

“Williamsburg Renaissance”

Jessica Guerra

Jessica Guerra is a former City Tech student. She wrote this essay in her ENG 1101 class and it was published in the City Tech Writer 8 (2013), City Tech’s annual publication of “outstanding student writing from all disciplines.” In this piece, Guerra explores the changes taking place in her Brooklyn neighborhood.

Vocabulary...

perfunctorily (adj)

industrial (adj)

abundance (n)

scaffolding (n)

proximity (n)

vacant (adj)

resurrected (v)

entrepreneurs (n)

evicted (v)

infiltrated (v)

thunderous (adj)

revelers (n)

conglomerating (v)

undignified (adj)

intolerant (adj)

vibrant (adj)

ostracizes (v)

Reading Questions...

1. What is happening in Guerra’s neighborhood? How does it impact her and her family?
2. How does Guerra describe the new people in her neighborhood? What does this tell the reader about her feelings toward them?

Discussion Questions...

1. Guerra describes the changes taking place with apartments, businesses, and public spaces in Williamsburg. While these are all *concrete* changes that are very visible, she also hints at other, less visible ones. What are some of these other changes? Do they matter more or less in understanding how a neighborhood changes through gentrification? Why?
2. According to Guerra, is gentrification positive or negative? What is your opinion on gentrification? What are you basing your opinion on?

Activities and Assignments...

1. Williamsburg is only one of several Brooklyn neighborhoods that is currently being gentrified. Research some of the other neighborhoods and compare. What is happening in these places? What are the similarities? the differences?
2. Guerra’s text is a combination of several different writing styles, including personal narrative and research paper. Select a paper you have written recently and try to *add* a second writing style. Why do you think Guerra combined two styles? What did she accomplish? What will you accomplish?

