

EDITOR'S NOTE

Dear Readers,

We live in a world of constant change, where an unyielding flow of innovation forces existing systems to adapt, often in the face of significant resistance. How do we measure the impact of new developments in technology, business, politics, and scholarly methodology? Is the process of transforming from old to new unequivocally good? Throughout history, these questions have arisen whenever a period of rapid shifts approaches. However, they take on greater importance in our 21st century context, characterized by changes in all arenas at unprecedented speed. Simultaneous revolutions in multiple facets of human life challenge our understanding of what it means to live in relation to one another. This issue of *Elements* explores the implications of disruptive innovation in a variety of contexts, in an attempt to reconcile the vestiges of the past with the realities of the present.

We seek to present the process of 21st century evolution as it unfolds in diverse arenas. “Uber Takes the Passing Lane,” our cover article, provides an in-depth analysis of a disruptive innovation that increasingly permeates daily life for urban residents. Author Allison Schneider examines the ripple effect of Uber’s arrival in the taxi-livery market and its potential consequences at the macro and micro levels, from shifts in regulatory structures to new frameworks for employee-employer relations. Doyle Calhoun invites linguistic scholars to consider renewed theoretical frameworks through his efforts to decode “A Grammar of Punctuation in Poetry.” Allyson Tank draws us to “A Biological Arms Race” in the sciences that could shed new light on our understanding of lentiviral resistance. In contrast to these examples of transformations occurring in our cultural moment, Alec Walker offers a historical perspective on the social forces that provide an impetus for new ideas in “Dissent in the Wirtschaftswunder,” an exploration of the 1968 German student movements. Together, this set of articles reminds us that change is a constant in human life, a force that touches us in uncountable ways.

Even as disruptive innovation transforms some fields beyond recognition, lingering remnants of obsolete structures inhibit essential changes in others. Catherine Larrabee describes how such “Inherited Injustice” allows the

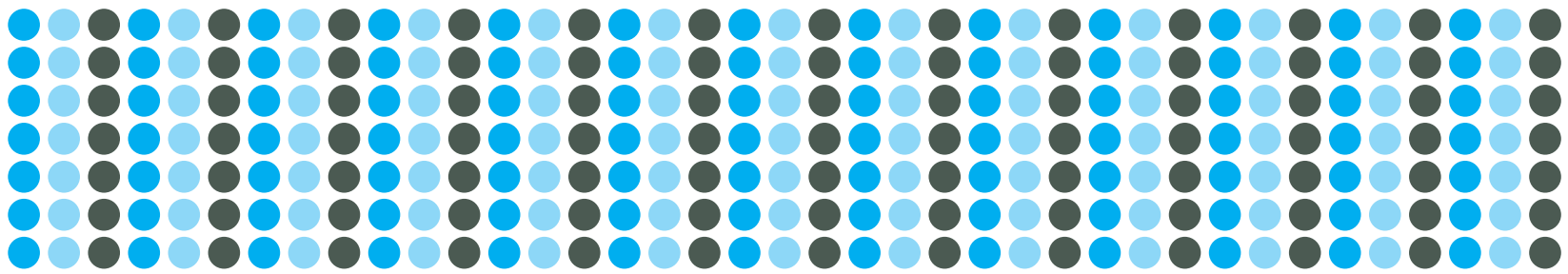
vertical transmission of HIV/AIDS to endure in India. In “Latino Masculinity,” Maria Vazquez brings Larrabee’s concern for social stigmas stateside as she attempts to dissect the influence of cultural stereotypes on college completion rates among first-generation Latinos. Featured author Olivia McCaffrey goes beyond the symptoms of stagnation to root causes in her analysis of voters who are “Neither Red Nor Blue,” the Massachusetts voters for whom the big tent, two-party system no longer suffices as an expression of political ideology. Through their examination of social systems struggling to adapt to 21st century circumstances, these three pieces highlight the risks inherent to resisting change.

This issue of *Elements* marks the integration of disruptive innovations in our own publication process. We are now operating under a Creative Commons license, meaning that articles published in *Elements* are non-exclusive and may be shared and cited, with attribution, by readers worldwide. Through a partnership with Boston College University Libraries, *Elements* debuted a live, open access e-scholarship website this semester, which houses an archive of all past issues of the journal and will serve as a hub for our future publications. In combination with our indexing with the Library of Congress as a print and digital journal, these advances represent a new phase in *Elements*’ maturation as a publication. As we close our first decade, we continue the traditions of academic excellence, intellectual diversity, and integrity initiated by our founding members and look ahead to the digital future of scholarship at the university. I invite you to explore our print edition, a legacy to which we remain devoted, and then to browse our digital book, an innovation we welcome. Happy reading!

Best,

MARISSA MARANDOLA

[Editor in Chief](#)



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