

OPEN

ABIERTO

Legacy Volume X
Reading Area Community College



Acknowledgments

The staff of *Legacy* would like to thank all of those that contributed to this years publication. Through this process, we have greatly appreciated the tremendous help and guidance of Dr. Diken. We would like to especially thank Cynthia West and Cynthia Thornburg, for generously giving their time and layout prowess to this project. Additionally, we would like to thank the faculty at Reading Area Community College for providing a quality education that has fostered the excellent student submissions that *Legacy* received.

An essential component of *Legacy's* publication is the consistent support of RACC's administration. We wish to thank Sue Gelsinger for her guidance and investment in our publication. We would also like to thank the President of Reading Area Community College, Dr. Anna Weitz for her ability to instill a supportive atmosphere at RACC. Her leadership has helped students, faculty, and staff to work together towards common goals such as this journal.

Finally, we would like to thank the students who opened themselves to this opportunity. Through their essays, poetry, artwork, and photography we have been given the chance to broaden our perspectives and open our minds. Thank you.

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Editors Note

“*Öpən*” has a plethora of meanings. Frequently, this word is used to invite customers into stores. If one views customers as our thoughts, students can choose to be open from 9am—5pm, and constrain their learning to scheduled class times or they can develop a mind that is always open.

Being open is more difficult than merely accepting all information as fact. Community colleges illustrate this by allowing everyone to enroll, but not automatically granting all students a degree. Similarly, we should keep our minds open to all perspectives. Yet, each idea should be tested before it is considered suitable for advancement.

The pursuit of an open mind has permeated the pages of *Legacy* each year. In celebration of *Legacy*'s tenth annual publication, we decided that this theme should be emphasized. In *Legacy X* we are excited to present an outstanding collection of student work. It is my hope that you will enjoy, question, and analyze all of the ideas offered in this year's journal.

Marilyn Miller
Editor-in-Chief

Philosophy

Legacy is produced and managed entirely by RACC students. *Legacy*'s student staff seeks to inspire intellectual curiosity, excellence, and creativity in research, prose, poetry, and visual arts by presenting student work in a publication that honors the principles of RACC – equality, diversity, and community.

Legacy has been published for a general college readership since 2001 by the students of Reading Area Community College, 10 South Second Avenue, P.O. Box 1706, Reading, PA 19603, (610) 372-4721.

Colophon

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Editorial Policy

Legacy is published once a year by students currently enrolled in credit courses at Reading Area Community College. Submissions to *Legacy* are accepted only from students in attendance within the current academic year. *Legacy*'s main purpose is to provide an annual showcase for outstanding student work—essays, poetry, artwork, and photography. All work must be submitted with proper submissions forms. Submission forms can be found online. All rights, including e-rights, reserved. Copyright for individual works reverts to authors and artists upon publication. Opinions expressed by contributors do not necessarily reflect those of the editors, the general staff, or the college. *Legacy* is available free to all students.

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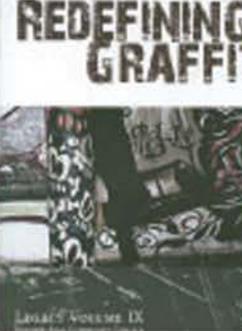
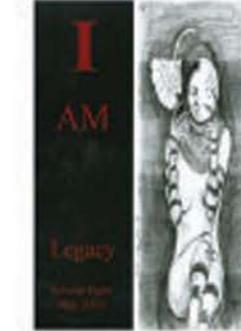
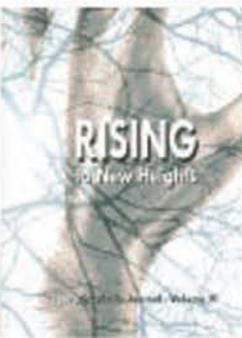
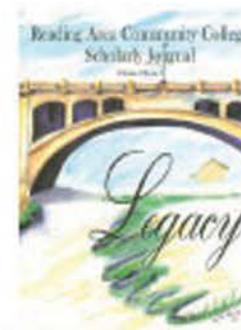
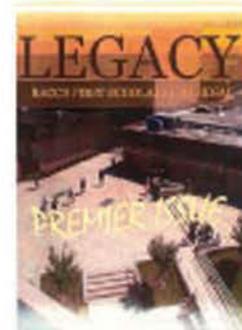
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LEGACY

EST. 2001

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Safety Between Pages

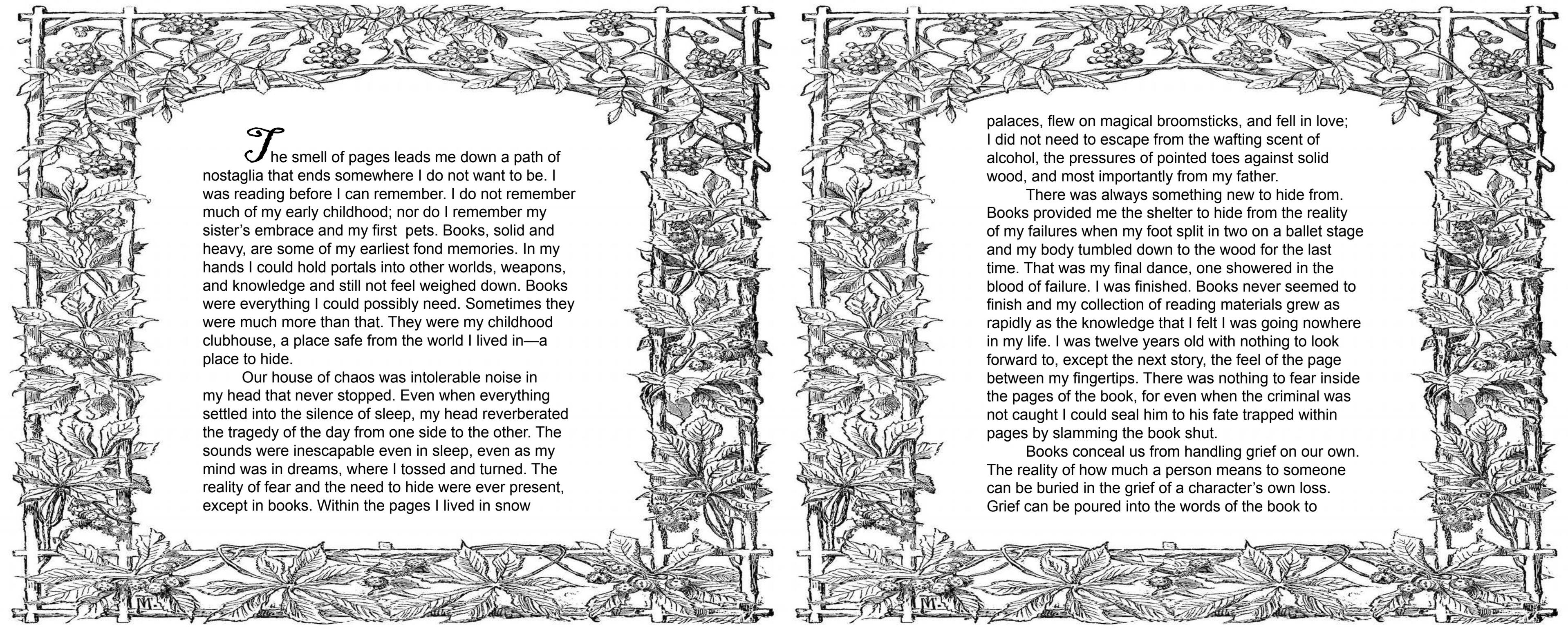


Amanda Colangelo

Inspiration

Reality and an individual's perception of that reality is something important to understand when you are preparing to engage in any piece of writing. I wrote this with the intention of providing snippets of information about my own reality through the lens of me as a reader. I wanted to tell my story but leave it as a story that is up to interpretation so not only did I present my own reality but readers were able to create their own image for me as well.

Amanda Colangelo



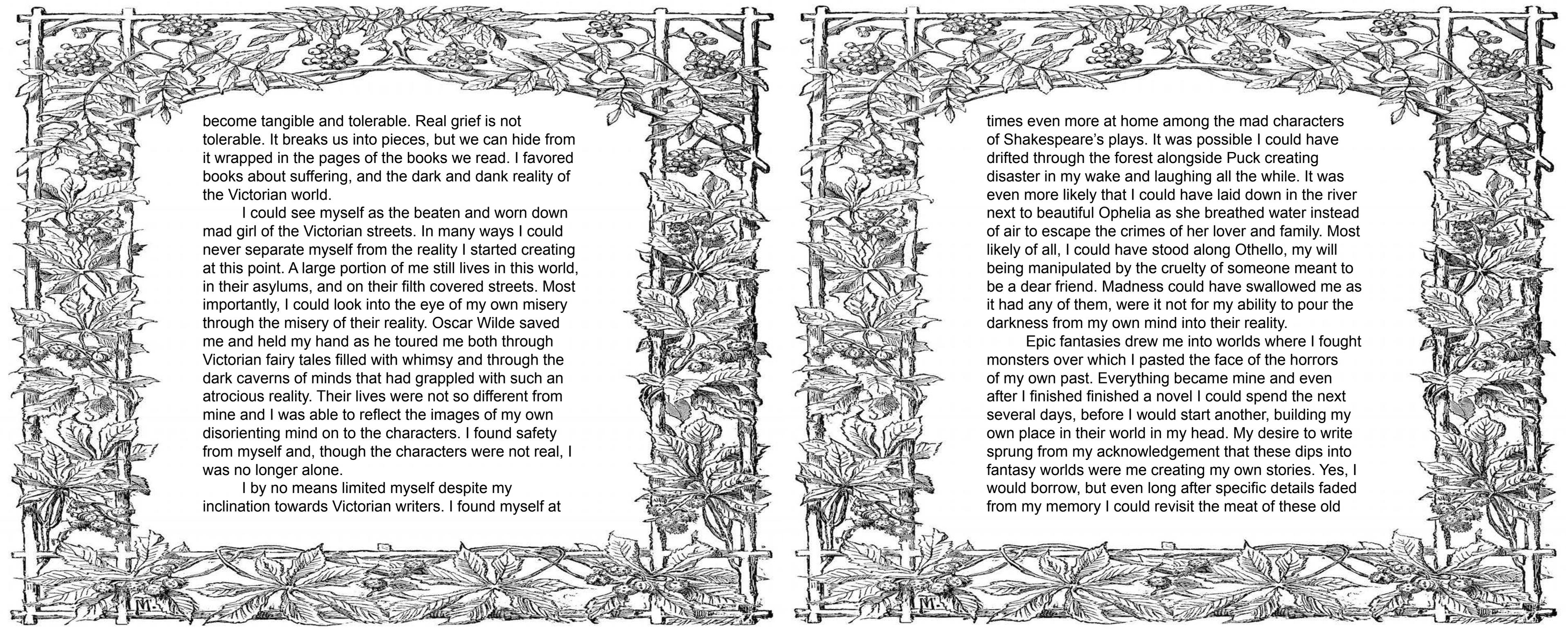
*T*he smell of pages leads me down a path of nostalgia that ends somewhere I do not want to be. I was reading before I can remember. I do not remember much of my early childhood; nor do I remember my sister's embrace and my first pets. Books, solid and heavy, are some of my earliest fond memories. In my hands I could hold portals into other worlds, weapons, and knowledge and still not feel weighed down. Books were everything I could possibly need. Sometimes they were much more than that. They were my childhood clubhouse, a place safe from the world I lived in—a place to hide.

Our house of chaos was intolerable noise in my head that never stopped. Even when everything settled into the silence of sleep, my head reverberated the tragedy of the day from one side to the other. The sounds were inescapable even in sleep, even as my mind was in dreams, where I tossed and turned. The reality of fear and the need to hide were ever present, except in books. Within the pages I lived in snow

palaces, flew on magical broomsticks, and fell in love; I did not need to escape from the wafting scent of alcohol, the pressures of pointed toes against solid wood, and most importantly from my father.

There was always something new to hide from. Books provided me the shelter to hide from the reality of my failures when my foot split in two on a ballet stage and my body tumbled down to the wood for the last time. That was my final dance, one showered in the blood of failure. I was finished. Books never seemed to finish and my collection of reading materials grew as rapidly as the knowledge that I felt I was going nowhere in my life. I was twelve years old with nothing to look forward to, except the next story, the feel of the page between my fingertips. There was nothing to fear inside the pages of the book, for even when the criminal was not caught I could seal him to his fate trapped within pages by slamming the book shut.

Books conceal us from handling grief on our own. The reality of how much a person means to someone can be buried in the grief of a character's own loss. Grief can be poured into the words of the book to



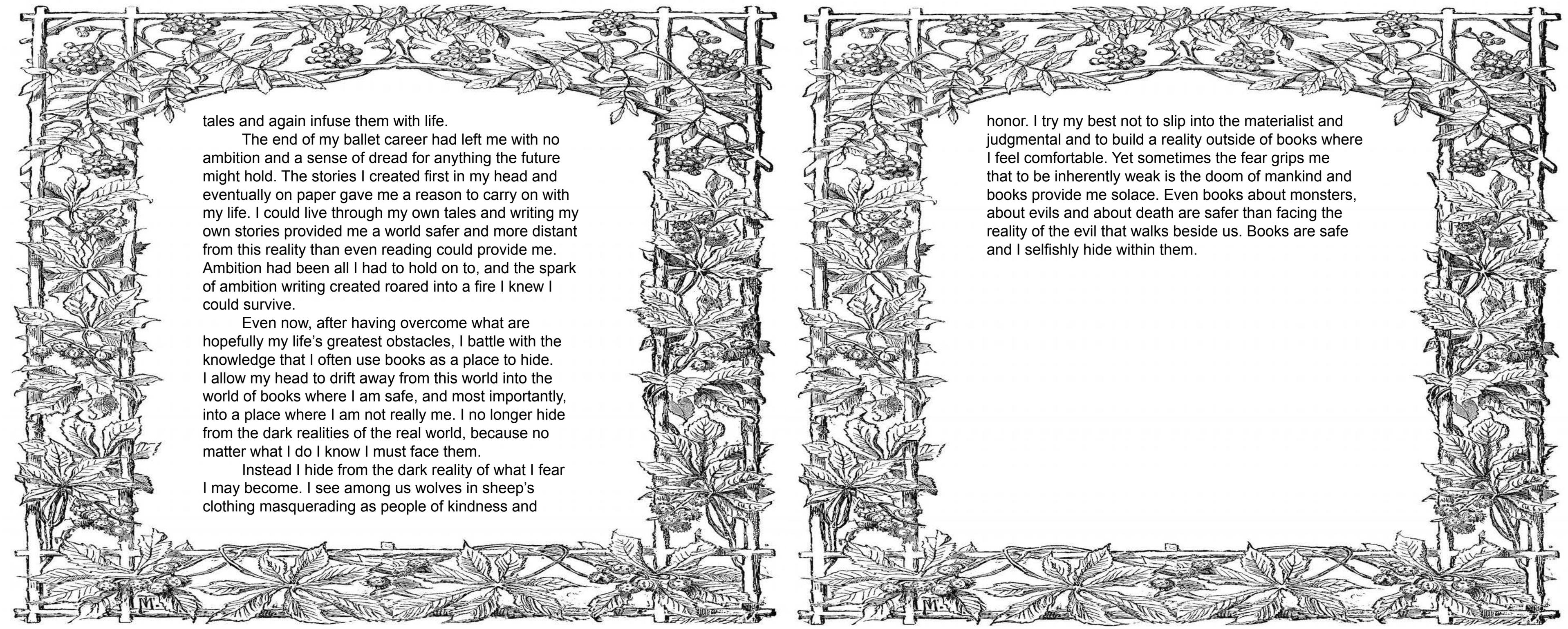
become tangible and tolerable. Real grief is not tolerable. It breaks us into pieces, but we can hide from it wrapped in the pages of the books we read. I favored books about suffering, and the dark and dank reality of the Victorian world.

I could see myself as the beaten and worn down mad girl of the Victorian streets. In many ways I could never separate myself from the reality I started creating at this point. A large portion of me still lives in this world, in their asylums, and on their filth covered streets. Most importantly, I could look into the eye of my own misery through the misery of their reality. Oscar Wilde saved me and held my hand as he toured me both through Victorian fairy tales filled with whimsy and through the dark caverns of minds that had grappled with such an atrocious reality. Their lives were not so different from mine and I was able to reflect the images of my own disorienting mind on to the characters. I found safety from myself and, though the characters were not real, I was no longer alone.

I by no means limited myself despite my inclination towards Victorian writers. I found myself at

times even more at home among the mad characters of Shakespeare's plays. It was possible I could have drifted through the forest alongside Puck creating disaster in my wake and laughing all the while. It was even more likely that I could have laid down in the river next to beautiful Ophelia as she breathed water instead of air to escape the crimes of her lover and family. Most likely of all, I could have stood along Othello, my will being manipulated by the cruelty of someone meant to be a dear friend. Madness could have swallowed me as it had any of them, were it not for my ability to pour the darkness from my own mind into their reality.

Epic fantasies drew me into worlds where I fought monsters over which I pasted the face of the horrors of my own past. Everything became mine and even after I finished finished a novel I could spend the next several days, before I would start another, building my own place in their world in my head. My desire to write sprung from my acknowledgement that these dips into fantasy worlds were me creating my own stories. Yes, I would borrow, but even long after specific details faded from my memory I could revisit the meat of these old



tales and again infuse them with life.

The end of my ballet career had left me with no ambition and a sense of dread for anything the future might hold. The stories I created first in my head and eventually on paper gave me a reason to carry on with my life. I could live through my own tales and writing my own stories provided me a world safer and more distant from this reality than even reading could provide me. Ambition had been all I had to hold on to, and the spark of ambition writing created roared into a fire I knew I could survive.

Even now, after having overcome what are hopefully my life's greatest obstacles, I battle with the knowledge that I often use books as a place to hide. I allow my head to drift away from this world into the world of books where I am safe, and most importantly, into a place where I am not really me. I no longer hide from the dark realities of the real world, because no matter what I do I know I must face them.

Instead I hide from the dark reality of what I fear I may become. I see among us wolves in sheep's clothing masquerading as people of kindness and

honor. I try my best not to slip into the materialist and judgmental and to build a reality outside of books where I feel comfortable. Yet sometimes the fear grips me that to be inherently weak is the doom of mankind and books provide me solace. Even books about monsters, about evils and about death are safer than facing the reality of the evil that walks beside us. Books are safe and I selfishly hide within them.



manipulation

alison simmons

inspiration

I am currently enrolled in Mrs. Andersen's Creative Non-Fiction Course at RACC. I was assigned to write a biographical sketch. I had never written anything in this genre before and I wanted my first piece to clearly exhibit my voice and writing style as well as reveal a small part of myself that no one knew. "Manipulation" seemed like the perfect chance to do this.

alison simmons

Her muddy green eyes were small, guarded, and held a gleam of maliciousness.

I stood with my arms crossed, shivering slightly from the cold of the basement. The stone floors felt like ice under my bare feet. It was early spring, but the basement was freezing no matter what time of year it was and my tank top and shorts clad body was ill suited for the temperature. I watched SaRae's hunched form as she rummaged around the room moving piles of boxes out of the way in order to get to the items behind them in the farthest corner of the room. The evidence of her hardships was seen clearly through her appearance. She was not fat, but still nearly twice my size. Hard muscle flexed threateningly underneath deceptively soft, feminine skin. Her womanly curves were hidden beneath baggy men's clothing as if she were trying to protect herself in some way. Her muddy green eyes were small, guarded, and held a gleam of maliciousness.

There was no room for weakness or compassion in this woman who had been struggling to survive and ensure her siblings' survival since the raw age of twelve. I suspected this "survival" was the reason SaRae felt the need to keep things hidden from my mother. It was insurance, a way to make sure she had things for herself if she ever felt the need to leave. After showing me the latest additions to her stash, a weight machine and a charcoal grill, she re-hid the items and moved over to the large workshop against the back wall. Taking a seat, she motioned for me to take the chair next to her. I chose to stand. Wringing her hands in her lap nervously and avoiding eye contact, SaRae asked me how school was going and how my boyfriend was. I answered curtly and

waited for her to get to the point. This was not the first time SaRae had called me down to the basement and asked to speak with me. We had many conversations like this. They usually happened after a fight with my mother. I knew my mother and how to deal with her better than anyone, so SaRae frequently came to me for advice. I was pretty sure I already knew what she wanted to tell me. But I waited patiently.

At last SaRae looked up at me. Her beady hazel eyes met mine and her hands stilled as she spoke. "Do not tell your mom any of this okay?" I nodded my consent and waited for her to continue. "I am leaving your mother. I have a place. The first month's rent is already paid and I can move in next month. I plan on giving her money for the next two months of that mortgage payment." She looked to me and her tone was pleading now, as if she was trying to apologize ahead of time for her next words. She was a good actor. I knew from five years of experience that she felt no real remorse. She just wanted to manipulate me into thinking she was the victim. "I just can't stay here anymore. She is a crazy bitch. I have tried to fix things with her but she just will not listen. She is crazy, Allison. You agree with me right? Do you think I should leave? Is there any hope of it getting better?" While she spoke, beseeched me to understand—to give her some final word, I reflected on the truth of their relationship.

I remember the day my mother told me of a wonderful woman she had met and fallen in love with. It was six years ago, before my mother took us to live in Pennsylvania with

"Do not tell your mom any of this okay?"

SaRae was the exact opposite of what my mother had thought she was.

her. Mom said she was caring, helpful and looked to be genuinely interested in her. Mom's smile that day was the brightest I had ever seen it. She was radiant. Had this woman been the cause of it? I gave her my blessing then. I wanted more than anything in the world for my mother to be happy.

Two years later things were very different. My brothers and I came to live with her and SaRae and when I saw my mother I knew something was terribly wrong. The haunted look had returned to her eyes. It did not take long to realize why. SaRae was the exact opposite of what my mother had thought she was. She was angry and jealous. She blamed my mother for everything bad that happened in their relationship. And SaRae was so adept at manipulating my mother that it only took a few words until my mother believed everything was her own fault. Whenever my mother attempted to have any sort of control over their relationship, SaRae would twist her around until she was subdued again. I never saw physical force, but I could see the bruises around my mother's neck where she had been lifted and thrown against the wall. This behavior went on for another four years. My mother did nothing to stop it. And slowly the life and joy was drained from my mother until nothing was left. SaRae played two parts. She was the god who had given my mother Eden and also the serpent who ripped it away from her for her own amusement. SaRae was right; my mother was crazy. But SaRae was the one solely responsible.

SaRae had finished speaking and now gazed at me imploringly, waiting for my verdict. She looked pathetic,

juvenile, asking me, a seventeen-year-old girl, and her wife's daughter no less, whether she should leave. But I knew that she would listen to whatever I told her. Her life of hardships and pure survival left her with no idea of morals or how relationships were supposed to work. She was in over her head and desperate for escape. I had the chance to manipulate her. I loathed the thought of thinking like her, but again I thought of my mother's happiness. She would never make the choice on her own. There was not enough left of her. Six years of ongoing abuse had made it clear. I regarded SaRae. Her hazel eyes were wide, waiting impatiently for an answer. I granted her request. "Yes, I think you should leave. There's no reason for you to stay in a relationship if all you do is fight. You don't want to come home at night. My mother can't be helped. I think it is best if you break it off." She stared in stunned silence for a moment. Then she sighed and hunched over, with her brown spiked head in her hands and mumbled, "Yes, you're right. I'll tell her next week. Remember, do not tell her any of this. OK?"

"Of course," I returned. Then I turned and walked up the stairs before I could see the tears leave her eyes. Crying was one of the ways she had controlled my mother and I had no desire to feel any sympathy for the woman who had all but killed her. As I ascended I felt relief flood my heart, relief for my mother, brothers and for myself. We would be free of her soon. And even though I worried for my mother's sanity, I knew that I would be there to pull her through the hole she had dug herself into and back into the light.

Her hazel eyes were wide, waiting impatiently for an answer.



Melancholy Meal

Lisa Mayol

Inspiration

When my writing professor, Sarah Grace, asked the class to write in detail about one small part of our day, I was inspired to write about how my pending divorce has affected even the most mundane and everyday tasks of my life. I wanted to show how the pain and sense of loss is always with me, and that I can still feel lonely even when surrounded by people, even during a meal with my three beautiful children. It was important to me to write in a tone that did not just focus on sadness and loss, but that also expressed my hope for the future. I wanted to convey the inner journey that I am on. It is a journey toward finding strength for me and my children, a journey of accepting change, and learning and growing from it, and a journey that is redefining my ideas of what exactly the word family truly means.

Lisa Mayol

My children and I sit down to dinner at our table in the breakfast nook. I sit on one end and my son, Alex, who is twelve years old, sits across from me. My thirteen-year-old daughter, Stephanie, is sitting to my right. Seated next to Stephanie is my nine-year-old son, Joél. I look to my left, where there is an empty chair. This is where my husband used to sit. I wonder if I will ever get used to seeing that empty chair.

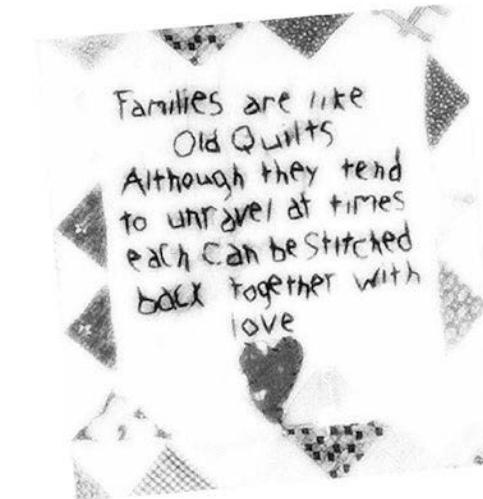
Our breakfast nook is a bright, sunny spot. I glance at the view from our bay window. The sun is just starting to set. I can see two mountains in the distance and I love to watch the sun setting behind them. I think to myself that when I first purchased this house, I thought I would be watching the sun set behind those two mountains for many, many years. I know now that this will likely not be the case, as I doubt that I can afford this house anymore as a single mom. As I gaze out the window while eating my dinner, I tell myself that it does not matter. I remind myself that every sunset is beautiful, no matter which window it is seen from, and that the sun will keep rising and setting whether I'm happy or sad...because life goes on and so must I.

I try not to seem depressed as I dine with my little ones. I listen to their chatter. At times they talk over one another; I smile and know I am blessed. Nevertheless, I cannot help noticing that empty chair. I wonder if it will always be empty.

I look at the wall behind Alex. There is a nail on the wall where I used to have a beautiful piece of framed artwork. I recently packed it away because it made me sad to see it there. It was a framed section of quilt with an expression embroidered in the center. I close my eyes for a second and see it in my mind. It said, "Families are like old quilts. Although they tend to unravel at times, each can be stitched back together with love." I think to myself, "Does this saying still apply to my family, even though my husband didn't think we could be 'fixed'?"

We finish up our dinner and together clear the table. I wipe the kitchen table with a wet dishcloth. Its surface is still shiny from the polyurethane I applied when I refinished it last April. It does not even look like the same table I started with. I chose a darker stain which brought the grain of the wood out beautifully and turned an ugly table into one of beauty, and with a little determination, hard work, and vision, I made it brand new again. I think to myself that I am going to do the same thing with my life. I can make this life beautiful again. I decide it might be time to return the artwork to the wall in the breakfast nook. This family may have unraveled like an old quilt, but I can still stitch what is left of it back together for me and my children with all of the colors of our personalities and rich textures of our love. The strength of the thread will be stronger than ever and, although a piece is missing, this quilt can still be beautiful. What will make it so is the fabric that is still there.

I run my hand across the shiny, new looking table one last time. I look at the nail that needs its picture back. Then I look at my kids, who need their mother back. I quickly load the dishwasher so I am free to have some much needed cuddle time with the three loves of my life.



Paz Ειρήνη 和平
م السلام Vrede

The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis, Peace Child, and My Deaf Mamma

Erin-Michal Clouser

Peace
CБИT Kapa ya pa an
평화 शांति

Peace.
Ειρήνη

.BIT Paz

和平

평화

शांति

Peace

Ειρήνη

.BIT Paz

和平

평화

शांति

Peace

Inspiration

Cultures and languages have been an area of interest to me for many years. I already have a bachelor's degree in Education, but have decided to return for an Associate's Degree in Anthropology because I enjoy Dr. Blakely's classes so much! While reading about and discussing the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis in class, I was reminded of my journey through misunderstandings with my Deaf friend (and later roommate) Lena as we explored each other's languages and cultures. Lena passed away on November 21, 2010.

Erin-Michal Clouser

Peace.
Ειρήνη
:BIT Paz
和平
평화 Vrede
م السلام
शात
Peace
ρήνη
Hòa bì
apayapa
CBIT

I have been very fortunate during my lifetime. My parents eagerly exposed me to multiple cultures and languages starting at an early age, and actively encouraged my participation in cross-cultural activities. By age nineteen I had lived in another country with a family who spoke no English and at age twenty nine I had already spent about a year and a half living with people who spoke little to no English. For more than a decade, I have noticed with mild amusement how the very language whipping off my tongue (or hands for the past three years producing sign language) could totally change the way I thought about things and even the way I acted. The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis was a light bulb moment for me in cultural anthropology class when I first encountered it. Suddenly, the change in “who I was” depending on the language I was using made a lot of sense. Since then I have been fascinated with the idea that language and thought are intertwined. Being exposed to a language and environment based entirely on sight, I have learned to turn off my ears and double my eyes, and it greatly affects my view of the world I live in and the experiences I have.

The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis basically boils down to the concept that our language shapes (or determines for some of the “purists”) the way we think. One may think, “What? No way! We think about stuff a lot and then we name it. So the way we think affects our language!” Not really. The Hanunóo people in the Philippines have ninety two different names for separate varieties of rice (Spradley and McCurdy 83). Most Americans might be able to name five or ten if they eat a wide variety of foods, but ninety two? That seriously would affect the way Americans think about rice. They probably would not even see the obvious differences (to a Hunanóo person) between the ninety nine types of rice. So clearly, the naming of each type of rice gives the Hunanóo a way to categorize, remember, and think about rice in a way an average

American with a smaller “rice vocabulary” cannot. So the language we have available to us can and does affect the way we think.

Our language shapes the way we think in other ways as well. Don Richardson was a missionary and anthropologist who worked with the Sawi people of New Guinea. During his time there he learned their language and culture, and attempted to share the story of Jesus from the New Testament (Richardson, Chapters 13-18). That is a serious cross-cultural endeavor. Four cultures are represented in one tree house as a Canadian man tells a Jewish story written in the Hellenistic Greek language to the Sawi people of Indonesia. Would it be doomed to failure? How in the world could one take a message jam-packed with Jewish religious and cultural illustrations, written in the Greek language, translated into English, read and understood by a Canadian man and successfully communicate it to a tribesman in Indonesia? There were major issues and Richardson encountered them all. He spent a lot of effort on translating the story of Jesus and telling it to the men of the tribe. Richardson felt he was getting somewhere until the ultimate cross-cultural disaster occurred. Richardson’s villain was the Sawi hero. His story was not only lost on the tribesmen, but his deficit in cultural knowledge and vocabulary caused the exact opposite effect than the one he desired.

Through various circumstances Richardson was introduced to a new Sawi concept: the Peace Child. Two warring tribes that wanted to have a lasting peace would basically swap children and as long as the children remained alive there would be a lasting peace between those tribes. His light bulb moment resulted in a retelling of the story in a way that the tribesmen understood that Jesus had been God’s “Peace Child” to mankind. Judas had betrayed and in that way assisted in murdering God’s Peace Child. Suddenly, the concept was understood across the

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four culture divide. The Sawi people understood the treachery of Judas, and the grace and mercy of God in spite of that treachery. Richardson was able to use that experience as a springboard to encourage more cross-cultural understanding. The concepts being compared were not exact, but there was enough overlap to foster an understanding from one culture to the next. A massive cultural misunderstanding was able to be cleared up with two words: Peace Child. These two words provide an excellent example of the relation between language and thought: language affects the ways in which we think. It gives us a framework in which to build our understanding of the world around us.

My own personal experience over the past three years has helped me to understand the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis better than any textbook I have read thus far. Three years ago I embarked on an amazing journey that has indelibly changed who I am. After years of wanting to learn to communicate with deaf people, I actually took the plunge and started taking American Sign Language (ASL) classes. I got plugged into a small Deaf community in Lancaster County and began to make friends and learn much more than a classroom could provide.

After about a year I noticed something about my friendships: most of them were with orally trained Deaf people. That meant I was straddling the fence best as possible instead of truly learning about Deaf people. I was spending the majority of my time with people whose lips I could read and whose language structure could be adjusted to be more like my own. I wanted to kick myself when I realized my stupidity; I was cheating myself out of the best experiences by being too terrified to venture further into the unknown. I made a concerted effort to reach out to the woman, Lena, who terrified me the most. I cringed every time she talked to me, because I knew I would not understand her and felt I would frustrate her by asking her to repeat herself ten times until I got it.

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But amazingly enough, she was infinitely patient with me. She repeated herself without complaint and would patiently figure out what on earth my hearing hands were signing backwards or sideways or the wrong way and correct me gently. I started to feel guilty about avoiding her and we exchanged text numbers.

Over six months while she struggled through chemo and I battled arthritis, we texted. Written English and suffering through health problems were places where our worlds met. She could read and write English rather well even though she never changed her signing structure to be more English. However, as I learned to communicate with her through text, her signing became easier to understand. I began to see the world as she saw it and understand her way of speaking. One of my brilliant discoveries had to do with the effect of a visual language on what is appropriate to discuss. Deaf people say it like they see it. They are the most graphic, insanely blunt, and to the point people I have ever met. If you got fat since the last time they saw you, they will say so without shame. Lena shared some very graphic stories about her doctor visits that most hearing people would have been disgusted by. But I learned that having a visual language means anything one can see is fair game for discussion. After I got beyond my initial shock and disgust, I actually found it refreshing to have someone with whom I could be brutally honest. I also found it releasing to be able to discuss traumatic medical things with Lena that I could not discuss with anyone else for fear of repulsing them.

At one point, we both ended up in tears misunderstanding each other's feelings due to our language issues and views of the world. She felt that being dependent upon ASL was something to be ashamed of and that it made her beneath me and unworthy of my friendship. That broke my heart because I felt her being ASL was a wonderful thing and came

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to her wanting a teacher. That seldom is the case since many hearing people misunderstand Deaf people as having poor grammar and being incapable of learning English, and therefore lacking in intelligence. Nothing could be further from the truth. But after that day, we agreed I should call her Mamma as a reminder of who really was the teacher in our relationship. In many ways that one word reshaped our relationship and was the best linguistic decision we had ever made.

For a year we studied for the English section of the GED test together, improving her English skills and my ASL skills—and I seriously think I got the better end of that deal. As I struggled to teach her poetry, which is often based on meter and rhyming that a Deaf person cannot hear and becomes frustrated by, I began to see how her language shaped her understanding of the world and my language shaped my understanding of the world. In order for us to see eye to eye, I would need to know her language and think her way. It was a long rough road of turning my ears off and learning to hear with my eyes, but it opened a whole new world to me and provided hours of entertainment for her. She truly became my Deaf Mamma and taught me how to be Deaf. When I struggled to see her world, she patiently closed my ears and opened my eyes. We moved in together for the last year of her life so I could continue to care for her and learn from her, and I think that year will always be one of the richest and most enlightening experiences of my life. I will never be Deaf, but Mamma Lena opened me to a whole new way of seeing the world.

Language definitely shapes the way we think about ourselves and our world. It gives us a way to categorize things, tells us what is appropriate and what is not, and helps us to communicate what we are thinking and feeling inside. The more languages we are exposed to, the richer our experiences and ways to describe our experiences will be.

Learning a language and culture will always go hand in hand, because the language itself will in many ways shape the culture. Learning the culture is also important to learning a language because without the cultural component we would have a collection of words without their fullest meanings.

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**Going to Hell in a Shopping Basket:
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ENJOY EXTRA SAVINGS TUESDAY – WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 16 & 17 ONLY!

► **Amy Belnome**

Inspiration

My purpose in writing this essay was much more than just completing an assignment. My intent was to make plea to my readers to reconsider the status quo of their lives. The topics of sustainability, quality of life, and financial responsibility are very important to me as a personal philosophy. Researching and writing this essay was an opportunity for me to learn more about these issues and share the information with others.

Amy Belnome

The modern American lifestyle is built on the illusion that our actions as consumers have no unpleasant consequences. The methods of both production and waste disposal are hidden from the average consumer. Many factories that produce the goods we use are in foreign nations, removing not only jobs but also pollution from American soil. Modern sanitation methods make our waste seem to simply disappear. These factors make our materialistic habits appear harmless, so we see no reason for restraint. However, in reality, America's consumerism harms its citizens, the environment, and people around the world by creating debt and pollution and obliterating the world's resources. Like locusts, affluent societies with their addiction to cheap luxuries are consuming finite resources in a way that will ultimately result in desolation. Developing nations such as China and India have large populations that are also increasingly achieving middle class status, adding an enormous additional burden on the world's limited resources. America has the opportunity to set a better example for the developing nations who emulate us.

For most Americans, the food and possessions used every day are purchased from stores rather than produced at home or locally, as they would have been in generations past. Today, food comes from attractive piles of unblemished fruit and rows of colorful boxes at the grocery store. Shiny new products on the shelves at the discount store are replenished from an unseen but seemingly endless supply. Things that people never knew they needed appear before them on a store shelf without requiring any effort or thought. Cash or often credit cards are exchanged with a retailer and a need or want is fulfilled. This is a false image of effortless abundance. The reality of the source of the products we buy is well hidden. The land, water, and labor used to grow, process, package, and transport food is not

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apparent to the consumer at the grocery store. The fine print on a wide variety of merchandise reveals that it was made in other countries, without hinting at the gritty details of the manufacturing process or cheap labor. The sources of the metals and plastics used to make an item such as a cell phone are an even bigger mystery that cannot be solved by reading the label on the package.

As one example of the web of effects behind the products we buy, bananas at the local grocery store are sold for the remarkably low price of 59 cents per pound. Bananas are a tropical fruit that must be imported, usually from Central or South America, yet they are cheaper than apples and oranges, which according to their labels are often grown in the United States. Instead of being an exotic luxury, bananas are one of the very cheapest products in the entire store. Their low cost is in spite of the rainforests that were destroyed to provide land for banana plantations and in spite of the freight costs and pollution involved in transporting the fruit to America. There are also human costs in the banana industry. According to Pearce:

In Costa Rica, the second largest banana exporter . . . women in banana-packing plants suffer double the average rates of leukemia and birth defects. Meanwhile, a fifth of male banana workers are sterile, allegedly as a result of exposure to dibromochloropropane, which is now banned, and other fungicides that are not. (57)

Another disturbing fact is that in 2007, Chiquita plead guilty to paying a recognized Columbian terrorist group 1.7 million dollars ("Chiquita"). None of this information is apparent to the shopper in an American grocery store. The ugly truth about the side effects of our consumption only becomes apparent with effort and research. As this example shows, one product produces a ripple effect with

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far-reaching consequences.

After the food is consumed and gadget is broken or obsolete, where does the waste go? A garbage truck drives down the street or we flush a toilet and waste seems to magically disappear. With our society's complex infrastructure, dealing with waste is disguised nearly as well as the methods of production. The volume of industrial waste is even less obvious than the waste produced by individuals. The bags of residential trash on the curb are minuscule when compared to the massive bins of waste that result from the manufacturing process. Landfills such as Pioneer Crossing, just out of site of Birdsboro, grow larger and larger into towering mountains of objects that were temporarily loved but are now only garbage. Because landfill waste is a costly commodity, other creative methods are often used to dispose of sewage solids. The combined sewage from households, factories, and hospitals is processed and converted into fertilizer for growing crops. According to a Pennsylvania state document, in 1999 seventy-one percent of Pennsylvania's sewage solids were disposed of by applying them to farm fields (Elliot, Brandt and Shortle 7). Our garbage and waste does not simply vanish, despite appearances.

Jane Meeks, Executive Director of Berks County Solid Waste Authority, has stated in an interview that in the United States, the average person discards four and a half pounds of waste per day. In Berks County, that garbage usually ends up in one of four landfills within the county. Many municipalities periodically have separate collections of hazardous wastes in an attempt to keep toxic materials out of standard landfills. Most household hazardous waste in Berks, such as oil-based paint and pesticides, is incinerated. According to Rathje and Murphy, the results of incineration are acidic gases and toxic ash (180). Sometimes disposal of this ash

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can pose a problem. For example, in 1986 a 15,000-ton load of garbage ash from Philadelphia began a sixteen-year odyssey in search of a final resting place. Most of the ash was illegally dumped in the open ocean after about two years spent sailing around the world. The remaining 2,345 tons were deposited in Haiti, until that country finally succeeded in getting it removed. It ultimately returned to Pennsylvania where it was buried in a landfill in 2002 ("Wandering Ash"). No one wanted to take responsibility for disposal of this waste, not even the state that produced it. Rathje and Murphy describe that objections to waste disposal methods are so common that the waste industry uses an acronym for it: NIMBY, which stands for "not in my back yard" (109, 235). It seems that people do not want landfills or incinerators in their neighborhood, yet residents who object to new or expanded landfills doubtlessly still put their bags of trash out on the curb to be carted away. All of our waste must ultimately find permanent storage. The only real solution to the disposal problem is to produce less waste by consuming less and reusing more.

The core issue at the heart of excessive consumerism is that people are willing to spend so much money on possessions that they do not really need. The easy availability of consumer credit, which is credit cards and loans, has made it possible to acquire possessions with a minimal amount of effort. For example, people today do not have to wait while they save cash to buy a new television as they would have had to in the past. Credit cards are a vital part of the image of the affluent American lifestyle. According to statistics quoted by Woolsey and Schulz, in 2010 fifty-six percent of people surveyed had credit card debt. Credit allows people to acquire new cars and the latest phone in order to try to buy satisfaction and status, regardless of their financial realities.

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Our passion for endlessly acquiring new possessions harms not only the larger world, but also damages individual lives as well. The endless choices of products and advertising's pressure to buy may be affecting the way people behave in other parts of their lives. In *Affluenza: The All-Consuming Epidemic*, family counselors suggest that consumerism may contribute to America's high rate of failed marriages. Because marketing "is always promoting dissatisfaction" and "the choices available to people in terms of products are so overwhelming," the attitude we have about shopping is carried over into our romantic relationships (qtd. in DeGraaf, Wann, and Naylor 46-47). People may become bored and unhappy with their mates in the same way that they become bored and unhappy with their wardrobe or their vehicle.

We must begin to consider alternatives to the mindless consumption that dominates American life. The negative effects of our excessive materialism demand it. Before making any purchase, we should consider the reason for wanting to buy. Is it boredom, the desire to keep up with other people, or an attempt to buy happiness? Can the purchase be paid for in cash or does it add to credit card debt? Does it fulfill a need or a want? Did that need or want exist before the item was advertised in a commercial or on a store shelf? What is the product made of and where did it come from? Who made it? Are the company's practices ethical and worthy of support? Most importantly, we must choose to consume less, or future generations will be forced to live with shortages of the resources that are so vital to us today. An increased awareness of the harm caused by excessive and careless consumption and increased transparency about the production, disposal, and advertising of material goods will allow us to make more informed choices about what we buy. The thoughtfulness and frugality of

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generations past must be resurrected in a relevant, contemporary way in order to avoid a future destroyed by today's consumption and waste.

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Carrie Schwartz French

Inspiration

The inspiration for my essay was watching my step-daughter struggle with self-esteem and with her own appearance and weight at the very young age of seven. Remembering what I went through as a girl, a bit older than she is, I wanted to research the impact of Barbie on youth culture. Each year these issues develop in our female children at a younger and younger age and as parents we should be concerned and begin standing up against the Barbie fashioned world around us. While my primary focus was my step-daughter, I suppose the second inspiration was young girls worldwide fighting this never ending battle inside themselves.

Carrie Schwartz French



For generations, Barbie has been the epitome of beauty in American culture. With her golden hair, sky blue eyes, and pencil thin frame, she has won the hearts of young girls over the past fifty years. While some may say that Barbie is merely a toy, I believe that she has become the icon of a society obsessed with beauty: a society so damaged at its core that we have allowed an eleven and a half inch plastic doll to become the benchmark for a woman's self-image. When society makes an unrealistic figurine the standard for what a woman should look like, we encourage a distorted self-image based on perfection and flawlessness: two things that are next to impossible to attain.

From the time I was a little girl sprawled out on my bedroom floor with all of my Barbies, I knew one thing: I wanted to be beautiful. Tall, thin, golden haired, with sky blue eyes—this was the vision I had of beauty in my crucial developmental years. Barbie was the epitome of everything I aspired to be in my life: couture outfits, fancy high heels, and posh accessories on top of her entire cast and crew of friends. What I loved so much was that I could walk down the aisle at the local department store and choose the doll that symbolized who I wanted to be. With all of Barbie's varying career choices I found myself wanting to be everything from a model to a veterinarian to an astronaut. The options were endless, but a few things remained the same: bouncy blonde hair, sky blue eyes, and a pencil thin frame.

“Kids practice everyday life through make-believe, and it becomes a rehearsal for them to figure out who they want to be and how they think society should be organized,” says Sarah Banet-Weiser, a communications professor at the University of Southern California (Glanton 1). Through my

own personal experience, I could not agree more. I remember talking with my girlfriends in third grade about what the most important things in life were to each of us. The first was doing well in school. I thank heaven that I was in the crowd that wanted to be intelligent. The second was being pretty, which meant I had to have fashionable clothes, an adorable pink lunchbox, and long beautiful hair. The third was having as many friends as possible, which translated into “the more people liked me, the more accepted and popular I was.” I was very lucky when I was young; I managed to fit into all of these categories. I had my clique and we ruled the elementary school: unless a girl passed the test, there was no way in.

Through our Barbie-driven insanity, my clique and I were responsible for harassing and tormenting other girls our age. The girls we chose to pick on were those that were not fortunate enough to be born with the perfect hair, own the perfect clothes, or have the social prowess we had already accomplished by age nine. Barbie had taught us the social and gender identity that we had begun to pursue and attempted to impose on other girls. For years, this is how my life continued. I had my friends and I had my version of reality, or rather “Barbie” reality. I thought I was on top of the world.

As time passed, I found myself questioning the reality I had built: “Is beauty really the most important thing in life? Is there nothing to be said for how smart I am or what I want to be when I grow up?” I remember thinking that there had to be more pressing matters in life than my clothing, my hair, and my friends and asking myself where this delusional thought process came from. I must have taken cues from my mother about life in general, but she most certainly did not teach me to be self-absorbed and obsessed with beauty. This left only

one place that I could conclude my thought process came from—Barbie. “Despite changes in culture and politics,” Banet-Weiser explains, “there is still a dominant understanding that women have a particular role in society and men have a different role. And toys often reflect that” (Glanton 1): they often reflect society's stereotypes of girls and boys.

After I came to realize how Barbie might have helped shape my sense of feminine beauty, and who and what I wanted to become, I found myself questioning the very fabric of my existence. I began to understand how this little doll had contributed to my understanding of women in modern society. She was beautiful, popular, and had every material thing I could dream of having, yet I started to see how unrealistic those things would be to attain. The first thing I began to deconstruct was Barbie's physical image, “which would measure 39-18-34 if stretched over a 5-foot-10 frame” (Mouchard 2). I could not possibly dream of attaining this figure without becoming anorexic and stretching my body an extra two inches. Realizing neither of those things were likely to happen, I started moving on to other aspects of the reality I called beauty. While in junior high school I found myself refusing to adhere to the facade I had grown so accustomed to. I became aware of the torment I had caused girls that in no way deserved to be treated in such a manner. The tables had turned and come full circle: I had become one of the girls who were not cool enough and suddenly found myself without my friends. I was sitting alone asking myself the same question I had asked my friends in the third grade: “What are the most important things in my life?”

“What children see,” Adena Young writes, “are the physical and social norms that we have placed on human

beings. From these norms they learn how to think about the world around them” (1). As an adult I get to see the world in an entirely new perspective. As I have aged, some of those norms have changed. Rather than the cute lunchbox, now it is the purse I carry that matters, and rather than the friends, it is the size of my professional network that counts. The criteria for what makes a winner may have changed with time, but I am still living and trying to gain the same advantage I always have. I have also come to realize that with adulthood comes an entirely different set of ways and means to accomplish the goal of beauty.

Many women I know, however, are still following their early conditioning and some are going to extreme lengths to become what society tells them is beautiful. One of these women is my former supervisor, whom I will refer to as Jane Smith to protect her confidentiality. Every few months Jane goes to the local plastic surgeon and gets either Botox or collagen injections and has recently been considering liposuction and a facelift. “Getting a little plump here and a little smoothing there,” Jane explains, “makes me feel more confident, more alive. I can't say that there is any specific way I want to look; I just know that I feel like I look younger and more rejuvenated when I get these things done.” Jane is “willing to pay the price,” as she believes “cost doesn't matter when it comes down to an issue of self-esteem.”

Jane is one of millions of women who are willing to go to any length necessary to feel beautiful. In fact, there is an entire culture forming around the cosmetic surgery practice. In her book *Flesh Wounds: The Culture of Cosmetic Surgery*, Virginia L. Blum explores many of the questions that I found myself asking when I was a teenager. Ranging from her own





experience being a cosmetic surgery patient to the delusions of girl-next-door types seeking surgery as a means to look like their favorite celebrity, she provides a provocative look at how cosmetic surgery has become the booming business it currently is. When confronting the influence of a culture dominated by fashion and beauty she explains that the images we are shown of beauty are fleeting and that the ever changing face of beauty makes it nearly impossible for one to attain the perfectly beautiful body (40). She also states that “[b]eauty is now as disposable and short-lived as our electronic gadgetry, more impermanent than even the flesh it graces” (40). Despite such cultural messages, more women are turning to surgery as an option to achieve their own personal view of perfection.

One woman who has taken this to an extreme is Cindy Johnson who admits that she never overcame a childhood obsession with becoming Barbie. As of 2004, CBS News reports, Cindy has had thirty-one operations over fourteen years, spent over \$100,000, and earned a spot in the *Guinness Book of World Records* on her quest to become a living version of Barbie (Leung 2). In an interview with CBS’s Richard Schlesinger, Cindy outlines her journey to become a living doll: “I looked at a Barbie doll when I was 6 and said, ‘This is what I want to look like.’ I just wanted to look better . . . Barbie was the blank canvas I filled in all those years ago. It is still my role model.” When asked “how much of the problem with [her] old looks” she thought was “a perception problem” in herself, “absolutely zero,” says Cindy: “It’s not that deep. It’s not that psychological” (Leung 2). Is it not really “that psychological”? Is it not true that many of us are emotionally crippled by the cultural stereotype that Barbie

represents?

To what extent are we willing to take our own obsession with this living doll? Some are willing to spend thousands of dollars on cosmetic surgery, some are willing to dye their hair and get monthly spa treatments, and yet others are willing to recognize that their hope of ever looking like these women is slim to none and find their own beauty within themselves. If we continue to use two dimensional figures from television and print media as the standard for what women should look like, we are going to continue to encourage distorted self-image in our society. Without unlimited time, money, and a personal beauty consultant, what chance do the majority of us have to achieve the perfection and flawlessness of Barbie-like celebrities we see? Perhaps it is time to become more self-aware, ask what really is important in this life, and change our perceptions of beauty to something a bit more attainable and less fleeting.



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The Front Street Journal

Reading Area Community College

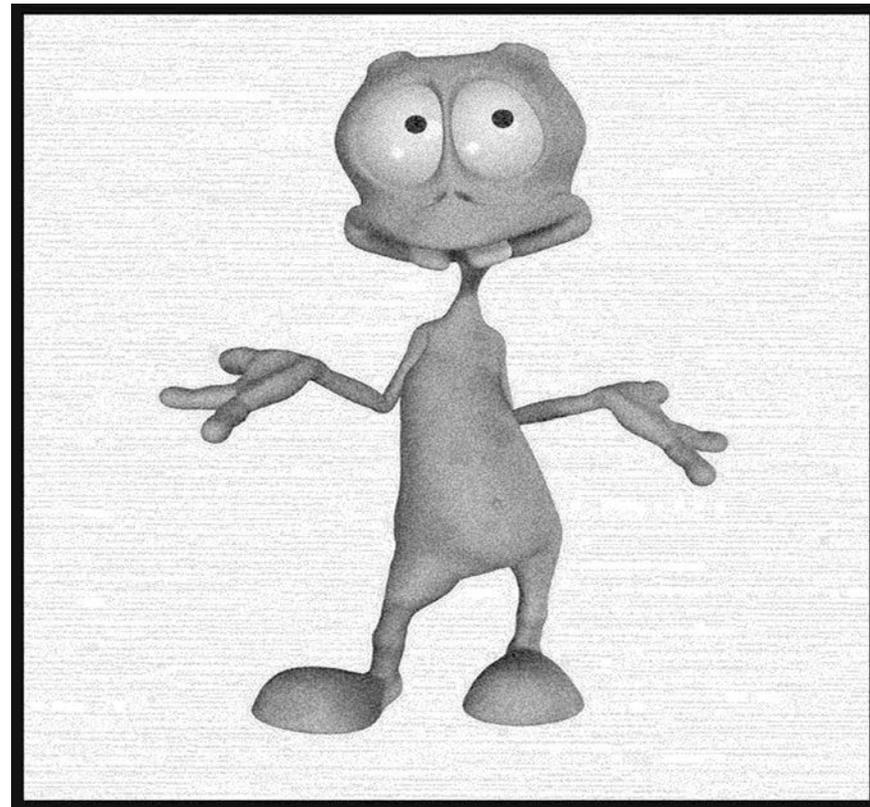
Reading, PA

No Space For First Place

Marilyn Miller

The Place for Aliens

A quality education that will not cost you your spaceship is something that aliens are looking for. It is hard commuting to RACC and being spotted hovering over cities throughout the world. What is harder is keeping ahead of the steady stream of papers and homework. Cover story inside on Page B3



Inspiration

Throughout high school, I believed the common stereotypes associated with community colleges. However, after my first semester at RACC I was shocked by the inaccuracy of these judgements. This essay attempts to distinguish between the image and reality of community colleges.

Marilyn Miller

No Space for First Place

The sun boiled down on my face as I trailed behind a group of prospective students at my freshmen orientation to Reading Area Community College (RACC). Blinded by the sun and standing at the back of the crowd, I could hardly see the face of our leader. Yet, I could sense that she was proud of being a student at RACC, which allows anyone to enroll and benefit from its programs and services. I looked around at the unfamiliar faces of the students surrounding me and wondered how many of them would manage to stay in college long enough to earn any kind of degree. I was confident that those who thought of the community college as an easy access to higher education were unaware of the hard work necessary for success in college. “After all,” many of these students might have been thinking, “RACC admits everyone who applies; it should not then take much effort to graduate.” The images associated with open access and even low cost often distort the reality of community colleges and form misconceptions about the quality of community college education and the population of students that are served. These distorted perceptions of the community college are also reinforced by our society’s popular college ranking system, the *U.S. News and World Report’s* “America’s Best Colleges,” which correlates selectivity and cost directly to a college’s quality.

Failing to graduate from a community college does not necessarily mean one has failed to accomplish his or her goal. However, the percentage of students attending college for

reasons other than graduation is not a category included in the *U.S. News and World Report’s* criteria for judging America’s colleges. According to this ranking methodology, “A higher average graduation rate scores better in the ranking model than a lower graduation rate” (Morse 3). Although this criterion seems logical, it implies that a college failing to produce many graduates should not be considered a quality institution. Unfortunately, two-year colleges such as RACC can have graduation rates as low as seven percent (Urban 1). Subsequently, if a high school senior compared RACC’s graduation percentage to any of the colleges ranked on the *U.S. News and World Report’s* list of “America’s Best Colleges,” their image of the community college could become skewed and misinformed. This may be one reason why two-year institutions are not included on the *U.S. News and World Report’s* list of best colleges. Yet, by comparing the graduation statistics of four-year universities with community colleges, one is comparing oranges to basketballs. Although both have the same shape and color, they serve two different purposes.

In reality, community colleges have diverse students with equally diverse intentions for enrollment: students may be attending a community college for personal enrichment, job advancement, course exploration, or in pursuit of a degree. Consequently, these students differ substantially from university students because “not all community college students plan to graduate” (Vorhees and Deying 220-21).

An example of how student intentions can affect community college graduation rates is Suzanne Miller, the Director of Special Education at Upper Perkiomen School District. Mrs. Miller’s intention for attending a community college was merely to “take enough education courses . . . to become certified.” She wanted to get married and raise children before starting her career. Thus, she left college before completing her degree. Fifteen years later, Mrs. Miller returned to the same college, successfully graduated, and proceeded to attain her goal of becoming a teacher. She eventually advanced to her current position. However, if one only measured “success” by graduation rates, both Mrs. Miller and the community college she attended would have been considered failures the year she withdrew. Ultimately, by focusing on graduation rates alone, the community college’s advantages will remain hidden to the untrained eye.

Open access may lower the requirements for admission at community colleges, but it does not reduce the quality of instruction. One of the central missions of community colleges is to serve “all segments of society through an open-access admissions policy that offers equal and fair treatment to all students” (Vaughn 3). Although this mission might be considered noble and democratic by the faculty within these two-year institutions, open access does not seem to be viewed as highly by the majority of academia. This is apparent in the *U.S. News and World Report’s* “America’s Best Colleges” criteria which state, “A lower acceptance rate scores higher in the ranking model” (Morse 3). Although this may accurately apply to a university’s quality, community colleges seem to focus more on competence than competitiveness. As a result, the image of community colleges becomes diluted compared

to more selective institutions (Handel 7).

Yet, although everyone can be a student at a community college, not anyone can be a professor. According to the United States Department of Labor, “Master’s degree holders fill most full-time teaching positions. However, in certain fields where there may be more applicants than available jobs . . . master’s degree holders may be passed over in favor of candidates holding Ph.Ds” (“Teachers – Postsecondary” 3). This seems to indicate that community colleges are trying to employ the best professors for their institutions. The President of Reading Area Community College, Dr. Anna Weitz believes that her community college has been successful in hiring excellent professors: “The RACC faculty are passionate about their discipline and care a lot about the quality of teaching.” Additional to the basic credentials, community college teachers are also evaluated for advancement by different criteria than university professors. When community college professors are eligible to become tenured, they are judged on “teaching abilities instead of scholarly research and publications” (“Community College Instructors” 3). Thus, they are encouraged to focus on student learning.

Community college professors often teach various kinds of students who may have different abilities and personal obligations. To maintain a high quality of education for these students, community college professors must enhance the clarity of their teaching as well as offer “much personal support and academic direction” (Caporrimo 31). This student-centered instruction seems to help increase the quality of education by supporting students who might become overwhelmed by college-level work. One student, who attended both two- and four-year institutions, admits that

she gained more knowledge from her general classes at the community college because “students have a close relationship with all the professors, who keep good track of their pupils and come down hard if anyone slacks off. But at Kent State . . . no one knows you in the big courses and lots of students fall through the cracks” (Schroff 88). With their commitment to student-centered education, community colleges aim to ensure that all students achieve their individual potential. Ultimately, open access may increase the quantity of students, but it does not decrease the quality of instruction at community colleges.

The cost does not have to be high for an institution to offer a good education. Community colleges try to encourage enrollment by keeping tuition rates substantially below university rates. Surprisingly, low tuition rates impact a college’s status negatively according to the *U.S. News and World Report’s* criteria which state, “Higher expenditures per student score better in the ranking model than lower expenditures” (Morse 4). However, student finances do not seem to be “worth” much in the ranking system, considering they are only ten percent of a college’s score. By keeping student expenditures high, universities seem to enhance their image more than their quality. Although this may allow them to fund more elaborate buildings, it also causes many students to obtain debt. Community colleges, however, sacrifice their appearance to help students afford a higher education “regardless of funding sources” (Vaughan 20).

Oddly, the concept of an inexpensive education seems to have negative effect on the image of these two-year institutions. Acknowledging this misconception, Dr. Anna Weitz explains that some people associate affordability with cheapness and cheapness with low quality. However, bargain

shopping does not always produce poor quality items. For example, if a consumer bought a shirt at the Nike department store for fifty dollars or the same shirt at TJ Max for ten dollars, it would still consist of the same material. Similarly, general education classes change more in price than content from one institution to another. For in-state students the cost per credit at Temple University is four hundred and thirty two dollars; this is more than five times what it costs per credit for county residents to attend Reading Area Community College (“Tuition Rate Schedule 2009-10” 1).

Unfortunately, it seems that only students attending community colleges are aware of the “deal” they are getting. An example of this is Carrie Poplar, a student who attained a 3.8 grade point average in high school and chose to attend a community college before transferring to a university. Consequently, many people were surprised by her decision. However, Carrie says, “[T]he courses you take during the first two years of a liberal arts degree are essentially the same whether you go to a community college or a university” (Schroff 88). Community colleges offer classes that are transferable to universities; the main difference is the price. However, the projected image that lower costs equate to lower quality hinders students and parents from recognizing this bargain.

Ultimately, it is often the misinformed people that associate community colleges’ graduation rates, their open-door admissions policies, and their affordability with a low quality education. Graduation rates at two-year institutions are often skewed because of diverse student intentions. Additionally, open access does not mean that anyone can enter any program without the competencies required for college-

level work; it means that community colleges offer programs and services to ensure that students develop the necessary foundation to succeed academically. Finally, low costs enable students to save money and advance in their college careers. Clearly, if there was a rank for an affordable school that offered a high quality education to students with diverse intentions, the community college would be number one.

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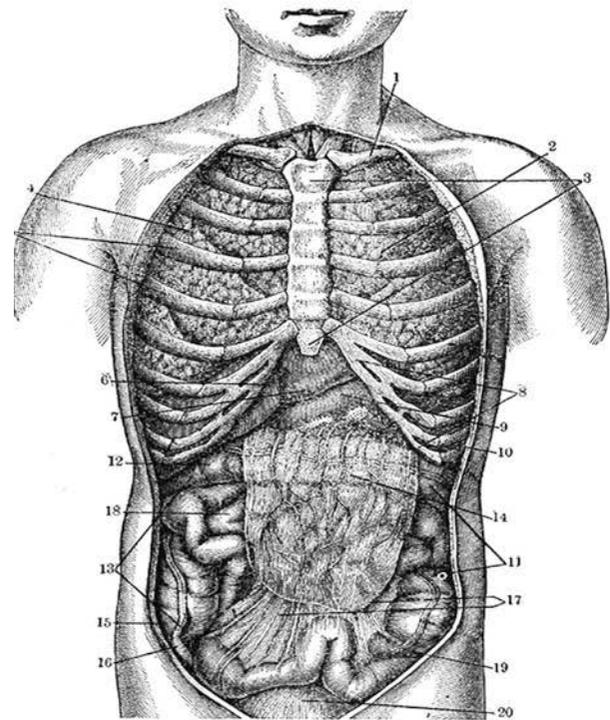
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Trichotillomania: Suffering in Silence

Alycia Rossi



Inspiration

This essay means a lot to me. It was the first time I've shared about this disorder to anyone besides my immediate family. I was nervous to submit this piece because it was so personal to me but I thought it could help others to understand, learn, and be able to open up about trichotillomania. I put my heart into this essay, along with lots of research. My hopes are for others with the same kinds of disorders not to feel alone and to educate people that have not experienced anything like this. I was finally ready to speak out and I thought this would be the perfect opportunity.

Alycia Rossie

Imagine fighting a war against yourself every day of your life. People who suffer from the disorder, trichotillomania, constantly try to resist the urge of pulling out their own hair. Trichotillomania is considered to be an impulse control disorder, often accompanied by obsessive compulsive disorder. Individuals who suffer from this disorder typically pull hair from their scalp, eyebrows, eyelashes, or pubic areas. Not only do they often wind up with patchy bald spots that are painfully noticeable, but the actual act of pulling is followed by an overwhelming feeling of regret and shame. In fear that they will be judged, these people rarely talk about their problem with pulling out their hair and would rather continue to suffer in silence.

Trichotillomania affects 4 to 11 million people in America and it is said to be more common in women and often associated with stress or anxiety: “Current estimates are that roughly 1.5% of males and 3.5% of females in the U.S. engage in clinically significant non-cosmetic hair pulling in their lifetime” (Mansueto, Ninan, and Rothbaum 3). Pulling can start during anytime of their life and may be episodic, transient or continuous. Generally, however, the majority of people begin pulling during their adolescence or childhood. It is important to understand that the urge to pull hair is uncontrollable and cannot just simply be stopped. Not only do people who suffer from trichotillomania experience feelings of embarrassment, guilt, and shame, but parents become frustrated because it is a

very difficult disorder to understand.

Trichotillomania is associated with a sense of increasing tension but the act is said to consequently relieve it:

Trichotillomania has been considered a habit, like nail biting, that can have a soothing function and potentially distressing consequences. The possibility that trichotillomania is associated with neurological conditions marked by motor tics, such as Tourette’s disorder, has been suggested since hair pulling, like tics, can be viewed as an uncontrollable response to an irresistible situation.

(Mansueto, Ninan, and Rothbaum 5)

Despite a quick moment of relief, people do not enjoy pulling out their hair. In fact, “individuals with this condition feel significant distress about their behavior and also experience difficulties in social, work and other areas of their lives as a result,” and admit to losing a lot of time due to their hair pulling and going through great lengths to disguise it (“Trichotillomania Has Victims,” A27). People who tend to pull from their scalp may wear their hair up often, cut it, or in worst case scenarios when they are completely bald they often find comfort in wearing wigs. Others who pull from the eyebrow and eyelash area use make-up to camouflage bald spots or hairless areas.

Trichotillomania is also viewed as “a form of obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) because of the repetitive and seemingly compulsive nature

of hair pulling, though significant differences between trichotillomania and OCD have been noted” (Mansueto, Ninan, and Rothbaum 5). Trichotillomania also can result in repetitive motion injuries because of the repeated, uncomfortable motions of pulling. Besides physical pain, some even bite or ingest the parts of the hair, which can then get trapped inside the stomach or intestine and cause a serious medical condition (“Trichotillomania Has Victims,” A27). Other disorders that highly contribute to hair pulling are depression and anxiety. Feelings of anger, depression, tension, anxiety and sadness may serve as a trigger for pulling. There is, however, no known cause of trichotillomania. Various psychological paths are explored, but no explanation has been established using scientific methods (“Facts for Families”). Many people who suffer from trichotillomania continue this habit unconsciously. Others who pay great attention to what they do, on the other hand, may have choices for coping with and hopefully curing this disorder.

Currently two treatments are recommended to reduce hair pulling. One is a form of psychological therapy known as cognitive behavior therapy (CBT) and the other is pharmacotherapy. CBT involves being able to recognize one’s feelings, thoughts, and behaviors associated with pulling. Increasing awareness and replacing hair pulling with alternative behaviors is the main goal of this therapy. Some replaced behaviors could be keeping hands busy when feeling the urge to pull or keeping a rubber band around the wrist and pulling at it instead of

pulling hair. Pharmacotherapy is a medication-based type of therapy. Medication, such as Prozac or Zoloft, is used to treat the feeling of depression, anxiety, or OCD and can also accompanied with behavioral therapy. Individuals who have very low self-esteem, however, may avoid getting medical attention, which makes the problem even worse overall.

There are other barriers that might prevent a person from healing. Some people truly do not believe that they have a problem, in which case their opinion must be respected. They cope with their hair loss on a daily basis seeing no need to change. Lack of faith in one’s self, or rather, in one’s ability to heal is another kind of barrier. Many failed attempts at recovering could result in altogether hopelessness. Often people lose their self-worth and identity, fearing what they have become and that there is no turning back. Wanting to achieve perfection can also prevent individuals from dealing with this disorder. These people may think that their hair is “bound to be uneven, asymmetrical, stubbly, gray, or in some other way bothersome to the puller” and give up trying (Novak, sec. 5). Perhaps the biggest barrier of all is the fear of letting people in:

Although recovery seems synonymous with “getting control” over symptoms, in it there are actually elements of giving up control. Letting another person such as a therapist into that very private, personal space of hair pulling and following their suggestions instead of the

familiar fighting an internal battle means giving up a very integrated behavior and mind-set. (Novak, sec. 4)

These barriers may seriously undermine individuals' attempts to try to control their internal experience and, more importantly, keep them from telling the truth about their experience.

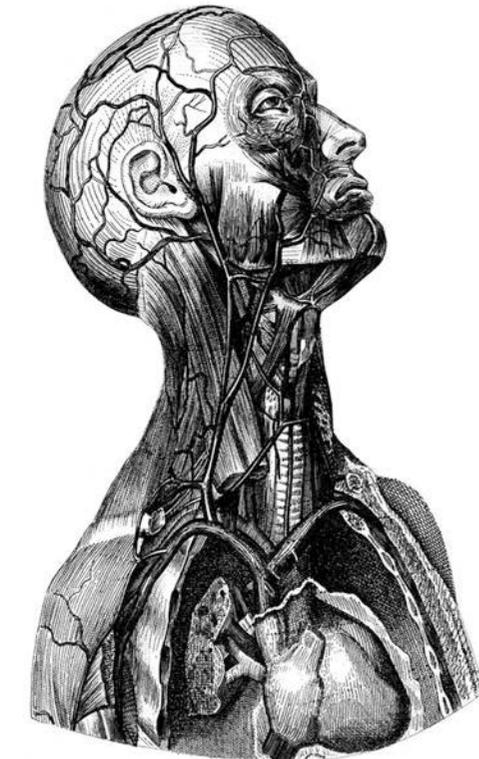
There are, however, many individuals who have stepped forward and shared that they suffer from trichotillomania. Twenty-year-old Jena Metts, who would like to be Miss Kentucky, has the same urges to pull and has tried many different forms of treatment to help her such as taping her fingertips, wearing gloves at night, and wearing a beanie on her head to avoid the temptation. Mandi Line, a successful stylist for Hollywood, for the first time admitted on ABC News that she too had trichotillomania. She had only shown her bare head to her ex-boyfriend and her mother, but made one of the most difficult decisions in her life during her interview showing her real hair to millions of TV viewers. Before unveiling her hair she stated, "Because you're sitting here interviewing this girl, and you think like, she's one person, and then all of a sudden I'm going to be some one else in about a minute . . . the ugly version of me" (Juju and Vu, sec. 3). She came upon this decision because she wanted to show the devastating effects that this disorder has on people. As for a cure in her future, even though she has her good weeks and bad weeks, she does not foresee that anytime soon. Cheryn Salazar is another

woman who has been public about her hair pulling. She is now one of the founders of the Trichotillomania Learning Center (TLC) and an author of many self help books. She also posts videos on YouTube for how to apply make-up and has her own website which offers the best make-up, wigs, books, and techniques for living with this condition.

By simply just sharing their own stories, their own struggles with trichotillomania, Jena Metts, Mandi Line, and Cheryn Salazar and many others, undoubtedly, have made it easier for so many people to live and cope with this disorder. There are, however, still millions of people who suffer in silence. I too fight this never ending battle against myself every day of my life. I, like many others, can only hope for the support of others and have faith within myself to truly fight and win this ongoing battle of whether to pull or not to pull.

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INSPIRATION

I submitted my essay, “Recidivism: A Societal Issue,” to Legacy to raise awareness of the plight of the convicted criminal offender. I am extremely passionate about this issue. The issue of recidivism and criminal justice reform affects the entire family and community of the offender. If I can assist in changing the structural deficiencies in society that perpetuate the cycle of crime and self-destruction, then all of my experiences with the criminal justice system will have been worth it.

MONICA FRENCH

RECIDIVISM: A SOCIETAL ISSUE
MONICA FRENCH

Convicted felons and current and former prison inmates have been an ignored population for years. Their needs, wants, and attempts to become functional members of their communities have often fallen to the wayside in a society who holds on to many misconceptions about this group. Some people actually believe that loss of opportunities is a just punishment for those who have made the decision to break the law. Discrimination runs rampant as stereotypical images of a convict fill people's minds and deter them from wanting to welcome such derelicts into their neighborhoods, homes, or business establishments. Unfortunately, there are some convicts and prisoners that would meet the expectations of many as violent, ruthless, cold-hearted killers. But a large part of this population are people who have faced adversity and made a few bad decisions during the course of their life. It is important to recognize that these people, just as everyone else, are capable of change and thus deserve redemption. Sometimes it takes more than one or two chances to make a drastic transformation. With the right combination of support, resources, and opportunities, however, many convicts are willing and able to turn their lives around and become assets to their community.

Recidivism is an issue that continues to become more prevalent in our society demanding the attention of lawmakers and citizens alike. The problem begins with our criminal justice system, which is in desperate need of renovation. Most American prisons are busting at the seams with inmates in need of some form of treatment and are lacking the financial resources to provide the appropriate services. As a result, there is a deficiency of rehabilitative services in jails and prisons. Many citizens

are unaware of how prisoners spend their time while incarcerated, what type of needs they have, whether their needs are met or unmet, what type of services are offered, and what the prison is doing to prepare inmates for impending releases. The majority of America's correctional facilities are the antithesis of rehabilitation. Inmates are thrown into precarious environments, where their survival depends on their ability to adapt to the unspoken codes of prison life. Many inmates must hustle, lie, steal, and cheat just to manipulate a tolerable living situation. Prisoners, gang members, correctional officers, and prison administration all contribute to the culture of violence and antisocial behaviors that exists on every cellblock. Inmates are lucky to leave prison unscarred, let alone rehabilitated and ready to live life on life's terms.

All of these issues must be considered when addressing crime and punishment. Violent offenders and nonviolent offenders, who usually do not have much more in common than their prison garb, are often housed together with no concern of safety for either party. Most people are not concerned about prison conditions unless they have a loved one in the system. Even if one does not care about the rights and welfare of prisoners, the prisoners' families must be added into the equation. Prisons are cultivating disturbed individuals in their unhealthy environments and many of these disturbed individuals are resuming in raising their children upon release. One can only imagine the havoc that our current policies regarding prisoners are wreaking on our children and future generations to come.

Rehabilitation must start in prison. Otherwise, we risk releasing inmates into the same environment that they

were unable to handle when they committed their crime with no more coping skills than they possessed before. Being labeled a convicted felon also brings new challenges to the table, as many of these people will have to deal with the loss of their driver's license, loss of prior employment or any type of financial security, fines and court costs, multiple trips to see parole officers and submission to random urine screenings (which also costs money), while also having to contend with a tarnished record and a scandalous reputation. Many citizens are not aware of the trials and tribulations that newly released inmates must contend with while trying to reintegrate back into society. Some inmates are fortunate enough to be released to caring family members who are willing to provide the needed support to assist their loved ones in getting back on their feet. Those that do not have the luxury of familial support face different challenges.

There are two major competing philosophies in the field of crime prevention. One is the pro-punishment perspective, which articulates that tough consequences are most effective in deterring criminal activities (Wilson, 2010). Those who subscribe to this point of view believe that a message needs to be sent to criminals through no-tolerance laws and mandatory minimum sentences. The opposing viewpoint on this matter advocates the positivist (pro-treatment) philosophy, which proposes that antisocial behaviors are the result of external factors and underlying issues such as mental illness, drug addiction, and poverty (Wilson, 2010). Supporters of this notion push treatment and rehabilitative programs as a method for reducing crime and recidivism. Traditionally, social workers have utilized the positivist theory in dealing with the criminal justice

system (Wilson, 2010). Most professionals in the criminal justice system would identify the first priority of the courts as ensuring the safety of society as a whole and delivering justice to the victims and/or the general public. Convicts are expected to pay their debts to the society that they offended. Unfortunately, there does not seem to be as much focus on the welfare of the convict and, as Wilson (2010) points out, "implementing policies and programs that recognize the importance of balancing fairly applied punishment and rehabilitation" remains a challenge for the criminal justice system (p.4).

We are able to see just how serious this issue has become in our society when we look at the recidivism rates in Pennsylvania and Berks County. Recidivism rates have been rising year after year indicating the need for a change in the criminal justice system. According to the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections, a study on re-incarceration rates between 1999 and 2004 displayed an increase each year in the number of inmates returning to prison after their release. At one year post-release, the recidivism rate for prisoners increased from 23.3% in 1999 to 25.9% in 2004 (Flaherty, 2006). At three years post-release, the overall recidivism rate for 1999 was 43.6%. There was a gradual increase to 46.3% in 2002 (Flaherty, 2006). Berks County incarceration and recidivism rates seem to be following the same pattern. According to Robyn Svirbly, the Senior Community Reentry Coordinator at Berks County Pre-Trial Services (BCPS)/Berks Connections, approximately 7000 inmates cycle through the Berks County Prison each year. Svirbly also noted that approximately 50% of Berks County inmates released from prison will be re-arrested within six months (personal

communication, December 8, 2010). It would be of much benefit to all involved in the system if there was more focus on rehabilitation in prison to prepare inmates for their impending releases. If preventative measures are taken, the destructive cycle can be broken and lives can be restored before irreparable damage is done. This is where the need for pre-trial and re-entry services inside and outside of prison comes into play.

BCPS/Berks Connections, formerly known as the Berks County Prison Society, is a non-profit agency that has been serving the area since 1975. BCPS/Berks Connections offers programs supporting individuals and families involved in the local criminal justice system. With the current recidivism rate in Berks County standing at about 50% and the county prison being severely overcrowded, re-entry services for newly released convicts are more crucial to the success of our society than ever (N. Schnovel and R. Svirbly, personal communication, December 8, 2010). There is also a shortage of agencies in Berks County that are equipped to effectively deal with re-entry related issues. Because the majority of people in the criminal justice system are dealing with multiple problems and issues at once, they often need to seek services from several agencies. Some problems and needs that this client population may require assistance with are drug and alcohol addictions, mental health disorders, housing, employment, education, job training, parenting, transportation, lack of financial resources, lack of support in the community, lack of family support, and basic functioning needs such as obtaining proper identification (N. Schnovel and R. Svirbly, personal communication, December 8, 2010). It can be quite difficult and overwhelming for newly

released convicts to navigate the social service system in order to meet all of their pressing needs. There are various agencies in Berks County that deal with these issues, but many newly released convicts do not even realize that some of these services are available.

When an individual comes in contact with the criminal justice system, it is usually a terrifying and confusing process, especially for someone who has never before been arrested. Our country's justice system claims to be founded on the principle of "presumed innocent until proven guilty." This ancient ideology was meant to relieve the defendant of the burden of proving their innocence and to place the weight of proving guilt on the government. The prosecution then must prove the defendant's guilt to a judge and jury beyond a reasonable doubt ("Presumption of Innocence," 2008). Individuals are also guaranteed "the right to a fair and speedy trial" ("Civil and Political Rights," n.d.). In theory, these philosophies make up an impartial and just legal system. Unfortunately, the system does

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not always work the way it is supposed to. People in the criminal justice system who lack financial resources are at a clear disadvantage to those who are able to afford to post bail or acquire the services of a reputable attorney. Although the indigent have the right to legal representation, they are usually assigned to public defenders that actually work for the county and, for whatever reason, usually do not get their clients the plea bargains or win the cases that a privately paid attorney can. To honor the principle of "presumed innocent until proven guilty," there must be equal resources available to anyone who is arrested. BCPS/Berks Connections is currently the only agency in Berks County providing these types of services. According to Nicolle Schnovel, Director of BCPS/ Berks Connections, their Community Release Bail Program and Pre-Trial Supervision Program were developed to increase the rate of defendants appearing for court, alleviate the overcrowding of Berks County Prison, ensure public safety, and provide referrals to defendants to other county agencies for treatment and basic needs (personal communication, December 8, 2010).

After an individual is arrested, the district judge will set bail based on the type of crime committed, the likelihood of the person showing up for court, and whether or not public safety will be jeopardized if the offender is released back into the community. The defendant is then given the opportunity to contact family and friends who may be willing and able to post bail. Bail that is set extremely high will usually leave the defendant stuck in prison until they either accede to a guilty plea agreement or go to trial if they want to fight their case. When a defendant pleads not guilty, it can sometimes take a year or more until they even see a

judge at trial. Lives are ruined and time is wasted for those who are wrongfully accused of crimes they did not commit, as they sit in prison unable to make bail, desperately waiting for their day in court. Posting bail may be the difference in the defendant losing their job, losing custody of their children, defaulting on their mortgage or other bills, earning the money to hire a private attorney, and preserving their emotional stability and reputation by staying out of prison. A defendant who can post bail will also be at an advantage in many cases because they will have the opportunity to prove themselves to their sentencing judge by seeking drug and alcohol or mental health treatment, paying restitution (if applicable), submitting clean urine specimens, and conducting themselves as productive assets to society.

BCPS/Berks Connections is also closely linked with the Berks Community Reentry Center (BCRC), which combines jail system staff and community agencies to provide an uninterrupted continuum of care that starts while the individual is incarcerated and continues for up to three years after the offender is released. When an individual is coming up on his release date, his Berks Connections case manager will compile an all-inclusive discharge plan. This plan ensures that the inmate will not have any type of interruption of care after release. The inmate is given an appointment card to meet with a case manager within the week he is released. BCRC provides case management services for up to three years after an inmate's release. 15-20% of graduates of BCRC are re-arrested within six months compared to the average 50% recidivism rate for Berks County Prison inmates (N. Schnovel and R. Svirbly, personal communication, December 8, 2010). This extreme

drop in recidivism rates shows astonishing promise for successful reintegration into the community.

When an inmate is released from prison, parole or probation begins. A newly released convict is assigned to a parole or probation officer to supervise them until their sentence has been successfully completed. The convict must agree to and comply with a number of conditions in order to preserve his or her freedom. Some of these conditions include regularly reporting to a parole/probation officer as scheduled, reporting any change in residence, submitting to random drug and alcohol urinalysis testing, attending counseling sessions, obtaining employment, and staying current on a payment schedule for fines and court costs. According to the Annual Statistical Report from the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections, the number of admissions for parole violators each year increased by 59%, from 3,826 in 1998 to 6,101 in 2008 (Emery, Hartman, & Lategan, 2008). Considering all of the complications that a conviction creates in the life of an offender, it is understandable that many may experience difficulty in fulfilling some or several of the parole/probation another obstacle that confronts an requirements.

Because a large percentage of prisoners are also drug addicts and lived as such prior to incarceration, it may take time to obtain and perfect the necessary coping skills to manage their sobriety while dealing with life on life's terms. Staying clean from drugs and learning to behave as productive citizens become daily struggles, especially when a great majority of convicts have not been provided with the resources to assist them in achieving these goals. Robyn Svirbly from BCPS/Berks Connections shed light on individual being released from prison. According to

Svirbly, about 70-80% of the population is leaving Berks County Prison without any suitable options for employment (personal communication, December 8, 2010). The uncertainty of unemployment leaves many people feeling helpless and scared. Those that do work take for granted the security that a stable job provides. Without a way to achieve self-sufficiency, on the other hand, newly released inmates are at the mercy of anyone who is willing to lend the support that they need to rebuild their lives. It seems as though many parolees are caught in vicious cycles of destructive behaviors, negative stereotypes, and self-defeating attitudes, which could be a result of the lack of support and resources available for them in the criminal justice system.

Like all social service agencies, Berks Connections must contend with major barriers to providing services to their clients. Unfortunately, there are many gaps that need to be filled in services offered to individuals in the criminal justice system. Before BCRC was developed, Berks Connections provided more programs at the Berks County Prison. They used to post sign-up sheets for different groups and activities on each individual unit, allowing interested inmates to participate by signing their name on the sheet. They also used to conduct a job skills workshop similar to the one that is implemented at BCRC. Berks Connections no longer facilitates most of these programs. Currently, the entire population of female criminal offenders is receiving inadequate therapeutic treatment in prison. To say that their needs are going unmet is an understatement. BCRC at Berks County Prison is for men only. Originally, when the plans were made for BCRC, women were included in the grand scheme. The plan was to transfer

at least twenty to thirty non-violent women on minimum security down to BCRC. There they would be given more freedom and have all of the advantages of an intensive treatment program that the men have been benefiting from. However, BCRC opened its doors on May 2, 2010, and there are still no female inmates lodged within its walls. The reasoning behind the women being excluded is not completely clear, but the two major impediments are a lack of female correctional officers to staff the center and a lack of funding (N. Schnovel and R. Svirbly, personal communication, December 8, 2010).

With BCRC out of reach, the women on F-Unit are left to depend on the prison to provide them with drug and alcohol treatment. Drug and alcohol addiction is one of the most pressing issues in the criminal justice system today with the majority of prisoners having substance abuse and addiction problems. If these inmates are expected to remain clean upon release, they should be receiving intensive drug and alcohol treatment while in prison. The women in Berks County Prison who receive drug and alcohol treatment get one hour of group time once a week for eight weeks until they "graduate" the program. They are barely scratching the surface on their issues during one hour a week. Most of these women come from the streets to the prison environment which operates similarly to the code of ethics on the streets, learn few, if any, skills while incarcerated, and are released to the same surroundings that they could not function in to begin with. According to Robyn Swirby, the long-term plans of the prison staff include developing a program to house women at BCRC (personal communication, December 8, 2010). Unfortunately, this goal is a long way off from being

actualized.

The other issue with BCRC is that it only houses such a small percentage of the men in Berks County Prison. There are about 92 out of 1000-1200 men currently incarcerated in the county prison, who are lucky enough to be housed in BCRC receiving reentry services that will benefit them upon their release (N. Schnovel and R. Svirbly, personal communication, December 8, 2010). How can the rest of the inmates be expected to change without adequate resources and a healthy support system? Reducing recidivism requires making an effort to provide all inmates with the assistance that they need, teaching them how to function in society, and giving them the tools to become self-sufficient and productive assets to the community. Funding is always an issue in every social service agency, but there must be a way to reach more than this small proportion of convicts that are currently housed in BCRC. Everyone deserves a chance at success.

The biggest obstacle, according to Robyn Svirbly, is often the convict himself (personal communication, December 8, 2010). Many convicts have a self-defeating attitude that comes along with constant discrimination from fellow members of society. The endless rejection wears on one's soul and could make the most confident individual doubt themselves. One of the biggest challenges for a newly released convict is to find a job. Employers are more likely to favor an applicant with no criminal record than one with a record. Convicts with theft charges have even more trouble finding someone to give them a chance because the employer looks at them as a liability. They may be afraid that the convict will steal from them or fit some awful stereotypical description of an evil being that will act

violently with no worries of the consequences. Some people are simply judgmental and cannot understand the plight of a convict until they know someone who gets arrested.

Svirbly and Schnovel both admitted that they see discrimination affect their clients quite often. Svirbly acknowledged that she sometimes has trouble gaining support from various community members when they discover that she is trying to raise money to help support convicts or when she is asking a business owner to consider a convict for a job (personal communication, December 8, 2010). The goals and ideals of Berks Connections are fantastic, but it will continue to be a difficult task to put them into action until other community members are willing to open their minds to the idea of a convict living, working, playing, and raising their children amongst them. Changing policies, laws, and procedures that hold back individuals in the criminal justice system would be of great assistance. However, the biggest change must come from our society: a sense of empathy and understanding, and a willingness to help these people succeed.

When asked what she thought was the difference between newly released convicts who succeed and those who are later re-arrested, Svirbly noted that those who succeed are afforded the resources necessary to change, obtain stable employment, have the willingness and desire to make changes and take direction, take initiative, and have a strong support network of family and friends. Svirbly maintains that Berks Connections is on the right track to providing effective reentry services. Obtaining more funding in the future would open the door to increasing the size of their programs, developing larger centers, offering more case management, more follow-up with walk-in clients,

and providing the females with a comprehensive reentry treatment program that would be capable of meeting their needs (personal communications, December 8, 2010).

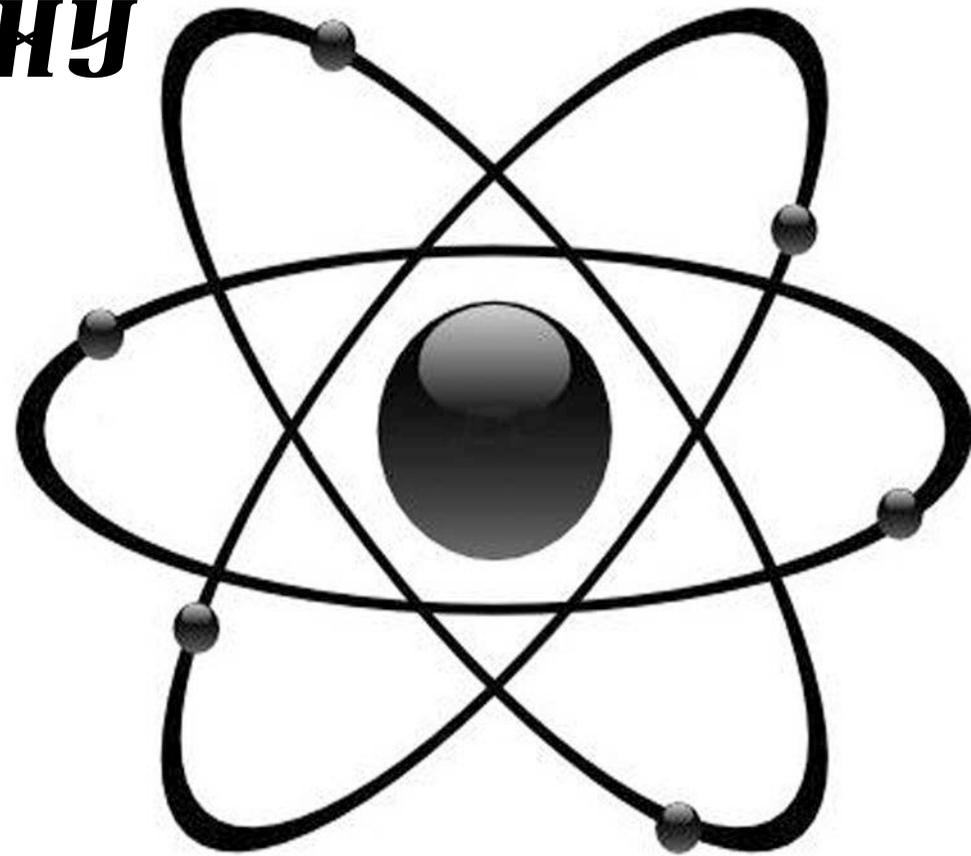
Structural defects in our society limit convicts in many ways. Their convictions determine what type of jobs they can get, what type of education they can seek, if they are eligible for financial aid in college, and even whether or not they can vote. Society must become aware of how limitations and stereotypes feed into the self-destructive mentality of the convict. Until the criminal justice system can be dismantled and rebuilt in such a way that works for society and the offender, crime, injustice, and shattered families will continue to thrive creating a new generation of corruption and transgressions.

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THE PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE

JARED BURKE



INSPIRATION

My inspiration for writing my essay, “The Philosophy of Science,” was to try and explain how science has had such a successful impact on our understanding of the world we live in. I wanted to show that the key to science is the ability to know what is possible through a continuous method of dis-confirmation that is vital to true knowledge.

JARED BURKE

Since the dawn of civilization, humans have engaged one another in philosophical debate. More often than not, such debates ended in disagreement and sometimes bloodshed. Just when it seemed impossible there would ever be a way to objectively settle these debates, a new method of discovery began to emerge, one that relied on logic and rationality rather than intuition and emotion. This new method became known as the philosophy of science and today it is by far the most influential tool we have to understand the world we live in.

The introduction to Gary E. Kessler's *Voices of Wisdom: A Multicultural Philosophy Reader* begins by posing readers the question, "What is philosophy?" (3). Kessler attempts to answer this question by using the etymological meaning of the word "philosophy," but quickly determines that etymology "does not help us very much when we are searching for an adequate definition today [since] meanings of words change" (4). So Kessler revises his methods and examines instead how some of history's greatest philosophers have chosen to answer the question. Still though, Kessler's attempts are met with dissent. After realizing that no single definition of philosophy can fully suffice, Kessler decides to offer his own definition for philosophy as "the rational attempt to formulate, understand, and answer fundamental questions" (5). Ultimately, however, Kessler's efforts to provide a cohesive definition of philosophy end in failure once he realizes that he is unable to clarify the term "rational" (8). Of course, Kessler himself possesses an

understanding of what rationality is, or else he would not have included the term in his definition. Kessler's quandary lies in the fact that his understanding of rationality is relative to his personal philosophy.

Kessler admits that "[rationality] is one of the most hotly debated issues in philosophy today" (8). In fact, by including the term "rational" in his definition of philosophy, Kessler may risk insinuating that certain factions within current philosophy do not fulfill their necessary requirements. Clearly then, the term "rationality" is too divisive to be incorporated into philosophy's definition. Let us suppose, however, that Kessler's definition be applied to a mere subset of philosophy rather than to the practice as a whole. It would then be plausible to define rationality without arbitrarily condemning varying opinions as nonsense. This is why it is my opinion that the definition Kessler offers is only applicable to specific branches of philosophy such as the philosophy of science.

The philosophy of science defines rationality as an individual's ability to examine evidence, to calculate what would best advance his or her interests as he or she understands them, and to act accordingly (Gardner 39). This definition may at first appear so simplistic that many would argue there is no difference between rationality and commonsense. We should not, however, be fooled by such a simplistic view. Using this definition, scientists have discovered that in terms of rationality, "[w]e are systematically flawed" (40). In *The Science of Fear: How the Culture of Fear Manipulates your Brain*,

Daniel Gardner reveals some of the tests cognitive psychologists have devised to understand "how people form judgments when they are uncertain of the facts" (39). Let us take, for instance, "one of the earliest studies of confirmation bias," where:



Peter Wason simply showed people a sequence of three numbers-2, 4, 6-and told them the sequence followed a certain rule. The participants were asked to figure out what the rule was. They could do so by writing down three more numbers and asking if they were in line with the rule. Once you think you've figured out the rule, the researchers instructed, say so and we will see if you are right. (111)

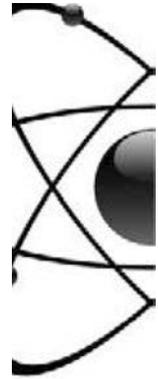
The test is devised to make it seem intuitively obvious that the rule the numbers are following is even numbers increasing by two, but the "correct rule is actually any three numbers in ascending order" (111). What scientists discovered from this test is that most people who take it get the answer wrong because in the face of uncertainty intuition seems to trump logic. The only way to deduce the correct answer in this scenario would be to submit guesses that disconfirm the intuitive answer, but that is not how our minds naturally work. Scientists discovered that "most people do not try to disconfirm; [instead] they do the opposite, trying to confirm the rule by looking for examples that fit it, [but] that's a futile strategy [because,] no matter how many examples are piled up, they can never prove that the belief is correct" (111).

Disconfirmation is such a crucial tool to scientists that "for a statement to be considered scientific explanation, it must be falsifiable - there has to be some kind of test that could be applied to the statement to prove it wrong" (Graffin and Olson 43).

In *Origins: Fourteen Billion Years of Cosmic Evolution*, Neil DeGrasse Tyson and Donald Goldsmith emphasize that "organized skepticism" is another fundamental safeguard scientists have instilled in order to overcome their own irrationalities (17). "Few of us doubt our own conclusions, so science embraces its skeptical approach by rewarding those who doubt someone else's," explains Tyson and Goldsmith: "Science's skeptical core makes it a poor competitor for human hearts and minds, which recoil from its ongoing controversies and prefer the security of seemingly eternal truths" (18-19). In the modern world of technology, it is impossible to deny the effectiveness of science; it is, however, easy to forget all the scientific achievements that brought us to this point. Tyson and Goldsmith stress that "[t]he greatest moments in scientific history have arisen, and will always arise, when a new explanation, perhaps coupled with new observational results, produces a seismic shift in our conclusions about the workings of nature" (19). From Aristotle to Darwin, from Newton to Einstein, from Galileo to Hawking, all of history's greatest minds have shared a common trait: the audacity to doubt the preexisting dogma of their time.

For all of science's great achievements, it is also important to understand science's limitations. Most

importantly, science does not have the capability to prove that anything is absolutely true. Science concerns itself only with what is possible and what is probable. In 1938, Albert Einstein, quite possibly the greatest physicist that the world has ever known, made a perfect analogy of this problem when he wrote:



Physical concepts are free creations of the human mind, and are not, however it may seem, uniquely determined by the external world. In our endeavor to understand reality we are somewhat like a man trying to understand the mechanism of a closed watch. He sees the face and the moving hands, even hears its ticking, but he has no way of opening the case. If he is ingenious he may form some picture of a mechanism which could be responsible for all the things he observes, but he may never be quite sure his picture is the only one which could explain his observations. He will never be able to compare his picture with the real mechanism and he cannot even imagine the possibility of the meaning of such a comparison. (qtd. in Zukav 9)

The other drawback of science is that most scientific discoveries tend to be discordant with the common belief that we are somehow the center of the universe—“as if we somehow formed the center of

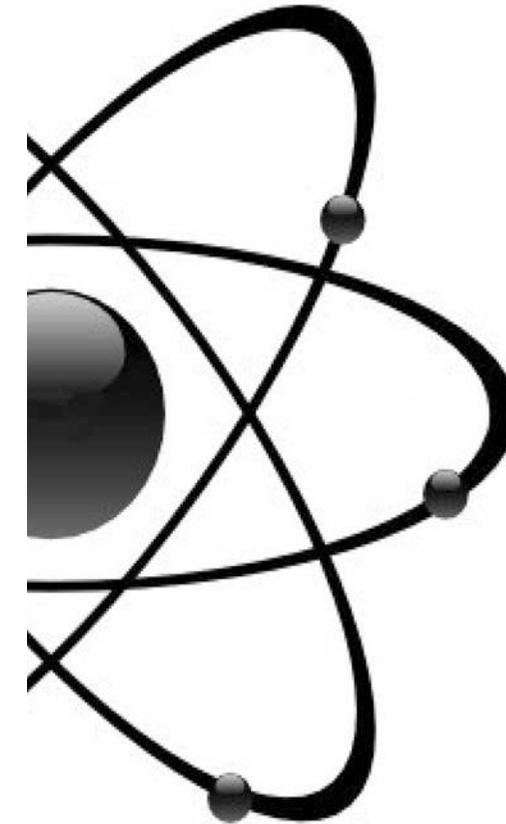
creation” and such self-centeredness, as Tyson and Goldsmith note, has been “bred into our bones by our evolution” and thus has kept us focused on the smaller world around us. However, much of the progress we have made in comprehending the universe has “revealed that we live on a cosmic speck of dust, orbiting a mediocre star in the far suburbs of a common sort of galaxy, among a hundred billion galaxies in the universe” (16). And our cosmic insignificance does not even seem to end there, for Tyson and Goldsmith have also pointed out that “all the matter that we have come to know and love in the universe—the stuff of stars, planets, and life—are mere buoys afloat in a vast cosmic ocean of something that looks like nothing” (70), reminding us how insignificant we actually are. In *The Dancing Wu Li Masters: An Overview of the New Physics*, Gary Zukav tells us how some of the greatest members of the scientific community such as Galilei, Descartes, and Newton helped us deal with these feelings of insignificance: “They attempted to place ‘man’ at the center of the stage, or at least back on the stage; to prove to him that he need not be a bystander in a world governed by unfathomable forces.” It is, however, Zukav notes, “perhaps the greatest irony of history that they accomplished just the opposite” (26).

Nearly every branch of philosophy teaches that wisdom, whatever its definition may be, is not an intrinsic characteristic of humanity. The philosophy of science believes that wisdom can only be obtained by constantly challenging what we believe through observation and

rational deduction. In my opinion, the philosophy of science is the only branch of philosophy that can claim all of its conclusions are based solely on rational evidence.

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THE BALANCE OF NATURE AND
THE HUNGER OF CHILDREN:
AN ETHICAL EXPLORATION OF
GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS

JON W. CARLSON



INSPIRATION

As a Communications major, I tend to be somewhat intimidated and baffled by the hard sciences--math, biology, chemistry, physics, and the like. However, while taking a Biology course at RACC, I was intensely drawn to the debate surrounding Genetically Modified Organisms, or GMO crops. Although much of the science behind GMOs still amazes and confuses me, I appreciated the opportunity to explore the ethics behind GMO crops, particularly as they relate to global hunger. At the heart of this debate lie two pressing moral imperatives: protecting the balance of nature and eliminating the hunger of children. While both are laudable goals, my paper seeks to make clear that we can prioritize the elimination of hunger without disrupting the balance of nature.

JON W. CARLSON

Yesterday, over 14,000 children under the age of five died of starvation (UNICEF, 2006). Scattered throughout what is euphemistically known as the developing world, these children died because of iron deficiencies, low caloric intake, and a lack of vitamin A. In developing countries, 9.7 million children under the age of five die each year; 53 percent of those deaths are caused by nutrition-related issues (UNICEF, 2006). Nobel Peace Prize winning economist Muhammad Yunus (1999), who has seen the effects of malnutrition in his native Bangladesh, describes death by starvation as “the most unacceptable [death] of all”: “Second by second, the distance between life and death becomes smaller and smaller, until the two are in such close proximity that one can hardly tell the difference. . . . [a]nd all for the lack of a handful of rice at each meal” (p. viii). While children are affected most frequently, many adults continue to suffer from inadequate access to basic necessities like food and water.

Faced with this macro-level problem that spans continents and impacts billions of people, scientists, policy makers, and other experts are focusing their attention on a very micro-level solution—the nucleus of a cell. Within the nucleus resides a set of chemicals known as DNA or deoxyribonucleic acid. DNA contains a biological code in its sequences of the compounds adenine, guanine, cytosine, and thymine. By controlling the manufacture of proteins within cells, this code controls the attributes and behaviors of organisms, from the color and texture of fruit to the breeding capabilities of animals. Since DNA controls so many functions of an organism, some scientists believe that the manipulation of DNA in food sources, like corn and rice, can help to alleviate global malnutrition. These genetically modified crops may be

engineered to be resistant to drought, disease, and infestation, or designed to produce more Vitamin A or iron. Many, however, remain skeptical of genetically-modified organisms (GMOs) and raise concern that this artificial manipulation of DNA may pose a threat to the delicate balance of nature.

Humans’ understanding of the role DNA plays in an organism has developed over the past 150 years. According to the National Institutes of Health (NIH, 2010), Gregor Mendel, an Austrian monk, identified a basic understanding of heredity starting in 1865. Although Mendel never saw the inner workings of a cell, his research conclusively showed that many of an organism’s characteristics are not random, but rather determined through heredity. Heredity refers to the process of offspring inheriting certain traits, such as the color or seed shape of the peas Mendel studied, from its parents. In 1869, Friedrich Miescher, a Swiss biologist, isolated DNA from white blood cells, calling it “nuclein” (NIH, 2010). Although Miescher never made the connection between his research and Mendel’s, the fluid he isolated contained the workings of heredity that Mendel described. When an organism reproduces, DNA carries information from parent to child, working as the mechanism of heredity.

Research into the cell continued in the twentieth-century: “William Astbury, a British scientist, obtained the first X-ray diffraction pattern of DNA” (NIH, 2010). Building on this image of DNA, in 1953, two scientists named James Watson and Francis Crick (1953) identified and described the structure of DNA—an elegant double helix. In a 900-word paper published in the journal *Nature*, the scientists correctly noted that “the specific pairing we have postulated immediately suggests a possible copying mechanism for the genetic

material” (NIH, 2010). By identifying the shape of DNA and pointing to a replication mechanism, Watson and Crick (1953) provided essential insight into the mechanisms of genetic heredity: The double-helix uncoils and separates during cellular reproduction, and identical genetic material is copied according to the DNA’s code. Armed with this information, a new generation of geneticists set out to shape the future.

In 1972, the first recombinant DNA molecules were created:

Recombinant DNA technology involves the joining of DNA from different species and subsequently inserting the hybrid DNA into a host cell, often a bacterium. Researchers at UC San Francisco and Stanford used restriction enzymes to cut DNA from different species at specific sites, and then fused the cut strands from the different species back together. (NIH, 2010)

While at first this seems shocking—the idea of an artificially created organism that differs at the molecular level from anything else in existence—one should note that humans have been tinkering with other organisms’ reproduction for millennia. Interrupting natural processes to achieve desired outcomes is nothing new: Some anthropologists suggest that domestication through selective breeding of plants began 13,000 years ago (NIH, 2010). Farmers have always sought to maximize their efficiency and yield by encouraging plants and animals with certain traits to breed.

Recombinant DNA, however, is different: rather than guiding and shaping natural processes (as is done with selective breeding), scientists are now able to alter the genetic composition of an organism through entirely artificial means.

Rather than encouraging two dogs with different fur color to mate and produce offspring with a specific fur color, scientists can now take a segment of DNA from a jellyfish, insert it into a mouse, and create glowing mice. The mechanisms of natural reproduction would prohibit this because jellyfish and mice do not share the compatible reproductive organs required for mating. Such creatures are referred to as “transgenic,” because their DNA structure shares pieces of genetic code from two or more different species. Only recombinant DNA makes these particular transgenic creatures possible—a revolutionary, rather than evolutionary, leap forward in humanity’s quest to dominate nature.

Paul Berg, one of the scientists involved in the creation of the first transgenic organisms, quickly recognized the promise and peril posed by this new technology. He drafted a letter, “along with ten other researchers, to the journal *Science*,” in which, they “urged the National Institutes of Health to regulate the use of recombinant DNA technology and meanwhile, they urged scientists to halt most recombinant DNA experiments until they better understood whether the technique is safe” (NIH, 2010). The NIH issued a document entitled “Guidelines for Research Involving Recombinant DNA Molecules” in 1976. Less than twenty years later, another federal agency, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA, 2011), would approve transgenic organisms (referred to as “Bioengineered Foods”) for human consumption.

The application of recombinant DNA technology for the development of food follows a predictable pattern. The aforementioned domestication of plants, the transition of humans from hunter-gatherers to agriculturalists, and the development of tools and weapons have all been, at least

partially, efforts to assure the procurement of food. Nearly any technological advancement, from gunpowder to the combustion engine to recombinant DNA, will eventually be utilized to supply food.

Beginning in 1995, the FDA approved transgenic soybeans, tomatoes, potatoes, and more, each modified to enhance desirable characteristics like “tolerance to the herbicide glyphosate” (soybeans), “delayed softening due to reduced ethylene synthesis,” “delayed softening due to reduced pectin degradation,” and “delayed ripening due to reduced ethylene synthesis” (tomatoes), and “resistance to Colorado potato beetle” (potatoes). Each of these genetically-modified organisms was approved in a single year. Since then, the FDA has approved over one hundred different alterations to the genetic structure of plants, which are then released into nature and into the food supply.

The first of these approved plants, soybeans with “tolerance to the herbicide glyphosate,” was designed for an unsurprising purpose: pest control (FDA, 2011). Darwin, in his theory of natural selection, posits that the world has scarce, or limited, resources. Because of this scarcity, individual organisms and entire species compete for natural resources like water, nutrients, and even sunlight. Since the advent of agrarianism, humans have worked to give competitive advantages to organisms they intend to eat. From building fences to pulling weeds, human farmers have sought to ensure that desirable plants and animals obtain the resources they need to thrive.

Glyphosate, more commonly known as Roundup, is an herbicide developed by the Monsanto Corporation. Herbicides are chemical compounds designed to kill leafy plants. When

used for agricultural purposes, herbicides are used to kill weeds or invasive plants, which would otherwise compete with crop plants for resources. The most successful of these chemical herbicides has been glyphosate, an artificial molecule discovered in 1970 by John E. Franz. Reflecting on his work, Franz said, “I think it's benefited mankind. It has increased fiber and food throughout the world by increasing yields and eliminating weeds” (Stong, 1990). Monsanto’s own description of the product, however, reveals how glyphosate can be a double-edged sword: “Roundup brand agricultural products are broad-spectrum, non-selective herbicides, which are active on most species of green plants” (Monsanto, 2005). The herbicide, if applied without precision, can kill both the invasive plant and the plant intended to be saved. Genetic modification provides a solution to this challenging conundrum.

By altering the DNA of the plant seed—first with soy, then with cotton, then with oilseed rape (canola), and eventually sugar beet, wheat, and alfalfa—Monsanto (2010) creates in essence a super-plant, one that can thrive in the midst of herbicides. These GMOs are both poison and antidote, sword and shield. In Monsanto’s words, “This means you can spray Roundup agricultural herbicides in-crop from emergence through flowering for unsurpassed weed control, proven crop safety and maximum yield potential.” Monsanto (2010) claims that these genetically modified crop seeds allow “farmers to conserve fuel and decrease the overall amount of agricultural herbicides used.” Through the altering of DNA, according to Monsanto (2010), they have once and for all perfected the domestication of food. Not all scientists agree.

According to the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS,

2010), the problems with Roundup and Roundup Ready plants are two-fold: first, “glyphosate is highly toxic to plants and fish,” and second, “herbicide-tolerant crops can transfer their tolerance trait to nearby related plants and weeds.” In the UCS’s understanding, increased usage of Roundup Ready crops will result in increased usage of Roundup, which the UCS believes will harm other wildlife. Monsanto (2010) disputes this accusation. The USDA (2010) classifies glyphosate as “Practically Non-Toxic to tested insects and birds” for a single lethal dose and “no more than Slightly Toxic to birds” if ingested during multiple dietary doses. Setting aside acceptable levels of toxicity, however, the UCS’s second concern merits attention: the possibility of genetically modified traits passing from one generation or species to another.

As Mendel indicated in his studies, many of an organism’s traits are heritable, passed on to successive generations, and subsequent studies have demonstrated that DNA functions as the means of heredity (NIH, 2010). GMOs differ at the genetic level, having different DNA from their naturally-existing counterparts. One should ask, then, how this genetically modified DNA affects heredity, and how widely GMO traits could spread into the wild. Stewart, Halfhill, and Warwick (2003), writing in the journal *Nature*, explored this very question. First, they noted the distinction between introgression and F1 hybridization: Introgression is “the permanent incorporation of genes from one set of differentiated populations (species, subspecies, races and so on) into another.” F1 Hybridization, however, is “[t]he initial cross between parent plants of different varieties, subspecies, species or genera.” While F1 hybridization between GMO and non-GMO species is quite possible and has likely occurred,

introgression (the more concerning of the two) requires a very specific set of circumstances:

Transgenic crops and sexually compatible wild plants must grow near one another and have overlapping flowering times. . . . Also, F1 hybrids must persist for at least one generation and be sufficiently fertile to produce backcross (BC1) hybrids. . . . The transgene must have a selective advantage for the wild relative that is greater than the sum of any selective disadvantages. (Stewart, Halfhill, & Warwick, 2003)

The authors conclude by stating that “large-scale genetic modification should be avoided for high-risk crops in which introgression is well documented. However, our assessment is that, in most cases, the risks and benefits of transgenes should be considered on a case-by-case basis.” In short, while some GMO crops may pose an ecological danger through the potential of introgression, most GMOs are unlikely to cross with other plants.

These findings have done little to alleviate the fears of those concerned about GMOs. Monsanto’s aggressive litigation against farmers over seed-saving and unauthorized use of Roundup Ready seeds has done little to improve the reputation of GMOs (Barlett & Steele, 2008). In parts of Europe, including Hungary and Austria, GMO crops have been banned, despite a finding by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) that “there is no reason to believe the GMO product poses any risk to human health or the environment” (Spongenberg, 2007).

While Monsanto sues farmers for millions of dollars, environmental groups protest, and European parliaments debate, people are dying. Hundreds of thousands of people

in the developing world die from food insecurity and malnutrition. Connie Hedegaard, a Danish environment minister, drew attention to this by encouraging the European Union to “look at how it could help improve the situation of food security in the third world, promoting a more ethical GMO industry there than the one run by big US biotech firms” (Spongenberg, 2007). John Franz, the inventor of glyphosate, believed his discovery helped the world, but that promise has yet to be fully realized.

The challenges facing the developing world differ from the ones faced by US farmers. Roundup Ready crops offer little benefit to communities still using preindustrial agricultural techniques. However, other genetically modified crops hold promise. Ingo Potrykus and Peter Beyer together invented a crop they now call “golden rice.” Rice serves as a dietary staple in many developing countries, yet the edible portion (the endosperm) lacks the beta-carotene necessary for vitamin A production. By inserting two genes into the rice genome, Potrykus and Beyer created a plant that produces and accumulates beta-carotene in the endosperm. They aim “to be capable of providing the recommended daily allowance of vitamin A—in the form of β -carotene—in 100-200 g of rice, which corresponds to the daily rice consumption of children in rice-based societies, such as India, Vietnam or Bangladesh” (Golden Rice Humanitarian Board, 2010). Golden rice is currently tied up in regulatory hurdles, but the Humanitarian Board backing its usages anticipates a final approval in 2011.

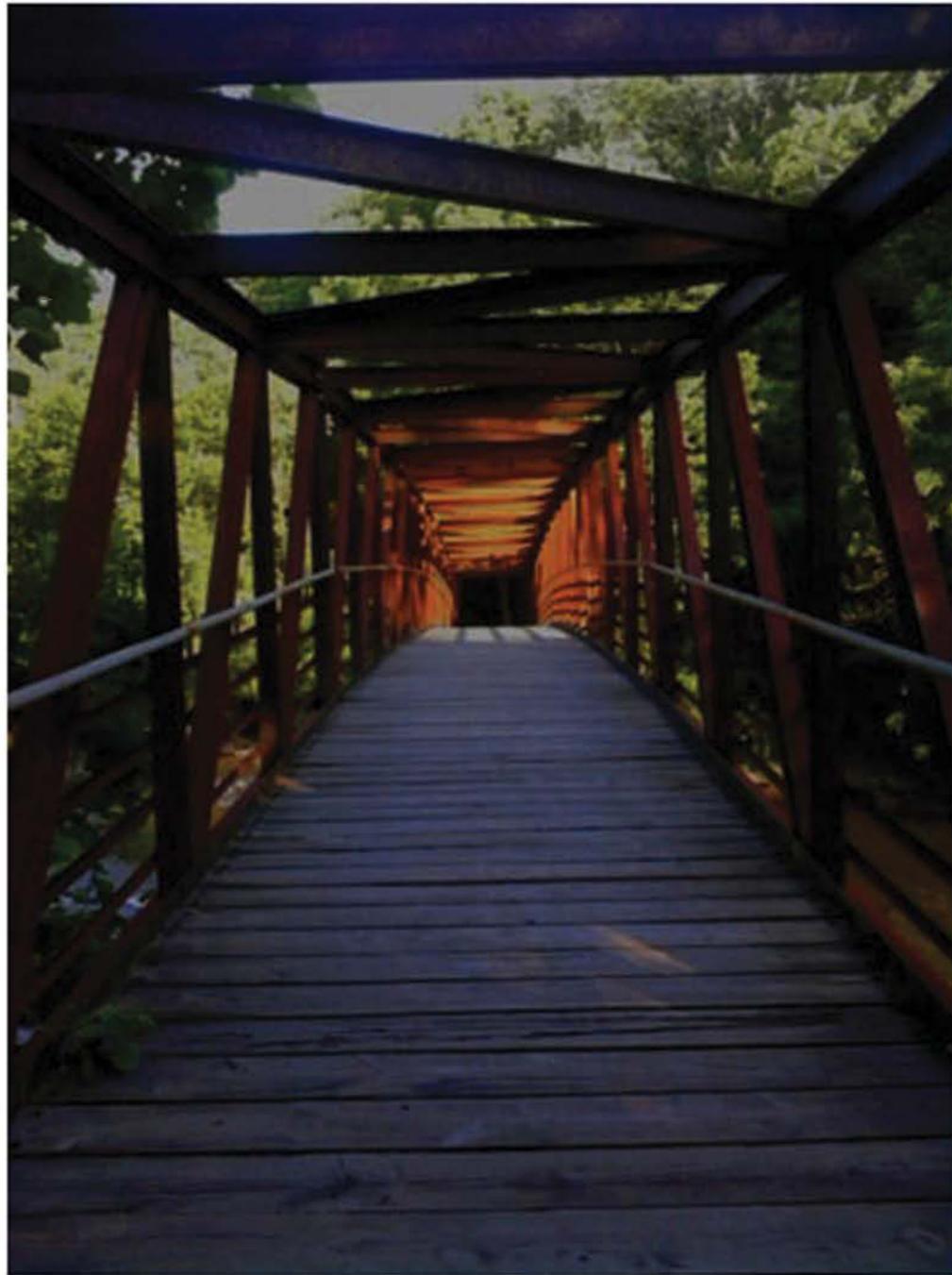
Once approved, Golden Rice and other humanitarian-oriented transgenic crops still face significant hurdles. With many European countries banning the import of transgenic crops, and many European consumers unwilling to purchase

food that may have been genetically modified, many small farmers in the developing world are concerned that planting GM crops could hurt their meager export business. Much of this fear and skepticism is based on ignorance. In 2005, only 41% of Europeans surveyed were able to identify this statement as true or false: “Ordinary tomatoes do not contain genes, while genetically modified tomatoes do.” Only 34% could correctly identify this: “Human cells and human genes function differently from those in animals and plants,” and only 31% could correctly identify this: It is not possible to transfer animal genes into plants.” All three statements are false (Gaskell et al., 2006). To think that the

Despite the progress made thus far, biotechnology remains a complicated challenge. Humans have been manipulating and attempting to control plants and animals for thousands of years, yet intrusion into the nucleus of the cell represents a new level of control and brings with it a new set of challenges. The promise of a world without hunger shimmers as a shining beacon of hope for humanity. “Superweeds” and a profound disruption of the subtle, slow flow of evolution could lurk as dangers around the corner. Successfully using transgenic organisms to improve the lives of humans requires consistent vigilance. However, we cannot deny the least of these—children living in the poorest parts of the developing world—the opportunity to grow and to thrive. GMOs may be frightening, but used properly and with adequate study, they hold tremendous potential to alleviate suffering.

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Tunnel to Serenity
Christina Buehler

**Under the
Penn Street Bridge**
Patricia Chase Sturz





Siesholtz
Dan Mergner



Trolley
Dan Mergner



Blue Tree

Dan Mergner



Grape Vine

Dan Mergner



Ghost of the Machine

Jon W. Carlson

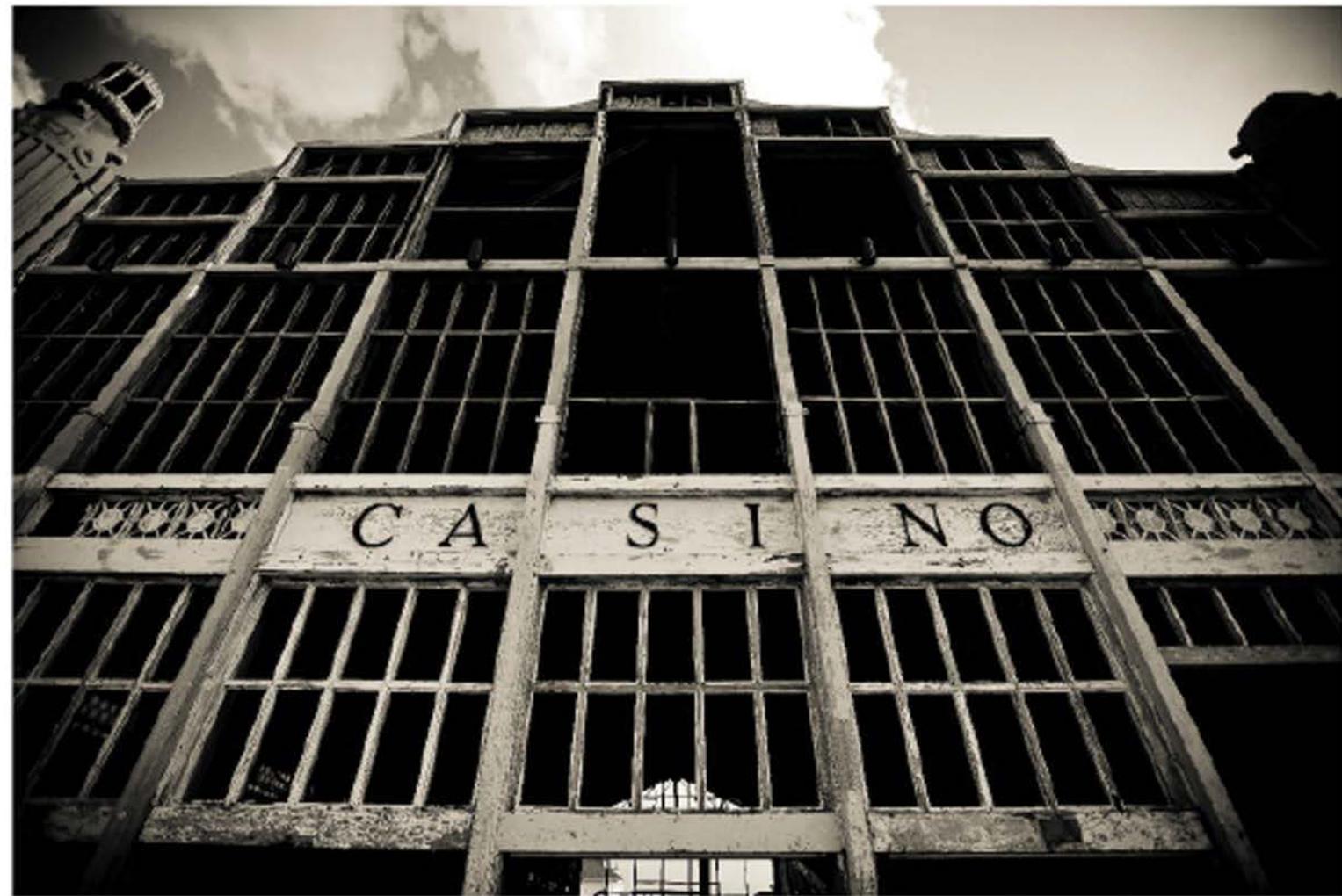


Measuring Power

Jon W. Carlson



Growth
Jon W. Carlson



Winning
Jon W. Carlson



**Shade of
Cherry Blossom**
Kate Chambers



Sun Father
Kate Chambers



Water Roads Venice
Nicole Pestcoe

Two O'Clock
Kevin Hopp





Fallen Angel
Adalberto Burgos



Empowerment
Adalberto Burgos

Unsinkable

"This ship's the best," he heard them say
As he passed through the gate
"This ship's the finest ever made.
She's set to sail at eight."

His mind was fit to burst with hope
He'd sail the open sea
And never once did he suspect
His dreams would never be

For though this ship had ev'rything
A person could desire
There was a thing it didn't have
That they would soon require.

There was a sound, a sort of crash
He ran upstairs to check
"This ship's the best," they said with faith
As ice poured on the deck.

He went back down to get his things
It was his great mistake.
The life boats started filling up
To save the lives at stake.



The gates had closed and caged him in
He knew what was in store
"This ship's the best," they falsely said
As water filled his floor.

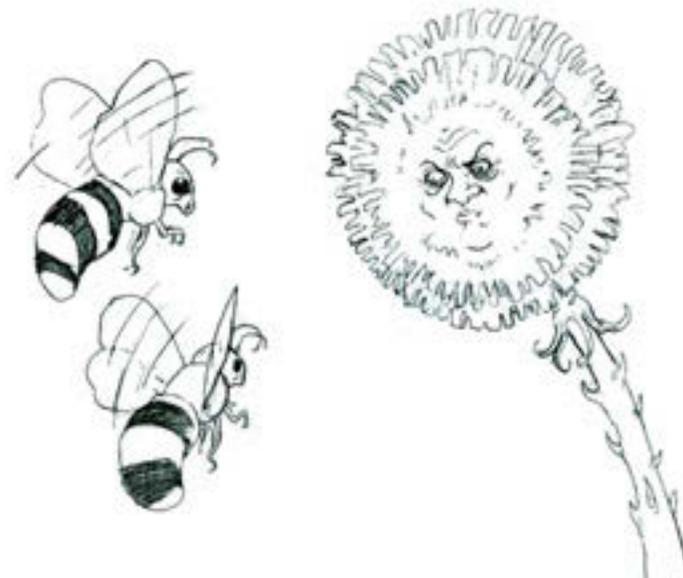
He went back down to get his things
It was his great mistake.
The life boats started filling up
To save the lives at stake.

Liz Nowrey

Getting It Out

Understand me.
Do I go strong and shouting
Brash and forged?
Screaming blazing reds, purples and orange
Or sweet and tender as
Blown leaves and petals
Across a vast horizon,
Detected and Ignored.
Am I one of the Forget-me-nots
Forgotten in a perpetually motioned vase
Of masses of Colors and sameness and Seen and not heard?
Getting out there from here,
Understand that or don't, because
An iris is still sweet
When you pick a rose from the garden.

Trudy Williams



Life's Decisions



A life so sure
A twist of fate
A time to see
A time for faith

For once it passes
Not an eye will see
All fault masses
Surely within you see

For life is precious
Precious you will see
So very precious
One should always be

In the arms of one
Better than not to be

To give a life
A chance to live
Is a strength
Strength for She.

Peter F. Duff



Transcend

Dew drop tears on your face
spring breeze, caressing grace.
Sunlight sprinkling halos,
the enchantment grows.

Weep not for husk deceased
strong, gentle soul released
Now flutter angel wings
evolved the body sings.

Pain, suf'ring stepping stones
with joyful undertones.
Never forgotten the love
all ascends with soul above.

He who walks path of light
never truly gone of sight.
Look upward to the skies
life transcends, never dies.

Nicole L. Davis Vergara

Reading, PA

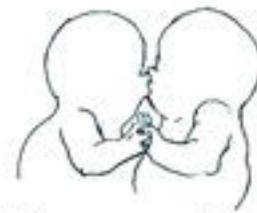
Our city is a blur of people and architecture,
Should you decelerate enough to focus, remember those
Tired, burned out buildings that cower behind rising fences,
That are drowned out by the crashing sidewalks and infected streets,
That bow before the expanding graves that occupy the hills,
That hide among the shade of the trees,
That are slashed for the aesthetic beauty of our uniting Pagoda.

Nathan Garcia



The Steps of Marriage

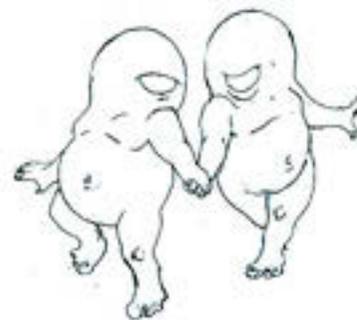
Young love is like fresh-fallen snow,
Unmarred by footprints of those we know.



Courtship is a time of testing.
Together we decide about our nesting.



Marriage is a bond,
In which to each other we must respond.



And when in death it comes to end,
I will have lost my greatest friend.



Melissa Velik

Boy

carefree, unstable
playing, sporting, experiencing,
"Chicks," cars – tanks, brotherhood
training, performing, battling,
exhaustingly, selflessly

Soldier

strong, motivated
enduring, defending, protecting
duty, determination – ambition, sacrifice
assuring, pursuing, delivering
tirelessly, humbly
Hero

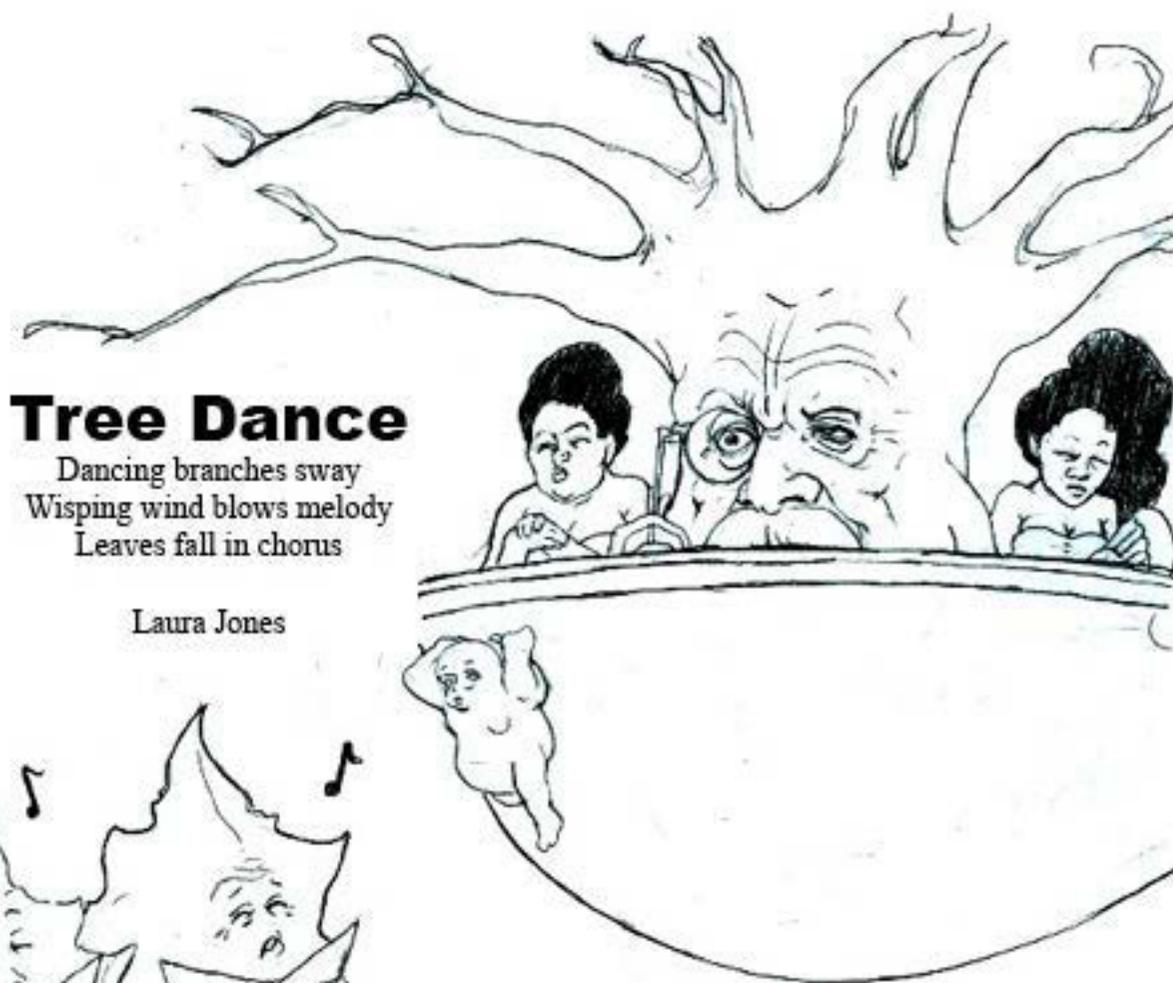
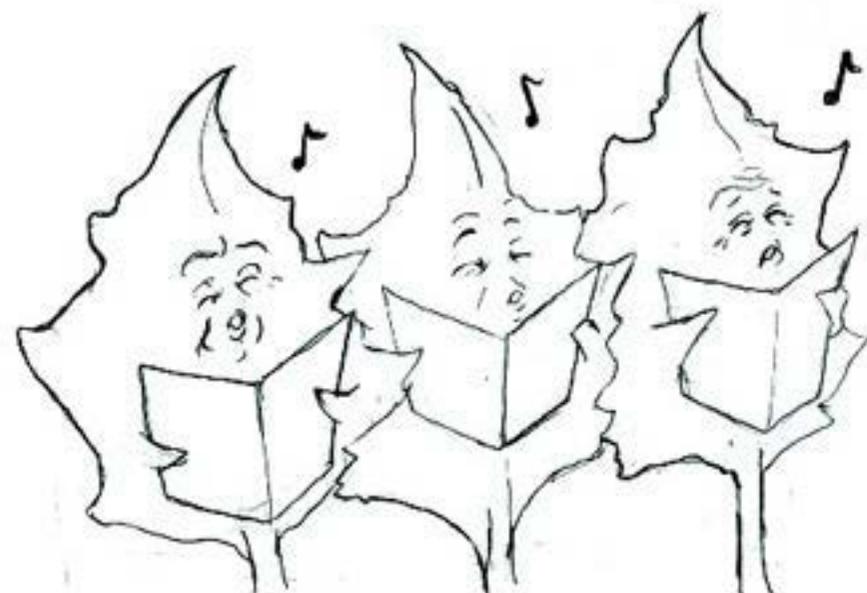
Courtney Harting



Tree Dance

Dancing branches sway
Wisping wind blows melody
Leaves fall in chorus

Laura Jones



Power of the Pen

Use the sword, to slay the least
Use the pen, to kill the beast
From hence you strike, no one can tell
Only hear the beast, scream and yell

Hunkered down, hidden well
Basement, bedroom, attic, cell

No man or beast to stop you
For you are we and we are still
Strong as ever, ever will
No beast big enough, Strong enough, to snuff our pleas

Ride your steed, ride him fast
Scream, shout, shoot, and blast
But when the smoke clears, many dead
The beast still stands, shakes his head

For the beast is strong, strong with malice and might
Sends fear, silence, through the night
But this is merely a time to form
To write, plead, gather our swarm

For the beast is strong, strong we surely see
But not strong enough to hold up to thee
So heed us beast, heed us well
Our swords are strong, but it will be our pens that send you to hell.

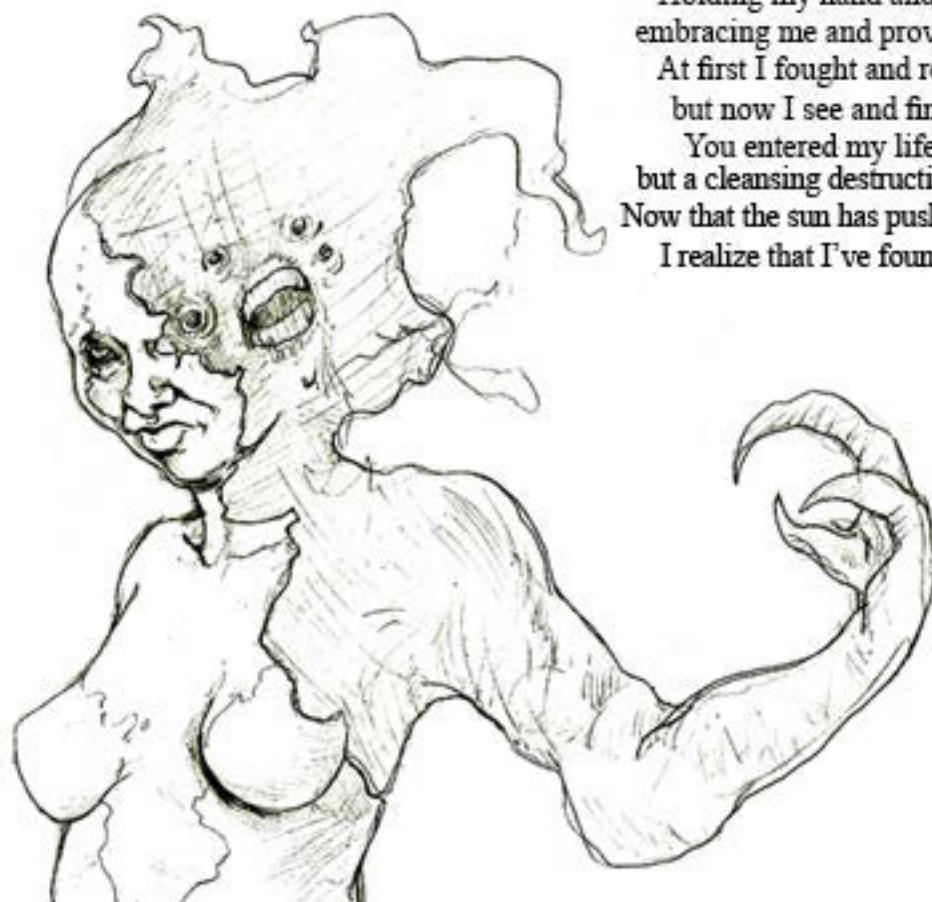
Peter F. Duff



Ruins do not mean ruined

As you approached you found where ruins lie;
a story to be told and a prisoner inside.
You cleared out old walls and flattened remains,
allowing all to be washed with your heavy rains.
Stubborn and determined, you laid down your goal,
and rebuilt what was, but stronger and whole.
Protection and comfort you provided for me,
releasing me from my cage to calm all unease.
No hidden motives, only seeking to repair,
part of what was, and what never was there.
Holding my hand and leading my way,
embracing me and proving that all is okay.
At first I fought and refused your hand,
but now I see and finally understand.
You entered my life not as a storm,
but a cleansing destruction allowing reform
Now that the sun has pushed its way through,
I realize that I've found myself within you.

Ashley Epright



Hourglass

Watch the sand drip grain by grain
Tell yourself, reassure your mind
While you see but just ignore.
The top's still full and you'll be fine.

Watch the sand trickling now
Shrug it off and just pass by
Distract yourself and look away
The top's still full and rises high.

Watch the sand pouring down.
Give a glance and toss it aside
Look again and worry now.
The top's not full and it's now low tide.

Watch the sand empty out.
Focus on the glass's shine.
Panic, dread, and realize that
The top's not full and you're out of time.

Ashley Epright



Lament of a Wounded Soldier

A flash of light
And puff of smoke.
My hopes and dreams
It has surely broken.

Through the sounds of thunder
And cries of fear.
I feel the end
Is creeping near.

O' deepest dark
You call me home.
When I reach your gates
Will I be alone?

With arms of steel
Deaths pull me close.
And my mind drifts to
The ones I'll miss most.

Whether father or son
Mother or wife.

For you I've gladly
Given my life.

Remember me fondly
As a hero so true.
A person who stood for
The red white and blue.
As I look at Death fully
With a sense of alarm.
It's not death I see now
But one of my brothers in arms.

He looks at me kindly
With tears in his eyes.
He says, "You're gonna be fine
John."
And I know he wouldn't lie.

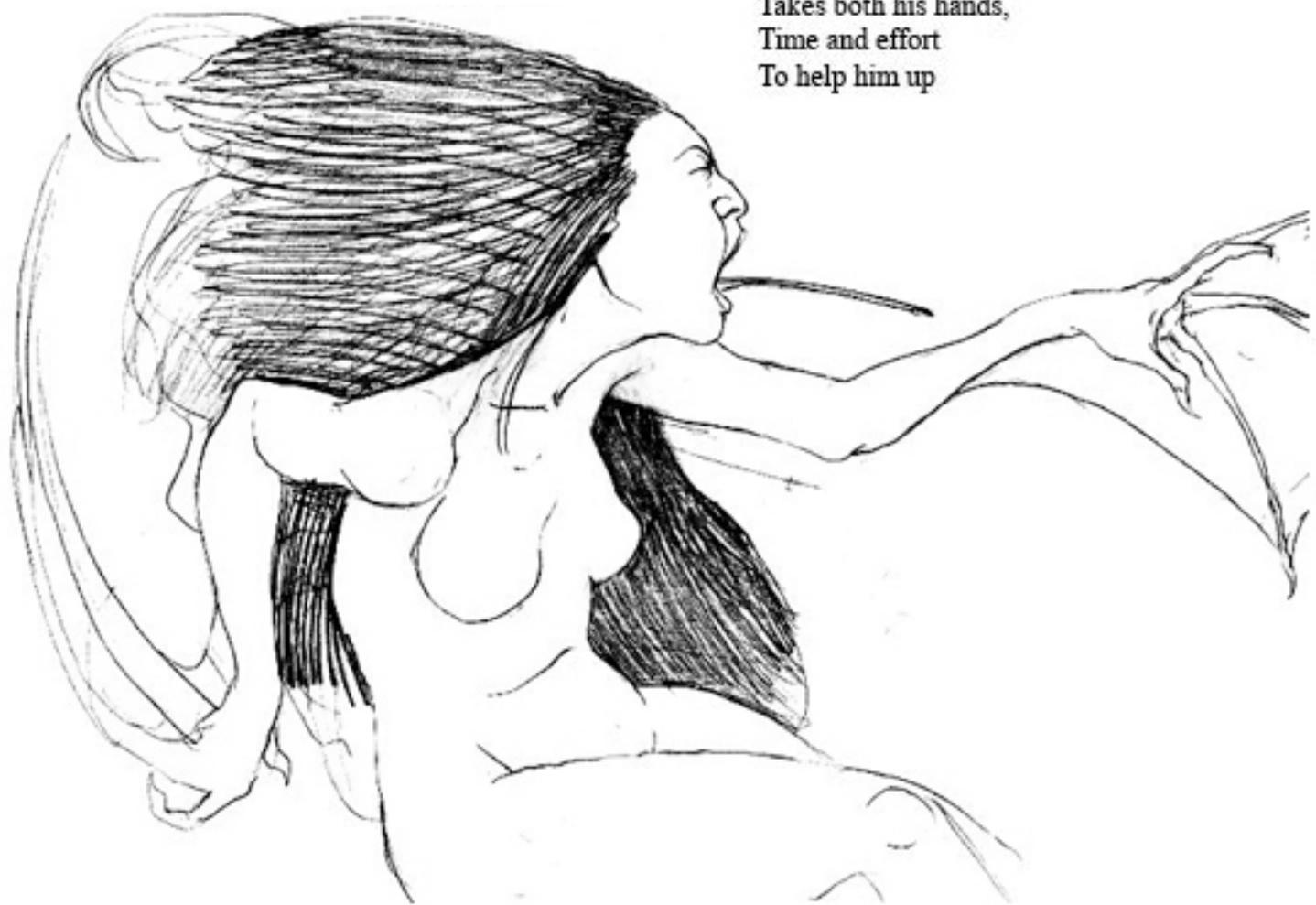
I hear a chopper's blades
As my vision starts to clear.
I think I'll be alright now
The cavalry is here.

David Schaffer

Reach Out

When life knocks you down
Your whole perspective
Of the world changes
What a difference looking up

But for somebody
To keep a man down
Takes both his hands,
Time and effort
To help him up

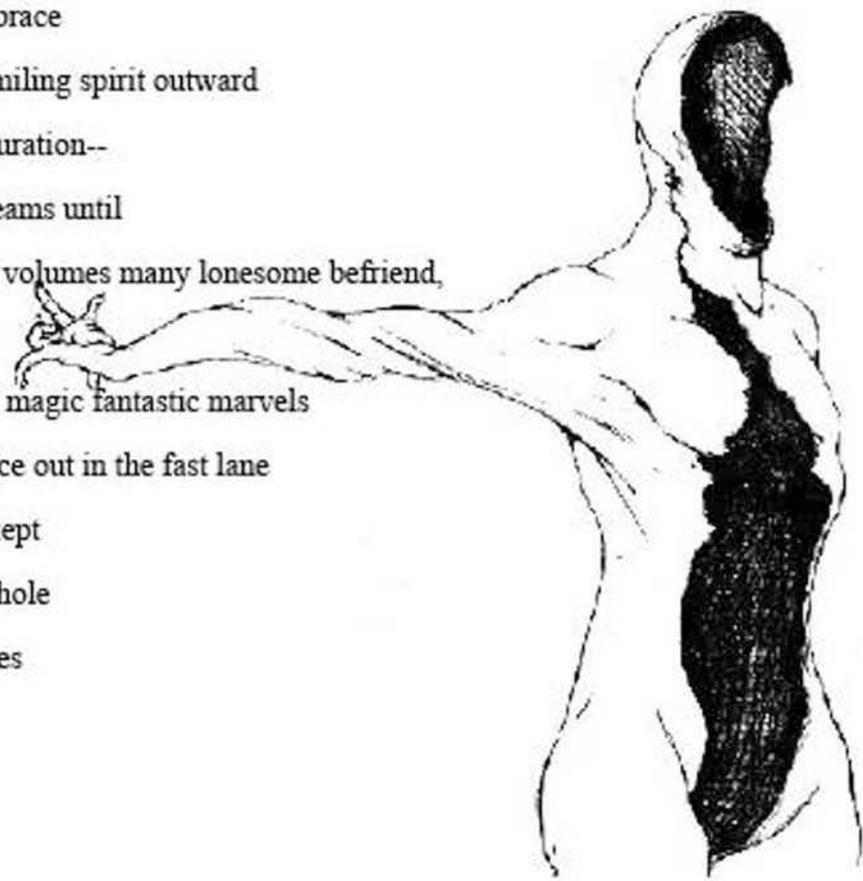


Just a moment
An outstretched hand
And a strong tug
So when you get up, my friend
Please don't forget about me
And if I rise first
I'll reach back for you
And if you're gone
I'll grab another
They can grab hold of the next
And I will think of you

Mike Boisson

glow

consult the dusty matchbook,
light the soft yellow taper
as mother earth and sun embrace
allow air into soul, punch smiling spirit outward
knowing January alone in duration--
Empty rooms barrel the screams until
bravery is plucked from the volumes many lonesome befriend,
while becoming
glassy eyed mystical merlot magic fantastic marvels
damned to a strange existence out in the fast lane
it seems when company is kept
when ego crawls out of the hole
when humble quietude fizzles



bartered off for fellowship
clarity of the mind plunges
out the fourth story window
to the cold street below
mixing with rainbow trout oil
greasy city rain water
filled with passion, quick draw
smiles to defend
your stoic stance
for the thrill seeking
danger loving woman knows
you are meant to bend
and not to break

Brian Drummond

Legacy Volume Nine Awards

Columbia Scholastic Press Association, 2010
Gold Circle Award

Gold Circle Awards
1st Place for Single Illustration Rendering Photographic Material: Black and White
Adalberto Burgos, "The 11th Hat"

2nd Place for Photographs: Black and white or black and white and one other
Jon Carlson, "On Notice"

Second Place for Photographs: Two or more colors
Tara Fansler, "Lost Space"

Certificate of Merit for Single illustration not based on photographic material: Black and white
Marilyn Miller, "Morning Routine"

Certificate of Merit: Photographs – Portfolio of Work
Tara Fansler, "Untitled"

Community College Humanities Association
Annual Literary Magazine Competition, 2010
3rd Place Divisonal Award for best Liteary Magazine



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