[IN]VISIBLE

SCRIPPS COLLEGE
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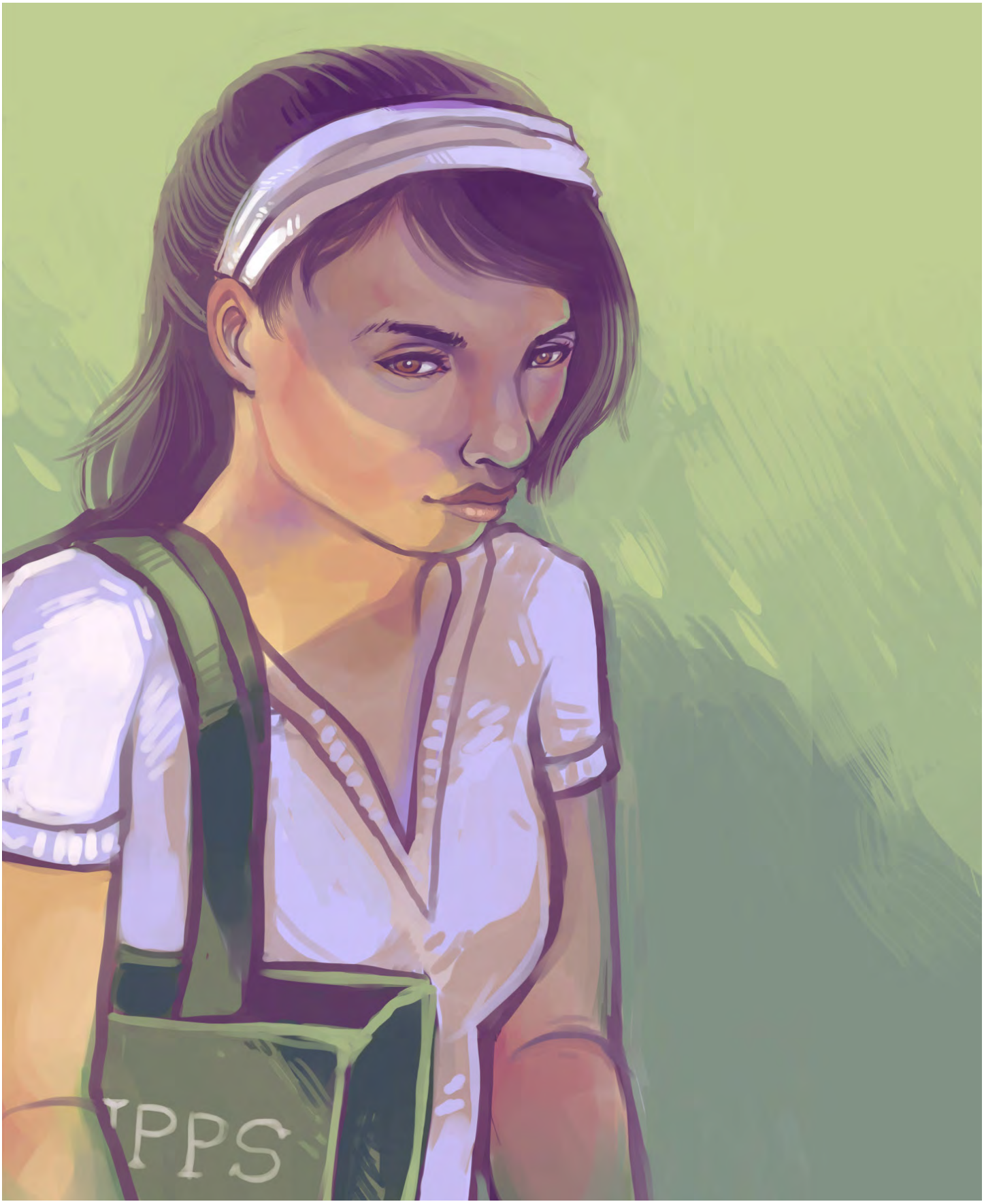

[IN]VISIBLE

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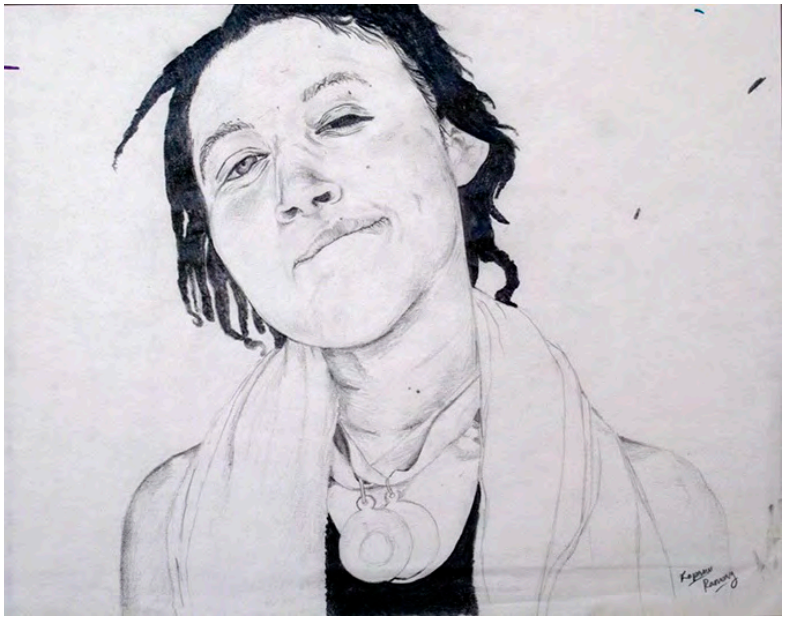

MISSION STATEMENT

We are a group of students devoted to reducing the perceived significance of outward apperances in the community, starting with Scripps College. We acknowledge character and voice as essential elements of community that should be appreciated in individuals, not drowned out by the majority. We believe there are qualities beyond physical appearances that define a person. As such, we seek to emphasize appreciation of what is frequently overlooked. It is our mission to bring these essential qualities into focus.

COLOPHON

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EDITOR'S LETTER

Dear readers,

Yet another school year has gone by, and [in]Visible is yet another year older!

At the time of writing, however, much of this semester still lies ahead, and with it, many new and exciting things for this magazine. We were lucky enough to have greater resources available to us this semester, enabling us to spread our mission in ways beyond the publication. [in]Visible participated in the Body Love event on March 4, where we joined event-goers in decorating outlines of different female bodies. We also proudly had a face-painting table at the A-Team's annual carnival on April 22. Our outreach event this semester was a karaoke event—what better and more fun way to celebrate Scripps self-confidence than belting some of your favorite tunes?

You may notice that the magazine itself has undergone a little change. This semester, I brought forth the idea of establishing consistent sections in the magazines, an idea which was greeted with much enthusiasm. Unless next year's team of editors decides to change it yet again, you can expect a Well-Being section, focusing on practical advice for physical and mental health; a Pop Culture section, featuring a review of a recent movie, book, or album that applies to body image; an Around Campus section, featuring an event on Scripps from the semester; a Current Events section; and then the usual surveys, perspectives, variety of feature articles, interviews, and At a Glance. I am very excited about this new set-up, hoping it will inspire writers to think outside of their comfort zone when it comes to article brainstorming, guaranteeing a variety of informative articles for every reader.

[in]Visible has successfully undergone its first year under new leadership, and it has been a growing experience for all: me, the other 2010-2011 editors, and the magazine itself. It's been rewarding to see the influential and engaging ways [in]Visible has grown to truly become an essential part of the Scripps community, through events and the development of the website (http://community.scrippscollege.edu/invisible/)

A final note to readers: we hope to start a "letters to the editors" section, where you can email responses to the magazine that we can choose from and include in our next semester's issue. Contact us with any likes or dislikes regarding this issue at invisiblemag@gmail.com, and please include "Letter to Editor" in the subject line! We will need all submissions by the end of September 2011 for them to be considered for publication.

With the end of the year drawing to a close, I hand off the magazine (with confidence!) to a new generation of Scrippsies. I wish them luck, and I wish you well, Scripps College community and [in]Visible readers.

Happy reading (and happy summer)!

Ann Mayhew
Editor-in-Chief

NEITHER HERE NOR THERE:

THE MIXED-RACE EXPERIENCE

By Katie Evans

When my cousin was very young, my aunt would take her for walks in her stroller. Her hair was very difficult to manage, so my aunt would use colorful plastic barrettes to make a dozen poofy ponytails jut out of my cousin's head. As they walked, some people stopped to say hello or mention how cute she looked. Others came up to ask my aunt, "Why are you dressing that child like a black girl?" or "Why do you have that white baby in 'Afro-puff'?" If she managed to respond, all my aunt could say was, "Excuse me?"

My cousin is biracial—her mother is white, and her father is African-American. She looks nothing like me, her pale, blond half-cousin, but she's distinct from her half-siblings from her father's family as well. In a society that loves clear labels—straight, gay, black, white—she exists outside of them.

Thankfully, she's neither alone, nor ignored. More and more multiracial people are entering the public eye, with President Barack Obama, of course, as the most famous. Actress Halle Berry and singer Shakira, among many other American celebrities, are also known for their mixed heritage. But the increased attention to multiracial issues is, unfortunately, a double-edged sword. Many people fetishize mixed-race individuals or envy couples with mixed-race babies. With the entrance of racially ambiguous people into the spotlight, American society has created new labels—"biracial," "multiracial," "mixed-race," and, specifically for those with Asian heritage, "hapa." These labels, however, are another faulty method of grouping individuals, as no two multiracial people have the same experience.

IN A SOCIETY THAT LOVES CLEAR LABELS— STRAIGHT, GAY, BLACK, WHITE— SHE EXISTS OUTSIDE OF THEM.

"I was much more exposed to one parent than the other," Marissa*, a Scripps sophomore, said. Race did not impact her self-identity until she grew older. "Whenever I am asked about my other side, I don't really have a lot of good answers." Scripps senior Emi Sawada, who has Italian-American and Japanese roots, has spent time living in all three countries but identifies most strongly with her Asian-American heritage. Her brother feels differently, she said, identifying more as Italian-American.

Both students acknowledge that there are huge misconceptions about multiracial people as a whole, such as their having more insight into "their" cultures, being more beautiful or intelligent, or having "an easier life." Marissa mentioned that many people assume she speaks the languages of both of her parents' home countries, something actress Jessica Alba, who doesn't speak Spanish, has also mentioned hinders her ability to receive roles written for Latinas. While she lived in Japan, locals saw Emi as wholly American despite her fluent Japanese. She attributed this to her appearance and, in particular, her atypical curly hair. It wasn't the only time she had to "prove" her race to others: While attempting to go to a party at an Asian-American sorority, the bouncer mistook her for white and denied her entrance. When she spoke with me, Emi radiated confidence about her own self-image and identity, even though it confounded those around her. Her most common pick-up line is, "What's your ethnicity?"

Because of their appearance and ambiguity, Multiracial children often feel isolated from others. When my cousin began attending elementary school, other African-American girls wouldn't speak to her—she "dressed too white," they explained. Marissa, who lives in a mostly white community, said that "for the longest time I wished I was more white-looking," particularly in comparison with her fairer sisters. She feels more comfortable surrounded by people who share her heritage. Although Emi identifies herself firmly, she still feels conflicted about what cultural aesthetic to align to—Americans prefer lean, curvy physiques and the clothing that emphasizes them, while Japanese fashion has a "balloon-like" style that often hides the body. Emi added that she seek[s] out other Asian Americans because she feels she can relate to them more easily.

The two expressed different opinions on mixed-race individuals in the media and society at large. Emi said multiracial celebrities are often "exploited," "glamorized," or "performing as white," meaning that they don't emphasize their heritage, nor does the majority of society recognize them as different. A Google search of "mixed-race celebrities" reveals a number of public figures who keep a low profile about their ethnicity. It is an issue she often struggles with. "It's better that they're there at all," she said, but, "at the same time, it's not enough to just be there." Marissa felt more forgiving, saying, "I don't really feel I should be criticizing anyone for the way they publicize or don't publicize their heritage." While she doesn't actively seek role models of her ethnic makeup, she is excited when she discovers a celebrity shares racial heritage with her. As for the perceived greater beauty of mixed-race individuals, she said, "We have features together that you wouldn't expect…so it's not that it's prettier, it's that it's something different".

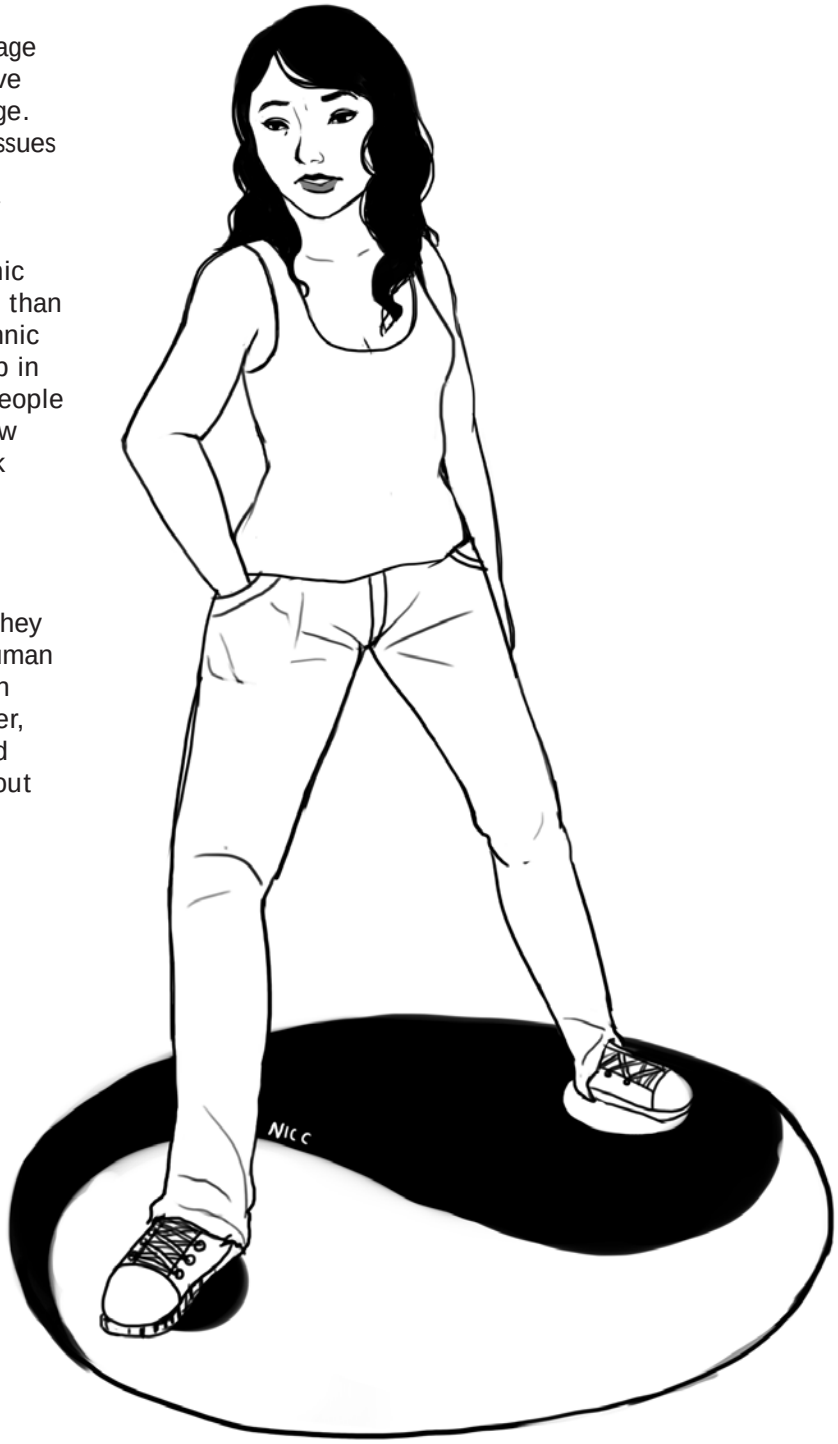
"It's trendy to be mixed-race," Emi added, saying

that many people see them as “white with extra spice.” Although they have struggled with self-image in the past, both girls acknowledged that they have come to terms with their bodies throughout college.

In short, mixed-race people face similar issues to those all minority groups face—as they become more visible and accepted as part of society, they face the same stereotypes, occasional ignorance, and fetishization by the mainstream as other ethnic minorities. At the same time, they are less united than other minorities, as many of them don’t share ethnic or geographic background, and they often grow up in different cultures and communities. Mixed-race people can grapple with their identities, their bodies, how society marks them, and how they choose to mark themselves in completely different ways.

As the experiences of my cousin, Emi, and Marissa show, there is no singular multiracial experience. Multiracial people aren’t any more beautiful or ugly than the rest of the world, and they aren’t an augmented or diminished area of the human race. They struggle with self-identity and image in complex ways. Through their experiences, however, we can realize how frivolous labels really are—and maybe, in the future, we can live in a world without them. ■

**Name has been changed*



EXCLUSIVE FIELDS

By Victoria Davis

It was a Friday night and a crowd was swarming around Garrison Theater. Mudd and Scripps students piled into Garrison Theater to watch the one-woman act Truth Values: One Girl's Romp Through M.I.T.'s Male Math Maze, written and performed by Massachusetts Institute of Technology (M.I.T.) graduate Gioia De Cari. This was to be a performance proving that a woman can successfully navigate through the male dominated field of mathematics. As the lights dimmed, the crowd hushed, and the much anticipated event began; everyone prepared themselves to watch the living proof that a woman can triumph over gender persecution, and that she truly can have it all.

The stage was empty. Only a small white four-legged table and matching chair occupied the space. De Cari strolled out of the shadows and stood casually in the spotlight. There were no costumes, backdrops, or other actors; De Cari stood alone and left the rest to the imagination of her audience. When De Cari portrayed herself, her professional attire of a gray blazer, blue blouse, and gray dress-pants sharply contrasted with her overly feminine and high-pitched voice. She performed excessively exaggerated scenes, making the audience laugh. At one point, De Cari was rapidly crawling across the stage on all fours. Her frantic mannerisms and whiplash character changes founded upon female stereotypes created a jocund atmosphere.

It became clear that the annoying actions she acted out, paired with her degrading experiences, revealed bitter sarcasm—a destructive effect of prejudice in the mathematics PhD program at M.I.T. De Cari acted out scenes of these past encounters with her colleagues, professors, and family members in the "male math maze," which included everyone who never took her seriously. She had worked towards following her father's footsteps "to make up for being a daughter." Comments such as, "You don't look like you're good in math" and "You're married? Why are you here?" swirled around De Cari, painting her as a joke and making her invisible in a male-dominated world. Whether it was a fellow M.I.T. graduate student making a pass or a professor asking her to serve cookies during lectures, messages of devalue constantly told De Cari that she did not belong. But, De Cari pushed back: she played pranks on her literal-minded colleagues, she wore overly flamboyant and risqué outfits, and she made her world a cynical playground.

One day, De Cari's father committed suicide. Her father's footsteps stopped, the path ended, and she was lost. She never got to prove to her father that she could be just as successful as all the great men in history. But in her new undefined space, De Cari uncovered her love of music and theater that had been buried beneath a life of proving others wrong. In the end, De Cari decided to "give up every known path, just set sail and survive." De Cari quit the PhD program and graduated from M.I.T. with a aster's degree.

The stage faded to black, leaving the audience with the haunting reality that all women are faced with the decision of whether or not to try to romp through the male mazes of the world.

De Cari was not the proof of a woman who triumphed over a male-dominated field. However, she was not the proof that women must fail in male-dominated fields. De Cari should not be seen as the epitome of a woman who was discouraged from following her dreams. The truth is that De Cari gave up on someone else's unfulfilled dream and discovered herself. She became certain in who she was: a brilliant mathematician and artist who chose not to compromise. De Cari is the epitome of a woman who made the decision to live her own life—founded on the multilayered disciplines that she valued.

There is no need for proof.

There exists a woman; therefore she can be whoever she desires to be. ■

FINDING A PLACE FOR MY MIND

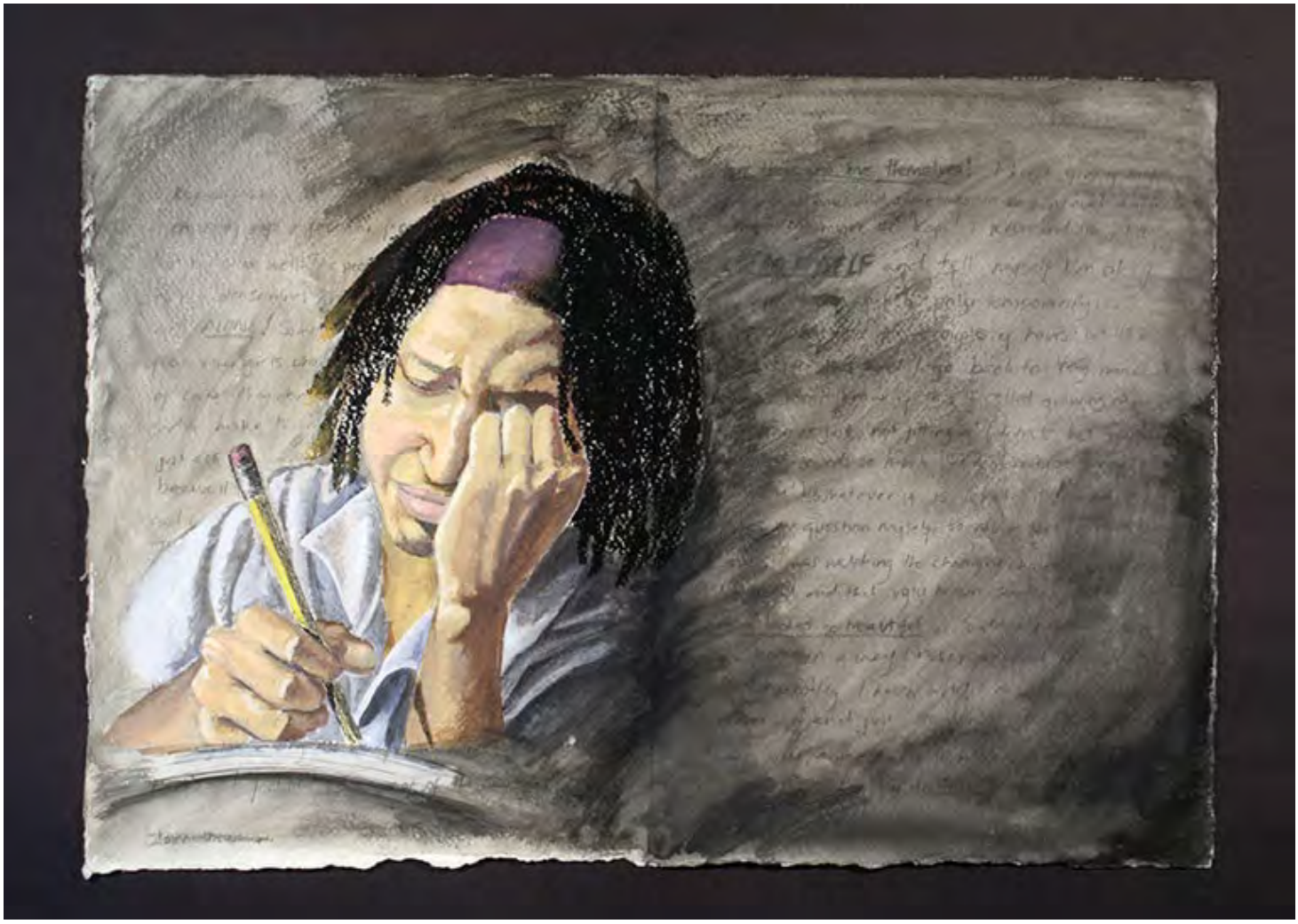
By Emily Simmons

GRE, MCAT, and LSAT are simply sets of letters with corresponding numbers, and yet they have such a strong hold on how we judge our intellectual merit. How can we determine intelligence, and what good does that quantification do? My high school was divided between the AP students and the others. As the college process ensued, everyone became even more compartmentalized. You became your applications, the number of schools, the caliber, and the location. As soon as April 1 hit, you were the acceptance letters, the financial aid packages, and the multitudes of collegiate sweatshirts that popped up on torso after torso of blurry-eyed college-bound seniors. I knew my place in the hierarchy. I was going to a private school in Southern California, a dreamy fantasyland of tan bodies, palm trees, and Mickey Mouse ears.

Upon arriving, it felt great to meet so many people that had thought Scripps was just as perfect for them as I knew it was for me. I thought I had finally left the hierarchy behind However, after the hubbub of orientation week and the 6:01 party calmed down, I began to learn why people really came to Scripps — a surprising number of my friends did so out of default. Regardless of how they felt now, Scripps hadn't been their first choice, and for some reason that came as a surprise to me. But it also came as an insult. Was I less worthy as an intellectual being if I hadn't even applied to any "better" schools? Was I less intelligent if I thought Core was difficult; did that mean I couldn't have made it at a "harder" school? I felt embarrassed to say anything in class because I was sure that all my classmates had gotten into "better" schools and that the classes here were a breeze for them. I hit a low after the release of the first Core paper assignment when I spent hours working on an answer only to have my professor reject each thesis statement, one after another. I felt like I physically didn't have the capacity to understand what he was asking for. In Core I we discussed the definition of intelligence and whether or how it can be measured. The very discussion of those things made me feel inferior. A ranking of intelligence is unavoidable. I don't believe that intelligence can be measured or ranked and yet it constantly is, by the school you go to, the grades you get, even the major you decide to pursue.

> I THOUGHT I HAD FINALLY LEFT THE HIERARCHY BEHIND.

A good friend of mine felt the same daunting feeling when faced with Core I. Her admittance to Scripps came as a surprise and thus a self-esteem boost. However, upon arriving she found the course load and time commitment of Core shocking and intimidating. Once she learned her professor's expectations and how to navigate the class, she realized that what we were learning was truly important. In an impromptu email to her parents she



wrote, "I can feel my brain expanding." Thinking in a new way made her excited to be learning and showed her that doing well in college is not about being smart enough but about what and how much we can learn while we're here.

As I walked out of the Core final in December, I felt the sense of relief that any student does when finals week is over, but I also felt an immense feeling of accomplishment. As I walked back to my dorm from Steele Hall I thought about what I had just achieved: I had proved in the past two hours that I could analyze difficult material by philosophers and authors, could connect all the ranging works, and could synthesize what I had learned into three succinct essays. Walking through Honnold Gate onto the grounds of my new home, I realized that if someone had asked me to do such a thing five months earlier, I would have laughed. Beyond that, I could see that we had all struggled through this first semester. It didn't matter where my intelligence ranked with the other women on campus. Knowing that I had shared this experience with such intelligent people made me just as worthy as the rest. No matter how prestigious the schools these women had applied or gotten into were, they are now part of the Scripps community, and so am I. It doesn't matter where we rank in intelligence, no matter how that is measured, what matters is how much we can grow and absorb, two things that I am confident all Scripps students are very skilled at because we accomplish them through our interactions with faculty and each other. ■

IT'S NOT "GAME OVER" YET

FANTASIZING IDENTITY

By Liz Lyon

Melody Strmel '12 sits on the floor, mashing buttons on her Xbox controller as she plays through the latest installment of the Dragon Age sequence. Hope Whitney-Monical '11, also a fan of the Xbox, prefers Dead Rising. You might not know it, but there is an avid community of Scripps students who play video games — though they might not be aware of exactly how many other students actually play video games or have consoles.

Videogames and females, videogames and women. Not what you would typically think of as an avenue for self-reflection and well-being, and not what you might think of when you envision a Scripps student. Although video games are controversial for the stereotypical women they portray — women with tiny waists and enormous breasts — it is not about who or what is portrayed in the game. More than affecting the way that women view their bodies, video games can help women's well-being. Despite many of the misconceptions that accompany video games, such as they are often associated with masculinity and foster antisocial behavior, they also have very positive effects, such as boosting confidence, acting as a way to release steam after a rough day or week, and promoting social interaction. Instead of using it as a method of escapism, video games can foster friendships and even be a space where anyone can reinvent themselves — especially women, helping in part to reinvent what femininity means.

Many gamers typically start playing games because someone in their family or a friend had a game console. Friends can turn a single-player game into a multiplayer game merely by designing different characters, and by doing so can create a social network. Such connections help foster a community of gamers, who enjoy relaxing together, are interested in one another's games, and enjoy the relief

that video games can provide. Additionally, multiplayer games like Halo can create a larger party of people who are interested in games and getting together.

Although the games can be used as a means of relaxation, much like reading a novel or watching episodes of a favorite television show, they also allow identity-play. One of the most important and empowering features of videogames is their ability to imagine a world where an identity is fluid and can be changed merely by restarting the game — and sometimes even within the same iteration. For example, in Dragon Age, the gamer can choose to be a man or woman of three different races: human, elf, or dwarf. And aside from relationships, gender is almost negligible in the Dragon Age games. Abilities, interactions with other characters, and even storylines are different depending on your race and how the gamer chooses to play the character. This dynamic not only adds to the re-playability of the game, but gamers can now explore what it means to play as a male or a female character. Even if there is not a noticeable difference in the way that female characters are treated, it is empowering to have the option to play as a female.

Malleable character design allows gamers to ask themselves questions, bringing a sense of play and expression of an inner being, or what they want their inner being to be, to videogames. However, this is a low-risk environment because gamers do not have to commit to anything. While exploring these options, gamers can change them. It is particularly valuable for females to have that kind of power and ability for self-invention, mostly because there are more restrictions on females and femininity than males and masculinity.

Playing a videogame can allow people to explore other modes of being, serving as a staging-ground for what one can be. Although Hope Whitney-Monical acknowledges that there are ample opportunities for women to find empowerment in today's society, playing video games is a unique space to do so and has lower risks than other spheres. Self-exploration through video games is more personal and can be private, and allows women to explore options that they do not normally have.

For now, as Melody and Hope mash their buttons, they continue to challenge the assertion that only boys play video games. In doing so, they play with their identities and help make an ostensibly male-dominated industry friendlier to all genders. ■

NO PRESSURE:
CHOOSING NOT TO DRINK

By Meg Roy

Growing up in the liquor capital of America, New Orleans, I was constantly surrounded by booze and some of the nation's greatest parties. My father, though never an alcoholic, always enjoyed at least one glass of wine per evening and had a collection of vodka, gin, and rum on shelves within my reach in our pantry from the time I was five. The first time I saw my classmates getting drunk was in seventh grade during Mardi Gras. My parents and housekeeper always told me about the dangers of drinking, and how I shouldn't do it without their supervision until I was 21, but my dad wanted me to share his taste for it around the time I became a teenager.

By the time I was an upperclassman in high school, I'd realized that I simply didn't like the taste of alcohol. I'd tried Champagne on New Year's Eve, wine while vacationing in Italy, and beer with my best friend on the first day after we graduated, and all of them tasted liquid fire to me. Most adults who encouraged me to drink told me it was an acquired taste. However, drinking a lot more to get to a point where I enjoyed it was unappealing to me. I could have fun at nice dinners and hanging out with my friends at a party without drinking, so why should I feel compelled to drink? The Saturday before Mardi Gras, my friend was constantly complaining about her massive hangover from the drinking she did the night before. I couldn't find a reason for feeling like crap the morning after drinking a lot, either. While I realize that you don't need to drink to get drunk to have fun and that most don't, I still feel an aversion to drinking. Watching my classmates go crazy every weekend, I don't feel bad about myself socializing in an atypical way. Not all of my friends lose control every time, and while I try not to judge any of them for it, I just don't want to join in.

When I was the "girl from New Orleans" my first week at Scripps, it was assumed that I partied and drank all the time, though this was not the case. The first time I ever felt insecure about my habit of not drinking was one of the last evenings of orientation. I had decided to go to the Pomona dance with some friends. We stopped by the room of a friend's older brother to have some beer and loosen up before we actually went to the dance. A few minutes after we got there, my friend reached into the fridge and started pulling out beers for each of us. When she held one out for me, I shook my head, and she handed it off to someone else. There was no verbal peer pressure, no strange looks in my direction, nothing that should have made me feel uncomfortable about the situation I was in.

But I was. I was lonely. I felt awkward standing in that room with two empty hands shoved in my pockets with nothing to talk about. I was impatient to head over to the dance, and getting fed up after waiting for a few minutes, I went over by myself.

I know that most students don't care one way or the other about who drinks and who doesn't. But sometimes it can be a little awkward to be one of the few who doesn't. I have nothing against other people drinking. I really couldn't care less about what my friends' habits are, as long as they don't affect me directly. It's really a personal choice, and as long as his or her health isn't seriously affected, I won't try to stop friends from drinking. But sometimes, I feel like I'm less mature than my friends because I haven't had the same "adult" experiences that they've had. Though I've had more time here, it's still an issue that comes up. However, I've found a group of friends that does keep the drinking to a minimum when they do go out, which has helped me keep a more positive outlook on the ways I prefer spending my time. As I've spend more time with these friends, I've become less insecure about my differences. I'm perfectly content spending my Friday nights with my non-drinking friends watching *Buffy: The Vampire Slayer* over pizza. ■


NIC C

KILLING US SOFTLY:

A HIP-HOP FEMINIST'S QUEST FOR LOVE AND RESPECT WITHIN HIP-HOP CULTURE

By Daysha Edewi

I LOVE HIP-HOP AND I ALWAYS WILL. BUT I LOVE ME MORE.

She had this sparkle about her, like the way broken glass scintillates off the pavement. Was she beautiful? No. Her eyes sagged into her face like two potholes from all the ugly events she had witnessed in the world. Her hair, unkempt and scruffy, loomed over her gaunt-looking face, and her tattered t-shirt and '80s faded jeans dangled off her petite frame. Was she beautiful? No. But when she spoke, her voice caused bright red roses to bloom through the dirty cracks in the sidewalks of city streets. Did she need beauty? No. She had a voice, and boy did she know how to use it. What was her name? Hip-hop. And I have been in love with her for as long as I can remember. Hip-hop has wiped the tears off my cheek during my greatest moments of despair and has held my hand through my deepest fears. The love I have for her is unconditional, and she has made a huge contribution to the woman I am today. But over the past few years we have come to a crossroads in our relationship. She called it "artistic liberty," but there is something about hearing the word "bitches" and "hoes," and other negative female epithets multiple times that just does not seem so creative or artistic.

"I like a long-haired, thick redbone," rapper Dwayne "Lil' Wayne" Carter croons over the sensual beat of "Every Girl in the World" by the Young Money crew. As groups of young people bop their heads to the hypnotic beat, or clusters of females gyrate their hips to the smooth baritone voices of the Young Money crew and countless other rappers, the degrading and dehumanizing lyrics of today's rap artists towards women often brush against the ear without a second thought. Now what exactly is a redbone, you're probably wondering? The term refers to a "light skinned female/male mixed with black and another race." Seems harmless enough right? But when this "redbone" beauty ideal of straight hair and fair/racially ambiguous skin tones, also depicted as the "tragic mulatta" figure in T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting's book Pimp's Up Ho's Down, is perpetuated as the preferred type of beauty within hip-hop culture, it creates tension for the darker-hued, non-European looking female members of hip-hop. While chatting with a friend of mine about my qualms with the language and content of hip-hop favorites like

Kanye West or Jay-Z, she simply replied that "sometimes you have to tune out what they're saying and just enjoy the song for what it is."

Now hear me out, I know that all rap songs do not need to be about "enlightenment"; some rappers are just concerned about making a party hit. I know that the language of hip-hop is not "pretty," and that's cool because hip-hop developed from a very grim and oppressed part of America. But lately there has been no variation. Rappers have gotten lazy. It has become all about the money and less about the artistry and lyrical value nowadays, and we've all heard the timeless adage "sex sells." But why does the woman always have to be "a bitch" or "a ho"? There are real bitches and hoes in the world, but if those are the women that these songs are supposedly targeting, then why hasn't anyone taken the time to consider how that woman got to where she is?

In the *Black Entertainment Television* (BET) airtime special "Hip-hop vs America," a debate which collected all the voices and figures in hip-hop for a weigh-in on its current conditions, rapper Cornelius "Nelly" Hayes, who has received a lot of backlash recently for his controversial video "Tip Drill," proclaimed that hip-hop is helping these women by providing them with jobs and opportunities. Yet I don't think having a credit card swiped down one's behind is a resume-worthy skill. If Nelly really wanted to give these women an opportunity at success in their lives he would put them behind a desk instead of behind a camera.

In the song "Miss Me" by rapper Aubrey "Drake" Graham, he does not judge strippers but claims "I could never love her /'Cause to her I'm just a rapper /and she'll soon have met another." Here Drake depicts rappers as being victims to loose women who are only after their money and status, even though in the previous lines he praises strippers for being able to "work somethin[g] [and] twirk something." Yet many women of hip-hop are constantly being cornered into this dichotomy: to be a part of a culture that prizes women's ability to shake their hips in front of a camera, but then calls them unworthy and unlovable.

"The first step in getting out of an abusive relationship is to realize that you have the right to be treated with respect," describes Kidshealth.org. Hip-hop has never hit me and yet I still carry these bruises and cuts festering on my self-worth. As a young girl, I used to watch hip-hop videos and aspire to be like the women in the videos. They had it all: beauty, men, money…or so it seemed. But my hair didn't bounce the way theirs did, so I got a perm. Then I noticed my skin didn't glitter the way theirs did, so I tried to stay out of the sun to avoid getting darker. Hip-hop wanted a "redbone," but no matter how hard I tried to alter my appearance, I was never going to be that. But if hip-hop really loved me, she would write a song that accepts me and all the other beautiful, black, curly-haired women everywhere. I love hip-hop and I always will. But I love me more. We need to show rappers how much we love ourselves and urge them to be more creative with their lyrics and to accept us for who we are. Rappers, however, are not the only ones to blame. It takes two people to sell a record, and part of the reason why rappers are getting away with these lyrics is because we let them. Don't let them. Listen up and speak up because it won't be long until hip-hop sweeps away our sparkle on the dark and bleak city streets. ■

GIVING A VOICE TO THE MANIC PIXIE DREAM GIRL

By Emily Morris

"OF COURSE, MEN FIND THESE WOMEN UTTERLY BEWITCHING. AND WHY WOULDN'T THEY? THEY'RE THE UNATTAINABLE MUSES. THEY NEVER MAKE ANY DEMANDS; THEY NEVER NAG; THEY KEEP EVERYTHING OPERATING ON A LEVEL OF FANTASY."

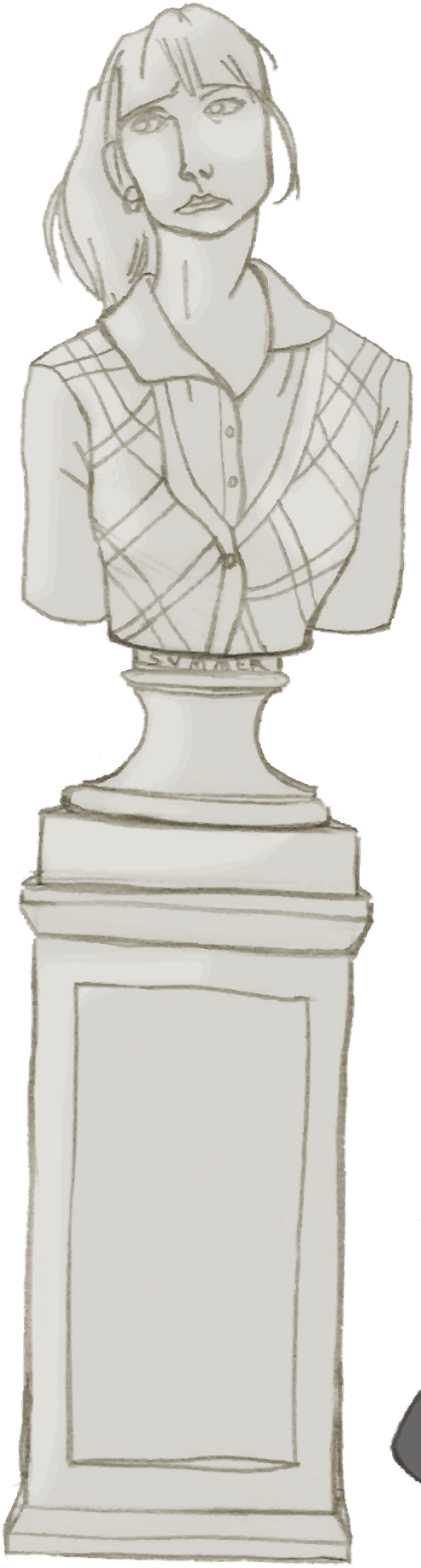
A disturbing parasite has wormed its way into the great indie-romance films of the last decade. Deceptively whimsical, whimsical, and exotic, this parasite is a woman — an overused, flat, and unrealistic depiction of a woman. Film critic Nathan Rabin coined the term in his review of the film *Elizabethtown*, writing that "the Manic Pixie Dream Girl exists solely in the fevered imaginations of sensitive writer-directors to teach broodingly soulful young men to embrace life and its infinite mysteries and adventures." In the film, Kirsten Dunst plays the love interest—a free-spirited, chatty airplane stewardess who provides the jolt of "life" Orlando Bloom's depressed, sensitive character needs to escape his gloom and aimlessness. And so the first contemporary Manic Pixie Dream Girl was born.

Why all the fuss? The Manic Pixie Dream Girl (MPDG) is only a passive character, the dream girl, while the male character actively experiences growth and change through his love or infatuation with this effervescent goddess. Doree Shafrir, a pop culture blogger for *The Daily Beast*, describes Summer, the love interest in *500 Days of Summer*, and other MPDGs as characters who "invariably serve as combination muse/object of obsession, usually allowing the guy in the equation to finally unlock his true creative impulses." Tom's experience with Summer inspires him to give up his unstimulating job as a greeting card writer and, instead, pursue his true love of architecture. She ends up being a tool to move the plot movement, rather than an actual character who has any meaning beyond her interaction with Tom.

Zach Braff, writer, director, and star of the semi-autobiographical film *Garden State* says the film is about "love, for lack of a better term. And it's a movie about awakening." Natalie Portman's character in the film, an epileptic free spirit, changes Zach Braff's character's life by inspiring him and supporting him to live a life without the medications he had been dependent on and by facilitating him to grow up. The MPDG is only a vessel for the male protagonist's ascent to greater understanding.

The MPDG is also exoticized; the protagonist wants to be with her because he wants to be with the type of person he perceives her to be, with certain whimsical and awesome attributes that will bring him pleasure. There is very rarely an exploration of her desires or wants. Most of the time, as in *500 Days of Summer*, Tom projects all of his desires on her based on his very limited interaction with and knowledge of her, and thus, throughout their relationship, he ignores the fact that she has indicated that she doesn't do relationships. When they ultimately break up over it, he acts shocked. While these films represent the infatuation that can accompany falling in love, they generally only feature the male perspective. Shafrir writes that "of course, men find these women utterly bewitching. And why wouldn't they? They're the unattainable muses. They never make any demands; they never nag; they keep everything operating on a level of fantasy."

Because one usually only sees the male protagonist's emotions, and events from his perspective of falling in love, the MPDG remains simply the object of affection, and is never a truly realized character. Staff writers at *Pajiba*, Dustin Rowles and TK, argue "that lack of character development was likely intentional — we're meant to



view the relationship from inside Tom Finn's mind, and one person's perspective never truly represents what's really going on in a relationship as a whole." While that may certainly be possible, it is so subtle that the audience may not register the "supposed" subversive nature of the character. And at the end of the film, the audience is given the indication that by falling for a girl named Autumn, he is beginning the cycle of a one-sided relationship.

The abundance of these passive, whimsical characters in independent films that paint themselves as progressive and racially and gender-friendly have a detrimental affect on women's self image. Watching these films can make female viewers feel inadequate because the MPDG is treated like an unattainable perfection, but at the same time doesn't resemble any realistic human being. These movies encourage women to turn themselves into someone resembling a Manic Pixie Dream Girl, in order to be worthy of being "loved," someone who seems unique but doesn't have desires or dreams that would burden the male lover's fantasy. Even worse, men may begin to expect women to act like MPDGs, and not like actual women who have ambitions, desires, and flaws.

Wouldn't it be refreshing for the film world, mainstream or indie, to finally produce a romantic comedy that, as Shafrir requests, is "about a woman who actually has opinions, who doesn't play hard to get, who articulates her hopes and dreams and expects her boyfriend to get excited about those too?"

Or, as she continues, "Is that too much to ask?" ■

THE NEXT STEP FOR EGYPTIAN WOMEN

By Ally Nkwocha

Hijabs of every color were heavily sprinkled throughout the crowds of protestors across Egypt during January and February of this year. Egypt's revolution has not only been limited to men; estimates have placed the percentage of female protestors on the streets of Cairo between 20 and 50 percent.

Protests in Egypt began January 25, inspired by the success of the Tunisian anti-government protests that began last December. The primary goals of the Egyptian movement were the immediate removal of Mubarak from office, the guarantee of democratic elections, and the end of extreme police corruption. On February 11, it was announced that Mubarak had officially resigned from the presidency. The movement has since entered a new, transitional phase as the Egyptians wait six months under the power of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces until the next election.

In recent years, women in Egypt have played a critical role in the ongoing fight against government corruption and social injustice. Israa Abdel Fattah, one of the founders of the 2008 April 6 Youth Movement, was arrested and detained for two weeks for her role in the movement. Regardless, she participated in this year's protests. Fatah and countless other women have remained committed to the cause of social change in Egypt, despite the difficulties and dangers posed by active participation in protests.

A primary danger women face in Egypt, whether participating in protests or not, is sexual harassment. A disturbing 2008 study done by the Egyptian Centre for Women's Rights states that 83 percent of Egyptian women experience sexual harassment, 62 percent of men admit to harassing women, and 53 percent of men blame the harassment on the women. The study also found that the majority of the women being harassed were modestly dressed and wearing hijabs.

Libby Kokemoor PO '12 spent fall semester 2010 studying at Egypt's Alexandria University. She recalled one of her female professors discussing her own participation in the protests: "It's amazing that I've been walking around protesting with so many men, so many people I don't know, and I've never felt so safe." From interviews with Egyptian protestors that have been released online,

it does indeed appear that harassment has been much less of an issue, and in some cases, completely absent. Kokemoor said, "The solidarity of protesting has really brought people together."

Though so many women have participated both online and actively in this revolution, the great majority of the images released to mainstream media sources show crowds of almost entirely men. In response to this severe lack of representation of women, a Facebook album called "Women of Egypt" was created by Egyptian woman Leil-Zahra Mortada. The women shown in the album are fighting not only for freedom from corruption, but also for gender equity.

Egyptian women have made huge efforts in terms of attaining their own rights in the past few years. In 2009, a law was passed that 64 seats in the Egyptian parliament would be designated for female candidates, putting the total female participation in parliament at 12 percent. Though the parliament is still male-dominated, the hope is that greater female participation will be a starting point for greater numbers of women in all areas of government. This victory was weakened in February 2010 by the Egyptian Council of State's decision that women could not serve as council judges. A protest ensued; however, this decision has not been repealed or overturned.

Hopefully, with a newly instated government with a new political stance, women in Egypt will be able to fight more effectively for their rights. In an interview with *Decomcracy NOW!,* Nawal El Saadawi, a renowned Egyptian feminist, sociologist, and doctor, said of the revolution, "We are calling for justice, freedom and equality, and real democracy, and a new constitution where there is no discrimination between men and women, no discrimination between Muslim and Christians, to change the system and to have real democracy."

Now that Mubarak has officially resigned, Egypt is at the beginning of a long road to change. Democratic elections will happen within the next few months, but the question remains: Who will follow Mubarak as president? Undoubtedly, a democratic election is a victory in itself, but in terms of women's rights, the outcome of this election is particularly crucial. A radical fundamentalist leader could easily set back relatively recent progress with more misogynistic policies and practices. On the other hand, a radical liberal could propel the women's movement forward at a speed much greater than was possible in the past under the basically unchanging regime of Mubarak.

Misogyny has a complex history in traditional Islam and remains a major issue in the Middle East as many other places in the world progress more rapidly toward gender equality. Women throughout the Middle East and many parts of Africa are at various stages in the same, slow struggle for positive changes toward equality with men. While basic rights, such as the power to vote, are beginning to be seen as more of a norm, others that are arguably more important, such as the ability to serve in government offices, are by no means standard.

This year's revolution is the symbolic beginning of a new chapter for Egypt and its women—though the process will be long, change of some kind is inevitable. Hopefully, progressive changes in the newly instated government will lead to and inspire positive changes in Egyptian women's rights. ■

WOMEN'S DRESS IN POLITICS

By Nikki Broderick

A BALANCE OF FEMININITY AND FORCE

In August of 2008, the United States geared up for arguably one of the most important presidential elections in history and also one of the most important primaries of the Democratic Party, with two unprecedented candidates: a woman, Hillary Clinton, and an African-American man, Barack Obama. While then current Democrats in office and constituents scrutinized both candidates' views on health reform, the war in Iraq, and the nation's economy, the media also analyzed a seemingly unimportant feature of the campaign—the different colors of Hillary Clinton's pantsuits.

On the campaign trail, popular television shows, such as *Saturday Night Live*, took every opportunity to display their revulsion at Clinton's style. However, after she was chosen as Secretary of State and became part of President Obama's presidential cabinet, the media has noticed what they deem a "style evolution" towards a more fashionable female poliician.As Secretary of State Clinton's evolution reaches more stylish results, the media focuses less and less on what she is wearing and more on what she is saying.

Across the aisle, journalists also dissected Republican vice presidential nominee Sarah Palin's style choices…right down to the supposedly $400 glasses she wore. In October 2008, The Huffington Post even reported that the GOP had spent over $150,000 accessorizing and dressing Sarah Palin and her family. Which leads to the question: Why is there the need for extravagant expenses and unrelenting media focus on an aspect of a candidate that has in no way the ability to predict the effectiveness of her or his ability to lead?

Fashion magazines and the American public have long paid attention to women in political leadership roles for style trends. There has always been pressure on women to exude an air of confidence, elegance, and style in the form of clothing choice, hairstyle, make-up and general appearance. More recently, the media pays attention to First Lady Michelle Obama and compares her trendsetting style and fashion to Jackie Kennedy. She has even inspired a book entitled *Everyday Icon: Michelle Obama and the Power of Style* by Kate Betts of Time magazine.

THE MEDIA HAS NOTICED WHAT THEY DEEM A "STYLE EVOLUTION" TOWARDS A MORE FASHIONABLE FEMALE POLITICIAN

Although the First Lady was not elected and has no official elected position or salary, she still stands in the limelight and often contributes to political activism. First Lady Obama has been criticized for her sometimes over-the-top outfits, but more often praised for her style transformation from a high-powered executive (before the election, Michelle Obama worked for the University of Chicago Hospitals as vice president for community and external affairs) to the relaxed yet elegant wife of the president, often wearing labels such as J.Crew or H&M to appeal to a broader demographic of women across America.

This concentration on style is rarely given to male politicians, whose uniform mainly consists of a suit and tie; understandably, there is not much room for criticism. The suits often have designer labels with expensive price tags, such as Armani or Dolce & Gabbana but no media commentary. Granted, there was the occasional comment on President Obama's purple tie during the 2011 State of the Union speech and its message for bipartisanship and the brief period before his presidency when he did not wear an American flag pin, but even that was more of a political assertion than a fashion statement.

However, the media did notice one outfit they considered a fashion faux pas of President Obama that even made the front page of The New York Post—wearing flip-flops on his winter vacation to Hawaii this past January. The tagline reads, "Should the leader of the Free World dress like this—even on vacation?" demonstrates focus on a moment when President Obama was not trying to pass a bill or keep the nation in order; he was simply spending time with his family. Coverage of such arbitrary details of a president's personal life shows the press's widespread obsession with politicians' dress.

Although the media's attention to dress in politics is overwhelming, it should be noted that more than their male counterparts, women in politics and in the public spotlight have to carefully choose their clothing in order to portray a perfectly balanced appearance showing strong leadership with femininity. Women politicians and leaders realize that even before they can start a speech, make a point in a debate, or even give a press conference, they will be judged on their appearance.

To a certain extent, the way one dresses in the political arena is important. A politician would not be taken seriously if she or he looked as if they had not taken the time to dress neatly. Haphazard or messy clothing indicates apathy for the matter at hand and a lack of respect for the audience.

Even beyond the political arena, women's dress for job interviews or in the workplace has a different standard. At Scripps College, an institution created for the equality of women's education, the Career Planning & Resources Office suggests that, "most interviewers surveyed preferred to see women in skirted suits. Pantsuits may be seen as too casual." Although skirted suits are conservative, Scripps, as well as other women, recognizes that the politics of dress dictate what is socially acceptable in the workplace, even if it creates a double standard.

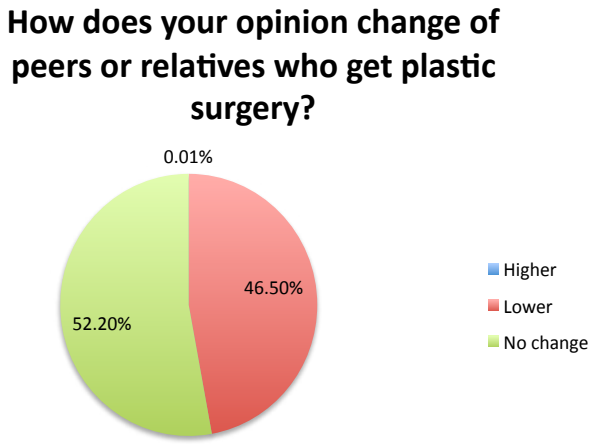
As of this writing, there are 17 women in the United States Senate, 78 women in the House of Representatives, and 6 female Governors in the United States. Although the number of women represented in public office is still not equal to that of men, perhaps cutting back the media focus on women politicians' dress, and that of politicians in general, will create a more equal atmosphere. ■

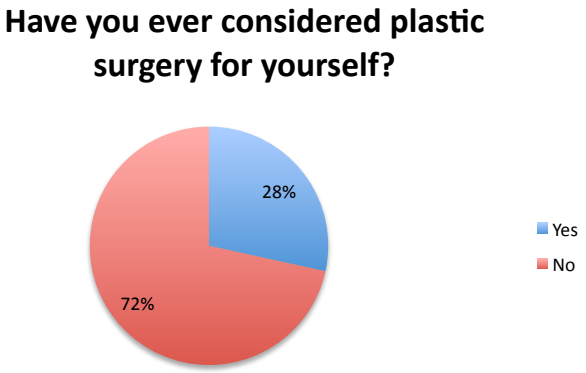
Plastic Surgery

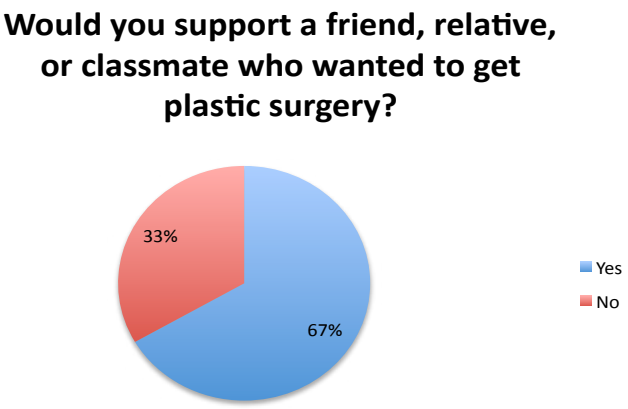
By Katie Evans

In a world where peer pressure and mass media rule, the self-image of young girls faces a constant onslaught. Peers and magazines give conflicting messages about what beauty is, and girls examine and sometimes even compare their bodies to those of classmates. Some stuff tissue in their bras, while others use baggy clothing to hide their chests. As women enter adulthood, or even before then, they are faced with a variety of options of how to view, appreciate, and even alter their bodies.

Plastic surgery is one of the most controversial—and complicated—beauty issues modern society faces. Many people seek these procedures for health reasons, such as receiving breast reductions to minimize back pain, but plastic surgery has received its infamy from those who desire it for cosmetic reasons. Over the years, networks have aired shows such as *The Swan, Bridalplasty, and I Want a Famous Face*, which glorify cosmetic surgery, and yet society responded with disgust when socialite Heidi Montag received ten procedures to achieve her "dream look." Gossip blogs are rampant with have-they-or-haven't-they? speculation, and "natural" beauty is often presented as superior to its man-made counterpart. With recent history in mind, why would someone choose cosmetic surgery? If it was a close friend, would you support them?

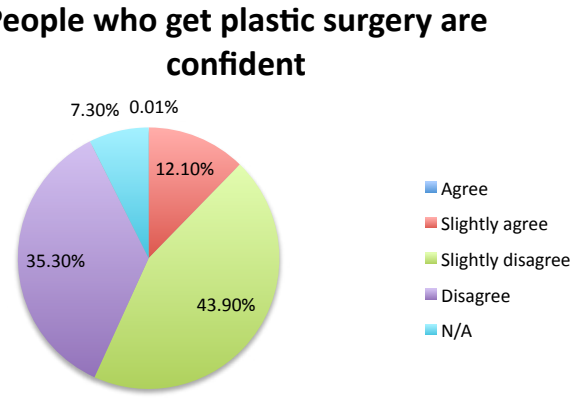


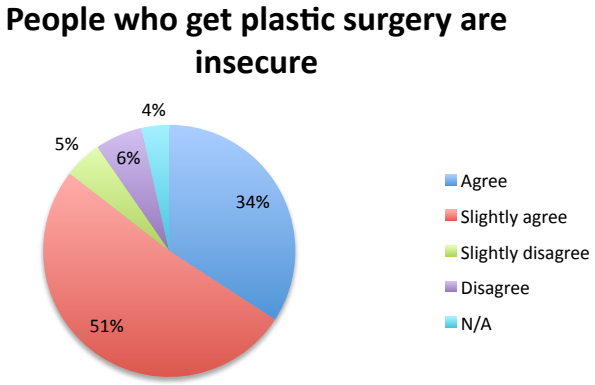




To answer these and other questions, [in]Visible Magazine surveyed 88 Scripps students in February 2011. Most students agreed that plastic surgery is acceptable for health reasons, but opinions varied on surgery for strictly cosmetic purposes. Responding students condemned surgery used to make people "more attractive" to potential partners. One student said that if someone wanted surgery for these reasons, "there's no reason to support it." Another gave a decidedly different opinion, writing, "I think everyone should have options to pursue bodily autonomy, and I've come to this position more and more definitively through conversations with trans people." Plastic surgery allows people, particularly scarred victims of accidents and transsexuals, the ability to feel "at home" in their own body. Through such procedures, people gain control over their appearance, a positive side not focused on by the public eye.

Despite its reputation, plastic surgery is an important development in modern science, which can produce very positive outcomes. Like all scientific procedures, however, its power is not to be abused.





Survey Participants: 88

SCRIPPS WOMEN TRANSCENDING TIME

By Victoria Davis

Within the corridors of Denison Library and seated beside the stone fireplace, time ceased to exist as Victoria Davis ‘14 interviewed Judy Harvey Sahak ‘64, the Sally Preston Swan Librarian at Denison, to learn more about the expectations and perspectives of past Scripps women.

During your time as a Scripps student, what kind of an impact did body image have on campus?

I heard rumors of a girl who would eat all of her dinner and then return to her dorm—we ate in our residence halls then—to throw it up in the bathroom. It seemed strange to me, to a lot of people. It was really the only instance—of deliberately throwing up to not get "fat"—that I had heard of as a student because there was not a huge emphasis on the body. [Today] girls go to gyms and work out. There is pressure to be healthy and fit. [When I was a student] I did sports and had P.E., but there wasn't the need to work out, slim down, and have a perfect body. Gyms? Prize fighters would go to gyms and bash their brains out. I wouldn't have gone to a gym, for heaven sakes. Constant exercise was not of importance to us.

How did food affect the idea of female body image for past Scripps women?

Food just wasn't a big deal. Today, in 2011, no two people have the same lunch or dinner. When I was a student, meals were served in individual residence halls. Everyone had the same thing. For dinner, you had your meat, salad, vegetables, and a starch. That was it. Now, there are so many choices and temptations. You go to [Malott] Commons, and there is so much variety: four options for soups, chicken, hamburgers, hot dogs, pizza, demonstrations, salads, stir fry, tofu—just all this food. I think there are so many issues that young women have today that we just didn't know. We didn't have the ubiquitousness of beautiful people everywhere you turn.

So past Scripps students weren't as concerned with the idea of a "perfect" body. Were students preoccupied with clothing styles or fashion trends?

In the early to mid '60s, what we wore was fairly conservative and restrained. There were rules. Clothes could not be revealing. We couldn't wear shorts unless we were in the residence halls or on our way to a P.E. class. We wore dresses to class. If we had dress-up parties, we wore our dress-up clothes. But we weren't even allowed to wear jeans to town. We were told what we could and couldn't wear. No one [could] ever lie in front of Toll Hall in a bikini.

Yes, we do like to soak up the sun. That reminds me of a stereotype I've heard about Scripps women: there are three "types" of Scrippsies; you have the very promiscuous Scrippsie, the social activist Scrippsie, and then the nerdy and studious Scrippsie. Were Scripps women stereotyped like this when you were a student?

As with all stereotypes, there was probably a bit of truth and a lot of legend in our images. Many Scrippsies were stereotyped by the residence hall they lived in. At Scripps, before there was the Hall Draw, students stayed in one dorm all four years, so I think that's why the residence halls carried their own "typical" personalities. Clark was where you could find the really good, serious, and studious students. Toll was sort of social, but the women were pretty well-rounded. A lot of Toll residents were daughters of alumnae. Browning? Now talk about social and sophisticated! Kimberly housed your all-American and studious Scrippsie—like me. And Dorsey was where you could find your very Bohemian kind of Scrippsie. Dorsey was where you could find someone who would whip out [a pair of] bongos and start banging.

That sounds like something a Pitzer student would do! How did Scripps students in the past interact with other campuses? Did you have party scenes like those that exist on campus today?

Pitzer didn't exist [when I was a student]. Back then there was nothing north of Foothill [Blvd.] but orange groves. On Friday afternoons, some Scripps students would go to the groves with students from CMC and Harvey Mudd to have small parties—TGIFs, thank goodness it's Friday! Of course there might be a keg there because the drinking mainly went on off campus. There was no drinking on campus. We did have organized hall parties and seasonal dances, but no large 5C college parties like today. If anything, at CMC a small group of guys would get together and drink, but it was never as huge a crowd of people. CMC had two types of guys: there were the jocks and then there were the cool preppy guys. Within those groups, friends would have parties and it was mainly the guys who [drank]. I know that sexual practices today are much more casual, but when I was a student, dating mostly consisted of two people going out, holding hands, and kissing. I'm sure women were sexually active: we heard of the occasional girl taking a semester off if she was pregnant—but it didn't happen a lot. In the days before abortion was legal, if you were pregnant you had an illegitimate child and your family would be mortified.

So women weren't very liberated sexually? What about a women's role as a member of society? What did Scripps women expect of themselves after graduation?

Many Scripps students felt lucky to get engaged before they graduated. Women hoped to get married soon after graduation. If they could get engaged, they were set for the rest of their lives. If they could get married a year or two years after graduating, they had made it. Well, that's just not true. It was so short-sighted. But my class didn't emphasize that. In 1963, with the publication of *The Feminine Mystique*, the role of women and who a woman was meant to be began to change. The 60s and 70s absolutely changed everything. Marriage was not a career anymore. I was part of an era where everything was changing: what we could wear, what we should eat, what we could communicate. With the Vietnam War and student unrest, it gave people a voice. It was very liberating. Women were liberated. When I was in my senior year, I knew a Scripps woman who was going to law school and another classmate was going off to medical school. Even I was seen as a bit offbeat going on to graduate school to be a librarian. It was very unusual. Not many women did this.

That must have been amazing to be a part of such a monumental time of change. What was it like being a Scripps woman during such a revolutionary era? How has such change in what defines a woman affected your life?

Old constraints and expectations were just thrown off. We could forge a new reality. Without rules, we didn't always know what to expect. It was a little more unsettling to create a voice for yourself. Many women found it a little scary, but it became a part of who you are. I believe the physical place [of Scripps] keeps you grounded. Today the campus is larger, the landscape is different, but it is still the same place. It's the one constant amongst all Scripps students that keeps you centered. I loved being a student at Scripps. Friendships, the community, and the beauty of the campus are amazing things to be exposed to during your education. When you go out into the world and you have to face the dirty grimy city streets, you can remember that there can be such beauty in the world.

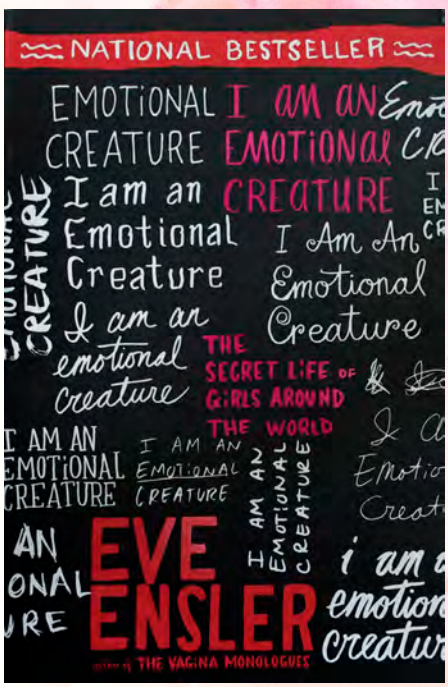
Just to publicize and give more awareness to the Denison Library resources: Can you tell me about the rare book collections?

We have rare collections of books, manuscripts, letters, [among many other primary documents] that are owned by Scripps College and are housed here in Denison. It is important that students use creative and original research avenues. Denison's goal is to integrate the rare collections into the curriculum: many Core III classes last semester, Core II classes, and even a senior writing her thesis have utilized the collections. [Though many of the collections are in the process of being made available online], the size of Scripps College truly gives students the opportunity to consult, investigate, and research closely such rare collections [at their fingertips]. ■

Go to the Denison page on the Scripps website to find out more. http://www.scrippscollege.edu/offices/denison/

I AM AN EMOTIONAL CREATURE:
ENSLER'S LATEST WORKS WRITTEN FOR TEENS

By Amy Borsuk



I AM AN EMOTIONAL CREATURE
The Secret Life of Girls Around the World
by Eve Ensler
192 pages. Villard.
$13.00

Simply put, Eve Ensler's latest book yells: teenage girls are people, not things. As she did with *Vagina Monologues*, Ensler interviewed women from various nations, documenting their sufferings, achievements, and strengths as the inspiration and foundation of the fictionalized monologues, poems and vignettes of *I am an Emotional Creature*. However, unlike Monologues, Ensler turned her attention solely to teenage girls aged from 13 to 15 years old.

As Ensler writes in her introduction: "I see how your lives get hijacked, how your opinions and desires get denied and undone. I see too how this later comes to determine so much of our lives as adults… This book is a call to question rather than to please." *I am an Emotional Creature* responds to the call for a young adult book that does not trivialize teenage girls, their mistakes, or their sufferings. It presents itself as a resource and a challenge for young women to be proud of their uniqueness, to take responsibility for embracing and celebrating their unique identity, and to resist the voices they hear that say that say women should not be who they wish to be.

Emotional Creature reminded me that the way teenage girls are portrayed does not give them respect or room to make mistakes. From the story of that girl in high school who sacrifices everything to fit in with the popular crowd to the story of a teenage girl in an abusive relationship to the sex slave in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ensler spreads her creative wings and lets these young women's stories take flight. The diversity of Ensler's entries only reinforces the fact that regardless of location and situation, teenage girls everywhere are struggling to survive.

Although I am technically still in my teen years, already I feel so distant from the stories that Ensler has told. Perhaps it is because I never felt the urge to ditch my friends and join the popular crowd, or perhaps it is because it has been several years since my last game of "Would you rather" that I thought that these stories were cliché, unrealistic. I fell into the very trap that Ensler warns her readers to avoid: the trap of believing that these stories are fake or invalid. I constantly needed to remind myself of the emotions that I felt as a 13-year-old; although I wasn't sporting Ugg Boots, I certainly was sporting pain from fighting alongside my brother as he battled and eventually defeated cancer. Just because my story did not show up in Ensler's work does not make these other forms of emotion less valid.

Although this book is a stronger tool for its target age range, it is still an important piece for all readers because it reminds us that not everyone fills the teenage girl archetype, but we all had and have our emotions. I too must respond to Ensler's wake-up call: "I am an emotional creature / I am connected to everything and everyone / …Don't you dare say all negative that it's a / teenage thing / …I am an emotional, devotional, / incandotional creature. / And I love, hear me, / love love love / being a girl." This call is for every woman, regardless of whether or not her story was put on print. The book is a conversation-starter, or a spark for thought. It is a challenge to think of all of the struggles young women have and to recognize that these feelings make us women and make us strong. ■

PUTTING GENDER IN THE VAGINA:

THE VAGINA MONOLOGUES ON THE 5CS

By Amy Borsuk

A feminist movement that uses theatre as its vessel for discussion is an exciting, fresh way to introduce people on the 5Cs, regardless of gender, to the importance of being comfortable in one's own body. The V-Day Claremont Club's production of *The Vagina Monologues* by Eve Ensler that will be performed this April strives to be this movement. *The Vagina Monologues* is a compilation of monologues that uniquely and diversely explore what it means to embrace womanhood. They strive to express the sufferings, accomplishments, fears, discoveries and celebrations of love that women experience. The V-Day Claremont club on the 5Cs has been hosting a performance of *TVM* for several years and this year, co-directors Angie Moore (PZ '13) and Devin Grenley SCR'13 and co-producers Holly Underhill SCR '13 and Sara Berge SCR '13 are celebrating and challenging what it means to be a woman.

"It's not just a show, it's a movement"

This production is first and foremost an opportunity to explore femininity and gender. "[T]his is about activism, not acting," Sara Berge said. "We want to reach the masses, really impact the 5C community."

The producers first want to reach out to their cast and make the production experience memorable through empowerment. "It's not just a show, it's a movement," said Angie Moore. The goal is to become "more empowered human beings in this process and realize the power of our own voice." For this production, gender identity is the lens through which the cast and crew will explore this power.

"The history of *TVM* and feminism is a white, straight history," Moore said. "Eve Ensler has outlets for breaking from that, but it feels more tokenizing [towards women of color, queer women]." As a result, the show limits not only its topics but its potential to be a wonderful opportunity for discussing feminist issues and empowering all women to be proud of their identity. This spring's production of TVM aims to break from the traditional production of TVM that tokenizes and generalizes the image of "woman" by including a monologue for transwomen that intimately and poignantly reveals the pain and oppression transwomen face from a society that does not necessarily understand what it means to have a gender identity that is different from one's biological sex.

Including the transwoman's monologue is a unique decision — one that I am particularly thrilled about. The concept of gender as an identity separate from sex is something that is complex and potentially frightening because it forces people to confront what it means to be a woman or a man not just in society, but for the individual. Through the oppression that transwomen have faced, we too are made to ask, "Why are we afraid of gender?" We are made to see gender as a form of identity that we can change by ourselves, and that powerful self-awareness and acceptance is beautiful.

Throughout the production, directors and producers are faced with the challenge of making gender visible. During auditions, actors were asked to give their preferred gender pronoun ("he", "she", "ze", "they", etc.). During the first meeting with the full cast and crew, everyone participated in discussions that raised questions about personal identity and gender identity. With questions such as, "When did you first think about your gender identity?" and "Describe a time when you felt disempowered or voiceless," the producers and directors have helped the cast to think about what it means to be a woman and to use that individual identity to create a stronger, more confident woman on the stage and off. This identity of "woman" may not be the same for all cast members, but it is important, as Berge said, "to meet people where they are" and to nurture each identity so that it may grow in a way that makes each woman feel strong and proud of herself. As a result, the cast will build a cohesive group through its unique experiences and ideas.

Just by sitting in on the production's first meeting in February, I felt like I was part of this movement. Although I have heard *TVM* many times before, learning that this production is more about the people in the show and in the audience rather than the show itself automatically made me feel included in these monologues.I could imagine myself sharing my own monologue, or working out how my monologue would be similar to the ones being performed. We were no longer acting out the show, but embodying it. Becoming that woman who is proud to ask, "What does it mean to be 'me'?" is a long, possibly never-ending process, but this show and those who become part of it will definitely be given the strength to ask that same question. ■

FOCUS ON THE FITNESS CENTER

by Nikki Broderick

I know the feeling when you take one look at the weight room, see the complex machines, and immediately back away toward the treadmills and ellipticals. [in]Visible magazine headed over to the Sallie Tiernan Fieldhouse to see what's really inside and showcase some of the machines that you may never have tried. We also learned that there's more to the gym than working out—workout videos, bikes, headphones, skateboards, sports equipment, and iPods are available for check out. The Fieldhouse also works together with Monsour Counseling and Psychological Services with classes to support mental health as well, holding different workshops and training sessions providing a healthy body and mind.

Cardio Wavetrainer

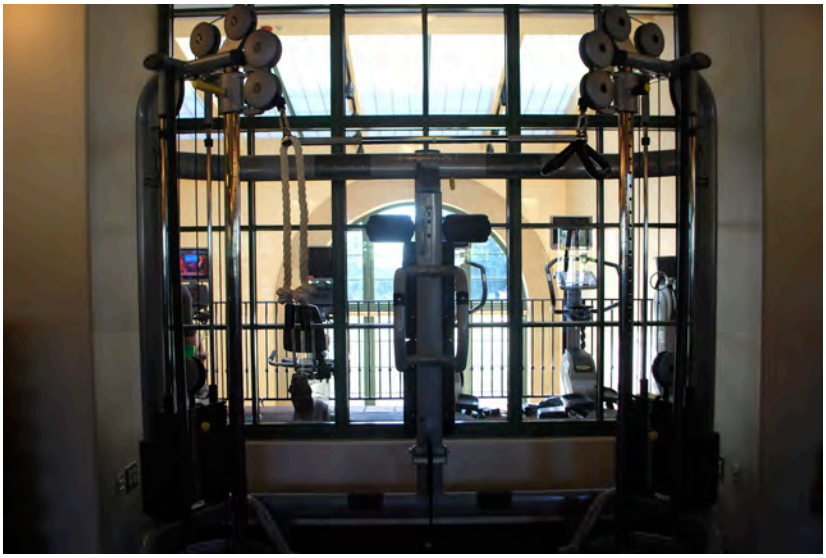
With four varying levels of difficulty, the cardio wavetrainer isolates the glutes and thighs.

Position 1: Grip the top of the bars, keeping your center of gravity. Glide from side to side, trying to keep only one leg moving at a time.
Position 2: Grip the middle of the handles, again keeping only one leg gliding at a time and focusing on a center of gravity to stay balanced, tightening your abs.
Position 3: Grip the lowest part of the bars and lean over, almost looking down.
Position 4: No hands on the bars. This is the hardest position, because this also works your abs to keep balanced while working your glutes and inner and outer thighs.

Multi-Hip

This machine looks complicated at first sight, but gives you three different ways to strengthen your hips, glutes, inside and outside of the thighs, and your hip flexor.

Position 1: Stand on the black platform and use the inside of your thigh to move the weight across your body. Make sure not to twist your back and stand straight. Switch legs to keep your exercise balanced.
Position 2: Stand on the black platform, this time using the outside of your thigh to move the weight away from your body. Again, maintain good posture and keep your back straight. Make sure to use both your legs.
Position 3: Facing the mirror, put your leg over the weight and push behind you, almost like riding a bike. Use the handrails to maintain balance, but be sure to use your leg muscles for the exercise.



Radiant
The radiant is the ultimate machine—you can do some chin-ups, and strengthen your triceps, biceps, and shoulders with the pull bar. The radiant also has a pull down bench to do some old-fashioned crunches.

Leg Curl (left)
The Leg Curl helps tone and strengthen your quads, hamstrings, and upper legs. Make sure you adjust the machine properly: your knee should align with the circular knob on the crank on the right hand side, and the padded bar should rest slightly above your knee. With your leg extended, your ankle shouldn't be pulling all the weight—let your legs do the work. Make sure to maintain good posture to take tension off the lower back!

Rotary Torso (right)
So, it sort of feels like you're in a roller-coaster. Grip your thighs around the middle post tightly, focusing on your abs. Keeping good posture, twist from side to side. For more advanced users, rotate post completely to the right or left and only twist to one side for a greater range of motion.

Class Schedule
Aqua Fitness—Saturdays 12:30pm-1:30pm
Body Fusion—Tuesdays and Thursdays, 6:15pm-7:15pm
Kickboxing—Tuesdays and Thursdays, 7:30pm-8:30pm
Pilates—Mondays and Wednesdays, 5:30pm-6:30pm
Yoga—Tuesdays and Thursdays, 5:00pm-6:00pm
Yoga Flow—Sundays, 8:00pm-9:00pm
Zumba—Mondays and Wednesdays, 8:00pm-9:00pm

AT A GLANCE

by Yasmine Acheampong

What is your name?
Kopano Ramsay

Country of origin?
Botswana

What is your perspective on beauty? And how has it been developed?
My friends taught me that true beauty is compassion, generosity, and kind heartedness. I guess you could say that Western media has taught me that a beautiful woman has a well-shaped body and a cute face. Personally, I think physical beauty varies: all sizes and skin tones are beautiful.

How are women viewed in your country?
The consensus on a woman's role has undergone a lot of changes in Botswana. In a lot of towns, women are still expected to be able to do domestic work — cook, clean and take care of the kids. However, in addition to that many people expect women to do just as well as guys: succeed in school and have successful careers. We have a number of female figures in Botswana who work in male-dominated fields. In fact, women who are a part of government are nicknamed "brave souls." I guess the ideal Bostwanan woman is one who can successfully juggle a career and adequately take care of her home.

Do female celebrities in your country conform to Western standards?
Everybody in my country conforms to western standards — the coolest thing to do is rap and beat-box and the clothes we wear are very Western. Sometimes, designers and musicians try to incorporate Africa-inspired style into clothing and music, respectively. Unfortunately, there are barely any female celebrities, but if there were I am certain they would conform to Western standards.

How do you think beauty can be shown through your actions?
A truly beautiful person has a truly irresistible personality: compassionate, empathetic, patient, and friendly. You know that stuff that makes you want to be someone's friend!

What is your name?
Sanggeet Mithra Manirajah

Country of origin?
Malaysia

What is your perspective on beauty? And how has it been developed?
Beauty is tied to how a woman carries herself, and not so much her physical attributes. When I was younger, my perception on beauty was defined by my family and Indian culture in particular. I bought into the notion that lighter-skinned people are more beautiful than dark-skinned persons. However growing up I have formed my own perceptions on beauty, and I feel that they are more thought-out and informed.

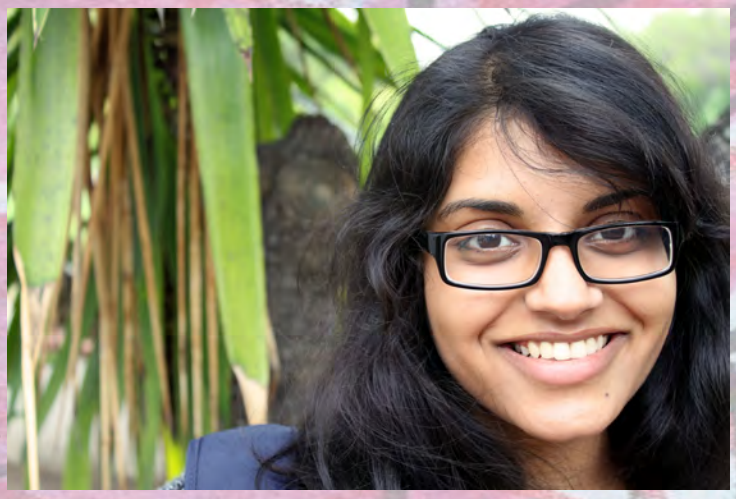
How are women viewed in your country?
Malaysian women are expected to meet both family and cultural expectations. Women have to be nurturers and provide moral support for the family. They are also expected to be the homemakers, taking on all domestic duties while the male provides for his family. Fortunately, the notion that women can only be stay-home mums is definitely changing as more women are pursuing higher education and successful careers. Very soon, the ideal woman will no longer be the domestic goddess.

Do female celebrities in your country conform to Western or local standards?
A majority of the celebrities are very Western in their music genres and sense of fashion. However, they do have to respect cultural norms such as dressing up modestly and not showing too much skin.

How do you think beauty can be shown through your actions?
I firmly believe that a woman's true beauty can only radiate through her actions: how she treats others and most important how she carries herself in the presence of others. A woman is truly beautiful when she loves everything about herself, is comfortable in her own skin and is not afraid to share her talents with those around her.

What is your name?
Shravani Bobde

Country of origin?
India



What is your perspective on beauty? And how has it been developed?
I definitely think beauty is an inner thing. My interactions with different people have made me realize that beauty boils down to what the person is on the inside. Beautiful people are sincere people who show love and generosity to those around them. Beauty is not what you look like on the outside: you are only truly beautiful if you treat others like you would like to be treated.

How are women viewed in your country?
In the past, Indian women were perceived as individuals only capable of managing domestic affairs. However, with the advent of higher education several Indian women are pursuing higher education, and many of them are definitely rubbing shoulders with me — some gaining even greater heights. The perception of women in India has definitely changed for the better.

Do female celebrities in your country conform to Western or local standards?
A lot of the celebrities are very western in their music genres and sense of fashion. I feel it may be because they want to appeal to a wider audience. Though, female celebrities are veering towards Western style, they do well to respect Indian culture by dressing modestly.

How do you think beauty can be shown through your actions?
As I said earlier, you are only truly beautiful if your personality is radiant and you are full of love for others. In that vein, I believe beauty can be shown outwardly through respect for others, kindness, generosity, and tons of love.

“The essential is invisible to the eyes.”
-Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, *The Little Prince*