

Stellar Op-eds:  
A Few of Our Favorite Openings  
(and links to the full texts!)

An American Kidnapping  
Ta-Nehisi Coates  
The Atlantic

I took some time this weekend to re-read Jennifer Gonnerman's piece on the odyssey of Kalief Browder. I wanted to understand how, precisely, it happened that a boy was snatched off the streets of New York, repeatedly beaten, and subjected to the torture of solitary confinement, and yet no one was held accountable. To understand this question is to journey into a world of legal-speak and phraseology all of which, in the case of Browder, allows what we would normally label thuggery to mask itself under the banner of law. Browder was supposed to be held no longer than six months. But as Gonnerman explains, poor people and the courts do not use the same clocks. To understand race in the U.S. today, it's Kalief Browder's story, not Rachel Dolezal's, that really matters. *[The last line appears as the subtitle of the published version. We've put it at the end of the paragraph to demonstrate how well it works as a thesis statement!]*

Read the full op-ed [here](#).

The Zika virus foreshadows our dystopian climate future  
Bill McKibben  
The Guardian

I've spent much of my life chronicling the ongoing tragedies stemming from global warming: the floods and droughts and storms, the failed harvests and forced migrations. But no single item on the list seems any more horrible than the emerging news from South America about the newly prominent Zika disease.

Read the full op-ed [here](#).

Want to work less and have more time? Then buy less stuff  
Michelle McGagh  
The Guardian

Britain has fallen behind most of Europe when it comes to consumption, but it shouldn't be seen as a negative; we could be at the forefront of a positive trend for more thoughtful purchasing.

Recent data from the Office for National Statistics shows the average person is consuming fewer resources than they were a decade ago, recording a fall from 15 tonnes of material in 2001 to 10 tonnes in 2013. We also use less material per person than any other European country bar Spain.

While this may not be what the chancellor George Osborne wants to hear – after all, consumption is king when you’re trying to balance the books – consuming less is no bad thing.

*Read the full op-ed [here](#).*

### Let’s Draft Our Kids

Thomas E. Ricks

The New York Times

In late June, Gen. Stanley A. McChrystal, the former commander of international forces in Afghanistan, called for reinstating the draft. “I think if a nation goes to war, every town, every city needs to be at risk,” he said at the Aspen Ideas Festival. “You make that decision and everybody has skin in the game.” This was the first time in recent years that a high-profile officer has broken ranks to argue that the all-volunteer force is not necessarily good for the country or the military. Unlike Europeans, Americans still seem determined to maintain a serious military force, so we need to think about how to pay for it and staff it by creating a draft that is better and more equitable than the Vietnam-era conscription system.

*Read the full op-ed [here](#).*

### The Internet of Way Too Many Things

Allison Arieff

The New York Times

At a design conference recently, I was introduced to Leeo, a new product that I initially understood to be a reboot of something really in need of a redesign: the smoke detector. As the designer explained his process, I quickly came to understand that Leeo was nothing of the sort. It was a gadget, a night light that “listens” for your smoke detector to go off and then calls your smartphone to let you know your house might be on fire.

So, to “improve” a \$20 smoke alarm, the designer opted to add a \$99 night light and a several-hundred-dollar smartphone.

This is not good design.

*Read the full op-ed [here](#).*

### Lifting families out of poverty: Focus on the children

Toh Yong Chuan

## The Straits Times

When I was in Primary 1, a teacher corrected me when I wrote in an English test that I slept under the bed. On the bed, not under the bed, she said, despite my protest that I was telling the truth. I was born in a one-room Housing Board rental flat in Stirling Road and lived there for nine years with my parents, an older sister and two younger brothers. The mattress I slept on was partially tucked under my parents' bed.

*Read the full op-ed [here](#).*