn behind the building. This informal gathering is a great way for newcomers to get acquainted with Amnesty

**Sunday, July 20, 6:30 PM.** Rights Readers Human Rights Book Discussion group. This month we read "How to get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia" by Mohsin Hamid.

## COORDINATOR'S CORNER

Hi All

What's been happening with Group 22 lately? Some members we haven't seen in awhile have come back, which is great.

Rob and I, Joyce and Veronica attended the 25<sup>th</sup> (I can't believe it's been that long) anniversary dinner of Tiananmen Square at Almansor Court in Alhambra in late May. The indefatigable Ann Lau was there, of course, as well as many other activists, both Asian and non.

Wishing all a restful and relaxing summer. I am working 3 weeks to pay to attend the National School Nurse conference in San Antonio, Texas.

Con Cariño,  
Kathy

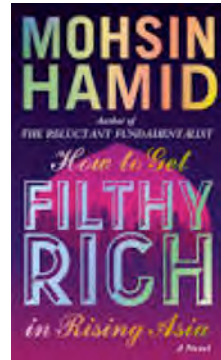
## RIGHTS READERS

Human Rights Book Discussion Group

Keep up with Rights Readers at  
<http://rightsreaders.blogspot.com>

Next Rights Readers meeting:  
Sunday, July 20, 6:30 PM

Vroman's Bookstore  
695 E. Colorado, Pasadena



## Book Review

*Yes Man*

Mohsin Hamid's *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia*

By PARUL SEHGAL

Published: March 29, 2013

"How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia" begins under a bed. With you — yes, *you* — under a bed. Once you quit cowering, you'll be the hero of this novel written in the second person, although there's nothing remotely heroic about you at the moment; you're so sick you can scarcely speak. The only remedy at hand is a large white radish, which your mother cooks up in a foul brew.

Courage. You'll live and what's more, you're only seven steps from getting Filthy Rich, according to the narrator. (You're also nine steps from ruin, but we'll address that in a minute.) The marriage of these two curiously compatible genres — self-help and the old-fashioned bildungsroman — is just one of the pleasures of Mohsin Hamid's shrewd and slippery new novel, a rags-to-riches story that works on a head-splitting number of levels. It's a love story and a study of seismic social change. It parodies a get-rich-quick book and gestures to a new direction for the novel, all in prose so pure and purposeful it passes straight into the bloodstream. It intoxicates.

But back to the radish. It saves you — or was it perhaps something more numinous? Luck has already begun clearing your path. "There are forks in the road to wealth that have nothing to do with choice or desire or effort, forks that have to do with chance, and in your case, the order of your birth is one of these," the narrator congratulates you. You're a third-born son. Third born means you're spared from going to work immediately (like your elder brother) or being married off (like your sister, who at puberty is "marked for entry"). Third born means you're not "a tiny skeleton in a small grave at the base of a tree," like your youngest sibling. Third born means you stay in school.

Even your illness is a blessing; it persuades your father to move the family to the city — Step 1 in getting Filthy Rich — and it's the point where the story of the individual debouches into the narrative of the nation. "You embody one of the great changes of your time," Hamid writes.

"Where once your clan was innumerable, not infinite but of a large number not readily known, now there are five of you. Five. The fingers on one hand, the toes on one foot, a minuscule aggregation when compared with shoals of fish or flocks of birds or indeed tribes of humans. In the history of the evolution of the family, you and the millions of other migrants like you represent an ongoing proliferation of the nuclear. It is an explosive transformation."

You ascend smoothly, going from DVD rental delivery boy to young entrepreneur with a bottled water business that thrives "to the sound of the city's great whooshing thirst," goaded on by the narrator's edicts ("Learn From a Master," "Don't Fall in Love"), which grow steadily more sinister ("Be Prepared to Use Violence"). You marry but remain besotted with a girl from the neighborhood identified as "the pretty girl," now working as a model and making her own hazardous climb.

Like his compatriot, the Pakistani novelist Mohammed Hanif, author of "Our Lady of Alice Bhatti," Hamid creates characters who enact the life of the nation. But where Hanif (a former fighter pilot) favors broad burlesques — a literature of parody and attack — Hamid (a former brand consultant) is politic and deeply ironic. He grew up in Pakistan and America, with stints in Milan and Manila (where our families were friends). He's alert to the dread and distrust with which America and the Muslim world regard each other. He's never merely telling a story, he's pitting his story against prevailing narratives about Pakistan, the roots of radicalization, the unevenness of economic growth. Hence his penchant for directly addressing the reader — all three of his novels make extravagant use of the second person.

"I'm a political animal," Hamid told the Book Review in an interview last year. "How the pack hunts, shares its food, tends its wounded — these things matter to me." There's no better description of what he strives to capture in this book. Where Virginia Woolf attends to the inner lives of her most peripheral characters, Hamid gives every extra a history of violence and a

lurid financial back story; he revels in the dream deferred, the loan denied, the fingers lost to creditors. A technician helping perfect the water purification technology is conjured in a few swift strokes: "He is a bicycle mechanic by background, untrained in the nuances of business, which is why he works for you, and also because, as the father of a trio of little girls and the youngest son of a freelance bricklayer who died of exposure sleeping rough at too advanced an age, he values a steady income." By supplanting the traditional role of choice in the novel with chance, by defining characters by their modes of survival rather than their personalities, he puts powerlessness at the center of his story. And by turning from his cast of terrestrial drones to the aerial drones silently monitoring their progress, he signals to powerlessness on a global scale.

Cleverly, Hamid sets "How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia" in an unnamed country, stripping away almost every signifier save a few that suggest we are in Pakistan. No mangoes, no mullahs, no preconceived notions.

Defamiliarizing Pakistan also obviates another criticism. "Although globalization is universally acknowledged as one of the most pressing issues of our time, it has usually proved a poor subject for fiction," the writer Siddhartha Deb observes. Too many books exhibit "an endless fascination for pop-culture trivia, poststructuralist meta-theories and self-referential irony." With only a few props — an assault rifle, a packet of milk, a white radish — and only the slightest tinge of tear gas in the air, the novel feels mythic, eternal rather than frenetic. And the bare stage is the best showcase for the narrator's one-man show.

Hamid, like Kazuo Ishiguro, specializes in voices in transition, split at the root, straining for cultivation and tripping over clumsy constructions. This narrator speaks to us in two tongues, in self-help's slick banalities and the bewilderment of the striver. He's magnificently fraudulent and full of uses; he swoops in to do exposition, pans away to turn prophetic or play sociologist ("You witness a passage of time that outstrips its chronological equivalent. Just as when headed into the mountains a quick shift in altitude can vault one from subtropical jungle to semi-arctic tundra, so too can a few hours on a bus from rural remoteness to urban centrality appear to span millennia"). He can be chilling and chummy, and very hard to shake. Some of the book's more serious sections, on mortality,

say, are imbued with a vestigial phoniness, and a self-referential ode to storytelling has the soullessness of a TED talk. It's a shame; Hamid is a stronger, stranger writer than that.

Witness the final reversal. The book ends with you, the hero, in your eighth decade, a Gatsby we never knew: an old man in a hotel room, trying to remember to take your medicines regularly. And as it turns out, there is still something left to learn, something more vital than how to get *Filthy Rich*. You teach us how to lose. How to relinquish health and hope; how to surrender assets to thieving relatives and one's children to America. "Slough off your wealth, like an animal molting in the autumn," Hamid writes. Look up the pretty girls of your youth. Find someone to play cards with. "Have an exit strategy."

*Parul Sehgal is an editor at the Book Review. A version of this review appears in print on March 31, 2013, on page BR9 of the Sunday Book Review with the headline: Yes Man. (The New York Times)*

### Author Biography



Mohsin Hamid is the author of the novels *Moth Smoke*, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, and *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia*; and the forthcoming essay collection *Discontent and Its Civilizations*. His award-winning fiction has been featured on bestseller lists, adapted for the cinema, shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize, and translated into over 30 languages. His essays and short stories have appeared in the *New York Times*, the *Guardian*, the *New Yorker*, *Granta*, and many other publications. Born in 1971 in Lahore, he has spent about half his life there and much of the rest in London, New York, and California.

## PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE

Gao Zhisheng

by Joyce Wolf

We're counting down the days until the scheduled August release of imprisoned human rights lawyer Gao Zhisheng. According to a June 20 article from Radio Free Asia, Gao is supposed to be freed from remote Shaya Prison in northwestern China on August 7.

"Jailed human rights lawyer Gao Zhisheng, one of China's highest-profile dissidents, is scheduled to complete his three-year prison term at a remote jail in China's northwestern region of Xinjiang in early August, amid concerns by some activists that the authorities will keep him under extrajudicial detention even after that. The family of Gao, who has defended clients in politically sensitive cases and spoken out on behalf of members of the banned Falun Gong spiritual movement, have been told that his term in Shaya Prison would end on Aug. 7." <http://www.rfa.org/english/news/china/lawyer-06202014150012.html>

Gao Zhisheng has been permitted only two visits from family members while detained in Shaya Prison. There has been no contact at all since the second visit in January 2013, and the family has no information about his state of health. The RFA article includes a quote from his brother, Gao Zhiyi: "No one knows the real situation ... we have had no news at all."

RFA reports that Beijing activist Hu Jia is not very optimistic: " 'Gao Zhisheng will be stripped of his political rights for at least one year even if he is released, so he may be held under surveillance or have limited freedom,' Hu said. 'He may be sent back to his hometown in northern Shaanxi province, or he may be sent back to Beijing via Urumqi; any of these things could happen.' "

In Group 22's May newsletter we quoted from the review issued by Amnesty International's China Team: "It is unclear what will happen to Gao Zhisheng after his release, and it is therefore vital that there is sustained pressure on the Chinese authorities in the lead-up to this date." We're trying to do our bit. We mailed a petition to President Xi Jinping with 47 signatures, most collected at the Tiananmen

commemorative lunch, thanks to Tracy Gore. Copies of the petition are also being mailed to Premier Le Keqiang, Minister of State Security Gen Huichang, Minister of Public Security Guo Shengkun, and Ambassador Cui Tienkai in Washington DC.

Please join Group 22 in the sustained effort on behalf of Gao Zhisheng. Go to the Group 22 page for Gao Zhisheng, choose one or more of the suggested officials to write to, and follow the guidelines.

<http://www.its.caltech.edu/~aigp22/GaoPOC/GaoZhisheng.html>, or just type 'amnesty caltech gao' into your browser's search box.

Thank you!

**SECURITY WITH HUMAN RIGHTS**

**by Robert Adams**

**"Iraq's Crisis: 3 Quick Points for U.S. Policymakers"**

*By Sunjeev Bery  
June 19, 2014*

As the latest crisis in Iraq unfolds, here are three basic points for U.S. policymakers to keep in mind:

1. The protection of civilians must be a top priority in Mosul and in every Iraqi community facing armed conflict.
2. The Iraqi central government has an abysmal human rights record that has left communities scarred. Government human rights violations have widely been seen as a significant factor in widespread popular discontent.
3. The U.S. government must push the Iraqi central government to make significant human rights reforms in order to address long-term public discontent and instability.

**Protection of civilians must be a top priority in Mosul and in every Iraqi community facing armed conflict.**

500,000 civilians are reported to have fled Mosul following its takeover by one or more armed groups that include those belonging to the

Islamic State of Iraq and Sham (ISIS). This follows the reported displacement of close to half a million Iraqis in Fallujah since January, following ISIS' expulsion of Iraqi security forces there.

ISIS armed groups, Iraqi security forces, and other potential armed groups must avoid repeating the violence against civilians that took place in Fallujah. Iraqi government forces have used indiscriminate shelling in Fallujah in the past six months, including on hospitals and in residential areas. There have been over 5,000 civilian deaths.

**The Iraqi central government has an abysmal human rights record that has left communities scarred. Government human rights violations have widely been seen as a significant factor in widespread popular discontent.**

Thousands of detainees languish in prison without charge. Many of those who are brought to trial are sentenced to long prison terms or to death after unfair proceedings. In many cases, convictions are based on "confessions" extracted under torture.

Iraq remains one of the world's most prolific executioners with at least 169 executed in 2013. As with prison terms, death sentences can also follow "confessions" extracted under torture. In many cases, such "confessions" are televised nationally.

Torture and other ill-treatment inside prisons and detention centers is rife and routinely goes unpunished.

**To ensure stability in Iraq, the U.S. government must address popular discontent by pushing the Iraqi central government to make significant human rights reforms.**

Iraq's long-term human rights crisis can no longer be viewed by the U.S. and other external governments as "Iraq's problem" or an internal matter. To ensure security and safety in Iraq, widespread popular discontent must be addressed by pushing the Iraqi central government to end its terrible human rights record.

## DEATH PENALTY NEWS

By Stevi Carroll

### Back In The Saddle Again

After 48 days, the death chambers of Georgia, Missouri, and Florida resumed their state-sanctioned murders. The attention Clayton Lockett's execution received allowed governors, members of boards of appeal, judges, prosecution attorneys, elected and appointed officials -both secular and religious, and all Americans the opportunity to evaluate why we either want or do not want the State, in our name, intentionally to take another human being's life. With the execution of Marcus Wellons, in Georgia, on June 17 and the executions of John Winfield, in Missouri, and John Henry, in Florida the following day, we Americans endorsed execution as a legal form of punishment. Just as thoughtful people believed the guillotine was more humane than beheading with a sword or axe, hanging, turning on the wheel, or burning at the stake, we in the USA primarily support lethal injection over electrocution, the gas chamber, hanging, and firing squad - all available among our states that murder for the State.

In 2008, two death row inmates filed a case that said the three-drug protocol was inhumane; the drugs may not work the way the executioners believe they will and condemned inmates may unduly suffer before they die. The two death row inmates suggested the one-drug protocol as an alternative. But then I guess the inmates wanted as little trauma as possible on the way out. I am aware this desire on the part of the condemned inmates creates a problem for some people. I understand. My compassion angel - and I do not believe in real creatures called angels - must work overtime when I consider the crimes of which the condemned have been found guilty. For many of us, this taxes our ability to consider compassion. This case went to the Supreme Court.

Chief Justice John Roberts wrote the majority opinion. He argued, "that the standard for deciding whether a method violated the constitution was if it posed a 'substantial risk of serious harm'." He also said the one-drug protocol had its own problems since, at that time in 2008, it had never been used.

Justice John Paul Stevens agreed with the decision regarding the type of drugs used for executions, but posited this idea: "The time for a dispassionate, impartial comparison of the enormous costs that death penalty litigation imposes on society with the benefits that it produces has surely arrived." He also said that if the question of the death penalty came before the Supremes, he would vote to abolish it.

In the wake of Clayton Lockett's execution in April of this year, I would like to ask Chief Justice Roberts if what Mr. Lockett experienced showed the signs of being a "substantial risk of serious harm". We can recall Mr. Lockett's executioners couldn't find a vein to insert the needle for the IV drip. Since doctors are not supposed to take part in executions according to the Hippocratic oath, less-trained people do. While the last couple of phlebotomists have drawn my blood well from my prominent veins, I've experienced a phlebotomist who searched in vain for a vein while I became nauseous as I sat on the paper-lined exam table. Third time was the charm.

Preliminary findings from an autopsy conducted by Dr. Joseph Cohen, a medical examiner employed by Mr. Lockett's lawyers, indicated that Mr. Lockett did have veins that should have worked perfectly for an IV. Whoever attempted to insert the needle punctured his vein. Because veins other than his femoral vein were available, they should have been used. Dr. Cohen said a vein did not blow, and he was not dehydrated. Puncture wounds surrounded by hemorrhages showed inept attempts to insert a needle. Additionally, Mr. Lockett was tasered by corrections officials during the process of moving him from his cell to the death chamber.

September 15, 2009, Romell Broom was strapped to the gurney in the death chamber of the Southern Ohio Correctional Facility in Lucasville, OH. For two and a half hours, technicians searched for a vein into which they could insert the IV drip needle. After an hour a doctor with no prior experience in executions was brought in to no avail as Mr. Broom had 18 needle thrusts into his arms. Mr. Broom's lawyers succeeded in blocking his execution with these questions: "If someone survives an execution attempt, can a state legally try it again? Or does the process itself constitute such

torture that it qualifies as unconstitutional cruel and unusual punishment?"

Neither Oklahoma nor Ohio appear to be efficient in dispatching the death penalty. Not only is the death penalty expensive but could also constitute a 'substantial risk of serious harm'.

### How To Stop A Heart by Mary DeMocker

Mary DeMocker's brother is on Arizona's death row. Her article, "How to Stop a Heart," is her personal revelations about our capital punishment environment and its impact on her life.

"How to Stop a Heart" can be found at <http://www.deathpenalty.org/article.php?id=746#StopAHeart>.

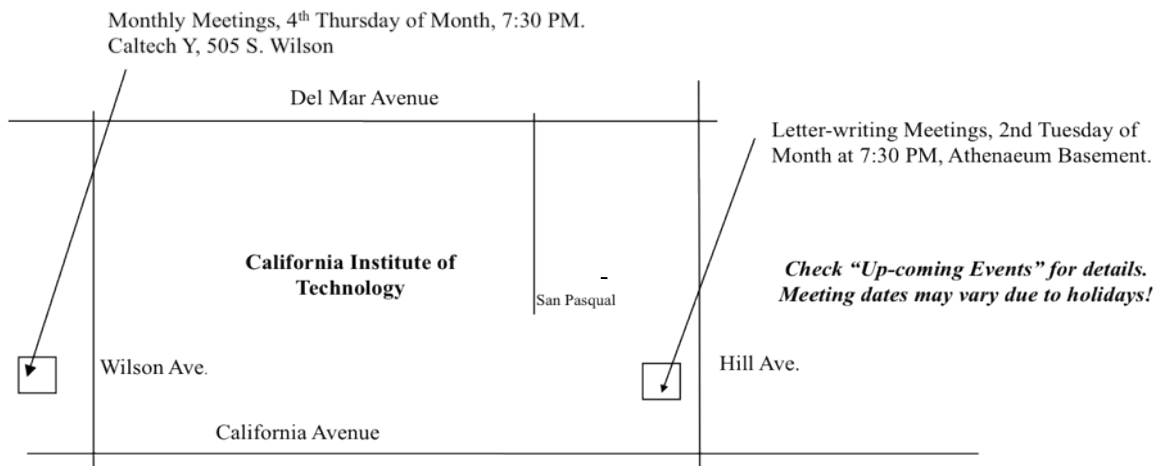
### The 2% Death Penalty

Death Penalty Focus recently released a report, *THE 2% DEATH PENALTY: How a Minority of Counties Produce Most Death Cases at Enormous Costs to All*. Because of the limited number of states and the limited number of counties in those states that use the death penalty, the death penalty has become more or less irrelevant even as our shared tax cash continues to be used for death penalty prosecution by this 2%. A brief video and the entire report are available at <http://deathpenaltyinfo.org/twopercent>.

### Executions

June		
17	Marcus Wellons	Georgia
	1-drug (pentobarbital)	
18	John Winfield	Missouri
	1-drug (pentobarbital)	
18	John Henry	Florida
	3-drug w/midazolam hydrochloride	

<b>GROUP 22 MONTHLY LETTER COUNT</b>	
UAs	13
POC	4
Total	17
To add your letters to the total contact <a href="mailto:aigp22@caltech.edu">aigp22@caltech.edu</a>	



From the 210 exit on Lake Avenue, head south, turn left on Del Mar  
 From the 110 continue on Arroyo Parkway north, turn right on California  
 Street parking is generally available.

Amnesty International Group 22  
 The Caltech Y  
 Mail Code C1-128  
 Pasadena, CA 91125  
[www.its.caltech.edu/~aigp22/](http://www.its.caltech.edu/~aigp22/)  
<http://rightsreaders.blogspot.com>



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