



We the People In Perfect Harmony



In Appreciation

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In Justice for all

Poverty in America

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Sonia Vazquez - 2006



Essay: Gratefulness for the hard work of the founders of our republic; Concern as to whether we, as a people, have what it takes to preserve, protect, defend, and pass on to our children the great gift that we have been given.

THE CONSTITUTION

To many, if not most Americans, this is the equivalent to The Holy Grail. Somewhere, in our deepest consciousness, we know that we have one and that it is important. Scholars study and debate it. Government entities interpret and reshape it. Political and interest groups argue about it, and seek to amend it or prevent amendment. In many ways, the vitality of the debate and the plethora of entrants is a measure of the success and very genius of the founders at their best (notwithstanding a few clunkers of provisions that simply could not be agreed upon by the parties at the time of its writing, some of which required a civil war to resolve).

In many countries, a constitution is merely a piece of paper without any real meaning – easily changed or flexibly interpreted depending upon the whim of the regime, which does whatever it wants regardless. Citizens of other countries may not understand or appreciate our devotion to our constitution because they do not have the same kind of multi-generational investment – they do not share our experience. However, to Americans, OUR Constitution represents the very foundation of our daily lives. It is real. It has definite meaning. It governs our way of life. It is to be passed on to our children, and their children – at least I hope so.

But what exactly is The Constitution? Is it permanent or variable? What does it do? How are we affected by its terms in our daily lives?

Most, if not all, of us know that we have some rights. We see them in operation on virtually every police-action television show that appears on our television screens (“You have the right to remain silent . . .” We know this by heart. As a result, we have a great silent majority – but I digress. That is a discussion best left for another day.). We, those who pay attention to

such things, hear about them from the commentators and talking heads on the many low-rated news and news interpretation shows that fill up air-time on cable television and, yes, sometimes even on ‘free’ TV. Those of us that read have our choice of fare. Indeed, politics and law seem ever present in our society. We know that these are somehow entwined in our concept of constitution. But, how many of us know exactly what our rights are or how they are protected and enforced?

What is the Constitution? The Constitution of the United States of America is a radical document created by a small group of people that believed in what was then a radical idea, namely that human beings were the creators of governments and had the right to determine the terms and boundaries of governmental existence – governance by the consent of the governed. Many, if not all, of the founders that participated in the creation and ratification of our Constitution apparently believed that their authority to create and implement such a doctrine was God-given. And, why shouldn’t they? After all, in so doing, a group of so-called ‘common’ people were challenging the long held principles of the divine right of kings and the hierarchy of aristocrats, asserting in their stead, the doctrines of self-determination and equality of the people. In point of fact, their claim of divine authority was at once necessary and sufficient to counter the similarly based alternative doctrines that were being challenged.

The Constitution of the United States of America is a radical departure from most other documents proclaiming themselves to be constitutions. First and foremost, it is an organizational document. More

Expectations thrive where freedom is permitted- Hope springs eternal.

Why do people fight?

Living in peace is so easy when you look inside.

Is it our duty, or a responsibility to do what is right?

Right is in the eye of the beholder, we choose, but then we can.

-Sharon Argov
Library
Director



THE CONSTITUTION



stop, look and listen to what is going on



importantly, on its face, Our Constitution is a document of limitation. It is a document in which The People, exercising their sovereign authority, assign certain limited powers to the government, and organize that government into competing entities (legislative, executive, and judicial) that are specifically designed to thwart the accumulation of too much power by any single branch of government. It is clear that the majority of the founders, on balance (certainly, there were some who argued fervently on behalf of a strong central government, and even some who advocated for a king), did not trust all-powerful central governments to be anything other than tyrannies. Moreover, only specifically enumerated powers are given to the federal government, the remainder being reserved either to the states (as specifically granted by The People) or to The People themselves. At least, that was supposed to be the way it worked.

To ensure that important matters were made clear or could be addressed, particularly as to the rights retained by The People, an amendment process was provided. Most Americans are more familiar with the initial results of that process, the contents of the Bill of Rights (the first ten amendments to the Constitution), than with those of the Constitution itself. They know that they have freedoms or rights when it comes to speech, religion, the press, bearing arms, limits to government searches and seizures, and representation. They do not necessarily understand and easily become impatient with the tensions that were deliberately designed into the system, the checks and balances [between the branches of the federal as well as the limitations on the federal itself and the powers reserved to the states and the people], in order to prevent the accumulation of too much power by any one central governing branch and/or the central federal government as a whole. These are particularly important concepts that must be reconsidered in light of the very real shift of power away from the states and towards the federal establishment following the end of the American Civil War, and the further accumulation of federal power that took place during the Great Depression.

Whether one likes or dislikes any given set of provisions, on balance, when compared with the vast majority of other organizational schemes around the world, one must agree that the Constitution of the United States of America, though cumbersome and inefficient in its operation, appears to provide the greatest benefit for the most people. It has provided the platform for our way of life and an economy that arguably has been more stable and prosperous over the past century than any other in the world.

Do you know what your rights are? Do you vote? Voting is your voice in government. It's a Right...It's a privilege!!!

Few other nations of comparable size and diversity are able to compare favorably with our standard of living and security. Perhaps that is why so many people are trying to get in and so few wish to leave. At least, at present, the people retain the right and opportunity to speak their minds and advocate changes through the legislative amendment process.



The real question arises over The Constitution's future, its long term viability. Remember, although seemingly long when compared to the lifespan of the individual human being, the 225 year life of The Constitution of the United States is still relatively brief. Framed during an era of primitive communications and low density agrarian population distributions, can it measure up to the needs of an increasingly urbanized, mechanized, computerized high-speed society? Can it survive the constant tinkering of a professional legislature that needs to continually pass and modify laws in order to justify its existence and position itself to generate the huge sums of campaign finances that are now required by successful candidates to attain and maintain office? Can it long endure a society that has turned its interests and attentions away from the issues of governance and what exactly those doing the governing are up to, preferring instead to focus their attentions on the pursuit of happiness, personal wealth, or pleasure?

The bottom line is this -- if we are to preserve the values and way of life that has been the outworking of The Constitution, each and every one of us must take personal responsibility. We must educate ourselves about the history and circumstances under which it came into being, what it replaced, and the plain meaning of the document itself. We must assure that each and every one of our family members, especially our children, and our friends is similarly educated. We must make sure that our communities teach and honor the document. And, we must take positive action to assure that it is protected and preserved by speaking out and voting. Does this sound religious? Perhaps it is. Perhaps it is the religion of 'liberty' and 'freedom,' whatever those words mean, that we seek to promulgate and preserve. If so, we are its evangelists. If we fail, once we allow the heavy boot of oppression to find our necks, it will be awfully difficult, if not impossible, for us to extricate ourselves from the predicament. In that case, it will be our children and their children that will pay the ultimate price for our lack of vision and wisdom.

Let each of us celebrate The Constitution by preparing ourselves to defend it. This can only be done through vigilance, diligence, education, involvement, and the exercise of all of our rights and responsibilities as citizens. If we fail to do our work, the hard work of democracy, we will lose our way of life and our very lives. There are plenty of persons in the world that would like nothing better than to see the United States of America subjugated and in bondage. Whether they be domestic politicians and political parties

**-- if
we are to
preserve the
values and
way of life
that has been
the outwork-
ing of The Con-
stitution, each**



seeking power and influence or foreign fascists and tyrants seeking world domination and control, our duty is clear. Let us never allow that to happen.

Rick Strul is an Adjunct Professor of Media Production at AIUFL and a Visiting Professor of International Communications at Lynn University. He is a magna cum laude graduate of the University of Miami School of Law where he studied Constitutional Law under the late Professor John Hart Ely, himself a former clerk to the late Supreme Court Chief Justice Rehnquist.



Freedom

When I gaze upon the clear blue sky
and I see wispy white clouds floating by
I am overcome by a sense of freedom
free from being confined, free to explore my mind
but just what is being free
is it just in my mind or is it reality?
Am I really free, can I chart my own destiny
or am I forever boxed in conformity
These questions, upon which I dwell
maybe someone's living hell
but of one thing I am certain
to be free you must unveil your mind's curtain!!

Bryan Bambury-AIU SF Student

Bitterly We Remember

As we step into another September many thoughts go soaring through my mind. It has been some time now since the attack of September 11 and all patriotism has diminished. You hardly see the American flag flying so boldly on passing cars, flag poles and homes. These flags have since been replaced with Hurricane, Dolphin and other assorted symbols. Have we forgotten?

September has always held memories for me as my father passed away many years ago in September. When this horrific event took place on September 11th people banded together to cry, reflect and mourn the loss of our fellow human beings. How could this happen? Where else could you say or do almost anything without fear of being arrested? You have the freedom to live in a country where you can earn a decent living if you work at it.

So, as we approach another September 11th and Constitution Day remember what we fought for. Remember what the Constitution stands for and what it says. Don't let the fight go unnoticed. Stand together for one Nation And Liberty for All.

Michelle Gaston-Visual Communications Student

The Constitution

There came about from our forefathers "The Constitution"
Handed over to our American lands to stabilize resolution
The Constitution undoubtedly is the people's civil protection
A document written with an obliging connection
Made for us to triumph and no longer fight
Acting upon as a loyal shield, strengthening and exercising our rights
I must mention and what a peculiarly magnificent gift
To hold us together and not drift
A sacred stationary union
Upholding the emphasis of equality under God's communion

Nelia Cervera-AIU SF Student

We The Weary People

We the people....

We???

The People???

I wasn't there.

So you ask...

How does this pertain to me?

Let's see...

Religion, Speech, Press, Assembly, Petition

All in the first amendment

And it's all a granted freedom...

So you ask again...

How does this pertain to me???

The first amendment says enough...

And what it says...

Is good enough for me....

Jim Rene'

We the weary people
of The United States
Marching off to war
Once again
And what for?

We the busy people
concerned with
surviving, working, and our
country do not profit from war

We the swindled People
in order to form more
perfect
multinational corporations
unsuspectingly
have given our power away.

WE the tranquil people provide for the general welfare of the big businesses who
snatch our
country's well-being away from us and secure the blessings to the few almighty share
holder
And THEY the unelected influential have our permission to speak and act for we the
people and to
otherwise write
the laws
to their advantage and be accountable to no one.

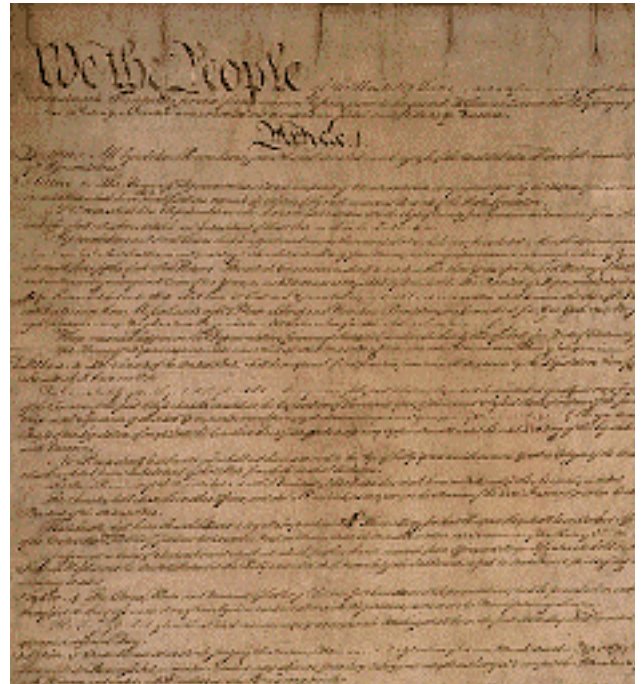
And by the power vested in them in Article whatever, section such and such...

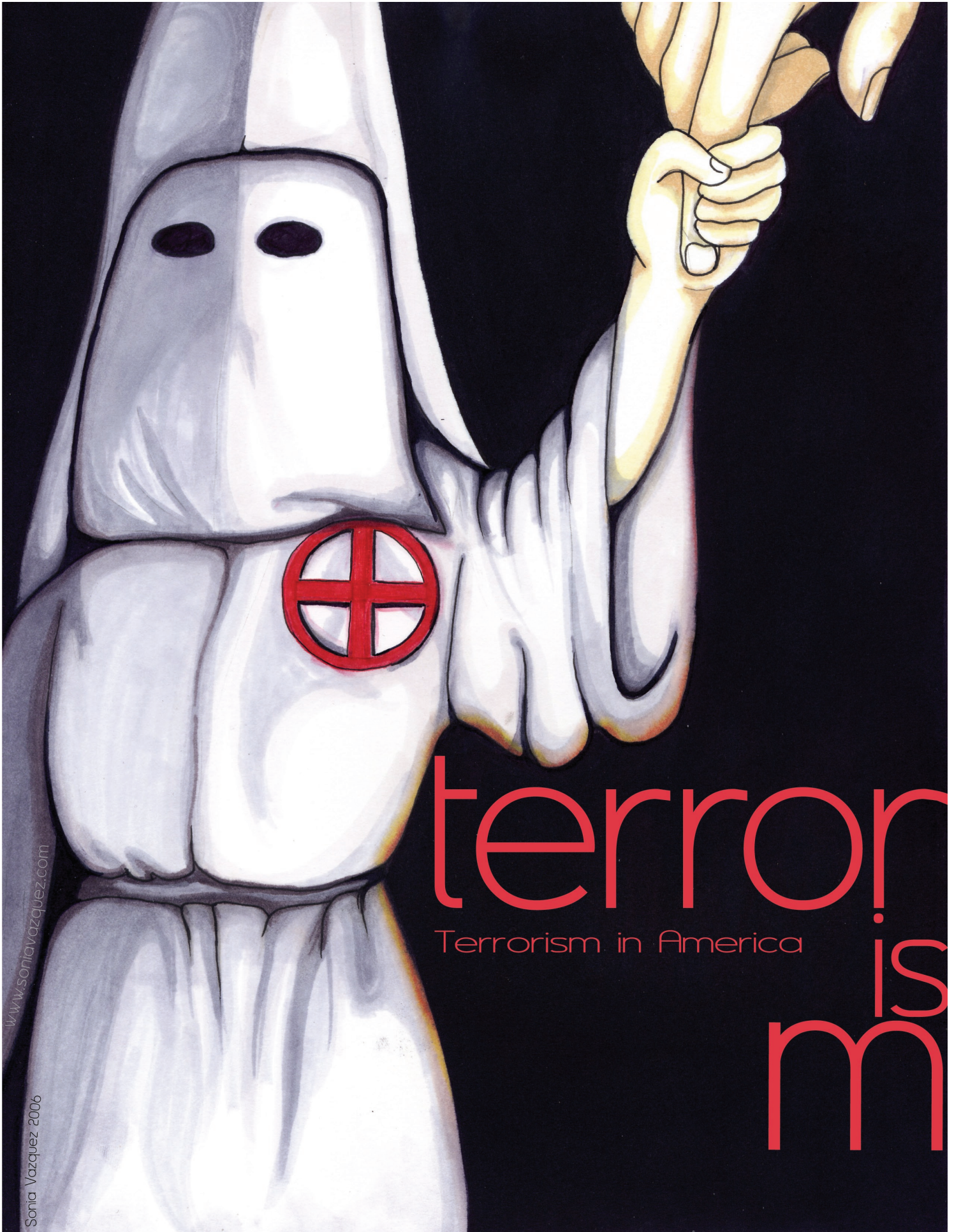
We the People of the United States will proudly provide and protect war time profits to
their posterity (mainly by fighting and dying) to avoid being labeled 'un-American'.

And We the People of the United States do state freely that we will provide for these
profiteers even more readily when we are provided with really catchy slogans and
soundbites

**And by the way,
We the People of the United States,
deserve better than this.**

By Karen Gelover, AIU SF Librarian





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Sonia Vazquez 2006

terrorism

Terrorism in America

Right of the People to Criticize

There is a riveting and provocative dialogue igniting American classrooms of higher education as students and professors take stands and argue political points and counterpoints. Whether it is a political science class in a New England town, a sociology class in southern California, or a criminal justice classroom in Weston Florida, the dialogue about the First Amendment probably goes something like this:

Student 1: "All you people do is criticize America."

Student 2: "It is our right to criticize our government under the First Amendment."

Student 3: "If you don't like it why don't you leave?"

Professor: "As compared to the Paleolithic and Historic dynasties of the past,

America is only in its infancy, and so criticism can be a healthy challenge to grow as a nation."

Student 1: "People who criticize this government don't realize that America is the greatest nation on the planet! If you grew up in a third world country, you'd understand that."

Student 3: "Exactly. America is a superpower and offers new immigrants the opportunity to create a prosperous life, and offers freedom and democracy."

Student 2: "Oh yeah, freedom and justice for ALL? Isn't that hypocritical in the light of inconsistency in the crack v. cocaine sentencing in this country, and the disparate treatment of people of color in the criminal justice system? What about the fact that about half of the founders of the Constitution owned slaves?"

Professor: Do you think the founders intended the ALL in the Preamble to include those enslaved Africans or even women? Were the enslaved Africans considered to be fully human by the founding fathers?"

Student 1: "This country is great and those who criticize it are unpatriotic."

Student 3: "They're traitors!"

Student 2: "Doesn't the First Amendment protect freedom of speech?"

Student 1: "Talking against the country is a threat to our national security."

Professor: "Wasn't the freedom to criticize the very spark that ignited the revolution?"

Student 1: "The First Amendment is really about the freedom of religion."

Student 3: "That's right; you have the freedom here to practice whatever religion you choose."

Student 2: "Tell that to the witches in the early 18th century, or Muslims in a post 911 world where racial profiling is seen as an anti-terrorist strategy, or that in the year 2000 it was a "novel" idea that a Vice Presidential candidate is of Jewish faith."

Student 1: "The First Amendment doesn't guarantee that you can say or do anything that you please."

Student 3: "Like burning the flag or yelling, "Fire!" in a crowded movie theater."

Professor: "Isn't it true that absolute power corrupts absolutely, and therefore, there is a need for checks and balances? Isn't that what the founders were really getting at?"

Student 1: "If you're not doing anything wrong, then you have nothing to worry about."

Student 2: "Tell that to the public librarian who

Right of the People to Criticize...

was arrested for denying the government officials access to library circulation records without a warrant.”

Student 3: Like I said earlier, if you don’t like it here, why don’t you leave?”

Professor: Because I believe that to whom much has been given much is required.

And so, the classroom blog continues, yet some questions linger on: What are the freedoms we so proudly hail? Can we ALL actually claim them? Do we really have the freedom to criticize the very process of democracy, and should we? How did Americans earn these freedoms? Were these freedoms taken at the expense of others? In order for some of us to prosper, isn’t it true that some have been and continue to be exploited? What groups in particular are limited in accessing freedoms by virtue of their membership in sub-groups that have been pre-determined as “out groups”? And so, on the anniversary of the signing of the Constitution, let the dialogue continue and help meet the challenge that, to whom much has been given much is required. Let us continue to petition the government for redress of our grievances as the First Amendment guarantees and urge America to mature into the nation that it can become.

Grace A. Telesco, Ph.D.

RISE

Red tulips push against the dead leaves
left behind at Fall
that soon will add life to the daffodils
waiting to escape their earthen sanctuary
of winter.

Waves of thin green grass
caressed by blue winds and washed in gentle rains,
raise the curtain of gray long lingering in its coldness.
New life springs forth
in a hallelujah of color and contrast
to praise the mystery of new birth.

And we watch and smell
And smile at the wonderment
of miracles sprouting around us
raising their mute voices
to shout with fiery colors
the new beginning that never
ended.

By Gordon Russell
Dean, School of Design

another Spick in the wall

Discrimination in America



www.soniavazquez.com

SUGAR

It was a little less than twenty minutes to closing time at the Natural World Café, when the boy walked in the door. He could have been anywhere from six to twelve years old. Physically, he was slight and short but in his face there was a maturity that made people slightly uncomfortable – until he looked at them with his big, brown, almond-shaped and almond-coloured eyes. There was an intensity in those eyes that, when people noticed, was a little frightening, but it was the love and gentleness that shone through, mostly. Twenty or thirty people sat at various tables, eating their sandwiches and sipping their coffee, but the café could have probably seated three or four times as many. Each table held a strange little flower in a tiny vase and a prettily painted miniature ceramic box that held, perhaps, a dozen sugar cubes. The boy walked in, took a quick look around, and walked over to the cash counter. The counter, however, was at least a foot taller than the boy's head. Just in front of the counter was a poster advertising the various natural products that the store used. It also explained how the exotic flower and the sugar cubes supposedly had magical healing properties. He stood next to the poster, directly in front of the cashier, for a few minutes. Yet, the boy went unnoticed for several minutes. Then, a smartly dressed pretty young woman, walked in.

Like the boy, she took a quick look around, and walked straight over to the cashier to place her order. The cashier, a girl in her late teens, immediately greeted the young woman with a nervous smile. The expression on the young woman's face was friendly, yet she carried an aura of command. She started to place her order with the cashier. She had barely said a few words, however, before the boy dragged a chair from the nearest vacant table to the cash counter and stood on it. He looked directly at the cashier, as though he was not even aware of the young woman though his shoulder nearly touched hers.

"Not fair!" he said, quietly but forcefully. "I was here first."

The young woman turned and gave the boy a chilling look. The boy, however, did not seem to notice. The cashier, however, could clearly see the anger in the young woman's face. And so, even though the cashier knew the boy was probably telling the truth, she decided to put him in his place. "First of all, don't be rude."

"You're being rude and she's being rude. You should serve me first. I was here first. She saw me waiting and didn't wait for me to order. You didn't even see me!" At this point, the young woman walked away and sat at a table near the exit, and far from the cashier.

"You're standing on a chair. You're not allowed to do that. Do you have any idea

how much those chairs cost? They're made of California redwood – and that is pretty expensive."

"Then why does it say '100% fibreglass' and 'Made in China' right here?" he asked, pointing to the bottom of the inside corner of one of the chair's legs. "Besides, if you don't notice me, what am I supposed to do?"

The cashier didn't know how to respond to that. "Fine. What do you want?" The boy not only told her what he wanted but exactly how he wanted each thing done.

Before she could ring him up, he grandly produced a crisp, new twenty-dollar bill and placed it on the counter. The cashier did not touch it or even look at it. "That'll be twenty dollars and 32 cents," she said, with a little smile of triumph.

"I don't have thirty-two cents."

"Fine. Then buy less stuff. What do you want me to take out of your order?" Normally, she would have let the thirty-two cents go, but the boy had rattled her and she wanted to get back at him in some way.

"I never said I couldn't pay. I just said I didn't have thirty-two cents." And he took out another crisp, new twenty-dollar bill and put it on the counter with an air of utter disdain. As she handed him everything he had ordered, he said, "Keep the change," and walked away. The package was a large one and he needed both of his hands to hold on to it. As he reached the exit, he stopped, and put the package on the table where the young woman was sitting.

The cashier groaned. She thought he was going to make a scene and fight with the young woman. She already had the phone in her hand, ready to call the manager, when she saw him go around to the side where the young woman was seated and kiss her gently on the cheek. The young woman sighed, got up, and picked up the package, holding it to her body with one hand. The other hand was firmly in the boy's grip. "Come on, Mom. Let's go."

After that day, the boy visited the café every day, for the next six months. The routine was always the same. He would come in, close to the end of the day, buy a cookie, sit at a table near the window, eat his cookie, and leave. And, every single time he left, the cashier noticed that, in his right hand, he always clutched a paper napkin. At first, she thought that, perhaps he was stealing something. She watched him closely for a month. But there was nothing to steal. He never changed his routine. After that first day, he never created any trouble. He just sat quietly, ate his cookie, and left.

One day, however, the cashier noticed that the boy had picked up the entire box of sugar cubes from his table and was walking out of the store with it. He hugged the box close to his chest, with both of his hands, so that the box was nearly invisible.



SUGAR...continued

But, of course, it was obvious that he was carrying something. Just as he reached the door, the cashier said, "Where do you think you are going, with that box?" The boy was startled, and the box fell to the floor and shattered into little pieces. He burst into tears.

"Look what you made me do!" he screamed at her. He took a vase from one of the tables and flung it at her as hard as he could. She didn't even have to move to avoid it but she couldn't prevent it from hitting the wall behind her and breaking. Now, she was furious.

The café, as usual, was more than half-empty but several people occupied it, all the same. Everyone turned to see what was happening. All they could see was a little boy furiously gathering up sugar cubes from the floor and the cashier walking toward him, her face lit up with fury. She grabbed him by the shoulders and stood him up and looked him straight in the eyes. "How dare you! You should be apologizing for stealing the box, not throwing things at me."

"The box?" said the boy, puzzled. "I don't want the box."

"Really? Then why did you steal it?"

"I wanted what was in the box – the sugar-cubes – and I didn't have any way of carrying them all with me."

Now, the girl was puzzled. His words seemed to have the ring of truth, yet they made no sense. "If all you wanted was sugar-cubes, you could have just asked and I would have given you as many as you wanted."

"No, you wouldn't. I read it the first day I came in here, on the poster. The sugar comes from a secret location, and they only make a few sugar-cubes each year. That's why you have only a few at each table."

"You're nuts!"

"No, I'm not. Your own poster said some scientists think it could cure cancer. But you can only take one cube each day. That is why I have been coming in each day and taking just one cube of sugar for my little sister."

"Your little sister has cancer?" asked the cashier, stunned. Suddenly, it all fell into place. The little paper napkin he clutched in his hand every day held one precious cube of sugar. And she could not stop her tears, as she held him close.

"Yes. And I thought that taking that one cube every day was helping her get

better. Really. She didn't seem sick at all. But yesterday the doctor said she probably wouldn't live even a week more. So, I just figured that if I gave her a whole bunch at a time, it might save her, at least for a little while, until the scientists can find a cure for her. But now, they're all over the floor. And she's going to die."

The entire café went completely silent. And then, someone quietly walked over with a box of sugar-cubes from his table and put it next to the boy. And then someone else did the same. In a few minutes, the boy was surrounded by every box of sugar-cubes in the café.

-Nandan Choksi
English Professor AIU SF

The Potomac River by Terry M. Hammes

Where eagles ride updraft currents
Soaring high above the trees
Lies the Potomac River in Virginia
Running to the Sea
Verdant lushness teeming with wildlife
Where deer, rabbits and pheasants alight
Waters lit by golden moons
Reflections kissed by starlight
River of plenty, named by Indians
Home to Founding Forefathers
Engine for Prosperity
Helped establish the United States
Site of Civil War battlegrounds
Fallen forests and fallen men
Bled our Ancestry fighting
For Freedom and Liberty

**"Democracy
is based
upon the
conviction
that there
are extra-
ordinary
possibilitie
in ordinary
people."**

**-Harry
Emerson
Fosdick**

heroes for ghosts



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Following is a popular email that many of us will remember receiving.

The 'LITTLE' Things

As you might know, the head of a company survive 9/11 because his son started kindergarten.

Another fellow was alive because it was His turn to bring donuts.

One woman was late because her Alarm clock didn't go off in time.

One was late because of being stuck on the NJ Turnpike Because of an auto accident.

One of them Missed his bus.

One spilled food on her clothes and had to take time to change.

One's Car wouldn't start.

One went back to Answer the telephone.

One had a child that dawdled And didn't get read as soon as he should have.

One couldn't Get a taxi.

The one that struck me was the man who put on a new pair of shoes that morning, took the various means to get to work, but before he got there he developed a blister on his foot.

He stopped at a drugstore to buy a Band-Aid. That is why he is alive today.

Now when I am
Stuck in traffic,
Miss an elevator,
Turn back to answer a ringing telephone...
All the little things that annoy me.
I think to myself,
This is exactly where
God wants me to be at this very moment...

Next time your morning seems to be going wrong,
The children are slow getting dressed,
You can't seem to find the car keys,
You hit every traffic light,
Don't get mad or frustrated;
God is at work watching over you.
May God continue to bless you
With all those annoying little things
And may you remember their possible purpose.

-author unknown /donated by Michelle Gaston

WHY

The government has changed how social security is going to pay the many working people who have reached the age of retirement. Why is it that social security is now being ordered to give these retired working people such a very low sum of money?

In my opinion, this is truly not fair to those people who have worked very hard for many years to survive and support their families.

What I would like to know most of all, is who were the ones from our American government responsible for making these decisions about our social security benefits? Why has this happened? Is there anything or anybody who can do anything about it?

Manuel Arellano Jr.
BFA Visual Communications

FOOD FOR THOUGHT



Finding Middle Ground



On this Constitution Day, we will hear about many important aspects of the Constitution. We'll be told about the separation of powers and establishment of the three branches, the checks and balances, and the importance of the Bill of Rights. Pundits will explain about the protection of minorities from the will of the majority. Experts will talk about the difficult amendment process. Historians will reveal how our Constitution has served as a model for the birth of many other new democracies over the years. They're all right. But the most amazing thing about the Constitution is the simple fact that it exists at all.

Most people who lived through those turbulent years must have seen the Constitution as a failure. Those who believed that the most populous states should have the greatest say in how things should be done were thwarted by the creation of the Senate. Those who believed that all states should be represented equally were devastated by the configuration of the House of Representatives.

And that was just the beginning – a list of the Constitution's failures could go on and on. Those who wanted to end slavery certainly found little comfort in the Three-Fifths Compromise. And yet those who wanted their right to own slaves were no more comforted by the decision to prohibit slave trading. War powers, the exclusion of a "religious test" for political office, the presidential veto, due process, equal protection, copyright and contract protections, authority to restrict interstate commerce – all of these issues were only included as the direct result of vast compromises that left Americans on both sides feeling disappointed and betrayed.

And yet, somehow, it worked. For 219 years the basic fabric of the Constitution has remained in place. It's worked so well that today we take most of the structure of our government for granted. There have been changes (amendments) over the years, but if you look at how few they are, and how far between they came, it's hard – no, impossible – to imagine a more successful plan for such a diverse group of people.

If ever there was a time when we needed to remember this most important lesson of the Constitution, it is today. We live in a world where we are bombarded with extreme opinions, day and night, from pundit-laden 24-hour news channels to extremist radio talk show hosts, telling us what to think, what to feel, and what to do. As



long as we're buying, they're selling. And what they're selling is how to be uncompromising. It's not hard to guess what the founding fathers would have thought of that.

We are surrounded by examples of the ongoing importance of compromise. Airport security, federal spending on education and disaster relief, abortion, the death penalty, immigration – the list goes on and on. And of course the mother of all needs for compromise – Iraq – in which we find multiple highly opinionated groups of people who have little more in common than the territory they happen to reside in. (Sound familiar?)

If there is a most blatant, glaring example of how the Constitution impacts our daily lives, it is in the way it employs compromise as a means to an end. No other aspect of it is more important. In my opinion, if the founding fathers were alive, this reminder would be foremost in their thoughts today.

By Pat Frank
AIU SF Student



Freedom

What does it mean? Are we really free?

We live in a country that has freedom of speech.

But be careful with what you say, it may be taken in a different way.

Freedom...What does it mean? Are we really free?

We live in a free world, We have free will,

But it seems that men don't agree

We are attacked by others for the simple fact that we are free.

Step outside, look in.

What does freedom really mean?

Freedom is what an individual believes it to be

So I ask again

Are we really free

Claudia Diaz-Fashion Student

**"Those
whowould
give up
essential
liberty to
purchase
a little
t e m p o -
rary safety
deserve
neither
liberty nor
safety"**

**Benjamin
Franklin**

FREE by Terry M. Hammes

I long to be free

To smell the flowers

And fly like a honey bee

To taste the sweet nectar of life

Devoid of never-ending strife

I long to fly to thee –

Not just in fantasy

I yearn for warm kisses mixed with love

And the blessings of God above.

To work to, to play

Far away from today

Without the 'State's' stranglehold over me

Each and every day and way

In this Land of Liberty?

Where all I have worked for was taken

That is precious to me.

To somehow erase the injustices

That have been heaped upon me

Where have they gone?

These Rights we hold so dear

There's a Constitution!

Remember!

Oh hear my plea.

Food For Thought

A True Story

Two years ago, when I attended my last school, I went out one night to do some night shooting for

my photography class. I went into a plaza to take some pictures of some of the buildings. People were staring at me from the buildings. When I was almost done with my night photography a police officer walked up to me and said, "Some people said that you're freaking them out because you're taking pictures." I replied "I'm just doing my homework for my photography class". The police officer asked me for my driver's license. She also asked me if I had a warrant for my arrest or if I was on the run for any reason, and I said "No". Then she got on her radio and asked her superiors for their permission to do a search for me in their records to see if I was a run away or not. Then the officer told me "It looks like you're not in the system. If I don't hear anything from them you should be all set. Now how about you wrap it up and get going?"

After going through that experience I felt my rights had been violated so, the next day, I told my instructor about what happened the night before. After he heard what I told him he was furious. He agreed with me that my rights had been violated. After I told him the whole story he advised me on what to do if I ever run into that problem again.

-Joel Atkinson

AIU SF Student

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Sonia Vazquez 2006

**Following are essay excerpts from Professor Michael W. Sheetz's, J.D
Criminal procedure (CRJ 315)- class**

They discuss the history of the Constitution itself, freedom of speech and religion, oppression, and responsibility. As stated by Ines Gonzales

"it's important to remember that freedom is not something we should take for granted."

Excerpts from Freedom

For years many African Americans fought to have the same rights as everyone else in the United States. One man had a dream that made many dreams come true for many people. Martin Luther King Jr. devoted years of his time trying to establish equality with the different races. He voiced the demands of the United States civil rights movement. He fought for what he believed in for many years, but what he fought for is not fully realized yet. Freedom is the ability to act and live as a person chooses, without being subject to any undue restraints or restrictions. Freedom is also the right to speak or act without restriction, interference or fear. The Constitution was set forth to give the people rights. Freedom is the opportunity to lead, to create your own path to your destiny. We have to take control of the freedom that has been given to us by placing everything in order. When you have order you can view the choices you have before making the wrong one. The Constitutional command requires protection of the laws for all people. When Thomas Jefferson wrote in the Declaration of Independence that "all men are created equal," he did not mean socially or economically. In 1868 there could not be one law for the rich and another for the poor, although the founders ignored the fact that there was clearly one for whites and another for slaves. In the original Constitution there is no mention of equal opportunity. The Fourteenth amendment forbade all states from denying any citizens, not only due process of law, but equal protection of those laws.

As a citizen of the United States it is our duty to respect the privilege that has been given to us. To take advantage of freedom we need to respect the laws of this country and those who fought hard to have these laws passed. We, as the people, are responsible for our own freedom. The choices we make determine whether or not freedom is no longer an option. Freedom is like sitting on the beach with your eyes closed allowing the sounds of the ocean move with your thoughts. Freedom is more than just a law that has been passed; it is like heaven innocent and pure.

By Tiffany A. Dixon

Excerpts from Freedom and the Constitution

The Constitution is the legal framework which embodies the rights and obligations of an inhabitant of a particular state. Likewise, it also dictates the privileges and freedom of the citizenry. By intention, the American Constitution is the highest law of the land. Because it is a freedom constitution, one whose primary principle is to guard particular liberty, the highest law of the land prevents taking a stand on the utmost matters. It does not intend to inculcate people on the integrity, or the subject of gratification, or the course to liberation. That is not because it presumes that integrity is immaterial, gratification has no satisfaction, or liberation is a fantasy. It lays down an outline within which the people can uphold a society where each has the freedom to pursue, coherent with a like freedom for others, integrity, contentment, and liberation in the way each considers as fitting.

The function of the constitution is that it clearly designates to the government its definite and distinct powers and it also specifically limits the powers of the government. The objective is to guarantee the broadest scope of freedom for peaceable, law-abiding citizens. Hence, a constitution has a twofold principle: to call into subsistence a government but, at the same time, to regulate the powers of that government. After all, hypothetically it would be probable to call into subsistence a government with the power to “do the right thing.” But “the right thing” in the point of view of some people is: Compel them to go to church, make them read only “appropriate” literature, oblige a license to employ in economic enterprise, and force people to distribute their riches with others. (Hornberger, 2001)

Accordingly, as Alexander Bickel dryly observed more than forty years ago in *The Least Dangerous Branch*, to say of some law or action or institution that it is constitutional is not to offer very high praise. For the Constitution permits much — from those in as well as out of office — that is foolish, vulgar, and degrading. Yet the enshrinement in the supreme law of the land of a large latitude for the exercise of individual freedom has consequences. It cannot but give direction to our moral life, incite and inspire habits and hopes, inform our sense of what is possible and of what are necessary, and instruct our understanding of what we owe others and what we owe ourselves. (Berkowitz, 2005)

At some point in the 1800s, the citizen of the United States hoisted the definition of liberty to the maximum level ever by improving the significance of economic freedom. For the American forebears, freedom signifies more than rational, religious, and civil liberty. It also signifies the right to hold in economic endeavour liberally, to liberally enter into equally advantageous economic trade with others, to accrue the fruits of that trade, and to make a decision how to dispose of their profits and possessions. (Hornberger, 2001)

To understand the character of the Constitution in creating a ethos of freedom takes nothing away from the influential character performed by the economic aspect, common leisure and the arts, camaraderie and family, affection and confrontation, religious devotion and devotion in reason. My views about freedom, as well as our abilities to benefit from its good thing and preserve its ideas and moral prerequisite, are shaped by many forces. The highest law of the land, nevertheless, is of distinctive importance. By determining imposing limits, by declaring, with the support of the coercive power of the state, what is prohibited, what is permissible, and what is necessary, it creates ample background circumstances for, and sets a tone that resounds throughout, all area of our lives.

Margine Contreras

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Excerpts from The U.S. Constitution

The Constitution is rooted in the beginnings of western civilization as well as the early English settlers who came to America. The U.S. Constitution could be regarded as the bible of the country because it governs all aspects of the country. It governs the legislative, executive and judicial branches. In other words, it could be inferred without the Constitution it would be difficult, if not impossible, to maintain law and order in the U.S. Although the Constitution provides a foundation to govern all aspects of the government (civil and military), it has not been without challenges to implement.

Prior to the enactment of the U.S. Constitution in 1787, the U.S. was governed by a liberal democratic system. The U.S. Constitution provides guidelines and standards for the people of the land to follow, which help in maintaining order in the land. The U.S. Constitution contains the pledge that address how to preserve "Liberty, bill of rights, freedom of speech, religion, the press, the right to a fair trial, the right to keep and bear arms, universal suffrage, and property rights".

There are 27 amendments in the constitutions, but I choose to talk about the Civil War amendments, which are the 13th, 14th, and 15th. I strongly believe that these amendments provide an equal field for all people in the country by giving them freedom, citizenship and rights to vote regardless of their color.

One does not have to be born in the U.S. to abide by the laws established by the Constitution. Any person who lives in the U.S. must abide by the law and violators will suffer the consequences imposed by the laws of the country.

In 1865, after the civil war ended, Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation. The main purpose of the proclamation was to declare the abolishment of slavery. The 13th amendment talks about the abolishment of slavery. The 14th amendment is about given citizenship right to the slaves who although born in the U.S. were not considered U.S. citizens. The 14th amendment declared, "All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside." The 15th amendment gives the slaves the right to vote because they are U.S. citizens. The 15th amendments is read as follows, "The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of bondage.

Although the 13th, 14th and the 15th amendments were enacted to give slaves equal rights, the blacks were still kept in servitude and not allowed to vote unless they met specified criteria, such as the grandfather clause, which stipulates that a free slave could vote only if his/her great-grand-father was able to vote.

To overcome those obstacles, civil rights leaders such as Martin Luther King surfaced to help in the fight to end segregation for blacks. Albeit slavery was abolished in the U.S. in 1863, blacks were still oppressed and the work of civil rights activists such as Martin Luther King helped in paving the way to ending slavery.

Chedley Louis

Excerpts from Freedom

What is freedom? Freedom is the right to choose: the right to create for yourself the alternatives of choice. Without the possibility of choice and the exercise of choice a man is not a man but a member, an instrument, a thing." Those were the exact words of Archibald MacLeish in 1967. Freedom means different things to different people. To some people freedom means no responsibility. To others it means having power and ability to assume responsibility. Freedom is the condition of being free of restraints, liberty of the person from slavery, detention or oppression. Freedom is also political independence, exemption from arbitrary exercise of authority in the performance of a specific action.

Freedom is a good word but it cannot stand without an explanation. For instance, freedom of something does not mean freedom from something. And freedom from something is not the same as freedom to do something. For example when a prisoner is released from confinement he gains freedom from jail. A recently divorced person might say, "I'm free" according to the situation, the word freedom is understood. There are many more situations where the word freedom varies.

Our freedom is defined by legal systems. This legal system is known as the Constitution. It lays out the basic rights of citizens of the states. Something common that is misleading about freedom is that people assume that freedom is a by-product of modern democracy. The only freedom that a democracy bestows on its members is that they have the right, every few years to vote for one of a set group representatives who will run the country on their behalf. Democracy can only be an agent of freedom if it gives the people important voting choices, and if it ensures that the people have the neutral and truthful information necessary to make a choice that is in their interest.

We have been taught all of our lives that we live in the land of free, that we do not question our freedom. It is what we were taught so it is what we so strongly believe. I wonder what we'd think of freedom if we were to start questioning it, for example are we really free? How can we be free if taxes keep us bonded to the government? How can we be free when we can not build homes on our own land? When it comes to freedom these are questions we can all ask ourselves but we choose not to because we so strongly believe that we live in the land of freedom.

In conclusion it's important to remember that freedom is not something we should take for granted. In order to have our freedom there was a fight put up by previous generations. We, the generation that has become the owners of freedom, must cherish our freedom and not abuse it.

Ines Gonzalez

Excerpts from Freedom: A Review on Freedom

Many people question the word freedom, but many will not notice how powerful this word could be. Freedom is the ability to act in every way that allows your ability. It is accompanied by the absence of any external resistance or oppressor. It is having the external control or self-determination that leads to an inner peace. When we have freedom, we can presence the inner control of experience of choice, spontaneity and even spirituality.

When I am asked why I came to this country, I can only think of one answer: freedom. Many people would question why, and this is that they have never experienced the oppression of a government. Where I came from, this right that our Constitution offers all Americans is not offered to them. Cubans have lived under that oppression for decades. The concept of civil liberties and human rights has being denied by that totalitarian and communist government. The United States Constitution offered my family and me that right that my own country has denied us as their citizens.

Freedom is a treasure that we must value. It is more than necessary that a person grasp the meaning of freedom. We all know it is not an easy task, but if at least you could understand it, you will know what it would be like if you lose it. Sometimes it is necessary to lose something in order to appreciate what we have. But when we talk about freedom, we cannot permit someone to take it away from us.

We must conserve our liberty, because it is our state of being; it is where an individual is by itself sovereign and responsible only to himself. If risk losing it, we might as well lose our own life, well being, time, and property. Liberty is where each person as individuals, at all times, can live and act as he or she wants within society at his or her own cost or to his own benefits, subject to only and always to the restriction that could exist to act in conflict or in violation of the liberty of another person.

To be free is no guarantee to life. One can be perfectly free, like the movie "Castaway," on an island: without food, water or shelter. One would be free, all right, and soon dead. But, I should add, one would be just as dead if one were in a land of plenty but tied down hand and foot to the ground. With freedom, one is able to make his own way in the world, though the way may lead to his or her destruction.

Our goal must be to maximize freedom. Freedom cannot exist by itself; it needs to be put all together with the help of constitutional and criminal laws. All men should achieve their liberty at their own dispense, not at the expense of others.

Now you may wonder, why are criminal laws needed? The answer is very simple. If criminal laws would not exist, who would protect our liberties? We must surrender a little and give power to someone or someones in order for this to occur. We must choose correctly to whom we give this special and important power, because they could take advantage of it. For example, there is a law that prohibits a person from trespassing upon the life or property interest of another. Could you imagine your neighbors in and out of your house whenever they felt like it; or perhaps, a stranger coming into your house and bathing without your permission? You would think he or she is invading your privacy, which is a right that our freedom allows us; that is why this law is necessary.

In conclusion, we need to abandon for an instance our collective mindsets and become aware that what we have in common with one another is a need for the protection of our individuality. This protection can only be found in the willingness of our neighbors and ourselves to come to the defense of our freedom. The first step in reclaiming our ownership is to be found in exploring the question itself. I fully understand the frustration of people when faced with the fact that governments are controlling their lives and freedom, especially, because I came from one of those countries. I can only advise those who have ever tasted or are tasting the freedom in their hands, not to let it go. It took many years for this nation to become completely sovereign, Remember, freedom is personal, and what can be freedom to you might not be freedom to others, but you must know that freedom is a form of release from arbitrary, dictatorial and tyrannical control.

-by Sarilys Perez

Excerpts from FREEDOM

The word freedom has many different meanings; it has meanings both in the political and philosophical context. The word Freedom is mostly known and used in the political context; the concept of freedom is closely allied with the concepts of civil liberties and human rights. Most democratic societies are characterized by various freedoms which are afforded the legal protection of the state. The most important of these freedoms are Freedom of education, freedom of speech and freedom of religion or belief. Freedom of education incorporates the right of any person to form a school and the right of parents, their children or students to be educated at the school of their choice. Freedom of education was one of the main struggles of the civil rights movement, Dr. Martin Luther King and Malcolm X amongst others fought hard and also many of our ancestors so that Blacks could be educated without fear of persecution.

The topic of free speech is still however, one of the most contentious issues in a liberal society. If liberty of expression is not valued, as has often been the case in human history, there is no problem; freedom of expression is simply curtailed in favor of other competing values. Free speech only becomes a volatile issue when it is highly valued because only then do the limitations placed upon it become controversial. And the first thing to note in any sensible discussion of freedom of speech is that it will be limited because it always takes place within a context of competing values. Free speech is just a term to focus our attention on a particular form of human interaction; it does not mean that speech should never be interfered with. "Free speech in short, is not an independent value but a political prize" (1994, 102). No society has yet existed where speech has not been interfered with to some extent. As John Stuart Mill argued in *On Liberty*, a struggle always takes place between the competing demands of liberty and authority, and we cannot have the latter without the former.

Lastly, Freedom of religion or belief is considered by many to be a fundamental human right. Freedom of religion must also include the freedom not to follow any religion or not having any belief in God. History is replete with examples of laws that constrain individual religious practice by denying legal recognition to certain religious organizations. Religious association laws have often been passed more as a means of controlling religious organizations than of contributing to their freedom. Sometimes such laws have been used to establish millet or millet-like systems, such as those that existed in the Ottoman Empire, which relegate non-dominant groups to second-class status (or worse). In all of these cases, individual religious freedom suffered to a greater or lesser extent because religious communities were denied access to legal structures which facilitated genuine religious freedom, or because the available legal structures condemned some religious communities to unequal status in the political community as a whole.

Freedom encompasses more than just the above mentioned; it also deals with freedom of association, but generally, it is something that many of us treasure, as it is not something foreign to us in liberal democracies but it is a right that is bestowed on us in modern day democracies. Unfortunately, it is also something that many of us take for granted, something that many may never experience and only dream.

Denzel Smith



So often it seems that our rights are violated and we don't know who to turn to. Our elected officials are the ones "we the people" put in office to help. Be they Republican or Democrat their job is to help and they will if for no other reason than to turn your vote. It is their duty to help...but you must sometimes remind them, and you must sometimes ask over and over again. Sometimes you must write them all or call them all, but the point is you should never give up. You should never let them forget their obligation to the people.

If you don't speak up...no one will hear you. One person can make a difference. Do not believe that your one vote does not count. It isn't true! Become aware and educate yourself on the issues and the politicians. Don't rely solely on the words of others to make your decisions. We all have different priorities and our own agendas. WE also have the right to vote in order to meet and fulfill those priorities and agendas. An election year is the very best time to make your voice heard. Do not be complacent or turn your back because you do not have time. Your Constitutional rights are a privilege. If you stand on the sidelines and do nothing you take the chance of one day waking up to find your rights have been voted away by the other guys. If you don't vote...don't complain...and remember **YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!!**

Tracy Marks



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Literary Journal



Our second edition of the **AIU South Florida Literary Journal** will be published in **February** for **Black History** month.

We will be accepting artwork, photography, essays, and poems. **Deadline** for submissions will be **Friday, January 12, 2007**.

Our third edition of the AIU South Florida Literary Journal will be on **Fantasy and Sci-fi**. All submissions will be considered. We are accepting submissions for both Journals now.

All artwork should be completed, flattened and in Jpeg or PDF format. Anyone contributing artwork or written material will also be asked to sign a release form.

Please send all **submissions** to Sharon Argov, Library Director, at **sar-gov@aiufl.edu**. Sharon will also accept submission on CD. You may turn those submissions in to Sharon at the AIU library.

Final submissions for print will be chosen by the AIU SF Literary Journal Committee. AIU SF reserves the right to modify for editorial purposes, reject any submission for any reason deemed necessary or to print any submissions received in future editions of the AIU SF Literary Journals.



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