

WHEN LANGUAGES COLLIDE

In this final section, authors explore what happens when languages collide. Each essay examines competing ways of talking about ideas, and then explores the impact of these discursive collisions on our perception of the ideas.

Consider, as Jerome Tognoli does, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*. When the tornado drops Dorothy, Toto, and the house in which they have been spinning, the house collides literally with the ground. In “A House Collides in the Land of Oz: The Search for Home and Identity,” Tognoli suggests that the house collides, too, with itself. Using the languages of film, literature, psychology, trauma, and psychotherapy, Tognoli shows that the collision, and the subsequent repair and integration of “home” and “identity” in Oz, provide rich therapeutic ground for the integration of home and identity in individuals.

“[I]mmobility in movement ceased recreated reinvented,” writes poet Ann-Marie Alonzo, a former dancer confined in a wheelchair who refuses the language of “paralysis.” In “Aesthetic Collisions: Dialogues in Dance and Poetry,” Cara Gargano illuminates conversions in language: Alonzo’s writing as dance, and Alonzo’s collaborator Margie Gillis’ dance as writing. Investigating diction—“static,” “fixed,” “feeling,” “thinking,” “rhetoric,” “ductus,”—and the evolution of “composition,” Gargano traces the history of the body as a figure of language, and alerts us to a collaboration in two languages that gives birth to a third, new language.

In “All Begin Guy Walks into a Bar,” Belinda Kremer and Angela Pisano collide multiple languages and genres: graphic arts, the written word, photography, poetry, the joke, narrative. Manifesting collision as a purely positive property, their text articulates each language or genre unto itself, and as part of a larger whole—not collage, not pastiche, not a sampler; cohesive, and energized by its supposedly disparate parts.

In “What’s She Talking About?: Post-Feminist Notes on Sexist Grammar,” Edmund Miller describes not an energizing but a destructive collision. Investigating the forceful impact between some existing and some emergent ideas about gender in language, Miller makes the case that the use of gender-free language is unnecessary, illogical, and even harmful to language itself. Forthrightly and with certainty, in an argumentative style many readers relish, he argues that the use of gender-free language “arbitrarily and often awkwardly circumscribe[s] a writer’s resources without addressing any real issues in sexual politics.”