

Introduction

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This issue of *The York Scholar* is particularly notable for the range of topics considered by the student researchers: cancer treatment, homosexual adoption, and the environmental effects of meat consumption. Each of their papers displays the elements we emphasize in Writing 300 courses: broad and deep research, insightful analysis, critical engagement, and proficient writing. These are writing and research skills the faculty of Writing 300 courses work hard to develop in their students. But writing a good research paper requires more than a mastery of these skills; it also requires the persistence that can only grow out of fascination. The excellent essays these students have written are driven by the interests and passions they bring to their topics.

The first, “The Role of Gene Therapy in Cancer Treatment,” by Rehan Mujahid, examines the latest research on how to treat cancer cells. Mujahid lucidly explains how cancer cells develop and considers the ways that gene therapy can be used to target these cells at different points in their growth cycles. The paper describes the various approaches gene therapy takes, including killing cancerous cells directly, and even repairing the flaws within their genes. Pointing out that chemotherapy and radiation are blunt instruments in the fight against cancer, he explains how gene therapy can provide more targeted treatment and avoid many of the side effects associated with current cancer therapies.

The second paper, “Homosexual Adoption and the Law,” by Patricia Brown, focuses on homosexual adoption, a social issue of increasing relevance. Brown outlines the current legal situation for gays seeking to adopt, explaining that the laws vary greatly by state. While some permit homosexual adoption, a few prohibit it because of a belief that homosexual parenting can damage children. Examining the research on homosexual parenting, she finds there is no evidence that children raised by homosexual parents grow up any differently—or any worse off—than children raised by heterosexual parents. Having found evidence that a bias against gay parenting persists in the judicial system, she calls for changes in the law to grant homosexuals the same adoption rights that heterosexuals already possess.

In the third paper, Adrianna Riolo-Mason tackles an issue that bridges health and environmental concerns. In “Cutting Meat Out of Our Diets,” Riolo-Mason discusses the environmental and health impact

of factory-farmed meat, showing that the practices many large farms engage in pollute water and damage land. After exposing the cruelty involved in many of the routine methods of raising and slaughtering livestock, she implores animal activists to band together to educate the public with the aim of minimizing both animal suffering and environmental damage.

These three students do much more than bring together extant knowledge on a specific topic. Their writing invites us to consider the important social, environmental, and scientific implications of their research. And while these students' papers are exceptional examples of inquiry-driven research, they exemplify much of what is at the core of the Writing 300 courses. We know from our experiences using the previous volumes of *The York Scholar* in our Writing 300 classes that these essays can serve as models, provide inspiration, and lead to deep conversations with students about the use of sources and writing techniques. We hope these essays will inspire discussion among both faculty and students throughout the college about the work currently being done by our students and the heights we would like to help them reach in the future.

The art featured on the cover of this issue is a piece by Travis Harris. We selected this piece because of the creativity and dynamic energy we see represented by the break dancers. We also like the way the artist chose to push one of the dancers to the edge of the canvas, particularly because it suggests a breaking of boundaries. Mr. Harris's art is featured in the Spring 2010 student art show and is currently on display in the art gallery on the first floor of the Atrium.

In this second issue of volume six we continue the still-new editorial policy of working closely with the students to revise and copy-edit their manuscripts. We were particularly pleased with the seriousness with which many of the students tackled this process. Although many of them were in the middle of work for their other courses, they made the time to respond to demanding editorial requests, fully engaging in the revision process in order to refine and polish their work.

The support of the York community is key to the publication of *The York Scholar*. Many thanks are due to: the Office of Academic Affairs, The Auxiliary Enterprises Corporation, York College Printing Services, the Web Team, and the faculty and staff of The College-Wide Writing Program. Most importantly, we thank all of the students who submitted their work for consideration; it is only thanks to their efforts and their willingness to expose their work to editorial judgment that we have papers to publish. We hope current and future students in the Writing 300 courses will be equally inspired to submit their work.