

DIVERGENT/CONVERGENT
SCIENCE/COMMERCE

Journal of the University 102 Students - Spring 2015

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ДИВЕРГЕНТ\ СОНВЕРГЕНТ

Journal of the University 102 Students
Spring 2015



University
of Victoria

DIVERGENT/CONVERGENT

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Cover image: *Timeless Expression*, by Shyah Delarom.

Pre-historic techniques that were replicated in the Uni 102

Archeology class. Created with the same materials as in paleolithic

times: animal fat, charcoal, oxidized iron, and ochre.

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University 102 is an introductory course in the Social Sciences. It is part of the University 101 program that offers free, non-credit, academic courses to students who have faced barriers to post-secondary education. Respect and value for the students' knowledge, experiences, and differences are the foundations of the program. The program strives to be inclusive and to foster collaborative learning.

thoughtful
intentional
expressive

University 102

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**Changing
paradigms
is the most
effective way
of breaking a
system's goals.**
- Beth Smith

A Note From The Dean:

Dr. Catherine Krull, Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences

As Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences, I offer my heartfelt congratulations to all the graduates of the Uni 102 program. Hats off to you!

The American poet, Ralph Waldo Emerson, once observed, “The purpose of life is not to be happy. It is to be useful, to be honorable, to be compassionate, to have it make some difference that you have lived and lived well.” While I don’t necessarily agree with his views on happiness, this volume of writings shows undeniably that the second part of his thought rings true: Uni 102 students this year have made a difference.

The social sciences is a fascinating discipline that challenges the way that people think about society and the world in which we live. The following insightful writings demonstrate how these Uni 102 students think critically about the world as they share their individual experiences. I praise the courage in these writings from individuals who have overcome barriers to be back in the classroom. I was also a mature student when I made the decision to pursue more education – it was both rewarding and slightly terrifying. I began expecting to receive “all the answers” from my professors, and I was a bit frustrated when despite learning a great deal, all I had when finishing a course were more questions. But as these students have learned, having questions is a valuable thing. The continuing quest to answer them is how they will create change.

I challenge the Uni 101/102 students to continue asking questions, seeking answers, and having an impact on society with their thoughts and actions. This volume shows that they are in the process of doing so. It is a genuine privilege for me to be associated with the Uni 101/102 program, particularly the students, staff, faculty, and volunteers who have worked so hard to make this volume possible.

The Effects of Exercise on the Brain

by Terri-Lynne Beaton

Almost everyone knows that exercise helps with many health issues, such as heart disease, weight loss, diabetes and many other diseases. Did you know that exercise can actually change your brain chemistry?

Here is my story: In 2010, I went to an Epilepsy conference in Victoria, BC. The main speaker was Brian Christie, from the University of Victoria, and his topic was exercise and the brain. I knew that exercise helped many diseases such as heart, lung, diabetes, and depression. I did not know that physical exercise could actually regenerate cell growth in the brain. This really excited me as I have memory problems. I decided to start an exercise program twice a week.

I lost over fifty pounds and gained heart health. Wow what a side effect! After a year, I was able to go to night school. It was hard, but I was able to grasp concepts and pay attention to the instructor. I managed to graduate in 2012.

I have done further research to see what actually happens when we exercise and what Dr. Christie has found about how “exercise can stimulate new adult brain cells or neurons.”¹ Dr. Christie was one of the first to discover that physical exercise can stimulate the growth of brain cells in the hippocampus. This is important because the hippocampus is the area responsible for memory and learning.

¹<http://ctr.uvic.ca/members-v15-146/members/profiles-%3E-a---c/brian-christie>

One of first clues about exercise-induced changes in the brain came when a group of scientists decided to give mice unlimited access to an exercise wheel. They compared these rats with a group that did not have access to an exercise wheel. In the rats that exercised, they found that the number of new nerve cells in the hippocampus doubled. Later when the scientists taught the rats to navigate the water maze, the runners learned faster and took a more direct route.

One study found that “Brain cells can improve intellect only if they join the existing neural network. One way to pull neurons into the network is to learn something.” Exercise plays a role in improving this and, although “How exercise remakes brains on a molecular level is not yet fully understood... research suggests that exercise prompts something called brain-derived neurotropic factor, or B.D.N.F.” Scientists can measure B.D.N.F. levels in the blood.

I am glad to find out that physical exercise can stimulate regrowth of neurons. Even though I do not fully understand the science of brain cell regrowth, I am sure glad that scientists have studied this area. I feel I have benefitted from this knowledge.

Misogyny and the Patriarchal System

by Beth Smith

"Patriarchy is the shelter that houses misogyny"

- Zama Ndlovu,

A member of the National Planning Committee, Zama Ndlovu states that patriarchy is the "root cause of oppression against women." Today, we continue to participate in and perpetuate this system of oppression. Why do we do it? What would it take to change this?

Key Terms:

Patriarchy: a social system in which: males hold primary power; males predominate in roles of political leadership, moral authority, social privilege and control of property; and, in the domain of the family, fathers or father-figures hold authority over women and children. (Wikipedia)

Misogyny: hatred, dislike, or mistrust of women, or prejudice against women. (Miriam-Webster dictionary)

Medieval scholars, based on the writings of medieval clerics, argued "misogyny and patriarchy as coterminous is inaccurate and tends to weaken the analytical value of both terms."² Given the definitions, clearly one is a social system and the other an attitude which substantiates that system. Propositionally, it's difficult to see how both terms are the same in extent and scope when we all participate in the system but not everyone is misogynistic. It is Individuals that comprise a social system.

Patriarchy is the paradigm; it is the mindset of misogyny that builds the goals, structures and rules of this system. Why are we, as a society still locked into outdated beliefs despite the fact that women have proven themselves capable in male dominated arenas of commerce, governance, science, medicine, law, engineering, etc.? Consider this, some women in Canada finally won the right to vote in 1921. Aboriginals were excluded from this right until 1951. Sexist jokes are still prevalent and common throughout much of the material comedians use today. Why do sexist rap lyrics with clearly misogynistic messages have the status of popularity? Why are assertive women referred to as 'bitches' while men are considered authoritative? Who benefits?

By interrupting the paradigm and adopting a different mindset, you risk being ostracized by family, friends, and the community at large. We take the path of least resistance and, voluntarily or not, consciously or not, follow that path. Being part of a community validates our existence. It is said that "Powerful forces encourage us to keep ourselves in a state of denial, to rationalize" in following those paradigms³. Considering that the military, the police, the courts, the prisons, and the government, as well as religion, education, politics, and culture, are all born out of a patriarchal system, it becomes clear how important it is to maintain the paradigm.

We take the path of least resistance and, voluntarily or not, consciously or not, follow that path.

According to Donella Meadows, a pioneering scientist who wrote an influential paper on system leverage points, "Paradigms are the sources for systems. From them, from shared social agreements about the nature of reality, come system goals and information flows..."⁴. This statement summarizes why we perpetuate the very same paradigms holding us in the patriarchal system. Changing paradigms is the most effective way of breaking a system's goals. The benefit of oppression is always power and there can be

no moral justification in that dynamic. Power is not easily taken away but it can be won.

The biggest changes begin with brave individuals who challenge these paradigms. Linda McQuaig is a brilliant Canadian economist, in addition to wearing a host of other 'hats', and a woman who Conrad Black said "should be horsewhipped" after McQuaig dug into his financial dealings in the U.S.⁵. Through her and my own personal experience, I have come to believe that one of the biggest threats to misogyny is education. Perhaps that is why education for women has been restricted for hundreds of years and continues to be denied in many places. How do you challenge an oppressive system unless you recognize the forms that oppression takes and have the tools to deconstruct it?

School curriculums include such authors as Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, William Faulkner, John Updike, John Steinbeck, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Washington Irving, and Henry James to name a few. What about female authors such as Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Kate Chopin, Sylvia Plath, Zora Neale Hurston, Andrienne Rich, Toni Morrison, Alice Walker, and Maxine Hong Kingston? Different texts construct our social identities and positions within a society.

The benefit of oppression is always power and there can be no moral justification in that dynamic.

There is much to be done towards shifting the paradigm of patriarchy. Mass media will continue to perpetuate that paradigm as long as there is a market for it. It is up to us as individuals to understand that sexism divides us as a species and that patriarchy is a system of male privilege (oppression). How far off the path of least resistance you are prepared to go, shifting the paradigm, depends on how much you are willing to risk.

In conclusion, there is no doubt that gains in women's rights and empowerment have been made. Anyone watching old movies from the 40's & 50's can see the differences in attitudes between men and women. Education is key in changing the paradigm of a patriarchal system, for in every woman educated and empowered lies the hope of a better future where oppression has lost its value and gender, its challenges.

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Designing buildings
that encourage
people to
congregate socially
gives the feeling
of ownership
rather than
disenfranchisement.

- Gillian McDougall

Pome

by Chey Hjelt

*WHEN THEY WERE FIRST BROUGHT TOGETHER
THEIR SWORDS WERE BROKEN AS THEY MET
NIGHT OF QUIET SIGHING
DAY OF THE LONG BREATH.*

She loved this program, riding her digital horse Maximus, learning to use her digital sword against the practice programs who constantly attacked her, she enjoyed the freedom and the precision she was capable of thanks to the digital downloads she had undergone...and she loved that she was free...free of the Matrix and free to be a human being again.

There was a certain amount of guilt however, her Matrix brother and sister were not free, they thought she had been killed in a car accident. Her mother and father were forever lost, having already been harvested by the machines. Their loss still haunted her, but there was therapy in her training.

She was suddenly attacked, her and her steed, arrows came at her and she swatted them out of the air as if they were beach balls, then out of the woods came the Ninjas, programed experts in the art of death. She engaged them, her sword singing, the chemical processes in her brain falling like dominoes in her head. She knew this was unreal, and that knowledge gave her superhuman abilities, in short order those programs were dead.

“Not bad!” came the voice of her savior, Charlie the man who had gotten her out of the Matrix and into the real

world, her tormentor who helped designed the training episodes that honed her mind into the weapon she was going to become in opposition against the machines.

“Thanks Charlie, its my favorite program...” she said.

“I know”...said Charlie his voice oddly cold, “I also know you have been spending your every waking hour in it, what is wrong with real life?”

“its not about that charlie, I just want to be ready for when I face them again...” she said.

“but you enjoy this...more then you enjoy real life...which is why i'm here.”

“What do you mean?”

“what if you could go back, back into the Matrix? be anything you want?”

“the matrix isn't real Charlie it's a prison...i don't want to go back.”

“really?” said Charlie “what if i could offer you just that? to be safe again? warm again? to be part of the winning team?”

“what the heck is this Charlie? another training scenario? winning team? i'm out and i'm not going back in!”

“I was the one who got you out! but you know what? I was wrong...the machines are going to win, that's why I think this...will be best for everyone... join me back in the Matrix or die.”

her mind swum for the first time since getting out she was genuinely afraid, threatened by a man she loved and admired, the same man who had freed her..the same man who was now drawing a digital sword!

somewhat weakly she managed...”No..I wont join you! not in that! never in that...”

immediately he struck at her, his skill was amazing, it was all she could do to stay alive, if she died here...she died for real...

“Are you sure you won't reconsider? this is your last chance! if you don't agree to go back in with me I will kill you! make your decision Coppertop!”

in her head something snapped she became truly free, she stopped caring whether she would live or die, stopped worrying whether it was right or wrong, she made a decision, she was not going to die, she was not going to submit! Charlie was wrong! He was wrong to ask something like this of her and for that she was going to beat him...no matter how skilled he was. From the beginning of their fight Charlie was stronger, faster and more skilled but she had determination on her side! throughout the fight he tried to convince her he was right in every way, in every way he failed.

eventually he stood over her, she was beaten, but still she resisted...

“This is your last chance...join me or die...”

she watched seemingly helpless “no...I would rather die than go back to living that lie!”

“So be it...” said Charlie preparing to kill her...

then the sword dropped, and something strange happened she caught the blade with both her hands...it broke somewhere in the middle and she turned it quickly and stabbed Charlie in the neck, he fell back startled and beaten... She looked over him feeling nothing he had tried to betray and kill her, she still loved him...

Suddenly she was back in the real world, aboard the ship FREEDOM and every member of the crew including charlie was smiling and greeting her warmly...

“we had to make sure, that you were completely free... that you didn't want to go back,”

Said the captain, Charlie beamed at her.

She got up, looked Charlie in the eye, and SLUGGED him on the jaw as hard as she could....

Then she walked out.

“except for that last part, I say she passed!” said the Captain...Charlie smiled too...he agreed with her.

LIFE

by Bonnie Frederick

Life is not about keeping score. Life is not about who you have dated, are dating, or haven't dated at all. It isn't about who you kissed or what sport you play, or which guy or girl likes you. It's not about the shoes, or your hair or the color of your skin, or where you live or go to school. In fact it's not about grades, money, clothes, or colleges that accept you or not. Life isn't about if you have a lot of friends, or if you are alone, and it's not about how accepted or unaccepted you are. Life just isn't about that.

But life is about who you love and who you hurt. It's about how you feel about yourself. It's about trust, happiness, respect, and compassion. It's about sticking up for your friends and replacing inner hate with love. Life is about avoiding jealousy, overcoming ignorance, and building confidence. It's about what you say and what you mean. It's about seeing people for who they are and not for what they have. Most of all, it's about choosing to use your life to touch someone else's in a way that could never be achieved otherwise, like being a friend to someone when they are down. Life is about being yourself and pretending not to be someone you're not. Be honest to yourself and others and you will live the life most people only dream of. LIFE is what you choose it to be and we only have one shot at it so make it the best you have to offer. Sometimes just sitting back and realizing that there are people who are less fortunate than we are, makes us appreciate what we have and live our lives to the fullest.

THE ABILITY

by Bonnie Frederick

I only have a grade 8 education and never thought I had the ability to do great things. Being able to take the 102 uni class has given me the ability to do and think things I never thought possible. Ability is to look at a blank page and create a poem or write a story. Ability is to stare into the eyes of fear, and come out stronger because of it. Ability is to walk into a room full of strangers, and come out with some new friends. Ability is to admit you were wrong when you were wrong. Ability is to get back up when you have fallen down. Ability has so many meanings and the one I like the most is the ability to believe when everything seems lost. ABILITY..... is a simple word with a complex meaning. For many, ability is never found. But for ALL ability is within. Ability stares everyone in the face at one time or another; whether your ability is how well you learn at school, how well you flip at dancing, how smart you are at school, or how great of a voice you have when you sing. Ability is the capacity to cope by being in a new learning environment and to be in a group setting with strangers. Ability is the capacity to be reassured that I'm not alone, although I was scared to try incase I failed. You and me, we all have the ability! For some ability is lost by never trying. So the more you try, the more ability you will have to learn and do new things. Ability is mine. Ability is yours. Ability is within.

STRUGGLING

by Bonnie Frederick

I work part-time for an organization that deals with mental health and addictions. For the last 4 years I have worked with many clients one-on-one, helping them to live in a cleaner and healthier environment. I specialize in OCD and people with hoarding issues. During the early time at my job I struggled to understand why people hoard stuff or live in a dirty place. A couple of times I had meltdowns, especially when I would come across some really bad places.

I did a few things to help me cope with the really hard challenges. I watched the show “Hoarding: Buried Alive” on TV and I got to understand what and why people hoard and live in the environment that they do. I also spoke with my clients one-on-one to see where they are coming from. It was so touching to hear each and everyone’s own story. Some had a tragic experience and the need to cling on to things, others had lost a loved one, some were abused, some came from poor families and had nothing growing up and others turned to drugs to numb out some past experience they did not want to deal with life on life terms. Hoarding is an illness most people don't understand.

I also work with community support workers and management to try and overcome any issues that might arise. During my time working I have helped over 400 clients live a cleaner and healthier lifestyle, not to mention the other basic cleaning jobs I've done. I understand people can get sick from some of the environments they live in. So it's my job to help them overcome issues they may not be able to do on their own. I have had so much more compassion and understanding towards people since I have been doing this job.

I myself once struggled with addiction issues, so I am able to understand more of what they are going through. So many of my clients are strong people who

have had their challenges just like I have had, and I do believe each person deserves good self esteem and a nice healthy place to live.

The management and support workers have been supportive of myself and the clients involved. There is no judging or looking down upon someone. They are treated with the utmost respect and are treated as an equal. I have faced just about every possible challenge, and I know what it feels like to be alone and have no one. Something that seems small to one person can mean big things to another.

There is no judging or looking down upon someone. They are treated with the utmost respect and are treated as an equal.

The management and support workers have not only helped clients, but they have also helped me get back on my feet and stay on my feet. They treat me like I'm special, cared for, and that I matter. They also make me feel like I'm part of a team. My self esteem and pride is the best it has been in many years. Plus I've learned to be more caring, loving, and compassionate towards others. I am truly grateful for all the wonderful staff who has been there for me through the good times and bad. They saw something special in me and believed in me. And I would not be where I am today without their love, caring, and support.

Boycott/Girlcott

by Desi Sloan

This is an introduction into the origin of the term boycott and how, through the passage of time, it has evolved into a present day phenomenon. A boycott is an act of voluntarily abstaining from using, buying goods or dealing with a person, organization, or country, as an expression of peaceful protest, usually for social or political reasons. Sometimes, it can be a form of consumer activism.

The word boycott entered the English language during the Irish “Land War”, and is eponymously derived from the name of Captain Charles Boycott. He was the land agent of an absentee landlord, Lord Erne. Boycott lived in Lough Mask House near Ballinrobe, in County Mayo, Ireland, and was subject to social ostracism organized by The Irish Land League in 1880.

As harvests had been poor that year, Lord Erne offered his tenants a ten percent reduction in their rents. In September of that year, protesting tenants demanded a twenty five percent reduction, Lord Erne refused. Boycott then attempted to evict eleven tenants from the land.

Charles Stewart Parnell, in a speech in Ennis prior to the events in Lough Mask, proposed that, when dealing with tenants who take farms where the other tenants were evicted, rather than resort to violence, everyone in the locality should shun them.

While Parnell's speech did not refer to the land agents or landlords, the tactic was first applied to Boycott when the

alarm was raised about evictions. Despite the short-term economic hardship to those undertaking this action, Boycott soon found himself isolated; his workers stopped work in the fields and stables, as well as in his house, local businessmen stopped trading with him, and the local postman even refused to deliver the mail.

The concerted action taken against him meant that Boycott was unable to hire anyone to harvest the crops in his charge. Eventually fifty Orangemen from Cavan and Monaghan volunteered to do the work. They were escorted to and from Claremorris by one thousand policemen and soldiers, despite the fact that local Land League leaders had said that there would be no violence from them. This protection ended up costing far more than the harvest was worth. After the harvest the “boycott” was successfully continued. Within weeks Boycott's name was everywhere. The New York Tribune reporter, James Redpath, first wrote of the boycott in the international press. The Irish author, George Moore reported: “Like a comet the verb “boycott” appeared.” It was used by the Times in November 1880 as a term for organized isolation.

Girlcott came into use in the mid-sixties as a term to represent the way to define the actions of female athletes. This was a step into equalization of the term to be inclusive of women. Girlcott is a neologism that combines “girl” and “boycott” to focus on strictly female boycott.

The term was coined in 1968 by American Track star, Lacey O'Neal, during the 1968 Summer Olympics in Mexico City, in the context of protests by male African American athletes. Speaking for black women athletes, she advised that the group would not “girlcott” the Olympic Games, because female athletes were still focused on being recognized. It also appeared in the Time magazine in 1970, and later was used by retired tennis player, Billie Jean King, in reference to Wimbledon, to emphasize her argument regarding equal pay for women players.

Then again, in 2005, the term girlcott was revived by a group of young women in Allegheny County, Pennsylvania. They were protesting what they deemed

sexist and degrading T-Shirt slogans on Abercrombie & Fitch merchandise. This action resulted in the company withdrawing the articles of clothing from their point of sale and catalogue.

Some synonyms of boycott are: To spurn, snub, shun avoid, abstain from, wash one's hands of, turn one's back on, reject, vito support. The use of the action of boycott in present day has been used in the following way: "Boycott" this action was the forerunner to the actions of the present day governments as sanctions against countries of government policies that are deemed to be unfriendly. The term boycott is not gender specific, it was the surname of Captain Charles Boycott.

Some modern actions, like the Boycott (sanctions) applied to Russia's economics and trade, and are because of the way Western governments feel about their alleged involvement in the annexation of Crimea. The political crisis surrounding the annexation on March 18, 2014 is referred to as the "The Crimean Crisis."

In fact, the word, and presumably the political tactic, proved so popular that it was quickly adopted by other European languages including French 'boycotter' (1880), German 'boycottern' (1893), now 'boykottieren,' Dutch 'boycotten' (1904), and Russian 'bojkotirovat' (1891).

In a Dolce & Gabbana quotation, directed towards Elton John and his partner who had adopted a child that was conceived through in vitro fertilization, they exclaim, "We oppose gay adoptions. The only family is the Traditional one... No chemical offsprings or rented uterus. Life has a natural flow, there [are] things that should not be changed." This caused Elton John to boycott the Dolce & Gabbana line of fashionable goods and fragrances.

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**With the words of
breath thrown
to the wind**

- RlcZ

Education Then and Now

by Bob Germaney

After a period of 58 years, I took the plunge into the Uni 102 course. I heard about the course, but didn't know what exactly was involved, as my schooling consisted of primary school from 1947 through to secondary school finishing in 1957 at fifteen.

When I was five years old, it came as a shock to get taken to school. The first day after all the introductions I was just left there. Yes I did make it through the first day. However, as time progressed I was moved to another class, and teacher. As time went on, things were starting to go wrong, getting left behind, and having see me on my homework. Then came the Eleven Plus exam which I miserably failed, and was now destined for secondary school. That's when things went from bad to worse, finally it was getting close to leaving school, my parents wanted me to carry on, but no, I had to leave at fifteen. My first job was working in a bakery, so when I got into the real world I found everything I never learned at school all fell into place.

Education has come a long way, since starting school in 1947, it is a lot more complex, far more to learn about subjects, than just to learn English period.

Myself, my pen and writers block overcome

by Brad Howley

"Pretend that you're writing not to your editor or to an audience or to a readership, but to someone close, like your sister, or your mother, or someone that you like."

— John Steinbeck Jr by way of George Plimpton.

One of my most consistent rituals is drawing graffiti. I am not always as consistent as I should be with it, as I get fairly self conscious about it, and the end result sometimes doesn't appeal to me at all. I don't always end up with a great piece but in the end I ALWAYS end up happy that I did the Piece. I instead focused on the perfect curves or the rigid edge of the first and last letter in the piece. The structure of the word in its entirety just makes me want to keep going until I finish. Then comes the sense of being lost and not knowing what to do next so I repeat.

Every time I do a graffiti piece I notice one recurring thing, other than the feeling that comes from writing the stylized word of my choice. I enjoy writing it. Sure, the artsy side of it is great and all, but I am by no means a skilled artist! But one day I shall look back at myself and see that I have reached the level of skill I desire with my writing. I always end up writing from time to time, usually with the feeling that it's going nowhere each time I pick up my pen. Today, however, I have learned to recognize that 'going nowhere' feeling. That is because I am not giving myself credit for all the ink and graphite I have put to paper creating my

writing over the years. Today I will allow myself to believe I can write, and write well, because I have been writing but not allowing myself to think so. One day I just picked up an ink pen and just fell in love with the flow of it. So I just wrote whatever came to my mind. I didn't know it then, but what I really loved was that physical act of writing. I wasn't writing with any kind of ulterior motive, nor was I writing to be a writer; I just knew it felt good. Somewhere, at sometime, I had lost complete sight of that without even realizing it, and started thinking, no, *wishing* that I was a great writer. I don't know how or when it happened, all I know is that it definitely happened and I completely forgot how great the flow of an idea pouring through my pen felt in my hand. Its smooth blue ink flowing onto the blank white lined paper from my silver, uncapped, uniball pen which I loved. What I thought was my love for the pen was in actuality a love for the act of writing all

Today I will allow myself to believe I can write, and write well, because I have been writing but not allowing myself to think so.

along. It was never the pen that felt good; never the smoothness of the pen or the physical flow of ink onto paper, but the act of exercising my mental psyche through writing. Why the physical act of writing one might ask— well, I'll tell you why. I feel as though I can firmly state with solidarity that the pen is mightier than the clicking of a letter on a keyboard. I think this is in large part due to the rich, also regal nature and feeling of the physical act of putting the pen to paper. Letting your ideas flow freely through the ink as though they are one entity. With a keyboard, however, I can relate the stroke of an individual key only to the letter it represents on the keyboard, and not to the vast wholeness that is a singular full word which can tell a story on its own if chosen correctly. Each written word is capable of standing patriotically on its own, like a soldier of a story with its own purpose and meaning. This is not the case with the incessant key clicking madness of a keyboard, and how it feels to me. Each incessant key clacking sound on its own has no meaning,

only an accompanying noise of distraction. The keys' criticisms which force you to look back and review with a daunting gaze only cause distraction. I can't possibly write out this idea and label it finished without arrogant insult. Foolishly believing the possibility, that just maybe with the next keystroke you will have finished writing the greatest literature ever composed. The genuine act of physically putting ink on the paper, on the other hand, has with it its own ornate imperfection that is all too human. The pain and passion in your eyes, the sparks in your mind, and especially the burn in your wrist and thumb. Caused by the intensity of your yearning to express your ideas, but not having the pen flow fast enough as they spark through your mind, creates an addiction. The thinking addiction that is writing is what will be your finished product, not the finished product that will be your written work. I'm no longer inhibited by criticism from my negative inner writer demanding me to write faster and better than my current realistic ability to release my thoughts through this vessel that is my pen. Nor am I forced to endure the key clacking distraction of a keyboard. I can just write free of any blocks.

I shall now depart from this pen and paper for it is as full as I wished it to be. And I will reflect on how I got here and how to fill another page if it pleases me to do so.

London

by David Trendell

Standing on a dock in Vancouver, the coloured ticker tape was falling, the band was playing, people were waving and crying as this huge wall of the huge cruise ship slid out to sea. My sister turned to me and said, “David why don’t you go and meet them in England?!”

Two weeks and one day later I am standing on the freeway just outside of Vancouver. With only a packsack on my back with a frying pan hanging off of it, a one-way boat ticket from New York to London, and ten dollars in my pocket, I stuck out my thumb. I had no fear as jobs were everywhere and I had a month to get to New York.

One day out and one of the people that picked me up heard my story and gave me a job painting his house in interior B.C. With that cash, I got a bus ticket via Ottawa to pick up my passport. Since Ottawa was a side trip, I sent my packsack ahead of me so it would be waiting for me when I got to New York.

By the time I got to the big apple, I had been on the bus for five days, smelt very raw. I had twenty five cents left and two and a half days until the ship sailed but my backpack still had not arrived.

New York is one crowded city and I noticed that people that came close to me moved away pretty quickly. I actually started to enjoy watching their expected reactions. Since coffee at the time was twenty five cents, I decided I would not spend my quarter until the middle of the next day and walked the streets

enjoying the wonders. Finally exhausted, I curled up under a tree in Central Park and had a fitful sleep.

The next day I really enjoyed not having spent my quarter and continued to fill the role of sightseer knowing I had a big event waiting for me, my cup of coffee this afternoon. My packsack still had not arrived. Later, in the afternoon, I came across a crowded greasy spoon cafe. I decided to sit at the ‘U’ shaped counter. Everyone, one by one, got up and left or gave me a look and move further away, while other customers opened their windows. I totally enjoyed the coffee and tried to make it last as long as I could until it got cold, one sip at a time. As other customers were coming and going, the busy waiter enjoyed that I had nursed the coffee. After I finished my cup, he topped me off until I was floating.

One more night in Central Park, I found a nicer tree to sleep under, with softer ground. Hunger was gnawing at my sleep but I was soothed by expectations that tomorrow was my big day.

The next day I really enjoyed not having spent my quarter and continued to fill the role of sightseer knowing I had a big event waiting for me, my cup of coffee this afternoon.

I woke up and went to the bus depot, still no packsack, so I sat there waiting as the sailing time was getting closer and closer. I decided I would catch the ship even without my packsack and take my chances on washing the clothes I had on, once I got on board. Finally my packsack arrived and I had to run and walk fast to get to the dock to catch the sailing.

I really smelt badly as I didn’t have time to change my clothes and clean up. The looks I was getting from the other passengers waiting to board was so much I made my way onto the employees ramp. When I explained my situation to the

ramp guard, he laughed getting a whiff of the truth. Even the ships crew were doing a double take, smiling and joking with each other. I had established myself.

Finally I reached a shower next to the boiler room. A change of clothes; I was a new man, with new friends, the crew. My ticket included all the meals and snacks. I was set to sail.

On a cruise ship, people let down their hair right away as we all know we will not see each other after seven days of partying on the ship. I made friends on that voyage that lasted for years.

We made it to London burnt out but happy.

Walking down the streets of London there were 'help wanted' signs everywhere. The one that caught my eye was a pub called "Charring Cross." I walked in and was immediately hired to start the next day. I asked them where there was an inexpensive area to live in London. They directed me to Royal Oak. I stood outside the pub and pan handled to get the subway and off I went to find a place to live.

I arrived in Royal Oak to find what appeared to be, during the day, a decent neighbourhood to live in. It did not take very long to find out there was a very limited number of rooms available to rent. Then a local, with a glint in his eye, suggested with a smile that I try an old lady down the street. "She might have some rooms available" he said with a grin.

I went to the house that I was directed to, climbed the cement stairs, and knocked on the front door. No answer. Knocked again; the third time I knocked louder.

"What the hell do you want?!" came an old, gruff, pissed off voice from under the stairs.

I leaned over the wrought iron staircase railing and looked down at the empty steps going down to the basement. "I understand you have rooms to rent," I shouted.

"Come down here and talk" came a slightly milder mood. I did as was commanded; walked down the stairs to the street, turned right along the wrought iron fence, opened the gate at the end, and walked down to have my first encounter with an English home.

Standing in the doorway, an old lady with a kerosene light. Her shoulder length grey messy hair tumbled down around a very wrinkled face. She wore a dirty white blouse, patterned skirt, below that hung six inches of her not-so-white slip. Below that, thin white legs with varicose veins leading into her faded blue slippers which she shuffled around in.

"My enemies sent you" she barked.

"No" I said, "I am from Canada and I am looking for a room to let."

She coughed loudly bringing her hand up to her face. "You seem to be a nice man, come in and have a cup of tea. My name is Dorthy." she said, as she backed into a pool of darkness. Her kerosene lamp giving small hints of her world.

"My name is David," I said as I sat in a wooden chair. The kerosene lamp moved over to a counter leaving me in the dark. A long counter showed up with dirty pots, pans, and dishes going up the side walls and cascading down towards the half full sink. Dorthy reached into the pile of dirty dishes, pulled out two cups, rinsed them under the tap, then leaned down, picked up her slip (which I found out later she lived in 24/7), and with a twist cleaned out the cups.

I stiffened in my chair. My father was strict on being polite and sensitive. I was stuck with no money in my pocket, needing a place on credit for a week, and had a job starting the next day. I said nothing.

Dorthy went over to her gas heater and picked up the teapot that lived there, pour out the tea and served it. I took one sip and noticed the multitude of smeared rings from past cups of tea were staring back at me. I put down the cup.

Dorthy went on and on about her enemies until finally I said, "it is getting late and I have to find a place to live, have you any rooms to rent?"

“Yes” she said, “I have a few. They are two pounds a week.” I explained my situation and she agreed with it. Dorthy picked up the lamp and I followed her to every room in the house except for two that were rented. “Not in right now” she explained.

The room I picked was on the top floor, no electricity, a gas heater, and a window facing a park across the street. I dropped by packsack, rolled out my sleeping bag, and slept.

Next day I am off to work starting at eleven. The owners were aware that I had never worked in a pub before, did not know the currency, and did not know how to mix drinks. They laughed, “you will be fine, our customers will tell you how they like their drinks and we will be here to help.” She turned to her regulars and said “you will help him won’t you?”

The regulars responded, with a “yes,” in unison.

There is a custom in England that I was not ready for. Not all tipping is done with cash. Many order a drink and say, “have one yourself!” Day one, scattered

Now I had tips and an attitude of good cheer as I weaved home and ended my day with a long deep sleep.

down the bar I had some of the customers tip me that way and they had two drinks in front of them; one for them and one for me. Being polite and sensitive, I had sips from each one, under the smiling eye of the owners, while I served other customers drinks and food. By two o’clock I was sent home drunk to the cheers of the regulars and as I stumbled out the door the owner said, “he is O.K. he is Canadian.”

Now I had tips and an attitude of good cheer as I weaved home and ended my day with a long deep sleep.

That night I am sitting on the front steps of my new home having a smoke, people watching. I looked to my left and coming up the street is a woman dressed in tight clothing. Her halter barely contained her breasts, her tight jeans glued to her large body, rosy cheeks with bright red lipstick. Her black hair matched her cold eyes staring right at me as she got closer; I can see she is angry. She storms up the stairs and into the house leaving the door open. Then this guy that was walking behind her took one look at me and kept walking down the street. The woman comes storming out the door and down to where I am sitting, grabs me by the collar and screams “You are ruining my business, these stairs belong to me, get your ass off these steps now!” Now I know who is behind door number one. I walked across the street to the park. The guy that went up the street walked back, went up the stairs and into the open door. I sat in the park contemplated the fact that I was now living in a whore house with a landlady that had issues. Welcome to England. I wondered for a moment if this was typical.

I gave everyone their distance and gradually Rose, the one that barred me from the steps, warmed up to me and over the next few weeks and we became friends. Rose invited me into her room for tea. I was surprised at how together it was. These teas became a daily event. One day, during tea, there was a knock at her door. Rose whispered to keep silent and shoved me into her closet with my cup. I sat cross legged on the floor sipping tea while she grunted, groaned, and screamed with manufactured joy. The visitor left, I came out of the closet, and she poured us another cup of tea while we joked and laughed. “I have never been to a tea like this before!” I said.

Rose took me to her hotspots in London for dancing and coffees and did the tourist things together. Her direct talk about her world and her honesty was refreshing as being Canadian, where honesty gives way to politeness at times. Rose informed me that her boyfriend was getting out of jail and would be moving in. “We will have to see less of each other, for he is the really jealous type of guy.”

I went to work and did not see anyone for a week. Then one night I got home to see Rose and Frank arm in arm walking up the street. Frank, over six feet tall, two hundred pounds, tattooed hairy arms, pug nose, with a mean look until he

smiled kind of man. Rose introduced us. “Frank has moved into the room just under yours and Lucy (behind the second door) is back and in business,” she said with a twinkle in her eye.

I kept my distance from the lot and became a London tourist. The job at the pub was fun as the owners laughed a lot.

One day Rose invited me in to tea with her and Frank. The chemistry between Rose and myself was good. We enjoyed each others company. Frank went from friendly, to silent, to mad before I had finished my tea. Frank started getting edgy and started to threaten me. I got up and left with Rose saying, “sorry” as I went out the door. The sound of the two of them screaming at each other followed me up the stairs.

I had a light sleep that night and went straight to work the next morning. An hour after I started the pub phone rang. It was Frank. He was still raging mad. Screaming over the phone, “I am going to be waiting for you when you get off of work and I am going to ‘do you’.

I hung up the phone and talked with the owners who said, “phone the police,” which I did. The policewoman took the details over the phone and said she would phone me back as soon as she could. Within half an hour she phoned me back and explained, “We have been looking for this guy for sometime as he lied about where he is living and is wanted on several charges. We consider him dangerous and will have undercover officers around when you leave work. We will let you know when we get there.”

Around an hour before the pub closed, a woman called me over to the end of the bar. She confirmed who I was and said, “there are two of us inside the pub and four plainclothes officers outside.”

“How come so many police?” I asked.

“He is wanted on some serious charges” she explained. We agreed on a signal if he came into the pub. I was to leave at my regular time. The bar closed and he did not show up. The police bundled me into one of their very small cars, squeezed

between two burly officers in the back seat and we were off to Paddington police station to fill out a report. The policewoman explained, “Ever since I first phoned, we have had an undercover officer watching my house for Frank to arrive and now there are a few cars standing by in case he shows up. Until we have secured the situation you will remain here with us at Paddington.”

Frank, not knowing what was happening, eventually went home. As he walked in the door, many officers immediately went in and grabbed him. They found nitro glycerine (a highly sensitive explosive) in the closet right below mine. His talent; a safe cracker.

The thought occurred to me to move out of the whore house into a different lifestyle; I did not. Instead, with the money I had saved, I teamed up with my parents who were touring England. At the end of our tour they wanted to see where I lived. I tried to put them off but they insisted.

As we were heading right towards my place, I pictured what could be happening there right now. I got the full impact of the words ‘take it as it comes.’ A front page picture of my father and mother being caught in a whore house did cross my mind. As a cross around my father’s neck was part of his work clothes as a minister. No one was there.

The next day, I saw my parents off. My mother referred to my place as quaint with no electricity.

It was obvious after two months that I was not going to be able to save enough money to get back to Canada, but the airlines saved me. They had a ‘fly now -pay later’ plan. I chose the ‘later’ plan.

Understanding Computers

by Cynthia Stork

Cynthia has a lot to learn about google, facebook, gmail, and how to use tabs on a web browser.

March 5 2015, free write: I like doing resumes because I feel I am giving good help to the community correspondence to help with practicum program as an individual in looking at resources and spaces for everyone.

I hope to improve researching work skills in uni 101, 102, 201, winter and spring at the University of Victoria. I go to the computer room to learn more about people and try a series of quizzes, puzzles, and games.

Cognitive ability in the way of analyzing a situation and your options in making a decision when given the ability to imagine alternative scenarios. The editor is me, thinking I am perfectly pleasant about any challenge, pre existing to the computer and after deep brain stimulation I enjoy writing with pen and paper to start the day. With exceptionally strong success Uni 102.

**I made friends on
that voyage that
lasted for years.**
- David Trendell

What's the Draw - Why Uni 101?

by Diane Stewart

There are many reasons to appreciate this privilege to attend Uni 101 and Uni 102.

First and foremost is the diligent effort of the Staff and Volunteers in making this course as easily accessible as possible for each person in attendance. Well informed Student Liaisons and Volunteers are always available offering one-on-one aid when needed: providing typed notes during class to those who have difficulty hearing or seeing; providing aid to those in a wheelchair, or otherwise immobilized, and providing any information, or simply a listening ear.

Bus Tickets for transportation, and parking passes and funds are made available for parking, as are monies to cover ChildCare costs and a Cafeteria Card for meals on class days with encouragement to join fellow students in the Dining area to enjoy further camaraderie.

The variety of courses offered, and the willingness and enthusiasm of the instructors, facilitators and professors volunteering their time to share their knowledge and expertise with us inspires learning, as does their delight and willingness for class participation, fielding questions asked and opinions shared during their lectures.

The group sessions afterwards spark lively discussion, and challenge one's mind to think more deeply and clearly, with the constant opportunity to listen actively to fellow students.

There are many other advantages available to those enrolled in the Uni 101 program; many doors are opened. One is made aware of the many free events on campus and around Victoria. With the presentation of the Student One Card, special rates are available for concerts and productions on Campus and in Victoria.

For example, the year I was accepted into Uni 101 one of my friends had been invited to sing with the Victoria Operatic Society in the production of Macbeth. I was able to attend the Royal Theatre at a reduced rate in downtown Victoria and enjoy the production and her performance. Also that year, being a guitar player, the enjoyment of revelling in the marvellous musicians from around the world at Guitar Night on campus proved to be another highlight for me.

Another amazing opportunity offered to Uni 101 students is a connection with the Humanities Program. This enables one to earn a Diploma in Humanities after which one has the freedom to branch out into different disciplines at UVic and other credit courses. Funding is also available to many students, including scholarships and bursaries.

The possibilities are limitless to a Uni 101 student, with many new doors opening not only practically but experientially, expanding our creativity and enlarging our thought processes. May you give this opportunity your deepest consideration as a possible student and your most generous support, financially and otherwise, as a fellow human being.

Negatives of Social Networking

by Judy Broswick

There are many benefits of social networking, such as collaborative learning, educational resources, geographic accessibility, and contact with others sharing the same interests, all at a global scale. With 42% of the world's population now plugged in (internetworldstats.com), most individuals fill their social needs through human interaction online (Barnett, 2011). This includes 70% of teenagers having computers in their bedrooms (Courtois, 2012). However, in the hype and excitement surrounding social media, the latest and greatest, many miss or forget about the negative aspects such as a lack of real community, loneliness/psychological well-being, cyberbullying, poor social development, gambling, illegal downloads, prevalence of racism, porn, safety concerns, child abuse, exposure to predators, violence, pro-anorexia, suicide sites, biased advice, invasive marketing, disclosure of personal data/privacy, hacking, meeting strangers, gender deception, technological addictions and compromised academic performance for youth (Walgrave, 2012). This essay will discuss loss of community, loneliness, cyberbullying and a few other points regarding the negative aspects of social networking.

What do all of these words mean? The technologies people use for social networking are television, personal computers, phones and gaming consoles. When people use the word 'social media', they usually mean Internet-based tools used on a computer (i.e. blog, video, slideshow, podcast, newsletter or an eBook), used by two or more people with common interests, to share information in a one-out-to-many mode

of communication. Social Networking is the process of using social media to communicate and share with existing acquaintances and/or to meet new ones. Social networking sites (SNS) are the websites on the internet that social networking uses.

Social networking affects having a real sense of community. When people join a SNS, "like Facebook, they first create a personal profile. These profiles display information such as one's name, relationship status, occupation, photos, videos, religion, ethnicity, personal interests, and display of one's friends that other users can then click on their profiles and traverse ever widening social networks" (Ahn 2011). Social support can lower stress and improve the quality of your life (Barnett, 2011). Although we as humans have a need to belong, this false sense of community creates a world of weak ties in acquaintances that leads to loneliness. "It can be exhilarating, at least at first, to connect with long-lost friends" (soulthinks.com), but the downside, is growing confusion between our weak and strong ties. Gamer (2005) wisely says "when we do not have the proper time or resources to create a meal, we are often willing to settle for a ...social snack - rereading emails, daydreaming of loved ones and looking at photos of friends, family and romantic partners and surfing the web." Oprah claims there is blurring in the genuine distinction between friends and acquaintances and "users are spending time maintaining relationships with people they don't really care about." An individual's network is "comprised of a diverse set of ties, and these ties provide different kinds of resources" that include immediate kin, extended kin, friends, neighbours, and co-workers (Barnett 2011). People who use media and technology are "spending more time apart from their ties, online with weaker relationships instead of stronger emotionally satisfying interaction face-to-face" (Bugeja 2005). This instantaneous access to these ties leads many to feel a void in their lives. The professional description used for mapping social networks is a social network composed of a set of actors and the relations or connections among them (Guiffe 2013). Social networking is not strengthening community, but in us going virtual, it is killing it.

Social networking links to loneliness and affects well being. "Whatever wonderful things the wired and wireless will bring, a hug is not one of them"

(Nie, 2001). Experts are unsure if loneliness causes clicking or vice versa (Burke 2010) but social isolation leads to mental, psychological, emotional and physical problems (social networking.lovetoknow.com). Time spent on web browsing, instant messaging, chat rooms, and newsgroups decreases life satisfaction and increases loneliness (Stepanikova, 2010) and you ultimately go home alone. Loneliness is tied to communication with strangers (especially in adolescence) (Valkenburg, 2007), length of time online and whether the user is an introvert or an extrovert (Boase, 2006). The more friends you have can seem like an overwhelming vortex and you can't win even with positives as on SNS we are judged by the company we keep: "It is cool to have friends on MySpace but if you have too many friends, you are seen as a MySpace whore" (Ahn, 2011).

Cyberbullying also encompasses sending viruses, compromising files, flaming, sending threatening emails or texts, obscene pictures, sexting, or being ignored by a group (cyberostracism, muting, banning, or defriending). Perpetrators can reveal sensitive data and "intimately disclose personal information of the victim to large audiences (outing)" (Walgrave 2012).

The whole idea behind social networking is to display your interests, social and work background and personal preferences for your "friends". However your privacy is at risk by marketing firms targeting this very information. They play off the feelings of people, especially fear and inadequacy. Many lose themselves in multiple characters online; you could confuse boundaries by being a teenage girl in a chatroom, professional web conference attendee and gamer character (Bugeja, 2009). Also, the world of social media and technology is prejudiced in that only those with money can afford to keep up with the latest and greatest gadgets and software.

Michael Bugeja (2005) sums it up best when he writes that the domino effects of media and technology are apparent in that "the more technology we use, the less we interact with others in real habitat, the more we rely on technology to entertain ourselves and communicate with others, the less sure we are of boundaries involving space, time and identity, the more we intrude on others or misinterpret messages, the less stable our relationships, the more

we replace them with virtual ones, the less privacy we experience, the more influence marketing has on behaviour, the less sound our judgement becomes, intensifying our search for acceptance, the effect: we seek self-help, exposing ourselves to more media and technology." There are many negatives of social networking including lack of real community, loneliness and cyberbullying. While you are building social capital in the form of a social network, too much of a good thing is simply not good for you.

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Cities, Roads & Automobiles : The Good, Bad & the Future

by Gillian McDougall

"Where people live affects their health and chances of living flourishing lives. Communities and neighbourhoods that assure access to basic goods, that are socially cohesive, that are designated to promote good physical and psychological well being and that are protective of the natural environment are essential for health equity."

*Barton & Tsourou*¹

"We are in danger of making our cities places where business goes on but where life, in its real sense, is lost."

*Hubert H. Humphrey*²

City and suburbia have been shaped by history, economics, immigration, and the invention of the automobile. I would like to discuss the impact cars have had on our cities; how it geographically shaped the land, our health, our mental attitudes, and our movements within the city. The popularity and affordability of cars shaped suburbia.

Suburban living began to flourish following the second world war. Returning soldiers were offered financial help from government to continue education, and to purchase new homes. These new homes were covered by the federal mortgage insurance company which favored suburban development over inner city projects³. Suburbia was seen as an inexpensive way of housing veterans and their large families (baby boomers) as well as profitable for the consumer driven economy⁴. Less expensive suburban homes became

more desirable as families started buying cars and commuting long distances to access the North American dream of larger homes, privacy, space, and neighbours with similar economic and racial backgrounds. Government policies that expanded the building and maintenance of road structures encouraged urban sprawl. This in turn increased car usage and its negative impacts on health, air pollution, and land development⁵. Today, the World Bank's stats show that "the combined impact of road crashes and air pollution from vehicles... raises the annual death toll linked to motorized transport to 1.5 million worldwide."⁶ Alarminglly the car has also had a negative impact on the rates of obesity, depression, and sedentary diseases as people spend more time behind the wheel. Some studies indicate that in car dependant neighbourhoods drivers with inactive lifestyles become less healthy, less involved in community, trust their neighbours less, and have higher divorce rates⁷.

Some studies indicate that in car dependant neighbourhoods drivers with inactive lifestyles become less healthy, less involved in community, trust their neighbours less, and have higher divorce rates

For seventy years the car has been the undisputed favored mode of transportation in North America. Today, the tide is turning, younger generations are seeing that commuting has a large negative environmental footprint, is expensive, and a hindrance to their social lives. Many are putting off driving or getting their licenses, choosing internet over car ownership⁸. Millennials, baby boomers, and seniors are moving to condos and older neighbourhoods in the city to save time and money spent on commuting. Urban living is not without problems. Downtowns favoring business and car traffic have encouraged commerce over residential living. City streets have been developed and widened not to promote walkability and pedestrian safety⁹, but to promote easier car access and parking for stores, customers and office workers. Large areas of downtown have been left empty after business

hours, creating social vacuums rather than social opportunities. As more people are moving into condos downtown traffic noise has become an issue. Noise reduction and traffic calming should be encouraged¹⁰ by City Hall, architects, and engineers.

With many diverse people of varying incomes living in densely populated areas, social connectedness becomes an important way of creating harmony within the city. Just as suburban sprawl and lots of driving disconnected people from neighbourhoods, lack of human contact within cities creates isolation and loneliness¹¹. Our behavior and health are influenced by our surroundings, buildings, and access to social programs¹². Peggy Thoits, a sociologist, states that there are two roles the individual has in society. The first is the "Obligatory Role" that consists of societal roles such as husband, wife, parent, etc. The second are called "Secondary Roles"; social, lighter relationships as exemplified by volunteering and interactions with neighbours and strangers¹³. This suggests that city living becomes easier as "The more social roles, people have in life, the stronger they become in both mind and body."¹⁴ The author John Helliwell (Vancouver Foundation 2012), suggests that people who are happy trust their neighbours and neighbourhoods and have a feeling of belonging¹⁵. The lower ratings of happiness in North American cities reflect the disconnect of people within their own communities, and the over emphasis on car-centric economies and material goods.

Cities are microcosms of society. Cities built around cars promote transient

Cities are microcosms of society.

populations, with lack of roots and ability to contribute to a city's vitality and culture. A city and its people thrive on diversity of incomes and lifestyles. High quality, affordable homes for everyone throughout the city encourages participation for all income groups. Access to universal health and transportation leads to more equality, and greener, environmentally friendlier city centres. People who are healthy make healthier choices. When affordable

transportation is available, the cost of owning a car becomes less appealing, leading to better air quality, and health. The rise of the automobile has led to a sedentary, inactive way of living, increasing the rates of heart disease, diabetes, and obesity. Urban and suburban communities have let designers favor the car to the detriment of a simpler healthier way of life. Community is the opposite of the polarization of car culture. It is a random mix on city streets of strangers, neighbours, friends and the trading of ideas and opinions. City neighbourhoods, with green areas evolve to become meeting places where human foot traffic rather than car traffic is favoured. Encouraging the in-and-out flow of traffic, over people and community, results in indifference to our surroundings. A city revolves around its people. Designing buildings that encourage people to congregate socially gives the feeling of ownership rather than disenfranchisement. People participation, as a whole, creates a feeling of group satisfaction; social connection and is good for physical and mental health. Examples abound of rejuvenation of our urban inner cities and in doing so improving our well being and the local economy. Let the sixties' slogan "Power to the People" become our mantra in the designing of our cities and the dedication of the city to its people.

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Sailor

by Monika Bocek

Sailor, a beautiful chocolate lab who was overweight, but the happiest and most lovable dog. He has died today and I wrote on my facebook wall that I'll sincerely miss him and he'll be forever in my heart. You were not even 10 years old. I'm so glad you went peacefully.

Sailor was the cutest chocolate lab. He often sneezed. He loved food, bones and squeaky toys. He fought for anything when it came down to his masculinity. I remember his wagging tail, you just had to look at him and he'd start wagging his tail. When Ian first laid eyes on him near the tree he was tied up to most of his nine months of life, he was deeply moved. Sailor was a rescue dog. It took a long time for the chain marks embedded around his neck to heal. He was the most lovable, care-free, spirited dog known to man. Because he was fed the worst leftovers by this family who abused him, he had issues with food from the start when he was a puppy. He loved to eat anything, I mean anything. Even raw onions!

I have fond memories of when we first met. Sailor and I were immediately bonded, it was love at first sight. We spent a few days in Tofino. He loved the beach and the smoked salmon I kept eating. We had many walks together. He used to get so excited when it was time to go for a walk together.

**blown west,
wet, dashing
on rocks of
wrecked age**

- Bruce Livingstone

Pseudo Haiku

by June Mauro

robbie what would you like to eat
do you want eggs, bacon, toast, orange juice
robbie robbie where are you

how wonderful is this
walking one night between mom and dad
they started to swing me in the air

huge white lazy snowflakes
walking home one night it started snowing
how beautiful

big pile of messy dirty mud
new houses being built
much fun for many kids

moved up north for dads management skills
horrible place
never want to be in that environment again

Leprosy vs Multiple Sclerosis

by June Mauro

Hi, this is June, writing about multiple sclerosis (MS) and leprosy - the similarities and the differences. I am using the literature on leprosy and my own experience and knowledge of MS to try and achieve this.

There is a cure for leprosy, and to date, there is no cure for MS. They not only affect sufferers physically, but mentally (and socially) as well. Both diseases affect the sufferer's nerve-endings, often resulting in clawing of hands and trouble walking. With both MS and leprosy there can occur nerve damage to the extremities that can cause accidents and deformities to the flesh.

With leprosy, you may be cursed and shunned by your family and community. In MS situations, you are invisible to others when you are in a wheelchair and if you are not using a mobility device, people look at you accusingly when you cannot walk properly. Many people do not understand how much rest time is needed.

People who develop leprosy may ashamedly attempt to hide their symptoms, and with MS, try to deny that there is anything wrong. Until now there is no definite cause for either disease. A person with leprosy is banished from their home forever and with MS, I feel that family and friends try to smother the person.

In records at the leprosy camps there are more men diagnosed with leprosy than women, as women are not allowed in the camps because they have children - and children were never allowed in the camps. The records of MS show that more women are affected.

People with leprosy now have a cure with multi-drug therapy - so there is hope that a cure for MS is on the horizon!

I am the Cat

song lyric by Liz St. John

I am the cat who fought right back
when the dog came after me
A casual cat, I keep my cool
at most of what I see
But I got ticked at being licked
for doing nothing at all
So my fur went up, my claws came out
Curled my lip, tore a strip
Backed him against the wall

Stopped him cold - that dog was stunned
He slowly slunk away
Cocked his head, "My Lord" he said
"What happened here today?"
And he'd been hurt but not by me
'Cause just a while before,
His master's boot had been unkind
Kicked that dog on his behind
Just waiting at the door

He thought it over and realized
Just how abused he'd been
Found that boot, bit it hard
Sunk his teeth right in!
Chewed and snarled, shook it some
Dragged it round the place
He had the right to put up a fight
Dropped it in his master's sight
and stared him in the face

His master took his meaning
'Cause, in his heart he knew
That puppy really had a point
That dogs are people too
The trouble was he'd lost his job
His house was on the line
And he was sore and he was sure
That he was fired for nothing more
Than turning forty-nine

Now forty-nine's a bumpy age
as some of you may know
You're getting lines, you're getting grey
But you're getting smarter so
He got himself a legal eagle
They worked on his attack
Figured out who to stick it to
Won his case, saved his place
Grabbed that job right back!

When you're mad it's hard to listen
But I'm telling you this my friend,
Pickin' on someone littler
Won't help things in the end
The powers-that-be make it hard
Don't you make it harder too

Just go for a walk, think about who
You can take this problem to
And if there's something you can do
Then
Be like the dog who chewed the shoe
Be like the man who made the plan
Be like the cat who fought right back
When the dogs come after you!

Impact of Uni 102

by Liz St. John

I woke up one day recently and realized that the world I had grown up in had changed far too much to ignore any more. I knew it wasn't going to magically change back into my comfortable familiar world again. How to cope with that reality was beyond me, because I didn't understand the cause. That was what drew me to seriously seeking some answers through Uni 102. So far I'm amazed at what I've discovered.

My lack of awareness on the subject of race, and how it is a social construct; the actual meaning of the inflammatory-to-me term "white privilege" and the complex subject of systems had worked against me in understanding my changed world.

One day I noted to my adult daughter, as we left a small second hand shop, that the owner had acted in an unnecessarily pushy way toward me. He had tried to blame and charge me for breaking an item that had already been broken. I had attributed his attitude to the idea that he had come from a country where people had no safety net to fall back on when they have no money. I said that he was here now and could afford to lighten up. That is what my parents had said long ago. I had thought it was a rather nice insight on the part of my parents and, even at that young age, I adopted that attitude myself. Well, my daughter didn't agree with me, and we were off and arguing half the way up Fort Street. I was in trouble, but fighting back. Me telling her not to call me "white" because I'm Caucasian and so is she. She telling me why "Caucasian" is an idiotic name. And so on. Comical now, but bewildering then! What was going on? I felt I was suddenly being challenged at the slightest drop of a cultural comment and it didn't get any better until the day I learned a little bit about what is meant by "white privilege". I had thought it meant that, because I am white, the whole world would just open up for me, which it positively didn't! I was living proof that 'white' didn't always mean successful. Surely, she and her brother should know that.

So in exasperation I told her I was just going to listen to her - give her the floor without interruption for a while. I listened as she explained that white privilege is about what she and I never had to experience or even know about as white people. She cited the job applications and career choices we would have a fair chance at where a person with darker skin or foreign name could be excluded without further consideration. There were other poignant examples she gave me that I could never have dreamed.

She got through to me, and more would come to light as I entered Uni 102.

Race is a Social Construct

Well, that was a start! But, I had many questions as a result of that explanation. I felt like part of my brain was missing. How did white privilege even come about? Why do we have racism? Isn't it true that there's good and bad in everyone? I had not yet learned the amazing skill of asking "what's missing?" I had been trying to make sense of my world with only inaccurate, incomplete information I had been fed or had gleaned.

The first double-take I did was when I read, on the classroom board, the words "race is a social construct." I was mulling that over when I heard Becky say that there is no such thing as race. I was thunderstruck.

Never in my life had I heard that, and it was almost too good to be true. There is no biological basis for race; it was as simple and bold as that. To discover that I have more in common biologically with those people tagged as "not white", than with those who are racialized as "white", is a dizzying realization. I am not limited to only one group of people, but am undeniably connected to all personkind. No more us or them, and good riddance to the notion.

But who had created this idea of race and kept it going for generations before me, and why? Hmm... I can think of some hints I've had in my lifetime. I remember my mom musing that "a white face used to be a passport to anywhere in the world, but now, well it just isn't the same..." I heard my grandmother grouching while on the bus with me, as we wove our way through Chinatown in mid-sixties Vancouver, "Speak English. Why don't they speak English?" I knew she

felt uneasy at not knowing if they were talking about us and, perhaps because of this, was retreating into a position of superiority. But even as a child I was uncomfortable with her coping mechanism. I did, however adopt the same attitude for many years.

Children love and believe in their parents, warts and all. But as much as I loved my mom and my grandmother, I had an inner compass that told me something was wrong in their attitudes. It was as though they chose to remain kept in the dark for our safety.

Systems

Back to the classroom. If we have no biological basis for race, what is at play that keeps racism functioning? Couldn't we just agree and get along fine? Sadly, no. There's a whole Pandora's box of the system that keeps racism firmly in place.

Systems exist everywhere. They manage all kinds of things from our own bodies miraculous workings right up to the great global machinations. They are out there managing away beyond our puny planet and into the farthest discoverable parts of the universe. Now that's big. Systems can be so strictly balanced as to be brittle, cumbersome things that don't take kindly to being altered. Most of all, they make sure that they themselves survive at any cost. That cost was me. I was born into a system of white supremacy and kept from understanding that fact.

Generations back, when "white" imperialism was afoot, indigenous people all around were losing their lands, their culture, resources, and lives. This was supposed to be a good thing. Fast forward to mid-fifties, where I would be taught in elementary school that this was a period to be proud of and impressed with. Nothing deeper. Again that inner compass signalled and the question formed in my child-mind "Isn't that kind of mean to the people who lived there first?" My culture required that I not only not ask, but also don't feel. After all children don't know anything. We learned songs like Rule Britannia "Britain never never never shall be slaves", "We'll fight and we'll conquer again and again", "Heart of Oak", "The Maple Leaf Forever", and others that offered us the questionable comfort of

being safe and secure as "white" subjects of a British colony. "The sun never sets on the British Empire", they would quip.

I was fourteen years old and in grade eight the day we heard that President Kennedy had been assassinated. To our puzzlement, we were sent home to reflect on this American tragedy. The states had a hundred years, or so, on us and their ragged edges were showing. What had that to do with us? We could clearly see that they had dreadful racial problems, while being blind to our own.

There are few places where there is any leverage in a system. The good news is there's hope. It is in a paradigm shift. When I learned to ask "What's missing?" instead of just accepting a jigsaw puzzle without all its pieces, it was an effective shift for me. What is important for me now is a sense of proportion. I am not Don Quixote. Since a system is usually hopelessly heartless, I choose to take my sails out of its wind. What is in my control comes under the heading of prejudice. Prejudice I can monitor. I can do this on a twofold basis. I can tune in to my own outgoing attitudes and I can challenge those prejudices coming at me. That's a fairer contest.

Conclusion

What a sobering slap in the face this has been, but a welcome one. These three elements; racism, white privilege, and the insidious systems that keep them in place have eaten up much time in my life. And time bothers me. Lack of time to live the way I would have done all my life if I'd only known. If my betters had known. I found out at 64 what they never learned to acknowledge. There really was a plot of sorts against so many people - everyone, really, for so long. It still exists.

Kudos to my daughter for inciting me to investigate my attitudes. Now our conversations are broader and more fun for me, as I hope they are for her. I believe it's extremely important to keep growing and learning all our lives. Children deserve to see more than Stone Age stubbornness in their elders as an example of how to navigate life. It's wonderful to have access to reliable information at a cost I can afford.

So, thanks for the opportunity, Uni 102.

“The Mindsets” by Carol Dweck

by Maree Carter

Hello, I am writing about my interpretation of a piece called “The Mindsets,” which highlights the differences between “fixed” and “growth” mindsets. Self esteem is important to me, so we will look at pages five and seven, seven again, and pages eleven and thirteen.

Let us start with five and seven. “It’s not always the people who start out the smartest who end up the smartest” (p.5). I like this very much because there is great hope for me, a struggling student.

“Did you know that Darwin and Tolstoy were considered ordinary children? That Ben Hogan, one of the greatest golfers of all time, was completely uncoordinated and graceless as a child? That the photographer Cindy Sherman, who has been on virtually every list of the most important artists of the twentieth century, failed her first photography course? That Geraldine Page, one of our greatest actresses, was advised to give it up for lack of talent?” (p.7). That is fantastic, because it reveals that perfect failures can sometimes lead to perfect successes! Perfect failures make one feel worthless, down in the dumps, useless, and a no-hoper, whereas, perfect successes have the opposite effect, and one would, I can imagine, feel quite elevated, and even have an air of superiority.

Now we’ll take a look at page seven again: “The passion for stretching yourself and sticking to it, even (or especially)

when it’s not going well, is the hallmark of the growth mindset.” Wonderful! Let’s stick to something, come sunshine or rain, even when it’s not going well!

We’ll have a peek at page 11: “. . . studies show that people are terrible at estimating their abilities.” Maybe those particular people are too humble to take pride in what they do. On the other hand, “. . . exceptional people seem to have a special talent for converting life’s setbacks into future successes.” This is almost the opposite to those who underestimate their abilities. I like the latter, what about you?

And finally, we’ll think positively about the following: “. . . the growth mindset makes you concerned with improving” (p.13). This is truly grand! I really want to improve my life, and I am almost certain you want to improve yours too!

Writing Explorations

by Maree Carter

One of the Best Things I've Ever Done Alone

One of the best things I've ever done alone is win the Junior Athletic Championship in high school.

It all began when I was only 11 years old. My parents encouraged me to do a paper route every day in the summer. This made me strong physically. At my school, we had competition amongst the students. I was good at running, long jump, and discuss. I did well, and won the championship flag.

I was so excited.

When I Felt Empathy With Someone

My friend Merina was living at my place. One day she was on the bus and the driver slammed on the brakes. Merina went sliding down the corridor of the bus. She hurt her back and was most upset. She needed a listening ear, so while spending time with her, I verbally and physically let her know that I was sorry that it happened. Verbally, by talking with her, and physically, by remaining near to her to hear what she had to say.

Onion and Garlic Flavoured Chewing Gum

Dear Haurice, thank you so much for the absolutely delicious organic onion and garlic-flavoured chewing gum. I really do appreciate your kindness towards little old me. I chew gum every now and again, especially when I am waiting to eat a meal. Thanks again pal. You have made my day!

A creative failure that turned into something really positive

I was 14 years old when I first started learning to play the violin. My teacher became impatient during several of the lessons I had with her. There is a proper way of placing the fingers on the bow, and a proper way of moving the bow up and down on the strings. She told me that my fingers were not placed correctly on the bow and that my bowing was not right. I thought I would never be able to play a violin.

But something really great happened to me after being told that I could not play the violin correctly; I ended up playing in a number of orchestras and got applauded by audiences.

Seeing myself from my neighbour's lens

Hardly ever home

A gardener

A happy face

A student

Quiet

A Christian

A bus rider

A friend

Sometimes alone; sometimes with another person

Share common disposition

Anti-What

by Malcolm Sword

Having recently been introduced by a poorly explained set of presumptions to a concept I did not have the pleasure of understanding, it gave me the impetus to figure out what in the world “anti-oppression” had to do with anything? As a member of a group on the move to develop a peer mentorship program, we were presented with the idea that we must all attend “anti-oppressive training”. It seems we actually possess and act with an oppressive bent, and we need to be “trained” to be less bent. This brought ire from some members of our committee including myself, both contextually and emotionally. Conferring the individual the benefit of the doubt, and honouring them with a second chance to present their views on anti-oppression in order to convince us that this training is the foundation of everything before attacking the real purpose of our actual mission. That failed to impress. Taking my non-views on anti-oppression and my lack of experience, knowledge and comprehension of this thing led to an obsession toward inventing a personal definition, vision and scope of anti-oppressive theory and practice; I am striving to create a stance in the real world that is effective for me.

Starting to peel away at the anti-oppressive onion proves to be the skin (the brown stuff on the outside) of the social work profession. One then begins to get into, layer-by layer of theory and practice. According to Wikipedia, “Anti-oppressive practice is an attempt within social work to acknowledge oppression in societies, economies, cultures,

and groups, and to remove or negate the influence of that oppression.” But then, the Anti-Oppression Network gets serious: “Oppression is the use of power to dis-empower, marginalize, silence or otherwise subordinate one social group or category, often in order to further empower and/or privilege the oppressor. Social oppression may not require formally established organizational support to achieve its desired effect; it may be applied on a more informal, yet more focused, individual basis. The role of the anti-oppressive social worker is to highlight, challenge and eradicate social injustice. It can thus be argued that anti-oppressive practice is linked to a longstanding tradition of humanism and social work’s long-established alignment with the experience of the underdog.” So, social workers are out to get the man, they are anarchists by trade and are likely socialists. And as we peel our onion; there is a political layer, then an economic one, a gender layer, a racial wrap and so on. This macro stance left me scratching my head: Why would our little group have to be trained in the art of this elephant in the room?

The Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation delivers support and services to a wide-range of people, distributing money (and other supports) based on criterion of ability to work — it seems to be the goal of the department to get people working that are able, and administering support for persons with disabilities. The department’s mandate is dictated by the policy of the government of the day. It’s role is largely administrative, and the system can be quite oppressive — one size fits all. However, the government does provide access to health, education, and employment programs. Anti-oppression becomes the foundation of social work. Like anything though, politicization of human practices naturally occurs with pecking order evolving within systems and marginalizing certain groups. The social worker involved in a segment of society; whether it be oppressive or prejudicial structures or practices involving women, racial identity, income and so forth, have developed on a macro scale. Those oppressive activities are politically and socially entrenched in the system. Great strides were made during the 20th century, but have not been completely overcome in many

respects. That women obtained the vote during the century, but are paid less than men for the same job today is an example of the major league battles. What about the organizational level?

“Social work is known to be a caring profession but when providing services what works for one person does not necessarily work for another. Practitioners need to be fully aware of the power imbalance between service users and providers in order to work in an anti-oppressive manner.” (Wilson and Beresford, 2000). They add that the “theory of anti-oppressive practice AOP is reliant upon users’ knowledges and ideas and the professions adoption of a facade of ‘anti-oppressive practice’ which in reality appropriates and incorporates the knowledges and experiences of service users, whilst still retaining the power to determine just what it is that counts as ‘anti-oppressive’ is, for us, the most oppressive aspect of its ‘anti-oppressive’ stance.” AOP is dependent upon service users’ participation and involvement, as well as the control and exploitation of this dependence by proponents of AOP. This “provides a focus for our suggested alternatives to existing notions of anti-oppressive social work practice.”

Now I’m getting somewhere. They suggest service users’ are critical at the foundational level for the development of alternatives for service. In *Understanding Social Work Research*, (McLaughlin, 2007) he outlines that “[for] Wilson and Beresford (2000), social work, far from being part of the answer is part of the problem. Healy (2005) also refers to conflictual nature of anti-oppressive practice citing Thompson’s (1997: 159) assertion that the prefix ‘anti’ is very significant as it symbolises the fight against powerful forces ... concerned that such a view polarises postures into ‘them’ and ‘us’ positions, neglecting the reality of social work which is often practised in the margins and grey areas of society where negotiation and compromise are essential.” This motion from McLaughlin takes the proactive approach to listen and work creatively within a range of stakeholders for solutions, and furthermore, actions, which are normally encumbered by preconceived ideas from those with the power. “It is also worth noting that service users claim that people

can only empower themselves, neither researchers nor social workers are in a position to do this for them.”

Ask not what your community can do for you ... but what you can do for your community.

“I would argue that social work institutions have often forgotten their community origins and have taken on the rational, bureaucratic ways of second wave institutions (Dudziak, 2002). The schools mimic the medical and legal professions. The agencies, whether public or private, are clones of bureaucratic government or corporation. It is far from clear whether existing social work institutions can shift their paradigm and practice, or whether new institutions will need to be invented to meet the challenges of the information age.” While her focus is directed the way social work is taught in schools, “... in terms of the current constructions of professional identity is to reconnect the political to the social ... and to incorporate the notion of citizen as part of the active expression of what it means to be a social worker.” Now we’re really getting somewhere. It is by nature, in my opinion, that ‘social work’ is created, and in fact, in many forms is somewhere along the lines of business entrepreneurship in the way it is executed. Take for example the umbrella of programs provided by University 101!

Dudziak further adds: “Smith directs our attention to the importance of “relationships and culture over programs and organizations” adding that “without culture, there is no community” and “no democracy” (p. 263-4). He offers this way forward: I believe it is extremely important for the schools of social work to rediscover their local community base, recognizing themselves as institutional players in a specific social order and rediscovering that learning takes place through experience. Let the schools acknowledge that to become a social worker is to take part in community building efforts, first as an apprentice, then as a master...The challenge is to be part of the action - locally and internationally (p. 264).”

This is where [our] little Peer mentorship group comes into play. A group of people devising a way to help another group of people in the community have a more dignified experience. In further readings, at the community level anti-oppression winds up in a mission statement and a code of conduct — a “Ten Commandment” construction with “Thou Shalts” using a vocabulary of equity, inclusion, access, education, justice, equity and so forth. These become guidelines for behavior and interaction within the organization and the people it serves. Anti-oppression on a grand scale still exists, those solutions are for the Ivory Tower crowd and the Government to work on. But I am happy to observe that the little group I belong is doing “social work” that will hopefully empower many people to healthier and progressive lifestyles. And, furthermore, an anti-oppressive bent was the foundation of our little group right from the get-go; we are at the community level! No training required!

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**What I thought
was my love for
the pen was, in
actuality, a love
for the act of
writing all along.**

- Brad Howley

Gossip

by Marie-Lou Gendron

An event happened recently at my workplace that triggered my curiosity about a subject I had never thought of investigating before.

As we were working side by side, my colleague Sissy was in the middle of saying how I may seem sometimes harsh in my expression, but once she knew me better she realized that I am not a harsh person. In her opinion what's harsh about me is more the way my voice sounds when I express myself in my second language rather than the words themselves or my personality as a whole. She also mentioned how I favour honesty over politeness sometimes, a thing that can be a little shocking for Victoria locals. Then we got to the point in the discussion when she said:

"Like for example when you made Emma cry."

I jumped to the ceiling! "What? Made her cry?"

All of a sudden, she made me realize how I had been unaware of the effect my "harsh" voice and straightforward style can have on others. I know Emma to be rather shy and in the pattern of wanting to please everyone, but I had never imagined I could have hurt her. This was new and surprising to me.

I began to bubble in my head and I burned to ask my questions to Sissy, who seemed to be in the know:

"When did that happen?"

"A while ago, actually last July."

"That's 8 months ago! How come I hadn't heard about this before?"

"Because nobody told you."

"How come she didn't come to tell me directly?"

"Because she's afraid of you."

"What happened exactly?"

"I don't know but it's something you said that hurt her and she went up to cry in the office."

"Were you there that day?"

"No."

"Then how come you know this?"

"Word got around."

"A lot?"

"A whole bunch, yes!"

"Then how come I didn't hear about it until now?"

She answered that last one silently with her classic half-smile, but we both knew I heard about it only at that moment because she was the one who had finally leaked the story to me. I was insulted! Finding out something that apparently everyone was aware of but me! Suddenly, a lot of things started to make sense about Emma's behaviour with me. How she simply seems to just avoid me when I work with her (I thought she was just a shy girl!), how she gives me some subtle looks, how sometimes her whispering stops when I come in, etc. All the signs were present...

Gossip!

What a fascinating thing. Words that can go around for months before one finds out. Words can be an airy innocent little spring breeze but can transform into a powerful storm; from slamming doors to sweeping away entire lives. Who can say they have never felt the breeze, felt the storm? Who can say that they have never been involved in gossiping in one way or another? I wanted to know more about this. I asked myself five main questions: 1. How could one define gossip? 2. How does it work? 3. Who gossips and who doesn't? 4. What are the advantages? 5. What are the risks?

In this essay I try to bring the reader on an adventure to find some answers to these questions, keeping in mind the event that I described and how these answers relate to it.

My hurt feelings have transformed into gold. What an awesome research topic! All of a sudden I feel so grateful to have fallen in this situation! Who said "academic" research had to be disconnected from the "field" of reality? I believe it is in everyone's advantage to research the "problematic" topics of our own lives, learn more from

the scholarly works; becoming increasingly aware and therefore more prepared when these situations arise again to challenge us.

How could one define gossip?

I looked into the Encyclopedia of Human Relationships (2009) and found this definition of gossip: "... an informal and evaluative talk in an organization about personal information on another member of that organization who is not present and can have either positive or negative contents." Additionally, gossip is defined as: "... a mood of familiarity, novelty and thrill are essential to the expression of gossip." Ah! That's interesting. We all like thrills don't we? It is thrilling to share new events, new details, new informations. I can totally understand that! It was indeed thrilling to hear about that 8 month old gossip which I was involved in without knowing it! Other research describes a few other elements: "... (gossip) doesn't depend on personal characteristics (age, education level, gender). Rather, context, setting and tone must be considered. It is traded among the people who have common history and/or shared interests (congenial collegiality)" (Martinescu, Jansen and Nijstad).

Does that mean we learn to gossip very early on in our lives? Who remembers the gossiping of school yards at lunchtime? Sally Yerkovich describes gossip as "a form of sociable interaction, which depends upon the strategic management of information through the creation of others as "moral characters" in talk. Because it is a sociable process, the content of the talk is not as important as the interaction which the talking supports." Storytelling is a very human thing and a very ancient one too. When she talks about "moral characters", that suddenly makes me see gossip as a form of ongoing soap opera. Some kind of afternoon storytelling, except the characters are real, which makes it so much more interesting doesn't it?

How does gossip work?

While researching for this fascinating subject, I found that there seems to be a common understanding of gossip as a triangle; a triad between the gossiper (or the emitter), the receiver of the gossip and the object (or target) of the gossip who is not present. These roles can be interchanging as the context changes of course. One may be a gossiper one moment and a receiver in another moment, only to be a target the next day! So beware before pointing any fingers... we seem to be at any given moment part of this dynamic triangle!

One thing that strikes me as central in this whole event and in the necessary mechanics of gossip in general: the notion of trust. In my example, Emma went to talk to others about this event because she trusted them. Trust, for me, is created by everyone participating in it. It is long and hard to build, yet easy to shatter. I wonder what would happen if Emma found out Sissy leaked it to me? Could it change their relationship forever? Perhaps!

The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy contends that "Trust is warranted ... only if the conditions required for trust exist (e.g. optimism about one another's ability)." So, trust is dependent on many factors! I had never thought of it that way. I had always seen it as a rather simple present/non-present thing. I had never imagined it to be way more complex and dependent on many circumstances. Helpful! I laughed at this simple way to put it: "Part of getting to know someone well enough to gossip *with* may be gossiping *about* that person with others" (Yerkovich). Hahaha! Talk about trust, eh?

But if we say we are all stand for and value the noble virtue of trust, how come gossip continues when we know gossip can harm and even destroy the trust between all the links of the gossip triad? Why are we all so drawn to and so prone to get entangled in gossip so easily? Scholars mention the constant thirst for negative news, which primes our desire for gossip. As Martinescu, Jansen and Nijstad explain: "If we see gossip under an evolutionary perspective, in order to survive, it is more important to warn others about untrustworthy behaviour than to praise trustworthy behaviors. Sharing positive information is a less effective way to seek solidarity with colleagues and is not as interesting or exclusive." So gossip can be a strategic tool. It can be a deliberate way to seek allies. Could badmouthing or indirectly harming a reputation can be a way to "get even," some form of passive-aggressive vengeance?

Was gossip Emma's way to seek vengeance although she was not feeling brave enough to confront me directly? Just think of mainstream media and the devastating effects an unproven allegation can have on a famous person's reputation when that scoop is aired in prime time! Why don't I get invited to Oprah to talk about all this? What about the tabloids? Who will catch your eye first in the news stand by the cash counter? People or Victoria Times Colonist? I confess, People's catchy colors and sensational titles always catch my eyes first! I even occasionally open one and flip through the pages of awesome celebrity diet tricks, juicy paparazzi pictures and

famous couples cheating rumours! Everyone knows most of the contents are not true or exaggerated versions of it yet these magazines are doing fairly well compared to their more serious newspaper and journal counterparts... Isn't that revealing about my own and our own gossipy tendencies? Fascinating! Oh my, talking about tabloids... I was just looking at one today! Did you know that so and so is gay? Interesting isn't it? Well actually, let's not get too entangled in such entertaining matters and let's go back to the main subject for now.

Who gossips and who doesn't?

Martinescu, Jansen and Nijstad contend that "People spend more than two thirds of their daily conversations engaging in some type of interpersonal evaluation." How shocking is that!? Further, these researchers found that: "50% of the people who at some point during their employment had felt wrongly treated by supervisors or managers reported that they shared their grief with colleagues. Only 29% of them reported to have sought direct confrontation." I wondered how many of that 29% first went to talk to their colleagues and then went to confront? How many didn't say anything to anyone and went directly? How much do we value straightforwardness and direct actions in our day-to-day behaviors with one another? Does courage has anything to do with efficient conflict resolutions?

In 1954, Abraham Maslow, known for the Maslow Pyramid, introduced his theory about how people satisfy various personal needs in the context of their work. He postulated, based on his observations as a humanistic psychologist, that there is a general pattern of needs recognition and satisfaction that people follow in generally the same sequence. He also theorized that a person could not recognize or pursue the next higher need in the hierarchy until her or his currently recognized need was substantially or completely satisfied.

Looking at Maslow's Pyramid, I asked myself: can the motivation to gossip be a way to fulfill some of our most basic needs of safety, love/belonging and esteem (including respect and achievement)? As we have seen in exploring how gossip works, there is a triad being formed. So, if two individuals feel rather pessimist toward each other, and therefore do not trust each other, they are less likely to gossip together, as trust is an important part of the collegiality necessary for gossip to emerge. However, those same two persons may have like-minded trusted friends of their own who they might enjoy sharing their thoughts and feelings with, then

that other negatively perceived person is in a perfect position to become the object of a flavorful gossip session.

In the light of the findings by all these brilliant minds, who is more prone to gossip? Could the gossipier be described as someone who has the trust of his peers, who looks to fulfill his basic needs of belonging, who looks for opportunity to receive and exchange useful (or not) information and in the same time make the day more interesting and entertaining?

What about the person who does not gossip? Could it be said he has a greater sense of morality? May it is someone who wants to verify the facts before building mountains with pebbles? Is he so strong natured that he does not necessarily needs the comforts and joys of group belonging? Is he missing out on useful insights or "collective intuitions" that might make him advance faster? In a room where gossip triads occur, can someone be called a passive participant by simply being present? Human being social creatures and gossip being so intrinsically linked to our basic needs, so present in our relationships and systems of social organization, I am starting to see that gossip cannot be completely avoided!

What are the advantages of gossiping?

The Encyclopedia of Human Relationships explains: "Learning what our fellow humans believe to be praiseworthy or blameworthy is a serious task in life. Removing gossip would result in our learning important life lessons and important information less early and less clearly." That sounds major!

Ellwardt, Wittek and Wielers describe the positive sides of gossiping by saying that: "Gossip supports diffusion of information, stimulates sense making, learning and reputation in organizations. It also stimulates the emergence and sustenance of cooperative relationships. With gossip, social cheats are criticized and paragons praised. Norms are upheld and group cohesion and boundaries maintained." Oh! Now I understand how it took 8 months to finally get to me!

Another surprising advantage of gossip is hidden in the receiver's perspective: "We suggest that receiving gossip is functional for individuals because individuals need evaluative information about others to evaluate themselves. Evaluating one's own abilities and opinions is a fundamental need that can be satisfied indirectly through interpersonal processes such as social comparison" (Martinescu, Jansen and Nijstad).

For example, in hearing Emma describe how the situation that occurred with me caused her distress, Sissy may tell herself: “Oh! I am sometimes doing that too! I better pay attention more attention and try to improve this since I see it can be hurtful.”

Another benefit of gossiping is how it allows us to compare ourselves with others: “Gossip may also be functional for recipients due to its self-promotion value... Downward comparisons are an effective way to boost self-esteem and make oneself feel good. The self-promotion value increases the more the gossip target is similar to the self, because failure of rivals in one’s proximity reflects most positively on the self. Evidence from evolutionary psychology shows that people are interested in receiving negative gossip about same-sex others, because such information derogates rivals and promotes the self” (Martinescu, Jansen and Nijstad). It is interesting to notice that the event happened between three women.

Sally Yerkovich describes this insider inclusion and outsider exclusion with her concept of “shared universe.” She says gossiping as a sociable interaction allows the gossipers to update their relationships in term of their own and other’s recent activities and in terms of their shared view of social interaction. It’s amazing how there needs to be a “shared universe” in order for gossip to exist in the first place. Yet by gossiping, other “shared universes” are created within it, making that “shared universe” ever more multifold, complex and rich for it’s inhabitants; ever more incomprehensible and hermetic for outsiders from other universes.

In my anecdote, the gossip was allowed to go on for months because I was not in the same “shared universe” as Emma and her trusted gossiping pals. Sally’s leak opened the door to that universe and gave me a chance to explore and understand it a little more.

What are the risks of gossiping?

Gossip can also be an important dissatisfier, especially if one is the object of on-going gossip (Herzberg). In this case, performance at work will surely be affected, especially if one doesn’t have the trust of one’s coworkers and doesn’t feel safe in the workplace. In both cases, gossip affects the attitudes; by creating tighter bonds between senders and receivers of gossip and by destroying the morale of the object of gossip.

It can be highly destructive and it may motivate someone to quit the environment where one is the target of gossip and cannot seem to get included in the “shared universe.” The risks of gossiping can be parallel to the risks of trusting as explained here: “What we risk while trusting is the loss of the things that we entrust to others, including our self-respect, perhaps, which can be shattered by the betrayal of our trust” (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy).

The things we entrust others are somewhat precious aren’t they? How hurtful to have our precious things destroyed? In Ellwart, Wittek and Wielers findings: “The risks seemed to be minimized in collegial trust relationships. If detected, it can backfire at the gossipier who spread harmful and likely unverified news about someone else. Every time gossip is shared, there is another chance the other person may leak the information. The more it gets shared, the leakage risk gets compounded.”

Gossip as an echo... one stands on the edge of the social valley and hears it’s own voice being repeated infinitely in the distance... grandiose yet frightening! Yerkovich talks about the risks of gossiping by describing how someone with a fondness of gossiping will cause others to be more cautious when they are in his presence. She puts it this way: “This caution increases when there is the danger that the Gossip (the emitter) will gossip about the person who gossips with him... Participants are either active or passive gossipers depending upon their interest in and attitude toward the gossiping and upon their gossip reputation; how they are known to deal with what they hear.” She identifies two possible characters among the gossiping tribes who may cause trouble: “The Unwitting Trouble-Maker” and “The Knowing Trouble-Maker”.

The first one is rather foolish in his practice of gossiping, as he tends to repeat what he hears to anyone without due consideration in addition of not managing information very well. He quickly becomes known as the person to gossip cautiously with. The second one is smarter. He repeats information in order to stir things up. He may do it just to see what will happen for his own personal entertainment or have an ulterior motive to his actions. The presence of those two “Troublemakers” can change the ambiance of congeniality into a more cautious one.

Wow! I am sure anyone has met one of these two or both of these characters at some point in their lives. Are those descriptions ringing any bells? Any memories resurfacing? Can some of us even identify personally with one of the two “Troublemakers”? Let’s think for a moment about the way the police or secret

services manage to gather information. Which kind of information is more valuable? Information gathered under torture or under undercover work? The “deep cover” work takes years to achieve and gossiping leakages must certainly play an important role in information gathering (Foreman).

Rebuilding Trust

Since I am the one who unintentionally hurt Emma, I felt it was my responsibility to take the first step in the healing process. First to let her know I cared about her, second to let her know I wasn't worth crying about and third to end this gossip thread once and for all. Even if I was insulted to find out I had been a subject of gossip for the past 8 months in relation to this event, I actually was feeling sorry about knowing that I made Emma cry. I didn't have any intention to harm this gentle girl. But I couldn't feel absolutely sorry either because the information was too vague, I needed to know exactly what to be sorry for, when that happened, what I said, how did she feel, was there any way we could not repeat this? Could there be any way trust can begin to be rebuilt?

To try and rebuild trust, I wrote her a letter: not too long, direct but compassionate, friendly in tone and welcoming her reply. I let her know that I was open to discuss or to read her if she was afraid of talking to me face to face. I gave it to her exactly a week after I found out. She has not yet replied to me (approximately two months this week). But her attitude has changed. I feel she is not as scared, not as avoidant. I wrote that letter only to her and I gave it only to her, yet I soon found out the “inhabitants of her shared universe” have also changed their behaviour with me. They have become more receptive and inclusive with me: proof that ‘word got around’, although in this case I should perhaps say the ‘letter got around’! Writing contributes to rebuilding some trust, and the effects were fast. But were they deep? Was writing enough?

Ellwardt, Wittek and Wielers suggest that: “Openness in communication and direct validation of perceived information accuracy helps to increase trust and decrease gossip. Validating the accuracy of information and sending out a constant information distribution. Offering explanations, openness to being questioned and offering answers. Openness to criticism and challenging the status quo... frequent contacts creates less need and demand for gossip.”

Unfortunately my contacts with Emma were already small and irregular, and now even more so because she is on a disability leave because of an injury. So rebuilding trust with her may take a very long time or may never directly take place. Writing probably isn't enough, but it was surely a good first step. Frequent contacts directly with her may not happen in the short or middle term, but I am regularly in contact with the inhabitants her “shared universe.” Seeing the changes in them about me confirms that somehow the message gets across. Even if I may never know all the exact details of her version of the events, I know the perception has changed. In the world of gossip, perception is everything!

This morning I opened my window and I heard dozens of birds in the hedge having what seemed to me very entertaining discussions in bird language. I wondered... were they gossiping?

What could a bird gossip translate into?

“Oh! She's gonna lay her eggs soon! Who's the father?”

“Did you see his nest? We all remember how bad was the one he made last year!”

“Look at him fly! He's got some feathers missing... I bet he fought with his neighbour again!”

“Did you see the huge dropping that just came out of his bird butt?”

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I had not yet learned
the amazing skill
of asking “what’s
missing?”

- Liz St. John

homeless hopes

by Bruce Livingstone

hunting and gathering detritus

clay feet mould to walk in another's cast-off

shoes, dues, blue double yous

ghosts of children past daring illegal sleep,

double-parking on bright commons of public light

or shop stoop, steep slope, shrinking night

subliming shared embers of salvage, leaf, sage,

chasing the dragons of myth bottled in ships

blown west, wet, dashing on rocks of wrecked age

they: the homeless, diving fountains of blood clad

in grimm street donations crumbing back to harbour,

labour to line-up, straighten stiff, still worldly, skeletal hopes

Origin of Runes

by Maureen Jean Francis Doherty

Have you always wanted to know your future? From the earliest of Oracles to modern day crystals, tarot and the practice of fortune telling; what drives us to try to predict major life events?

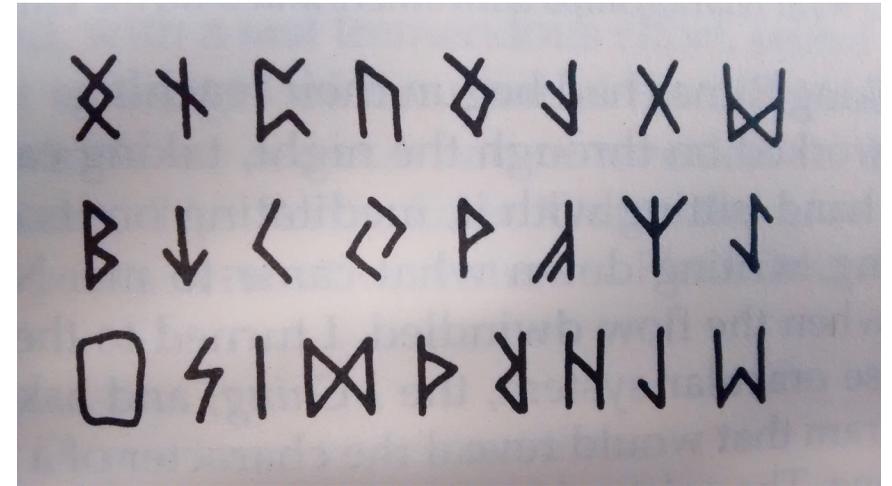
I'm sure we have all read our horoscope in the Sunday paper: "The stars are on your side and you will have a fruitful month because Jupiter is on the rise." Or any one of many influences we want to know about are, for some, a daily routine. In this paper I will talk about my personal favorite: Rune reading.

The practise of Rune reading is used as divine communication. With Celtic and Baltic influence, the oldest of these claims are of Nordic descent. Exactly how old are these runic-like symbols are is unknown. This may give the reader an idea; there is mention of them in the bible.

Kings and Queens believed oracles to be fate, and as such, followed the advice, most of which was common sense. Is it really that easy?

Going back to Mycenaean times, the Oracle of Delphi (since 14th-11th century B.C.), was considered the deity of an era. Consulting seer's in aspects of all decisions, giving way to righteous conclusions in any given situation. Oracles, in every sense of the word, made an example of belief in an outcome that is yet in the future. Following advice of an outside force, and on this note I will expand, you may follow

good advice, and heed the bad. Indeed there is something very powerful in words.



I myself have been reading Runes for many years. Intuitively, when making a difficult decision, I will first smudge my set, lay down my cloth and reach into my bag to draw a Rune, giving myself permission to think through my choices: Take time for the quiet of heart. This could be said: words have power! My personal thought is the right words at the right time may give one pause. The number of runes counts 25, including a blank one, which is called Odin's rune. When doing this simple reading, you take just one rune from the spread.

The above picture shows the runic alphabet from my personal book by Ralph H. Blum (1993/1997 St. Martin's Press, New York). There is much information in this book and on this subject to anyone who wishes to know the right action at the right time. Find a quiet place and read your runes. You just may be surprised!

P.S. Your runes must be given to you or you must make them yourself!!!

Winds Breath

by Rlcz

I heard the sound of waterfall.
With this sound, in, and of, itself;
was a silent breath.
With the words of breath thrown to the wind

The wind's breath,
A drop of the water, in this breath;
that holds the wind sacred song spirit
sing the next word.

As we see the sacred breath
from the tree grown in the leaves
when we hear mindful meditation in its truest form.

Form truest
in meditation
hearing we are when,
Leaves in the grown tree seed
Breathe sacred
see the, as we

Word
sing the next
Spirit Song, Sacred Wind
holds that breath, in this
the water drops
A winds breath

Thrown winds breathe
Words with the silence, breath,
was in itself sound.
Waterfall of sound
Hear the sound of
The next breath

The Lost Essences

by Rlcz

I cry in the memory of losing you.
The echoes of the words you drew,
Reflecting the feelings that were smelt,
And the ideas that discovered themselves
with the clouds, as that they drew.
I wish I could remember you,
instead of only the essences that you knew.
So many long nights of conversation,
slowly grew mind gasping awakening,
revelations that opened doorway to enlightenment.
Exhaled nirvana's lotus in full bloom.
Blossoming teachings that Buddha never gave,
cause these words embody the understandings of the higher aum
thoughts of their own, open your books and
 read something what was written
with the wisdom of sacred creation.

There was no time and space
Only the direction to a realm of thought.
With the motion of sounds,
Toned feeling from the knowledge of the wise,
transcending thoughts of understanding that revealed
 themselves within the third eye.
Time was disguised and lied and the music that is created from their
 tones made you cry with the essence of your sacred radiant light.
Overwhelmed with learning that there is so much more than what is known.

Open up your mind,
let it be sowed
Passed on like pollen on a bee's wing,
Flying between blossoming lotus',
that are the thoughts we have sending you deeper outside.
to fully realise the reason you're alive.
Thoughts meditate, rotate translate
The meaning for life
An aum of your own
Tones to be known
And passed on to the next
That's willing to invest
Intuitive thought so high
They make you sigh.

I saw that you were their
By my side, in my bag next to other words I wrote
I praise that they were read,
enlighten the reader, by the fire side,
then buried in a hole so they may be laid to rest,
 and return to the ether world.
So they would be reincarnated
Did it fill them with dreams of ideas so great it made
 them sigh as tears drip from my eye.

I guess it's going to be an abstract piece this time around

by Beth Allan

"We are all faced with a series of great opportunities brilliantly disguised as impossible situations." - Charles Swindoll

Ruins, ravens, and relativism.

Others were writing all around me while my brain struggled to recognize the voices talking in my head.

Australopithecus had just painted fresh rock art for Cro Magnon, trying to get her into his cave. Big Pharma was carving up our bodily functions and emotions like a butcher's beef chart for easy prescribing and the sample set we were basing our progress on was as erroneous as one could get.

If we are disproving old concepts and learning new things every day in areas where we had been promised surety, how was one supposed to begin navigating the treacherous waters of simple existence?

Subjects and topics square-danced in my head to a tune I didn't know and I opened the research paper I had started weeks ago before I had missed too many writing sessions. The linearity of it singed my scrambled sensibilities and I knew I couldn't continue with it as it was.

Every person with a brain injury can be expected to have problems in many areas, but each will present a unique constellation of symptoms. Even a mild brain injury can present a pattern of

cognitive and psychological symptoms that disrupts psychosocial functioning and results in occupational disability.

I guess it's going to be an abstract piece this time around.

Arriving at this conclusion provided a sense of ease as I released the pressure of having to perform a task my body was not up to at this point in time.

Coming to Uni 102 today I had driven past a house that had a significant fire over the weekend and the firefighters were there to let the former tenants in to get what remained of their possessions, their lives.

It got me to thinking about loss and damage and fragility.

I was relatively new to disability and a major setback had placed me at the tail end of the longest snake on the game board, without a ladder in sight, and I was sliding down so fast I couldn't get my bearings yet alone figure out what to write about.

When we are cut off from the familiar or we don't have access to something we previously did, we need to find new points of reference

When we are cut off from the familiar or we don't have access to something we previously did, we need to find new points of reference; like the tenants searching for remnants in the ashes, we need to find new homes. We have to establish a base camp before we can contemplate rebuilding. Some semblance of security, no matter how tenuous, must be in place before one can go out on little foraging trips to start the process of reconstructing our lives.

I was impressed by how many folks in Uni 101 and 102 were going through similar experiences to me and how, no matter what was going right or wrong,

they managed to show up. Perhaps it was the concreteness of the routine of Uni 101 and 102, every Tuesday and Thursday come rain or shine, that provided a crucial stepping stone for rebuilding. A place to come, to interact, to stretch one's mental muscles and try out new ideas and concepts.

I was beginning to understand that none of us was created to fit in but, rather, to come here and be our own unique expression of whatever it is we had brought to the party. Abiding in the truth of who we really are instead of what society tried to make us believe we needed to be. And I can tell you that Uni 101 and 102 were a haven for people to move into the full reality of their own *reality* and express it without fear.

A rainbow wouldn't be a rainbow without green or red and Uni 101 wouldn't be Uni 101 if it wasn't for the full spectrum of all of our uniquenesses coming together at just the right moment in time.

Perhaps it wasn't an abstract piece after all.

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**While you are
building social
capital in the
form of a social
network, too
much of a good
thing is simply
not good for you.**
- Judy Broswick

Brain: God, Science and Function

by Shyah Delarom

Life is a very important concept; how/when life started for us as a human being. Questions like this have occupied our minds from the very beginning of time. There are great answers to these questions that are reflections of our understanding. I think you can divide the answers into two main groups. The first one is based on the minds of believers in God as the creator of all the universe and all beings. The second one is based on scientific minds and the idea of evolution. Regardless of which camp you belong to, we all have a brain and they function more or less the same. This essay will cover the brain function in relation to how you can achieve positive outcomes through either religion or scientific modes when you use a healthy connected mind.

As believers, we see God as ultimate beauty and goodness, we go to places where we learn about God's teaching through holy books and prophets. We learn about why we are here (that God created man in his own image) and how we can have a good life in this world and beyond. When following the spiritual answers, much of the information is based on trust and your beliefs. Often when god is the guiding factor people also use science to back up their beliefs. There are scientists who believe in god, and in their work, they are trying to understand the beauty of god's creation. This knowledge helps them to achieve higher ground as a human being.

Scientific methodology says that human lives start somewhere in early fetal development. Also, the same theory follows that life came through evolution where modern humans have been documented to be on earth between 120-200,000 years. Scientists hope that by achieving more holistic knowledge about life on earth we can know ourselves better. As scientists we try to understand the world around us, and the purpose of why we are here, by doing research and experiments. We have experienced the world around us since the beginning of time, as a result we created a pool of knowledge which has been passed from generation to generation. As it passed, we have used the knowledge to create new experiments to expand our understanding of the world. As we witness these results, the knowledge base has grown exponentially. We have achieved marvelous results and created positive advances in so many aspects of our lives. However, some of the results have been quite damaging to us as human beings and the world we live in. Although some are unintentional, the cost is great to expand in the name of science, democracy and progression.

Regardless what we believe, our brain has been subject to study from early time. In history many types of studies were done on the brain. We started to study skulls, through time to present, to classify them. Modern science studies the function of the brain not just morphology; why is there such a overwhelming difference in our ideas and what kind of forces within us initiate good and bad ideas? There is now relatively a great deal of knowledge about how our mind/brain works; a critter brain, a neocortex and an emotional pathway in between. Our critter brain is very similar to other animals, especially reptiles, hence reptilian brain. It is the oldest part of the brain developed. Here, basic instinct is reproduction and means to survive and is classified by four F's (functions): fight, flight, freeze and fuck. The brain is composed of reptilian, limbic midbrain and neocortex. Limbic and neocortex sections developed later as a means to enhance and support the reptilian section and basic survival. Limbic brain is in charge of our emotions. The cerebrum or neocortex is in charge of higher functions like thinking and

creating ideas that give us as human beings a great advantage over other living creatures on earth. It is responsible for our conscious decisions.

If we put our critter in charge, we would act like other animals, our action would be based on basic instincts. We would live in packs to increase our safety and resources to survive and reproduce. One's actions would be based on their interest interdependent on the whole pack's interest. However if we put our smart brains in charge, we certainly would create some ideas and ways to bring them to reality, basically execute the idea by planning and create environments to materialize the idea. We experiment, learn and increase our knowledge and therefore efficiency. However all that does not say anything about the effects of the realization of these ideas, it just makes us better at what we do.

No matter where we believe we come from, our brain is designed to have infinite capacity to create and support ideas which is in harmony with our and our world's well being. The question remains are we willing to utilize our capacity in a positive way for survival? At the end of the day all we need is within us.

As the neocortex is capable of creating anything, and is not based on moral right or wrong, it can go in a path of destruction and work against our real interest as human beings by ignoring our critter and emotional brain. Therefore our well being and that of our packs is threatened. Our emotional brain is not active in a way to connect to our critter brain, therefore there is no feedback from our critter brain to our neocortex. If the neocortex worked on its own and chose a destructive path, our critter and emotional brain would respond with immense fear and danger. When in danger we would fight, flight or freeze; fight against the destructive idea and it's systems, run

away from it or freeze and do nothing. Any of these options is better than the original plan, executing the destructive idea. If the feedback reaches the neocortex, in a healthy smart brain, the neocortex would create an alternative plan supported by our critter and emotional brain, hence a beneficial situation that supports our well-being and we feel joy. It is always best if the three parts work healthily together.

We know that our critter brain is very well developed in its function, which is why it has not evolved over thousands of years. Our neocortex and limbic system have evolved over time to support our critter brain and survival. In healthy interconnection of our three brain parts (reptilian, limbic and neocortex) we achieve our survival in the most ideal way. This creates a safe, healthy environment for us and the world we live in by utilizing emotional, instinctual and intellectual aspects of the brain. For example, if we are working on a project that can make a huge profit for the developer, and the same time the project changes the environment in a positive or negative way (that makes the consumer pay a higher price that can affect their lives permanently). These negative options happen every day. But, when the brain is in healthy interaction, the profit would not be the main concern but the effect on our environment and other fellow human beings. If the project has a negative effect the healthy brain would reject the premise of the project regardless of the profit. No matter where we believe we come from, our brain is designed to have infinite capacity to create and support ideas which is in harmony with our and our world's well being. The question remains are we willing to utilize our capacity in a positive way for survival? At the end of the day all we need is within us.

Journal Entry

by Jerry McBride

What do I have to offer for the Journal? Do I actually have anything to offer? I am too scared to find out. I am so scared to attach to the idea, that I would prefer to rebel, and become interested in other things. I could write about points, but are they worth talking about? I could write about the following questions:

- do I want to share some personal history?
- how has coming to Uni 102 given me a different sense of purpose lately?
- how are attachment theory topics connected to my disability of attachment and my trauma therapy?

Some personal history. What would I like to share? Would people be interested? Would anyone care? When I was growing up with Grandma, I would just get her to do it, and I would simply copy whatever she completed as if I did it. This is how I coped in elementary school, and some part of secondary. After high school, all my schooling was about making an effort and getting scared to follow through, because I was not willing to believe in myself and complete my goals. When I tried to finish Grade 12 after high school, welfare government told me I had to look for work. Found a job program that gave me my GED, and I kept trying to look for work I could do. My job history is too much to write about. Simply, I struggled until I decided to give up on career choices near the end of 2007.

I have been feeling intimidated since coming Uni 102. If anything I read was not up to my expectations, I was not interested. There were moments, I was ready to give up on the course, because topics about race and gender all reminded me of how I grew up. However, I decided to persevere and read the material. Most of my reading has been through either on the toilet, riding a bus, or waiting in line for a meal or a shower. This is my greatest accomplishment because I am not inspired to read anything unless it is in my interest. Because I wanted to understand what the lecturer was talking about, I would make the effort. Lately, I have been very interested in what I have been reading about the following:

- Big Pharma and Medicalization
- Stigma of Leprosy
- The economic structure of drug dealers

These topics would bring my curiosity into my consciousness and I would not let go until I finished reading, or else I was simply be too tired to continue.

Attachment theory was a very captivating topic, because my therapist and I have been working attachment disorder for over 4 years. It started with sexual assault from a past teacher and then I was granted funding for my further therapy. The clarity of what secure and insecure attachments are has given me an understanding that I can ask my therapist questions regarding attachment.

At this point, this is I am going to write about, because I am not sure this is making any sense. I could talk about the following:

- would it be possible to do economic understanding on the attachment theory?
- what type of insights have I gained through Uni 102?
- how is Uni 102 helping me with my ACA Step work?

I am feeling like I have no further time. Is there anything else for me to offer?

Shampoos & Conditioners

by Tara Genier

Whenever I'm buying shampoo and conditioner, I look at the label and often it says Not Tested on Animals and I think "That's good." Recently, I watched a TEDx talk by someone who helped herself recover from a serious illness using medical research information that came from tests on mice. I was glad the person had recovered from her illness, but I felt bad for the mice. After some reflection, I found myself being in support for ending animal testing.

People around the world are experiencing good health because scientists have researched to cure many diseases. Many of these accomplishments have been due to animal testing long before trial medicines were administered to humans. Although achievements in human medicine are significant, the practice of using animals as test subjects in medical research should stop.

As humans grow and evolve consciously, we will view animals no differently than how we view ourselves. Humans are sentient beings; animals are sentient beings. If we consider what it means to be sentient, we see that it is having the ability to perceive through the senses and conscious. When we know that animals are sentient beings, we understand that they are very likely suffering while being subjected to medical research experimentation. In their natural settings animals know when they are in physical danger and have developed ways to avoid or escape danger. Not to be vulgar or crude, but it's certain that most test animals would run

away or fight back when subjected to the tests if they were not tethered and drugged.

An important fact of why animal testing should end in medical research is the animals have not given their consent. I've not heard of any animal population expressing agreement to be test subjects. Some might say that because animals don't have the capability to communicate verbally means that we don't have the obligation to get their permission. Again, an animal will run away or fight back when being poked and cut with surgical instruments. This is clear non-verbal communication that we don't have their consent.

The last point I'll mention as to why animal testing should stop is the matter of exploitation. The arrangement of using animals in medical research shows that humans gain and animals lose. Test animals are being exploited at the expense of their lives and humans gain better quality lives. If we ask "Is this fair? Is this right?" many people would say "No." To use the analogy of humans subjected to experimentation by aliens, we can more easily see the test animals' perspective. Humans don't like unconsented experimentation being done to us, so we shouldn't subject animals to unconsented medical research experiments.

Perhaps these points will offer a moment of contemplation when we consider the issue of animals being used in medical research. Humans are compassionate and are always evolving to higher states of awareness and it is certain we will eventually stop exploiting animals for our gain.

I was beginning to understand that none of us was created to fit in but, rather, to come here and be our own unique expression of whatever it is we had brought to the party.

- Beth Allan

DIVERGENT/ CONVERGENT
ДИВЕРГЕНЦІА/ КОНВЕРГЕНЦІА

Journal of the University 102 Students

University 102 is a course in the social sciences. It is part of the University 101 program that offers free, non-credit, academic courses to students who have faced barriers to post-secondary education. Respect and value for the students' knowledge, experiences, and differences are the foundations of the program. The program strives to be inclusive and to foster collaborative learning.

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