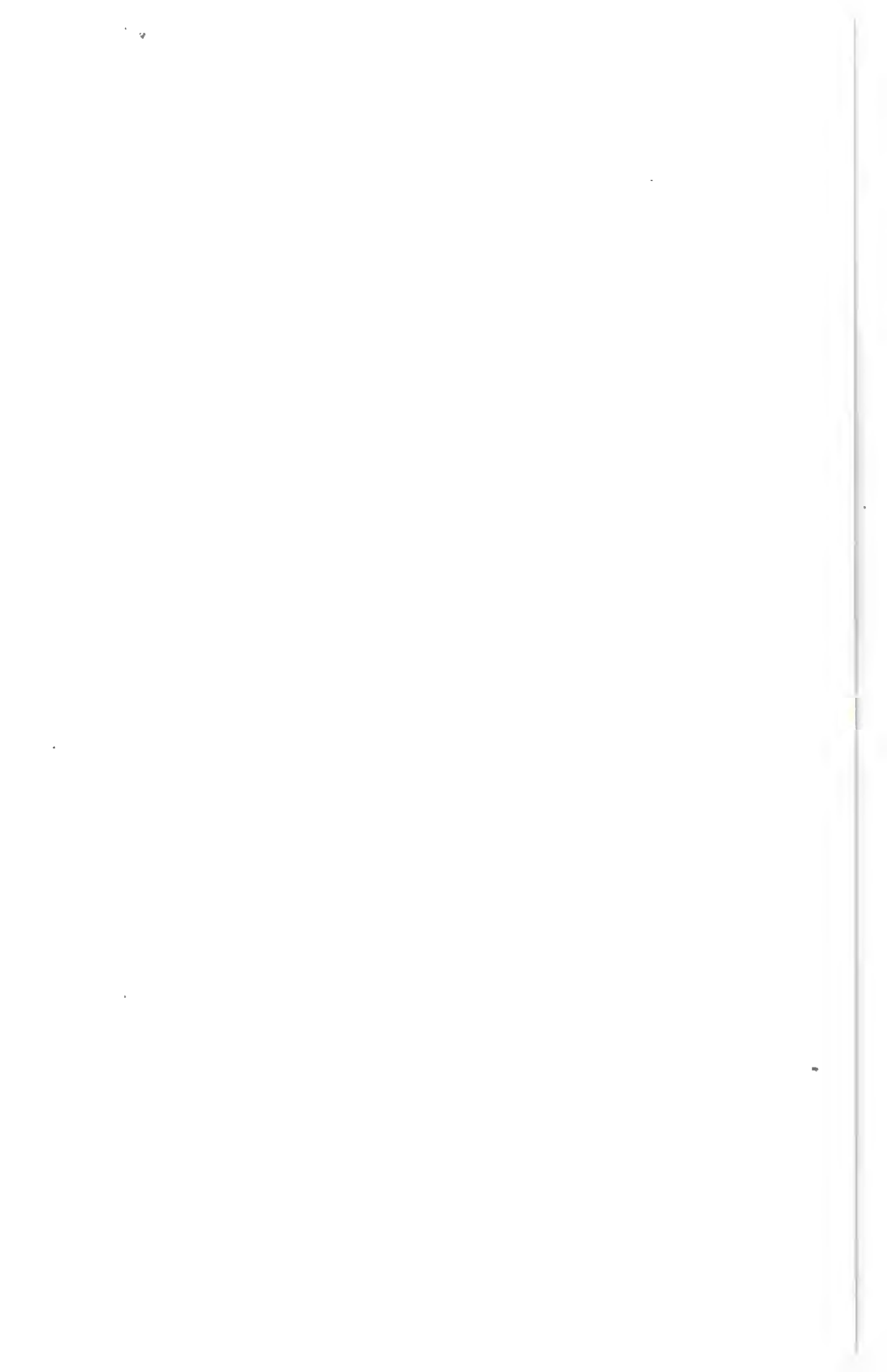


A dense thicket of tall grasses, possibly reeds or bamboo, with a large, gnarled tree trunk in the foreground. The scene is captured in a slightly desaturated, naturalistic color palette. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

A  
GATHERING  
OF  
VOICES

2006-2007



wcc Writing Center

# A GATHERING OF VOICES

An Anthology of Student Writing & Art

2006-2007



Whatcom  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

This anthology is the product of an Outcomes project to assess student learning and critical thinking.



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Front/Back Cover: Cob sculptural wall project in progress

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Jennifer Pruess  
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Mixed media/collage,  
20" x 16"



# Introduction

Jeffrey Klausman

*Writing puts students right in the middle of their own liberal arts education. It asks students to confront opposing points of view, to be able to move from having an opinion to having an idea and to understand why [they] care about that idea. That seems to be what a liberal arts education is all about.*

Nancy Sommers

In 1994, Sherri Winans, Whatcom's first full-time English composition faculty member, attended a statewide conference on Outcomes Assessment and attended a presentation by Gordon Koestler and Shannon Hopkins, both from Yakima Valley Community College, on their publication, *Mainsprings*, which featured students' work with both theirs and their instructors' comments. Sherri worked with her colleague in composition, Vicki Boutté and Outcomes Assessment Coordinator Barbara Hudson, to put together the first *A Gathering of Voices* in the late spring of 1995. In the introduction to that first edition, Sherri writes, "Students whose work is published here will gain . . . a better understanding of their own writing, their audience, and perhaps even themselves."

When I consider what Sherri has written and what Nancy Sommers, the Sosland Director of Expository Writing at Harvard, say, I can see an intersection which holds true today: "Writing puts students right in the middle of their own . . . education." Sommers expresses what most faculty and students find when considering writing in education: good writing requires a sense of agency, a shift from absorbing material to producing knowledge. That first *A Gathering of Voices* includes work by students that does that and so does this one—and it's one of the most exciting pieces of evidence we have that Whatcom is doing its job.

In 1995, one student, Sarah Koehler, wrote of her paper "Contemporary Issues of Mathematics": "The class had focused its attention on the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and so I tried to make a connection to the mathematics of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. . . . As a future mathematics teacher, I feel that knowing the history of mathematics and how that

history influences present-day mathematics will enable me to be a more effective instructor.”

Similarly, in this edition, a student in the Registered Nursing program, Tawnya N. Carlisle, writes, “When non-Muslim American nurses take the time to understand Muslims’ beliefs and usage in regards to family planning and cultural characteristics, they can then take the information learned and apply it to give culturally sensitive care to Muslim-Americans.”

In both instances—and in every piece collected here (text or art) and in many pieces I was not able to include here—the student voices express an agency in the student’s own learning—which perhaps is the grandest Learning Outcome of all. Congratulations to all the students who submitted work to *A Gathering of Voices* and to all of our faculty and students who work so hard to make education meaningful.

# An Unexpected Hero

Hilary Alynne Berg

Fragments of memory only a few seconds long can leave huge a mark on the heart and stay there forever. Why a that particular small bit of a picture or a scene is the one that sticks is hard to say, but it can make a big impact and stay forever in some small corner of the mind sometimes even in just a subconscious way. Patricia Hampl wrote a story about her memory of a woman she met on the bus and the enormous impression it left. Similarly in my story I was on a bus and it was a woman that left an outstanding impression on me. But I never met the woman. She never even saw me, and yet the scene remains as vivid in my mind as the day I saw it.

Patricia Hampl's essay "Red Sky in the Morning" begins, "Years ago, in another life, I woke to look out the smeared window of a Greyhound bus I had been riding all night" (346). Hampl begins retelling this story about her memory from long ago as she says "in another life" while riding the bus across the state to visit her boyfriend during the Vietnam War. At a bus stop Hampl wakes from a long night on the bus to see a improbable couple kissing their goodbyes on the platform bellow her: she marvels at the passion and love these two seem to have. The woman boards the bus and takes the empty seat next to Hampl. When the woman sees the look on Hampl's faces, she proceeds to tell her that he is her husband and they have been married for five happy years. One last remark she makes before drifting off to sleep stays very vivid and puzzling in Hampl's mind: "I could tell you stories" (347). This remark—so open-ended and untelling—made Hampl ponder what in fact she couldn't tell her, that what this woman had to tell was too big for words: it was an emotional and intricate roller coaster of the past years of her life. She had stories but maybe they could not actually be told.

My mother, uncle, cousin and I went to Maryland for my aunt's wedding. The day after the wedding we started a little road trip to do some sight seeing and the first stop was Washington, D.C. That day we took the bus from the College of Preachers, where we

were staying, to the Lincoln Memorial. On the ride we passed the National Mall between the Capitol and the Lincoln Memorial, where marches and rallies are often held. On April 25, 2004, the previous day, there had been an abortion rights rally that tens of thousands of people attended. It was the largest abortion rights rally ever and activists from nearly 60 countries attended (MSNBCnews.com). As the bus I was riding in passed the Mall, there were scattered piles of garbage and signs at least ten feet tall. Among the mass of green and piles was a lone woman wandering the maze, a thoughtful look on her face. She wore blue jeans and a green button-up sweater; her dark brown hair that fell just below her ears, blew across her face as she mindlessly picked up a sign and added it to a pile. My cousin started to talk to me but I didn't hear: I couldn't take my eyes off this woman roaming the grounds alone with the Capitol behind her, the sunlight sliding across her face as it started to rain. Just the day before, that place where this contemplative woman now stood had been trampled with tens of thousands of feet of women from around the world. It was as if this woman now alone stood for so much. I could feel in the pit of my stomach an awe for this woman and for all the women that had been there the day before. They had been strong enough to stand up for what they believed in and to march and make a stand. These thoughts and the pondering in my mind all happened in a matter of seconds as the bus passed by her.

I have seen pictures of the tens of thousands of people who were marching that day, but somehow that lone woman wandering among all the leftovers is much more powerful to me. Thinking back on that memory gives me goose bumps. I was so in awe of those masses of garbage and that woman, who roamed through that place, where the passion and power of so many women lay. Hampl was so in awe of the passion between the woman and her husband as she had never been kissed the way the woman on the bus was kissed. She was envious and amazed at the unlikely pair's passion. Hampl discusses how even though the man was the truly beautiful one in the pair, she can no longer picture his face—the woman is the one that remains embedded in her mind: “It is she, stout and unbeautiful, wearing her flowery cotton housedress with the zipper down the middle, who has taken up residence with her canny eye and her acceptance of adoration. To be loved like that, loved improbably: of course she had stories to tell” (348).



Hampl is showing how even though there are many parts of a situation, for some reason one particular image or phrase will remain strong in the mind and can stay there while the rest fades away with time. Hampl talked about how she was just the girlfriend, on the bus going to visit her boy in prison for resisting the draft. She had no stories to tell as this woman did and she felt almost insignificant. The feeling I had was very similar. I felt so small and oblivious to the world. I had no stories to tell as I imagined this woman would.

Seeing the aftermath of the Woman's Rights Rally left a very big impression on me. It made me realize a lot about myself and how I view things. It made me feel more powerful as a woman and want to stand up for what I believe in. It was a very powerful moment and made me truly ponder a lot of things about our society and ways of life. The world is evolving and all of us with it. Things are happening all around the world and in some way we are connected to them and have some small part to play in the outcome. For Hampl, that had not been how she viewed things until meeting the woman on the bus: "I thought if something was happening to anybody it was happening to people like my boyfriend: they were the heroes, according to the lights that shined for me then. I was just riding shotgun in my own life" (348). Hampl has a revelation regarding her life and all the world going on around her. We can all be a hero to someone else. Walking about the grounds of the Mall, I am sure that woman would never have imagined she would become my hero.

Out of all the the experiences we have in our lives, some of the smallest things will be the ones that stick with us the most. For Hampl and me it is a small fragment of a memory that ended up having an underlying meaning to us, and in some way made a difference in our lives. The stories that are never told are sometimes the ones we remember the most. I remember the untold story of this lone woman and the aftermath of the abortion rights rally, while Hampl remembers the passion of the unlikely pair. Hampl closes her essay, "The stranger's remark, launched in the dark of the Greyhound, floated across the human landscape like the lingering ton of a struck bell from a village church, and joined all the silence that ever was, as I turned my face to the window where the world was rushing by along the slow river"(349). Hampl suggests

## Methods

The material presented was gathered from searches performed on or in EBSCO, Proquest, JSTOR, PubMed, and the Whatcom Community College Library. The research consists of nursing research journals, journals of comparative family studies, medical journals, and cultural books. Search terms and phrases that were used were Islam, Muslim, Reproduction, Family planning, Contraception, Birth control, Health Care, and Nursing.

The information presented was for analysis purpose, in order to explain the use of family planning amongst Muslims, as well as cultural factors that affect nurses. After the analysis, the researcher grouped information regarding Muslim family planning and the effects of cultural and religious beliefs.

## Discussion

Since being fertile and having many sons is important in Muslim families, pregnancy happens early in marriage. It is said that "procreation is regarded as the purpose of marriage..." (Purnell & Paulanka, 1998, p. 150). Because of this and other reasons, there is a large amount of pressure on a married Muslim couple to have many children, and thus not use contraception. Not only do many Muslim women not use contraception because of family pressure, but also because of their own desire more children. Kridli and Newton (2005) reference a survey performed by the Demographic Health Survey (DHS) (1990) that reported almost 21% of Jordanian women did not use contraceptives because they wanted more children. One reason behind wanting many children is because of the needed help in the fields. Azaiza (1996) references Caldwell (1976), who believes that having many children on a farm is of economic value, in that it ensures a labor force. Having more than one child also increases the parents' belief that they will be taken care of in their old age. Lastly, it is both a need and a desire within Muslim society to have a male child. Azaiza (1996) states that "Children are not considered equal, a son being much more valuable than a daughter... sons are regarded as pillars of the family, daughters rank far below them..." (p. 559). The need for a male child is based on the desire for the continuation of the family line, as well as for the father to pass down his inheritance. If there are no males born, and the husband dies, his inheritance is divided

among his brothers and their children, with no thought to the widow and her rights (Azaiza, 1996). A family that has daughters will gain large amounts of societal pressure, which will then cause them to “continue to enlarge their family in a frantic attempt to sire a son” (Azaiza, 1996, p. 560). It has been said that the focal point within families is the choice between having a “large family” and a “larger family” (Azaiza, 1996, p. 560). Kridli and Libbus (2001) reference Cleland et al. (1983), who reported that Jordanian women who were interviewed for a World Fertility Survey expressed a strong and explicit preference for sons, which was found to strongly influence contraceptive use (Kridli & Libbus, 2001).

Not only does the pressure to have children affect Muslims’ family planning use, but so does Muslims’ knowledge of it. Some women believe contraceptives are unsafe or have adverse side effects, and because of this, refrain from using them. Kridli and Libbus (1996) reference Farsoun et al. (1996) who discovered there were many misunderstandings regarding the use of oral contraception (OC) among women in Jordan. These women believed that OC’s caused serious side effects such as cancer, back pain, headaches, dizziness, hair loss, weight gain, fetal abnormalities and infertility (Kridli & Libbus, 1996). These misleading beliefs are views that keep Muslim women away from using family planning. According to Kridli and Newton (2005), women who perceive a method of contraception as unsafe have little motivation to use it effectively.

Other women do not use family planning because of the area they live in. Kridli et al. (2001) believes that “location of residence” plays a part in usage of family planning. It is said that rural women tend to have more children than urban women: “The desire of rural women to have a greater number of children is related to lifestyle, where children are needed to help their parents in the fields” (Kridli & Libbus, 2001, p. 146). One other reason for the low use of family planning among rural women is the lack of access to educational programs. Because rural areas lack these education programs, women remain uneducated or wrongly educated about family planning and therefore do not use it.

The Muslim faith also influences the high fertility rates and low usage of family planning. Azaiza (1996) states, “The Moslem religion has a restraining influence on fertility control...” (p. 2). In

Jordan, it was found among Muslim husbands that the belief that "God decides family size," is the reason why contraception was not used (Purnell & Paulanka 1998, p. 150). Kridli and Libbus (2001) quote Warren et al. (1990) who found that more than 50% of Jordanian husbands believe family size should be chosen by God. Kridli and Libbus (2001) reference Farsoun et al. (1996) who found in a study of 24 married couples that most of the Jordanian men surveyed believed that Islam opposes the use of family planning. In order to back up their belief, they quoted a verse from the Koran stating, "You shall not kill your children because you cannot support them. We provide for you and for them" (Kridli & Libbus, 2001, p. 146).

For those Muslims who do use family planning methods, Kridli and Newton (2005) quote DHS (2003) stating that methods most commonly used among Jordanian Muslim women are the intrauterine device (IUD) and oral contraception (OC). Other methods used among these women are rhythm, condoms, coitus interruptus, vaginal tablets, foam, Depo-Provera, and diaphragm (Kridli & Newton, 2005). The women who do use family planning methods revealed that they used a certain method over others because it produced no side effects, it was an effective method, they liked it, and it was easy to use (Kridli & Newton, 2005).

Some believe that these methods may only be used in certain circumstances, whereas others believe that modern techniques may be used if natural ones fail. Since a male child within a Muslim family is a definite need, family planning methods are usually not used until a male child is born. Azaiza (1996) states that "...family planning becomes a viable concept only where there is (sufficient) male offspring" (p. 2). These methods may also be used for child spacing. Kridli & Libbus (2001) state that "...participants accepted the idea of family planning... [where] family planning for child spacing is approved by Islam..." (p. 4). Some Jordanian Muslims believe that Islam does not prohibit family planning when the couple has a good reason. Some examples are poor health of the newborn or mother, or if the couple could not provide for the child's needs. Some Jordanian Muslim couples believe they can use family planning methods if they are natural, such as rhythm or breast feeding. Other Jordanian Muslims believe

that modern methods may be used only if natural methods have failed (Kridli & Libbus, 2001).

Muslim women who use family planning methods must first become educated or advised about these methods. Within Azaiza's (1996) study, it states that 91% of those women using birth control had received advice in some form: "...counseling by the nurse of the family health care center & passive acquirement of knowledge via the mass media" were at the top of the list of ways women were educated or advised about family planning (Azaiza, 1996, p. 4). After becoming educated about family planning, Muslim women seek a facility that offers contraceptives. Kridli & Libbus (2001) found from the DHS (1994) that Jordanian Muslim women obtain contraception from Jordanian Association for Family Planning and Protection Clinic (JAFPPC) (30.2%), private physician's clinic (20.5%), public hospital clinic (17.9%), or the pharmacy (14.8%) (p. 9). Kridli & Libbus (2001) state that "...JAFPPC and public hospitals provide contraceptive services at a very low cost," which "explains why a greater proportion of women used the JAFPPC to acquire their contraceptive supplies..." (p. 4).

When talking about family planning methods, a level of modesty must be upheld. Within Islam there are many concepts that Muslims must follow. One of these concepts, modesty, "forbids revealing private parts of the body or even discussing them with the opposite gender" (Rashidi & Rajaram, 2001, p. 5). Rashidi and Rajaram (2001) quote Leiniger (1996) who discusses the fact that Muslim women are also not comfortable having male health care providers. The author also states that this belief in "modesty even discourages looking directly into the face of the opposite gender..." (Rashidi & Rajaram, 2001, p. 59). Not only are men and women discouraged from looking at each other when not family, similarly men and women are also discouraged from being alone together. Rashidi and Rajaram (2001) state, "Men and women are prohibited from being alone in private, except with relatives..." (p. 59).

Communicating with Muslim women about family planning methods can be complicated because Muslim husbands are often the decision makers in the home; also, Muslims must have a trusting relationship in order to disclose personal information. When informing a woman about medical information, the husband or the oldest male relative should be included when receiving this

information. By including the husband or the eldest male in medical visits, Rashidi and Rajaram (2001) believe this helps to show them the importance of women's health care needs. The male partner must also be included in any discussion or decision in regards to family planning, because he gives the final decision in what is to be done. A woman can negotiate with her husband, but can only make a decision when receiving her husband's consent (Hill, Lipson, and Meleis, 2003). Before discussing or offering personal information about family planning, a Muslim couple needs to establish a trusting relationship. Lipson and Meleis (1983) state, "It is useful to offer some personal information in the interest of gaining trust. . .withholding information may prompt patient and family to withhold personal health state information" (p. 860). The authors do state that "once trust with a caregiver is established, personal information is given more freely" (Lipson & Meleis, 1983, p. 858).

## Conclusion

With the increase in Muslim immigrants, it is important for non-Muslim American nurses to realize that these immigrants carry distinct cultural beliefs that affect every day life. When such nurses also understand the beliefs of family planning methods and cultural characteristics of Muslim's, they can then apply this information when assisting in making decisions and educating Muslim-Americans about family planning.

Nurses must understand that Muslims have strong beliefs in modesty, as well as a need for a trusting relationship before offering personal information. When nurses first understand these things, they can then apply it to their daily care, which then allows the Muslim-American patient to feel more comfortable. When addressing family planning, nurses can do such things as making sure that male nurses do not speak with these women in regards to these things, as well as making sure these women have a female nurse for any health care they receive. Nurses can also offer personal information and create relationships with these patients in order to create an environment that the patient would be comfortable discussing family planning.

Nurses must also understand that Muslim men have the final say in any family planning decisions that are made. When nurses understand this, they can include the decision-making male

when educating or discussing family planning. By doing this, it informs the Muslim-American husband of how important it is for women to receive health care, as well as clarify any misunderstandings a husband may have had in regards to family planning. Nurses should also include information on how child spacing allows for healthier babies and a healthier mother.

With the low use of family planning among Muslim women, it is important for nurses in America to provide the opportunity for Muslim-American women and men to learn about family planning methods. Before educating a Muslim-American about family planning, a nurse must first assess how the patient feels about it, and if they are using a method. Once this knowledge is gained, the nurse can then prepare to educate the patient about family planning.

When educating about family planning methods, nurses should educate Muslim-American women and men about the different types of methods. In doing this, any misunderstandings regarding methods would be clarified so that a couple can decide what method would be best to use. Side effects of each method should also be taught since one reason for lack of use is the misunderstandings of side effects. By clarifying wrong information and teaching about the side effects of each method, a nurse can help Muslim-American women to understand better and therefore try family planning methods. When teaching about family planning, nurses should use phrases like child spacing, instead of contraception or birth control since some Muslims agree with child spacing but disagree with birth control or contraception. The preferred terms allows the Muslim-American patient to listen to the information presented, which makes way for usage. Nurses must also teach Muslim-American women where they can get certain methods, such as condoms, OC's, spermicidal, IUD's, etc, as well as information regarding these products and others. Some examples of places where information can be obtained are Planned Parenthood, the primary care provider, and the pharmacy. By providing this and other information in schools, mosques, rural areas, community settings, and in homes, Muslim-American's will be better educated, and more likely to use or continue to use family planning methods.

simultaneously creating the visual illusion of the entire landscape of which we are concerned and drawing focus to the center of the cause itself, the plight of the beautiful and needlessly threatened Pacific Northwest Tree Octopus.



# Beowulf as a Post-Heroic Epic

Jonathan R. Ditzel

One of the distinguishing marks of Beowulf, as with any national legend or epic, is it recalls a Golden Age, when heroic deeds of valor were done and the supernatural was commonplace. The heroic code is a prominent theme throughout the poem, yet as the poem progresses through Beowulf's life we see a decline in honor and the willingness to live by the heroic code. Treachery and evil grow and the difference between right and wrong becomes confused.

In the beginning of the poem, we see an example of the highest code of honor, "Scyld Scefing ambushed enemies, took their mead-benches, mastered their troops... That was a good king!" (Lines 4-5, 11). The code of conduct is explicitly stated in lines 18-20, "A soldierly son should strive in his youth to do great deeds, give generous gifts and defend his father." The heroic code consists of courage, loyalty, kindness, courtesy, chivalry, etc.

Proceeding to the time of Beowulf, we hear about the terror of Grendel. Grendel is a fearsome monster, but is not actually described in much physical detail. We actually are left wondering whether his form is that of a man or some mythical troll or other creature. Then we are presented with Beowulf, the rescuer of Hrothgar. He comes to Heorot and boasts of his great deeds. He was "one who, as a boyish prank, could swim for seven days in full armor and dispose of nine sea monsters..." (Ogilvy 53). Again we have the enormous stature of the hero brought before us. Yet here at the apex of the Germanic heroic code, Unferth is introduced. He is certainly a man of valor, but he is under the shame of having killed his brothers, something which certainly does not accord with the heroic code of honor.

Grendel shows up: "Then the young soldiers swung their old swords again and again to save their guardian, their kingly comrade, however they could" (Lines 711-713). All the men in the hall fulfill their oaths of fealty and loyalty. His easy defeat of the monster supports his boasts: "Beowulf gained glory in war; and Grendel went off bloody and bent to the boggy hills..." (lines 730-732). A wrong has been avenged in equal combat against a terrible

enemy. The loyalty, courage, and strength shown here are the heroic code at its peak.

In the second part of the poem, Grendel's Mother, the heroic code is fading. Grendel's mother avenges her son's death on Hrothgar by killing his right-hand man. This is no longer the serial killing madness of Grendel, but rather a case of revenge slaying, well understood and justifiable to the ancient North European peoples. Yet, Beowulf journeys to her home under the lake and attacks and kills her there. The honor has lessened. Not only this, but "weary, the warrior stumbled and slipped; the strongest foot-soldier fell to the foe"(lines 1366-1367). He kills her in unequal combat, his sword against her dagger. In contrast to the loyalty shown by the warriors in Heorot, the Danes actually leave Beowulf in the lake, and "generous Hrothgar headed for home" (line 1414).

Finally in the third part of the poem, The Dragon, we see the ultimate demise of Beowulf, supernatural monsters, and the heroic code, and thus the Golden Age. Both Beowulf and the dragon are described as being old, Beowulf is probably in his seventies having reigned fifty years, and the dragon is at least three hundred years old (lines 1945, 2010). Now the desire for gold is the central motif, beginning with the wretched slave who steals a cup from the dragon to buy his freedom. Beowulf makes a heroic last stand but falls to the dragon, yet it is not from his wounds that he dies, but from the dragon's poison. Before he dies, he and Wiglaf kill the dragon, thus ending the age of monsters. The ultimate demise of the heroic code is eloquently expressed,

Enfolded in fire, he who formerly ruled a whole  
realm had no one to help him hold off the heat,  
for his hand-picked band of princelings had fled,  
fearing to face the foe with their lord. (Lines  
2291-2295)

Finally Beowulf dies, and the Golden Age is over. Sorrow fills the rest of the poem.

The author of the poem is looking back on the past with nostalgia for the golden heroic age. Yet he shows that even in the heyday of the heroic code, treachery and dishonor were creeping in.

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Alison Weimer  
*Logo design:  
Issue of the Year*



# Freedom through Sustainability: How Permaculture Can Loosen the Shackles of Hegemony

The Sustainability Club of  
Whatcom Community College

Alisa Eddy, Eric Schiller, Alex Middleton  
Amanda Knutzen

## Abstract

American Corporations have gained an unprecedented amount of control over the nation's foreign and domestic polices by way of hegemonic control via the media and Neo-liberalism. As a result of this they rely upon Foucauldian tools of panopticism, governmentality, marginalization, and technologies of the self. Submission becomes a common theme in American society, as fear of societal rejection drives citizens into all-encompassing consumerism that directly contributes to a state of rampant environmental destruction. Communication is a vital aspect of acknowledging the key issue of cloaked societal control, as the modern media does a mediocre job of covering the real side of the issue of sustainability. Effective communication with the public and the mass media is essential to transcending the common rhetoric that misleads the public and ultimately damages the future of humanity.

While parts of the American political sphere contend that rampant deforestation, global warming, depletion of vital resources, and a clearly visible destruction of the planet is a nonissue, it is a solid fact within the scientific community that sustainability is not only the issue of the next decade, but rather is the issue of the next century. As a result of this, scientists from across the globe are racing to find solutions to this far-reaching crisis that is intertwined with hegemony. Permaculture is a somewhat unlikely savior from hegemony; it is a holistic restructuring of the very fabric of society that is often dismissed as a result of its seemingly primitive nature.

A self-contained sustainable community seems nearly utopian, yet with proper societal restructuring it becomes a very real prospect.

### Introduction

Sustainability—it's a new word for an old concept, a more pleasant and innocuous word that elicits no conspicuous and tolerable counterpart against which to be pitted. Last year it was "green": green power, the green party, the green movement. The opposite of green is...purple. The opposite of sustainability is...the inability to remain. Now that should sound a few alarms. Recent interviews conducted on a West coast college campus found that three out of four students would consider joining an extracurricular club named "The Sustainability Club," while one out of four would consider joining "The Green Club" (Interview, Eddy, 2006). It looks like two can play at the game of reification, and "climate change" may have met its match.

Sustainability also has a philosophical opposite: hegemony—"control or dominating influence by one person or group over others, especially by one political group over society or one nation over others" (Encarta Dictionary, 2007). In order to fully comprehend hegemony, one must fully comprehend its necessary opposite, subjugation; they are but two sides of the same coin. A note on logic: the *absence* of hegemony does not equal the *opposite* of hegemony (The Fallacy of the Alternative Syllogism:  $p$  or  $q$ ,  $p$ , therefore not  $\neg q$ ), although that is how "real" freedom is typically portrayed by the hegemonic power (Hurley, 2000).

Contrary to one's initial estimation, freedom and hegemony have everything to do with sustainability. Millions of Americans have seen "An Inconvenient Truth," the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has publicly released myriad studies verifying rapid deterioration of local and global resources as well as the disquieting recent reduction in biodiversity; and "greenhouse gasses" is a household term. The alarm has sounded, and markedly little has changed. The factories continue polluting, developers continue clear cutting, and miners continue mining. This is because the decisions that must be made in order to preserve our planet and our species are not up to the people; they are up to the CEOs and/or Boards of Directors of a few massive corporations whose only moral is profit above all else, and they have more influence over the lawmakers than any group of citizens



(McChesney, 2004). “History is the long and tragic story of the fact that privileged groups seldom give up their privileges voluntarily” (King, 1963).

The United States of America is inarguably the global superpower of our day, though China crouches like a tiger on the horizon. Within the U.S., an intra-national empire, hegemony promotes interests of the elite at cost to the masses, including subjugation, oppression and violence (Chomsky, 2005). A democratic marionette with corporate capitalism, the puppet-master on a world stage; the show enjoyed a successful run until the pressing matter of ecological destruction began heckling from the back row.

According to Michel Foucault, French philosopher and social scientist, power is not a static quality but a force in constant exchange. In Foucault’s model, power, like energy, always has a source from which it was taken or a destination to which it affixes (Flyvbjerg, 2001). Just as citizens’ values of life and health begin to abruptly and publicly conflict profoundly with corporate values of profit and power, the citizens awake to find their so-called democratic authority alarmingly absent. As U.S. corporations, depending on your viewpoint, gain or maintain control of national policy, citizens continue to lose control. Like cancer overwhelming a weakened body, American corporations have obtained disproportionate power over America’s foreign and domestic environmental policy by way of media control and the institution of Neo-liberalism. These fortresses are secured and sustained by Foucauldian power tools of panopticism, governmentality, marginalization, and technologies of the self. Participation in U.S. society requires submission to its moral of profit and its lifestyle of consumerism; the precise driving forces driving environmental devastation.

Foucauldian theory is used to interpret a corporate social report published by the Royal Dutch/Shell Group. However, the author interprets it in the context of the larger sociopolitical discursive struggle over environment and social justice.

Communication is frequently overlooked and underestimated as part of the equation for change in sustainability. Media maintain the status quo in their coverage of sustainability. The field could benefit from more in-depth consultation with

communication experts to determine how to effectively motivate the public for change.

### Hegemonic Power

Prolific author on the subject of American hegemony, Noam Chomsky (2003), wrote:

Those at the center of power relentlessly pursue their own agendas, understanding that they can exploit the fears and anguish of the moment. They may even institute measures that deepen the abyss and may march resolutely toward it, if that advances the goals of power and privilege. They declare that it is unpatriotic and disruptive to question the workings of authority—but patriotic to institute harsh and regressive policies that benefit the wealthy, and subordinate a frightened population to increased state control. (p. 217)

Chomsky described America as an imperialistic giant that will stop at nothing to gain more power. “The goal of the imperial grand strategy is to prevent any challenge to the ‘power, position, and prestige of the United States,’” wrote Chomsky (2003), quoting Dean Acheson (p. 14). He offered the United States’ war in Iraq as an example. When the United States was attempting to rally worldwide support for its new war, there was little enthusiasm for such a conflict. As a result, the U.S. chose to go against the will of the United Nations, veto their resolutions, and attack Iraq nonetheless. Washington expressed that it intended to maintain its supremacy at all costs and then announced that it would disregard the UN Security Council over Iraq and further affirmed that “it would no longer be bound by the [UN] Charter’s rules governing the use of force” (Chomsky, 2003, p. 13). Chomsky contended that the United States is actually controlled by the very rich elite of the nation, a clique with goals that are somewhat unclear other than their inherent need for power and prestige.

Controlling the general population has always been a dominant concern of power and privilege, particularly since the first modern democratic revolution in seventeenth-century England...it is

necessary to safeguard a system of elite decision-making and public ratification—'polyarchy,' in the terminology of political science—not democracy. (2003, p. 5)

Chomsky's belief is that America's capitalist economy is a hegemonic system, designed to keep the citizens in their place and out of the way producing more consumers who in turn continue to purchase from corporate America, empowering the elite to control and manipulate the world as if it were their personal plaything. In Walter Adamson's book (1980) *Hegemony and Revolution*, Gramsci is quoted,

Socialists must not replace order with order. They must bring about order itself. The Juridical norm that they want to establish is the possibility of the complete realization of ones human personality for every citizen. With the realization of this norm, all established privileges collapse. (p. 19)

Neo-liberalism gradually reformed American government during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This change was accelerated in the late nineteen-sixties by governmental 'scale back,' resulting from the rise of social conservatism. In order to alleviate the government of its obligations to the people without relinquishing social control, the state began to increasingly emphasize autonomy and responsibility of the individual to provide her- or himself with necessities as defined by the government. Rather than engineering social change the slow way, through government reform, neo-liberalism controls through projection of ideals and norms onto the individual citizen whose value is suddenly measured against the desires of the hegemony. Denying social and institutional causes of poor health, homelessness, and hunger, a lack of personal cultivation is identified as the single culprit; an individual issue unquestionably out of the state's realm of responsibility (Gutting, 2005). Those who fail to meet their own basic needs (health, shelter, food) are viewed as defective, lacking personal development, rather than as victims of poor social services. These defective members of society are often marginalized and subjected to various kinds of "expert" help for their inability to achieve what our nation requires. Often the end result of failure to achieve independently results in jail time and

life long persecution, rather than government provision for the unmet need (Nadesan, 2006).

### **Governmentality**

The tool of neo-liberalism is Foucault's concept of governmentality as described by Lionel Boxer:

By (governmentality) he refers to the collected fragments of a society's structures, organizations, approaches, and deliberations, and—specifically—the capacity of that aggregate to normalize people and their behavior by the conjoint effort of technologies of power and technologies of the self.

The power of governmentality is exercised through its ability to normalize those who don't behave supportively of the ideals of the existing hegemon (Boxer, 2003). It's important to recognize that normal and average have different meanings. Normal is an ideal. Everything we achieve is placed on a scale that demonstrates a higher level of achievement is possible. Every accomplishment is diminished by comparison, and threatened by the ever rising 'abnormal' zone. Achievement in the 'abnormal' zone would merit "expert" intervention, as abnormal performance indicates that you either are not capable of, or are not trying to be normal in our society, and that makes you a threat to everyone. Although the norm is always changing, the definition of acceptable behavior (that which doesn't require correction through medication, therapy, or self-cultivation) grows narrower and narrower each day. What is now "generalized anxiety disorder" fifteen years ago was defined as "high strung." However, treatment with anti-anxiety medications will restore your docility and help you function at your highest level of utility to the economy. "Normalizing judgment is a peculiarly pervasive means of control. There is no escaping it.... The threat of being judged 'abnormal' constrains us moderns at every turn" (Gutting, 2005).

### **Normalization**

Normalization is achieved through internalizing the gaze of authority and exercising its judgments on oneself and others. Foucault refers to this internal policing as panopticism, borrowing

from Jeremy Bentham's panopticon: a ring-shaped prison with a central watchtower; all the prisoners are isolated from each other, but completely observable to the watchtower, the power of which lies in the inability of prisoners to verify whether or not they are being observed (DeLuca, 1995). Foucault himself writes,

On the whole, therefore, one can speak of the formation of a disciplinary society...an indefinitely generalizable mechanism of "panopticism." Not because the disciplinary modality of power has replaced all others; but because it has infiltrated the others...linking them together, extending them, and above all, making it possible to bring the effects of power to the most minute and distant elements. It assures an infinitesimal distribution of the power relations.

The intentional result of unverifiable observation is that the subject begins to behave as if being observed at all times. The citizen confines her- or himself to life within socially accepted boundaries. To further identify herself, for example, as non-threatening to the prevailing social ideals, she enforces social norms on others by persecuting those who display non-conformist behavior. Examples of such social regulatory behavior include gay-baiting submissive men and dominant women, and community rejection of whites who 'act black,' and blacks who 'act white.' The panoptic citizen is far from free as she or he simultaneously embodies both the prison guard and the prisoner. A society wrought with internally and externally placed judgments is disjointed and lacking in true community. (DeLuca, 1995)

### **Manufacturing Consent**

Political apathy then results from the fragmented, atomized, and self-cultivating society as described below by DeLuca (1995) in *The Two Faces of Political Apathy*.

Our disaffection from politics is emblematic of our disbelief that we can change things, but not only because of how the world is...but because of doubts we have about ourselves. Then we push others away who are probably more like us

than we can afford to acknowledge, close off potential alliances, reinforce the self-fulfilling prophecy of our political self-doubt, and further weaken our capacity and deplete our desire to engage in democratic politics. Already overburdened with our sense of existential responsibility, economic responsibilities, it seems, for designing and holding onto our identities we naturally become less willing to take on political responsibilities.

To further the individual's frustration, corporate media "manufacture consent; that is to bring about agreement on the part of the public for things that they didn't want" (Chomsky, 1997). American propagandist Walter Lippmann, the creator of "manufactured consent," stated that it is accomplished by a special group of intelligent men who are 'qualified' to make decisions for the American public, since the "common interest" evades the ignorant masses, or as Lippmann put it, "the bewildered herd." The media seek to atomize and fragment the masses to prevent them from organizing and thereby exercising their power. Hegemony of corporate America has contributed to political apathy because it deprives the citizens of the power to realize change in their nation. (Chomsky, 1997)

The parties benefiting from the ecological homicide are not going to lower their profits and compromise their global domination willingly; they've even united and expressed to President George W. Bush in January of 2007 in a public statement that environmental protection measures cannot be optional; they must be mandatory by law with consequences for failure to abide that are greater than the cost of becoming compliant with the new regulations. Still the president refuses to enact mandatory regulations.

Language is a powerful tool, a weapon that aids massive corporations in coercing the masses into complacency, as demonstrated by their mission statements and press releases with such hollow phrases such as "encourage concern and respect for the environment, emphasize every employee's responsibility in environmental performance" (Exxon, 2007) and "We will comply with environmental regulations and serve as guardians of our

natural resources and environment.” (Citgo, 2007) It is clearly difficult to decipher what these statements actually mean. Vague statements such as “encouraging concern and respect,” and “serving as guardians,” only feed consumers meaningless, albeit sweet-tasting words that avoid actual accountability for their collective corporate actions. While corporations claim to care about the environment, often they are only going as far as the state deems necessary. For example, Exxon Mobil’s environmental policy states, “We protect the environment to the full extent the law requires.” As a result of this, it becomes apparent that Exxon Mobile and many other corporations aren’t concerned about conservation, but rather are more interested in covering their hides and maintaining highly profitable margins.

Other corporate organizations present percentages and statistics in vast quantities, DuPont claims that they will reduce their greenhouse gas emissions by nearly 15% by 2015 from the year 2004. (DuPont, 2005) It is difficult, however, to verify the legitimacy of these claims, to hold these corporations accountable for goals, and to determine how much of an actual global impact these measures of conservation will actually have.

There is no guarantee that they will adequately measure accurate emissions to verify their claims of reduction in 15 years. Obviously, large corporations are concerned with maximizing short-term profits, essentially mortgaging our future by resisting costly environmental regulations and looking towards future sustainability.

We have lost our power as a result of hegemony and its progeny, globalization. An alarming side effect of globalization is the hefty collateral damage that resource extraction has upon the environment. Vast quantities of resources are required to fuel the first world’s ever-expanding “need” for new possessions. Jared Diamond (2006) discussed this in his book *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed*,

Environmental practices of big businesses are shaped by a fundamental fact that for many of us offends our sense of justice. Depending on the circumstances, a business really may maximize its profits, at least in the short term, by damaging the environment and hurting people. (p. 483)

The environment isn't the only victim, humans are just beginning to feel the squeeze of the rapid depletion of our natural resources, notably crude oil reserves. While it is outside the scope of this paper to delve far into the oil industry as a subject, it is critical to note that oil as a commodity is currently driving the entire western economy. Diamond (2006) wrote:

The world's major energy sources, especially for industrial societies, are fossil fuels: oil, natural gas, and coal. While there has been much discussion about how many big oil and gas fields remain to be discovered, and while coal reserves are believed to be large, the prevalent view is that known and likely reserves of readily accessible oil and natural gas will last for a few more decades. (p. 490)

Revolution is a tricky business. So long as the whole of American society believes that they are "free" and that life is all about attaining more and more, it will prove increasingly onerous to compel them to demand extreme change simply to be able to *breathe* in 30 years. Unfortunately, hegemony begets hegemony. No sooner does a revolution of thought take place than a new hegemony is created and new systems of societal control are put in place.

### **Sustainable Agriculture**

Modern agricultural methods in industrialized nations produce immense volumes of food with unsustainable inefficiency in the overall ratio of energy cost to benefit. The vast amount of chemical fertilizers applied in an attempt to combat soil depletion, the immense amount of land assigned to single crops for ease of harvest, and the typically significant distances between farm and market to transport crops, all are factors which conspire to result in enormous ecological damage in the wake of our unending quest for "more." Consequently, alternate models of food production are entering the world stage; one of the most promising models emerging recently is permaculture.

Permaculture is a holistic approach to society; old problems are evaluated from new angles, and no possible solution is dismissed due to its privatives. Permaculture is a vehicle to



freedom, and an alternative to hegemony. The concept converges on freeing the individual from their dependence on the hegemonic cycle of subjugation and destruction. Self-contained, self-sustaining communities on a scale significantly smaller than modern metropolises; this is the final goal of permaculture. Permaculture seeks to erect a new, more closely-knit society which liberates the individual from both the shackles of slavery to one's essential needs and the subtle prison of Hegemony.

## **Permaculture**

*Permaculture* was coined by Bill Mollison in 1959; while observing the forests of Tasmania, he explored the concept of this man-made system along with one of his students, David Holmgren, and together they developed what Hemenway defines as a "set of techniques for holistic landscape designs that are modeled after nature yet include humans" (2000). Permaculture studies the mechanics of forests and utilizes the "underlying principle which makes them work," specifically, "a web of beneficial relationships between the different plants and animals, and between them and the rock, soil, water, and climate of their habitat" (Whitefield, 2002).

Permaculture takes into consideration both biological and social science, with a primary focus on the ability of human systems to sustain themselves without damaging the environment surrounding them. Another discussion of the subject states:

It recognizes, first, that all living systems are organized around energy flows. It teaches people to analyze existing energy flows (sun, rain, money, human energy) through such a system (a garden, a household, a business). Then it teaches them to position and interconnect all the elements in the system (whether existing or desired) in beneficial relationship to each other and to those energy flows. When correctly designed such a system will, like a natural ecosystem, become increasingly diverse and self-sustaining. (Wasser, 1994)

This precept of energy flow also applies to the planning of a Permaculture site, which is typically laid out into five to six zones,

placed around a centralized location (like a house) based on decreasing need for human intervention; Zone 1 includes those systems requiring the most attention, Zone 2 less so (vegetable gardens, compost bins, beehives, and other relatively independent parts of the plot), and so on, with Zone 5 being wilderness outside of the plot, which is interfered with as little as possible. In this way, the layout of the plot is designed to make it require a minimal investment of time for a maximum yield.

Permaculture focuses primarily on food production, with other beneficial aspects and tenets of society emerging from the core concepts. The design concepts are taken from observations of the beneficial interaction of life in a given ecosystem, such as a forest, specifically “the careful design of relationships among them – interconnections – that will create a healthy, sustainable whole. Interconnections are what turn a collection of unrelated parts into a functioning system, whether it’s a community, a family, or an ecosystem” (Hemenway, 2000). A typical permaculture site possesses a wide variety of food plants with varying production times, to ensure as close to a year-long food supply as possible between stored nuts and dried fruit for the winter, with fresh food for most of the rest of the year.

The creation of sustainable behaviors in humans is a major tenet of permaculture which is summed up by Mollison, “one should only carry out necessitous acts that non-necessitous behavior tends to be very destructive” (1981). This summarizes the principles of cultural reform enmeshed in permaculture; focusing on energy efficiency and seeking less harmful solutions than those currently used (e.g. petroleum). A significant element of permaculture considers the desirable qualities that can be achieved by community planning; using the same regard for energy flow found in the zones listed above. This is found in both building design (taking advantage of sunlight for extra heating, minimizing waste water and energy, and otherwise improving the efficiency of a given building) and community layout (designing a town to prevent suburban mentality and reduce or eliminate the need for a commute, as well as to create food production within the city rather than requiring imports). The core concepts of utilizing energy to the fullest and reducing or eliminating dependence upon imports through cooperative relationships between elements of a system are

the heart of what makes permaculture a highly sustainable social philosophy.

Sustainability has a number of definitions, the most applicable to Permaculture being “the ability to meet the needs of the present without compromising the needs of the future.” This is what sets permaculture apart from the typical “anti-growth” image of green activism, as it acknowledges the need for development of new technologies and new suitable areas for habitation; however, the concept of sustainability seeks to focus on technologies that do not carry the heavy costs associated with our dependence on fossil fuels, but focuses centrally on necessities, to pare back the use of luxuries and reduce the consumption of the populace. A sustainable system is one that can support itself without relying on external scarce commodities; scarce, in the economic sense, being anything that is not available in sufficient quantity for all needs for it to be met. In short, the core concept of permaculture is ensuring that a system does not have dwindling returns; it refuses to compromise the long-term life of a system in exchange for short-term affluence

There are intricacies associated with permaculture that proponents of the hegemony-backed agricultural systems will claim diminish its value. A permaculture plot would be exceptionally difficult if not impossible to automate with today's technologies, requiring hands-on attention to grow and harvest; however, this is offset by the vast difference in energy input between the two, as explained by Bill Mollison:

[my friend] told me that the older Chinese agriculture (weeding by hand) produced, under very intensive conditions, using natural manures, about three times as much [non-solar] energy as it consumed. Then they modernized...I think he said that they put 800% more energy in and got a 15% increase in yield. And then as they continued to pour in more energy, the yield decreased. By now they are into the same kick that we have. They only get 4% to 6% of that energy out again (1981).

This is why current forms of agriculture are considered unsustainable. The immense quantity of non-solar energy required by a modern farm, which is often supplied by fossil fuels and other

limited and damaging sources, far outweighs that of the mild manual labor required for a permaculture site in both sheer quantity and in regards to efficiency of output. The math in Mollison's example demonstrates a staggering level of inefficiency, and yet through the exclusion of the energy cost so that all that is heard is "crop yields are up by 15%," it is silently accepted as being the 'best' system presently available.

### Solution

Unfortunately, this waste of energy and dependence upon an artificial inflation of production carries a heavy cost. The soil is depleted of nutrients, the runoff accumulates, and the damage to the environment ramps up with every passing day. As the fields become less productive, more are hacked out of the landscape. In South America and Africa, this is done by burning and clear-cutting jungle and forest, eliminating biodiversity and causing erosion, stripping once-fertile soil of the ability to sustain crops. Rather than consider that perhaps the method of choice is not the best, farms repeatedly "stay the course" towards extensive ecological destruction.

A success story from New Mexico is that of Roxanne Swentzell. Under the guidance of permaculture designer Joel Glanzberg, over the course of four years she changed her barren land north of Santa Fe—described by herself as "no trees, no plants, no animals, just pounded-down dirt and lots of ants" (Hemenway, 2000)—to a permaculture garden, which

[brought] immense biodiversity to a once-impooverished place. Here in the high desert was almost too much water and shade. Food was dropping from the trees faster than they could harvest, and birds that no one had seen for years were making a home in the yard. (Hemenway, 2000)

Permaculture is a promising solution to a danger posed to the modern world, that of over-consumption and ecological failure. Depleting oil supplies, unsustainable agricultural practices, and greenhouse gas-induced climate change threaten human societies, if not human life as a whole, with collapse and possible extinction. The danger may not be within this decade, or even several decades,

but the evidence suggests that a solution must be sought, and as traditional wisdom holds, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Permaculture has been shown to work, and with minimal labor on the part of the garden's owners; it is an efficient and effective way to produce food as well as a potential means to reverse and prevent some of the damage being wrought upon this planet.

Hegemony has presently locked society into the cycle of environmental destruction, and continues to thwart attempts to create a sustainable future. The only prospect of a sustainable future requires freedom from the hegemonic power. This freedom can be germinated through permaculture.

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## APPENDIX

To address the issue of supplying sustainable organic produce on campus we will be creating our own Permaculture site proposed to be placed between two buildings on campus, Kulshan Hall and Cascade Hall. This site was chosen because of the proximity to the science building, Kulshan Hall. The site also currently has a seasonal pond which could be easily extended and converted to a pond more suitable for the long-term permaculture site we envision. The pond is essential because it will supply water in a sustainable manner by using grey water—water from showers, sinks, and washing machines obtained from the college buildings—as well as natural rainwater collected from buildings across campus. (Hemenway, 2000)

The plants in Zone 1 of the plan will consist of blueberry bushes, blackberry bushes, and raspberry bushes. These were all chosen for their fruit producing qualities as well as their ability to flourish in rainy Northwest Washington. Also in Zone 1 roses will be grown to produce rose hips. (Hemenway, 2000) In the center of the garden, seasonal vegetables would be grown, including, but not limited to, rhubarb, spinach, chard, kale, chives, and wild strawberries, all to be used for food production. (Whitefield, 2002)

The plants in Zone 3 would be fruit and nut trees such as apples, to be the majority of our trees because of their heartiness and the storage life of their fruit. Also grown will be plums and pears, though making up a lesser part of the garden because of the reduced yield and difficulty to develop in extremely rainy weather. Also crab apples, for preserves. (Whitefield, 2002)

Planted throughout the garden on the ground among these plants will be herbs, like fennel and lavender, as well as vegetables, like broccoli and cauliflower, grown to attract insects that feed on pests. (Wetherbee, 2004) The majority of the plants, however, would be in Zone 2 as well as the center of the permaculture site. Legumes would also be used because,

The fixation of nitrogen by some plants is critical to maintaining the health of soil as it converts the inert atmospheric form of nitrogen into compounds usable by plants. Legumes, as used in this study, are an important group of plants



as they have the ability to fix nitrogen. (Nature, 2006)

COST ANALYSIS

Plants	Number for Price	Cost per Plant	Farm	Number Needed	Total
Blueberry	1	\$6.95	ARN	8	55.60
Blackberry	1	\$6.95	ARN	8	55.60
Raspberry	1	\$5.95	ARN	8	47.60
Wild Rose	1	\$9.50	ARN	4	38.00
Apples	1	\$8.50	ARN	6	51.00
Plum	1	\$7.95	ARN	3	23.85
Pear	1	\$8.50	ARN	4	34.00
Crab Apples	1	\$7.95	ARN	4	31.80
Rhubarb	1	\$8.95	ARN	5	44.75
Spinach	200 seeds	\$1.79	ARN	2	3.58
Chard	90 seeds	\$1.59	ARN	2	3.18
Kale	500 seeds	\$1.59	ARN	2	3.18
Chives	400 seeds	\$1.79	ARN	2	3.58
Strawberries	50 plants	\$19.50	ARN	2	39.00
Fennel	16 ounces	\$5.49	Glenbrook	5	27.45
Lavender	570 seeds	\$2.50	Burpee	1	2.50
Broccoli	300 seeds	\$2.50	Burpee	2	5.00
Cauliflower	100 seeds	\$2.50	Burpee	2	5.00
Peas	225 seeds	\$2.50	Burpee	2	5.00
Beans	1/2 pound	\$8.95	Burpee	2	17.90
Grand Total					497.58

Except summer camp clinic is kids and they're not pregnant. They tend to have poison ivy or a tummy ache, etc.

I would say because we had so many people, that I improved greatly throughout the day. The first patient I brought back for a NST, I forgot to get a urine sample from and we did it at the end. And, then I would dilly dally with getting them on the monitor. But, by the end it was: Here's the bathroom, here's a gown. OK, let's get the monitor on you and get your VS. Then, as you are monitoring, you can ask about s/s or reason for visit. The goal was in and out in an hour for things like labor checks. Of course, in able to be independent I would need a lot more experience and skill. But, I think I was a very good assistant.

Well, we started off with an assignment to take a recently triaged mom and admit her for labor. I was very excited about getting an admit, start to finish. However, it was not meant to be. After I introduced myself and Sarah, the father politely and kindly refused to have me care for them, even after discussion about my role and Sarah's role, etc. He had had a fetal demise some years ago at some other place and a student was involved, according to him. So, we checked in with the NTL and then we were swapped to triage. It was my first time someone didn't want me working with them. More than I thought, I was really OK with it. It is their process and if there's something we can easily do to make it more what they want, all the better. Turned out, the baby had some major variable and prolonged decels and ended up with cord gases. It could have made a great case for my learning but we reviewed the tracing during and after the baby's delivery, so I learned some anyway. Triage turned out to be quite a day and learning experience.

## Day 11

Daily Goal: Work with a postpartum nurse to get discharge experience; discharge a patient.

I worked with Carrie (name has been changed) and participated in immediate postpartum care and teaching, especially with breastfeeding/pumping. I did the baby's PKU (the second one I've done) and Hep B. Then, I processed the orders with Carrie and assisted the family to prepare to go home (mostly teaching about

the car seat). I gave them their follow up orders and walked them out the door.

Still the paperwork. I felt good with the teaching I did. I just wasn't familiar with the discharge paperwork and had to be talked through it before I actually walked in the room.

The encouragement that you give new moms is very important. This is a scary point in their lives, having their first brand new baby. And, upon their discharge, they are losing their resource, the nurse who's been there for them since labor and delivery. Reiterating that you have confidence in them and that they have resources, in the book and pamphlets they have, the home health nurse scheduled to come in the next 24-48 hours and that they can always call the CBC or their provider's office with questions; its just so important for them to walk out really feeling like they can do it.

## Day 12

Daily Goal: Circulate: sterile technique; Triage: work on monitoring, by ear, the FHR during all other activities, assessment: especially with PIH.

I did well in the OR. I did the counts and handed sterile items off to the techs. In Triage, I monitored patients, wrote up nurses notes (which are beginning to be organized in a better, more flowing way) and did assessments for PIH (HA, visual changes, swelling, epigastric pain, DTRs).

When a multip was admitted from triage, Sarah and I set her up in her delivery room and were her nurses while she was receiving her epidural (since her assigned nurse wasn't due on shift for about 20 min.). I independently positioned her, assessed her VS during her test dose and bolus and documented those things on the strip for later documentation.

I'm still working on seeing that big picture and trying not to be too narrowly focused. I really want to be able to see the big picture and think about what priority needs to happen next and what after that and especially what contingencies might apply and might I need to at least be mentally prepared for.

I'm more helpful to Sarah. Which, I hope, means that I've learned enough to be able to anticipate some things and do them. I

also think she knows what things I can do well and lets me do those more independently.

## Day 14

Daily goal: To, as independently as possible, admit a patient in labor, assess and monitor her and the baby and assist with delivery if it occurs.

Still getting better at the documentation/paperwork. I made phone calls to the physician and even though Sarah followed up my vaginal exams, he knew I was trying to be the lead and he communicated with me and valued my assessments. It made me feel good to know that he thought my assessments were valid. (I'm sure it helped him to know Sarah trusted my assessments as well!) This couple spoke English as a second language, although the patient spoke English pretty well. I talked with her at length about pain medication. At first we heard her say she was going for an all natural and then she asked about pain medication and wanted to know more about an epidural (she stated her sister had one!). I made sure that she knew how an epidural would change the way she labored, since she's had two previous natural deliveries and I knew she would be remembering those deliveries as she prepared herself for this one.

I'm really trying to be sure to keep an ear out for the monitor, however, sometimes I still get so focused on whatever else it is that I'm doing. I just need to keep that in mind and remind myself to listen for the FHR. I also will work more on juggling the maternal and baby care in the immediate post partum period. I feel a little overwhelmed by the assessments needing to be done and the baby care right after birth.

There was a shoulder dystocia with this delivery. I have heard about them and Sarah and I had talked through them, but, I'd never been a part of one. I feel pretty lucky to have had this experience in my preceptorship, with Sarah, who I knew could run this situation. She talked me through the process while we were maneuvering the mother and in about a minute and a half, with lots of suprapubic pressure and McRoberts maneuver, the babe popped out. We hit our staff call light and had several assistants in there assisting and assessing baby. Baby also had a nuchal cord, that

was easily reduced, and was bruised from the neck up, so we kept a special eye on the baby after delivery.

## Day 15

Daily Goal: To, as independently as possible, admit a patient in labor, assess and monitor her and the baby and assist with delivery if it occurs.

I had a tricky IV start/blood draw. I problem solved, with Sarah and got it worked out; we got the IV in, but had to get blood from the antecubital. Still getting better at the documentation/paperwork. I communicated with the physician about the FHR, which had variables. I called the physician when I thought delivery was near and was firm with him when the mother went complete and he seemed to think we had more time (even though he wasn't in the room!). She had a 20 minute second stage! I set the entire room up and directed mom during delivery. I did the postpartum assessments with the help of other folks who checked in on me as needed! I picked up on the fact that she never had a Foley placed and hadn't voided and so I straight cathed her postpartum (with another nurse present!). She passed a moderate sized clot and I made sure that someone else backed up my assessment that her fundus was still firm. I gave report off to a nurse up on second surgical and I did a pretty darn good job of it! I only forgot one thing and it was a minor, non-priority thing!

However, that documentation after birth was overwhelming, especially as I was trying to keep up with my assessments. That will just take more time to get used to.

My last day. Sarah was on NTL and they had a nearly emergency section. So, I really was nearly on my own with a handful of other nurses keeping an eye and ear out for me. It was a whirlwind, but I knew the priority things. My paperwork was behind, but my patients were cared for.

Nick was my Latin instructor from over an adult ago. I had him for three consecutive years, but it was an incident that occurred near the end of the second year that came to mind. Due to 'problems at home' I was failing nearly everything in high school, including Latin II. I did not want to repeat the class, but I also wanted to continue on with Latin and my colleagues who had sense enough to attend classes. I asked Nick that if I could, in some way, pass the final exam, could I take Latin III in my senior year. He looked at me for a long, awkward moment and said, emphatically, "No, but if you can pass a *special final*, then I will consider it."

I showed up for the final and it was unlike anything I had seen in an exam. It was not the 'decline this' and 'conjugate that' that everyone else had printed on their exams; it was simply a passage, one that I had never before experienced, in Latin, with the word "TRANSLATE" printed at the top of the page. I closed my eyes and, at first, I could only see tables of Latin grammar. However, those images slowly faded and were replaced with images of ancient Rome. I began to write. The memory of that day, so boldly reproduced by my conscious faded and ideas began to germinate; I got up and returned to my computer, up righted my chair and I began to write.

The difficulty that the budding writer is experiencing is not necessarily the need for a paradigm shift, a shift from working life to a life of continued education, but the need for a complete re-programming of neural pathways. He desires to "continue," but one must ask, with what? It is evident in the narrative that the primary perspective of the writer is one of a task-based philosophy; he compares his writing assignment with a job. As the "continuing student" has been out of school for 18 years and is a "single parent," one can conclude that the majority of his experience in life has been in the preparation and continuation for the role of employee in a Western capitalist and consumerist culture. The proper performance of this role ensures that the individual takes part in the production and consumption of material goods for the culture. With this assigned and life-long duty comes a responsibility to maintain the tools necessary to participate in this environment; to be a productive member of society.

The productive member of society does not spring to life at age 18 or after graduation from high school. There must be some manner of preparation for this lifetime of occupation, and subsequent perpetuation of the system, or those thrust into the system would fail due to a lack of groundwork. This proposed ordered and contrived production of productive members of society by educational systems is similar to the ideas in Paulo Freire's essay "The Banking Concept of Education."

In "The Pedagogy of the Oppressed—The Banking Concept of Education," Paulo Freire describes his solution to the problem of the traditional "narrative" education. This form of education employs the teacher in the business of "filling" students with information; memorization for the sake of memorization which transforms students into "automatons," thus "minimize[ing] or annul[ing] the student's creative power" (Freire). This annulment firmly establishes the creators and perpetuators of this process as "oppressors," while the oppressed, stripped of creative power, can never "become fully human" (Freire).

In order to become fully human, Freire insists that the student, and the teacher for that matter, abandon the oppressor's "necrophilic" pedagogy in favor of one that opens communication between the teacher and student; each party takes on the responsibility of educating the other. This "humanist" method transforms the "dichotomy" of the narrative "banking" education with the "dialogue" of Freire's anticipated "problem-posing education." Within this new and necessary system, Freire insists that the burgeoning humans must join in a dialogue with teachers which subsequently allow them to "co-create" their "realit[ies] in progress." Freire believes that the participants of the problem-posing education can surmount their assigned "false perception[s] of reality" only through "fellowship and solidarity." According to Freire, this movement from individualism to solidarity, which is integral in the transformation from banking education to problem-posing education, must be "revolutionary," because any use of the old system can only "serve the oppressor." The post-revolutionary system will overcome the oppressors by permitting the oppressed and repressed humans to intellectually and ontologically evolve by allowing them to finally pose the question "Why?" (Freire)

It is apparent in the narrative that the writer's past experiences with education are very similar to Freire's "banking concept." When the student initially sees the Latin prose of the special exam, he initially envisions grammatical charts, or "receptacles" for words which, according to Freire, converts a word's "transforming power" into "sonority." This sonority ensures that the student completes his transition into his assigned occupation as a productive member, or as Freire would say, a "being for society."

According to Freire, these beings, like our narrator, are "not fully human," because they lack the tools necessary to participate in the design of their realities. As mentioned above, the move to self-creation of reality requires a "revolution," wherein a new dialogue is established between student and teacher for the purpose of "co-creating their realities." Nick, the Latin instructor, is attempting to subvert the previous banking pedagogy with one of a shared investigation, outside of his normal realm of instruction, through the introduction of the special exam. Nick's motivation for the creation of a new test is not as significant as his willingness to circumvent the typical examination of conjugations and declensions. However, during the exam the narrator is instantly transformed from memorizer to creator, indicating that the tools necessary to create and think for oneself were contained within the educational system which eventually served as a tool of oppression.

However, the tools of oppression have outweighed the effect of the dialogical exchange of the special examination in this incident. As stated in the narrative, the continuing student does not continue his education until much later, so it can be argued that Freire's pedagogy of the oppressed created, in practice at least, a productive member of society rather than its antithesis, Freire's "being for the world."

Can the productive member of society complete the metamorphosis to a being for the world and deny the programmed need for an occupation to search for what Freire would call an "ontological vocation?" This chapter is not yet written in the narrative, but the neural pathways are shifting and the narrator is creating a written work and subsequently his own reality. After the 18 years of dormancy, the continuing student admits to having to make sacrifices in order to pursue his education, which alludes to



choice, a feature that Freire's bank clerks do not possess. In the capitalist and consumerist culture that the narrator is immersed in, the offering made of time and money are a symbolic representation of the shedding of the material of consumerism and its replacement with a mantle of self-discovery. This removes the necessity of the material answer to the question "Why continue?" However, it requires the continuer to continue to ask the question "Why continue?"

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# Solitary Confinement in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*

Stephanie Lerner

Being physically different from society's norms is never easy for a person, and often means that the person may have difficulty gaining acceptance into the society, if they are even accepted at all. In Mary Shelley's novel *Frankenstein*, the monster's hideous physical appearance causes people to universally shun, hate, and fear him, even though he wants nothing from them but love and companionship. The monster remains in the role of society's outcast throughout his existence, from Victor Frankenstein's horrified desertion in the monster's first moments of life to the monster's final decision to die alone in the isolated arctic wasteland. While he makes numerous attempts to overcome human revulsion and gain friendship from the people around him, only the blind old man De Lacey treats the monster with any sort of kindness. The monster is even denied companionship in the form of another like him when Victor breaks his promise of creating the monster a female friend. This complete isolation from human contact is what eventually turns the monster to violence, as he decides that if people cannot love him, they will fear him instead. Throughout Shelley's *Frankenstein*, society excludes the monster from any kind of human love or companionship because of his terrifying physical appearance, disregards the monster's essentially kind and gentle nature, and in the end actually turns him into the monster they believe him to be.

The monster's role as "outsider" begins in his first moments of life, as Victor, disgusted by the being he created, abandons the monster to fend for himself with the mind of a newborn. Although the creature, being Victor's creation, is his responsibility, his fear and revulsion overcome him and he flees in horror, saying "I had desired it with an ardour that far exceeded moderation; but now that I had finished, the beauty of the dream vanished, and breathless horror and disgust filled my heart. Unable to endure the aspect of the being I had created, I rushed out of the room . . ." (Shelley, 43). Victor's sense of the monster as menacing

and demonical is incorrect, however, as when the monster recalls his earliest memories they are childlike, simple and indistinct. Filled with confusion and fear at not knowing where to go, what to do, or how to interpret the world around him, the monster wanders lost in the woods after his creator's abandonment, recalling "I was a poor, helpless, miserable wretch; I knew, and could distinguish, nothing; but feeling pain invade me on all sides, I sat down and wept" (Shelley, 91). At this point, the monster is no more threatening than a lost child, but unlike a child, his outward appearance prevents people from taking him in or caring for him in any way.

The monster's first encounter with people other than his creator occurred in the village outside the woods in which he first wandered. Upon seeing the monster for the first time, the villagers respond with a mixture of terror and aggression; some faint or flee from the creature, and the rest drive the monster away with stones and other weapons, forcing him to take refuge in a low hovel on the outskirts of town. The monster's description of this event is enough to evoke sympathy for the way he was treated by the villagers, as he remembers, "Here, then, I retreated and lay down happy to have found a shelter, however miserable, from the inclemency of the season, and still more from the barbarity of man" (Shelley, 94). From this hovel, the monster begins watching the De Lacey family, who unknowingly provide him with most of his education.

When the monster first discovers the human power of speech by studying the interactions of the De Laceys, he thinks "This was indeed a godlike science . . ." and in a way, he is right, as the power of speech is a uniquely human trait, and a symbol of what it means to be human (Shelley, 100). By giving the monster the power of speech and thought, Shelley firmly defines the creature as human, no more monster on the inside than any other human, regardless of his outward appearance. As he studies the De Laceys from his hiding place, the monster attempts to learn their language so that he might allay their fear of him and gain their friendship and protection by communicating his good intentions. As the monster recollects, "I imagined that they would be disgusted, until, by my gentle demeanour and conciliating words, I should first win their favor and afterwards their love" (Shelley, 103). However, it is not until the arrival of another outsider, the Arabian Safie, that he begins to master speech and reading, and even then he only learns

by eavesdropping on her lessons, as the De Laceys would fear and revile him for his appearance like everyone else. Of this he states “I admired . . . my cottagers, but I was shut out from intercourse with them, except through means which I obtained by stealth, when I was unseen and unknown . . .” (Shelley, 108).

The “outsider” theme continues in the form of Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, one of the books that the monster finds and reads to further his education. After reading Victor’s notes on his creation, the monster compares himself to Milton’s Satan, as both he and Satan were created to be beautiful, angelic creatures, but when their beauty and goodness were corrupted they were abandoned by their creator. The monster reflects that he is even less fortunate than Satan, being a truly complete outsider, as he notes that “Satan had his companions, fellow devils, to admire and encourage him, but I am solitary and abhorred” (Shelley, 119). When the monster begins relating his story to Victor he again references *Paradise Lost* and draws parallels from himself to Satan and from Victor to God, telling him “Remember that I am thy creature; I ought to be thy Adam, but I am rather the fallen angel, whom thou drivest from joy for no misdeed” (Shelley, 87). The allusions to *Paradise Lost* continue throughout the book as the monster becomes increasingly malicious and desirous of revenge, as Satan does when he falls from grace.

When the monster finally does approach the De Laceys, he is careful to only speak to the old man at first, as the man’s blindness prevents him from judging the monster on appearance and allows him to judge the monster instead by his pleasant speech and personality. Although the old man treats the monster with generosity and kindness, the other De Laceys return unexpectedly and react with the same terror and fury exhibited by the other villagers, attacking and driving him away, and later abandoning him to live elsewhere. This betrayal and abandonment from the only people he loved and trusted dashed the monster’s hope of gaining acceptance into human society, and incited him to vow revenge on humanity for this betrayal:

There was none among the myriads of men that existed who would pity or assist me; and should I feel kindness towards my enemies? No; from that moment I declared everlasting war against the species, and more than all, against him who

had formed me and sent me forth to this insupportable misery (Shelley, 125-6).

Or, in other words, the monster feels that if the whole of humanity hates and rejects him, there is no reason why he should continue to treat them with gentleness and respect. Instead, the monster decides to revenge himself on the people that caused him so much suffering, especially his creator, who brought him into the world and left him without any hope for happiness.

After leaving the De Lacey's, the monster seeks out his creator to demand that Victor create a creature that could love him despite his monstrous appearance, that creature being a woman created in the same manner as the monster, and just as hideous. The monster pleads with Victor to allow him this small measure of happiness and relief from his hated isolation, and for this the monster promises Victor to leave Europe and live peacefully with his mate in South America. The monster argues eloquently that a companion will remove any violent impulses from his nature, saying "If I have no ties and no affections, hatred and vice must be my portion; the love of another will destroy the cause of my crimes . . . My vices are the children of a forced solitude that I abhor, and my virtues will necessarily arise when I live in communion with an equal" (Shelley, 137). After much persuasion, Victor reluctantly agrees to create a female companion for the monster, who departs to await completion. Victor works on the second creation nearly to completion, but at the last minute changes his mind and destroys the female, with the excuse of protecting humanity from a race of demonical children. By destroying the monster's last hope of companionship and happiness, Victor ironically does not protect humanity, but instead causes the deaths of those closest to him by leaving the monster with no other emotional outlet but revenge.

Revenge is indeed the motivation for the remainder of the monster's actions. After killing Clerval and Elizabeth, the monster leads Victor further and further north, until they meet Walton's ship in the arctic. Victor eventually dies on Walton's ship, and the monster, lonely and tormented by remorse for his actions, comes to weep over Victor's body, asking his pardon for his crimes. Walton chastises the monster for weeping over destruction that he himself brought about, but the monster responds in a tone of extreme agony and grief that while Victor suffered as a result of his crimes,

“he suffered not . . . the ten-thousandth portion of the anguish that was mine during the lingering detail of its execution. . . . My heart was fashioned to be susceptible of love and sympathy, and when wrenched by misery to vice and hatred, it did not endure the violence of the change without torture such as you cannot even imagine” (Shelley, 210). As the monster asks Walton, “Am I to be thought the only criminal, when all mankind sinned against me?” the people who reject the creature as monstrous are the very cause of his eventual turn to evil, and so in that manner create their own enemy. However, after Victor’s death the monster wishes no longer to be mankind’s enemy, and makes his final decision as an outsider to remove himself permanently from humanity, dying by fire to end his suffering and the suffering he inflicted on those around him.

Although throughout Shelley’s *Frankenstein*, the monster never asks anything of humanity but love and acceptance, his hideous outward appearance prevents humanity from reacting to him with anything but hate and fear. The monster’s own creator rejects him in disgust and horror, abandoning him to fend for himself only moments after the monster’s life begins. The villagers drive him away, and the De Lacey, whom he admires and loves, also reject him, destroying his hope of ever gaining human acceptance. Victor destroys the monster’s last hope of any kind of companionship, even that of another monster, when he breaks his promise and destroys his creation of a female monster hideous enough to accept the monster’s appearance. As the monster is left with no chance for acceptance or happiness, he turns to revenge on his creator, the cause of his suffering. Although he eventually succeeds in causing Victor’s death, the monster suffers terribly in committing the evil acts, and after Victor’s death the monster ends his hated life of isolation with a lonely death in the barren arctic.

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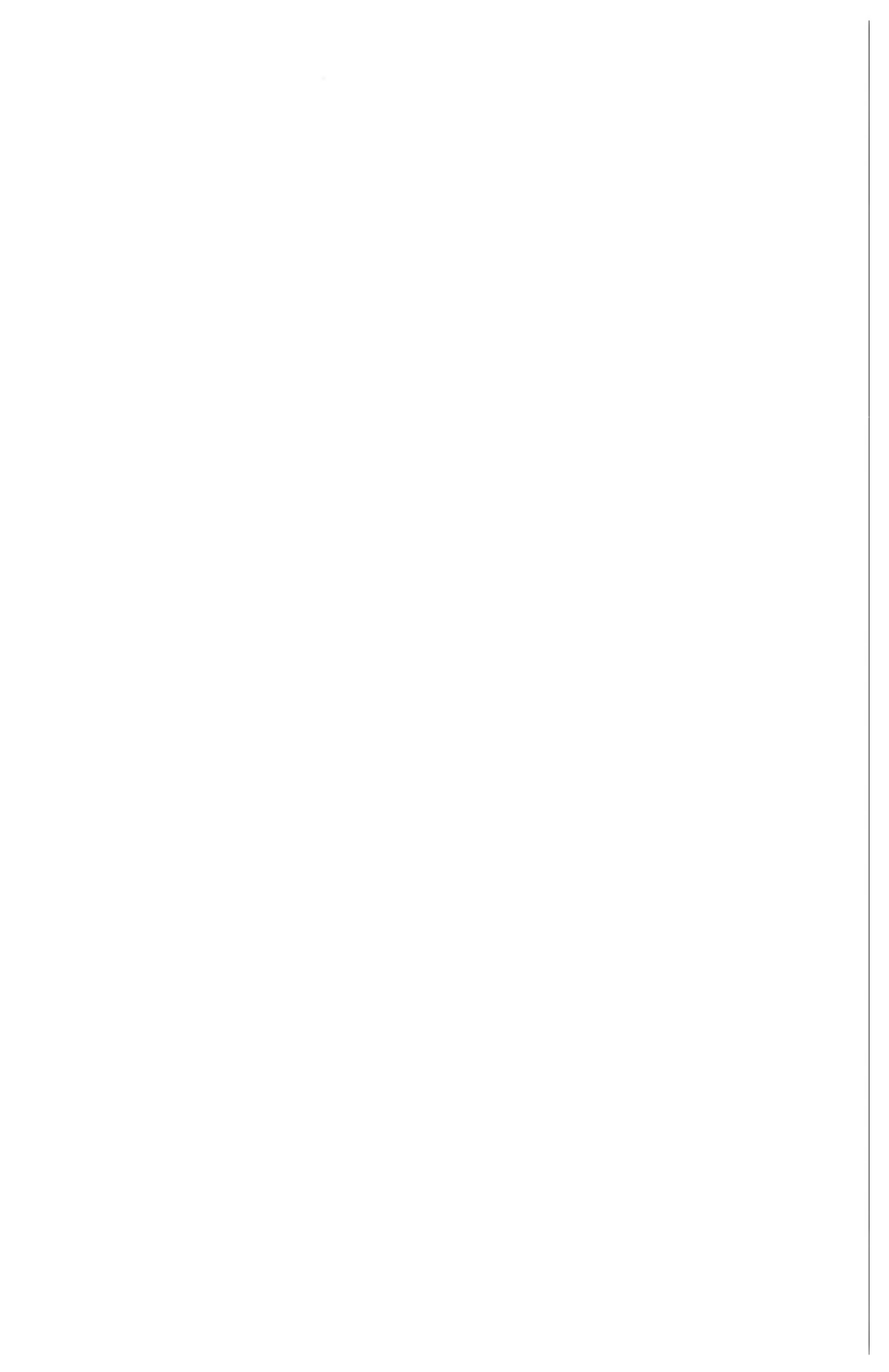
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Eliah Drake-Raue  
*Burning the Midnight Oil*  
Collage, 22" x 16"



# A Magic Solution: “Sumimasen”

Nobunari Neyoshi

One day a few years ago, a psychologist arrived at an airport in Tokyo. He was involved in a small trouble in front of the entrance gate. Although he eagerly explained the reasons, a security staff had not allowed him to pass the gate. Nevertheless, once he said “I’m sorry,” their attitude towards him suddenly changed, and he was easily able to pass through the gate.

The Japanese word “*Sumimasen*” is mainly used when someone expresses apology. The security staff probably interpreted his “I’m sorry” as this word. In this country, *Sumimasen* seems even a magic word for visitors. Many foreigners who have visited Japan must have been surprised at the effectiveness of this word in difficult situations. Moreover, it obviously reflects the remarkable character of Japanese culture.

*Sumimasen* is generally considered as just an expression of apology. However, it means not only apology, but also *Sumimasen* is used in various other situations. Therefore, this word doesn’t just coincide with “I’m sorry.” We often use it in the situation where we should express gratitude.

An example is when an American student who studied Japanese in college first visited Japan. In a train station, he found that an old woman with a big suitcase was climbing the stairs. Of course, he offered to carry it for her. When they arrived upstairs, the old woman told him “*Sumimasen*” which he had not expected. He wondered why she apologized to him instead of saying “thank you.”

According to a cultural scholar, Kunihiko Yanagita (1951), *Sumimasen* came from the denial form of the adjective “clear,” so it means the condition when our mind is not clear. Despite the fact that we have received kindness, even because of the one-way kindness, our mind fell into an uncomfortable condition.

On the other hand, a psychoanalyst, Taterou Doi (1971) proposes another theory. He states that the origin of *Sumimasen* is the denial form of the verb “complete.” Therefore, it indicates the condition where a process in our interaction has not yet been

completed and will continue. In other words, we must acknowledge and remunerate the kindness we are given as soon as possible.

The word "*Sumimasen*" has a lot in common with a Japanese word, "*Gomen-nasai*," which approximately corresponds to "I'm sorry." However, there are some differences between them. When we apologize to someone in casual relationships, such as among friends or family members, we say "*Gomen-nasai*." On the other hand, we say "*Sumimasen*" mainly to people we aren't so familiar with. While we can directly express gratitude by saying "Arigatou" in close relationships, we are required to make efforts to remunerate the kindness whenever given it in an unfamiliar relationship. In other words, we primarily apologize for bothering someone. One-way kindness is allowed only in close relationships.

*Sumimasen* doesn't mean only a simple apology. The differences between an English "I'm sorry" and *Sumimasen* even reveal differences in each culture. In the Western culture, apologizing suggested that we admit our failure. Once we say "I'm sorry," we have to be fully responsible for the quarrel and might be punished. In contrast, *Sumimasen* allows all people concerned with the quarrel to equally share the responsibility among them.

The psychologist who found out the importance of apology in the airport later said in his book, "I totally recommend Western people to apologize without any excuses if they are involved in a trouble in Japan. Eventually, saying '*Sumimasen*' is the best way to resolve any difficult situations."

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# The Moon

Lora Schallert

The last seven years of my life was spent working with children in one way or another. No doubt my past jobs left me with a sense of fulfillment, but they also left me with a need to branch out into a career I could count on to support myself. No matter what parents and advisors say, leaving work with a smile is no substitute for a full belly and health insurance. I had to find a job that could be just as fulfilling emotionally as well as something more nutritionally supportive. After a year and a half of prerequisites I entered the Registered Nursing program I am currently in.

Two years of no social life, scraping for change and a small voice questioning, “Did I make the right choice?”—this was the easy part of nursing school. But a year and a half spent combing through textbooks and journal articles still left me nervous for my final quarter. We were to spend 120 hours working with a nurse in a clinical setting of our choice. I chose to work on the pediatric floor of a local hospital.

Kids tend to make an impact on people’s lives: Not just a pebble dropping to earth, but more like the moon landing in your front yard. Even after working with children for as long as I have, I find they still have a profound effect on my life and the choices I make. In the hospital I found myself amazed as the moon fell from the sky.

Though I had many memorable experiences on the pediatric unit, one in particular stands out. It is not learning how to monitor a three-week-old infant for signs of respiratory distress, or the long drives in the back of an ambulance to and from Seattle hospitals. It is not the inventiveness required for working with kids or even playing basketball with a nine-year-old in the hallways. What stands out the most is a fifteen-minute conversation I had with a 14-year-old boy.

A five-minute seizure at a drug rehabilitation facility landed him on my floor as my patient. Multiple somatic complaints made him request medications frequently. He complained of full body aches and intense nausea. His heart rate, respiratory rate, and blood pressure all indicated he could not possibly be in as much

pain as he was indicating, yet medications were requested and given. Letting this information absorb into my brain, I realized he was potentially seeking attention. Since he had no visitors and would always respond well to me, I decided to offer him some one-on-one human contact.

As I entered the room he sat up and smiled at me. I pulled up a chair and asked him how he was doing. Initially, he shrugged and did not say much. But as I asked more questions and the conversation continued, he began to share his life story with me. He began by telling me about his family history and his drug addiction. His sister lived in another state and was battling a heroine addiction accompanied by prostitution. Over two months had passed since he had seen or heard from his mother. Cocaine was his “drug of choice” and he had been off of it for six months. The past two months had been spent at the rehabilitation facility, purging his body of other drugs and learning the social and mental skills he needed to stay clean.

This young boy, not even old enough to have a driving permit, had already experienced a harder life than most adults. As I sat in the chair and listened, he began to tell me his thoughts about his future career goals: he wanted to be a nurse or a drug rehabilitation counselor. An overwhelming sense of hope entered me as I began to realize this child had the potential and the drive to turn his life around.

He asked me about the schooling required to be a nurse and if it was hard. I told him the truth: it is incredibly difficult, but I can not imagine it being any more difficult than conquering a drug addiction. Did I like nursing? I love nursing. No hesitation when answering this question. Thinking about the past few weeks, I realized I always left the hospital with a smile and I never dreaded an upcoming shift. After a few more minutes of chatting, the conversation came to a close. I left the room as he lay down to take a nap.

After our talk, he no longer reported such high pain, nor did he request the medications he previously wanted. All he needed was a little bit of one-on-one time with another individual. Giving him the attention he needed allowed me to find security in my own choices. I realize in answering his questions about school and the benefits of becoming a nurse, I was able to find an answer to my

own question. I have made the right choice about my future. The moon landed in my front yard, and it was in the shape of a 14-year-old boy.







Bob Porter  
*Logo design:  
Issue of the Year*



# American Elders: Patronized, Overlooked, and Concealed

Kate Lynn Vredevoogd

American culture is rich with youth and beauty. It is fresh, and full of new beginnings, representing a golden opportunity to wipe the slate clean and start again. Around every corner, in every hip café, on billboards and magazine covers, Americans flaunt their youthful appeal. But something is clearly missing. In the quest for wrinkle-free faces and svelte figures, an entire generation of people are disregarded and forgotten. Where have our elders gone?

Many cultures value age and venerate the old. Wisdom is often considered to increase with time, and therefore, being the wisest, elders are treated with respect. Tami, an official representative for the Nooksack Native American Tribe, tells stories that have been passed on through generations. In her late fifties, she feels that she has finally earned the right to tell the stories that symbolize her culture because she has enough “age under [her] belt” (Woodrich). In Tami’s tribe, all ages of the spectrum are appreciated: the youth are valued for their potential and innocence, and the older members are cherished for their life experience and knowledge.

In American culture, a majority of the value is put on youth. We have products to make our skin defy gravity, to cover our grey hair, and to enhance our sexual performance; surgeries to remove the weight that comes with age; and ubiquitous magazine articles teaching us how to “Look five years younger in five easy steps” while bombarding us with images clarifying which generation beauty belongs to. According to *The Fountain of Age* by Betty Friedan, one out of 290 faces in a *Vogue* magazine was of a woman over sixty, two out of 116 of the illustrated images in *Vanity Fair* included women over sixty, and one percent of 201 magazine ads in *Esquire* consisted of men over sixty. Friedan concludes that “the editors, art directors, ad agency executives, and advertisers shared a belief that the face of anyone ‘older’ was an object of revulsion to

Americans, which had to be hidden from view in order to sell the product” (38). Images of older people are deliberately omitted from public advertisements. As a result, our culture is conditioned to believe that beauty lies in youth and anything beyond that requires alteration or a veil.

Our denial of aging transcends advertising and reaches the point of actual physical relocation. Rather than allowing our elders to grow old around us, we tuck them away in nice little homes where they can corrode alone together, and our society can maintain its image of youth and beauty. Ironically, incarcerating our older members of society can result in their depression and mental or physical deterioration, which can be mistaken for senility, but this isn't inevitable. Thai culture, like many others, is one that values its elders. During my trip to Thailand, I was astounded by the large number of older citizens I saw on a daily basis, compared to what is standard in American culture. Each home included at least three generations of a family living together and often more. The grandparents were treated with the care and respect they deserved, and they lived their full lives with family rather than strangers in a nursing home.

Because we hide the old, we cling to our formative years out of fear of the unknown. We don't see what happens after the wrinkles set in and our hair follicles shrink to half their former size, and this creates uneasiness towards life after youth. Old age is now an unexplored and unaddressed cavern waiting for us when we've passed our prime. Our elders are no longer respected for the wisdom they carry and are now enigmatic creatures whose bodies have been eaten away by the beast of time. We are not exposed to older people as part of our daily lives, and therefore, we are left to form our own conceptions of who they are and what part they play in society. Friedan claims they are misperceived as “helpless, senile, dependent, solitary, sick, poor old people” (39). When asked to describe older people for a study, doctors, occupational therapists, nurses, institutionalized older persons, people of all ages, and even gerontologists used the words “childlike, mentally incompetent, unattractive, lonely, dependent, and powerless” (Friedan 50).

Due to our rejection of old age, our society has lost an important element. Wise elders are no longer who we turn to for advice because they are stashed away to preserve our culture's

youthful image. In an attempt to define the mystery of old age, we have discarded the wise crone and replaced her with a meager woman unable to eat graham crackers unassisted. The loss of an important icon in American culture has left both the youth and the elders fighting alone, when they could be fighting together.

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Tyler Parnell  
*Logo design:  
Issue of the Year*





# Reflections on Charles Johnson's "Our 'Post-Literate' World"

Kaye Werner

A lack of time and toned muscles in my brain lead me to attempt a quick response, rather than a deeper reflection, on this essay.

I find that I am afflicted with the "decline of literacy" both in reading and in writing that Charles Johnson, a writer-in-residence for the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, describes. College students are reading less and are less able to understand and interpret what they read, he finds, and their writing is mediocre and detached from its necessary discipline. Reasoning ability for, among other things, making choices in a democracy, and awareness of meaning in culture and consciousness are lost, according to Johnson. His solution is to experience and interact with books that are challenging, inspiring, esthetically stimulating, innovative, complex, and transforming.

I have been a recent college student for just this quarter so my current perspective is short. However I first graduated from college many years ago, so much of my view is down the corridor of the years after a college graduation. I agree wholeheartedly with Johnson in his analysis, though I think there has always been a literacy deficit in U.S. culture: I don't know how much of a "decline" exists now rather than a continuing weakness.

It's ironic that this article is brought to my attention today. Just this morning I was bemoaning my own lack of imagination—my thoughts automatically jumping to previous events, rather than creating and wondering about new possibilities. Even my dreams rehash the day's events, more or less. I was wondering how I could look ahead, create ahead, in my thoughts or daydreams or dreams. In the past few weeks I was thinking that I need to learn to write—because this is such an excruciatingly difficult process for me (I've been working on this short piece for about eight hours now!). I never thought of writing to help me think or, better yet, to help me imagine.

I am one of those who have slipped into illiteracy. I have avoided writing letters, emails or anything else as much as possible

for years, and I have probably not written anything at all looking at what other people had to say. Any writing I did was of the self-absorbed journaling type (which has advantages but it's still self-focused). Most of my reading has consisted of self-help non-fiction in various areas, murder mysteries, or internet alternative news media. Keeping up with the news does produce for me an unyielding sense of despair and only by virtue of a sub-rosa cognitive dissonance do I maintain some optimism. I still have, though, a large need for escape from the pain. It's difficult when the forays into literature lead to more despair, as when I recently chose to read Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*. At least there was investigation of compassion, of caring as well as of pain.

What Johnson says rings so true to me as I see that I have a fairly analytical view of the world, a thinking view. But where is my moral engagement? Have I fallen, following along with our illiterate culture, into a "moral erosion" such as Johnson mentions? Am I living a life so isolated from the inspiration, the demands, the probings of artists who demonstrate aspirations for the "finest human values" that I can remain disconnected?

And I do feel disconnected—from art, from heart—in a feeling that percolates beneath my day to day wanderings. Fiction, poetry, drama, could help bring those feeling more to the surface to engage in "making sense of the world of consciousness and culture." Johnson's mention of interplay of consciousness and language is illuminating for me—exploring writing as exploring consciousness. I love his spiraling (in one passage) around "word," "meaning," "experience," "predecessors," "reasoning," "vision," "sense"—weaving a process, an interaction with consciousness, with unconscious awareness.

Johnson connects the re-vivifying of literature with community. I agree. Art is necessary but not sufficient to heal the consciousness. It must be interactive with a vital community that is not only intellectually, but also emotionally, spiritually, even physically analyzing, responding to, and contributing to the art, and is operating within a context, an overall cultural question of what is good for the whole—all of the people, all of the planet, all of the time.

There are new demands on our times—demands to become new philosophers, historians, scientists, lovers and all

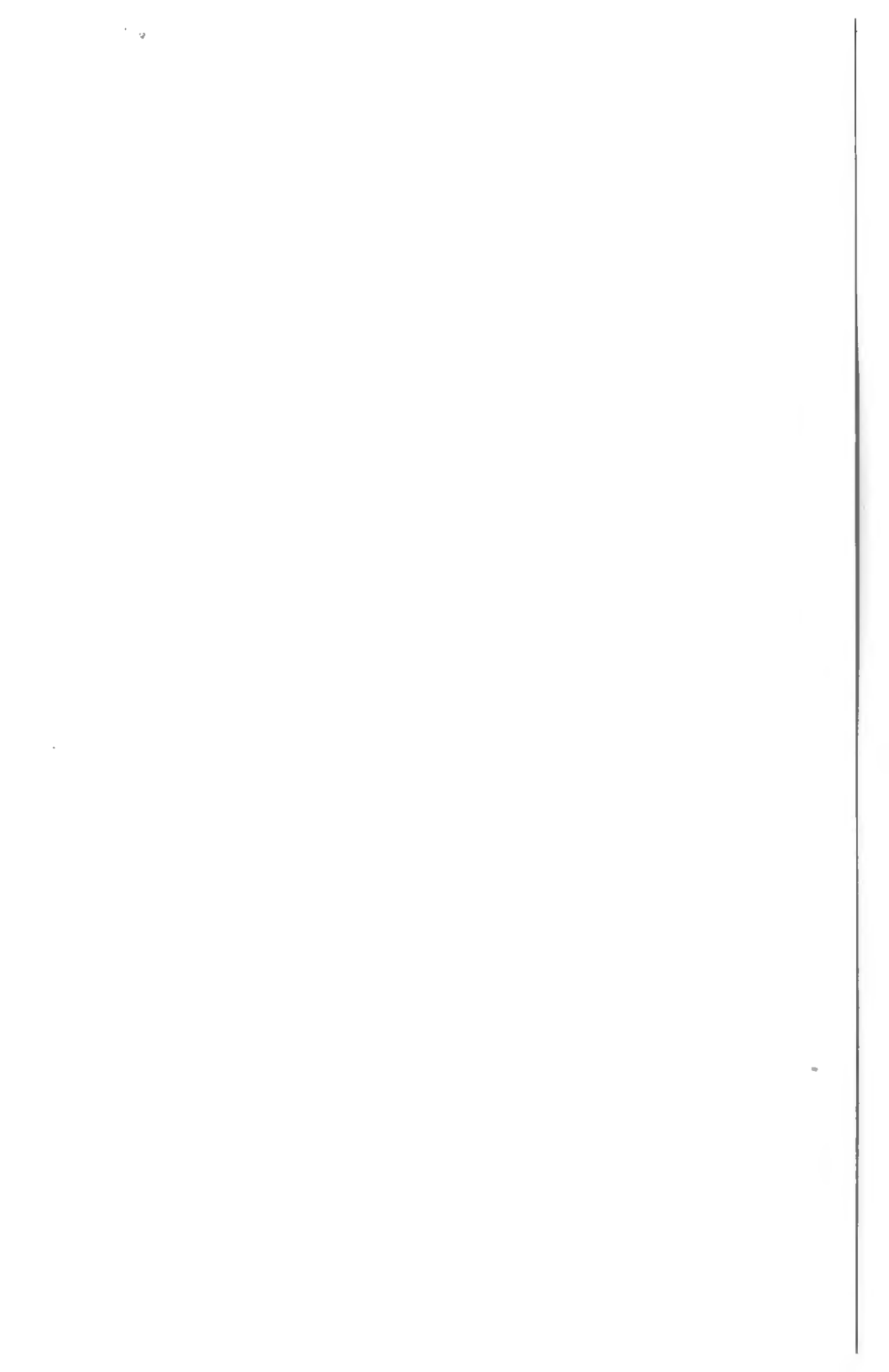
manner of committed consciousnesses, as well as new artists of a living language.

I did, after all, take time for this response. Now I need to flex the muscles in my brain and in my heart and learn to write.

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