

# *Roughneck Review*

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## *Featured Works*

### **Winner and Finalists in the Monthly Creative Writing Contest at the Bakersfield College Writing Center**

*Each month, the Bakersfield College Writing Center produces a prompt to elicit creative writing work from students. The winners and runners-up of these monthly contests are published in Roughneck Review. Our spring issue will include this month's choices, along with all subsequent winning works and runners-up. This informal, personal form of expression is too often overlooked in today's academic climate, so it is our pleasure and our honor to showcase these works.*

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# Personal Essay

# Fatherless Girl

## Miranda Swisher

"What did I do to make him leave? How do I get him to come back to me? What do I have to prove to him to make him see that I am here?" These are the questions children cry after their fathers walk out on their household, and these were the questions that had haunted me for seven years as a child. It has been proven by many researchers that children who are in a fatherless home will have more challenges in their lives than other children who grow up in a traditional two-parent home. The reason I say this is because I grew up with a father in and out of my life, and I had to face hard trials.

Growing up without a father was very difficult. I faced many challenges that resulted in depression and bitterness. When he was in my life, he would leave me in tears. He would use his guilt card to make my mother and I feel bad for him. Being so young, I would always believe every lie he told and he would manipulate me into visiting him. He was good at this manipulation, but once he got caught, he would leave me and not come back for months. He planted a bitter seed in me, and eventually it grew and it was puncturing my heart. I was a happy and blessed child to everyone, but they only saw the outside/ Inside I was withering, and dying.

One night, my mother's boyfriend (now her husband) Steve, came over to watch movies at our apartment/ I was asleep because it was a school night. Around midnight, I heard screaming and banging. I open my door and Steve ran out my mother's room. Steve left the apartment in a hurry. Then I saw my father yelling at my mom. I didn't understand what was happening and I didn't want to know what was happening. My mother was crying and I saw terror in her face. My dad was about to kill Steve and I began to weep. I cried out saying, "Stop it! Stop hurting mommy!" He looked at me for the last time and walked out sadly. He left fear in our house.

When I was about six years old, I had to go to therapy for my nightmares. These nightmares happened every night for two years and they all had to do with my father. One of the main nightmares I remember included a memory of my father holding the little me and smiling. As the scenes in the dream continued, he walked me over to a dark, smoggy forest, and laid me down on the ground. He began to walk away and fade into the forest. In the dream, I was scared and began to cry with a piercing, haunting scream. I screamed, "Daddy! Come back, I need you! Don't leave me, I'm sorry!" In my dream, it was cold, dark and all I could hear were the sounds of crowing ravens. My nightmare would end suddenly, and I would wake up weeping. I just

wanted my daddy to love and protect me. I wanted him to hold me close to his heart. I felt that I never had a moment of protection and closeness with him.

The nightmares stopped around the time when he returned. I thought everything was going to get much better. He re-entered my life with a job, car, another girlfriend, and her kids. His girlfriend had two kids of her own. I thought to myself, "My father's back and now I have to share him with kids and a woman that I don't even know." I only had Tuesdays, Thursdays, and every other weekend with him. He would make me stay at his girlfriends while they would go out together. Jealousy began to grow in me and I began to have low self-esteem. I thought my dad did not love me and he only wanted his girlfriend. He would always compliment her beauty, while I wasn't beautiful enough. Eventually, he and his girlfriend had plenty of arguments and time away from each other. While they were away, he would forget about me and only care and focus on himself. As they would get back together, he would take me to play with her kids. Most of the time, I was left home sobbing, feeling unworthy of his time and attention.

My father had always lied to me. He was very manipulative and emotionally taxing. I stopped taking his calls when I was thirteen and I wanted him away from me. I was hurt and afraid of him. When I did talk to him, he became aggressive and very sad. I had grown tired of his empty word and eventually gave up on having a functional relationship with him. He tried to contact me for two months, but I would not take his calls. My mom said I needed to call him and talk to him about how I felt. Finally, I mustered up the courage to call him and he answered. He said so in an angry tone, "Why haven't you called me or seen me?" I did not know what to say to him so I replied, "I don't know." In an irritated voice he replied, "That's so typical for someone your age." I felt rage begin to heat in my face and I started to sweat. I yelled out, "Dad, I'm tired of you. I hate you!" Sweat dripped from my face and tears shot out of my eyes. A few months later, he wrote a typical long, emotional apology letter. He said that he was getting married to his girlfriend, and that he was going to basic training for the army. I attended his wedding and that was the last time I saw him. We had written many letters while he was in training. He was sent to Tacoma, Washington where he would stay permanently. Even though time had passed, I was still angry with him. I knew it would take time to heal.

In Junior High, I became very aggressive and depressed. My self-esteem was low and I began to eat as a way of dealing with my feelings. I felt even worse because I was gaining weight and I hated how I looked. I threw many temper tantrums and I didn't want to be around anyone. I feared men because I thought they were all doing to hurt me. I was also terrified of people loving me because I did not want to go through heartache. I became more bitter and jealous of my step-siblings because I wasn't with my dad, while they got to see him every day. I was not

taking care of myself, but I didn't care. I struggled with my identity and I questioned my purpose in life, which eventually led to me cutting myself and attempting suicide. I felt like the nightmare I once had was now a reality and my life had become a representation of the cold, dark, scary forest. My mother began to notice what was happening and she sent me to our church to talk with someone. Talking and praying with a member of my church had chopped down the bitter plant that had grown within my heart, but it did not dig for the root of it. I didn't realize I had to get all of my hurt and frustrations out before I could move on.

Even up to this past year, I have had many struggles and I still am struggling. Last year he stopped calling for periods of time. When he would call, I felt as though I was parenting him. He would tell me his problems and I would take on the role of the parent, telling him, "It's alright. Things will get better." Our relationship never changed. My dad divorced his wife, and left his home and his kids, just like he left me. During his divorce he was seeing someone, and she had five kids. He came back to Bakersfield to spend time with her around Thanksgiving and he wanted some time with me. We had planned a day just for him and me to spend time together the day after Thanksgiving. Then after Thanksgiving Day, he wanted me to spend time with both he and his girlfriend. I had said no to his invitation. The next day I waited three hours for him, but he never showed. I got angry and deleted him off of Facebook and I did not talk to him. I didn't cry this time, because I should have expected this. That whole weekend, I was mean to my mother, stepdad, and brother. Before I left for a class that day, my father emailed my mom saying that he didn't think the incident was a big deal/ he began to blame our current relationship and situation on my mom. As in the past, he was being childish and emotional. I went to my class at church and I was just angry. I didn't want to hear anything that had to do with God. I was praying to God, "Don't you dare call out to me! Don't do it. Don't tell me anything!" Then of course, one of the ladies from the class had said, "Miranda, God said that you are not alone and I am here. I am your true Father, and your earthly father does not matter." I began to weep uncontrollably. It was all the tears I needed to cry out.

Today, I do not talk to my dad very often. At the moment, I do not want to be involved in his life. I am still very hurt and struggle with depression. I keep a lot of my feelings inside and I do not cry often. I feel like crying makes me look weak and I do not want to be vulnerable. I still have wounds in my heart from past pain, but I still have my faith in God. He is mending me with his love. He is my only therapist that can help me. For years my question for my father was, "What did I do to make you leave?" Now my question to him has become, "Why didn't you fight for me?"

## Untitled Writing Assignment for English 50

### Duchess Nolbert

*Duchess Nolbert's paper was nominated by Professor Richard Marquez.*

Raising seven children is no easy task for a single mother. My mom worked an eight hour job Monday through Friday. Sometimes she worked on Saturdays and Sundays to keep the bills paid. Her job as a mother of seven kept her on her toes. She never participated in PTA or attended open house to keep track of our grades. She found out by going through our bags. She pushed us to succeed but not like Amy Chua pushed her children. She didn't discourage us either. She only let us know certain things about the world that concerned us at the time. My mother never talked down to us. She only congratulated us when we accomplished a high grade on a test or report card or had a note sent home saying one of us made the Principal's or Dean's list.

Reading Martin's essay about his father, made me appreciate the times my mother encouraged me to do what I want just as long as it was something I really wanted and would stick with long term. In Martin's essay he says, "After my appearance on Saturday Night Live, my father wrote a bad review about me." I read that sentence and my heart dropped. After reviewing my work, my mother would tell me what I could do better but never tell me that I had a bad performance. I never imagined a parent would put their child down in such a way. I also experienced a troubled feeling after reading Amy Chua's essay "Why Chinese Mothers Are Superior." Chua's daughter Lulu was seven years old, learning to play the piano, when her mother told her "stop being lazy, cowardly, self-indulgent and pathetic." I couldn't imagine my mother saying that to me or myself saying that to a child. I understand that all she wants is for her children to succeed but sometimes a parent's criticism goes too far.

My mother didn't shield us from the world but tried to help us understand the things that were happening in the world. She showed us how the world can be our best friend then turn on us in a matter of seconds. She supported us in following our dreams and making something of ourselves, but she didn't push us enough to make us want to achieve our goals and take the steps to get where we wanted to be in life. We were taught to do well in school, graduate, go to college, graduate, and get a job. But following our dreams after high school was in our own hands. I feel if my mother had been tougher on us, we would be exploring much better things and going places that we only saw in our dreams. If my mother were a tiger mom, I would be a very different person. I would be more successful and wouldn't let failure be an option in my life.

# A True Friend

**Alejandra Moya**

*This paper was nominated by Dr. Rae Ann Kumulos.*

Ever since I was a little girl I have had a passion for animals, unfortunately my mother never shared the same feeling with me. I was so desperate to have a pet that every chance I got to pet an animal I would take it, even if that animal wasn't safe or even if it was running in the streets. After being bitten by several dogs on different occasions my mom finally gave in and decided to get me a puppy. We named him Pepe Brown, and ever since I got him we've had a special connection. For nine years I enjoyed his company, his craziness, and his playfulness. There was nothing I relished more than playing with him, just by having him around I would feel better.

My mother was very picky when it came down to getting the dog. She didn't want a rat as a pet; she wanted a big, strong dog that would love to be around kids. When we first saw Pepe after having spent half a day walking around town looking for the right dog, we knew he was it. Most of his body was light brown, except for his paws which were white and on his snout he had a white patch that made it look like someone poured white paint on his face. He was a big, clumsy, energetic puppy that was very excited to have found a family that loved him. Most people that saw him would be frightened by his size but once they would start petting him, they would see he was a kid stuck in a giant's body. In 2005 we had to move to San Diego from Colombia because of my dad's job, and Pepe came with us, he had become a part of our family.

Pepe was always very protective when it came to me. I remember one time my parents and I took him to a river in Melgar, a town that was a couple of hours away from home. He would run all over the place, picking up brown leaves and dust as he went by but never getting close to the river. My dad got in thinking Pepe would follow him in to enjoy the cool water in that scorching day. Pepe stopped for a second to look at him and then he went back to running around the dry dirt and smelling desiccated trees. Then I decided to get in the river and swim in the refreshing water. Once the water was up to my hips I started to hear Pepe bark. I turned to see what was going on, he was barking at me as he was dashing up and down the side of the river. It seemed as if he was trying to warn me to get out, but he was too scared of the water to come and get me himself. After several minutes of him panicking, he jumped in, splashing water everywhere and kicking hard he came to my side. Then he continuously tried to push me with his snout, trying to get me out of the strong current of the river. I would get out and he would get out with me, then I would run back inside the water and he would follow me. He never left my side that

day; my mom would laugh at him jumping in the water clearly still terrified of the river. That same afternoon my mother said to me 'You have a Guardian Angel by your side.'

Just after a few years of having him, we had grown very attached to him. We even put presents under the tree during Christmas for him. In our country we celebrate Christmas the 24<sup>th</sup> of December with a huge dinner followed by a party where all friends and family are invited, then the presents would be opened at midnight. Every year when the time came to open the presents we would let the dogs inside. Pipo, my cocker spaniel would jump on people to greet them; Pepe would sit by the sofa waiting for his name to be called when his present came. Once his name was called he would bite and shake his present, then I would come and tear off the paper as he would start jumping too anxious to know what I was uncovering for him. He would put the toy or bone in his mouth and he would walk around the room, showing off his present then he would set it down by the sofa and he would wait patiently for his name to be called again. None of my friends believed this was true until they would see it for themselves. He was a very special dog.

Pepe was a very healthy, strong dog and it took a lot to get him down. Unfortunately Boxers are prone to getting tumors when they start aging and he was no exception. He enjoyed his life, which is why every time they would get a tumor out of him he would get better right away. Unfortunately all good things must come to an end. At the end of May of 2012 Pepe started eating less and those marble brown eyes that once were full of life started to become dull. The vet couldn't figure out what was wrong with him, neither could we. By the end of June he had stopped eating all together, and he had lost almost half of his weight. His once muscly frame had become skin and bones; his shiny smooth hair had become greasy and rough. During the last weekend of July both of my parents were out of town, I noticed something was off with Pepe. Even though he was very sick and lacked of energy, he would always shake his tail and bark when he saw me. Before I left to my job that day I went to the yard to check on him, he was laying on the ground his big brown eyes looked lifeless as he looked at me, he didn't bark, he didn't shake his tail, he just looked at me. I skipped work and took him to the Affordable Pet Veterinary, where I was told to take him to an emergency animal hospital downtown. Once there I was told that they couldn't do much for him and that maybe he had a couple of hours. I sat by his side for a few hours, unable to cry or sob because he would start whining when I did as if it caused him more pain to hear me cry than his own illness. He died in the afternoon of July 28th, 2012. I'd like to think he went peacefully with his best friend by his side, having his back just like he had mine that day at the river. He was terrified of the water; I was terrified of losing him.

Pepe had been with me since I was 9 years old, I truly don't remember much of my childhood before him. I grew up half of my life with him by my side. He was always there when I had a bad day, when I needed a friend the most. I have accepted now that I won't get to pet him anymore, play with him or put presents for him under the Christmas tree, but what I'm most certain of, is that he will not be forgotten. His presence would bring light to my day and now his memory will bring only happiness and warmth to my heart.



# Punjab

## Navjot Singh

*Navjot Singh is a first semester Biology Major. He is pursuing the pre-med track looking forward for a transfer to University of California Los Angeles. The subject of the submitted work has a deep attachment to his past and where he is from and was born. He is currently enrolled in a Spanish 3 course for which students were assigned to write an ode. This paper was nominated by Professor Rocío García Guerras.*

¿Quieres ver los campos abiertos, cultivos hermosos, sentir el aire fresco, y beber agua fresca y sabrosa? Si tu respuesta es sí a la pregunta precedente, necesitas visitar Punjab, el estado noroeste de India. Punjab es la tierra de los colores, la comida, el patrimonio, y los valores ricos. La cultura de Punjab es una de las más antiguas en la historia del mundo, que va desde la antigüedad a la era moderna. El alcance, la historia, la sofisticación y la complejidad de la cultura son enormes. Algunas de las áreas principales son: Punjabi filosofía, la poesía, la educación, el arte, la música, la comida, la arquitectura, las tradiciones y los valores. Cuando se formó Punjab había un reducido número de personas Punjabi en el mundo. Sin embargo, ahora, es muy fácil encontrarlos por todas partes del mundo. La cultura de Punjab es reconocida y honrada por su ropa versátil, la comida deliciosa, el baile y la música, y los festivales coloridos.

En mil novecientos cuarenta y siete, cuando India recibió su independencia de Gran Bretaña, Punjab se dividió en Punjab occidental y Punjab oriental. El Punjab occidental fue asimilado en el nuevo país de Pakistán, mientras que el Punjab oriental se unió a India. El nombre Punjab se deriva de las palabras persas: Panj = Cinco, y Ab = Agua, es decir, 'cinco aguas.' Se llama 'Punjab' por los cinco ríos: Beas, Sutlej, Ravi, Jhelum, y Ghaggar.

La ropa de Punjab es tan fascinante como la historia larga de Punjab. La ropa de Punjab es indicativa de la cultura brillante y vibrante y estilo de vida de la gente. Los vestidos son una mezcla de color, comodidad y belleza. Las mujeres tradicionalmente llevan "Salwar Kameez" con brillantes colores "Chunnis". Salwar kameez tiene dos piezas: el kameez, o una camisa larga, y salwar, o pantalones. Chunni es una tela larga de colores que las mujeres visten alrededor del cuello. Algunos salwar kameez son simples y algunas son elaboradas hechas de seda. Los hombres tradicionalmente llevan "Kurta Pajama", una camisa y pantalones, que es muy popular entre los agricultores del Punjab. Los chicos modernos también llevan pantalones flojos o con una camisa o una camiseta. Sobre sus cabezas, muchos hombres llevan turbantes,

llamado "pagris". Los chicos llevan un "Patka" o una tela pequeña alrededor de su cabeza, y luego llevan el turbante cuando ellos se hacen mayores.

Además de la ropa, la comida es también una de las características principales de la cultura Punjabi. Uno de los rasgos principales de la comida punjabi es su amplia gama de platos. Los platos principales usan ricas especias, cocidos con mantequilla. Punjabi cocina las verduras, la carne y lentejas en las especias y se sirven con arroz o un pan plano llamado "roti", similar a las tortillas mexicanas. Para ayudar a aliviar las especias, sirven un postre de yogurt o un vaso de suero de leche. Hay ciertos platos que son exclusivos de Punjab, como "Makki di roti y Saron da saag". Como Punjab se conoce por su comida, no puede existir sin el baile tampoco. Debido a la larga historia de la cultura Punjabi y del pueblo punjabi, hay un gran número de bailes. Estos bailes se realizan normalmente en los momentos de celebración como bodas y fiestas. El estilo general puede variar de muy alta energía a más tranquilo. Bhangra es una forma muy prominente y viva del baile que se originó en el Punjab. Las letras de Bhangra reflejan la larga historia de Punjab, la educación de la historia de Punjabi ofrece aspectos importantes en el significado de la música. Comenzó como parte de las celebraciones del festival de la cosecha, pero con el tiempo se convirtió en una parte de diversas ocasiones como bodas y celebraciones del año nuevo.

La cultura de Punjab tiene coloridos festivales, además de comidas deliciosas, ropa elaborada y baile. Dos de los festivales más importantes que se celebran en Punjab son Baisakhi y Lohri. Punjabi celebra Baisakhi el trece de abril de cada año. En Punjab, una zona predominantemente agrícola, este día es importante porque simboliza el primer día de la cosecha. Los campos están llenos y hermosos con los cultivos, listo para ser cosechado. Tradicionalmente, los hombres y mujeres realizan Bhangra al ritmo de dhol en este día. Lohri marca el final del invierno, celebrado el trece de enero. Este festival se celebra como una feria de la cosecha, marcado con alegría y con un banquete. Se supone que es para renovar y honrar el espíritu de Punjab. El día que sigue Lohri es un buen augurio para la comunidad punjabi y se honra con la caridad y donación. Todas las chicas jóvenes reciben regalos en forma de dinero.

Punjab es una tierra de cultura rica, el patrimonio, los valores, los festivales, la música, la comida, y lo más importante, la tierra de la agricultura. La gente de Punjab es de carácter alegre y agradable, y siempre están dispuestos a disfrutar y celebrar. Enriquecido con la historia larga e interesante, ahora, la cultura Punjabi está creciendo en todo el mundo.

# Literary Criticism

# Rage vs. Reason: An Analysis of the Heroes in *The Iliad*

## Kennedy Thomas

*Kennedy Thomas is a 25 year old Communications major and recovering procrastinator, with no astounding physical or mental attributes. He does, however, obtain the ability to put one or two sentences together now and again. This paper was nominated by Professor Rebecca Mooney.*

*The Iliad* is fraught with foils and doppelgangers, both complimenting and offering stark contrasts to one another. There is the mighty warrior Agamemnon, leader of the Argive armies, and Priam, the withering elderly ruler of Troy. There is Helen, stolen from Menelaus just as Chryseis is from Agamemnon and Briseis from Achilles. The most direct comparison, of course, is Achilles versus Hector. Mighty Achilles, the hero of this tale, is focused primarily on his own personal honor and perceives himself (quite justifiably, being a demigod) as above his brethren. Hector comes across much more human in nature. The pride of the Trojan armies, he seeks victory by whatever avenue he can achieve it, to win not only honor, but peace for his family. In its purest form, *The Iliad* is a story of emotion triumphing over reason and humanity.

As the poem unfolds, both men are adorned with lavish descriptions of their might by Homer. Achilles is "...as fast as the black eagle, the fierce marauder, / both the strongest and swiftest bird that flies the sky-"(21, 285-6). Spurred on by Apollo against Menelaus, Hector unleashes "...a savage cry and flaring on like fire, / like the god of fire, the blaze that never dies."(17, 98-9) striking fear into Menelaus' heart. Strangely, the protagonist of the story, Achilles, is by modern standards of heroes often depicted more negatively than his direct competition, Hector. Achilles is portrayed as a hotheaded warrior who thinks chiefly of himself and places his personal honor over the lives of his countrymen. Hector, conversely, is seen to be a more practical man who seeks to put an end to their long and bloody war as quickly as possible. Despite any initial conclusions that the audience may reach about these two characters, both will undergo radical changes of attitude at the conclusion of the poem.

"Rage - Goddess, sing the rage of Peleus' son Achilles," (1, 1) reads the first line, lashing out at the audience, demanding their attention. For the vast majority of the story Achilles is portrayed as anger incarnate. His is a stewing anger, containing itself for nearly the entire poem until finally unleashed on the hapless warriors of Troy. Achilles, so concerned with his honor and reputation, refuses to do battle, as Agamemnon's slight to his honor is taken as a slight against all Achaeans in the eyes of Achilles. Not only does he withhold himself from assisting the war effort, but his mighty Myrmidon warriors as well, the best warriors in the Achaean army. Clearly

the ancient Greek view of honor differs greatly from that of modern societies, placing emphasis on personal respect and power above all else.

Hector, on the other hand, makes a serious effort to end the war as quickly as he possibly can by pressuring his young brother Paris into settling it in a test of one-on-one combat with Menelaus. His is a more modern honor, looking out for the good of his people as a whole. While Achilles prolongs the fighting and suffering, Hector actively seeks to circumvent the continued slaughter of infantry on both sides. This scene presents an interesting mirror to Hector's battle with Patroclus. Whereas if Paris had died facing Menelaus, there would have been peace, when Patroclus is later defeated at the hands of Hector, Achilles unleashes his rage on the armies of Troy.

The two heroes of their respective nations also contrast greatly when it comes to the portrayal of their love lives. Achilles pays lip service to his love for Briseis, but seems to regard her more as property than wife, at one point even disregarding his desire to get her back. "Agamemnon—was it better for both of us, after all, / for you and me to rage at each other, raked by anguish, / consumed by heartsick strife, all for a young girl?" (19, 63-5) Hector is shown to be much more traditional "family man," visiting his loving wife and son in Troy, forsaking all other engagements in order to spend time with them before heading back out to battle. Hector's son is the "...darling of his eyes" (6, 474), and Andromache his "...warm, generous wife..." (6, 466) Achilles seems to be a bit conflicted about his feelings for Briseis, being sure to proclaim his love at every opportunity when lamenting over his misfortune, then downplaying his love for her when letting "bygones be bygones." (19, 74)

Despite Hector's more relatable nature, he does not deny his power any more than Achilles, taking joy in claiming his armor off of Patroclus' back and using it to strike a crushing, demoralizing blow to the Achaean troops. As he battles with Apollo himself behind him, he takes joy in the terror that he has caused for the Achaean army. Of course it is this defeat of Patroclus that seals Hector's fate. The raging storm of Achilles' fury is unleashed once he has heard of the death of his dear friend Patroclus, and all of the bottled up rage Achilles has stored throughout the poem explodes onto the battlefield, tearing through the Trojan forces and even nature itself.

It is at the conclusion of Achilles' rampage that Hector's character is turned upside down. This brave warrior, pride of Troy and bane to Argive forces, suddenly loses all courage at the sight of Achilles, fleeing from his impending demise at Achilles' hand. Even after being caught and defeated, he begs for mercy from Achilles in the form of an honorable burial for his body: "I beg you, beg you by your life, your parents— / don't let the dogs devour me by the Argive

ships!" This Hector is a far cry from the one seen earlier, demanding that Paris own up to his own doings and lay his life on the line for the sake of his people. The wrath of Achilles is so overpowering that it destroys the courage of the most honorable man that Troy has to offer.

After getting his revenge, Achilles undergoes a transformation of sorts. During the funeral games for his departed friend Patroclus, Achilles is joyous and fair to his comrades when dealing out rewards to the winners of the various competitions taking place. He even offers extra prizes for Agamemnon, the man who drove him to hateful seclusion for nearly the entire poem. He expresses his heartfelt love once more for Briseis, now returned to him. Instructed by the gods to do so, he reluctantly relinquishes Hector's body to king Priam, and even obtains a kindred bond with the father of his slaughtered enemy, seeing in him his own father, Peleus. After defeating the very human Hector, the demigod Achilles is released from the hold of his rage, and becomes much more human in the process.

## Brazilian Soliloquy (A Parody)

### Brandy Brandon

*Brandy Brandon is a Biology major with an emphasis in human anatomy. Her ultimate goal is to become an Upper Cervical chiropractor. This parody of Hamlet's famous "To be or not to be" soliloquy was written as fulfillment of a creative project assignment in English 1B, Introduction to Literature. As, Brandy says, "I love humor & enjoy making light of situations. A Brazilian is brutal yet we woman subject ourselves to such atrocities anyway for the sake of conveniences & cosmetics. What better way to shed some light & humor then a parody to such a situation. Experience is your best ammunition."*

### Hamlet's Soliloquy William Shakespeare

To be, or not to be: that is the question:  
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer  
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,  
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,  
And by opposing end them? To die: to sleep;  
No more; and by a sleep to say we end  
The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks  
That flesh is heir to, 'tis a consummation  
Devoutly to be wish'd. To die, to sleep;  
To sleep: perchance to dream: ay, there's the  
rub;  
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come  
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,  
Must give us pause: there's the respect  
That makes calamity of so long life;  
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,  
The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,  
The pangs of despised love, the law's delay,  
The insolence of office and the spurns  
That patient merit of the unworthy takes,  
When he himself might his quietus make  
With a bare bodkin? who would fardels bear,  
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,  
But that the dread of something after death,  
The undiscover'd country from whose bourn  
No traveller returns, puzzles the will

And makes us rather bear those ills we have  
Than fly to others that we know not of?  
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all;  
And thus the native hue of resolution  
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,  
And enterprises of great pith and moment  
With this regard their currents turn awry,  
And lose the name of action. - Soft you now!  
The fair Ophelia! Nymph, in thy orisons  
Be all my sins remember'd.

### **Brazilian Soliloquy by Brandy Brandon**

To wax, or not to wax--that is the question:  
Whether tis better to stubble suffer  
The poke of the prickly overgrown bush  
Or to take control of the wayward mess  
And by epilation end them. To wax, to die--  
No more-- and by a wax to say we end  
The body hair, and the thousand follicle's there of  
That each shaft sprouts from. 'Tis a culmination  
aesthetically to be missed. To wax, to die--  
To wax--perchance never to return: ay, there's the rub,'  
For in that wax of heat what pains may come  
When we have ripped off that pubic hair,  
Must give us redness. There's the respect  
of razor burn not long.  
For why would one bear the rips on flesh each time,  
Th' moment passed and gone, one sore spot  
The pangs of epilation lost, shaving no more: yay  
The uncomfortable positions, and the burns  
That expose one in an unflattering manner,  
With a pair of tweezers, To get the strays  
spread eagle at first, bottoms up? no way  
To grunt and sweat under the light,  
But that the dread of torture soon be done,  
The undiscovered smooth hoo-ha, from 3 days out  
No razor returns, quickens the shower,  
And makes us rather glad this we have chosen  
Then return to the wilderness we want not?  
Thus our conscience does make decisions for us all,

And thus the Brazilian truth our resolution  
Is now o'er and now resolved of thought,  
And delight and not itch at the moment  
With the hair of new growth so spry  
You are not faint of action. -- Soft you now,  
Fair wax lady! -- Brazilian past my bikini lines  
Be every 4 weeks remember'd.

# Muzzling the Lion

## Kennedy Thomas

*Kennedy Thomas is a 25 year old Communications major and recovering procrastinator, with no astounding physical or mental attributes. He does, however, obtain the ability to put one or two sentences together now and again. This paper was nominated by Professor Richard Marquez.*

It is impossible to unlearn what one has learned. The transition into adulthood is a universal, anxious experience for every generation. In "The Secret Lion" by Alberto Alvaro Rios, the reader is presented with a nostalgic view of the perceptions of childhood and resigned acceptance of their loss. Through the eyes of a 12 year old boy and his best friend, Sergio, the reader relives the fear of the loss of innocence and the realization that the ones to finally kill childhood are often the adults that they become.

Narrated from a position of adult reminiscence, the author somehow maintains a tone that immerses the reader in the thought processes of the young. Rios' diction is ripe with playful, pseudo-onomatopoeic exclamations such as "Guythisis, this is, gee-Guythis... Guy-Godthis is perfect, this-isthis is perfect" (334). Not merely restricted to dialogue, such phrases find their way into the narration as well - "So we got out little kid knapsacks... and into them we put... knivesforksplates" (Rios 335). These phrases serve to put the reader into the state of mind of these characters. Almost presented as stream-of-consciousness, the thoughts and emotions of these children come flowing off the page, undeterred by the formalities of proper grammar. This creates an instant recognition and association between the characters and the reader. The reader is forced to remember their own experiences at a similar age and may in fact relate directly with the kind of thinking presented by these children. Most remember the confusion and anxiety of adolescence can see themselves in these characters. These boys are curious about the future, and all of these forbidden things that represent adulthood, yet they cherish a piece of their past and want to protect it. They are child and adult, yet at the same time neither.

The naiveté of childhood is perhaps best represented by the recalling by the protagonist of his adventure with Sergio at the even younger age of five to the "mountains" nearby their homes. Searching for a place to enjoy lunch out on a grand adventure, the boys find what they describe as "heaven." Settling down and partaking of their rations, they are promptly informed by adults that they are in fact encroaching on a golf game. Until that point they had never heard of golf, and had no reason to view this wonderful field of green and trees as anything but heaven on Earth. The setting of the Arizona desert, only a few miles away from the Mexican border contrasts greatly with the golf course, providing an even larger appreciation for its heavenly

qualities. They had learned about golf, and had "heaven" stolen from them in the process. They were forced to grow up just that little bit, unable to return to their adventure. They could not unlearn golf.

Although the golf course is an effective representation of the main theme, the major symbolism of this piece revolves around an object that represents the antithesis of the world in which the boys now find themselves. Freshly enrolled in junior high school, there are new words that they can't say, new unspoken rules regarding their female classmates, and questions that they aren't allowed to ask. Described as "like a lion", the changes to their lives are overbearing, "roaring that way the biggest things do" (Rios 333). It seems that school is now a place where information is restricted, rather than given. As youth clashes with the beginnings of adulthood, authority figures in the boys' lives find it necessary to protect them. Of course young people do not see it that way. The boys find a place that allows them to participate in this forbidden world. Hidden away, the arroyo allows them to express all of these bottled up questions and shout aloud words for which they would normally be punished. A refuge where they can experiment with the new knowledge that they are not supposed to have. It is here that the boys find the grinding ball.

The grinding ball is perfect and unnatural, haphazardly left to rot in this secluded bastion of adolescent expression. Only appreciated by them, the boys "...didn't understand what it was, didn't have a name for it. It just felt good" (Rios 334). A symbol for the innocent bliss of childhood, the grinding ball has an unexplainable hold over the boys. The boys use "kid words" to describe the ball, such as "neat, good" (Rios 334). Even in this place, where they go to revel in all the forbidden fruits denied them by their new day-to-day lives; they admire the ball and prize it above all else. It is their "secret lion". Roaring only for them, reminding them of what used to be and growling back at the changes thrust upon them. They feel that it must be guarded, and not exposed to family or other authority figures. They would not understand and would certainly demand that the boys "Getridofit" (Rios 334).

Driving the symbolism of the grinding ball even deeper, the boys choose to bury it in the arroyo to keep it safe. They know that it has no place with them back in the rest of the world - That "backward-like" (Rios 334) place where teachers hide information and yell at students for searching for answers. Taking precautions to find their precious microcosm of youthful bliss, they place reminders and clues throughout the arroyo. Unfortunately, upon subsequent visits the duo is unable to find the ball. They continue to visit the arroyo for a time, hoping to stumble back upon it, yet accepting that it is gone. They do not even attempt to search very thoroughly. Thus despite their efforts to preserve it, childhood is enveloped by the complexities of

adulthood. The secret lion is muzzled. Unable to truly grasp ahold any longer, they continue to reminisce over it as time goes on, until eventually, even the memory vanishes.

# Visual Arts

# Nature's Guardian

Josè Lemus



# Poetry

# Oda a Mi Amor

## **Maria Ocampo**

*This is Maria Ocampo's second year at Bakersfield College her major is Spanish with an emphasis on liberal studies. She wants to become an Elementary school teacher. She is currently enrolled in a Spanish 3 course for which students were assigned to write an ode. She wrote an ode to her love. She writes, "I share with my audience the beauty of being in love." This paper was nominated by Professor Rocío García Guerras.*

Eres un gran enseñador.

No me enseñaste la biología,

Ni tampoco la arqueología.

Pero me enseñaste la cosa más encantadora que es el amor.

La manera en que sonríes

Haces a mi corazón cantar,

Ya no voy a llorar.

Juntos para siempre.

Tú y yo somos inseparables.

Conectados con algo fuerte.

Evocables.

Lo único que nos separa es la muerte.

Te amo más de lo que te imaginas,

No lo adivinas.

En ti veo una persona noble y bella.

Brillas como una estrella.

Me encantan tus abrazos.

Me encantan tus besos.

Te adoro,

Eres mi tesoro.

Jamás pensé que me sentiría así.

Me haces muy feliz especialmente con tu humor.

Gracias, mi amor.

# Oda al Tiempo

## **Martha Jimenez**

*Martha Jimenez is a Child Development major. She enjoys writing short stories, but this is her first ode. She is currently enrolled in a Spanish 3 course for which students were assigned to write an ode. This paper was nominated by Professor Rocío García Guerras.*

Tiempo que te vas de mis manos

Sin yo saberlo...

Tiempo que poco a poco me consume

Sin yo notarlo...

Tiempo largo, tiempo corto...

Tiempo bueno, tiempo malo...

Tiempo al tiempo, paso a paso

Y todo...a su tiempo.

# Oda al Océano

**Michelle DeLeon**

*This poem by Mitchelle De Leon, a Bakersfield College student, explores humanity's complex relationship with the ocean by adoring its enigmatic appeal while also fearing its immense power. She is currently enrolled in a Spanish 3 course for which students were assigned to write an ode. This paper was nominated by Professor Rocío García Guerras.*

El agua azul,

La temperatura baja,

Te necesitamos para sobrevivir

En este mundo.

Tienes muchos misterios

Porque hemos visto

Un poco de tu cuerpo

Grande y oscuro.

Por favor, no nos dejes.

Tememos un día.

Cuando te vacías,

Cuando haces calor.

Te protegeremos.

Lo prometemos.

A veces, te odiamos.

Puedes matarnos

O comernos con la boca fría.

Cuando estás abrazándonos,

No podemos respirar

Ni decir, "Ayúdanos!"

# Incondicional

## Patricia Felix

*The poem "Incondicional" is written by Señorita Patricia Felix. She was inspired by the great men she has encountered in her life. Her paternal grandfather, the hard working man, maternal grandfather, the great kind hearted man, and her father, loving, understanding man, all of whom were and are unconditional. She is a Mexican woman, 25 years old, raised in Lamont, family oriented, part time student and worker, who hopes to graduate from BC with CHDV and Spanish major. She is currently enrolled in a Spanish 3 course for which students were assigned to write an ode. This paper was nominated by Professor Rocío García Guerras.*

Sigo aquí a pesar de lo malo,

No te encarcelaré por tus errores, no serás un judío en campo de concentración.

Los errores jamás serán vistos bajo un jurado, nunca pisarás una corte, ni enfrentarás cargos mayores.

Mucho menos dormirás solo en un cúbico friolento, oscuro, húmedo noche tras noche.

Mis castigos nunca compararán como los latigazos dados a Dios, dados sin razón, con la fortaleza mayor del abusador.

No derramarás ni una lágrima, ni una gota de sangre.

No sufrirás, eso dalo por hecho.

Yo te comprenderé como lo hace una madre, incondicional.

Te daré todo lo que merezcas y hasta de más.

Como suele pasar con un buen estudiante, e hijo.

Te querré sin ningún pero, así tal y como eres. .

Será como un mamífero protege a su cría, contra cielo, mar y tierra.

Alimentaré tu mente y espíritu.

Seré un libro lleno de información; más que un diccionario o enciclopedia.

Como un platillo exquisito alimentando tu cuerpo.

Como la comida echa en casa, con su buen aroma, lleno de especias, calor y amor.

No habrá condiciones.

Tan sólo una.

Ámame, escúchame, compréndeme, y quédate incondicionalmente.

Incondicional seremos uno para el otro. Te amaré por siempre Incondicionalmente.

# Philosophy

# Teddy's Quest for Reality

## Haley Lawson

It is perhaps the most basic instinct to mistrust and doubt even the simplest of occurrences and situations. Evolution has trained man to question all. Interestingly enough, this doubt has permeated our own sense of personal reality. Skepticism, a branch of epistemology, calls this sense of supposed knowledge and thus the reality it forms into question by asserting that true knowledge is impossible. Thus if true knowledge is impossible, the next logical thought becomes, “what is the reality I am experiencing?”. In an attempt to further expand upon skepticism and answer this question, famous French philosopher Rene Descartes muses the possibility that perhaps his senses are not actually portraying reality. Instead Descartes provides three possibilities, all of which are depicted in Martin Scorsese’s 2010 psychological thriller, *Shutter Island*.

Descartes’ first and arguably most terrifying possibility is that perhaps in reality, he is one of many other “madmen whose brains are so rattled by the persistent vapors of melancholy that they are sure that they’re kings when in fact they are paupers, or that they wear purple robes when in fact they’re naked” (321). In short, Descartes is presenting the possibility that the reality he knows is only a figment of his insanity. This concept becomes one of the most dominant themes in *Shutter Island* as the entire movie is structured around Teddy Daniels—a patient at a mental hospital—who has deluded himself into believing a fantasy in which he is the heroic US Marshal Daniels, a widower whose wife died in a fire before the two had ever had children. In

Teddy’s reality, he has been sent to Shutter Island to track down a fictional escapee and ends up discovering a conspiracy. Yet, only at the movies’ end do we learn that in reality Teddy Daniels is in fact a patient at the mental hospital on Shutter Island, a recovering alcoholic, a father to two deceased children that were murdered by his wife, and lastly completely insane. To further complicate the scenario, Scorsese intensifies the theory by alluding to the fact that the insane cannot know their insanity, and thus the delusion becomes much more real and concentrated for the patient. Therefore the possibility of insanity remains a valid and possible explanation to our perceived realities.

In addition to the insanity explanation, Descartes (perhaps realizing that it is not logical to assume delusional and insanity as the norm) offers another scenario in order to explain our perception of reality. Descartes ponders the possibility that he is asleep and that what he perceives as reality is only a dream saying, “When I think very carefully about this, I see so plainly that there are no reliable signs by which I can distinguish sleeping from waking that I am

stupefied—and my stupor itself suggests that I am asleep” (321). This second hypothesis in which Descartes questions whether he is awake or asleep presents the question: how can I ascertain fiction from reality (dream world from the real world)? This concept, too, becomes another driving force behind the movie *Shutter Island* as Teddy Daniels regularly dreams that he is with his dead lover and while dreaming, Teddy basks in the reality that he enjoys before he awakens. It is only after Teddy is jolted awake that he realizes that the reality he had just been experiencing was in fact false. Like Descartes asserted, there were no reliable signs that would have distinguished dream from reality until after the person has finally awoken. Furthermore, if this is true and one really cannot ever distinguish dreams from reality, then one must accept that we can never know if we are awake or asleep and thus our entire lives could, theoretically, be a dream that we have yet to awaken from. Perhaps, we are all experiencing what seems like years in the span of an eight hour dream that we have yet to awaken. Because if we cannot know dream from reality, surely we cannot safely judge any real sense of time or aging.

Finally Descartes provides one final theory; perhaps “there is an evil demon, supremely powerful and cunning, who works as hard as he can to deceive me...” (322). This demon can be interpreted as anything from a literal demon to anyone demon-like (anyone wishing to mislead and deceive him). This too also becomes a contributing factor to Teddy’s sense of reality as his most trusted confidant and partner in the film, Chuck, is in reality, the proverbial wolf in sheep’s clothing. It is Chuck in this case that is the demon working to create a false reality for Teddy. Chuck, who in reality is Teddy’s psychiatrist, is in reality, encouraging and enabling Teddy’s delusion in the name of curing him. While Chuck may have supremely good intentions, the truth is that he is only supporting Teddy’s false reality. Also it is key to notice that unlike the first examples in which true reality was not attainable due to the self (as it is “you” that is insane, and “you” that cannot awaken), while the last example relies on an outside source. Thus both Descartes and Scorsese seem to have doomed any chance at real knowledge as even if we could somehow ascertain that we are first sane and secondly awake, we could never ascertain that there was in fact no “demon” (literally or figuratively) deceiving us.

In short, according to skepticism, all knowledge is impossible as is supported by Descartes’ three thought-experiments in skepticism: insanity, inability to distinguish dreams from reality, and trickery. Furthermore, *Shutter Island* exemplifies each of the theories by telling the story of Teddy—a criminally insane patient who is unable to distinguish fact from fiction and whose delusion is egged on by his doctor. Yet at the end of both works, ironically, we are, ironically, left with few definitive answers. Descartes finally concedes that he is “like a prisoner

who happens to enjoy the illusion of freedom in his dreams, begins to suspect that he is asleep, fears being awakened, and deliberately lets the enticing illusions slip by unchallenged" (322). Thus perhaps the overwhelming question shifts from "what is reality?" to "what does it matter?".

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# **Politics and Social Comment**

# Anti-Piracy Measures: Futile, Unsuccessful, and Counterproductive

## Barak Grogan

*Barak Grogan is a full-time Bakersfield College student majoring in English. His interest in video games introduced him to piracy prevention measures. This interest led to the research paper for his English 1A class taught by Professor Rebecca Monks, who nominated this paper.*

With the rise of an increasingly digital world, new methods of viewing, sharing, and manipulating information have become easily available. This influx of different forms of digital media has allowed companies to distribute their creations, whether it is music, movies, videos, or video games, to many people at once. Unfortunately, this innovation has brought with it problems, the most prominent of which is piracy. It being a major issue in the digital world, many companies have begun to employ anti-piracy measures. Rights holders are making a push to prevent piracy, especially since, thanks to the Internet, it is easy to pirate any form of digital media. While piracy is a major issue and rights holders should be able to protect their profits, many of the forms of anti-piracy are unpopular due to the restrictions they place on those who wish to use digital products fairly. Not only that, anti-piracy measures are seen as unnecessary by many because they do not seem to be preventing piracy, as they should. In fact, the restrictions have encouraged otherwise honest consumers to resort to piracy in order to fully access the content for which they paid. To better understand this argument, some concepts and terms should be explained and defined. Piracy is the unauthorized use or manipulation of a copyrighted work, usually some form of digital media such as movies, music, and video games. Anti-piracy measures are any software or hardware that restricts the use of a copyrighted work in some way so as to, ideally, prevent piracy. Digital rights management (DRM) is software that restricts the usage of copyrighted software or other digital media in order to prevent any piracy of that copyrighted work. Regional coding is a measure typically implemented in movie DVDs that prevent that DVD from playing in a device from a region different than the one permitted on the DVD. With those terms in mind, the argument set forth in this paper will be more easily understood. Anti-piracy regulation is a failure and a danger to the rights of users of digital media and is at risk of promoting the very practice it tries to prevent; thus, it should be avoided or entirely removed.

Since the time music and, later, movies were capable of being mass produced in a form that allowed common citizens to purchase such media for personal use, piracy has plagued copyrighted material and has proved to be an annoyance to copyright holders. In the days when media came in a more physical form, such as records, tapes, and eventually CDs for music and VHS tapes and DVDs for movies, piracy was simply an illegal reproduction of that physical

form of media. Copyright holders grew increasingly annoyed at piracy, but other than pushing for legislation that would punish those caught and convicted of piracy, little could be done. However, as modern society grew increasingly digital, more methods of preventing piracy became available. Movie companies began using region coding on DVDs, thus preventing users from watching a cheap copy of a movie they purchased legally or illegally from another country. Unfortunately for copyright holders, with the Internet's rise in popularity came a new medium through which to pirate and distribute copyrighted works, which include video games, movies, and music. Attempts to curb piracy, which is now almost entirely digital, through software and other means, have become more invasive and restrictive. With increased use of anti-piracy measures, many people are beginning to find the restrictive nature of such measures a hindrance to the use of the product they purchased.

For long-term use of anti-piracy measures to be justified, of course, the measures have to work. According to Mikhail Atalla in his article "Steal This Article: Battening Down the Digital Hatches," non-intrusive piracy protection exists and "delay[s]—and often entirely prevent[s]—the hacking of software" (28). This may be true. If a less experienced pirate is accustomed to cracking software that is unprotected, measures placed within the software to hinder piracy may either deter the pirate outright or it may prove to be too much of a hassle for the pirate to attempt to circumvent the measures.

However, anti-piracy measures have failed to significantly impact piracy, despite what Atallah believes. While intended to prevent piracy, DRM has not done so. Pirates have still discovered ways to get pass the DRM and illegally use the product supposedly protected. One study made of piracy rates concluded that from 2005 to 2006, piracy rates rose 15% (Atallah 26). At that time, application of anti-piracy measures in digital media increased. The implication is, of course, that the DRM being applied to various forms of digital media is not producing the desired results. Unfortunately, rights holders and big companies do not see this. They see the growing prevalence of piracy as a reason to increase the application and restrictive nature of anti-piracy measures. What had previously been only a minor annoyance in the form of a CD check or an authorization code has now become larger issue in the form of restricted use and software-protective measures, such as a limited number of installations. Rights holders insist that such increased restrictions are necessary evils to protect their revenue. Of course, to say that anti-piracy measures do not impact piracy at all would be difficult to prove, as hard, unquestionable data on issues regarding piracy and financial gains and losses is currently unavailable, as reported by Erasmus University assistant professor Christian Handke (392). Perhaps another reason for the unsuccessful nature of anti-piracy measures currently in use is that, as Forbes video game and business writer Paul Tassi argues, piracy will never go away, no matter what is implemented to prevent it (n. pag.). Someone somewhere will always prefer a

free copy of copyrighted software, and no matter what measure is used, another person will be ready to crack the software and offer it for free or for a discounted price. While such is a sad truth, it is one that should be considered by rights holders in their decisions about piracy prevention measures, especially considering more money is required to implement such measures (Handke 390).

The problems with anti-piracy measures are also at risk of being exacerbated by legislation. That is not to say that legislation has not already contributed in some way to the problems of anti-piracy measures. According to Professor of Law Steve P. Calandrillo and law clerk Ewa M. Davison, the intended purpose of the Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA), an act signed into law in 1998 (354) as the first major legislative attempt at thwarting piracy, was to protect copyright holders without hindering the users of copyrighted works (360). The first major issue related to the DMCA came about when a person on the Internet who called himself AiboPet hacked the Sony Corporation-produced Aibo and developed enhancements for the robotic toy, which he then provided to other Aibo users via the Internet. Sony claimed that the enhancements were illegal according to the DMCA and wanted AiboPet to pull all the enhancement programs off the Internet. Fortunately for AiboPet, the many people who enjoyed the enhancements were able to convince Sony to back off (Calandrillo and Davison 353-354). Still, the DMCA had almost been the cause of a developer-consumer conflict over programs that should have been protected by fair use rights, especially considering the programs did not harm Sony's sales or profit AiboPet in any way (Calandrillo and Davison 353). Unfortunately, the DMCA has since been used many times to hinder fair use because the act considers illegal any circumvention of technology protection measures (TPMs), even if such circumvention is not committed with the intent to harm the developer of the copyrighted product.

However, interpretation of the DMCA in the last few years has become less harmful in regards to fair use—just in time for legislators to attempt to pass two acts that would be significantly more restrictive than the DMCA ever was. The Senate's version of the act, the Protect IP Act (PIPA), did well and was passed to the House of Representatives, according to Reihan Salam and Patrick Ruffini in their article "Innovate or Legislate" (n. pag.) The House's version was changed to the Stop Online Piracy Act (SOPA), but unlike PIPA, SOPA did not do as well (Salam and Ruffini n. pag.). Essentially, SOPA would allow rights holders to take legal action against any Internet site suspected of containing copyrighted content (Salam and Ruffini n. pag.). Thus, rights holders would be given incredible power to regulate the Internet. However, this legislative form of piracy prevention received a swift reaction from Internet sites and users. In January, strong opposition to SOPA was displayed in the blackouts of over 100,000 websites (Salam and Ruffini n. pag.). This caused many of SOPA's backers to withdraw their support of the bill (Salam and Ruffini n. pag.). Thus, some comfort can be taken in the fact that while legislation

has the potential to exacerbate the problems of piracy protection, it is also influenced by the people it would affect, allowing for a check in the legislative process.

Perhaps a more important aspect of anti-piracy measures to consider when deciding on its implementation is the impact on consumers and users of copyrighted works. Atallah states that the purpose of anti-piracy measures should be to protect the software or other form of digital work from piracy without negatively affecting the user of the product (28). In her essay "Broadcast Flags and the War against Digital Piracy: A Solution or Dilemma for the Digital Age?", Debra Kaplan argues that both rights holders and users should be protected (344), even if that protection requires some type of concession on one or both sides. Thus, a "delicate balance" would be reached (Kaplan 344). However, the ideal anti-piracy measure is no longer ideal for both rights holders and consumers. Methods of preventing piracy are becoming more restrictive, and fair use is taking backseat to the protection of copyrights. An example of the restrictive nature of DRM is the video game *Spore*. Prior to its release, it gained much popularity. Pre-release hype rose to an incredible level, and many game players awaited their chance to play the game. However, when it was finally released, it came packaged with a program called SecuROM, which was necessary for the game's installation. While many game players were annoyed at the need for an additional program, they were even more annoyed at the fact that the program limited the number of times the game could be installed (Hoffman 17). Such restrictions essentially limited the extent to which game players could use the product they had legally purchased.

A similar situation arises with regional coding on a DVD. The code that is programmed into the disk itself communicates with the device attempting to access the data on the DVD. If the code on the disk does not recognize the device, the data cannot be accessed. While the regions are generally countries, and thus do not have much effect on the average consumer, the fact that the limitation is in place causes some to question its need.

Unfortunately, reactions to such anti-piracy measures are not limited to personal annoyance and public outcry. After *Spore's* release, many game players were understandably angered. Many were not satisfied to just be angry, however. Thus, *Spore* piracy rates began to rise. The game could be found on the Internet for free—and devoid of SecuROM (Hoffman 17). The reasons for such high piracy rates varied, no doubt. Some game players may have just wanted a copy of the game that was not limited in the number of times it could be installed. If a person buys a game, he should reasonably expect to be able to install it on any computer he owns. It could even be argued that he should, if he wants, be able to lend it to a friend. With the limited installations, however, this would be difficult. Anger, though, was probably the more likely reason. According to Atallah, for anti-piracy measures to be successful, they must be implemented in a way that

does not interfere with the use or function of the product. More importantly, the measures should respect the products' consumers and not betray the trust built between the consumer and the company that made the product (28). In the case of *Spore*, the game's developer implied that they did not trust their consumers to not pirate the game. While it is true that some would pirate the game, essentially punishing honest consumers because of dishonest consumers is not fair. If Paul Tassi is right that piracy cannot be stopped (n. pag.), as he appears to be, then implementing anti-piracy measures, especially heavily restrictive ones such as SecuROM, is pointless and only harms those who choose not to pirate (n. pag.). While *Spore* is a popular example of the possible results of harsh piracy prevention restrictions, it is not the only example. Neither are video games the only medium in which this happens. Music and movies are also susceptible to increased piracy due to anti-piracy measures, even if to a lesser extent when compared to video games. Thus, anti-piracy measures can inadvertently encourage piracy.

With so many problems with and stemming from anti-piracy measures, a solution is needed. It might be possible to develop some anti-piracy measure that hinders piracy, as it should, but does not hinder the user. Atallah's vision of the ideal copyright protection scheme would be fulfilled: rights holders would be satisfied and users would be able to enjoy the product without any restrictions or frustrations. Unfortunately, with the unsuccessful push in the last few years toward developing copyright protection measures that completely prevent piracy, such a solution seems impossible, at least for the next few years. A solution that seems more likely to be successful, but would not be favored by rights holders, is a complete cessation of the use of anti-piracy measures. Based on the evidence so far, this solution would be the most beneficial to rights holders and consumers. Consumers would be free of the restrictions that come with anti-piracy measures, and thus would be more likely to purchase the product. Rights holders would still suffer from some piracy, but it would no doubt be significantly less than when anti-piracy measures were used. Consumers and rights holders would profit financially, as well. With no money spent on anti-piracy measures and their implementation, the digital media could theoretically be sold for less money. This would allow for a greater number of people to buy the product. Even with a price lowering, then, rights holders would increase their profits. Another possible solution, at least for movies and video games, could be lower budgets. As Paul Tassi argues, many decent, low-budget movies have been made (n. pag.). With lower budgets come lower prices, and thus a greater incentive to pay for a product instead of pirate it.

Anti-piracy measures are unsuccessful, invasive, and can even be counterproductive. Often, however, rights holders do not see this, and instead they attempt to protect their copyrights using anti-piracy measures. The effects are more far-reaching than just simple restrictions on digital products. The threat anti-piracy measures pose on the unrestricted and fair use of digital

media is important because our society is becoming increasingly digital, with much reliance on technology and its use. Users of digital media should not be hindered by rights holders whose sole goals are to protect their profits. Granted, rights holders should be able to do just that, but not at the expense of users' rights. In the end, piracy will, as Paul Tassi argues, persist (n. pag.). If rights holders would realize this, perhaps they would cease using anti-piracy measures. Not only would that do service to digital media consumers, but it might also do service to the rights holders themselves.

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# Myths, Medicine, and Psychotherapy: MDMA Changes Lives for the Better

**Breanna Fields**

*This paper was nominated by Professor Gloria Dumler.*

Advertisements and campaigns dominate a vast amount of media that circulates within our culture. It is so deeply integrated into society that it is difficult for one to determine the legitimacy of information that is thrust upon us through commercials, radio advertising, magazines, and a range of other mediums. Many diverse techniques have been explored in an attempt to reach the public to either promote a product or cause. In all of the strategizing that we can observe going on in the world, it is important that humanity makes an effort to analyze and conduct their own research into the accuracy of what is being said, whether it be from television, newspapers, or magazines. There have been many myths surrounding the substance MDMA (3,4-Methylenedioxymethamphetamine). A television program on MTV presents shocking PET-Scan results; a newspaper article from *The Sydney Morning Herald* claims that it causes Parkinson's disease symptoms. The accuracy of data has also been questioned in more than one circumstance. Even though experiments have been conducted in order to assess long-term damage, scientists and psychiatrists are still working to verify data. False information in media has consequently resulted in the substance being labeled as a Schedule I drug, disqualifying it for medical use. MDMA has been utilized successfully in a therapeutic setting and should be put back on the market as a therapy tool due to its value in treating Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and a variety of phobias; it has not been confirmed to cause long-term damage in humans.

Familiarizing oneself with the history of MDMA is essential in order to obtain a clear understanding of when it was synthesized and why this "love-drug" has consequently been declared a Schedule I substance. The history of MDMA began in the twentieth century and it was synthesized sometime before 1912. In an attempt to create a medication to stop bleeding, Merck, a German pharmaceutical company, discovered MDMA. It was included on the patent application for the chemical hydrastinin (Beck). The patent has expired since it was received in 1914. MDMA was not marketed as an appetite suppressant or used during World War I. MDA (its chemical cousin) was tested as an appetite suppressant, which could be the reason that these ideas have spread (Holland). Sasha Shulgin, the chemist who synthesized MDMA in 1976, described it as "an easily controlled altered state of consciousness with emotional and sensual overtones" (qtd. in Holland). Shulgin introduced MDMA to other therapists, which led to increased psychotherapeutic work during the seventies and eighties (Holland). Therapists

initially referred to MDMA as Adam (Metzner and Adamson). Those who consumed the substance recreationally called it Ecstasy (Eisner).

Drug scheduling is determined by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration. Substances are categorized by their potential for addiction and whether or not they have any medical use (Holland). Some of the more common Schedule I drugs include MDMA, Heroin, DMT, PCP, and LSD (Drug). In a case where public health is at risk, the U.S. Attorney General can schedule a drug for one year on an emergency basis. Due to the increased consumption of MDMA, the government did so. After the one year period had expired, it was extended for another six months. Francis Young, the administrative law judge on the case stated, "The evidence of record does not establish that MDMA has a high potential for abuse. It cannot be placed in Schedule I because it does have a currently accepted medical use in treatment and it does have accepted safety for use under medical supervision." Regardless of the judges recommendation, the DEA still had sole power and placed MDMA permanently as a Schedule I drug on November 13, 1986 (Holland).

It is important to make the distinction between MDMA (also known as "Molly") and Ecstasy. Studies that refer to MDMA as Ecstasy are inaccurate. MDMA is the pure, unadulterated substance. A.C. Parrott, from the University Of Wales Department Of Psychology, describes Ecstasy as the street form of the drug which may or may not contain the pure substance MDMA (Parrott 234). Ecstasy tablets are generally cut with amphetamine, caffeine, aspirin, DXM (cough syrup), or a variety of other adulterants.

Another essential element in understanding the effects of MDMA is knowing the difference between physically and psychologically addictive substances. MDMA can be psychologically addictive for some users due to a variety of factors that do not always come as a result of the substance itself. A person's genetics and the environment that they exist within can be contributing aspects. Psychologically addictive drugs do not cause physical withdrawal symptoms, but can lead users to want to continue consuming the drug due to its satisfying characteristics. Julie Holland is a psychiatrist who received her M.D. from Temple University in 1992, made multiple television appearances (discussing MDMA and Cannabis), and has contributed articles to publications, which include the *Wall Street Journal*, *Lancet*, *Journal of Psychoactive Drugs*, *Journal of the American Association of Emergency Psychiatry*, *MAPS Bulletin*, and *Los Angeles Times*. She discusses the role of addiction by stating that "the use of almost any substance can become compulsive and excessive in some people" (Holland). With repeated use, the initial "love" effects of the substance can fade. In an attempt to revive the initial experience, users may ingest more of the drug. Those who attend parties and consume drugs rarely ingest pure MDMA. Statistics regarding MDMA within that atmosphere are

questionable. Polydrug use is not uncommon; therefore, it is difficult to come to a conclusion based solely off of those cases reported. It is possible for street pills to be cut with amphetamine-like substances which have proven to be harmful and physically addictive. Substances that cause physical addiction make it difficult to function without the drug. "Stopping," according to the Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research, "may cause intense cravings and make you feel physically ill" ("Symptoms").

Many studies have been conducted in an attempt to prove that MDMA causes long term damage. Thus far, it has been an unsuccessful endeavor in the world of science. George Ricaurte, a neurologist at the John Hopkins University School of Medicine, released an article titled, "Severe Dopaminergic Neurotoxicity in Primates After a Common Recreational Dose Regimen of MDMA." The article was eventually retracted due to an alleged mislabeled bottle. The vial was said to contain MDMA, but instead it contained Methamphetamine. The drug supplier was Research Triangle Institute (RTI). A spokesperson for RTI stated that, "We are conducting a thorough review of our procedures, even though we do not have any evidence that an error occurred at RTI." Ricaurte was unable to repeat the same results when administering MDMA to primates (Holden).

It is not farfetched to say that those who attempt to determine whether or not MDMA is safe provide data based on biased factors. The initial decision to place MDMA as a Schedule I drug was based on data from the substance MDA (Holland). A Schedule I drug must also have no medical value. Before it was illegal, MDMA was used in therapy with positive results. Holland discusses the accuracy of data provided to the public:

Scientific research is done for the public good, though it, too, can be influenced by various factors. Most human reports are gathered retrospectively, that is, data are collected after the fact. For this reason, collected data are often incomplete. For example, not all serotonin syndrome cases record the patient's muscle tone, and not all hyperthermia case reports included information about whether the patient had been dancing. Such missing pieces limit any conclusion that may be drawn from the report (Holland).

Ruth Pollard, a communications major and journalist for *The Sydney Morning Herald*, wrote an article titled "Study Links Ecstasy to Parkinson's Symptoms" which used research conducted by George Ricaurte as the focal point (Pollard). Pollard is a journalist with no connection to the medical or scientific field. Ricaurte's statement in regards to Parkinsonism claimed that, "...some humans with a history of MDMA abuse have developed Parkinsonism" (Holden 1454). This is another questionable piece of information proposed by the neurologist. Those who he referred to as having a history of MDMA abuse were most likely using street drugs, as pure MDMA is

difficult to acquire outside of a laboratory setting. Street pills are cut with various substances (as previously discussed) in order to gain higher profit. Methamphetamine (often found in Ecstasy) can cause reduced levels of dopamine which can result in Parkinson's disease symptoms. Although scientists do not know the cause of the disease, they have discovered that it is damaged dopamine neurons. MDMA does not damage those neurons in any part of the brain (Holland).

Another shocking rumor surrounding MDMA is that the substance has the ability to put holes in the brain. While over the years this assertion may have scared more than one naïve person, had further research been conducted, they would find out the origins of such a rumor. MTV aired a story featuring a woman with a history of polydrug use. The program displayed a PET-scan with what looked like segments of missing brain tissue. This was, of course, not the case. The alleged holes were actually areas with low blood flow, which can be misleading to the untrained eye when viewing PET-scan results (Holland). Another similar scenario occurred on an episode of Oprah's television show. Two PET-scans were displayed: one brain from a normal patient, the other from a girl who had consumed a number of drugs including Ecstasy. The images show low blood flow in areas of the second patient's brain. It could be easily misinterpreted as missing areas in the brain (Does).

The adverse effects of MDMA are still unknown. The number of MDMA users has also not been determined, though it is believed that consumption has increased over the years. Data is difficult to interpret due to the fact that we often rely on clinical information from patients in different environments and circumstances (Holland). A table of studies has been compiled by Mathew Baggot and John Mendelson, M.D., in an attempt to assess the long-term behavioral or functional changes in multiple species of rats and monkeys after a specific dose of MDMA has been administered over a period of time. The studies involved Rhesus monkeys, Sprague-Dawley rats, Wistar rats, Long-Evans rats, and Lister-Hooded rats. For the first experiment, ten milligrams of MDMA were administered to Rhesus monkeys twice a day for four days in 1998 by Frederick, et al. Post one month, the monkeys displayed drug-free performance on all tasks. They received escalating doses twice daily for fourteen consecutive days and again displayed drug-free performance on all tasks. Sprague-Dawley rats received twenty milligrams of MDMA twice a day for four days in 2000 by Byrne, et al. This study resulted in two of the eight rats being unable to pass the lever pressing task with twenty-second delays during an eight hour session at post fourteen days. In 1992, the same species of rats were tested by Callaway and Geyer. At twenty-one days, the rats displayed "drug-free locomotion." In 1998 ten milligrams of MDMA was administered to Wistar rats once a day for four days by Dafters and Lynch. These rats showed increased temperature when placed in twenty-two degrees Celsius or twenty-eight degrees Celsius ambient temperature at post four or fourteen weeks. No significantly different

measures were observed. In 1991, Dornan, et al. gave Long-Evans rats doses of forty milligrams of MDMA twice a day for four days. This study showed no significant effects of MDMA exposure, although at post ten days sexual behaviors and spontaneous motor activity was observed. Marstal, et al. studied Lister Hooded rats in 1999 by administering an ascending regimen of ten, fifteen, and twenty milligrams of MDMA, each dose given twice daily for one day. These rats displayed decreased performance in the task they were assigned to perform post twelve days. Spontaneous behavior and body temperature was observed post sixteen days. In 1998 another experiment involving Sprague-Dawley rats was performed. Nencini, et al. gave the rats twenty milligrams of MDMA twice a day for four days, which resulted in the observation of drug-free behavior in the tail flick test. The tail flick test is a meter used to measure latency and/or temperature threshold when narcotics are detected in mice or rats (Baggot and Mendelson).

It is crucial to realize that the results of these experiments can vary due to many factors. The environment, stress level, temperature, and species are just a few examples of what could influence the results. With that said, we must not disqualify the information in order to make an educated decision when evaluating the safety of such a substance. There is no proof that a single therapeutic dose of MDMA (about 125 mg) would be harmful to the nervous system. Animal studies involve "repeated high-dose injections...The changes reported do not involve the cell body but rather the tail, or axon terminals, of the nerves" (Holland). From this we can conclude that the likelihood of damage from a therapeutic dose of MDMA is quite low.

Prior to being labeled a Schedule I substance in 1986, MDMA was utilized during the '70s and '80s as a therapeutic tool with phenomenal results. The long-term goal of psychotherapy can be accurately described as helping patients come to terms with themselves, as well as their problems, and taking steps to solve it. Holland accurately sums up the four ways that MDMA-assisted psychotherapy acts as a catalyst in helping resolve problems ranging from anxiety, mental illness, and social phobias: connection, recall, insight, and acceptance. MDMA's empathetic qualities enable patients to build better relationships with their therapist, family, and friends. Having the ability to recall insight gained under that state of mind is crucial in the continuation of positive outcomes reached during a therapeutic session. Gaining insight and self-acceptance into ones problems allows for the reflection without the ego getting involved (Holland).

George Greer, M.D., is a psychiatrist in private practice. He works part time at a treatment center for post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). He also conducted MDMA-assisted therapeutic sessions with patients during the period in which it was legal in the United States. MDMA-assisted psychotherapy "...speeded up the process by reducing defenses" (Greer). MDMA is a non-sedating anxiolytic, which means a drug that decreases anxiety. In therapy, it is crucial that

defenses are reduced in order to gain a clear understanding or insight into problems which include social relationships, mental illness, and a variety of other problems. In an interview on the results of MDMA-assisted psychotherapy, Greer addresses the question of whether or not the knowledge people gain in that state of mind is long-lasting, "Yes, I think it's possible...it all depends on the people and their intention, their willingness, to work it out." MDMA administered just once in therapy has made it possible for people to understand, accept, and solve simple phobias, although it may take longer for those with more troubling problems such as PTSD (Holland).

PTSD is a disorder that can develop when a person goes through a traumatic experience. Psychological anxiety also occurs which can cause flashbacks and other elements of mental and emotional instability (Holland). Greer discusses a case in which MDMA was administered to a woman who had been raped. She was able to "relive the aspects of the rape itself, and resolve a lot of it." After the session her symptoms and flashbacks were gone (Greer). A patient's ability to understand reasoning and behavior may also make MDMA a useful tool in helping to treat eating disorders. It would enable patients to feel self-acceptance so they could come to terms with such illnesses (Holland). MDMA may also be able to help people who suffer from schizophrenia, as it lowers defenses so that they would be able to gain insight into their disease, though this has not been tested. MDMA can also be used in palliative care, "to ease suffering of those who are dying" as well as unfinished business (Holland). With MDMA used as a therapeutic tool, the possibilities are limitless.

The Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies (MAPS) is an organization that funds clinical trials around the world and studies the therapeutic use of MDMA in helping patients with PTSD. Researchers at MAPS state that, "MDMA has proven sufficiently safe for human consumption when taken a limited number of times in moderate doses" (Multidisciplinary). MAPS is working on a plan to gain the FDA's approval to make MDMA a prescription medicine. The reason this may be difficult is that since the patent has expired, for-profit pharmaceutical companies cannot make enough earnings from a medicine that is only administered a certain number of times (Multidisciplinary). The use of MDMA should be further researched in an effort to legalize the substance for therapeutic work.

MDMA, a drug that has proven to have countless therapeutic benefits for those who suffer from PTSD, social phobias, and other mental illnesses has become a Schedule I drug, disqualifying it for medical use. The controversy surrounding whether or not it is a safe substance to administer to patients seems to have enough support scientifically to prove that a single therapeutic dose (125 milligrams) is not harmful in humans. The accuracy of information has been questioned for years, leading to the retracted study by George Ricaurte and experiments conducted with

varying results due to environment, temperature, and other factors. Many myths have been expelled, leaving humanity with a greater sense of the potential that MDMA possesses. While scientists still continue to conduct research, the outcome of past therapeutic sessions seems to say it all: MDMA is a drug that has changed the lives of countless individuals in a positive way within, and outside of, a therapeutic setting.

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# Technology and the Decadence of Individual Rights

## Lydia Martinez

*After participating in her high school's national-qualifying "We The People..." team, Lydia developed a keen interest in politics and Constitutional debates. Therefore, researching the topic of national surveillance for her research paper in English B1A with Professor Bradley Stiles was a great pleasure. Lydia is seventeen years old. She graduated in 2012 from Centennial High School. She plans on getting her bachelor's degree in biology before moving on to medical school to become a pediatrician. This paper was nominated by Professor Brad Stiles.*

"In framing a government which is to be administered by men over men the great difficulty lies in this: You must first enable the government to control the governed, and in the next place, oblige it to control itself."

-James Madison, Federalist #51

As seemingly tangible evidence of a promising and greatly developed future society, technological advancement and innovation is typically celebrated and generously compensated by our contemporaries. In fact, individuals with a remarkable technological genius are deeply respected and almost venerated for their creations. Modern technology is, undeniably, used at the advantage of the American public, as it aids not only in disburdening the general population of the inconvenience of quotidian chores and in facilitating the accessibility of luxurious commodities to the lower classes but it also encourages the progression of the globalization of our society. Naturally, the government has also begun to have ready access to the newest technology and has thus begun to implement it into domestic as well as international policies. However, recent observations by learned scholars have revealed a rather disturbing trend in the usage by government of these devices. They have discovered that instead of protecting and furthering the fundamental ideals of individual rights and limited government that are ingrained in the Constitution, our government has used technology to bypass a myriad of restrictions in surveilling common civilians--all in the name of security and efficiency. This newly-developed form of governance has been termed "The National Surveillance State." Amongst the citizens of this country, there is a growing concern for the issue of privacy with such a pervasive form of surveillance, as they feel that they are experiencing a severe infringement on rights that they had previously considered impenetrable. In order to address these concerns, Congress must enact legislation that seeks to reconcile the government's use of technology to our Constitutional values.

In the foundation of the American government, there exists tension between the values of privacy and protection. The conflict arises from one of the ideas that not only was the basis of the Declaration of Independence but also was greatly influential in the drafting of our Constitution: John Locke's natural rights philosophy. This philosophy states that the primary purpose of government is to protect its people's inalienable rights to life, liberty, and property (Leeson 17). Among other reasons, the thirteen colonies fought for independence from Britain because the British monarch did not provide them with the protection of these rights. Therefore, variations of these three natural rights have been acknowledged through enumeration in the Bill of Rights of the United States Constitution and through judicial interpretation by the Supreme Court. Despite its apparent clarity, this fundamental theory has proven to have multiple interpretations, as it has been cited in arguments both in favor and against the ubiquitous surveillance state.

Those that approve of mass surveillance argue in favor of prioritizing safety over individual rights in times of imminent threat, as they believe it a necessary measure to protect those rights. To support their arguments, they point out successes in crime rate reduction by surveillance. One case that is referenced quite often is Chicago's first pilot program for Police Observation Devices in 2003. The data analysis after the installation of cameras in Humboldt Park, one of the local Chicago parks, suggest that this form of surveillance played an important role in controlling crime, as "cameras alone were likely responsible for a nearly 12 percent drop in the crime rate," and a twenty percent decrease in violent crimes, in particular (La Vigne). It is rather appealing to the American public to give up some liberties in exchange for a sense of security. In regards to suspicionless searches at airports, Ben Shapiro, "the youngest nationally syndicated columnist in the United States, states that "[e]ffective law enforcement should supersede individual 'rights'...when...human lives are at stake" (Shapiro 47, 49).

The superior efficiency of crime prevention in a state of surveillance as compared to that of a government in which individual rights are given priority is indisputable. However, within John Locke's philosophy are the concepts of individualism, limited government, and private property, and "[e]ach of these guiding ideas had a common purpose: to free citizens from unlimited surveillance and control that had been exercised over 'subjects' by the kings, lords, churches, guilds, and municipalities of European society" (Westin 330). Therefore, the use of ubiquitous surveillance for efficiency in government arguably does not concur with the natural rights philosophy.

One of the most important ideals that our nation prides itself in claiming to uphold and defend is American individualism. This concept signifies individuality not only as a nation but as individual citizens of that nation. Many scholars have cited the unenumerated right to privacy

from government, recognized in the Supreme Court case of *Griswold v. Connecticut*, as a fundamental factor in the prosperity of American individualism (Westin 355). In today's society, where technological developments have caused the rapid transition of our government into the extremely invasive national state of surveillance, the right to privacy is suffering a great danger. As Balkin states in his essay, "[i]n practice, much privacy depends on forgetting" (13). By this, he means that when data of our activities is permanently archived, we lose that aspect of privacy and therefore, degrade the value of American individualism.

Another fundamental principle that is central to the United States constitution is the idea of a limited government. Its essentiality is reflected in Federalist Paper No. 45, in which James Madison, under the pseudonym of Publius, assures the American public that the then proposed Constitution did not enlarge the powers of the federal government, but that it instead "substitute[d] a more affectual mode of administering them." Former president Ronald Reagan also supported this ideal when he stated, "Man is not free until government is limited. As government expands, liberty contracts." Through the expansion of surveillance, there occurs an increase in governmental power. Therefore, this practice conflicts with the Constitutional principle of a limited government. Furthermore, the national surveillance state does not only violate abstract ideas within the Constitution, but it also infringes upon rights guaranteed to the American people by the Bill of Rights and by judicial interpretation.

The first amendment to the Constitution states that "Congress shall make no law...abridging the freedom of speech." After a series of incorporation cases, the rights granted in the Bill of Rights expanded to apply to any situation in which there was state action: anytime governments or its agents were involved (Monk 127). Therefore, it has been argued that national surveillance infringes upon the right to free speech. This is because "knowing that you are being watched by armed government agents tends to put a damper on things...so you are not quite as free as you otherwise would be" (Sullum). This concept of limiting one's expression because one is being watched is known as the "chilling effect." Though some may argue that this is not a concrete consequence of surveillance, one must only look to the Constitutional Convention to realize the legitimacy of the chilling effect, as "[t]he Constitution of 1787...had itself been written behind closed doors; no reports were published, and all participants were sworn to secrecy, 'to preserve the fullest freedom of discussion'" (Westin 334).

National surveillance has proven to also violate the right to the free exercise of religion granted in the first amendment. Since 9/11, many Americans have grown unreasonably suspicious of all Muslims. However, the New York Police Department manifested their suspicions by following a Muslim group for no other reason than because they practiced Islam: Undercover officers and informants eavesdropped in Muslim cafes and monitored sermons, even when there was no

evidence of a crime. They infiltrated Muslim student groups, videotaped mosque-goers or collected their license plate numbers as they prayed. (Henry). This action by the NYPD is clearly unconstitutional, as it involved both state action and a serious infringement on these Muslims' freedom of religion. The fact that "the state's attorney general found that New York City police did not violate any laws in its surveillance of Muslim[s]...in New Jersey," an area clearly outside of their jurisdiction, demonstrates that surveillance has made acceptable a serious infringement of Americans' basic rights to the free exercise of religion--a right that early Americans fled Europe for.

The fourth amendment guarantees Americans the right "to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures." This amendment was included in the Bill of Rights because of the American experience of harassment by British soldiers through writs of assistance, warrants that allowed those officials to "search people, businesses, homes, and property indiscriminately" (Leeson 224). For many generations, the restrictions in this amendment proved to be sufficient to impede unreasonable searches. However, modern technology has presented a challenge to those restraints. Given the virtual and intangible nature of technology, government has found a loophole in this amendment. They have been able to search people without the physical invasion of their persons or property (protected by the fourth amendment), and, since the Patriot Act, also without their knowledge. These types of searches are so invasive that they are comparable to those by the British monarchy in colonial times. One example of the type of technology that is used to perform such searches is the Unmanned Aerial Vehicle, otherwise known as a drone. These aircrafts have been used by the military typically for spying, but they have recently started to percolate into everyday law enforcement throughout the country. One of the first cases in Washington that included a drone was the search of three suspects that had stolen six cows (Bennett). These invasive actions by government are seemingly only the beginning of future, more protruding actions, as The U.S. Department of Homeland Security, revealed its plans to spend thirty-six million dollars to "support ongoing projects to improve surveillance technologies to detect...threats" (U.S. Department of Homeland Security). Though some of these type of technological searches have been checked and limited by the Supreme Court, most recently by *US v. Jones* in which the use of unwarranted GPS tracking devices were prohibited, technology has far outpaced these rulings and government continues being able to utilize invasive technology in their searches, such as the aforementioned drones.

The government is not the only institution that is collecting and analyzing data from the American public. Private corporations are also surveilling their customers for their own financial profitability. However, many of them also later sell the collected data to government institutions. This provides the government an avenue through which they can bypass the

restrictions placed on them by the fourth amendment, as there is no direct state action in this process of attainment of this information. One of the most recent and highly controversial case is the unacknowledged partnership between the National Security Agency and Google. Though this partnership is not the only one that exists between a governmental institution and a private corporation, it has captured the attention of many because of the court's decision to not require the U.S. authorities to disclose any information on the communication it has with Google (Mears). Furthermore, a bill that is currently being debated in the Senate, CISPA, will make it "easier than ever to share information between different government agencies, departments, and corporations" (Gerstein). If CISPA becomes a law, then it will simply provide another way through which government can outsource to private corporations and continue with its blatant and indirect constitutional violations.

National Surveillance has also allowed for the abridgment of the right to due process. This right guarantees all people the right to a fair court hearing before being deprived of life, liberty, or property. This was seen in the recent killing of American-born Anwar Al-Awlaki. He was working with the terrorist group, Al Qaeda, in Yemen when he was killed by a drone strike ordered by our own government (Mazzetti). The national government believed itself justified with its explanation that he was too much of a threat to our national security. Unfortunately, a large majority of the American public accepted this explanation and failed to give importance to the serious infringement on his right to due process and focused more on their irrational fear of terrorism.

Lastly, given that Article VI of the United States Constitution states that the Constitution is "the supreme law of the land," it becomes evident that by allowing the government to ignore Constitutional rights, one is essentially lessening this document's authority. Also, taking into account that "[t]he whole network of American constitutional rights--especially those of free speech, press, assembly, and religion;...[and] securing 'persons, houses, papers and effects' from unreasonable search and seizure--was created to curtain the ancient surveillance claims of governmental authorities," one realizes that government surveillance in the form that it exists today is unconstitutional, and must be regulated (Westin 57).

The Supreme Court has been unable to effectively check unconstitutional action, for the reason that they can only rule on the constitutionality of cases when they are brought to their court. Thus, it can be said that their reactive nature permits them only to trail far behind the quick-developing technology. Congress, on the other hand, has the power to propose bills without previous challenges. In addition, Congress, as the branch that is "close to the people" has the duty to defend them against violations of their rights (Monk 27). Thus, the Legislative branch is

the branch that is the most suitable to create laws that regulate national surveillance to more adequately conform to the Constitution.

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# What Some People Fail to Remember About the Reconstruction Period After the Civil War

## Stacie Norris

*Stacie Norris is married and a mother of 3 teenagers. She is a freshman at Bakersfield College and has finally begun to appreciate the learning experience. Stacie looks forward to the wonderful possibilities that CAN and WILL come her way with a formal education. This essay was written for History 17b taught by Professor Erin Miller. The topic was Reconstruction, did it fail or succeed?*

Have you ever heard the phrase, "A journey begins with a single step"? Whoever coined this phrase could have been speaking of the Reconstruction of the South after the civil War. Many people today would argue that Reconstruction failed miserably. I myself thought this very way until recently. Once I took a hard and honest look at Reconstruction and the intended purpose, I was persuaded to change my mind. Although there were set backs and some opposition, a lot of good things came out of Reconstruction. The Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments to the constitution were created, the North and South were united, and a stronger Federal Government was established. All of these accomplishments far outweighed the setbacks and oppositions and that is why I believe that Reconstruction was a success.

All three of these Amendments to the Constitution were necessary and played an important role of 'making wrongs right'. The Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States was the first of three Amendments adopted after the Civil War. Unlike the Emancipation Proclamation (an order that proclaimed freedom for slaves only in certain states), the Thirteenth Amendment officially outlawed slavery and involuntary servitude everywhere in the United States. As to be expected when change sometimes occurs, this Amendment was not embraced or received well by all. Black Codes were introduced and meant to limit the freedom that was granted by the thirteenth Amendment. Blacks were forced to abide by curfews, sign labor contracts, and still denied the right to vote. In another attempt to make things better for blacks, the government introduced the Freedmen Bureau. This was a program ran by the government meant to help the recently freed slaves adapt to their new freedom. Aid was in the form of food, housing, education, and healthcare. In response to blacks receiving aid, one white southerner's testimony to Congress was that "the negroes under the influence of the Freedmen's Bureau do worse than without it." This was the attitude of many southerners, yet the country forged ahead with sights on making life better for Blacks. The Fourteenth Amendment granted citizenship to all persons born or naturalized in the United States. This brought the states a step closer to ensuring equality for all, including blacks. This Amendment also offered Due Process (a clause

that prohibits state and local governments from depriving persons of life, liberty, or property). The Fifteenth Amendment put a stop to the government denying citizens the right to vote based on their race, color, or anyone that was previously a slave. Once the Civil War was over and reconstruction was underway, how were the North and South going to make nice with one another? Many of the states (North and South) had their own interpretation of the law and what it meant. Abraham Lincoln, who later became the President of the United States in 1858, said it best in a speech made to Congress, "A nation divided against itself cannot stand" and the Civil War proved that point too well.

During the reconstruction period, many white southerners were fearful of the many changes that were sure to come. There were government aided programs put into place to assist the newly freed black slaves. When a member of Congress asked a man by the name of Caleb Forshey about the Freedmen's Bureau (A program aimed at helping blacks become self-sufficient), Forshey said it was unnecessary and did not improve the lifestyle. In spite of troubles between the North and the South, black and white, they did join together to bring the Republican Party to power. In the decade following the end of the Civil War, organizations of Veterans of the North and South were formed. There was a grand reunion and former soldiers from the North and the South met at Gettysburg for the Anniversary Celebration and grand reunion in 1913. Men formally joined in a singular purpose of National Unification and peace.

The United States established a strong central government after the Civil War. Power shifted away from the states over to the Federal Government. Many thought too much power in the hands of the state government would eventually lead the nations back into another Civil War. Legislation, courts, and the Bill of Rights would protect the rights of the citizens.

We as a Nation have come a long way. By any means do not grow weary because there is still much work to be done. If we don't despise the small beginnings, we can see some good things that came out of The Reconstruction Period. In his speech, "What Black Men Want" Frederick Douglas said, "This War, which began in the interest of slavery on both sides, bids fair to end in the interest of liberty on both sides"

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# Personal Responsibility

## Jacqueline Bagala

*This paper was nominated by Professor Ann Tatum.*

We live in a world where personal responsibility is becoming a foreign subject. Just the other day I listened to a conversation between my mother and my little brother. My brother was trying to finish his homework and my mother was trying to explain to him what he was doing wrong. Out of frustration he crumpled up his paper and threw it across the table. When my brother realized he messed up his work he looked at my mom and screamed, "Look what you made me do!" This is just a simple example of how individuals do not take personal responsibility for their own actions. What we need to understand is no one can be personally responsible for our own actions; only you can create the outcome of your life.

We strip ourselves of our own personal responsibility by the way we align ourselves to groups. In Doris Lessing's essay "Group Minds," she states that "When we're in a group we tend to think as a group does: we may even have joined the group to find „like-minded" people. But we also find our thinking changing because we belong to a group" (159). Later on in the essay she continues to argue, "Many agree that among our most shameful memories is how often we said black was white because other people were saying it" (160). When we merge ourselves into a group we tend to take on the group's mentality. We find that we no longer have our own thoughts and opinions but we copy those around us. This can lead to the loss of our responsibility for our actions. An example of someone who lost their identity after joining a group is C.P. Ellis. Once a member of the Ku Klux Klan, Ellis realized that his racist actions were not all his own, but the attitude of his group. In Studs Terkel's interview with Ellis, Terkel quotes Ellis declaring, "I didn't know who to blame. I tried to find somebody. I began to blame it on black people...The natural person for me to hate would be black people, because my father before me was a member of the Klan...I joined the Klan" (400-401). Ellis joined the Klan because he felt he could identify with them. However, after a while he came to terms with the fact that he wasn't taking responsibility for his actions. By the end of the interview Ellis recognized that he was blindly following his group and forming his actions based on what the others wanted. Therefore, when someone follows a group they lose their personal responsibility and they end up letting the group control the outcome of their life.

Sometimes as individuals we find ourselves blaming our actions on authority. American social psychologist, Stanley Milgram, conducted a study demonstrating that humans are obedient to an authority figure. In the experiment the "learner" was strapped down to an electric chair. The

“teacher” was told to read a list of words and the learner is to repeat the second word in the list. If the learner fails to do so he will receive an electric shock giving to him by the teacher. A scientist will be watching this process and commanding the teacher to continue the shocks. What the teacher does not know is that the learner is an actor only pretending he or she is in pain from the shocks. Milgram wanted to see if humans will continue to shock someone else when an authority figure tells them to do so. One teacher in the experiment was Fred Prozi. Milgram describes a scene where Prozi protests against going on with administering the shocks to the learner. Prozi says, “I refuse to take the responsibility. He’s in there hollering!” (par. 31) In response the Scientist commands that Prozi must continue. Prozi then asks, “...who’s going to take the responsibility if anything happens to that gentleman?” (par. 37) The scientist assures Prozi that the responsibility will be his own, not Prozi’s. To that Prozi agrees: “All right” and continues to shock the learner (par. 39). Fred Prozi was alarmed that he was hurting this man, but he felt better when the responsibility of the man’s pain was on the scientist, not himself. This shows that humans will hurt another human if the responsibility is not their own. When told to do something unethical by authority, most people will be obedient. But to clear their conscience they will tell themselves they are only acting out what was commanded of them. They will push the responsibility of their actions onto authority, since they were only doing as told. Milgram goes to say that “The essence of obedience is that a person comes to see himself as the instrument carrying out another person’s wishes, and he therefore no longer regards himself as responsible for his actions” (par. 111). Milgram then concludes his article with a chilling comparison of the individuals in his experiment and those who helped Hitler kill millions in the concentration camps. Those Nazis butchered countless people a day, yet they justified their actions by the fact that they were only pursuing orders giving to them by authority (par. 121). The reality is that authority cannot determine your choices and individuals need to take responsibility for their actions.

“Look what you made me do!” Perhaps just like my brother, you have used this excuse for your own actions. You did not want to be accountable for your actions, so you found it easier to push the responsibility on to someone else. You might have blamed the group of people you hang out with. Or maybe you blamed your actions on an authority figure (after all they did tell you what to do). But in reality your actions are yours and yours alone. No one is personally responsible for your actions. Only you can create the outcome of your life.

# Featured Works

## Not From Here (But Chicken Sure is Tasty)

Winner: Writing Center Creative Writing Contest

### Jarad B. Mann

*Jarad B. Mann sees himself as a "present day Renaissance man and natural story teller who enjoys writing any genre." He is currently working on 3 novels and a book of poetry.*

If you are reading this, then my study of your world is complete. I am not from here. I can only be described in human terms as transcendental, though I do not consider myself, or my kind, Godlike. We can enter time and space whenever and wherever we choose. We find life and we live it. We simply exist. We hold to one responsibility, the insurance of life. After a study, it is common for my kind to search and jump until they find a new form to take, leaving the previous world relatively unaltered in anyway. Since the beginning we have vowed to protect the life that serves as host on our journeys. In the case of humanity, I am at a crossroads. Out of all the species on all the worlds throughout the universe, humanity is the only one I fear. It is my responsibility to prevent humanity from becoming a danger to the universe, but after living a human life the idea of destroying the Earth seems like madness.

I've worn this form for over eighty-five years, and now I feel its functions starting to fail. My time is at an end, as is my study of the Earth. There are seldom few planets with more than one form of life, whereas on Earth there are thousands, humans regard themselves as the dominating life form, though a few others would argue. What I see as synapses firings resulting from chemicals and molecules stirring in a water jelled container, humans regard as emotions and feelings.

These were unknown to me, but over the course of this life, I have learned about love and loss and have witnessed the constant balance the Earth is in, between the best and worst of humanity. Throughout the universe, never have I or any of my kind crossed paths with a species so complicated and intriguing as Human Beings. Though humans have proven to be capable of greatness, they have also demonstrated the capacity to become war mongering barbarians.

When this body was young and my study was in its infancy I witnessed my first form of human violence. A man killed a chicken. I saw the man snap the chickens neck and cut off its head with an axe.

He went on to pluck all its feathers and then dropped the corpse into a vat of boiling oil. Minutes later he pulled the bird free and began to eat it. So barbaric.

I can feel the inner workings of this body starting to shut down as I only have minutes left until this cycle is complete. Looking back now after what could be considered a wonderful life, I am

glad I chose not to decide your worlds fate simply based on the killing of that chicken. As it turns out, chicken is damn tasty even if you're not from here.

## Astral Plane

*Runner-up: Writing Center Creative Writing Contest*

### **April Orr**

Once upon a time, there lived a girl who only found refuge in her dreams...

At night, she sits at her windowsill and stares at the sky. Tonight the moon is carved into a crescent, she gazes as the soft clouds pass by. What she wouldn't give to be able to fly away from the life she has known. She reminisces the times as a young child believing there was a castle in the clouds and that someday she might find a way to get there. People were skipping, and dancing, and doing all sorts of wonderful things up there. She marveled in what it would be like. Until then, her only escape from this reality was initiated in her slumber. She could run fast and glide with the wind. She could speak to animals.

She found the other half of her heart. She ate sundaes for every meal. She reunited with her grandfather who had passed away. The options were endless.

When she awakened, her heart would fall into sorrow. It was only a dream. Why is this life the actual reality of it all? Why can't she miraculously speak several languages, dance to any beat, and see beyond her own looking glass? All she lived for was to work hard at a job that will never get her far. She cannot bear children, so she lives vicariously through her sister. The soul mate she dreamt of never materialized. She only had herself, and every night stared up at the same sky hoping for new change.

One night, while she tucked herself into her bed, she heard a surprising sound from the window. She looks up, and there is a bird whispering to her. She called out to it, confused of what she thought she heard. It spoke back. She rose from her bed and quickly moved to the window to get a better look at the bird. It stood there, dark but glowing, whispering some more. She nodded in agreement. Then it flew away. She looked up to the night and saw no moon. She understood what the bird had instructed her to do. She went back to bed and gradually fell asleep.

When she awoke, she recognized she was living her life in the wrong world. Her dreams WERE her reality and she was unconscious in her other life. She smiled and her heart literally warmed. A hand reached out, a young man, her soul mate, waiting to show her her life that was there all along.

# Labyrinth of Opportunity

*Runner-up: Writing Center Creative Writing Contest*

## **Varden Frias**

*Varden Frias is a 21 year old second year Bakersfield College student and has finished two unpublished novels. His desire is to major in Rangeland Resource Science and to pursue a bachelor's degree at Humboldt State University. "Labyrinth of Opportunity" is the first piece he has ever submitted for any form of public viewing. He is proud of receiving third place in the Writing Center's writing contest for September, 2012, and is eager to submit another work for the October contest.*

The ocular cavities in my skull shed no light on the world of the living, they only illumine the world that I inhabit now: The World of the Dead. I demand my eyelids to draw back, I cry with a useless voice box for my limbs to carry my body away from the ravens circling over my head in the gray sky. I can see the worms underneath my body waiting to eat my decomposing flesh and...wait! I see a black widow crawling over to me. It stands over my body, bearing its eight eyes into my core; judging my likeness in those red eyes. It does not waste time in greeting, nor introductions, for we both know each other's thoughts and why it is here.

My numb heart would race if I was alive, but alas I am dead. Only the cold shadow of terror is able to accompany me and this spider is here to take my essence away to another world. I plead, for I wish not to venture into neither Paradise nor the Inferno.

I see an apple tree not far from my dead body.

I sensed no objection from the spider and with this I summed up all of my strength to demand that my limbs move to take my essence to the tree. The spider above me reminded me that this journey to a final resting place will not be simple. My essence tried to throw itself around in the cage that my body made for it and if it were alive my insides would burn with rage. There was only the cold stillness of a dead body to answer. The spider over me turned to the ravens circling in the sky, soon they would be upon me to take me away.

A moment flashed, or perhaps it was an hour; a raven swooped down and perched on my bloodied chest and chanced a rough peck on the original wound that caused my death. The ravens came in by my side, one by one, each gathered on my chest over my heart and plucked at the blue film seeping from within it.

A beak against my heart; a living being would certainly scream at this, but could I?

The raven withdrew with the fibrous and pale essence; ready to deliver the string to the spider. My essence resisted this abduction, forcing the dead emotions to quicken with a newfound sorrow. With this, my essence caught hold of me and drew back into my body and closed the wound behind it. My body obeyed the demands of my mind and carried the pale film in my hand over towards the tree. Having completed its final mission, my body fell and the ravens faded to dust along with the spider.

Many ages later, my smiling essence stares down at the sleeping man underneath my tree body. Perhaps I may be of use and drop an apple onto his head for him to change the world.