

Editor's Note

Interdisciplinary encompasses several concepts, chief among them progression. At times, progression comprises radical change. The idea of equality for all men, regardless of class, was certainly a radical idea when Rousseau published the *Discourse on the Origin and the Foundation of Inequality*. He believed in waking up to a better world, one featuring revised versions of nationalism, freedom, and brotherhood. However, that's just the word that hints at Rousseau's cultural blindness: brotherhood. Instead of rally for the rights of everyone, he focuses on what he knows to be true, the rights of men. Other modes of research countered his claims. Specifically, Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* calls out the hypocrisy in Rousseau's arguments for egalitarianism. For if forward motion is truly the epicenter of progression, marching off without half of the human race is no way forward at all. Likewise, in the academic world and beyond, the unification of all modes of research and creative expression through interdisciplinary approaches is intrinsic to greater understanding. This issue of *Penumbra* proudly highlights gender issues in an effort to be the other voice reaching for reason, much like Wollstonecraft.

Another part of interdisciplinary may be defined in a collectivist sense. Self and interdependence are outlined in Gish Jen's *Tiger Writing*. She relies heavily on stories about her father (and his family and cultures) to inform readers about herself, as reflected through others. Understanding and practicing interdisciplinary research is quite similar to Jen's description of interdependence, which leads to instances of "in between". According to Silko as quoted by Delores Bernal, "in this universe there is no absolute good or absolute bad; there are many balances and harmonies that ebb and flow." The ability to remain in flux, while also reaching back to a constant, is strength-building, and integral to the interdisciplinary approach.

This issue of *Penumbra* includes four critical articles, two essays, one short story, and various poems. The work comes to us from scholars in academe and out, established and emerging writers and artists in the U.S. and abroad, individuals using traditional and experimental styles to explore the power of critical and creative expression as it relates to the interdisciplinary approach.

In her essay, “So . . . who are you now?: Performing Women in Stage Beauty’s English Restoration”, Tico Tenorio examines gender and performance through the lens of Judith Butler, contextualized through an analysis of the 2004 film, *Stage Beauty*. Similarly, Misti Chamberlain’s “They Aren’t in the History Books: Women Artists in History” focuses on gender, specifically on the omission of women’s contributions to art history books, as she seeks to highlight certain women artists. “Welcome Home Sisters! : A Personal and Political Education”, another gender-critical piece by Kris Hege, is an academic and personal reflection on the radical feminist education--the pedagogy, curriculum, and community--of the 40th Michigan Womyn’s Music Festival that took place in August 2015. In one more expansion on gender from a different perspective, Nancy Pratt offers her essay, “The Truth Women Tell: Arthritis,

Heartache, and a Mercedes”, to show unity and individualism of the woman’s experience at an age when art, media and society often completely ignore women of a “certain age”.

Brandon Marlon’s poem collection includes four pieces focused on narrative, compelling imagery, human desire, and satire. Another poem by Nancy Semotiuk, “Faculty Colloquium at the Country Club”, examines privilege through the lens of race and social justice. Sharon Lin’s “Swiftly” is a story chronicling a young woman preparing for the holiday season, but doubts begin to creep in when she rediscovers a memory from her childhood.

In keeping with memory and experience, Allison Budaj offers her creative essay, “Confessions of a Study Abroad Coordinator”, detailing her journey to becoming a Study Abroad Coordinator and the various obstacles she encountered while leading her first group abroad. Next comes a critical essay from Janis Chandler, who discusses history and gentrification in “Faubourg Tremé: Cultural and Societal Progress in a Neighborhood Faced with Gentrification.” The last critical piece to round off the issue underscores philosophy and relationship evaluated via a literary lens: in “Friendship in Frankenstein: An Artistotelian-Thomistic Analysis” by Greta Enriquez.

While all of the criticism and fiction appearing in this issue were approved for publication following a double-blind review, “Only Time Can Tell” is a solicited mixed-media piece that scholar and Artist Misti Chamberlain graciously shared for the cover of this issue. We found the image to be stunning. Coupled with Chamberlain’s critical article, “They Aren’t in the History Books: Women Artists in History”, a practical application of expanded perspectives is highlighted on a greater scale.

Adding greater perspectives is the mission of this journal, and should be the mission of progression. Varied perspectives fuels ideas and expands knowledge. Furthermore, Delores Bernal believes that a mixed sense of “epistemology exposes human relationships and experiences [...also enabling others...] to become agents of knowledge who participate in intellectual discourse that links experience, research, community, and social change.” Where some view formlessness, the contributors and editors of this journal see fluidity. With fluidity comes innovation, in the form of new research and creative endeavors.

— MARIANNA BONCEK
and JONINA STUMP

