

AP Literature Pieces

2020-2021

Ramparts

by Emme Richards

Here is where the world fell low --
obliteration by peace's battle call,
five-hundred-twenty miles from Bordeaux.

Pecking among stones is a lonely Belgian crow.
"Who were you?" ask I, from McCall.
He does not answer; I will never know.

Perhaps his voice was silenced years ago
in some global brawl.
His voice box muted under frigid snow.

Wicked was the arméd foe.
Just as evil as the great war's drawl.
To each his own. So was the crow.

I stand up to go.
I do not belong here at all;
here among dead when I have life to tow.

Looking back at the desolate crow,
I ponder his downfall.
Visiting, he hops between stones, row on row,
and I observe the poppies blow.

Imperious

by Jaeda Moyer

Oh fire,
inspiring others; from
primordial beings to multi-generation millennials.
Your fury, ignited by the caretaker of deceased souls,
mocks as enemies dance round you.
Power too strong to contain
scorches enemies with a
single –
flick.

Oh fire,
your dictatorship lights
trenches built round. Your presence implies war,
with ammunition eager to spit on the enemy.
No competitor surrenders
without a branding

Snowflake

by Emme Richards

What is society?
Prevailing majority rule?
Belonging to notoriety?
One wants not to be a fool,
but concluding it as a curse,
makes one a fool.

This mankind one sees as adverse,
is nurtured from the past
ideas humanity looks upon in old-timey verse.
Society is not true society, which one has cast
in the role of a foe.
Such ideas never last.

Think solo,
think different,
think everyone as below.
Do not think a whole belligerent;
common thought is likelihood.
Know the past is simply precedent.

Metamorphic

by Jaeda Moyer

Smooth and alert,
a jade stone stands
alone.
Embodied in luck and hope,
complacent,
resting in peace.
Balance
is essential to combat
pressing forces.
Child-like innocence
touches all polished surfaces:
protecting interiors from trauma.

Learning by example from this
Master of Zen, core values
within ignore
sharp strikes, attempting
to break --
my sturdy exterior.

or dusty lungs,
broken and
scarred.

Oh fire,
bored by soft
competition, wisps of smoke rise like magicians,
keeping tricks disguised while ashes fall.
Grey smoke whispers into
followers' ears:
the dominance
you seek to
prevail.

Beauty remains
a gentle reminder: gemstones
are
classified as rock:
unbreakable,
durable,
built to outlast
even the most trying conditions.

A Modest Proposal

by Jaeda Moyer

It sickens my heart to see streets overcrowded with men, women, and children who possess no basic resources. Between 703 and 729 million people are expected to be in extreme poverty by 2021.¹ These chronically-poor people need some form of aid to survive. A newborn infant may starve from a lack of food or mothers may be forced to sell their bodies to make some source of income. Families across the world are stealing, begging, or dying due to such drastic living conditions. Without work, humans cannot break away from their poor lifestyles.

According to *Live Science*, many scientists believe that Earth has a carrying capacity of approximately nine to ten billion people.² By the year 2035, the population will supposedly reach this limit.³ It is in the world's best interest to create solutions to this impending problem in the next fourteen years. A failure to take care of this situation will result in more people existing, or dying, in terrible living conditions.

Although pollution may be the cause of extreme global problems in the future, pollution may be the solution to poverty. In the ocean alone, there are about 5.25 trillion pieces of trash.⁴ Scientists have concerns about the effects on all wildlife from pollution. An increase of chemicals such as nitrogen and phosphorous spawn more algae blooms, which can be toxic to wildlife, domesticated animals, and humans.⁵ Seventy-five percent of carbon monoxide pollution is caused by motor vehicles alone.⁶ While statistics such as these seem to point a finger of blame at humanity, the key to solving the world's problems is right in front of our eyes. If every individual does his part to fix the initial problem, we can make the world a better place.

My humble proposal is that humans should simply create as much pollution as possible.

Instead of 50 billion plastic water bottles being used a year,⁷ manufacturers should double their outputs to create more landfill, which would increase pollution in all areas of the world. Approximately 485,000 diarrheal deaths occur each year from contaminated water.⁸ This small number of deaths could increase potential resources for individuals who are stuck in poverty. By decreasing the human population in a natural way, those who stay alive may become healthier due to these increased available resources. Some may argue that this practice is cruel, but Charles Darwin's theory on natural selection never hurt anyone.

If we emit more pollutants from transportation, the resulting naturally occurring disasters could wipe out cities as a whole instead of picking off individuals one by one! Single-handedly, the Haiti earthquake in 2010 killed up to 316,000 people. Think of all the extra resources the developing world could access after depleting its overcrowded slum populations as a result of super hurricanes, tornados, and tsunamis caused by climate change.

Someone might suggest that this carefully orchestrated plan could get out of control, and wipe out the whole planet instead of merely millions of individuals. First of all, before the human race would actually be completely destroyed, a large plethora of resources would become available to figure out how to escape to another planet. Secondly, if worst comes to worst, dying as a united humanity would be better than dying separately at different times. I doubt the latter would even happen, anyway. Because of the resources we already utilize, the human race should already be extinct by now.

A population struggling to survive climate disaster would simply turn into well-nourished survivors. The sacrificed would be martyrs as ones who saved the Earth. The strongest individuals will continue to live and breed stronger babies. Healthy living studs would arise to create the ultimate human population. A better human race is the natural result of demolishing the weak.

I am open to different suggestions for solving this growing problem, if one is easier and more enjoyable. Tackling overpopulation is really simple and fun. Humans would at last unite to do their part, polluting the Earth in order to obtain our common goal. I do not think anyone could form a solution as natural as overwhelming natural disasters, or as entertaining as spontaneous natural selection.

I am unbiased towards this idea because I, myself, am adopted. My own existence has not impacted the overpopulation in the least. Due to China's single child law, I was taken into a family in place of their having children of their own. I simply suggest this plan as a way to help strengthen the world's population in the future by optimizing the best genes. Together, as a whole, we can pollute to foment natural processes that decrease humanity's life expectancy, raise the level of consumer consumption and fun in the world, and spawn the future master race.

Endnotes

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A Tolerable Proposition

by Emme Richards

In past months, the word "hype" has found its way into the vocabulary of many young Americans. Consequently, an urban variation, "hypeism" has become the go-to word among teenagers to describe anything that merits publicity. HYPISM, an acronym created by a gaggle of teenagers on Reddit, is a clever pun on the modern high schooler's view of several elite institutions that have long been fawned over by influencers such as Hamilton and Zuckerberg. HYPISM, standing for Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Stanford, and M.I.T., have respectively seen record numbers of applicants this year. Fifty years ago, the acceptance rate for Harvard was 20%. Fast forward to 2021, Harvard is touting an admissions rate of 3.4% for the class of 2025. The hype surrounding HYPISM comes mainly from societal expectations.

All parents dream of telling Karen from the P.T.A. that their child, yes *their child*, was one of a whopping six teenagers in the country to get into Harvard. Gaining admittance to one of these elite institutions is a near-impossible feat. Unless one is a first-generation, low-income, minority student who overcame adversity through creating a startup that raised half-a-million dollars to fund her very own non-profit to cure cancer in children (which she herself discovered through a research internship with a top hospital), while somehow still maintaining a 4.1 unweighted GPA and scoring 37 on the ACT, there is virtually no chance of assuring one will receive that glorious "Congratulations!" in the early days of April. So, every student with such credentials and her foot in the door of a select work force *still* believes she needs an elite education to create personal value in the eyes of admissions officers.

As acceptance rates in schools across the nation continue to plummet and expectations soar, society must take action to assure that everyone receives an elite education. I would like to suggest a small adjustment: switch the progression of schooling from starting with kindergarten and ending with college, to beginning with college and completing kindergarten at twenty-two. As the most successful students must show that they are worthy of attending college by exhibiting how they don't need college in the first place, why not begin post-secondary education at the ripe age of five?

Toddlers will begin by taking a test that determines their life success. The current education system already does this through the SAT and ACT, so no one should be appalled by my proposition. This test determines which toddlers will attend what schools. Testing at this age will eliminate the idea of "elite" institutions because five-year-olds don't care whether or not they get into Harvard, Yale, or Walla Walla Community College, unless their parents chant, "You must get into Harvard," every day after birth. Kindergarten-aged college students will have two years to decide what they want to do with their lives before being forced to commit themselves to their majors. Elite institutions will send their fledglings to jobs doing grunt work for Goldman Sachs

and other conglomerate giants, so they can quickly realize they despise such work and can go into the arts. Stuck in the past, these companies still see HYPISM as a positive elite marker. Over time, these companies will realize that one does not need to be from HYPISM to be a stellar Thursday coffee-fetcher, thus eliminating “elite” cravings from every branch of society. Students at community colleges will be encouraged to do whatever they want because their professors don’t get paid enough to care.

After attending college until the age of nine and entering the workforce for some thirty-odd years, students will attend high school. Here, as they enter their midlife crisis, they can discover how to form meaningful relationships through tame daily interactions. The very basics of their job sectors will emerge in the rudimentary principles high school offers. After four years of learning to socialize properly, students will be sent to middle school, where forty-something students will be given the opportunity to try many subjects. No careers matter here, where all are encouraged to ponder areas that pique their interest. After three years of middle school, students will move on to elementary school where they will receive a general education diluted to manageable difficulty levels, because as they approach retirement age, nothing should be harder than it need be. After five years, students will move on to kindergarten, where retirees get to take much needed naps and snack breaks between learning to read literature with attractive pictures or selections that are not a textbook or mathematical equation.

My proposition will also have economic benefits. Although household incomes have remained relatively stagnant, the price of college has increased nearly 400% in the last thirty years. Everyone is getting an education nowadays: a college degree is a requirement for most employees. Elite private institutions often demand the highest prices, reaching up to nearly \$80,000 a year for tuition and room and board. If only select students are destined to attend these colleges, the colleges must meet every need of parents, no matter how poor or rich they are. Thus colleges will have to hand over money from their larger-than-life endowments, invest in their five-year-old students, and simply hope they ultimately give something back. By weeding out talented toddlers, parents will avoid the strife of paying for college applications, of financing titanic loans, and overall, of contributing to a bubble destined to burst.

Some people may argue that students should continue applying to college in their late teenage years. However, teenagers are incredibly immature, and often have not had enough life experience to figure out what they want to do with the rest of their lives, often resulting in throwing away thousands of dollars for an unnecessary education. For example, a student thinks he wants to be an engineer and attends Caltech for three semesters before realizing that he finds more fulfillment in working as a barista at his work study (which he must do to offset the crippling debt he is going to face). He drops out of school and opens his own little café in the middle of nowhere Oregon. But he is happy. By instating my proposal, adults can go through life without the burden of college debt. Furthermore, they will appreciate the simple wonders more. Teens cannot currently stop and smell the roses or enjoy their youth under their piles of calculus homework and having to fake water polo pictures with Rick Singer.

This proposition is created purely out of the concern I have for future generations. It does not benefit me in anyway, as I have already applied and committed to a college that will put me in insurmountable debt. I hope society sees the benefit in my system. It will eliminate the pressure behind HYPISM, create a youthful and specialized workforce, assure that everyone receives an education, and provide a satisfying change to people in mid-life. Of course, it adheres to society’s notion that excelling in education is far more important than nurturing necessary life skills that everyone needs. My system simply takes the pressure off teenage students to foster both socialization and working skills while filling up the rest of their free time with a copious number of clubs, internships, and sports. Transitioning to this method of education will be a challenge, but then again, the American education system has never been uncomplicated.