COPPER MOUNTAIN COLLEGE

the

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Penny

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This issue of *The Copper Penny* is dedicated to CMC Art Instructor

Robert Brasier

The Copper Penny is an electronic publication, sponsored by the Copper Mountain College Academic Senate's Academic Integrity committee. *The Copper Penny* is a forum for student scholarly work.

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The Copper Penny
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The historical importance of copper is evident by its use in legends, art, medicine, trade, and technology. Its metallic brilliance is enshrined in the word "liberty" that beams forth from America's copper penny. Like the Statue of Liberty, plated with copper, its green coloring offering evidence of natural weathering, the copper penny endures. This journal is intended as a beacon of liberty, a celebration of expression, and the renewal of meaning.

—Aimee` Percy (2010)

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Art Department

Alexandra Bear

Prof. Robert Brasier

Art 2C-01

28 April 2011

<div align="center">*The Human Condition*</div>

  The Human Condition is a surrealist painting by the artist Rene Magritte made in the year 1933. It is a composition made by using oil on canvas. This composition depicts a wood easel with a mounted canvas in front of a window inside of a house. Inside of the house, surrounding the easel is a yellowish-tan floor, that could be wood or carpet, sheer beige walls, white molding along the edge of the ceiling, and a window at the center. Above the molding is a slight view of a white ceiling in the top left corner of this square painting, which lets us know that we are looking upon this depicted view not straight on, but at an angle. Furthermore, either side of the centric window is framed by tan drapes mounted onto a brown, cylindrical curtain rod via slightly golden-brown curtain rings. The window we are drawn to look through is constructed using white-painted wood, and it has a black ledge, which, unfortunately, is not one big enough to sit upon and gaze at the pleasing view outside. Outside of the window, we can see pleasant, fluffy, gentle, white clouds in the soft blue sky, lush green bushes with a lone tree just beyond them, and soft, short, green grass that has been free to grow but also has an inviting, uninterrupted dirt trail running through it unswervingly. All of this is accentuated by the soft wilderness running along the horizon. But then suddenly, yet also subtly, as we are looking through the window, we are drawn to the white, tacked line of the aforementioned canvas, the apex of the easel floating in the sky, and the fact that the scene outside of the window runs slightly onto the drapes framing the window we are looking through. Alas, we find that the soft wilderness and lone tree that we were once so fixed upon may not actually be there as we realize that most of what we were gazing at through the window was actually painted on the canvas resting itself on the easel in front of the window.

  Rene Magritte has now had a long reputation for creating such wonderfully, optically illusive paintings such as this. In this sense, we can see, in a way, how this artist reflected the time he was from. He was born in 1898 and lived until 1967, and, as many surrealists did during

the 1930s, he reflected an interest in the then developing new field of psychology and the theories of optical perception that came with it. However, he added something that other surrealists did not—Magritte's paintings inspired thought. Deeper thought. Not just in the sense of "What does this mean?" or "What is this?" No, it offered us not only the pleasure of viewing art, but it also causes us to take a step back and think about how we *perceive* art.
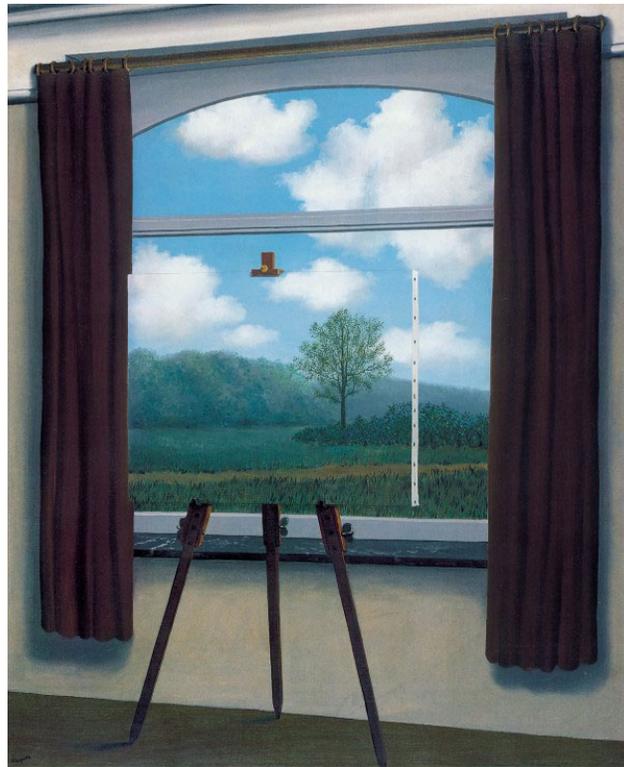
Picture 1. The Human Condition by Rene Magritte, 1933.

As also seen in his painting *The Treachery (or Perfidy) of Images*, a painting depicting a single pipe with the words "This is not a pipe," underneath in French, he seemed to want to make us realize and think about how we as humans, when looking at a painting, think that what is in the painting is actually real. Such as in *The Human Condition*, we imagine that we are actually in the room looking at the scene depicted rather than realizing that we are not in that room—We are in another room looking at a painting of a room.

Personally, I find this painting to be—to put it in 1980s terms—*Awesome*. I am a fan of optical illusion art, and I believe I always have been. I also enjoy Magritte's ethereal style of painting. It is clean and feels desolate yet non-threatening and somehow also gives a subtle or slight sense of warmth. But the reason I enjoy this particular painting of his is not only because it is an optical illusion painting, but because it does make us think about *how* we perceive art, and I think it accomplishes this because it is a painting of a room rather than being something so abstract we would not see it in real life. If I were to ever make a psychology textbook, I would want to use this painting under the perception section.

Picture 2. *The Treachery of Images* by Rene Magritte, 1929.

Henri Mattise, another meaningful artist, once stated that "composition is the art of arranging in a decorative manner the diverse elements at the painter's command to express his feelings," but with this idea is also the one that says, "But who is really the authority on what any piece of art is about?" and so because of art's ambiguity, we are free to think of as many interpretations as we can about any piece of art (and I for one like to hear many interpretations for any piece of art).

I think that this painting is, at least in part, about the aforementioned reasons of getting us to think about how we perceive art, but I also think that many other thoughts can be extrapolated from this painting. One could theorize that this piece is about how, often in life, we give

ourselves illusions, thinking that they are real. We blind ourselves into believing what we think is the case and rarely look behind the picture we have painted for ourselves to see what is really going on in the world outside of our interpretations. Sometimes, yes, our interpretations are accurate to what is real, but they can also be drastically different. Also, adversely, perhaps he is commenting on how, at least with some people, they do see the big picture and hope to recreate it or incorporate it into their own lives. He could also, perhaps, be commenting on what it is like to finally have reality revealed after having another interpretation being most or all of what is seen.

  With these many thoughts, it is interesting to see how one painting can be such psychological commentary, yet this is also utterly and complementary befitting for a piece that is all about perception.

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Faculty Sponsor: Cathy Allen for Robert Brasier
Art 2C History of Modern Art

English Department

Javonnie Beall

Michel Walker

Eng. 50.04

20 February 2014

Blind L-O-V-E

A blessing is what I called him. When he smiled, the room lit up. His eyes dreamy, dark, brown, were locked on me. We communicated without words. My mama always told me that good things came to those who waited, and God knows I had been saving myself and waiting patiently for this man. We could talk all day and night about our future, except Tuesdays and Thursdays; those were the days he had class. He was an overall perfect gentleman. When we kissed, I just knew the angels in heaven were singing. We were never apart; there was no him without me. I remember it like it was yesterday, etched in my mind like a tattoo. He picked me up at 7 p.m., and we went on a walk hand-in-hand as always. We sat on the bench in the park, and he kissed my forehead as he did so many times before. He held my hand as he did so many times before, but as I looked at his eyes, it just wasn't the same as before. They were serious and watery like a 75 percent chance of rain. He explained to me his Tuesday and Thursday classes weren't college classes; they were classes on coping with HIV. As he continued, I heard nothing but the three letters H-I-V. The dreamy dark brown eyes that once locked with mine were now infected with the disease that is incurable. What about the wedding we dreamed of, the kids we talked about having? My world was turned upside down. "I love you" is what he told me; H-I-V is what I heard. "I was going to tell you," he said, and all I heard was H-I-V. Perfect gentleman, bright smile, dreamy eyes, yet the blood that ran through his veins was infected. I felt betrayed; I couldn't cope. The man I loved deceived me. Never judge a book by its cover until you read the pages in between the book.

Faculty Sponsor: Michel Walker
English 50 Basic Writing Skills

Brittney Beaty

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English 50.04

March 24, 2014

Drinking

What might occur due to a night of drinking? Young adults start drinking sometimes due to peer pressure and trauma. For instance, people invite you to a party. Of course, being thrilled at the opportunity to meet new people, you say yes. You go to the party, and that stud from math class is walking your way with some shots. You don't know how to say no. You agree to drink with him; little do you know he just wanted to give you some liquid courage to take you back to his place. You go with him. Being intoxicated, you believe all you are going to do is hang out. As he takes you to his room, you begin to realize what is about to happen. You try to tell him you don't want to do anything, and you just want to go home. When he seduces you with the "You're the prettiest girl" line, you believe him because he chose to bring you back to his house. You are still hesitant, but he begins kissing you. Once he tries for more, you say no. He continues against your wishes. The next morning, you call the police to explain to them what had occurred the night before. They bring the guy in for questioning for his version of what occurred between the two of you. He said that you flirted with him and decided to take things to the next level. Consequently, after drinking, you went home with a guy who took advantage of you. And what could the police do because it would be a "he said she said" case? You both decided to drink, but he decided to go against your wishes. The results of drinking were you got sexually assaulted, and the trauma of that event could make you drink more or move on to other bad addictions.

Faculty Sponsor: Michel Walker
English 50 Basic Writing Skills

Danielle Cline

Walker

Eng. 50.04

6 February 2014

<center>I Am a Quitter</center>

Everyone knows that smoking is bad for your health. I was one of the many people addicted to smoking. I wanted to maintain an active and healthy lifestyle, so I decided to kick my habit. I attempted to quit many times before, setting a quit date, telling my friends and family of my decision to quit, but I always failed. I used to count down the days and brag to people how many days I had been nicotine free, just to begin smoking again. Although I had failed a few times before, I did not let that discourage me from kicking my habit. I did not use tricks like before; I simply did not buy any more cigarettes. I now have 90+ days and counting. I realized that for me, it was more of a habit than a true addiction. I utilized smoking as a crutch. When I had my morning coffee, I lit up. When I talked on the phone, I had a cigarette. Everything I did, I had to light up and surround myself in a toxic cloud of smoke. I knew when I was truly ready to quit again the feeling would be different. I learned to develop healthier habits one step at a time until lighting up all the time was no longer second nature. I noticed that I was able to breathe easier and run a little farther for a longer period. My most memorable moment after becoming smoke free was when I was driving by myself, and I was able to smell the shampoo in my hair from my shower that morning. I was amazed. That was something I had never experienced before, and, as silly as that may sound, it made a big impact on my ability to stay smoke free. Becoming smoke free is one of the toughest things to achieve, but it is one of the most rewarding things you can do for your health.

Faculty Sponsor: Michel Walker
English 50 Basic Writing Skills

Interpretations of the Term "Desert"

Kevin C. Eubanks

Copper Mountain College

The term "desert" summons many depictions to the one who is confronted with this word. Hot, dry, unpredictable, remote, unique, lifeless, beautiful, dangerous—any collection of these adjectives, as well as an array of others, is often associated with a desert. By paging through dictionaries, probing the Internet, and inquiring of others' interpretations, I have arrived at a more complete understanding of this word's many distinctions. As for me, the frozen Antarctic had not previously come to mind when hearing the word "desert," but yes, it too meets the requirements to be classified as such.

Personally, I think of little else but the Joshua tree and the less acclaimed Mojave Yucca when I encounter this word, quite simply, because I live in the Mojave Desert. Though I realize there are many other deserts to be found, the Mojave will always be linked to my personal interpretation of a desert. It seems that the most prominent descriptions that I would use to define this desert, and therefore the connotations I associate with the word, are those that have heightened my emotions about it. For example, I do not think that I am likely to forget the many sweltering afternoons of its summers, the diversity of its flora and fauna, the vibrancy of its sunsets, nor the fragrance of its creosote bush. Likewise, I feel that the opportunities I have had to experience this desert's various wildlife populations will forever be a part of my description of a desert. The desert is also a place of recreation for me. I can usually depend on favorable weather for an evening's run, a beautiful landscape in which to explore, or much excitement when climbing in the Joshua Tree National Park. To conclude, the desert is my home, a place where I can retire and forget about life's worries.

Scientifically, a landscape is considered a desert if its annual precipitation total does not exceed 10 inches ("Desert," *Environmental Encyclopedia*, 2003, p. 362). Because of this, and perhaps ironically, temperature does not in any way define a desert. Deserts are most generally categorized into three types—hot, temperate, and cold ("Desert," *Environmental Encyclopedia*, 2003, p. 362). However, other categorizations include extremely arid, arid, and semi-arid deserts, as well as continental, subtropical, coastal, rain shadow, and polar deserts (Cross, 2001). The number of classifications may give light to the diversity that the deserts of this Earth exhibit. In deserts that are characterized by high temperatures, it is often the case that evaporation greatly exceeds annual precipitation totals, and it is not uncommon for these totals to be received in a single storm ("Desert," *Environmental Encyclopedia*, 2003, p. 362; Huenneke, 2002).

Interestingly, rainfall has never been recorded in some parts of the Atacama Desert (Huenneke, 2002). Desert conditions are often severe and unpredictable. It is quite common for night and day temperatures to differ quite dramatically and for storms to occur unexpectedly (Weisbrod, 2003). Because of their severe climates, deserts are among the harshest environments on the planet.

Through the inquiries I have made, it seems that my assumption that deserts are often misconceived has been confirmed. A friend of mine, who recently visited the Mojave Desert, stated, "It was shocking to find it completely other than what I expected! All in all, I found it to be stunning and more beautiful than I ever would have imagined"(A. Brown, personal communication, February 14, 2014). It was her opinion, before she visited, that all deserts were sandy, flat, and devoid of life. Though any one of these descriptions may fit other deserts, they certainly don't describe the Mojave.

From another friend, I found that she, too, associated similar connotations with the word "desert." After sending her pictures of the landscape around my house, she stated, "Well, I thought all deserts were wastelands full of tumbleweeds and rattlesnakes. I can't believe you live in such a beautiful desert." She concluded by exclaiming, "I can imagine a herd of cowboys galloping around the bend and riding off into the sunset!"(M. Patterson, personal communication, January 24, 2014). Interestingly, tumbleweeds are not desert natives; rather, they are migrants from the Russian steppe (Johnson, 2013). So, why are they so often represented as an iconic symbol of the desert? Also, her mentioning of the cowboys indicated that she linked cowboys to the desert. At least for us Americans, it is probably the case that we have been affected, at least in part, by Western films and now associate John Wayne with the deserts of the American West. It makes me wonder if the fact that Westerns were filmed in black and white has any part in explaining why deserts are often considered to be drab.

Detached from any personal opinions, a desert is defined as a desolate, barren region, waterless and treeless, and with but scanty growth of herbage ("Desert," *Oxford English Dictionary*, 1971). This definition seems a good match for most of the associations we conjure with the word. However, the *Oxford English Dictionary* indicated that a desert was formerly used in a much broader sense, used to include "any wild, uninhabited region, including forest land; an uncultivated tract of country; a wilderness." Common synonyms of this term include

barrens, dust bowl, wasteland, wilderness, no man's land, tundra, steppe, and plain, among others (Rodale, 1978).

A less widely used form of the term "desert" is defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary* as "Deserving; the becoming worthy of recompense, i.e., of reward or punishment, according to the good or ill of character or conduct; worthiness of recompense, merit or demerit; in a good sense: Meritorious, excellence, worth."

The *Oxford Dictionary* defined the verb form of "desert" as "To abandon, relinquish, give up; to depart from, and, to forsake (a person, institution, cause, etc. having moral or legal claims upon one); *spec.* of a soldier or sailor: To quit without permission, run away (the service, his colours, ship, post of duty, commander, or comrades)."

As I hope I have made evident, the term "desert" does not simply describe a hot, barren landscape choked with cacti and snakes, for there are many deserts that do not exhibit these characteristics, nor could a native of the Sahara argue that a desert is primarily a region characterized by sand dunes and little plant life, for, once again, there are deserts without these characteristics. Instead, it seems that the term supports many opinions and descriptions. As for me, I think of the Mojave Desert with its many Joshua trees that stretch their twisted arms toward the sun. For other Americans who are not desert-dwellers, it seems that their depictions may be affected by the Western films of the mid-20th century. For yet others, I am sure their opinions are as diverse as the deserts themselves.

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ENG 3A College Composition

26 November 2013

<div align="center">''Arguing a Position"</div>

Many Americans have strong opinions on the correlation of aggressive and violent behavior among today's youth and the youths' participation in violent video games. Many parents and scholars believe that playing violent video games, which require the participant to shoot and kill other humans within the game, can cause irreparable, violent, psychological damage. In the wake of many deadly school shootings, there is a movement to ban violent video games from young players. Many parents, political leaders, scholars, and sections of the news media say that aggressive and violent behavior in youths is a direct reflection on their participation in playing aggressive and violent video games. Although I understand and to some degree sympathize with their point of view, this is ultimately a question of parental and community involvement. What is at stake is not the negative effect video games have on youths, but rather the lack of parental and community involvement in their lives. Therefore, we must become more involved in our children's lives, be more aware of their choices in friends, be vigilant in positive, corrective punishment, and most importantly show them unwavering love and affection.

A common perception among parents, political leaders, scholars, and sections of the news media is that violent video games desensitize children. By actively engaging in aggressive gunplay with other "humans," children are losing the fear response to gun use. "Various reports and commentaries have documented the fact that Sandy Hook [Elementary School] shooter Adam Lanza's video game playing included violent shooter games like Call of Duty, Counterstrike, and Starcraft. Some have cited that activity as a possible cause for his shooting massacre" (Bezio). It is common to blame the games for the deadly behavior. According to psychologists Douglas A. Gentile and Craig A. Anderson, "[We] found consistent evidence that violent games increase desensitization [and] aggressive thoughts, feelings, physiology, and behaviors and decrease helpful behaviors" ("Firefight"). In a typical violent video game, such as Grand Theft Auto or Call of Duty, players earn points based on

the number of bad deeds performed or the number of people killed. "Some researchers and lawmakers say the gory games make teens aggressive and violent. They argue that young people shouldn't be allowed to play them without parental consent" ("Firefight"). The real question we, as a society, should be asking is "Who's allowing these young kids access to these types of games?" It's not a matter of why the games are causing destructive behavior. It is a matter of why are parents allowing their young children to play such hostile games?

It appears that the minority in this debate chooses to blame the video games for the deplorable behavior of today's youth. Stetson University researcher Christopher Ferguson states:

> The impression that a link exists is a classic illusory correlation in which
> society takes note of the cases that fit and ignores those that don't. When a
> shooter is a young male, the news media make a fuss over violent video
> games, neglecting to inform the public that almost all young males play
> violent video games. Finding that a particular young shooter happened to
> play these games is neither surprising nor meaningful. (qtd. in Peckham)

Most Americans realize that it is not the violent images seen while playing video games that cause aggressive and deadly outbursts. In general, the games are created for a much older audience. The violent and aggressive scenarios seen are intended for the eyes of experienced, life-weathered individuals. Irresponsible parents are to blame for children being influenced by such dastardly games.

Although we are in an age of heightened technology, we should not allow it to supersede fundamental morals and values. Being a good person, pursuing education, involving people in their community should be among the top priorities for today's parents. Instead of allowing an Xbox or Playstation to raise their children, parents should read to their kids, play outdoor activities with their kids, and give them tons of mental and emotional support and love. A solid basis of self-confidence, self-worth, and altruism should be instilled in today's youth, as it was in America's past. An example of the type of youth parents should be striving to raise is Raven Laddish, age 15, from California. She claims that she "avoids titles such as Grand Theft Auto, in which players steal cars and shoot people" ("Firefight"). She continues with the sentiment that "[t]hose types of games

don't really appeal to me…I just don't feel that it's a good message to send to teens" (qtd. in "Firefight").   Raise your kids right, and it will almost guarantee they will be upstanding citizens and make you and their community proud. Allow them to waste away in front of a violent, aggressive video game, choose to not interact with them or show them love and positive attention, and you can almost guarantee a bloody news headline involving your children.

      Violent and aggressive behavior almost never leaves a positive impact on a person. Allowing impressionable children to view and participate in such destruction, whether real or fantasy, will likely have damaging "real world" consequences.   On the one hand, I accept the argument of some parents, political leaders, and scholars that violent video games are the main cause for lethal behaviors in youths, but, on the other hand, I still think that consistent parental involvement in a child's life is ultimately more important.   It provides the child a solid base of self-confidence, self-worth, and a strong sense of altruism.

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Faculty Sponsor: Ellen Baird
English 3A College Composition

Drake Jensen

E. Baird

English 3A College Composition

20 March 2014

Researched Essay

"And what I have, what I am, is enough, was always enough for me, and as far as my dear little sweet little future is concerned I have no qualms" (Beckett). True peace-of-mind may be one of the most unattainable feats in life, but that is not to say it isn't possible. For Daniel Suelo, he has achieved peace of mind, but it's come at a price. Suelo's price was the abandonment of the monetary system. This begs the question: Is the abandonment of money a prerequisite for peace of mind? I believe that this isn't the case. For me, peace can be achieved in a myriad of ways, but peace nearly always encompasses these three traits: intrapersonal happiness, spiritual happiness, and social happiness. I adamantly disagree with Suelo on what a person has to do to gain peace of mind, but I still respect him greatly and give him all of the right in the world to attain peace-of-mind however he sees fit.

Intrapersonal happiness, or happiness with oneself, just might be the most challenging aspect of gaining peace-of-mind for a person. For Suelo, he was disapproving of people's use of money on pointless things that ultimately just led them to more dissatisfaction (Sundeen). Suelo blamed this on the monetary system, but I cannot blame this on money itself, rather on inherent human greed and our culture's nearly hyper-consumerism.

Greed is a nearly universal human condition, and this is why I tend to vehemently disagree that money corrupts people; it's greed that is the corruptor. If money was no longer present, there would still be greed, and people would still do terrible things to improve their standing in the world. Greed would just manifest itself in different ways. Nowadays it's the man with the most money who can control and dominate others. Were there not antediluvians who would stockpile grains and food to gain power over others? Back even further, were there not humans dragging themselves out of the primordial sludge who would use superior strength and speed to claim more meat and more women? All of these things are of a kind. If money did not exist, greed still would, but it would metamorphize into another dimension of itself. This is

not to say, however, that the hyper-consumerism that manifests itself in our society is not without harm.

"The junk merchant doesn't sell his product to the consumer; he sells the consumer to his product. He does not improve and simplify his merchandise. He degrades and simplifies the client" (Burrows). Consumerism is one of the worst byproducts of our capitalist system. Society's belief that by simply possessing a product one can improve its place in the world is a fallacy. This fallacy is so widely accepted now that a person's whole image can be summed up by whether one can afford "X" product. Needless to say, this type of thinking has led to a nearly immeasurable amount of crime.

Greed and consumerism to me are some of the worst challenges to a person's attempt to gain sense-of-mind. Greed can cause a good person to do terrible things and to me is the root of all evil. Consumerism can cause a person to spend money on things that have little to no value to them just to "improve" their social-status in society. Suelo had to get rid of money to gain peace with himself. I, however, do not accept that a person has to get rid of all money to stop being greedy and to not be a pawn to consumerism.

A person can take steps to not be greedy and to not be a slave to consumerism. A person can think of how actions will affect other people and whether what it is doing hurts others more than it helps oneself, and to ask why there is a compulsion to do it. Consumerism can be beaten by not becoming a tendril of a company's marketing system. To me, having an allegiance to any company is moronic; a company is not a person, so to advertise one just based on how you feel about it is akin to saying "This product, 'X' is better than product 'Y' because of who makes it and not the product's overall usefulness." This is only one piece of the puzzle; to have personal peace-of-mind, you also need spiritual peace.

Spiritual peace to me is not to say that a person is religious; rather, it means that it is in harmony with whatever it believes controls the universe. For Suelo, being a deeply religious person, he couldn't find tranquility between how he was living life and how he believed his God wanted him to live. He couldn't accept that all he read in the Bible was either not thought about in the society, or it was disregarded entirely. This is greatly important for every person in the world: finding philosophical belief.

The person must accept what he or she believes and see those beliefs manifest within. Not only is this true for a religious person, but it's true for a secular person. If a person doesn't agree with his or her own religion or lack thereof, or he or she does not see it in him or herself, this can set up an existential crisis. Existential crises can cause a tremendous amount of havoc in a person's life because if he or she does not know what guides him or her, then what is there in life? Suelo gave up money to live harmoniously with his philosophical beliefs, but again I have to disagree with him.

To me a person doesn't have to take such an extreme step to live with his or her philosophical beliefs. I'm not trying to start a religious debate, so I will just say that to me being rich doesn't mean that a person is bad. Money cannot buy happiness, and every person must ask what he or she wants to do in life, what that will take to accomplish, and overall how important is money? One important thing to consider is that, and this goes doubly for Suelo, a person's philosophical beliefs and his or her society's beliefs can clash. Other times they can go hand-in-hand.

Societal peace-of-mind is probably the most difficult aspect of peace-of-mind to find reconciliation with, as you cannot, try as you might, have direct control over it. Everyone is a part of the society he or she was born into even if he or she doesn't want to be or if beliefs clash with society's. This is where the difficulty comes from reconciling a person's philosophical beliefs with the beliefs and the customs of the society at large. Suelo's solution to this was to depart from the society entirely. Essentially, he took his ball and went home. Shockingly, I do not completely disagree with Suelo on this point.

No one man can change society by himself, so the best thing he can hope for is to live the best way possible in society, because try as he might, very rarely can one man change a society. I cannot disagree with Suelo because what he did was completely "punk-rock," and I definitely respect him for that. However, Suelo wants to help people, and I do question him on that, not because he isn't doing the best he can, but because he most definitely is. Sharing knowledge with people is one of the best things a person can do in life. However, I do think he is a bit naive and suffers from tunnel vision because, as is the case with nearly everyone, he could do so much more.

Suelo agreed to have the book *The Man Who Quit Money* published for no payment, and this in and of itself is not bad, but a person has to look at it more broadly to get the full picture (*Unwelcome*). If Suelo didn't get any money for the book, then who does get the money? The answer is simple, Penguin (the publisher) and Mark Sundeen (the author), and no one knows what they used this money for. This is why I say Suelo is short-sighted. If he wouldn't have been so extreme with his swearing off money, he could have done so much good with it. Instead of letting Mark Sundeen and Penguin take all of the money from the book, he could have taken the sales from the book and donated all of the money to charities, thus helping many people. This is why to me Suelo is very naive; he is so set in his ways that he cannot consider that money can have any sort of positive value or assistance in any way. However, this is definitely not to say that I feel Suelo is a bad person.

Suelo, to me, is probably one of the most genuine people I've ever read about. He believes everything he says, and what's more, he lives his life not to hurt people, but out of a very strong and valid belief that he is in fact helping them. I respect Suelo a great deal for this, as it is very rare now that a person chooses to and follows through with a life strictly designed to help people. To me some of the worst people are those who force their beliefs down another's throat. Suelo is definitely not that person; unfortunately, it's often those people who are able to change a society's outlook. It pains me to disagree with Suelo because at the end of the day, I do agree with a lot that Suelo has to say but not how he says we need to accomplish them. Suelo has gained a clear mind, and many others, including myself, have not, and honestly this isn't of ultimate importance. What is most important is that everyone continues to try to gain peace-of-mind. This is why I cannot completely disagree with Suelo because although our methods for accomplishing our goals may be very different, what is more important is that our similarities are much more valuable than our differences.

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Veronica Luna

Michel Walker

English 50.05

17 September 2013

<div align="center">Surf's up</div>

The day felt cold for an early summer morning in Venice Beach, the sun not quite up. I didn't feel nervous or sick, excited maybe. I felt the sand underneath me, between my toes, moving them slowly, and the surfboard clutched underneath my arm. Everyone asked me if I was ready for it. I didn't respond; I was too busy trying to remind myself to breathe. Breathe. Breathe. Well-known in Southern California is a wave called the Wrath of Poseidon, and I was waiting for it; I was waiting for him. I made my way through the sand, meeting with the cold ocean moving in—breathe. Breathe. Breathe. The water rose, covering me from feet to shoulders, then head. I sank down into the water to feel the movement of the ocean, the current pushing and pulling. When I finally arose, there was already a strong, humid breeze hitting my face. I paddled out far into the ocean; everyone's eyes pierced through my back. I've always kind of been afraid of the ocean, its vastness, the unknown in this big body of water. Breathe. Breathe. It was calm, the sun breaking through, hitting my skin. I turned to face the shore—no sign of him yet. The current changed dramatically once the sun completely broke through the horizon. He was here. I felt a roar, a rumble as he raised me up. The tunnel was nothing I could have imagined. He swallowed me and brought me down as deep as he could. Breathe. It's funny what a near-death experience can do to someone. I've never felt so happy to see so many faces or to feel sick one more time. Breathe. Breathe. Life.

Faculty Sponsor: Michel Walker
English 50 Basic Writing Skills

Little-Star S. Martorella

Michel Walker

English 50.05

19 September 2013

Dark to Light

I turned away from my life of godless darkness and emotional pain to joy, light, and hope. First, I was hurt, and then I hurt back. I turned my eyes away from peaceful harmony to war with the world. A good man calmed my restless spirit with his love; we were married. The Earth fully rotated around the sun, and then I was with child. My mind was filled with dread and fear of the future. Shadows from my past stirred up the memories of my horrible first marriage. My mind played out my memories of a painful miscarriage and my first-born baby's terrible birth defect. Oh, what will become of my husband, child, and me? Nine full moons dragged by. Would my baby be alive? Would I have another child with a terrible birth defect? The sky rained blackness over my soul. Finally, after the 10th full moon, she was born on a sunny day in the month of July. Her bright eyes sparkled with the light of life and hope. My baby was beautiful, pink, and healthy. My stone-cold heart melted faster than snow in the spring. I knew joy again as I saw God's love in her sweet, tiny face. I named her after God's promise. I named my precious baby girl Rainbow.

Faculty Sponsor: Michel Walker
English 50 Basic Writing Skills

Alejandro Penalva Martinez

Ms. Walker

English 3A.02

April 7, 2014

<div align="center">Church-State Separation: A Blessing for Science

and Progress</div>

Until recent times, the meaning of the First Amendment regarding freedom of religion was clearly established in American culture as interpreted by the Supreme Court. In recent years, there has been increasing challenges to its meaning, especially regarding the separation between Church and State. The First Amendment states that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof" (United States Constitution), which has been interpreted by Thomas Jefferson's letter to the Danbury Baptists, as "building a wall of separation between Church & State" (Jefferson). The great nation envisioned by the Founding Fathers to become a model to the world required two essential elements: first, social stability and tolerance, and second, the flourishing of the sciences. Separation between Church and State is paramount, protecting religious civil liberties while defending the state from religious interference, and essential to the prosperity of the nation. "Recognizing the unique and intimate nature of religion, the Founding Fathers wisely put religion on a different footing from other forms of speech and observance, mandating strict separation of religion and government to [ensure] religious freedom for all individuals and faiths" ("Safeguarding Religious Freedom"), allowing for the development of a prosperous nation.

To understand the importance of Church-State separation, we can start reviewing the history of religion, which is a history of horror. For thousands of years, religion has been the primary cause of death and war. All over the world, people of all races have taken their time to kill each other in the name of their God, and religious extremists have found their way to control governments and their armies, which has empowered their misdeeds dramatically. To the unification of Church and State, we owe the most terrible chapters of history, such as the Crusades, Inquisitions, Witch Hunts, Jihads, Assassins, Heresies, and their countless victims. Considering all this, it makes sense to conclude that in order to avoid similar experiences in

America, a provision to keep religion separate from the state seemed appropriate at the birth of the nation. One of the biggest obstacles against the prosperity of a nation is a lack of scientific achievement. Science often challenges centuries-old conceptions with evidence, and its discoveries are not always welcome. When science forces religion to review its tenets, some people update their views and incorporate them into their beliefs ("About the BioLogos Foundation"). Others become defensive and cling to their dogmas, sheltering under ill-conceived concepts of faith, sometimes adopting obnoxious attitudes. An example of this is evidenced by a phrase posted in an Oklahoma Baptist Church's welcome sign, captured by photographer Stanley Rice, reading, "Big Bang Theory. You've got to be kidding me. God" (Rice). This serves as a good example to illustrate the consequences of arbitrary religious thoughts seeping into our government or even taking a center place in it. A religion controlled state, or even a religiously biased state, would not only be a threat to equality, but a tremendous obstacle to the flourishing of the sciences and the progress of this nation.

Today, most of the poorest countries in the world are ruled by religious fanaticism, and many of them lie within the old dominions of some of the most brilliant civilizations the world has ever seen. The Arab world, to take an example, seized today by the tentacles of religious fanaticism, was once the beacon of scientific achievement and innovation, to the extent that most of the stars in the sky are named after Arabic names (Lebling). The Arab world greatly influenced subsequent periods of scientific and cultural achievement in Europe, like the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, and provided the world essential universal discoveries, like the fundamentals of mathematics and the very same numbers we use in our everyday life, called Arabic numerals (Rowlett). Scholars maintain that this period of scientific enlightenment that sprouted fantastic achievements, ended at the hands of Islamic theologian Abu Al-Ghazali (Al-Ghazali). He deemed science incompatible with Islam, leading an unprecedented cultural transformation from scientific inquiry to religious fundamentalism, perhaps analog to the message contained in the Oklahoma Baptist Church's welcome sign, which suggests that when scientific research contradicts testimony from sacred scriptures, those take precedence over science, no matter how compelling the evidence might be. Even though Al-Ghazali lived in a time when the world was thought to be flat, resting on the back of an elephant, he did deplore

knowledge on behalf of religion, motivating a renunciation that triggered the decline of the Arab world, a blow from which Islamic civilization has never recovered.

A similar fate is attributed to Central Asia's golden age, a civilization that significantly contributed to the development of civilizations of Europe, the Middle East, and Asia; it started its slow decline after a period of religious pluralism was replaced with a monotheistic conception dominated by Islam (Markian). The decline and end of the Roman Empire also coincided with the rise of a new religion: Christianity. Christians, and their monotheistic conception of God, challenged Roman society by defying the authority of the emperor, also conflicting with Roman polytheistic religion strongly influenced by Hellenistic Greece. Christians were persecuted in Rome until Emperor Constantine the Great ended persecution and declared toleration of Christianity (Lunn-Rockliffe). What followed was the establishment of Christianity as the Empire's official religion and the implementation of drastic changes in policy that spread the new religion to every corner of the Empire, ending centuries of state secularism and precipitating the fall of the Empire less than a century later (Lunn-Rockliffe). Most of the greatest civilizations that ever existed owed their place in the history books to the flourishing of their sciences—and their disappearance to the rise of religion.

American astrophysicist Neil DeGrasse Tyson, director of the Hayden Planetarium, has noted that some of the most brilliant scientists who ever lived often invoked concepts of divinity to explain what they could not demonstrate. Isaac Newton, while studying the orbits of the Solar system, concluded that the planets should have fallen into the sun ages ago. Since that had not happened, he concluded that God must be stepping in and keeping things right. According to DeGrasse Tyson, this resulted in an abdication that delayed advancements in Celestial mechanics for 100 years. References to divinity in science have always appeared when scientists "reached the boundaries of their own understanding" and found themselves "staring into the ocean of their own ignorance" (DeGrasse Tyson). But who has never pondered, even subconsciously, the weight of divinity in the Universe when faced with those unresolved mysteries of life? Is it not natural to shuffle all possibilities, when confronted with the inexplicable events of the Universe, such as organic life suddenly emerging from a pond of water? The idea of God, or an intelligent being, has recently taken the form of what it is called Intelligent Design, which is a philosophical trend that proposes that certain features of the universe are best explained by an intelligent cause,

as opposed to a process of natural selection (Milner). DeGrasse Tyson argues that as a philosophy, Intelligent Design is a philosophy of ignorance that encourages the dismissal of questions, simply because they are difficult questions. On the other hand, science, as philosophy of knowledge, keeps the quest for answers open and refuses to give in to mystical deterrents (DeGrasse Tyson).

But, does all this mean that religion and science are incompatible? Perhaps religion needs to be given a chance to evolve. After considering a few words by Tenzin Gyatso, the spiritual leader of the Tibetan people, known as the Dalai Lama, I regain optimism and confidence about the possibility of mutual benefit between science and religion. The Dalai Lama, acknowledging and welcoming the tremendous advancement of science and knowledge, comments as follows:

> Although Buddhist contemplative tradition and science have evolved from different roots, at heart they share significant commonalities. Buddhism and science prefer to account for the evolution and emergence of the cosmos and life, in terms of the complex interrelations of the natural laws of cause and effect. From the methodological perspective, both traditions emphasize empiricism. For example, in the Buddhist investigative tradition, between the three recognized sources of knowledge [consisting of] experience, reason and testimony, evidence takes precedence, with reason coming second and testimony last. This means that empirical evidence triumphs over scriptural authority, no matter how venerated a scripture may be. Because of this methodological standpoint, I have often remarked to my colleagues that the empirically verified insights of modern cosmology and astronomy must compel us now to modify many aspects of traditional cosmology as found in ancient Buddhist texts. (Dalai Lama)

As we neglect the quest for knowledge by cancelling important ventures, such as our pioneering space program, and squeeze every desert rock for the last drop of fossil fuels through means of uncertain consequences, we delay the development of so much needed technology to exploit renewable energy sources. Decline of entire civilizations has coincided with the neglect of science, the rise of religion, and the unification of Church and State. Recognizing the unique nature of religion, the Founding Fathers mandated strict separation of religion and government to ensure religious freedom for all individuals and faiths, as well as the prosperity of the nation. How we manage to protect our cultural legacy of secularism and scientific achievement, protecting the state from flawed leadership, will determine whether we continue to thrive for

centuries to come or whether we decline and vanish to be remembered as one of the greatest civilizations that ever lived.

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Faculty Sponsor: Michel Walker
English 50 Basic Writing Skills

Timothy Tinnerman

Instructor Ellen Baird

ENG 3A-02

17 November 2013

<div align="center">Are Cell Phones Dangerous?</div>

There has been some anxiety over the years concerning cell phones emitting radiation, which might cause tissue damage and cancer. Of the seven billion people living on the Earth, around six billion of them use cell phones ("UN: Six Billion Mobile"). With so many people using cell phones today, it is no wonder that much concern has been expressed over the unproven harm of a device that constantly emits radiation into the head of its user; it is a frightening thought, and it is true. By its very design, a cell phone communicates by emitting radio waves in the form of electromagnetic radiation. There is no way around that. It is simply the only way that cellular devices can currently send wireless messages, which is the most efficient way of communicating over long distances. However, the frequency of the radio waves that cell phones produce is not high enough to ionize atoms, aptly called *non-ionizing radiation,* so it should not be associated with what most people think of when they hear the word "radiation." Although this type of radiation cannot strip away electrons from our cells, potentially affecting our DNA, it does produce heat, which could still cause some damage in high amounts ("Do Cell Phones Pose")

This concern is especially emphasized for children. Their developing brains are more susceptible to damage than the average adult's brain is, giving reason to severely limit children's use of cell phones. France has even gone as far as banning cell phone advertisements directed at children under the age of twelve years old (Smith).

Despite the often frantic worry that these people have expressed, there is no concrete evidence to support the popular hypothesis that the non-ionizing electromagnetic radiation that cell phones emit causes cancer. In one article, the FDA reported that "[t]he weight of scientific evidence has not linked cell phones with any health problems"; the organization also restated this observation later in the same article as "[t]he majority of studies published have failed to show an association between exposure to radiofrequency from a cell phone and health problems" ("Do Cell Phones Pose"). Without conclusive data showing that radiation from cell

phones causes health problems, people—especially concerned parents—should focus on *what is* known of cell phones to cause problems: their irresponsible usage.

Teenagers are usually the example given for carelessness regarding cell phones, and there will be no exception here—they are completely reckless. The predominate manifestation of their reckless attitude is texting while driving, which has a high probability of causing many problems for them, and—more importantly—to the drivers around them. In one study conducted on teenagers regarding this issue, over 40 percent of the interviewed children admitted to texting while driving. In the same article, texting while driving was associated with an increased probability of reckless behavior: "Researchers reported that teens who text while driving are also more likely to binge drink (five or more drinks), use tobacco, use pot, use indoor tanning devices and have unsafe sex," which is particularly disturbing. This correlation between careless driving and reckless behavior should set off a red flag for any parent who cares for his or her child (Healy).

Unsurprisingly, the article has shown a pattern of reckless behavior in the younger generation, stemming from the irresponsible usage of cell phones. Thinking that they are invincible, children arrogantly ignore the rules set for them, completely bypassing the safety net placed for their benefit. This ignorance generally results in suffering for them and their parents. Parents should press the matter more vigorously, always instructing them in not just rules of safety, but the reason behind them too; they should never relent their effort for a second. In regards to radiation, cell phones could possibly be harmful, and more research should be conducted. However, before people start worrying about unproven theories of possible harm, they should instead start addressing established facts, such as the likeliness of their children to be irresponsible and reckless, causing harm to themselves and those around them.

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Sociology Department

The subsequent two submissions are responses to the following test question:

> What is the sociological imagination? Select **one** concept we have learned this semester, describe the important aspects of the concept, and explain how learning about this concept has contributed to the development of your sociological imagination.

Robert Capelli

Mike Danza

Sociology 1 Introduction to Sociology

4 April 2014

<center>Sociological Imagination</center>

The sociological imagination promotes individuals to step outside of their own mind frame and reality and view society from different perspectives. According to Allan Johnson (2008), we are always participating in something bigger than ourselves, and the sociological imagination allows us to recognize this. The sociological imagination has allowed me to look at statuses, and how these statuses contribute to the construction of different perspectives. A status is a position that someone occupies: father, CEO, etc. Statuses exist regardless of whether anyone is occupying them, meaning if the president suddenly died, the status of president would still exist; a new one would be appointed. Another example is if a head coach in the NFL got fired; the status of head coach would still exist, even though no coach is occupying that position at the time. Certain statuses can empower people and constrain them at the same time, and it is vital to identify this. Appointing a new president provides certain prestige and power for someone who previously never held that position before, and discovering this is critical for the development of the sociological imagination to see how certain statuses people hold and the decisions they make can have lasting effects that can be felt throughout society.

Learning about this concept has developed my sociological imagination by making me realize that people with different statuses have different opportunities. For example, a person with a low-level status, such as a garbage man living in the ghetto, is not going to have the same opportunities as a young male whose parents are the CEOs of a company. Low-level statuses are

up against labels, discrimination, and financial limitations while those with high-level statuses are able to create opportunities and have an abundance of resources compared to their counterpart. Using the sociological imagination allows individuals to see problems from another perspective and allows them to determine whether a particular problem is an individualistic problem, a person whose problems are his or hers only, or a social problem, a problem that is much more large scale and common amongst various groups.

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Faculty Sponsor: Mike Danza
Sociology 1 Introduction to Sociology

Jamie Hayward

M. Danza

Introduction to Sociology

9 April 2014

<div align="center">Social Imagination</div>

The Sociological Imagination is a tool that allows a person to see where his or her life fits into the bigger social context. It also allows a person to understand how his or her experiences are shaped by historical context and understand how beliefs are shaped by culture. The first part (how you fit into the bigger social context) lines up with Allan Johnson's argument that we are always participating in something larger than ourselves. The "something larger" is the social context. When learning about the "self," I understood that there are two types of the self, the relational (how you see yourself in a specific relationship) and the collective self (how you see yourself as a member of a group that you are a part of). The sociological imagination can help a person understand how the self can be affected by power, narratives, and macro-level changes.

When in the presence of different types of power, a person will act different according to the level of the power. For example, when talking to a boss or manager, a person will present him or herself as respectful, but when talking with a coworker who does the same job the same person is more relaxed in that person's presence. A person changes with power because everyone is trying to fit into the appropriate social context he or she has been taught. We try to fit into that context because it is how we participate in "something larger" than ourselves.

A narrative is essentially the act of storytelling. A person is taught to how to tell narratives from people such as parents, friends, and schoolmates at an early age. A person's life can be considered a narrative because he or she can shape the story by making decisions throughout life, and sharing that life through storytelling with others. Narratives affect the self because when a person is telling a story (narrative), he or she is telling it to others *and* their selves, meaning they have a validation that they exist. That validation allows a person to tell the story however he or she wants. Even though everyone has his or her own personal narrative, those individual narratives come together to create a social structure. This means every person's narrative makes a contribution in creating "something larger" than just their selves.

The Macro-level is the highest level of society; sociologists who study it look at social structures and institutions throughout the world. Those institutions can be multi-national organizations, such as Citi Bank, OPEC, and Coca-Cola. When the macro-level changes, institutions can create new jobs/opportunities (narratives), giving them more options to choose from. Each of those options (narratives) can affect the self, as stated in the previous paragraph. Learning about the self has contributed to the development of my sociological imagination by seeing how my life is shaped by different social contexts (power, narrative, macro-level change).

Faculty Sponsor: Mike Danza
Sociology 1 Introduction to Sociology

The subsequent two submissions are responses to the following test question:

> Based on everything you have learned this semester, offer a powerful definition and explanation of social construction. How are racial categories socially constructed at the institutional-level? Offer examples. How are racial categories constructed in our everyday lives? Offer examples.

Rebecca Manley

Mike Danza

Sociology 14 Introduction to Race and Ethnicity

11 October 2013

<div align="center">Social Construction</div>

Social Construction is the idea that individuals and institutions created, and still perpetuate, ideas on race, class, and gender. Basically, skin color had no meaning until people in power gave it meaning and structured society around that meaning. Suddenly, race and ethnicity came into existence. The same is true for sex and gender, as well as class and sexuality. We give meaning to what it is to be black, white, male, female, rich, poor, gay, straight, etc., and society has been constructed to fit those given meanings.

For example, members of the medical institution offered "scientific evidence" of the biological inferiority of blacks to whites. Black inferiority was viewed as inherent, and whites were therefore justified in treating them as such. Though these biological differences have since been removed from medical journals, white society still may feel, to some degree, that the inferiority is real. In the institution of education, women and minorities are being counseled to search for "easier" jobs (nurse over doctor, administrative assistant over project manager, etc.), rather than being encouraged to try for high-level positions in white, male-dominated work forces. These are just two examples.

In our everyday lives, we construct racial categories. On this level, we use intragroup policing, meaning that women encourage other women to conform to their traditional roles, and white people discourage other white people from participating in traditionally black culture, such as rap music. Both groups may even discourage interracial or same-sex relationships.

Just because race, class, gender, and sexuality are socially constructed does not mean that these categories are meaningless or fake. On the contrary, these categories have significant meaning because they have very real implications in society. They are the very world we live in

here in the United States. Sociologists emphasize that these categories are socially constructed because they want us to realize that since we made them, we can change them. It is the way things are, but not the way they have to be (and I'm sure many would argue that it's not the way it should be either). We have control over social construction, and that is why the views on race, gender, class, and sexuality have already dramatically changed since the founding of this country. Sociologists want to empower all people and encourage them to question and to learn about the factors contributing to inequality so that we can work together to make even bigger and better changes.

Faculty Sponsor: Mike Danza
Sociology 14 Introduction to Race and Ethnicity

Melissa McPheeters

Mike Danza

Sociology 14 Introduction to Race and Ethnicity

11 October 2013

<center>Social Construction</center>

One sociological concept we have focused on in depth this semester was social construction. We learned how it connected to topics such as race, class, gender, and sexuality. The following essay will explain what social construction is, how racial categories are constructed at an institutional level, and how they are constructed in our everyday lives.

As with many concepts in sociology, social construction can be defined in several ways. One way to explain social construction is through a few examples. Race, class, gender, and sexuality are considered social constructions because they are not inherently established at birth; rather, people assign huge amounts of meaning to various characteristics, and these meanings combine together to form a social construction. For example, people (typically) are born with either a penis or vagina, which implies their sex. However, based on this characteristic, people socially construct gender—male or female. Further, male and female became constructed based on people's other characteristics, which also end up connecting to masculinity and femininity, two more social constructions.

To summarize, social constructions are developed by people (rather than being biological), often with the intent to better understand the world around them. Social constructions often allow people to categorize one another more specifically by creating more groups for people to be part of.

When speaking of race as a social construction, sociologists argue that it is not a biological concept—people assign means on the basis of, primarily, skin color, but also behaviors. Racial categories are socially constructed at the institutional level and in everyday lives. At the institutional level, racial categories are constructed in a variety of ways. One way, usually beginning early in schools, is when people are asked to provide their race and are offered a few choices, such as white/Caucasian, black/African American, Asian, Hispanic/Latino, etc. By prompting this, children learn from an early age which box to check, and that it is dependent upon skin color and the skin color of their parents, grandparents, etc. Another institutional-level

construction of race is in the media. In television shows, news, movies, etc., race is portrayed in a particular way, often based on stereotypes of that racial group. Because the majority of powerful people in these industries are white males, minority groups have little input. Thus, the media are consistently reinforcing expected behaviors and stereotypes of people, based on the racial group they are assigned.

Stereotypes also play a role in how race is constructed in everyday lives. One of the readings in the text pointed out that after gender, race is commonly the next characteristic acknowledged upon meeting someone new. Even if it is not a conscious effort to do so, this acknowledgment allows people to assign meaning and form expectations of the new person. This can lead to people being treated differently based on the racial category they have been put into—"You are in group X; members of group X act this way, and since I expect you to act that way, I will treat you as if you already do." Again, this is not necessarily conscious, but if Person A treats Person B a certain way because Person A has established expectations for Person B, it may create a self-fulfilling prophecy, where Person B then responds in the way Person A was expecting, when the person otherwise might not have.

In conclusion, concepts that are considered social constructions are established based on meanings people assign (male/female), rather than being inherently present (genitalia). Racial categories are constructed at both the institutional level, and in everyday lives.
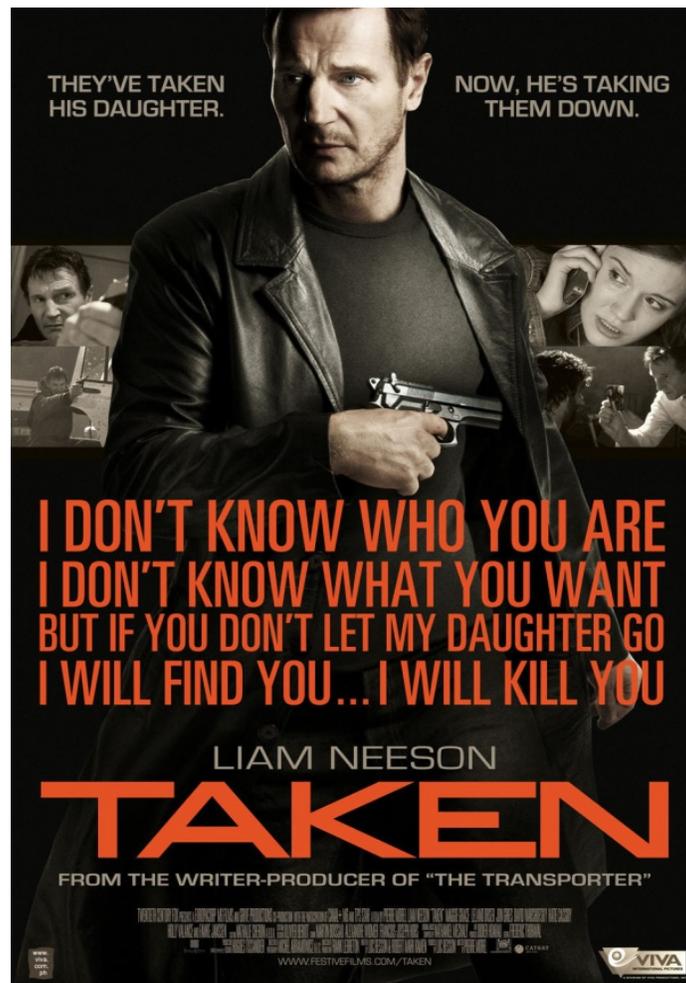
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<div align="center">

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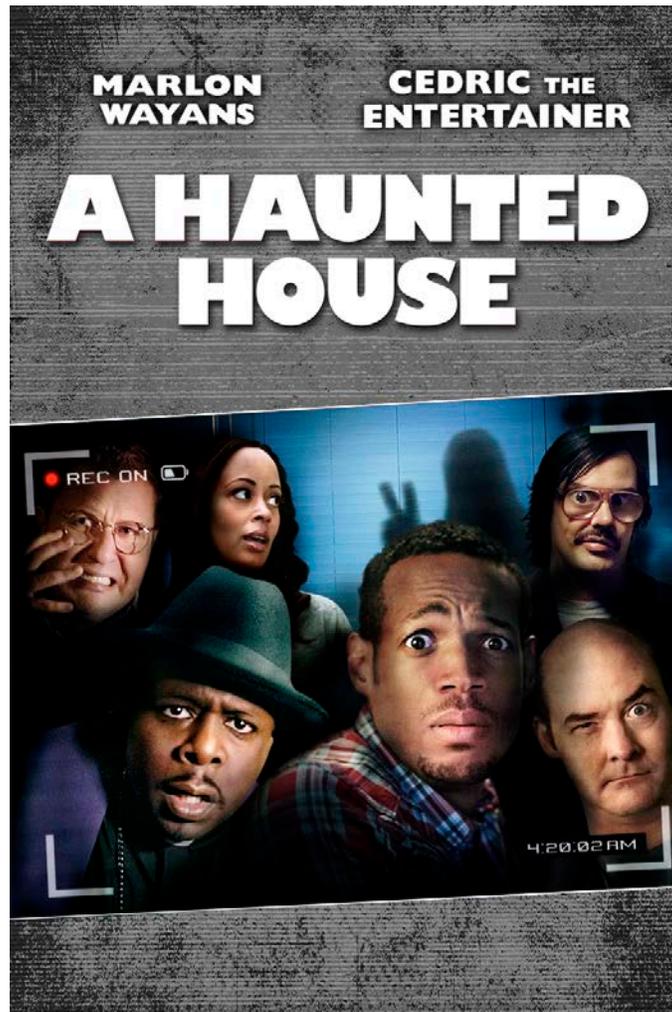Rebecca Manley

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<p style="text-align:center;">*A Haunted House*:</p>

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