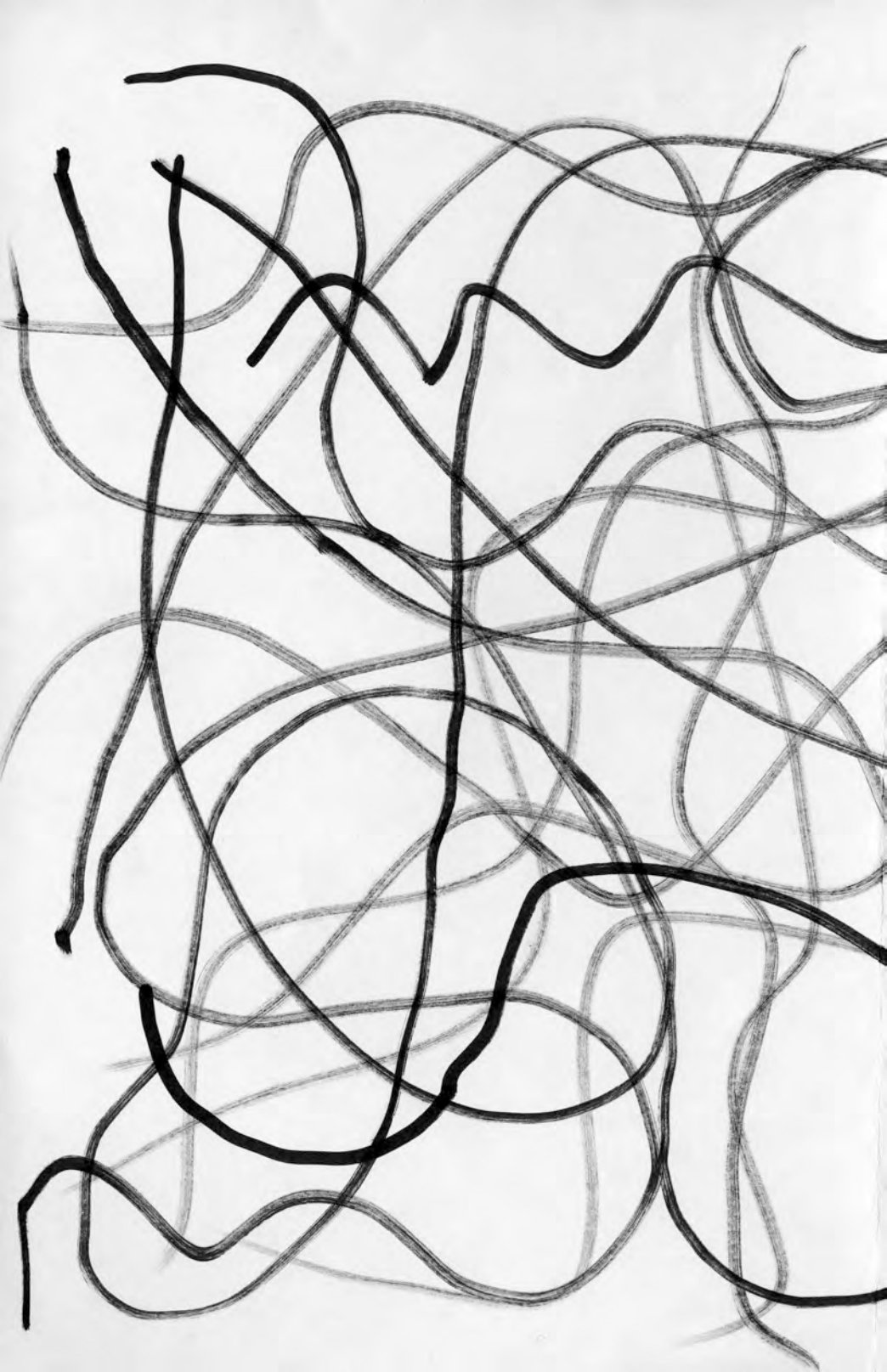


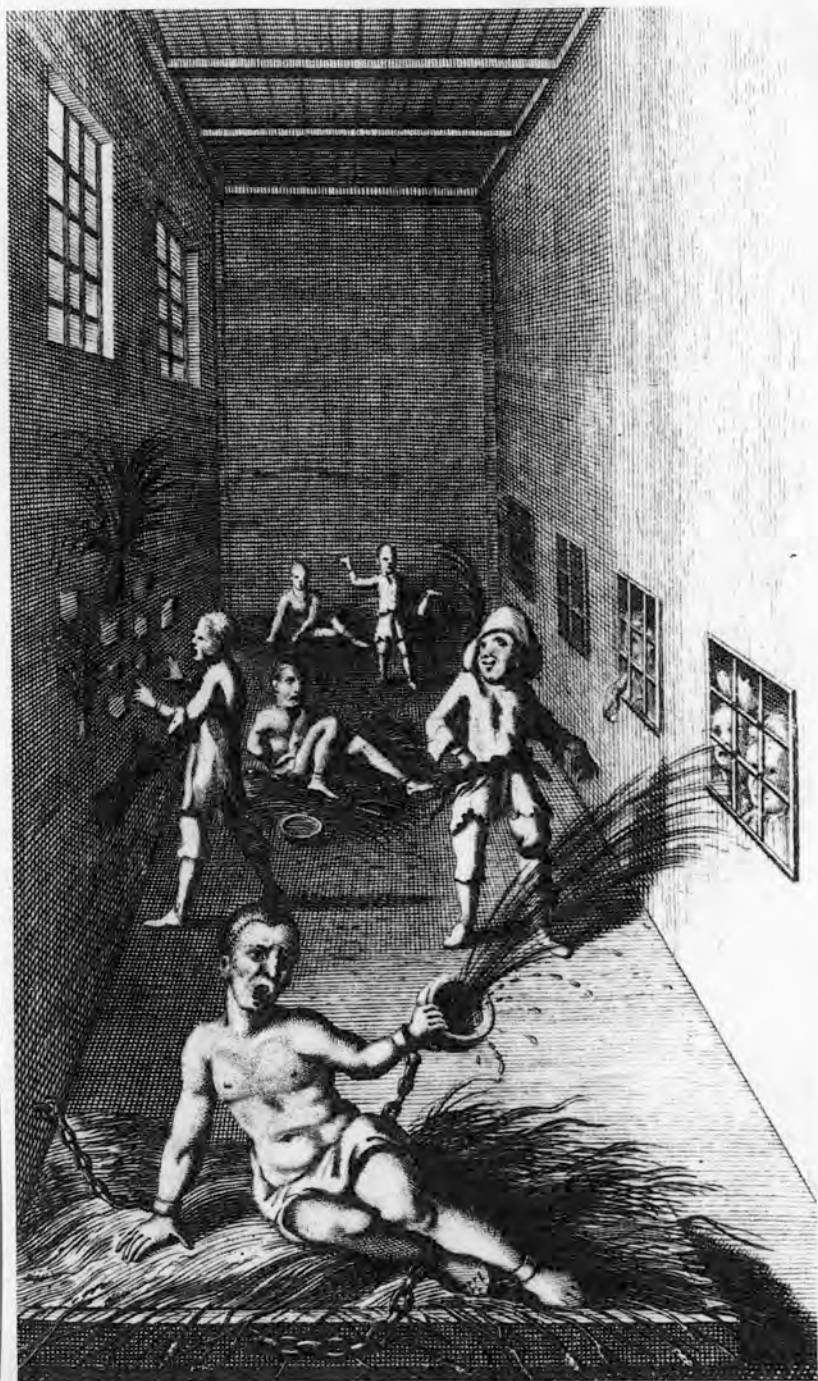


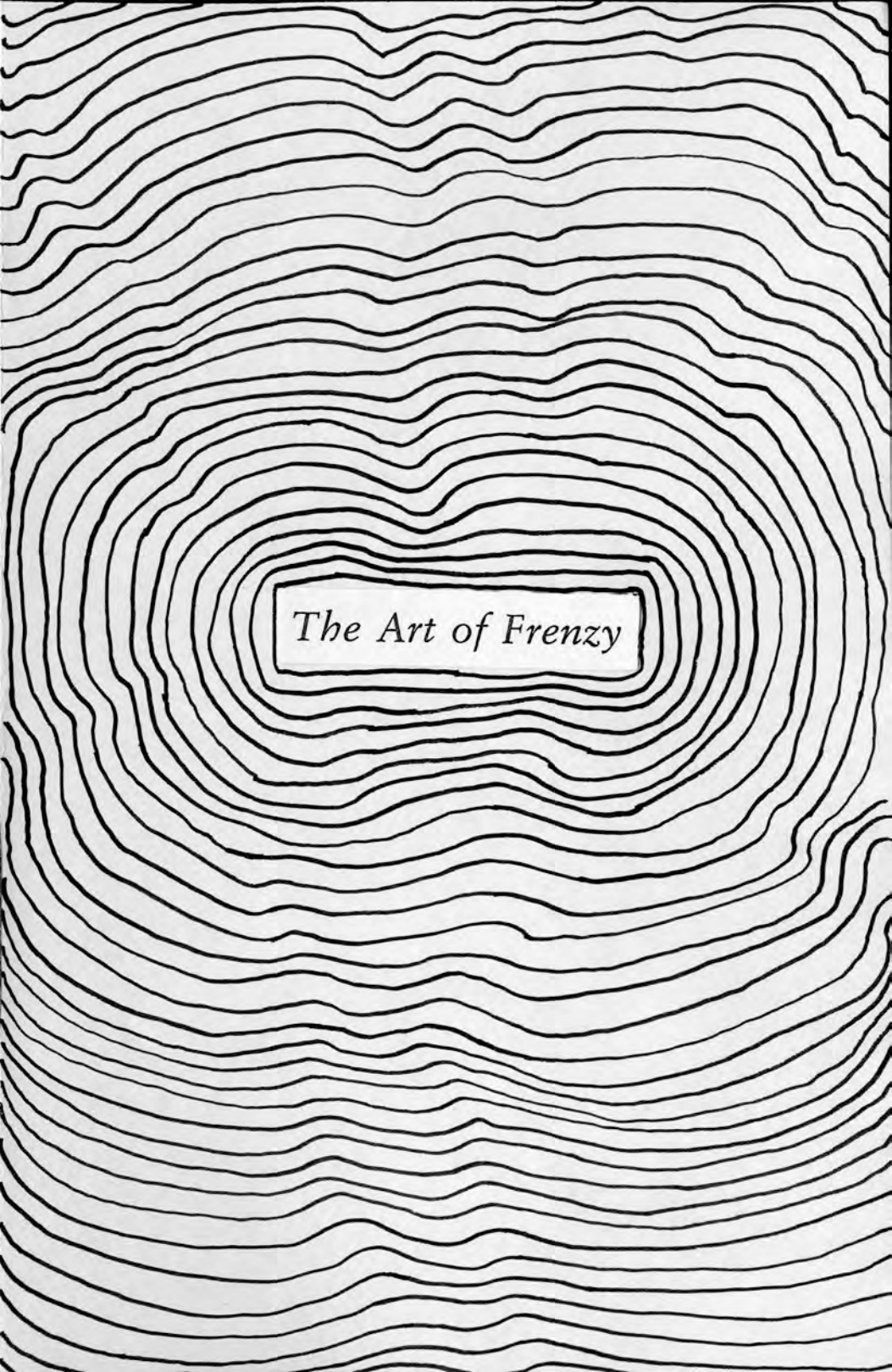
IMPULSE
CONTROL
DISORDER

PART 2



I was anxious about sharing IMPULSE CONTROL DISORDER publicly from the moment I started working on it. Until a few months ago, the only people I'd ever told were my therapist, psychiatrist, and high school (now ex-) boyfriend. I knew that making a zine about trichotillomania had the potential to be an interesting coping mechanism, but actually making it and putting it out into the world was oddly therapeutic, even cathartic, in ways I had never anticipated. I posted a link to it on Facebook on a recent Sunday night, then went downstairs for house meeting for an hour without my phone. When I returned to my room and checked Facebook, I received an outpouring of support from friends who applauded my bravery, and others who had tricked themselves and thanked me for my attempts to express the shame and hopelessness that comes with it. And after all this, I felt a wholly unanticipated but greatly calming sense of relief. Who knew that finally not feeling forced to hide something that caused me so much embarrassment and pain for over five years would be a huge relief! It's like the metaphors of the beach ball my therapist uses - sometimes trying to push down these feelings and experiences is as futile as trying to hold a beach ball underwater, and the more energy you expend, the more extreme the reaction is when it finally blows up; sometimes it's just better to let the ball slowly rise to the surface instead. While doing research for the first zine, I realized that I was only scratching the surface; what follows is a continued exploration into the cultural, historical and clinical implications of mental illness and its treatment. The story continues...





The Art of Frenzy

What is it you have to do?





What is the likelihood of anything bad happening?

Trichotillomania

Why the Hair?

considerable discussion [redacted] disorder of impulse control [redacted] obsessive-compulsive disorder [redacted] (American Psychiatric Association [redacted] 1994).

[redacted] fueled by an arrest [redacted] regression [redacted] lack of impulse control [redacted] failure in mastering the modulation of anxiety [redacted]

[redacted] time of the struggle for autonomy, [redacted] both may be the case [redacted]

[redacted] repetitive acts that lead to skin change; [redacted]

[redacted] impulse-driven behavior [redacted] compulsion. Why [redacted] the hair? [redacted] derive from [redacted]

[redacted] inner life of the patient [redacted] very early experience [redacted] focused attention [redacted] given hair the [redacted] *transitional object* [redacted]

[redacted] an entire spectrum of feelings [redacted] rage and destruction.

Think to yourself, "This will be over soon."





When feelings of being afraid appear, take a breath and exhale slowly

APPENDIX 5

Massachusetts General Hospital Hairpulling Scale

Name Juliet Eldred Date 2.16.15

Instructions: For each question, pick the one statement in that group which best describes your behaviors and/or feelings over the past week. If you have been having ups and downs, try to estimate an average for the past week. Be sure to read all the statements in each group before making your choice.

For the next three questions, rate only the urges to pull your hair.

1. **Frequency of urges.** On an average day, how often did you feel the urge to pull your hair?

- 0 This week I felt no urges to pull my hair.
- 1 This week I felt an occasional urge to pull my hair.
- 2 This week I felt an urge to pull my hair often.
- 3 This week I felt an urge to pull my hair very often.
- 4 This week I felt near constant urges to pull my hair.

2. **Intensity of urges.** On an average day, how intense or "strong" were the urges to pull your hair?

- 0 This week I did not feel any urges to pull my hair.
- 1 This week I felt mild urges to pull my hair.
- 2 This week I felt moderate urges to pull my hair.
- 3 This week I felt severe urges to pull my hair.
- 4 This week I felt extreme urges to pull my hair.

In the morning they're generally pretty mild. It always gets worse in the evening. There is no "average", or rather - the average is during evenings at best

Source. Reprinted from Keuthen NJ, O'Sullivan RL, Ricciardi JN, et al.: "The Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) Hairpulling Scale, I: development and factor analysis." *Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics* 64:141-145, 1995. Used with permission of S. Karger, Basel.



You can expect your fear to rise, but you can keep it manageable.

3. **Ability to control the urges.** On an average day, how much control do you have over the urges to pull your hair?
- 0 This week I could always control the urges, or I did not feel urges to pull my hair.
 - 1 This week I was able to distract myself from the urges to pull my hair most of the time.
 - 2 This week I was able to distract myself from the urges to pull my hair some of the time.
 - 3 This week I was able to distract myself from the urges to pull my hair rarely.
 - 4 This week I was never able to distract myself from the urges to pull my hair.

For the next three questions, rate only the actual hairpulling.

4. **Frequency of hair pulling.** On an average day, how often did you actually pull your hair?
- 0 This week I did not pull my hair.
 - 1 This week I pulled my hair occasionally.
 - 2 This week I pulled my hair often.
 - 3 This week I pulled my hair very often.
 - 4 This week I pulled my hair so often it felt like I was always doing it.
5. **Attempts to resist hairpulling.** On an average day, how often did you make an attempt to stop yourself from actually pulling your hair?
- 0 This week I felt no urges to pull my hair.
 - 1 This week I tried to resist the urge to pull my hair almost all of the time.
 - 2 This week I tried to resist the urge to pull my hair some of the time.
 - 3 This week I tried to resist the urge to pull my hair rarely.
 - 4 This week I never tried to resist the urge to pull my hair.

Sometimes I just give up and give in

6. **Control over hair pulling.** On an average day, how often were you successful at actually stopping yourself from pulling your hair?
- 0 This week I did not pull my hair.
 - 1 This week I was able to resist pulling my hair almost all of the time.
 - 2 This week I was able to resist pulling my hair most of the time.
 - 3 This week I was able to resist pulling my hair some of the time.
 - 4 This week I was rarely able to resist pulling my hair.

For the last question, rate the consequences of your hair pulling.

7. **Associated distress.** Hair pulling can make some people feel moody, "on edge," or sad. During the past week, how uncomfortable did your hair pulling make you feel?

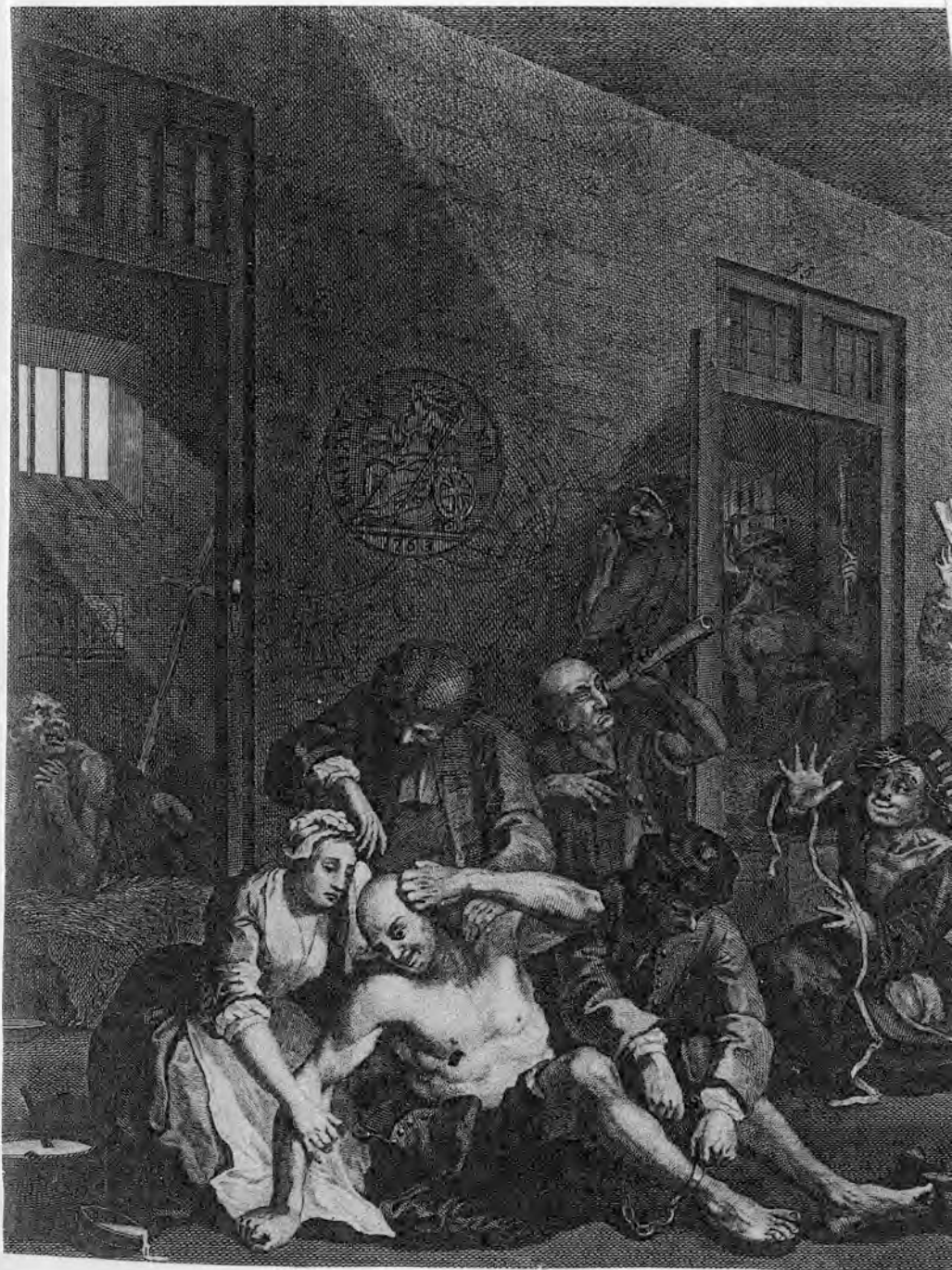
0 This week I did not feel uncomfortable about my hair pulling.

1 This week I felt vaguely uncomfortable about my hair pulling.

2 This week I felt noticeably uncomfortable about my hair pulling.

3 This week I felt significantly uncomfortable about my hair pulling.

4 This week I felt intensely uncomfortable about my hair pulling.



Focus on the plan. Relax . . . Take a breath; you are ready to go.

... of hair...
 ... through the need to
 separate in order to establish personal and sexual identity. Eccentric behaviors may be regarded as expressions of a self that is not fully internalized. Expressive features are not...
 This is the time when many cases of trichotillomania occur.

The Symbolic Meaning of Hair

The symbolic use of the skin and its appendages to express unconscious ideas, wishes, and fears is a theme that has been noted in the history of art, literature, and psychology. In the physical world of the body, hair is one of the appendages that have been used in a symbolic manner, reaching back to the beginnings of time and encompassing many cultures. On the surface it does not make sense that, despite feelings of distress and pain about the process, a person should repeatedly pull out his or her own hair. In the inner life of the individual there is always a perfectly logical explanation for such seemingly irrational behavior. If we understand trichotillomania as a symptom that is designed to relieve anxiety and to express unresolved unconscious conflict, then we can begin to understand the unconscious symbolic meanings of this behavior.

The constant meaning in different areas of hair has been readily met by hair. It has been noted repeatedly in classical mythology, in ancient literature, and in modern psychology (Fergusson, 1951). These themes have both loving and aggressive components and, according to analytic theory, were designed to solve conflictual issues in past times, just as they do in the present.

The meanings assumed by hair in the history of literature in the Greek and Roman world (Fergusson, 1951) show that the growth of body and scalp hair parallels the course of physical development, increasing at puberty and waning in senility; in the male world it has come to symbolize strength and virility. The attempt to separate these two components of physical strength, masculine power, and the hair, as represented by

clearly phallic... from diverse...
 ... symbolic castration. ...

initiation into manhood... symbolizing phallic power;... phallic women, ... the seat of magic power, ...

female genitals, ... Medusa myth...
 ... cutting or plucking hair symbolizes loss of power...
 ...

physical beauty in a woman, ... seduction...
 ...

This fear may slow you down, but it will not stop you.



National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) Trichotillomania Scales

Trichotillomania Symptom Severity Scale

Subject name Juliet Eldred Date 3.05.15

Rater self Total score ???

1) In the average day, for the past week, how much time did you spend pulling hairs?

None ≤15 minutes 16-30 minutes 31-60 minutes X
(0) (1) (2)

1-2 hours 2 hours
(4) (5)

*1 guess? (3)
bit high but anyway
3 i'm pretty
(SCORE) sure I spend
more time doing it
than I think I do*

Which hairs did you pull this week?

Scalp/head X Arm/leg/body
Eyebrow X Pubic X
Eyelash X Other

2) How much time did you spend pulling hairs yesterday?

None ≤15 minutes 16-30 minutes X 31-60 minutes
1-2 hours 2 hours 05
(SCORE)

3) What were the thoughts or feelings preceding the pulling episode?

- a) I felt anxious and this calmed me down X
- b) I felt compelled to pull and reacted to that urge X
- c) I had a troublesome thought and the ritual/habit of pulling made the thought "okay" X
- d) Other Sometimes I just start pulling when I'm sitting at my computer and it's almost subconscious

4) Did you attempt to resist the urge to pull?

NO X

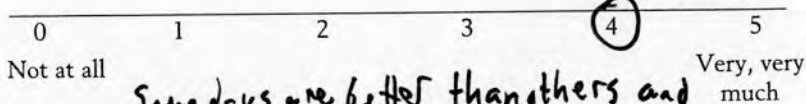
- a) Too much effort to resist Sometimes
- b) Previously unable to resist so didn't try _____
- c) Didn't think about resisting when I start doing it subconsciously
- d) Other the thought of resist once doesn't even enter my mind until I realize what I'm doing

YES X

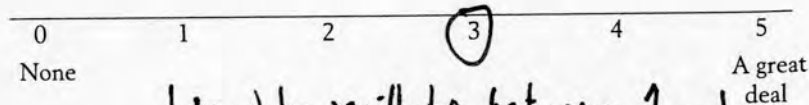
- a) Successfully resisted the urge to pull _____
- b) Moderately successful in resisting the urge to pull X wore a hair tie in the library the other day which definitely helped
- c) Limited success in resisting the urge to pull _____
- d) Unsuccessful in resisting the urge to pull _____

what are the point values for this section? → SCORE

5) How much are you bothered by this compulsion/habit?



6) How much does hair pulling interfere with your daily life?



You may feel anxious and want to avoid the situation, but you can deal with it.





Focus on what is happening now; what is it you have to do?

In what ways?

Resulting appearance embarrassing or prohibits activities X

Interference because of time expended X

Other Sometimes I give myself headaches

and make my scalp sore and my shoulders get all tense and the headache starts to get worse and I'm usually trying to do work

(TOTAL SCORE)

Trichotillomania Impairment Scale / Trich "Global" Scale me out and makes the urge to pull even worse. Also there is hair all over my bed-

- 0 No impairment
- 1-3 Minimal impairment—patient feels some embarrassment or shame but hasn't changed hairstyle or been "found out," may think she wants to quit and tried on her own. Rarely thinks about it, and finds self pulling a few times each day, no resultant bald spots
- 4-6 Mild impairment—impairment is noticeable to close friends and family. Preoccupied by urge to pull hair, upset about appearance, has small bald spot/regrowing area. Has tried to quit and feels ashamed of appearance or finds pulling interferes with activities
- 7-10 Moderate/severe impairment—pulling is obvious to others either because of time spent or resulting lack of hair. Large bald areas apparent, patient spends time/money to conceal disfigurement, has sought out therapy or tried a number things to stop. Feels pulling causes significant interference in life because of time/money/embarrassment

embarrassing and I haven't had a chance to vacuum in a while

→ Sounds about right but "mild" seems too, well, mild, but Physician Rating of Clinical Progress
my symptoms and experiences aren't bad enough (for the most part) to ⁰classify me as ¹⁰"moderate" or ²⁰"severe"

Cured

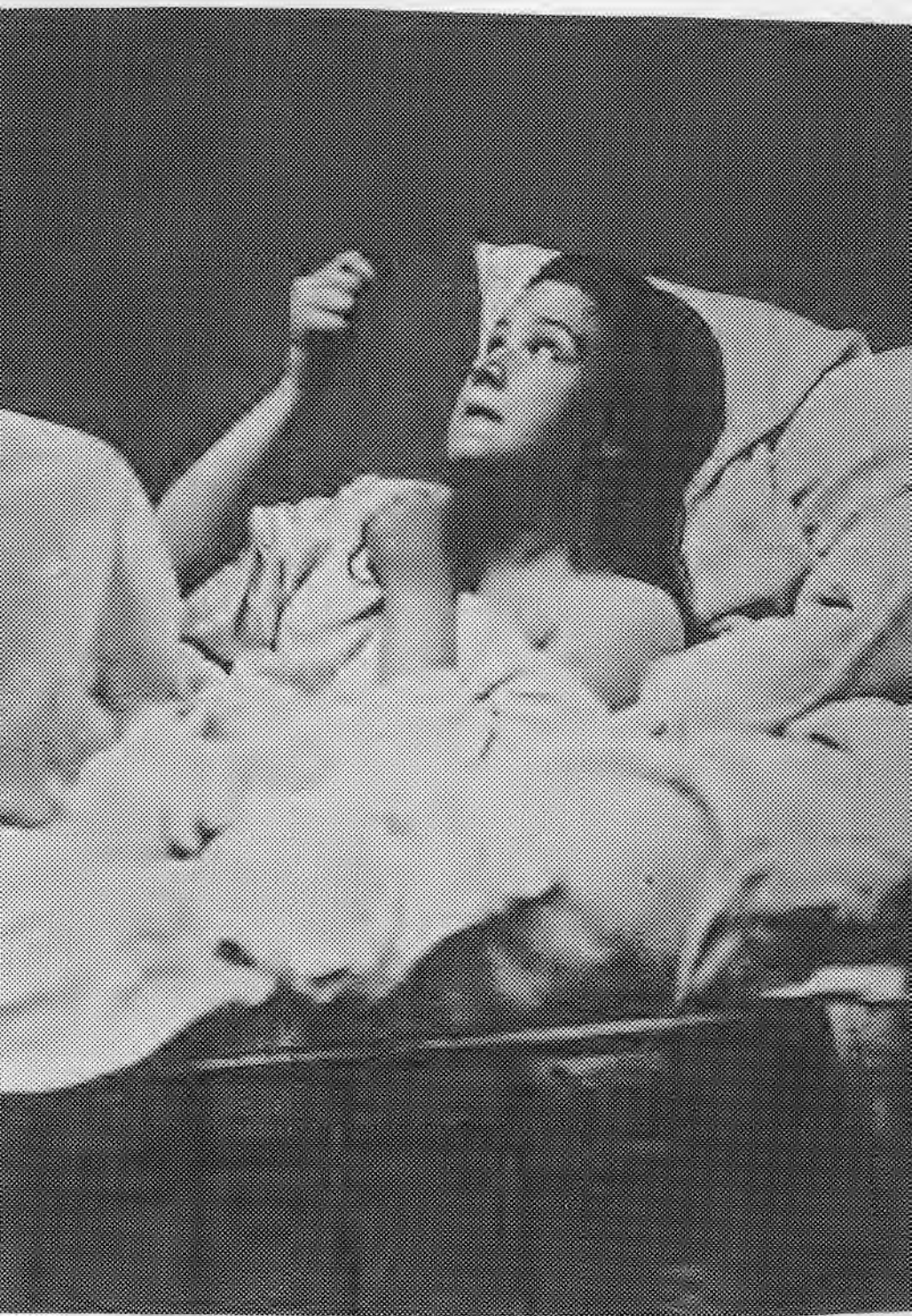
Baseline

Worst ever imaginable

"severe". This scale (the English language lacks the degrees of nuance that I need.

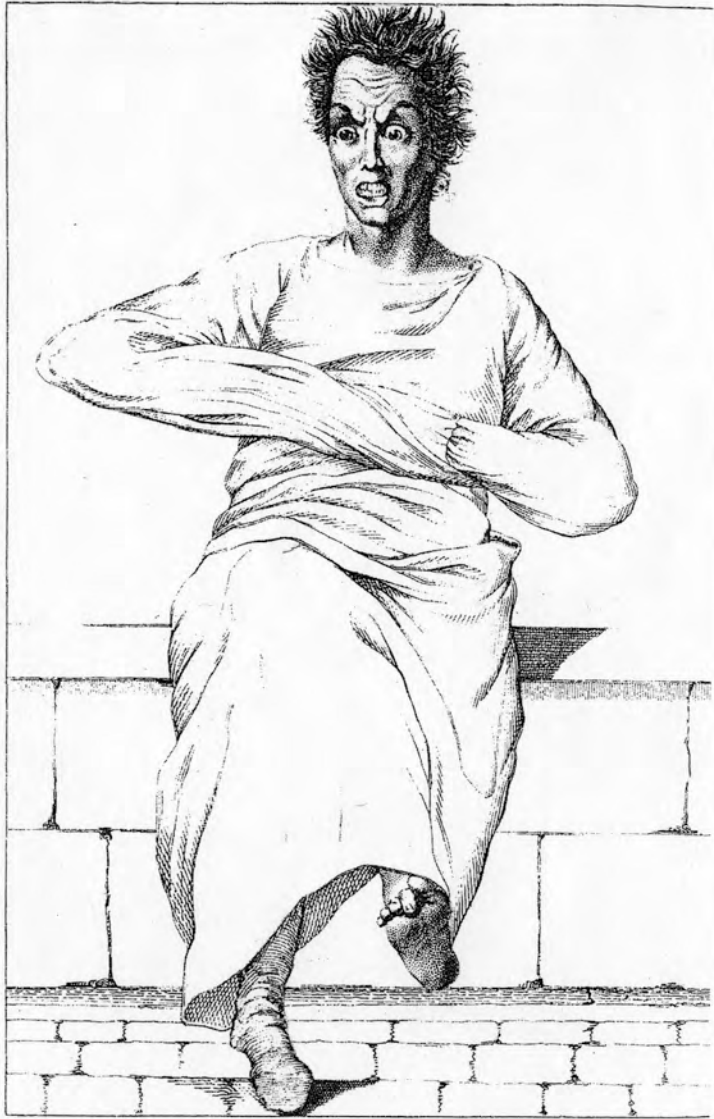


Don't think about being afraid or anxious; think about what you are doing.



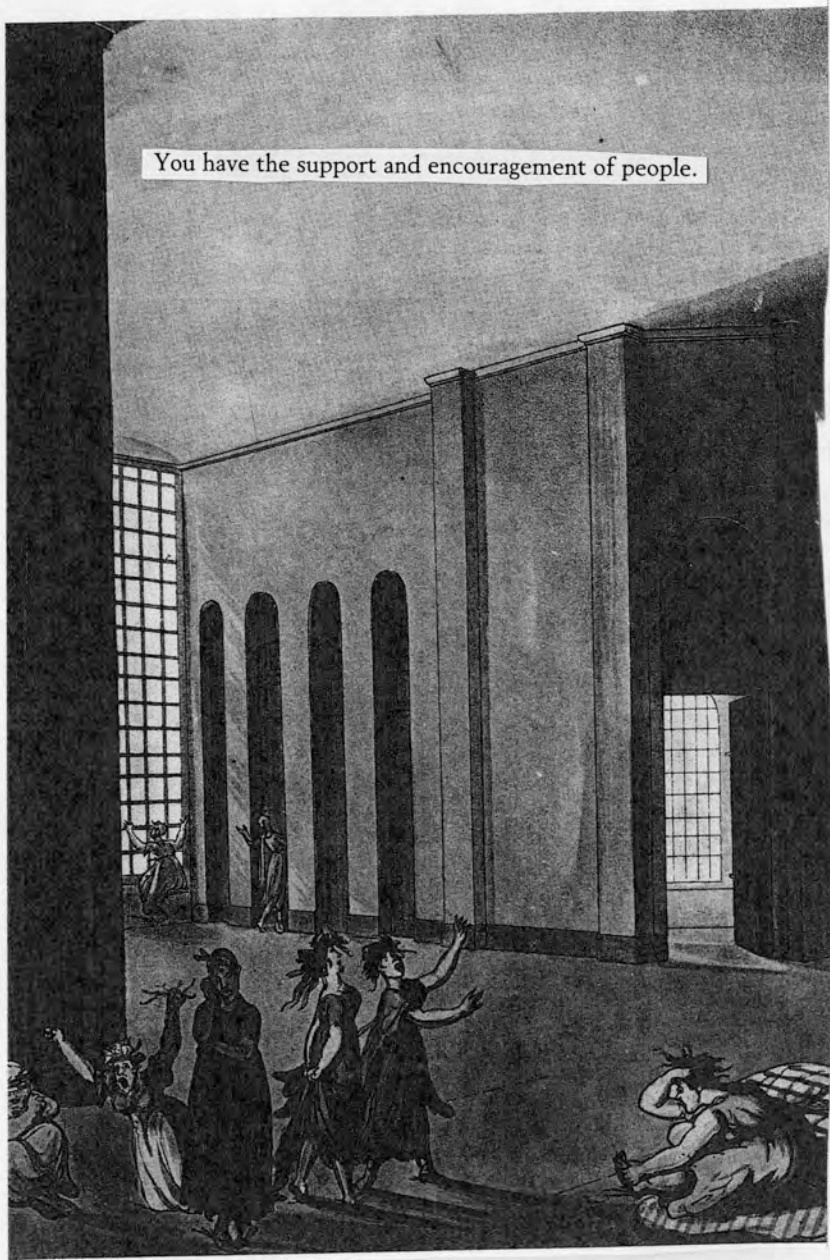


Don't be caught up in yourself; thinking only about your feelings won't help.

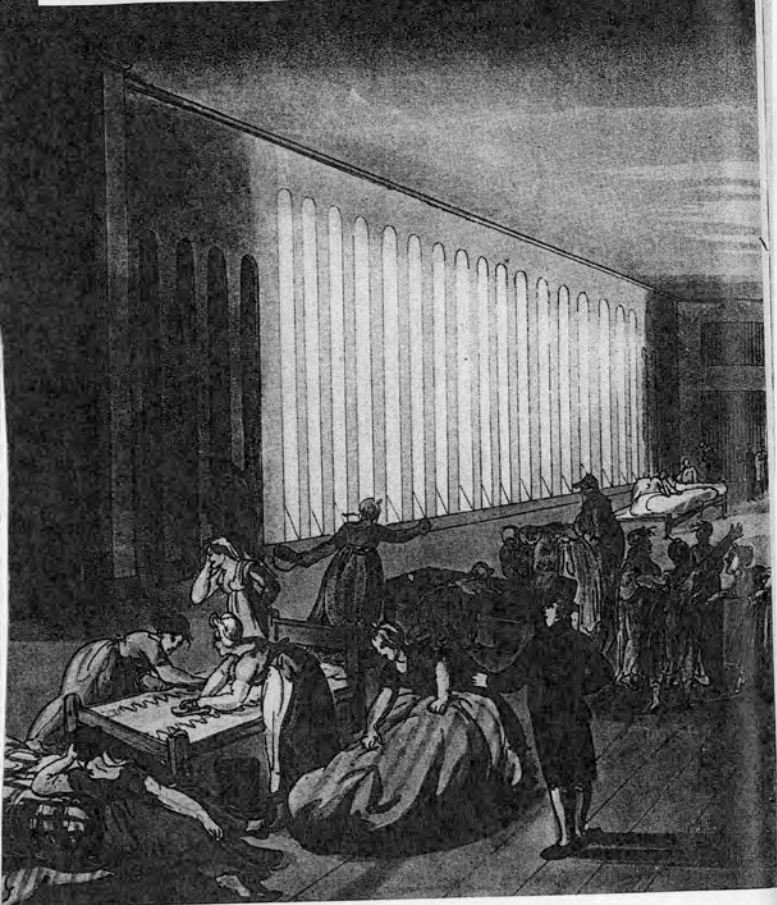


Don't think about how bad you feel; think about what you can do about it.

You have the support and encouragement of people.



You have already come a long way toward handling the problem.



Sources and Resources

Trichotillomania Learning Center: www.trich.org

All images borrowed from.

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Kromm, Jane. *The Art of Frenzy Public Madness in the Visual Culture, 1500-1850* London: Continuum, 2002.

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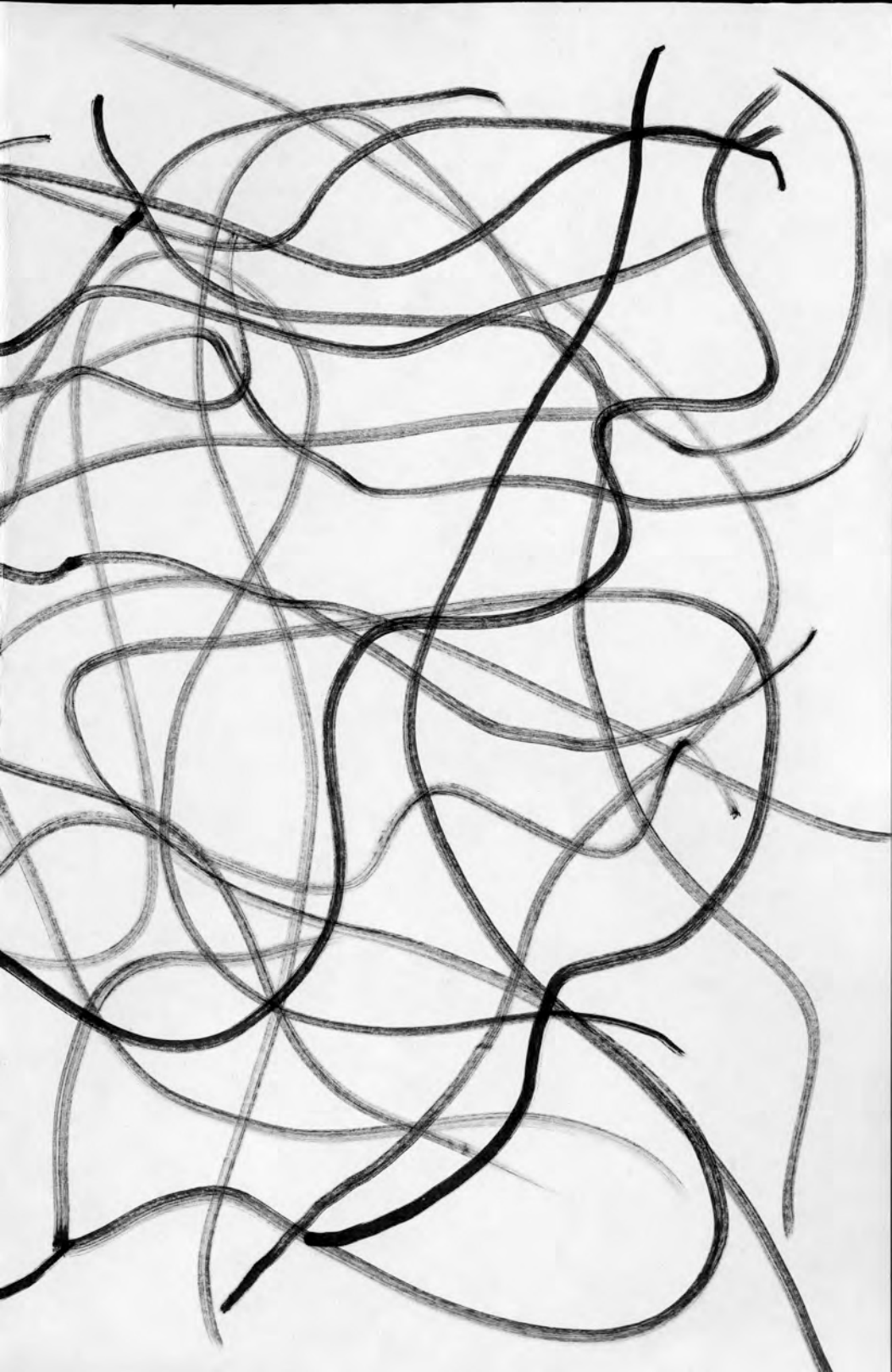
Stein, Dan J. *Trichotillomania*. Washington, DC. American Psychiatric Press, 1999

Everything else is from the artist.

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Nothing succeeds like success.

