



THE PENNINGTON SCHOOL

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PENNINGTON, N.J., March 20, 2024—Pennington Senior’s Research Paper Chosen for Publication in *The Concord Review*

The Pennington School is pleased to announce that one of its senior students, Shinyi Li, of Pennington, NJ, will have a research paper published in the spring 2024 edition of the prestigious publication, *The Concord Review*.

Over a year earlier, the Pennington senior had wrapped up a 6,000+ word research paper, entitled “From Folktales to Fairy Tales: The Grimm Brothers’ Motivations” for an honors thesis seminar course. This January, Li received word that her paper had been accepted for publication. *The Concord Review (TCR)* is the only quarterly journal in the world that publishes secondary student’s academic research papers—and it accepts a mere 5% of the thousands of essays they receive each year.

Li was initially inspired to focus on fairy tales after remembering a collection of tales she had read in elementary school from the Grimm brothers. “Their versions were violent, devoid of magical elements, and nothing like the Disney films I had seen,” she recalls. In her paper’s introduction, Li addresses those darker aspects and states that “Believing that folktales were for everyone, the Grimm brothers did not shy from horror—most of their tales were, in fact, rather ‘grim.’”

As her research developed, Li chose to focus on the factors which led the Grimm brothers to shift from a scholarly audience to one composed mostly of children. The brothers are widely regarded as “some of the most prominent figures in the development of children’s literature,” says Li, who was fascinated by the conscious and repeated adjustments they made to their collection, *Children’s and Household Tales*, over a period which spanned four and a half decades. While such modifications were largely motivated by literary criticism and financial concerns, Li’s paper explains that “the brothers viewed themselves as protectors of sorts and strongly believed in the custom of storytelling, hoping that their work would allow German folk culture to stay alive.”

The semester-long project posed many challenges, such as finding relevant sources which she could understand. Honors History Seminar teacher Gretchen Overhiser, who encouraged Li to submit her paper to *TCR*, says, “It was a joy to watch Shinyi become immersed in the historical story of the Grimm brothers! I’m so proud of her hard work on such a fascinating topic and so glad to see it shared with a wider audience through publication in *The Concord Review*!”

Reflecting on the research, Li credits the simultaneous “freedom and support given by my teachers” as essential to the success of such an extensive project and believes that “this course allows students to develop the skills needed for navigating independent research.” Witnessing students making “an emotional connection to their work” and developing “active learning” is especially exciting for faculty, says Overhiser. “Helping students understand that the seeds of great ideas lay within their own



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interests and working with them to explore those interests through research and writing makes it a privilege to teach this class.”

Founded in 1987 to recognize exemplary history essays written by high school students, *The Concord Review* uses a quarterly publication schedule, with editions in fall (September), winter (December), spring (March), and summer (June). As of last fall’s edition, more than 1,500 research papers have been published from young authors in 46 states and 46 other countries.

The Pennington School is an independent coeducational school for students in grades 6 through 12, in both day and boarding programs. The curriculum is college preparatory, with an emphasis on individual excellence, fostering the development of the whole student through academics, athletics, community service, and the creative and performing arts.

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