



expenditure



SERENDIPITY

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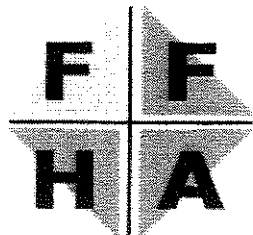
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Serendipity /sɛr(ə)n'dɪpɪti/ (noun)

The faculty of happening upon fortunate discoveries when not in search of them.

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Dear Readers,

Serendipity 2015 has become a reality, and we are all so very excited about it! Originally the challenge for the students was to write an essay about a topic they felt they could embrace with heart and soul... an essay to leave a message, to share experiences, personal reflections, life lessons learned. In short, an essay about values they cherish. They went beyond the call of duty, and with Sarah's invaluable guidance, they also embarked on a creative writing journey, which was then enriched by the beautiful illustrations by the artists who took up the challenge. That's how these wonderful essays, poems and short stories came to life. In this process, students have undoubtedly discovered many aspects of the writing process, but more importantly, they have discovered their own potential and that of the written word.

*Marisel Bollati
Deputy Editor in Chief*

Welcome to the fourth edition of Serendipity. Serendipity began with the help of Fulbright Language Assistant Dennis Manion in 1993. El Departamento de Lengua y Literatura Inglesa, el Departamento de Artes Visuales, and the Fulbright ETA program are excited to bring Serendipity back to print after an eleven year hiatus. This volume is less delightful happenstance than a testament to the power of process- the fifteen essays composing its centerpiece were written by the students of Lengua Inglesa III. For many of these students, researching and writing English prose seemed a daunting task, but brainstorming soon blossomed into theses and paragraphs unfolded into pages. In reading the resulting collection of writing, the real beauty can be seen in the intersection of the diverse voices, ideas, and experiences of their authors. A portrait of the class forms in the commonalities and distinctions amongst them- and perhaps it is in these serendipitous connections where we see the value of this project.

Many thanks to the tireless students of Lengua Inglesa III, the infallible Marisel, and the collaboration of the artists and writers who contributed. Together, we invite you to read and enjoy Serendipity 2015.

*Sarah Daly
Editor in Chief*

The Everlasting Benefits of Student Exchange Programs

By Marcos Andrés Jaliff

"I resolutely believe that respect for diversity is a fundamental pillar in the eradication of racism, xenophobia and intolerance."

Rigoberta Menchú

Picture a seventeen-year-old child from Norway trying to brush his teeth with the water from a bidet, a sort of a new sink for him, on his first morning in Argentina. Sound awkward? Believe it or not, it happens. Every year thousands of students, either from secondary schools or universities, land and stay in foreign countries for a certain amount of time to get to know other cultures, improve personal skills and learn new languages. For them, participating in a student exchange programme means a challenging and rewarding experience.

Before, during, and after World War I and World War II, and in light of the need for strengthening bonds among nations, plenty of peace-building organisations, such as AFS Intercultural Programs (American Field Service), YFU (Youth For Understanding), Rotary International, and AIESEC (International Association of Students in Economic and Commercial Sciences), were created to address the urgent need for putting an end to hostile altercations. These organisations believed that it was impossible to hate a country and its people if a person really got involved in it; they understood, as it is stated on the AFS Intercultural Programs official website, that "the acknowledgement of cultural differences provided by a deep immersion in a different society guaranteed the prevention of further bloodshed" ("Cómo Nació", 2013). For this reason, they developed programmes for students to go abroad for a period of time while living with a host family or on a college campus and attending classes at a foreign school. Such programmes became a pioneering initiative in developing and increasing people's understanding and tolerance towards other cultures, with the main objective to promote world peace by getting a real insight into other cultures and cultivating love among people from different backgrounds. Today these programmes continue to improve and offer numerous benefits for students, host families and communities.

Many students choose to study abroad for the simple reason of seeing the world. Studying abroad offers students the possibility to live in a completely different country, learn new customs, meet people of various nationalities, see natural wonders, visit museums and historic monuments, and take city-tours. By and large, while abroad, exchange students are not limited to travelling only in their host countries; they can visit neighbouring countries as well.

Yet, one of the biggest reasons why students go on an exchange programme is the abundant educational benefits. Being enrolled in other academic institutions gives them the chance to interact with their peers in a different social setting, be exposed to different subjects and approaches, know how the education system in their host countries functions, earn school credits, develop different skills and make an important and favourable impact on future decisions. In addition, and as AFS Intercultural Programs highlights on its website, schools "provide a place where exchange students can share, learn and reflect on their experiences;" in

turn, “teachers and other students also benefit from the opportunity to bond with someone from a different culture” (2011). It is also certain that a complete immersion in a foreign school community is a great way to understand a new culture and its deepest values. Moreover, this experience often stands out on students’ applications for college admission panels and is highly valuable on their resumes; it shows their considerable leadership acumen and their commitment to their education.

And just as beneficial as going to a school abroad can be is the learning of a foreign language, considered one of the most interesting draws of an exchange programme. Picking up a new language is not always an easy task. For this reason, most students opt to go abroad and dive right into a different language. As AFS Intercultural Programs mentions on its website, “immersion is one of the quickest and most effective ways to learn another language. Aside from competitive advantage in college applications and jobs, a new language helps students truly communicate and connect with other cultures” (2015). The study and acquisition of another language aims to develop intercultural sensitivity and appreciation. In fact, students can have a better understanding of other cultures through their languages.

Being part of a new family and making new lifelong friends are the most significant and lasting benefits of an exchange programme. By living with a host family, exchange students, as YFU clearly underlines on its website, “create relationships and emotional bonds with people from another culture, resulting in a familial feeling that no money can buy” (YFU, “Host Family”, 2015). It is a perfect opportunity for them to share their world and, in turn, their host families “will experience new traditions and customs without leaving home” (2015). Moreover, “spending time studying abroad can provide an excellent opportunity to make new contacts and build invaluable relationships with peers from around the world,” says Elizabeth Dalferes, Assistant Director of Admissions and Graduate Program Administration at Tulane Law School (*TopUniversities*, 2014). While taking part in an exchange programme, chances are that students establish close and lasting bonds with their classmates at school and also with other students from their exchange organisations. Not only will these relationships grow throughout their lives but they will also help them understand the world through new eyes. In this way, participants will have built up an international network of contacts which they can take advantage of in the future.

Likewise, while being abroad, students can also experience personal growth. They have the opportunity to develop self-awareness, learn how to control their emotions, see themselves as profoundly influenced by their own cultures and show tolerance towards people in the learning process. Exchange programmes also foster improvement of self-esteem and critical and creative ways of thinking. Additionally, these programmes may enhance students’ ability to face social challenges out of their comfort zones and deal with their problems, and in turn, these challenges let students have the possibility of gaining experience and maturity, as well as independence. Nonetheless, although exchange students can get substantial benefits from studying abroad, they might also encounter real difficulties while trying to embrace another culture. From communication problems to culture shock and homesickness, adjustment issues might have a negative impact on their experiences, with exchange students changing host families and schools, returning home early, or even developing anxiety issues.

Consequently, an important question arises: Do the benefits of participating in a student exchange programme outweigh the drawbacks? Absolutely! Studying abroad is rarely an experience that exchange students regret. Despite the efforts, students agree that these programmes are an opportunity to make lifelong connections, take in a new culture, gain new interests, develop educational and personal skills and appreciate diversity. Furthermore, as Sarah Han of the Department of International Cooperation at the Korean Council for University Education explains, "long term experience in other cultures has a tendency to help one think objectively about oneself and one's home country, tolerate differences, and recognize and appreciate diversity" (*TopUniversities*, 2014). So, now that you are aware of the great benefits of a student exchange programme, what are you waiting for to have this worthwhile and fulfilling experience?

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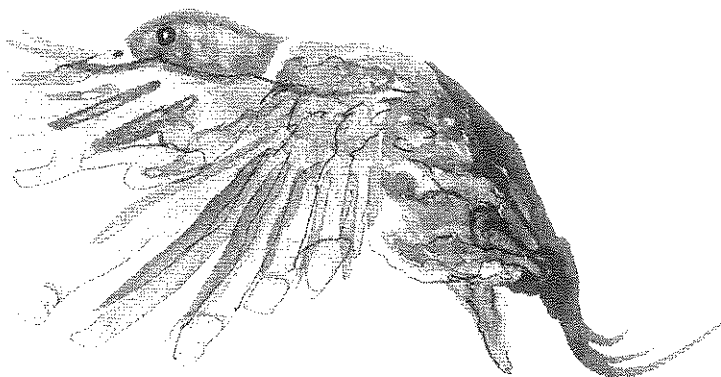
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Débora Bazan Flitt



In My Element

By Maria del Valle Falcón Domínguez

"You miss 100% of the shots you don't take"

Wayne Gretzky

Every Sunday morning while I change outfits, my friend's questions come to mind: Why do you do it? How? Does it hurt? Do you like it? How do you protect yourself? What do you feel when you do it? These are sometimes difficult to answer but by the end of the day I know I like it more than I did a few days ago. The feeling of adrenaline pumping through my veins is almost impossible to describe. Paintball offers me the possibility of disconnecting myself from reality, enjoying natural beauty, all while having fun.

First of all let's agree on what Paintball involves. The term refers to a game that simulates military combat in which players of one team try to eliminate players on the opposing team by shooting capsules of paint —also known as paintballs— at them with a device called a paintball marker. These capsules are composed of a non-toxic, biodegradable, water soluble polymer. Even though many people believe that players are just running around on a field shooting each other, this is not so. Every game has a clear objective set before the game starts, such as: tag all the players on the opposing team, capture the flag, touch the other team's bunker, rescue a prisoner or a number of different scenarios. These objectives must be achieved under the basic rules: keep your mask on, stay within the field's boundaries, do not overshoot someone, and when you are hit by a paintball you are out, along with some other rules. There are also referees in every field to ensure these rules are followed.

Broadly speaking paintball is divided into two game types: "Woodsball" or "Rec Ball" and "Speed Ball." The former is the original form of paintball mainly played outside in a natural or semi built up environment. Variations of fields allow different versions of the

game including Tactical-Milsim paintball which uses tactical or military simulated gear, game play and objectives. These fields and the type of game allow the possibility of making big and large scale games which can take place over a few days. Alternatively, the latter is played on leveled fields with grass or artificial turf that look like small football fields, bunkers are air filled and made out of fabric. These fields are generally placed outdoors, but can also be found indoors. The games that these fields allow are generally faster paced, shorter in duration and use significantly more paintballs than Rec Ball games. The number of players can vary according to the type of game that you want to play. It may go from hundreds -as in an international tournament- to a one on one challenge.

At this point you may be wondering how I got involved in this sport. It was a Sunday almost two years ago when all the girlfriends on my boyfriend's paintball team had planned to play paintball together. Some of us were excited and others were frightened, so we did a big game mixing boys and girls, dividing couples in order to play against one another. We did two games of this kind and I ended up not being shot in any of them. I felt brave. I challenged my boyfriend and we did a one on one game in which the first one to get shot would lose. I remember the countdown before the game began, I can still feel that tingle of anticipation down my neck. The adrenaline and adventure it provides and the satisfaction of ending it with a victory is magnificent. I believe that when a sport happens to be fun *and* rewarding, it becomes a must-do activity.

While it is true that some people are afraid of playing this extreme sport, maybe because they believe that it will hurt them, safety procedures are of great concern in paintball. Getting to know the obligatory and optional equipment used for protection when playing can alleviate that fear. Within the obligatory equipment we find: paintball weapons, which vaguely resemble real guns and function on the concept of compressed air or carbon dioxide with aiming ranges from 30 to 45m. Most of these weapons are semi-automatic (one trigger pull – one shot). Paintballs are gelatin balls filled with color that is easily removable from both skin and clothing with water and soap. Safety equipment includes a protective mask, which protects the face and eyes and must never be taken off in the field, and chest protectors, which protect from the majority of the paintballs that land on the chest. The optional equipment includes: clothing with some kind of camouflage; paintball jerseys and pants, derived from motocross, or special outer clothing with integrated padding that allows the player a free range of motion and helps protect him or her from paintball hits and from the hard ground as well; elbow and knee pads are common among outdoor games and are generally worn inside a player's pants to prevent abrasion. Players also sometimes wear gloves to reduce the potential for injury from paintball impacts and scrapes to the hands as the result of crawling.

After having moved beyond the fear, we may be able to reap the benefits that playing a sport in contact with nature has. A systematic review carried out by a team at the Peninsula College of Medicine and Dentistry has analyzed existing studies and concluded that there are benefits to mental and physical well-being from exercising outdoors. The study found that exercising in natural environments, as compared to exercising indoors, was associated with greater feelings of revitalization, increased energy

and positive engagement. It also decreases tension, confusion, anger and depression. More evidence seems to confirm that there is an innate human tendency to seek connections with nature and other forms of life, as Erich Fromm's "Biophilia Hypothesis" suggests. This may be one of the reasons why we feel so attracted to nature (Fromm 1973). At first we may not think of Paintball as a sport connected with nature but it is.

Playing Paintball also provides an excellent chance to strengthen your body without ever having to think about it as exercise. While there are some intervals of sitting, hiding and waiting, there is plenty of running, sprinting, jumping and moving. Intense workouts also result in the release of endorphins, which elevate mood. Regular exercise also reduces risk of heart diseases, blood pressure and depression. Tense situations in the games generally boost the players' self-confidence. According to a research led by the University of Missouri Health System, "team sports are good for learning accountability, dedication and leadership, among many other traits. Fighting for a common goal with other players teaches you how to build a collective team synergy and effectively communicate the best way to solve problems en route to a victory" (University of Missouri 2015). While playing Paintball you rapidly learn that success comes by working together and that the best strategy will fail if everyone does not work as a unit. And what can be more important than teamwork?

I firmly believe that people should not be afraid of trying different activities, like paintball, the excitement and feeling of fulfillment that you experience is worth a try. This sport is a challenge to overcome fears and enjoy the benefits of exercise and spending time in nature. Paintball changed my life, why don't you let it change yours?

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The Journey to a Better Academic Life

By Romina Mendez

I was feeling nervous so I closed my book and decided to take a break. I looked for the two tools I needed: my mat and some instrumental music. I put the music on, sat on the mat with my legs crossed, and closed my eyes. I focused on taking deep breaths and getting rid of anxiety and negative thoughts, the usual pre-exam nerves. Slowly I began to release the tension in my body, starting with my facial muscles and continuing to the other tense muscles. The aim of this exercise is to get the mind to go blank. What I simply consider as my routine exercise to ease anxiety the day before a final exam, meditation, is proven to be a powerful exercise that provides important benefits for college students.

One of the most significant benefits is the reduction of stress. In 2008, Doug Oman published an article called "Meditation Lowers Stress and Supports Forgiveness Among College Students: A Randomized Controlled Trial" in which he explains why people should consider meditation as an effective antidote for the difficult experiences college students have to undergo. For students, having to study and sit for exams can be highly stressful but through meditation they can release accumulated tension in the body and rest their minds (2008). A study in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* proved that meditation can help college students decrease the cortisol (stress hormone) that the body produces (Tang 2009). Furthermore, the same study confirmed that meditation activates the "rest and digest" part of our parasympathetic nervous system. When this part of the nervous system is active, the symptoms of stress such as heart rate, breathing rate and blood pressure slow down. Meditation releases stress and its symptoms and in this way allows students to perform successfully at college.

The feeling of being worried about a future event, or anxiety, can be a dangerous enemy in academic life. Many college students say that anxiety is inevitable before an exam. However, the unpleasant symptoms like panic, heart palpitations, nausea or stomach cramps can affect performance on exams. But don't worry, meditation can be a powerful antidote to anxiety attacks. Neuroscientist Philippe R. Goldin and psychologist James J. Gross at Stanford University, through the mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) program, found that people who practiced mindfulness meditation for eight weeks were better able to turn down the reactivity of the amygdala, a ganglion in the brain that is involved in autonomic responses associated with fear (2010). These responses can interfere with college performance. Taking this into account, it is important to consider that experiencing fewer worries leads college students to achieve better grades.

Another benefit of meditation is good sleep quality. Sleep disorders can be common for college students. By practicing meditation, students can manage stress and anxiety more effectively and in this way they can improve their ability to rest and relax. "Meditation involves focusing on your breathing and bringing your mind's attention to the present without drifting into concerns about the past or future," posted Julie Corliss, the Executive Editor of Harvard Heart Letter, on the Harvard Health Blog in February 2015. An article called "Better Living

through Mindfulness" published in the University of Utah's *UNews* claimed that mindfulness meditation helps people have a better control over their emotions and moods and helps them sleep better at night as they develop the ability to manage stress (2013). It is a very useful technique that allows people to control their mind and thoughts so as to have a good night's rest.

With less stress, less anxiety and sufficient restful sleep, students will be able to boost their concentration. As they have to focus on breathing while meditating, students can improve the control over their own mind. With this form of mental training students can study and do their tasks without being distracted by thoughts or the typical external stimuli, such as digital devices. According to a 2005 study published in The National Center for Biotechnology Information called "Meditation experience is associated with increased cortical thickness," the reason why meditation enhances people's attention span is because the brain's cerebral cortex becomes thicker. This part of the brain is the one that deals with attention and memory among others. Memory and attention are key cognitive skills that are crucial for a positive educational achievement.

The studies already mentioned show us that meditation is not only a way of relaxing, as was thought for many years, but also a useful tool that provides meaningful benefits for the academic performance of college students. However, it is also true that these benefits develop over time. Meditation is a mental exercise that needs training and practice for it to be successful. We can compare meditation with physical exercise in that the benefits of both types of exercise, one for the mind and the other for the body, appear after training for a period of time. After devoting a little time each day to meditation, you will be surprised how relaxed, unworried, active and restful your mind becomes. During your academic life, facing stress can be unavoidable but training your mind through meditation is an effective tool that will guarantee you a successful performance in your career.

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Leaving My Birthplace

By Bárbara Domínguez

Leaving the place where you were born is not easy. Sometimes people ask why you left your city but it is not simple. All around the world, people flee for different reasons. Some good, some not so good. In my case, it was *security*. Of the 40 million inhabitants in Argentina, more than 20 million live in the province of Buenos Aires (INDEC, 2010). It is an attractive city whose job opportunities and night-life attract people from all over the globe. But in the last decade, insecurity has taken its toll and many people have started to leave. 2005 was a tough year for my family. With people being robbed, dying in the streets, and children being kidnapped, living in Buenos Aires had become dangerous. My parents couldn't afford a life in which we didn't know whether Daddy would arrive home or not. So, they made a decision that changed our lives forever: "*We leave it all behind, or we stay in this jungle*" said my father. Some months later, we landed in San Juan with our pockets full of emotions and expectations.

Life in San Juan was not easy in the beginning. What would it be like to live in a city with only 700,000 people? (INDEC, 2010) Would it ever be the same as living in the capital? Living in San Juan meant a new school, new people to meet, a new culture. And, while some think that saying "a new culture" if you move within your country is not right, let me tell you that living in and being from the same country doesn't necessarily mean that we are all culturally the same. During my first years in San Juan, I experienced culture shock. Culture shock is by definition "the personal disorientation a person may feel when experiencing an unfamiliar way of life due to immigration or a visit to a new country, a move between social environments, or simply travel to another type of life" (Macónis, 2010). As specialists on the topic state, there are different ways in which culture shock affects people: boredom, social differences, language barrier, generation gap, information gap and so on. Although we live in a country in which people speak Spanish, there are differences among provinces and social environments. I remember once going to the market to buy a kilo of *batata* (sweet potatoes) and arriving home with a kilo of *dulce de batata* (a sweet potatoes desert), not knowing that in San Juan the word *batata* is used for the desert and the word *camote* for the vegetable. I also found it difficult to understand certain slang expressions, like *manso*. What did it mean? Something is cool or great. After a while and a few explanations, I got used to these phrases and started using them, too.

But more important than the language differences are the social differences. People in San Juan tend to be more friendly and pleasant than people in Buenos Aires. That doesn't mean that people living in Buenos Aires are cold and unfriendly, but you may find out that you've been living on the same block of apartments for more than fifteen years and still not know the name of your neighbour. The negative side of living in San Juan is that everybody knows everybody, their life stories, who they dated, what they studied and so forth. In Buenos Aires people don't mind what others are doing as long as it doesn't affect them. Another thing I found here in San Juan is that in general, society is more prejudiced or has a more old-fashioned way of thinking. Some people here still raise an eyebrow when they see two boys kissing each other or a girl dressed as if she were a character from a comic magazine, while in Buenos Aires that is normal.

But all these differences are superficial in comparison to leaving my family 1200 km away. No more birthday parties or Christmas surrounded by my relatives. No more saying "this weekend we are having lunch all together at grandma's." That special relationship I once had with them now is maintained through Facebook and Whatsapp. I start communicating more through "likes" in pictures than actually phoning them, and meanwhile I am developing closer relationships with people I have met in San Juan. What's more, going back to visit will never feel the same. At the beginning I constantly wanted to go to my hometown and stay there for weeks. Now, as visit after visit goes by, this necessity to stay long has decreased and after one week I just want to go back home. Yes, HOME. After ten years in San Juan, I can say that even though I take great pride in and feel deeply about my hometown of Buenos Aires, it is no longer my home.

Every time I go back to Buenos Aires, be it to visit my family or on vacation, I experience reverse culture shock. The phenomenon of "reverse culture shock" results from the "psychosomatic and psychological consequences of the readjustment process to the primary culture. The affected person often finds this more surprising and difficult to deal with than the original culture shock." Reverse culture shock comprises two parts: idealization and expectations. As specialists on the topic admit, when we spend some time abroad we tend to focus on the good from our past, elide the bad and create an ideal version of it (Macionis, 2010). We also tend to think that our previous world has not changed. We assume that everything remains exactly as we left it, and the realization that life has evidently continued without us causes discomfort and psychological anguish. Living away and coming back to my Buenos Aires has been one of the most difficult experiences I have had in my life. In my last journeys to Buenos Aires I saw signs that made my experience different from what it used to be. I know I have changed forever, I'm no longer that little city girl who lived surrounded by concrete giants and infinite street lights. I find myself seeking every and any opportunity to talk about my new city, and, truth be told, I tend to feel a bit angry or upset when people start asking silly things about San Juan.

What is it that makes you miss a place? What makes a place home? Is it that I love San Juan more than I do Buenos Aires? I cannot answer that. They deserve different and yet the same kind of love. I love Buenos Aires for being my birthplace, the city where my family grew up, that incredible place where lights never turn off and there is always somebody waiting for me with open arms. I love San Juan for being the place that sheltered us when times were hard, where the sun always shines and the people I love live. I can only say that if it had not been for Buenos Aires, I would have never come to San Juan. And if it had not been for my coming to San Juan, I would have never met the people I met. My heart belongs to the city of Buenos Aires, but San Juan is my home now; it keeps me grounded and as Henry Miller once said: "One's destination is never a place, but rather a new way of seeing things."

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"Liberate" por Daniela León

Who Am I?

By Belen Lopez

"We're born alone, we live alone, we die alone. Only through our love and friendship can we create the illusion for the moment that we're not alone"
-Orson Welles

Have you ever felt sad because you thought you would never find that one person who complements you and reassures you, especially in bad moments? Have you ever felt alone? Have you ever thought that there are people out there like us, like you and me, who are immersed in chronic loneliness? According to psychologists loneliness is not just about self-preservation; instead it is something that affects people's lives more and more. Although common definitions of loneliness describe it as a state of solitude or being alone, loneliness is actually a state of mind (Askt quoted in Estroff, 2008). It causes people to feel empty, alone, unwanted, desperate and without a future. It can make them feel depressed and even desperate when they do not know how to overcome this feeling.

In a new essay, Paul Farmer and Jenny Edwards, the chief executives of the Mental Health Foundation, said loneliness can be both a cause and effect of mental health problems (Gil, 2014). According to research by John Cacioppo, a University of Chicago psychologist and a top loneliness expert, loneliness is considered to be strongly connected to genetics although it can also be attributed to internal factors such as low self-esteem (Gil, 2014). That's probably one of the reasons why some people try to hurt themselves. They think perhaps that pain is the only way they can take control and not feel that loneliness is destroying their lives. For example, some teenagers hurt themselves in order to forget about loneliness and instead think about the pain they are feeling when they cut themselves. Instead what people should do is express their feelings to a friend or a professional to alleviate their loneliness.

People who lack confidence in themselves often believe that they are unworthy of the attention or regard of other people. This can lead to isolation and chronic loneliness. Also, loneliness is considered to be linked to increased stress, depression, paranoia, anxiety, addiction, cognitive decline and is a known factor in suicide (Cherry, 2015). People who feel lonely are exposed to risk because their mental health is strongly affected by loneliness. Fortunately, this very painful feeling can be treated medically. Medical treatment is necessary when loneliness becomes chronic depression (Cherry, 2015). We need perhaps to go to a psychologist with whom we can talk about what is happening to us. Someone who can understand what is going on and can help us with a solution. Psychologist Dr. Hughes says, "A problem aired is a problem shared and sometimes you need to talk to someone impartial and independent of your friends and family" (Gil, 2014). Friendships and other relationships can also contribute by providing solutions or by giving suggestions and letting us know that we have worth and are cherished as a friend and family member.

We can help to treat and prevent loneliness by recognizing that loneliness is a sign that something needs to change, understanding the effects that loneliness has on our lives, and last but not least, expecting the best. Lonely people often expect rejection, so instead what they should do is to focus on positive thoughts and attitudes in their social relationships

(Cherry, 2015). I used to think that I was the only person in the world that felt this way. I was not proud of myself because what I thought was the only solution was to try to be with someone, to find a partner. I was a dependent person and I felt alone but perhaps the worst part was that I couldn't tell anyone what was happening to me. I thought that no one could help me because they would not understand the way I felt. I had the impression that they would laugh at me or feel sorry for me; I thought that if that was what I would gain by sharing my problems, then I preferred to keep them to myself.

It's important to know that whatever happens to you, you are not alone and can plan your recovery. The poet Edgar Allan Poe once said, "I have absolutely no pleasure in the stimulants in which I sometimes so madly indulge. It has not been in the pursuit of pleasure that I have periled life and reputation and reason. It has been the desperate attempt to escape from torturing memories, from a sense of insupportable loneliness and a dread of some strange impending doom" (Poe, 1945). I must confess that I felt better when I discovered that I was not alone in this. It was as Edgar Allan Poe said; it was really an insupportable loneliness in which I was immersed. Insupportable because it felt like no matter what I did, I would not feel better. Insupportable because at every step loneliness was there.

What we as human beings should do is consider this painful feeling as part of our lives and give it the place and importance it needs. Only when we do this will we find it easy to deal with or at least know what to do to get rid of loneliness. As a result, we will not be ashamed to ask for help. It is also necessary for us to know what we can do to help others when we recognize its symptoms. It is time people considered loneliness as something that needs early intervention. Someone told me some time ago, "only you can provide happiness in your life" and the real thing is that I can't feel happy if I am feeling lonely because there is something missing or something happening that makes me feel incomplete. I know that there is something I have to change, something that starts with me ...and I am working on this. I want to show everyone how big and powerful I am. To know everything starts from myself and know someday I will be capable of saying "I don't need anyone who teaches me how valuable I am, anyone but me!"

In conclusion, I think that it is necessary for us to know what we mean when we are talking about loneliness because we can only know how to deal with it if we really know what loneliness is. We have to realize that it is not just a state of mind; loneliness is affecting people's lives. It's high time we knew the causes of loneliness. It's high time people recognized the difference between loneliness and chronic loneliness. We have to identify those things that affect people's lives and that put them at risk. Taking all this into account, loneliness is a medical condition that affects our lives in many ways, but we can get rid of it with early medical intervention and personal awareness.

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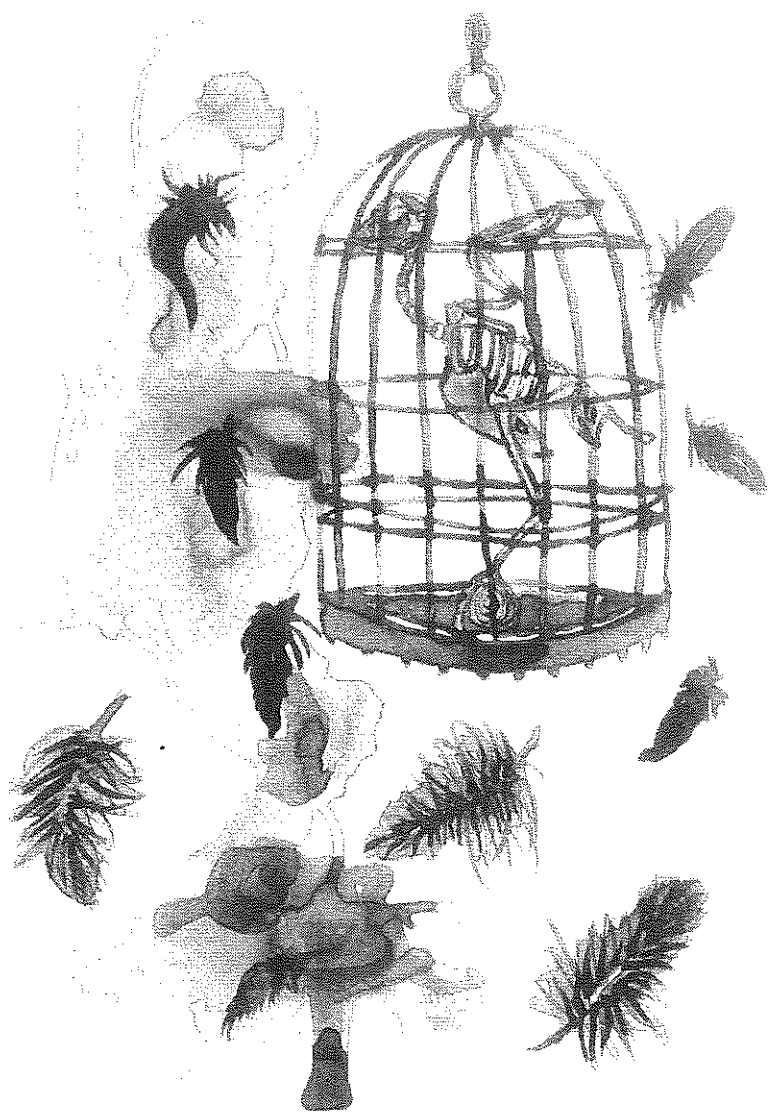
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To Be, or Not To Be Stressed- That is the Question

By María Luciana Maldonado

It is 11:45 at night and your essay is not finished, you half studied for your test, and you are pretty sure you are not going to get a good night of sleep. This is not the first and won't be the last time this happens, so here is my question: do you ever stop for a break when you feel overwhelmed? Stress has become a common word in our society and many students suffer from it; but do we really know what we mean when we use this word? Stress can be defined- according to The Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English- as the "continuous feelings of worry about your work or personal life that prevent you from relaxing" (Longman, 2003). Nevertheless, Hans Selye- "father of the stress field"- coined the word to refer to a biological adaptation to external threats. A mechanism present in the body that helps us to adapt to external stressors. These adaptations generally take a physical toll on people in the form of high blood pressure, kidney disease and ulcers. However, stress can have a different kind of toll. The silent and often heavy emotional effects of stress can be devastating for students in particular; the isolation of stressed students can lead them to leave important things aside without realizing the impact this has in their lives.

Tight schedules, long sleepless nights studying, the constant need to be in control, and the combination of meeting deadlines and keeping up with university pace are seriously affecting the relationships of college students with their family and friends. College can be a rollercoaster, and the stress of working towards a professional goal implies a great amount of pressure. This pressure is not only put on students by teachers but also, and mainly, by students themselves; and when university becomes a burden it becomes pandemonium. *Whiplash*- a nominee for best picture at the 2015 Academy Awards - exemplifies this clearly. In the movie we see how a percussion student wants to perfect his technique under the instruction of a well-known teacher. What starts as a dream come true soon becomes a nightmare for the protagonist. He is put under so much pressure that he becomes obsessed with improving, and eventually, arguments arise within his family and with his girlfriend. His loneliness feeds his obsession which grows until he has to quit college. Although fictional, *Whiplash* shows us the all too real possible actions stressed students sometimes take in order to achieve their goals.

As shown in the movie, the accumulation of homework and practice and the sensation of little time in which to do it lead to mood changes, irritability and anger followed by anxiety, guilt and restlessness. Confirming this, the Mayo Clinic - a leader in medical care- claims that "stress symptoms can affect your body, your thoughts and feelings, and your behavior" ("Stress Symptoms," para. 3). Think about how students change their humor when studying for final exams. Take me for instance. In my second year of college I was so snowed under with papers to hand in and exams to prepare that I hardly got any sleep. This caused me to fall asleep in the car or anywhere where I felt even a little bit comfortable. The sleep deprivation in combination with the continuous feeling of not reaching my goals changed my personality. My family can tell you that "irritability" is a soft word to describe the mood changes I experienced that year. The feeling of annoyance increased together with stress and my only way out presented itself when I decided to be alone and focus on my work. Just before stress took over my life by depriving

me of precious time with my family and friends, I decided to slow down a bit. I chose to enjoy my college studies and the people that had supported me even when I became a stress monster.

We have to take into account that the issue does not start with isolated and period-specific changes in mood. It starts when this behavior prevails and students begin to leave their social life aside. By this time, stress starts to be an emotional issue; and as it grows, students no longer want to be with others. Their friends and family represent a distraction and the process of isolation begins. Becoming a hermit under the influence of external factors is unconscious and typical of college students as they stop going out with friends, and avoid family reunions in order to get everything done. They avoid socializing or any activity that involves other people. Social withdrawal is not beneficial and the American Psychological Association confirms this in "Paying with Our Health" by saying that "While the connection between stress and health is clear, both appear to be affected by the social and emotional support we perceive in our lives" (Anderson 2015, 7).

Living under constant pressure and going in a never ending search of the self-imposed fulfillment of goals adds up to stress. The overwhelming life of college students deprives them of other pleasant activities that would help to alleviate stress. "I don't have time to sleep but I will have time to watch a movie!" this phrase -which is typical of students- proves that simple activities such as listening to music, reading for pleasure, painting, dancing, or any relaxing activity is also thought of as secondary and even not necessary. This thought is accompanied by a feeling of guilt every time a student does any of these activities. They feel haunted by their responsibilities and this prevents them from enjoying their hobbies. At this point, those that have become control freaks in university matters have lost control of their own lives.

So what can be done to stop this apparently unstoppable stress?

Although many would think that doing your activities under pressure could increase your productivity, the reality is that in general stress is mind blocking and makes students unable to focus. So, whenever you feel you have spent too much time in front of the blank page of your next essay, you should remember that college is college. One important advice for college students is to not stress about being stressed. It can increase your stress levels to think too much about what is not being done instead of thinking of ways to handle what can be done. This is surely reflected in the racing thoughts and the inability to get things done. College is nothing more than a stage in life that should be enjoyed more than suffered. It is in college where you can embrace knowledge in a way that you have never done before and where you can find lifelong friends. If you are focused on deadlines you might miss them.

"Every stress leaves an indelible scar, and the organism pays for its survival after a stressful situation by becoming a little older," says Hans Selye (as cited in Sincero, 2012) and he could not be more right. Students should acknowledge that stress can affect their life in many ways. Products of stress like high-blood pressure, weight loss, irritability, and isolation can be prevented if students are more aware of the effects stress has in their lives. The Mayo Clinic declares that "Stress symptoms may be affecting your health, even though you might not

realize it. [...] Being able to recognize common stress symptoms can give you a jump on managing them" ("Stress Management," para. 13). The early recognition helps students to balance their activities in order to take some action to prevent or release stress before it affects their health. Simple solutions come hand in hand with a change in the routine. The Clinic suggests getting enough sleep, eating proper meals and exercising- which could be walking to a nearby restaurant- as good options to reduce stress in students' life.

Finally, scholars should take time for themselves and the activities they enjoy doing because they are not secondary and they help to release stress. Balance in life is very important and staring at what might come prevents you from seeing what is important. So, every time you feel excessively worried about schedules and paperwork- stop. Get rid of unnecessary thoughts and start over. Go pet your dog, have a beer with a friend, read a book, listen to your favorite music, play around with your little cousins, dance or sing. Guilt may be present at first but the satisfaction of relaxing for a while will be worth the try. Appreciate the small things in life because, as John Lennon said, "Life is what happens while you are busy making other plans;" and wouldn't it be ironic if that happened?

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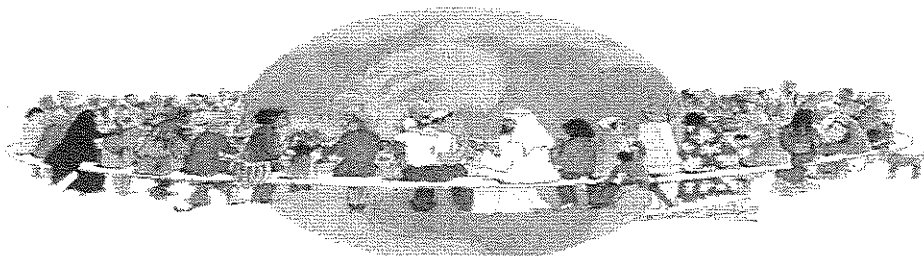
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Every culture has it's own reasons behind their existence. an output of many generations' learnings. Neither follow nor deny them without understanding the actual reasons. A blind following and an outright denial both do the same to kill a culture. instead of bettering it.

Wendy L. Davis

Women Through Different Lenses

By Julieta Villegas

A recent case of a woman –aged nineteen- in Saudi Arabia has caused great shock. She was recently condemned to six months in prison and 200 lashings for being raped by seven men. In a society where people of different races, gender and sexuality are fighting more and more for their rights, it seems unthinkable that such things are still happening. Many people say that some cultures are still oppressing women while others are moving forward to a better and equal society, but the truth is that some of us may not be aware of the differences between cultures. While we may think we have a duty to interfere and help those who we believe are losing their rights, in fact, we may be discriminating as well. Have you ever asked yourself how much you know about the treatment of women in Afghanistan, in Kenya or in any other country? How do women feel about their situations in their countries? Have you ever asked a woman from a different culture about her religion or traditions?

I believe it is important to get to know and understand the differences between cultures with respect to women, their actions and their reasons to act the way they act so as not to justify those who oppress them but to comprehend the way in which societies treat them. It is also important to understand that culture itself improves over time and that the role women play in individual cultures can develop for the better. Just to exemplify how different cultures are, here are three different portraits: the situations of Arabian, Chinese and Latin American women.

The culture of Saudi Arabia is strongly connected to Islam. Before Islam, women were considered inferior to men; they were treated like things with no rights as daughters or wives, with no voice to be heard, with no spiritual values. "La Mujer en Las Distintas Culturas" (Distintos en la Igualdad), a Spanish article, says that many people believe "Islam is a woman's enemy that degrades her dignity and humiliates her pride [...]" but this is not entirely true. After Islam was introduced as the main religion in Saudi Arabia women started to be respected and elevated in society. According to the sacred Quran (the most important religious book in Islam), men and women were created equal, both with honor and dignity.

A Muslim woman has access to education, to have a job even when the household's economy is a man's duty. Although they are equal to men under the Quran, Saudi Arabia is an

absolute monarchy whose royal family base their legitimacy on a written pact with the Ulemas, one of the most intolerant parts of the Islam. The Ulema impose many bans, restrictions and punishments on women. One of the bans has to do with their clothing. The reason behind their use of the veil, or hijab, as it is called, highly criticized as being a signal of submission to men, is actually a typically

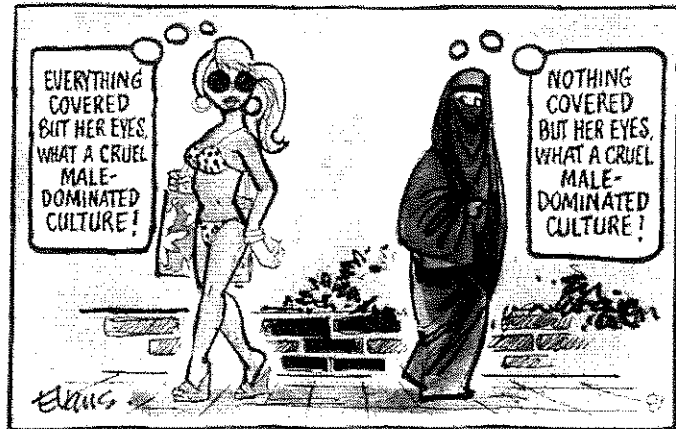


Image via the Bauchi Banter

traditional symbol of the Muslim women; a symbol of identity. Contrary to what many may expect, some Muslim women accept with great pride the use of the veil. As Fariha Khan says "to me, the hiyab is a present from Allah. It gives me the opportunity to get close to Allah and also allows me to identify myself and be recognized as a Muslim" (Distintos en la Igualdad). Among the restrictions, women can come into contact with other men only in the company of their husband or relative. And as regards punishment, the Quran penalizes adultery with lashings and imprisonment which is accepted by certain societies. Even rape, in this special culture, constitutes a public shame that rarely gets to tribunals. Although some of the things mentioned above seem hard to understand, it is important to highlight that women are fighting to gain more flexibility as regards their traditions.

China is also different from what we know. Wang Lifen and Yun Xian, two Chinese women, one old and one young respectively, describe their experiences marked by a male dominated culture since ancient times. Some of the practices to which women were subjected may seem horrible but it should not be forgotten that everything has a reason and Chinese practices are not an exception.

Suffering for beauty is a concept familiar to most women but Chinese women went even further; in search of an ideal beauty to somehow find a better future by getting a good marriage they started to bind their feet into a "three-inch golden lotuses." Let's take Wang's situation: "Because I bound my own feet, I could manipulate them more gently until the bones were broken. Young bones are soft, and break more easily. I didn't want to bind my feet, but the whole village told me that I had to. So I did" Wang Lifen says (Lim, 2007). She was only seven years old when her mother started binding her feet and after her mother died she continued doing it. According to the article by Steinfeld, "The Surprising Truth About Chinese Women Who Bind Their Feet," the practice began approximately during the Five Dynasties and

Ten Kingdoms period in Imperial China (10th or 11th century) and continued until 1912. The process consisted of soaking each foot in a warm mixture of herbs and animal blood, then the toenails were cut back as far as possible. The toes on each foot were curled under, passed with great force downwards and squeezed until the toes and the arch of the foot broke. Each foot was then bound with bandages so tightened that the girl could not move for a very long period. After this agonizing procedure each foot had to be cleaned and checked for injury.



Louisa Lim. NPR

At that time, bound feet were a status symbol which would bring honor upon the entire clan, the only way for a woman to marry into money (Yang, 2001). Mr. Yang was not mistaken in his assertion; Chinese girls saw in their pain the way out of future misery. "I regret binding my feet," Zhou, another bound Chinese woman, says. "I can't dance, I can't move properly. I regret it a lot. But at the time, if you didn't bind your feet, no one would marry you" (Lim, 2007). These women accepted the miserable pain of binding their feet to guarantee their future but according to Yang, "this act ultimately consigned them to tragic lives." They could not either make hard physical efforts or find a job suitable for their condition; they were unable to do simple things such as walk into the mountains to pick vegetables and fruit like many other mothers. Surprisingly, even after footbinding was banned, many women continued the tradition in secret.

Yun's experience is common for many Chinese women now. The laws imposed by the government affect women starting the day they are born. In China, male children are coveted and female children unwanted. According to the article "China: Un Infierno Para la Mujer" (Costa, 2008), many Chinese people traditionally believe that male children are the ones that continue with their ancestral descent and the ones that assume the responsibility of supporting their parents in their old age. In farms, where two thirds of the population live, male kids also play an important role in agriculture; this may be the reason behind the farmer's need of a male child instead of a female one. "My parents are farmers. I have a brother aged fifteen who still goes to school; I am twelve and I only went to school for two years, that's why I do not know how to read or write." In fact, in China, one out of three girls do not know how to read. My parents always complain about me. It is said, among the farmers, that the more male kids you have, the richer you will become and that female kids are just another economic burden" says Yun (De la Peña Palacios, 2007). These concepts are so rooted, in certain parts of China, to their cultural principles that poor families tend to abandon or sacrifice the newly born if it is a girl and start looking for the boy. Parents' decisions of this nature created a disproportionate number of men and women and as a result China has become a mostly male country, where men have a more active role than women.

The situation of Chinese as well as Arabian women are examples of countries that were (and some still are) based mostly on traditions that have persisted through years and that have shaped people's minds. We may agree or not but it continues to be each individual's decision to accept or not their countries' traditions.

The scenario is different for women in Latin America. In almost all the countries that form part of Latin America, especially Guatemala, Nicaragua and Mexico, a culture of machismo prevails. "Being born a male is of high prestige and valued more than if one is born female. Machismo is the cultural attitude that is commonly adopted by males, and is transmitted from an older role model to a young male that is ascribing to it" (Pigeon, 2014). Machismo can be positive in the form of taking care of the family, showing bravery amongst peers, working hard for money to support the family, and taking pride in the raising of children. Negative machismo includes aspects of violence to women and other males, alcoholism, and engaging in extra-marital sex. Guatemala's deeply rooted patriarchal society is one of the biggest problems their women face today; the prevailing machismo culture and the institutionalized acceptance of brutality against women, says Julie Guinan, a reporter of CNN who went to Guatemala, leads to high rates of violence against women, where the blame is placed on the victim.

Women are raised to marry a man who will be in charge of the family, and the family must obey him. In traditional Latino culture, females are supposed to live as martyrs to the needs of the family; the mother is responsible for the children. In this aspect, women reflect the machismo value which in many cases, is partly influenced by their religion. "When I was young I would attend church with my husband and I can say I was always religious... later in life when my husband became more abusive and morally degrading, I looked for an all higher Faith. Not another religion or God, but a God that would see what I was going through and give me reason for what was happening to me and my family. I continued because it was part of my responsibility to stay with my family, and go through everything; it was my duty. My reward would come later and would be of great value," an anonymous Mexican woman says (Pigeon, 2014). Again it may seem hard to believe that women accept those traditional concepts in an era where many women are more independent than before and in places where a woman has gained so much power as in Latin America, but there are many things that are still far from our understanding.

Coming back to what I said at the beginning, if we criticize something we know little or nothing about, we will take the risk of being seen as ignorant people. Not only are Saudi Arabian, Chinese and Latin American women different but all the cultures around the globe. Cultures are hard to understand if we only stand within our borders; we have to broaden our knowledge and understand that different doesn't mean "wrong" or "right," it is just different. As Malcolm X once said "don't be in such a hurry to condemn a person because he doesn't do what you do, or think as you think. There was a time when you didn't know what you know today."

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Different Strokes for Different Cultures

By Sol Gardiol

Just as we take for granted that the sun will rise every morning to warm and light our days, our languages and our cultures have been an inherent part of our lives since we were born. Is it worrying that we never stop to ponder the complexity of languages and cultures? They not only help us survive but also influence how we view the events that take place during the course of our lives. What is surprising is that we use our languages, with all of their cultural baggage, without being concerned about the way we do it or even why. Have you ever thought of languages in that way?

From a strictly grammatical point of view, we will take this worn out phrase used by lovers all around the world when they meet again after a long time: "I missed you." Even this short sentence can reveal how much languages differ. In English, we mark the verb for tense (in this case we are talking about the past tense), and so we say "missed" instead of "miss," and we need to mention the subject to understand who the doer of the action is. In Spanish, we also mark the verb for tense, but we need not mention the doer of the action as verbs are also marked to express person and number, as in "Te extrañé." In Portuguese, we would have to express the same through the use of a noun, rather than verbs connoting the meaning of "miss" and "extrañar", and say something like "Estava com saudades de você" or "Sentí sua falta." There being no verbs to imply that meaning in Portuguese, we have to resort to the use of the verb "estar" or "sentir," that is "be" and "feel," and mark it for tense, person and number but still make our romantic confession making use of the noun "saudades" or "falta."

Do English, Spanish and Portuguese speakers end up perceiving and accounting for their experiences differently simply because they speak different languages? If we continue with the example of the phrase "I missed you," we could say that English stands as the safest language to use because the number of people you missed can only be interpreted from the context. On the other hand, the difference between saying "TE extrañé" and "LOS extrañé" could cost you a heated argument with your partner. In Spanish "te" is "you" singular, whereas "los" is plural. Coming home and telling your partner "los extrañé" implies that you have more than one lover and you missed them all! Sometimes minor grammatical differences can make big changes in meaning. But grammatical constructions are not the only defining elements of languages. Languages have social functions that allow us to belong to a society by maintaining relationships with other people with whom we share certain ideas.

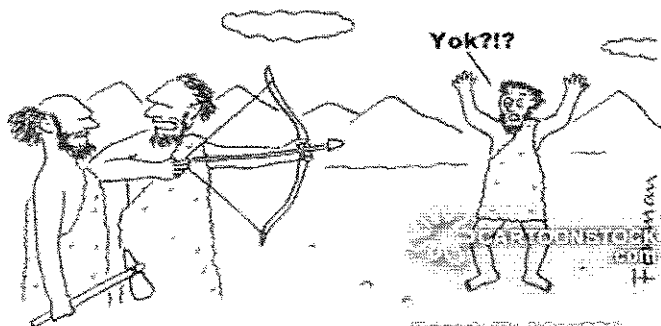
Nowadays linguists with a social view of language, such as J. R. Martin and P. R. R. White, are working on a model known as Appraisal Theory to identify and describe appraisal expressions in the language we use to communicate our ideas. In their model, they describe how we, as writers or speakers, approve and disapprove and take a position with respect to the subject we are dealing with and they also describe the language resources we use to position our readers/listeners in our message. Our language choices reveal the level of commitment we hold towards the message we are sending, and can also say a great deal about the type of relationship we maintain with our readers/hearers (2005). Appraisal Theory analyzes the way

opinions, feelings and emotions are expressed. The theory achieves this by paying close attention to three main systems: Attitude, Engagement and Graduation.

Attitude has to do with the values we communicate in the judgments and emotional responses we associate with people and situations. According to this theory, the values we attribute to people and situations can be related to our own emotional responses or to a culturally determined value system. Engagement refers to the linguistic resources we use to position our voice with respect to the topic we are dealing with in our message and with respect to other possibly existing voices or points of view, which we may choose to ignore. Graduation refers to the resources we use to graduate the interpersonal impact of our message, increasing and decreasing its strength and dimension. Let's now take some popular sayings in English and in Spanish to analyze these systems at work.

Sayings belong to culturally-determined value systems and they teach us lessons about positive and sometimes negative values. "Different strokes for different folks" ("Sobre gustos no hay nada escrito" in Spanish) and "Health is better than wealth" ("La salud es la mayor riqueza" in Spanish) appraise certain values as positive, and show us cultural traits that are orally transmitted because they are considered to be fundamental to the construction of the self of each culture. In "Sobre gustos no hay nada escrito" the word "nada" graduates the dimension up to which there is no way to predict what different people may prefer. And we can also analyze the same appraisal system in "Health is better than wealth," where the word "better" graduates the importance of having health over wealth. On the other hand, "Every law has its loophole" ("Quien hace la ley hace la trampa," in Spanish) shows us a value that is conceived as negative, but is recurrent enough to warrant its own saying. The fact that these sayings have a correlation in Spanish and in English shows that certain characteristics, such as tastes and loopholes, are shared by different cultures. What is more, if we analyze the appraisal system of Engagement in relation to these sayings in both languages, we can see that no first person is used, i.e., there is no speaker engagement with these messages, which makes them applicable to many people and situations.

It may amaze us how the replacement of one word by another may affect our whole vision of a situation. Take this humorous cartoon (right), drawn by Kresten Forsman: two cave men who are about to shoot an arrow at an "intruder," and are thankful for their recently invented language because it allows them to identify said intruder. This idea of shooting people just because they do not speak our language, and do not belong to "our group" sounds rather



"Since we invented language it has become so much easier to identify intruders on our territory."

caveman-ish. However, drearily we must admit that this still is a recurrent worldwide situation. If we slightly modified the men's words in Forsman's frame, their actions might be drastically different. Let's say that, instead of "intruder," they used the word "foreigner." To start with, the word "foreigner" has a connotation less negative than the word "intruder;" but, at the same time, it can include the concept of someone that, not belonging to "our group," carries with him/her a cultural baggage different from ours and may even speak another language. Hopefully, these hunters will not immediately attack the interloper. Instead, their whole vision of the situation may change and we might now think of a happier ending.

The social impact of languages can be applied to other fields too. Being able to identify others as intruders or guests, through the language used, will guide our actions towards that person either in a negative or a positive way. Now, picture you are at a supermarket doing your weekly grocery shopping, going through the aisles and trying to find the products you need. Suddenly, someone calls your attention, because this person does not look like any other person in the supermarket and does not seem to have a clue of what to do or where to go to find the products he/she wants to buy. For sure, this person is not from here. You instinctively think of helping this person and you decide to start a casual conversation by offering your help. This will probably lead you to a slightly awkward scene in which you will have to negotiate meaning by mimicking, pointing at things and using some isolated words that you can both understand. However, no matter what resources you use to communicate, the shopping will be done and you will have intrinsically learnt a new valuable lesson about languages: as we are social beings, we communicate to maintain relationships with others, and despite the existing differences between languages we can manage to communicate.

The examples above illustrate the complexity of languages. Minimal differences in grammatical structures can result in enormous differences in meaning and even the replacement of a word might change our vision of a situation. In addition, we can learn through languages that certain characteristics are shared by many cultures. The one characteristic that will always be present is that we communicate to maintain relationships in our society. Our awareness of that can help us not only learn new languages, but also keep in mind the cultures, traditions and feelings behind them and be more tolerant towards those differences.

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Schooling vs. Multiple Intelligences

By Camila Castro Brizuela

"It's not how smart you are, it's how you are smart."

Howard Gardner, 1993

Once upon a time some animals gathered together to found a school. Each founder wanted to include their own ability as a subject required for graduating. And so each student would have to be able to fly through the skies, climb majestic trees, swim across large rivers, dig deep holes and run faster than winds. Although this school programme intended to improve animals' capacities, in the end it did the opposite. The rabbit was an excellent runner. However, he fell from the top of a tree while trying to learn to fly and broke his legs and consequently got poor marks both in flying and running. The bird, on the other hand, had an extraordinary ability for flying; no-one was as good as he was. Unfortunately, he damaged his wings while trying to climb a high tree and his outstanding flying capacity was significantly reduced. Why push a bird to climb a tree when he can fly to the top in one second? (Reavis, paraphrased).

As difficult as it may seem, it is high time for us to re-think our own school system. Are we humans doing it better than the animals in Reavis' fable? Are we paying attention to the vast variety of our students' abilities? I'm afraid to say that in most cases we are not, for our school system follows an outdated methodology which treats students as if they were a homogeneous mass and fails to accept and work on the differences that make each student special and unique. In close connection, specialist in education Sir Ken Robinson says "when it comes to education, we tend to have stereotypes in our minds about what counts as ability, success, the normal thing' and we apply them everywhere" (Robinson, 2011). In other words, we tend to stigmatize everything that does not fit into the "normal" category.

Psychologists and pedagogues label each child or teenager who does not follow the learning standards and this can be detrimental. Take ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) for instance. ADHDs have difficulty remaining focused for long periods of time. For them, controlling hyperactivity and consequently their behaviour, poses a real challenge. Because of this, ADHDs cannot learn in a "normal" way (or the way the school system wants them to learn, I should say). Unfortunately, there is a tendency to treat, or worse, to make ADHDs feel as if they have less potential than non- ADHDs. All this occurs because of the common belief that these children are not intelligent. So I must ask, what is intelligence?

Traditionally, the school system has considered intelligence as the ability to deal with logic and language, emphasising only those and turning its back on a range of other abilities. If we look back to the origin of school as we know it today, this should be no surprise. Today's public school system in Argentina dates back to the Industrial Revolution and was aimed to educate people to work. "Get a degree and you'll be able to get a job," and schools made students believe that only if you possessed academic ability (deductive reasoning and knowledge of the classics) were you smart. Because of this, a good number of brilliant people were left out of that category (Robinson, 2008). What about today?

The twentieth and twenty-first centuries are characterized by globalization and diversity and of course this has also influenced ideas about intelligences. Fortunately, there is a different paradigm which welcomes a more varied group of intelligences. This paradigm is called Multiple Intelligences (MI). Designed in 1983 by Harvard University Professor Howard Gardner, MI holds that human beings have a wider scope of capabilities than previously believed, expanding the conception of intelligence to include more than seven different abilities. Based on Gardner's theory, the Northern Illinois University published an article providing an explanation of the profile of those intelligences:

The first is verbal-linguistic intelligence. People with this type of intelligence possess a knack for written and spoken language as well as for interpretation and explanation of ideas through language. This is why professionals such as professors, writers, editors, lawyers, translators, TV and radio hosts rely a great deal on this skill. Another skill is logical-mathematical intelligence. Abilities such as analysing problems, detecting patterns, reasoning and deducting, and understanding cause effect relationships are characteristic of logical-mathematically smart people like analysts, bankers, computer programmers, accountants, engineers and researchers. These two types of intelligences were the only ones taken into account in traditional paradigms. Nonetheless, you should not panic or be discouraged if you do not fit into either of them. There are still six abilities at which you can excel.

If you are aware of differences in sounds, can recognise tonal and rhythmic patterns, and can understand relationships between sounds and feelings then you are musically intelligent. These capacities are shared by composers, DJs, music producers, voice coaches, musical instrument players and singers. But perhaps you belong with my group: bodily kinaesthetic intelligent. As far as sports are concerned, the most important abilities are eye, hand and body coordination, physical agility and balance. Nonetheless, athletes are not the only ones bodily-kinaesthetic intelligent. Dancers, physical education teachers, sign-language interpreters, instrumentalists, geologists and nurses also require these skills to perform correctly in their jobs. Being good at interpreting and creating visual images, expressing and understanding relationships between images and meanings and between space and effect is the main attribute of spatial-visual intelligent people. Professionals who stand out in those aspects are architects, cartographers, engineers, graphic designers, inventors, photographers and sculptors.

Have you ever been called "the chatterbox in the classroom?" Maybe you could not help yourself from engaging in conversations, right? Well, the power to relate to others, interpret behaviours and body language and understand the relationship between people and the specific situations they go through is also inherent in advertising professionals, coaches, educators, HR professionals, mediators, politicians, and psychologists. Or perhaps you are intrapersonally intelligent. You are aware of your needs and are prepared to react accurately to unpredictable changes. At the same time you are keen on grasping with objectivity your relations with other people and with the environment surrounding you.

I am sure you possess at least one of these intelligences. Yes, I said *at least* one because, in fact, we generally develop more than one. Take educators for instance: a math professor

would (hopefully) be proficient in logical-mathematical intelligence and also show verbal-linguistic and interpersonal intelligences so as to be able to teach their students appropriately.

Anyways, are students learning appropriately? I do not think they are. Nonetheless, I would not put the blame entirely on educators. While in many cases they are responsible for students not learning meaningfully, I think the problem mainly comes from deficiencies in our school system. It is supposed to prepare students to be "good citizens" and get a job but misses the point. Living in such a changing society, how could we possibly "prepare" students for the future if we do not know what our society is going to be like even next week? (Robinson, 2008). The system's fixed standards do not guarantee that students will succeed in the careers they will eventually follow. In fact, nothing does.

The story of this athlete illustrates my point perfectly: when he was ten years-old, he was diagnosed with ADHD. Instead of medicating him for his hyperactivity as many parents do nowadays, his mother decided to encourage him to channel that extra energy into swimming. His name is Michael Phelps. Today, he is the most decorated Olympic athlete of all time, with a total of twenty-two medals and a mountain of records. Perhaps he flunked in maths, language and sciences, but he was extremely bodily kinaesthetic intelligent, proved a thousand times in competition. Gardner's Multiple Intelligences is the approach the school system should go for. It should offer students the opportunity to learn in varied ways. It should pay attention to the whole range of intelligences. It should open different doors, show students possible paths to take and let each one decide which is compatible with his or her specific abilities. In one word, harness students' potential to its fullest.

Accepting different types of intelligences is the starting point to improve our school system. If we succeed in doing so, I am quite positive we will have more energetic Michael Phelps swimming around and fewer unfortunate broken-winged birds struggling to fly through a wild sky.

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Lu Gentile

Why Do I Dance?

By Nati Correa

"The heart has reasons that reason does not understand."

Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet

On an afternoon of a very cold June in 2001 the telephone rang with the news that my grandmother had died. My heart was broken because we used to have a very close relationship. As a consequence of her death, I began gaining a lot of weight and was diagnosed with a type of depression. My doctor recommended that I do some physical activity. At the beginning, doing physical activity did not call my attention because I thought it was boring. But then, one Saturday, my father bought the *Diario de Cuyo* and in its arts magazine, the best dancer in Argentina, Eleonora Casano was featured. I read her interview and from that moment on, everything in my life changed. I think that it was the way in which my grandmother told me not to be sad anymore and to dance instead. At the beginning I was not sure what dancing implied so my mum and I went to different dancing schools to explore options. After walking around for three hours, I saw a picture of a girl wearing a blue dress with "vuelitos y lunares" (ruffles and polka dots) and decided that I wanted to learn Flamenco. At first, dancing was just a hobby but it became a passion and when I was eighteen, I got my degree as a Spanish dances and Flamenco teacher. Dancing changed my life and is my passion. Dancing can not only help people to come to terms with bad situations but also it can help improve people's life quality.

So, how can dancing help people to improve their life quality? There are some groups of people that obtain benefits from dancing. This is the case of a group that quite often are left aside, disabled people. But in dance, it is not always so. In fact, in England, PhD Imogen Aujla and dance instructor Emma Redding have made several studies that reveal that "Attitudinal barriers can come from disabled young dancers themselves, from peers, parents and carers, companies, audiences, and critics. The performing arts are not typically perceived as a viable, or appropriate, activity (never mind career) for people with disabilities" (AUJLA 2013). There are plenty of stories and organizations, however, which try to change these negative concepts related to disabled people dancing. One example is the group El Alma, an Argentinian organization that gives the possibility of physical expression to disabled young people. Its shows them (and the world) how tango can be used as a means of communication previously thought to be impossible. This organization was created because of Demian Frontera, who after suffering a bad accident, was confined to a wheelchair. His mother did not accept the situation and after consulting many professionals, she founded "a dance company in Buenos Aires that specializes in partnering up wheelchair users with able-bodied people so that they can dance tango" (BBC, Latin America 2013).

Another example is the story of Agostina Perez and her mother. Agostina was born with a rare and severe form of Down's Syndrome and doctors told her mother that she did not have a possibility of developing because of her physical and mental limitations. Not accepting this situation, Maria, Agostina's mother, started exploring different options related to the arts.

Agostina started dancing when she was only five years old. I was in the third level of the Spanish dances and Flamenco program when I met her. I remember dance class with Agostina; it was difficult at the beginning, because adapting to a school with certain rules and ways of behaviour was difficult for her. But, after some time, she adjusted. Agostina became an excellent dancer and even won the **gold medal** at a National Interdance competition because of her careful technique and ability.

So, taking into account these examples, the theory that "dancing is not for disabled people" is not so true after all. Dancing is an inclusive art that gives many people the opportunity to change their life. It breaks down barriers. Dancing is not only a way of doing some physical activity but also passion for movement. However, there are some people who say that dancing is a useless activity because countries need scientists and not artists. Or sometimes people say that you are going to starve if you choose dancing for a living. That they speak in this way is sad because, perhaps they do not fully understand. For me dancing is not just a hobby, it is my passion. In my case when I dance I am not the same person. I feel free of everything. Nothing can disturb me because I am in my ideal word. The problems, the bad mood, sadness, disappear when I am dancing. After two hours, my head is no longer worried about anything. I am totally different. Dancing is how my soul expresses itself. Now, how does your soul express itself?

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"Baile" por Débora Bazan Flitt

To Travel Is To Live

By Sofia Vildoso

"Fill your life with experiences, not things. Have stories to tell, not stuff to show." The first time I read this quote I realized it was what I wanted to do in my life. It reminded me of a moment a few years ago when my friends and I had just started our four-day trip into a mountain in El Bolsón, Southern Argentina. We had been walking the hills for a couple of hours when we saw it: a deep, quiet turquoise river. Its beauty astonished us so we stopped to enjoy the view for a moment. We looked down from a high rock above and the water was so transparent that we could see the fish and rocks under it. "Let's take a dip," I said and all of a sudden everyone turned around and stared at me as if I were mad. "Come on!" I said, taking my trainers off. Finally Rodrigo said "Ok, but you know... the water is quite cold." Although he was right I stood up and jumped. But Rodrigo was wrong. The water was not cold; it was freezing! I sank a few meters that felt like miles. In the time it took me to reach the surface, my feet and legs started to go numb. Finally, the sunshine touched my face and filled me with joy and tranquility. Such was my happiness that I felt like doing things like that the rest of my life. And travelling is the key to this becoming reality. And I am not alone; there are many people who devote their lives to travel. So why do they feel so passionate about it?

"Travel is the only thing you buy that makes you richer." The unique experiences people get when they travel have been scientifically proven to enrich people's minds. Psychological research carried out by professor of psychology Ryan Howell suggests that, in the long run, experiences make people happier than possessions. He claims that the "initial joy of acquiring a new object, such as a new car, fades over time as people become accustomed to seeing it every day. Experiences, on the other hand, continue to provide happiness through memories long after the event occurred" (Howell 2012). His study looked at 154 people enrolled at San Francisco State University, with an average age of 25. Participants answered questions about a recent purchase -either material or experiential- they personally made in the last three months with the intention of making themselves happy. While most people were generally happy with the purchase regardless of what it was, those who wrote about experiences tended to show a higher satisfaction at the time and after the experience had passed.

So, since good experiences appear to make our lives happier. What do we have to do? Paulo Coelho, a best-selling Brazilian novelist provides the answer in his book *The Alchemist*, "Be brave, take risks. Nothing can substitute experience" (Coelho 1988). Despite the risks in adventuring to a place you do not know, the results you have are valuable stories to tell your children and grandchildren. In addition, travelling involves stepping out of your "comfort zone." But what does this mean? According to an article written by Alan Henry in *Lifehacker*, it is a "behavioral space where your activities and behaviors fit a routine and pattern that minimizes stress and risk" (Henry 2013). People who travel and want to live to the full have to explore outside of their bubble of protection. While doing it, taking risks, experiencing new places, interacting with others and facing unexpected situations are unavoidable. On my own amazing trip to El Bolsón, I had to sleep in a tent, cope with cold temperatures, shower outside, and even go hungry. I remember the first night of our camping trip. It was very cold so we decided

to make a fire to cook dinner and warm ourselves up. When we finished eating everyone agreed on going to bed right away because the following morning we had to get up early to start our long walk into the mountain. We duly put out the fire and went to our tents. I opened my sleeping bag and made myself comfortable. I was shivering so much that I thought the extreme cold would not let me get a wink of sleep. Fortunately after almost forty minutes of tossing and turning, I finally fell asleep. Despite the discomforts, I honestly will never regret taking that trip. Travelling showed me I am capable of overcoming challenges and enjoying experiences in spite of them.

"Travel broadens the mind." As the Turkish proverb expresses, travelling benefits our mind and our ways of thinking. When you travel, even inside your own country, you get to know other cultures. The variations in language, food, customs and traditions demonstrate that the world is huge and its people different. Knowing other places far from your own shows you how little of the world you know and live in. Since travelling involves escaping from your routine and navigating unfamiliar places, it is no wonder that many people have bad experiences through their journey. However, as Samuel Johnson wrote in his travel narrative *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*, "All travel has its advantages. If the passenger visits better countries, he may learn to improve his own. And if fortune carries him to worse, he may learn to enjoy it" (Johnson 1775). So, if people go to some place and see poverty or injustice the experience will be shocking but at the same time valuable since they will learn to appreciate the comforts they have at home.

"A journey is best measured in friends, rather than miles." The icing on the cake of travelling is making friends. It is extremely easy to meet friendly people when you are on a trip. And one reason may be that people behave naturally and freely when they are out of their every-day environment. It is like they are naked and they present themselves as what they really are without the pressure of feeling judged. A simple "So where are you from?" breaks the ice quite easily and may lead to lasting friendship. Once I got to know three Spanish people who were doing a tour of South America and my group and theirs got along very well. When the time to go separate ways came, we exchanged numbers and they offered their hospitality to us in case we planned to go to Europe. If you are planning a tour, having friends in different places can guarantee you free accommodation and the advantage of living with a local citizen and learning the culture in depth for a few days. Moreover, travelling with friends creates memories for a lifetime and strengthens the bonds you share. It also gives nice and funny stories to tell other people and to remember when you are together. Sharing with them a wonderful traveling experience far outweighs the benefits of buying material stuff. Goods have a limited life span, whereas memories last forever.

"We travel not to escape life but for life not to escape us." For those pirates who look for happiness and adventure, travelling is the treasure. I think it is one of the most rewarding activities people can experience in life. Moreover, memories and experiences are the only things you will take to your grave. Things remain here. Considering some of the benefits of travelling, it is no wonder that many people see it as a passion and even a necessity. As St Augustine of Hippo sums it up, "The world is a book and those who do not travel read only one page."

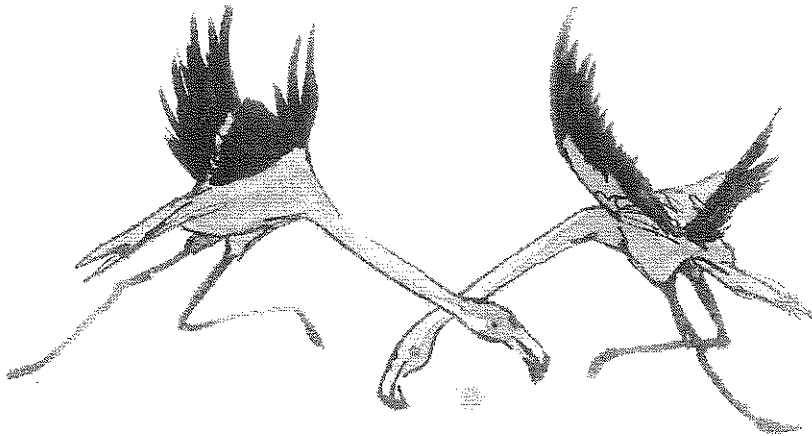
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"Hockey" por Débora Bazan Flitt

Not Just a Sport

By María Victoria Ortiz Molina

It was the hardest choice I ever made. I was ten years old, and as I had done in previous years, I intended to practice hockey and dance at the same time. However, as both hobbies occupied the same time in my schedule, I had to choose one and abandon the other. At first, I was unsure which hobby I preferred but after giving it some thought, I made up my mind. I decided to continue doing what I loved and what made me happy: hockey.

Looking back, I know I made the right decision. Hockey has given me the most incredible experiences of my life: traveling with my teammates, representing my province in national tournaments, and meeting people who are now my friends. But hockey is more than my own personal experience. As a sport, it is good for socialization and, like many other sports important for health. Field hockey is played all across the world; it is in fact, the second most played team sport in the world, played in over 100 countries ("About the Sport of Field Hockey"). This sport was first played in Britain in the early 19th century. A hockey match consists of two teams of eleven players, each player has a stick with a rounded head to hit the ball, and the objective is to score goals by throwing the ball into the opposite team's goal. Nowadays grass fields have been replaced by synthetic turfs, and hockey has become a faster sport due to this change.

Playing this team sport has inspired me. Every time I step onto the field I feel I must put my best effort into winning, but the main focus is enjoying every match as if it were the last. When I was four years old my parents took me to a club called San Juan Rugby Club (S.J.R.C.). My memories playing hockey include a lot of running around and having fun on a big green field. As I grew up and learned more about the rules of this sport, I started taking it more seriously and responsibly. Playing hockey requires hours of training, so I organized my life in order to have enough time to play. This sometimes meant missing birthday parties, family and friends' gatherings and so on. However, I have never considered this situation to be a sacrifice because I am passionate about hockey.

Hockey is also good for our health. It is a team sport and highly physical. According to the testimony of the sports expert with the NSW Department of Education and Communities, Ross Morrison, "playing a team sport provides kids with important values to interact with society" ("Benefits of Team Sports"). These values include: friendship and camaraderie, a sense of belonging, respect for teammates and opponents, and self-esteem. Through playing on a team, children work together with others, who may or may not be their friends. The experiences of playing a team sport as a child influence how participants behave and live throughout childhood and into adulthood. "These experiences can influence them throughout their lives such as when it comes to working for a boss, or respecting the police or other authority figures," Ross Morrison explains. When playing a team sport children know they have a "boss" (the trainer) who has the authority over the team. Children should show respect if they want to be part of that team, and this may well happen in future working environments in which grown up children will have to respect their bosses, and other kind of authorities in life.

He also points out that playing a team sport can develop the ability to deal with losing as well as winning. Through this, athletes learn as children that things are not always going to go their way, or the team's way. In a study comparing children who played sports and those who did not, Morrison reached the conclusion that team sports have a great importance in kids' lives. He even recommended to parents: "If you want your child to grow up to be a confident and well-adjusted adult, then team sports may well be the answer." In order to promote the development of previously mentioned values and qualities in children, Morrison suggests parents encourage their children to select a sport they would like to play and to take the initiative to take them to practice that sport.

Sports do not only offer benefits in the social and emotional realm, but are also important for our physical health. There is a great amount of scientific evidence about the positive effects of sport and physical activity as part of a healthy lifestyle. A report from the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on Sport for Development and Peace states: "Young people can benefit from physical activity as it contributes to developing healthy bones, efficient heart and lung function as well as improved motor skills and cognitive function" ("The Health Benefits of Sport"). They also highlight that those positive effects of practicing a sport are influential in the prevention of several chronic diseases, such as: cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, cancer, hypertension, obesity, depression and osteoporosis. On the other hand, the report shows that exercise can be therapeutically important in tackling several psychological disorders, such as depression. The act of practicing a sport or physical activity is thought to improve children's self-esteem and, furthermore, to have various benefits on cognition and affection; children playing a sport performed better in school than those children not practicing a sport. Due to this, several schools have included sports as subjects in order to improve children's performances.

In conclusion, it is important to highlight that team sports like field hockey have a positive impact on people's lives. Experts confirm the benefits of team sport and suggest that parents engage their children in sports. Hockey is not just a sport but a passion for me and it will continue inspiring me as long as I play it. As the famous Hockey player Luciana Aymar once said, "There are no limits, only your own mind. If you feel it, look for it; and if you are looking for it please do it with all your passion." Hockey is my passion and because of it I was able to write this essay.

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What If

By Nadia Videla

Have you ever felt bad about something you did or did not do? Did you ever say words that you wished you hadn't? Have you ever travelled along one path while wondering what a different path would have looked like? Well, these questions are common. They storm people's minds at some point or another in life. They are what we know of as regrets. According to Amy Bellows, PhD in psychology, "Regret is fundamentally human. We have the ability to compare the actual to the possible" (2013). In other words, regrets are those questions that pop into our mind every time we think of how things could have been. I decided to conduct a survey among a group of students from San Juan, Argentina, aged between twenty to twenty three in order to show how frequent and common regrets are for human beings. This survey was carried out among a small number of people and some may claim that generalizations cannot be made. Nevertheless, I think that this small number still provides a perspective on a situation that affects us all.

Have you ever had regrets? Well, for the people surveyed, that's a unanimous yes. What brought some diversity to the survey results were the types of regret. The most common kinds were related to love 54.5% ("I didn't feel mature enough," "I said things that hurt the person I was with," "Not voicing feelings") and lost opportunities 53.7% ("Not accepting good opportunities," "Staying within my comfort zone"). The rest of the categories, such as education, friendship and health were chosen by five people out of the twelve surveyed. The general reasons for choosing those categories were, for example: "I regret not having studied enough," "I regret having had certain friends that weren't appropriate for me," "I regret eating too much junk food and then complaining I'm fat," or Not having had the opportunity to say goodbye to a loved one." We can infer that respondents each had more than one type of regret at the same time which means we cannot deny that having these feelings is inherent to our human experience.

The survey results demonstrate how common and varied regrets can be. The presence of remorse supports what the surveyed said about the possibility of living a life without regrets. 90.1 % of the students asserted that it was impossible due to the fact that at some point in our lives, we all have at least one regret. Contrary to the answer of most of the surveyed, 9.9 % decided that a life free from regret is possible but difficult. It was also claimed that "we should accept what we have and what we lack and make the most of that." It is interesting to see that most of the surveyed regretted the things they did not do or did not say rather than the experiences they had been through. The reason why this called my attention is because it proved my preconceptions to be true: most of us have regrets and they usually have to do with things we failed to do. Whether we regret something we did or did not do, it all comes down to our decisions. In the end, we are the ones who choose to say or do something or remain silent and passive.

From my own experience, regrets can help us grow on a personal level. They can be very good "teachers" of how to overcome feelings of uncertainty about "what would have happened

if?...” Regrets may help us realize how important our decisions and our actions can be and the differences they can make. Opportunities may come and go but the important lesson for us to learn is how to do things better next time so as not to feel remorseful. However, having regrets may not be that simple. Constantly questioning what we do can have a considerable impact not only on our thoughts, but also on our health. Can you imagine people having regrets that conspire against them in their heads day and night? Well, this can happen and it may help you reflect on the harm that can be caused by giving too much importance to trivial things.

As clinical and health psychologist Melanie Greenberg wrote, “Regret can result in chronic stress, negatively affecting hormonal and immune system functioning. Regret impedes the ability to recover from stressful life events by extending their emotional reach for months, years, or lifetimes” (2013). In other words, regrets can have great impact on our health and everlasting consequences with which we may have to deal. Thinking twice before saying or doing something can help us avoid these remorseful feelings and prevent those negative effects.

As an ordinary human being I cannot say what is right or wrong, whether people should or should not regret things they did or failed to do. What I CAN say from my experience is that a life without regrets is quite impossible; they are inherent to the human condition, but if you are going to regret something then it is better to regret something you did rather than something you did not do.

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A Broken Mirror and Other Little Memories

By Lucas E. Yunes

I was four years old and my brother, Nicolás, was two. It was a cold and grey August day. I can't exactly remember why I was standing in front of the precious, expensive mirror hanging on the wall in my parents' bedroom, but I was analyzing something in my face so I was as close to the mirror as two lovers. All of a sudden, my brother unexpectedly broke into the room, slamming the door open and shouting lots of things that are irrelevant to this story. I was shocked by the shouting, got nervous and hit the mirror with my head. It fell from the wall and broke into a thousand pieces. The noise could be heard all over the house, and it certainly was; my parents asked in loud voices from the kitchen what had happened. Flabbergasted (and with my head incredibly not bleeding!), I was asking myself the same: what had happened? What had I done? What was I going to tell them? My brother was in shock as well. Then, my parents burst in with a furious "who did this?!"

I've always been unable to explain why I said "it was him; he's to blame," pointing at my brother's pale face. But what is more curious, I've also never known why Nicolás remained silent. It has always made me feel a burden of shame. It is one of those memories that I will never forget even as I turn greyer and greyer as years go by. I think it happens to many of us that we sometimes look back on our lives, analyse our experiences, or see our faults and try to get rid of them, to try to improve and become a better person. So, I'll share my experiences to show how they've shaped me and how I've become the person I am today by looking back at my past.

Friends were a large part of my childhood. They were the people I shared my toys with, as well as notebooks, games, laughter, football matches, school breaks and all the ingredients that are necessary for a memorable childhood. There was no such thing as selfishness in those days... except when it came to my favourite toy, of course. As the Drs Newman claim in their book on developmental psychology, "while sharing is in many cases difficult at this age, children are more likely to share with someone they consider a friend" (Newman). This is an extremely important aspect to take account of when I look back - we were told all the time to share material possessions with the people around us, which in turn enabled us to share that which is deep inside us: our opinions, fears, advice, feelings, jokes, laughter, blissful and sad moments. As Luis Alberto Spinetta used to sing, "loneliness is a friend that's missing." It's common knowledge that the absence of friends can be emotionally damaging; it can cause depression and stress, a sense of distrust of others, self-centeredness, selfishness and lack of self-confidence. Looking back on childhood experiences made me realise the importance of having friends like the ones I have today: no wonder my parents, teachers and society in general insisted so much on sharing. This is why friends are there: to back us up in adversity and to laugh with us at after we break the neighbour's window while playing football in the street.

While I was writing about friends, I was inevitably reminded of two other important friends of mine: Luigi and Fender. They were a cat and a dog, respectively, and they were beside me during different stages in my life. First, Luigi came to lighten nine-year-old Lucas' days, and then Fender came when I was a troubled fifteen-year-old adolescent. Scientifically speaking, there are several benefits to owning and nurturing a pet. According to Jeanne

Segal, Ph.D. in Sociology, with a specialty in Holistic Health, among health benefits we find less proneness to suffer from depression, increased levels of serotonin and dopamine (which calm and relax), lower stress rates and less proneness to the types of illness related to this condition, among many more. Even if they never knew, both Luigi and Fender taught me about life itself. Luigi was the most playful, enjoyable kitten I've ever known. We used to spend whole evenings playing with his wool ball and running hither and thither. Unfortunately, one rainy night my father came home and found several dogs in our pavement playing with him under the rain. When my father drove the dogs away and approached to see what had happened, he sadly found that Luigi had been badly hurt and was dying. The next morning, I woke up looking for him, just to be told that he had passed away the night before. I can't possibly describe the gloom that took over my heart then. I cried desperately for hours, and found little solace in my mother's assurance that "he had gone to kittens' heaven and was happy."

Fender, on the other hand, was a sort of hyperactive seven-year-old child; he would run tirelessly around the backyard all day long. Thanks to him, I learned that dogs can understand not only our gestures, movements, words, but also our feelings. One evening, my parents had a furious row. I've always hated that kind of thing, so I went out to the backyard. As I sat on the grass, extremely sad and worried about my parents, Fender came up and walked *calmly* towards me. He got closer, licked my face and stayed beside me until my parents had stopped arguing. Afterwards, and unluckily, my mother just couldn't put up with Fender anymore; he was a messy dog, and she gave him away to an aunt of mine, whose backyard was bigger than ours. For some reason, I didn't cry the day we said goodbye, but I've always missed him. These furry friends taught me about life: both animals and humans must depart someday, whether to kitten's heaven or to an aunt's house. Dealing with death is one of the most difficult things in life, but having pets can prepare us for the emotionally harsh event in the future. Also, they make us love and feel loved, two of our intrinsic human needs.

Now, there are some people I don't want to leave out of this story. Firstly, because they are paying the electricity bill thanks to which I'm able to write this to you in my computer, and secondly because they're the reason why I'm here, with you. And although I once thought of leaving them, now I don't want them to leave me as long as I live, which inevitably is bound to happen. Argentinean Dr. Miriam Kaufman, specialist in child psychiatry, states that "people spend their childhood learning to be like their parents, and their adolescence learning who they are and how different they are from their parents" (Kaufman, "Social and Emotional Development in Teenagers"). Well, that certainly happened to me: during childhood they were the people I looked up to, and then during puberty the people that "wouldn't let me be who I wanted to," as I pushed for more individuality and independence.

So why did I look up to my parents? According to the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, "children look up to a variety of role models to help shape how they behave in school, relationships or when making difficult decisions" (AACAP, "Children and Role Models"). During my first year of secondary school I wanted to transfer to my father's former school. He had told me about his own experience there and I was so delighted by his anecdotes that I became eager for my school years to be exactly like his - I wanted to be like him. I didn't end up transferring. Even though my desires didn't come true, I do not regret at

all having stayed at the institution I finally graduated from. Now, why did I use to think that my parents wouldn't let me be who I wanted to? Now that I look back I would instead say that they worked their fingers to the bone to give me almost everything I have today, so why complain? Perhaps because all of us have done so at some point during our adolescence. In psychologist Carl E Pickhardt's view, "the adolescent must be let go, as he or she starts the process of becoming more socially independent" (*Psychology Today*). I no longer looked up to my father, who started to complain about me not sharing my feelings, my talking back and my moodiness. I started to look up to my friends instead. I understand that conflict during early adolescence is commonplace for many of us, and it's just a matter of dealing with the pertinent issues, for both parents and children. In conclusion, I feel I'm unable to say today that my parents haven't let me be who I wanted to: everyday they provide me with the foundations for a future, and if I one day happen to be a parent, they will be the ones I'll try to emulate.

Well, now it's about time to return to the broken mirror and the question of why did "he's to blame" come out of my mouth? Just milliseconds before accusing my brother, I remember having felt sort of angry at him— lots of memories and thoughts came to mind: my parents, aunts, uncles and even Copito, the family dog at that time, focused more attention on Nicolás than on me. Everybody was around him to see how he ate, how he laughed and even how he slobbered. He was even given my favourite blanket – the straw that broke the camel's back. So, what is the word I've been looking for the last fifteen years? I think they call it "jealousy." Some may say that I was an evil five-year-old, but I've found out that sibling jealousy is, in fact, common and natural. For example, the blanket tantrum is a question of identity and self-confidence: "being around four or five years old, children become naturally protective of their toys and belongings and are learning to assert their will," argues psychologist Dr. Sylvia Rimm ("The Effects of Sibling Competition"). Moreover, the elder sibling trying to be the focus of attention when there is a younger child in the family is as common as fighting and arguing between siblings: a child who is especially clingy and drawn to parents for comfort and love might be resented by siblings who see this and want the same amount of attention ("Sibling Rivalry" *KK Women's and Children's Hospital*). "Why wasn't he able to walk by himself? Why did he have to use my old baby walker?" In view of this, the problem actually was not him, but *me*! Of course, jealousy, competitiveness, and striving for attention have faded over time – they tail away as children develop their own identities throughout childhood and adolescence. However, bear in mind the following: now that the siblings may have discovered their own preferences and skills, "labelling your children is not a good thing to do. If the first child is considered the scholar and the second the creative and social child, for example, then those labels may cause the second child to assume he/she is not good at school and the first one at making friends," states aforementioned Dr. Sylvia Rimm. In this case, I was labelled the scholar. As both Nicolás and I attended the same school, every teacher that was graced with my presence (and Nicolás's mere one afterwards), would always remind my brother of what an "intelligent, quiet and responsible student" I was. Today, I can say that comparisons and rivalry came to an end long ago - specifically when we knew we were very different from each other- and we both have a lot of valuable things to offer the world. Of course we engage in petty arguments from time to time, as is typical of brothers, but I've started to cherish my brother, which is something I used to think would never take place.

This trip to my past has made me realise what I was learning without being aware of it as a child. It's worth it to look back on our past experiences. That's something we should all do, so as to never forget who we are and where we come from. Yet, the real highlight of making this trip is bumping into those characters that gave shape to what I am today: Luigi and Fender, the old folks and my family, always keeping in mind that whether they're still beside me or not, they left something in me. Of course, there were some people and some other important experiences I haven't mentioned, but... Oh wait. Well, guess what! Nicolás has just told me that it's my turn to wash the dishes. What? I did them yesterday! Oh, how I detest him sometimes. Hopefully no dishes fall from my "brother's" hands and break...

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"Sibling Rivalry" por Débora Bazan Flitt

Eu-reka!

By Camila Perez

Perhaps today you looked out the window and saw a glimpse of a beautiful sunset but you had to go back to your seat, where your laptop was roaring for your attention, with a blank page threatening you with that unwritten paper due tomorrow. Perhaps tomorrow your dog will try to lure you into walking him with his sad irresistible puppy eyes, but you will be literally stuck with the pile of paperwork that has you snowed under, and will probably have to have someone else do it for you. And it is a pity when you think about it, since those lost moments can never be recovered. However, there is more to it than missing precious moments: you also compromise your health. This comes down to the fact that we choose not to enjoy those simple things because we are always stressing about something else, and stress is very harmful. Isn't it?

I always thought stress was a detrimental bodily defense mechanism when we were under too much nervous tension, but I have come to think otherwise. Why? In doing some research, I came across some studies from a "stress eminence," Dr. Hans Selye, who actually coined the term, and whose articles made me change my mind and embrace stress. So, as it turns out stress is a biological phenomenon, a response to the demands made upon our bodies (1950). Anything can be a stress agent, so long as it triggers this mechanism. More importantly, we could be talking about the negative and harmful distress, or about the positive and beneficial eustress- from the Greek eu = good, Dr. Selye explains. Aha! There is a silver lining to stress, then. The secret is just to know how to handle it.

As I thought about it, I could recognize eustress in my own experience. It was the end of the school year, which means a whole lot of exams and not a lot of energy, since tiredness accumulates. Also, I was a week away from my holidays and from something way more exciting for me than tests and grades: as soon as I finished sitting for all the subjects I was going to travel to watch my favorite band in concert. But I had a bumpy road ahead before the event, which was on a Sunday night. It was the Sunday of the preceding week and something made me break out of my state of lethargy. Now I know that this was due to eustress, which can be described as "being totally focused in a mindful state of challenge, a healthy state of aroused attention on the task, exhilaration, and being fully present," and which apparently helped me get through those difficult days (McCarthy, 2000).

Then, I underwent what Selye calls the "General adaptation syndrome" and defines as "the manifestation of stress in the whole body, as they develop in time," while my body and mind were trying to catch up with the job ahead of them (1985). This syndrome encompasses three stages, but before showcasing them, let's mention that my stressor was an emotional one, specifically the challenge to get everything done in a short amount of time: doing well in two exams every other day.

First, I went through the adaptation stage, in which our body's adrenal gland releases adrenaline or epinephrine. This hormone speeds up our heartbeats, pushing blood to our entire body. Also, it opens up the lungs airways, allowing them to take as much oxygen as possible with each breath. Through these changes, adrenaline puts us in a state of alertness and triggers the release of blood sugar and fat, which in turn provide energy to our body. So, that was why I did not feel the need to sleep and my brain was actively participating in

my education, at last, allowing me to get creative in my writings. However, you cannot stay like that forever, as some of you can remember from the movie *Limitless*, although that required some illegal drugs that turned you into the ultimate genius, which is not the case here. But those drugs, like stress, did end up causing hallucinations and memory loss after this great creativity period, similar to the symptoms of sleep deprivation, which I experienced in the next stage. As the exposure to the stressor, i.e. my exams, continued, I passed into the resistance phase in which we develop a further adaptation to the stressor, but its effects on our bodies start to get to us and to wear us out. We feel sleep deprived and our cognitive performance is affected. Therefore I started to struggle with the shapeless mass of knowledge in my brain and I may have mixed up the terms of a couple of subjects, but I managed to survive. The next thing I knew I was completely exhausted, but happily packing my bags and going on a road trip to enjoy a great reward.

Nevertheless, what could have happened next, at some undefined point in time, is the exhaustion stage, which consists of the depletion of the adaptation energy that enabled us to cope with the stressor, and that results in the death of tissues. It is more usual for people to go through only the first two stages, the third being reserved for cases in which the stressor not only persisted but intensified. Luckily, within a week everything was over and I am still here, telling you about this. Everything went on as Dr. Selye nicely summarized it: "we first have to get into the swing of things, then we get pretty good at them, but finally we tire and lose our acquired efficiency," and that is the story of how I enjoy some extra energy, but, unfortunately, it did not last forever.

Yet, the question is, how is it possible for us to take advantage of stress, turning it into eustress? Dr. Selye's answer is egoism. Okay, let's not panic. What he means by this is that we should establish what he calls a code of behavior that consists on keeping the goals we badly want to reach in mind and working towards them, choosing a stress level that we can handle – you know, as they say 'don't bite off more than you can chew.' This would allow us to reach our goals without suffering, because we would be eager to do so when thinking about how much we want them, that is, by being a little bit selfish. While we work towards accomplishing our 'egoistical' objectives we also should try to be useful to other people, since this leads to personal satisfaction, too. The gist of it is to find the balance between those two.

We may or may not take his advice, but it is important for us to think positively when we are exposed to our daily stressors – because, let's face it, they are inevitable, and try to make the most of this phenomenon in order to be able to achieve our goals without perishing in the attempt. Hence, we should take all the extra energy stress gives us and write our papers, walk our dogs and watch the sunsets. Make it worth it.

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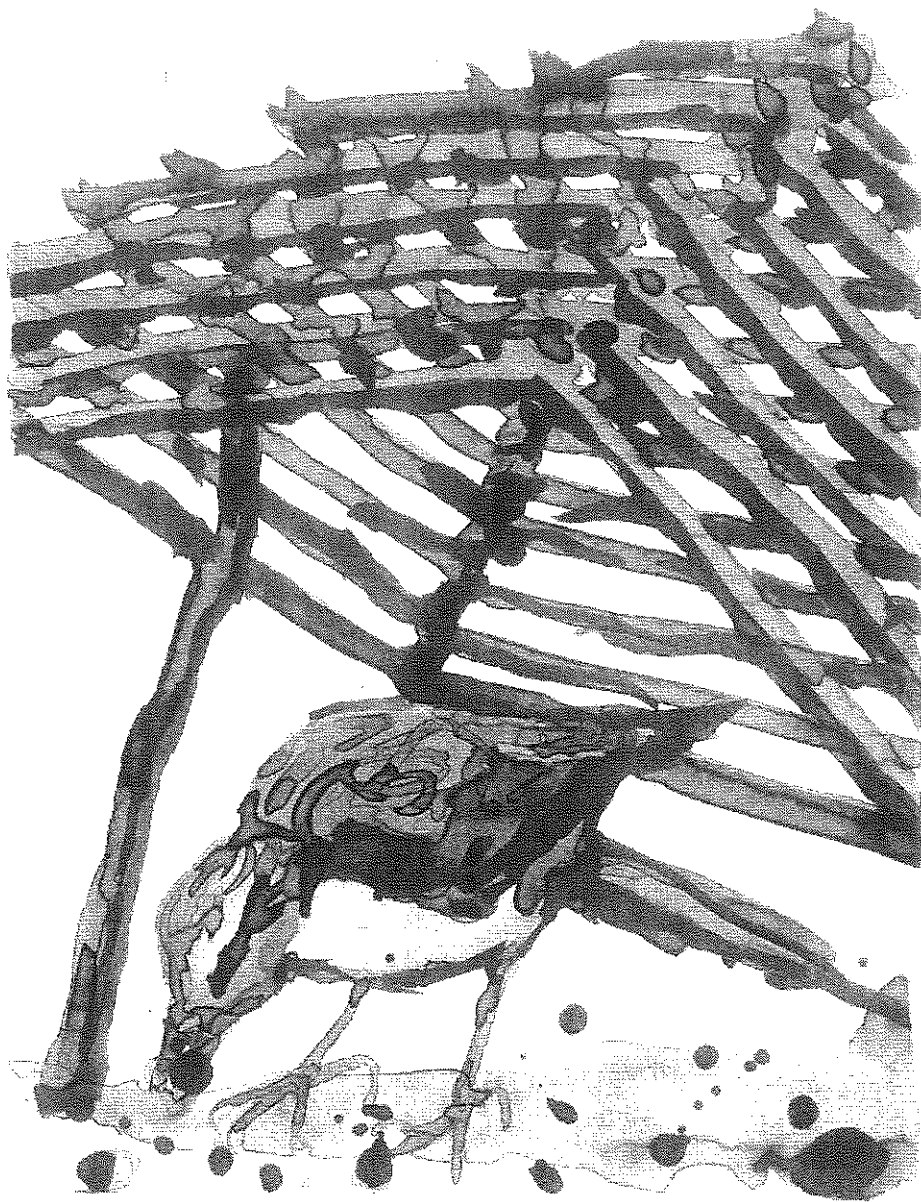
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"Arrepentimiento" por Débora Bazan Flitt

Write a Poem

By María Luciana Maldonado

Wisdom flows
Rivers move, you move
I stay, you move
Thank heavens you do
Exciting my soul away

A quiet place, I guess

Parts of you stay
Others leave
Even without admission
My mind reaches you

Our Lives Will Be One

By Romina Mendez

What a decision we made that day!
Ready we think we are.
It will change our lives,
To share them together.
Eager for that moment.

A pure love we have for each other,

Passion that will never die.
On the altar we will say "yes."
Even if people say we are young,
My life belongs next to yours.

Untitled

By Marisel Bollati de López

Words, but not just words
Rhyme, but often more than that
Images, sounds, shadows and light
Together, fighting for fame
Entangled in a meaning labyrinth

A world, but more than one

Passions and pains
Omens and joys
Endless mysteries
Multiplied... yet ever solved?

Let's Play with the Dolls

By Nati Correa

What have you been playing?
Read my lips
I'm not a Barbie Doll
The makeup doesn't make sense
Elegance is not for me

A doll is not a human. I'm a human.

Please don't treat me as a doll
Oh, you just wanted somebody to play with
the End of the game is near
My beauty is natural. I don't want to be a doll.

Biting the Apple

By Camila Castro Brizuela

I'll never be on speaking terms with God,
Never have, and never will
Is it that I'm doing it all wrong? Is it
that I question everything?
Well, I don't know
For some people it is so easy
For me, well, it is not so
The thing is I could never believe You And no
one ever seems to get my point You told us
you created everything
But we came from the apes
And even if you had given us our lives
You would never leave us alone
So, why bother about freedom
If you only want us under control? Take
Adam and Eve for instance
Expelled from Eden for an apple?! That
must be a joke
It's not a big deal, you know
I can plant you a tree if you want.

You never showed me your feelings
Perhaps that's why I feel so cold
I was young and full of insecurities
I needed you to show me the way, The
path leading to your heart
You wouldn't believe
How many times I wanted to hug you
To smile at you
To tell you I loved you
Oh, I needed desperately to do it Why
did I not let myself do it? Well, I guess
I was scared
And fear froze not only my body
But also my soul
Not admitting my feelings was easier
It spared us a lot of pain, I thought
But now we've hurt each other's hearts
We can finally see we were all wrong
And although I'm still crying
I'm glad we have
Because at least now I know you love me
I can tell from the tears in your eyes

I Look up to the Sky

By Nadia Lourdes Videla

I look up to the sky
and see this perfect sky,
the sun is hidden somewhere
and the clouds are dazzling and white.

I have flown like a bird through that endless freedom
I have felt the air take me where I wanted to be
I have forgotten the world around me
I have seen the reflection of the rain on the brilliant green

And in the silence of the night
I have seen the beauty of fire
those sparkles that enlighten the dark
the moon has shown me shadows
and I lost myself in the sparkling stars.

Under the Willow Tree ...

By Marcos Andrés Jaliff

Countless cherished memories flooding back,
Can't remember when I felt it for the first time.

But there's one thing I will never forget,
And that's you're my wonderwall and eternal friend.

Under the willow tree,
I sit tonight with a ring.
My heart leaps with joy
'Cause I know for sure
Soon we'll become one.

Couldn't think of anything else these days.
Your love made me take a big step ahead.
I have no fear of what your answer might be
'Cause I know I got your love and that's all I need.

Under the willow tree,
I sit tonight with a ring.
My heart leaps with joy,
'Cause I know for sure,
Soon we'll become one.

Stabbed in the Back

By María Luciana Maldonado

I can't sleep tonight
Thoughts won't let me
They flow as an uncontrollable river.
Heart is a trouble too
Beating fast and slow
Consuming what is left of emotions
I wonder among lots of what if
Sleepless nights are devouring me
As tiredness and anger become part of me
Decisions will lead you to where you are
And I know we are both lost
So if you read these lines
Can we stay up as one tonight?

I once hurt someone really bad
So mean was I
That it actually hit me back
Never hurt those who you love
Because your life already depends on them
Words are a powerful weapon
And its damage is not always expected
Who would have thought
That from all of them
Mines are the one that killed us both?

I Let You Light up my Way

By Nadia Lourdes Videla

I let you light up my way,
you said you were one I could trust,
guess you were carrying a candle
because the light did not last long

And in the darkness, you disappeared,
I could not find a way out,
guess you found the exit
and left me locked up inside

Trusting someone can be tough,
disappointment is a chance
it can take you to safety
or destroy you in the blink of an eye.

My "Nothing Box"

By Franco Cangialosi

I admired you the most
Until the moment that you told
Inside my head there was no brain
But just an empty "nothing box"

How can you say you want to see
all the words inside of me?
If speaking truth, you just believe
That emptiness resides in here

Then, let me, please. Oh please, could I?
Well, I just want to apologize
If deep inside you think my rhymes
Should have never ever come to life

If this sounds stupid, well it's hard
To write some words and make them rhyme
When you just have a "nothing box"
And nothing else is there inside

Suspension of Disbelief

By Camila Perez

*"It is now life and not art that requires the
willing suspension of disbelief"*

-Lionel Trilling

A bird sitting on a high branch started singing his melody, creating a perfectly tuned morning orchestra with other birds on other branches of other trees. A light, warm breeze blew away the leaves left behind on the sidewalks by the autumn, cleaning the path for a beautiful early-spring day. The sun, very shyly, shone over the majesty of nature and man-made world alike, inviting everyone to be startled by the beauty of the day. The city started to wake up and people were walking down the streets or driving their cars towards their routines. It was a particularly quiet morning, though – except for an occasional honk from an angry driver telling the world ‘I’m not a morning person.’

Everything was just as it was supposed to be. But not for everyone: a young girl was using her spare key to her sister’s apartment, because the sister hadn’t been returning her calls. As she turned the key in the lock, a shiver went down her spine, and once inside, the shiver intensified. Everything felt the same, smelled the same, and looked the same as always, except for a detail that made Anna call the police.

When they came in, under the premise that Sophia, the owner of that apartment, was missing, they didn’t find anything out of place. The walls looked spotlessly white, and the hardwood floors waxed to perfection. Every chair was perfectly in line with the table in the dining room, the stainless steel of her kitchen appliances was as stainless as it could get, and the red and gold cushions on her leather couch were thoroughly placed. Her bathroom was the cleanest they had ever seen. In her bedroom, the bed was made military-style, the many books on the shelves were arranged by author, and there was no scattered paper on her desk, just an open laptop. A truly neat girl. Why had the sister called anyways? Maybe Sophia had gone somewhere and forgot to tell her, although it was unlike her, according to Anna. Why had she called? Well, there was just one detail: by her bed, on the floor, there were some clothes piled up over an open book. Sophia wouldn’t have left that there. Of course, the police were skeptical. Of course, they didn’t know Sophia as well as Anna did. However, when they lifted her jeans from the floor they found her cell phone still in the pocket, which was enough to raise suspicion.

The process started: the police enclosed the apartment with their yellow tape. In the hallways the neighbors gathered, some still in their bathrobes, and some others fixing up their ties while anxiously sipping their coffee, and whispered all kinds of crazy theories to each other, creating an annoying hum. Inside, the scientific police turned on the computer and a message appeared on the screen: ‘goodbye.’ They checked for prints and for blood in the whole apartment, but didn’t find anything strange. They questioned Anna, but she could only tell them her sister had always been a bookworm, who always behaved and never had a friend or an acquaintance you would call ‘suspicious’ - no bad-boys in her dating record. Sophia didn’t even have financial problems, or drinking issues, or issues at all for that matter, just a tiny bit of a temper and a sensitive soul. It almost felt like she didn’t even belong to this cruel world. Days passed and no progress was made regarding the possible abduction of Sophia.

Anna could not come to terms with the fact that her sister was missing, nor with the police's favorite theory of a runaway Sophia. All Anna had was her sister, and she was determined to find something, anything, the police had disregarded that could to find Sophia. She went back to the apartment and tore apart the yellow tape remains from the door, almost passionately as if the absence of it would restore her life. She walked through every room carefully, as though floating over, so as not to disturb anything, she just stared and felt compelled to go to the bedroom. There she stood in front of the pile of clothes and almost kicked the yellow plastic square indicating the evidence number. She picked the clothes up and opened the closet to fold them in. When the white shirt was hung among the other shirts of similar shades, and the blue jeans were folded on top of the pile of blue jeans, she closed the closet door and turned around to put the book – another piece of evidence – back on its corresponding shelf.

She stopped for a second and felt an unavoidable urge to open it and read it again, since it had been their favorite book growing up. She flicked through it and a heavy piece of paper fell from it, landing on her feet. Her name was on it, so she bent over to get it, and read its content. She was confused: how could Sophia do that to her? Leave without calling, without saying goodbye. She had just left a lousy letter inside a book saying that she had moved to a better, more exciting place and that she would come back when she was ready. Anna would've recognize Sophia's handwriting anywhere, and now she would have to explain everything to the police. The romantic Sophia had always had a knack for drama, how infuriating! Those thoughts went through her mind like a lightening through a cloudy sky, but the storm dissipated in seconds. Warmth invaded her, as if the sun had suddenly entered the apartment and covered all the rooms until it got to her heart and soul. No matter how sloppy and selfishly Sophia had acted, she was fine, and she would come back eventually. Anna decided to stay where she was and enjoy the light that now shone not only from the sun outside but from herself, and leave explanations for later. She kept flicking through the book, remembering and smiling. On the last page of *An Exciting World* there was a drawing strange to the book. Sophia smiled happily inside her favorite world.

Their First Time

By Sol Gardiol

"I've never done this before" She said.

"Me neither" He answered.

"How do we start? Shall I approach you?" She doubted.

"I don't know. I'm nervous" He confessed.

"But we have already got this far... I even missed my singing lessons today for this" She insisted.

"Yes, I know. It won't disappoint you" He guaranteed.

"So, again: can't we just do it?" She invited.

"Ok, yes! Just so many others did it before" He suggested.

"Promise it won't hurt!" She demanded.

"If it does, I'll make it up to you in another moment" He proposed.

"Promise?" She insisted.

"Promise" He confirmed.

"Just give me your hand and we can start" She decided.

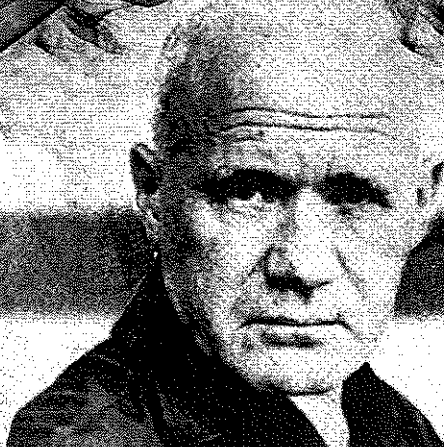
"I'll give you my hand and we can start" He repeated.

This was their first time. The two little birds let their bodies fall from the branch on which they had been debating. Their colorfully feathered wings, held together, made it easier for the pigeons to glide in the air and land gracefully only some meters away.



"Viajar" por Débora Bazan Flitt

SERENDIPITY



Vol. IV



"Serendipity" por Monk

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