

Eye on Editorials

PAIR OF PENNIES

:My Mind Is Made Up!

By daniel j. taylor - Lion's Eye Editorial Editor - djt5036@psu.edu

Your life is a crock. You're a phony, a fraud, and do nothing of value. That's what a determinist would tell you. A determinist argues that everything about a human is predetermined by the forces acting upon one's life. Your gender, your race, your social standing, your family, your school—these are all forces which control the person you are to be.

"Pshaw," says the determinist. "Be gone with your justice, your religion, and your free will. A man is the sum of his surroundings. Your successes are not yours, nor are your failures. Free will is an illusion. You didn't choose your lifestyle; your emotional fortitude is not a reflection on your character. You are an animal, a beast! Instinct and circumstance alone are responsible for your development."

What an insulting and belittling ideology! I admit that for one who holds nothing sacred, determinism could seem a promising truth (although truth itself loses value in a world where only the preselected have access to it). However, determinism becomes most evident in situations where the targets are overpowered by their surrounding forces. For instance, one can imagine the pressure of the inner city, where poverty, drug use, violence, a gang presence, and cyclical entrapment present quite persuasive forces. Likewise, families in the elite (consider the Kennedys) can provide wealth, incredible education, strict discipline, and protection, thereby producing a different kind of persuasion.

The existence of money can be cited as a source of many forces which overrun freewill. Without the capitalistic drive, neither our idealistic goals of economic success, nor the perceived joys that accompany it, nor economic hierarchy, nor such constant exposure to successes and failures could exist. Without such burdens true choice could flourish. Perhaps these cumbersome obstacles are to blame for the disregard of freewill.

The middle-class, however, is where determinism breaks down. More variety comes from the middle-class, where the ability to choose remains free from arbitrarily constructed realities, such as social dynamics and occupational status. Criminals in this class receive more condemnation than criminals in the lower classes, where circumstance is often blamed for guilt. Likewise, success is more readily applauded than in the upper classes, where success is expected as a result of such opportunity. The emphasis on solid, real-life freewill can be best felt in the middle-class,

where it is not so heavily stifled by such overwhelmingly strong constraints.

The existence of freewill is crucial to life as we understand it, that to not defend it is to stand in outright opposition of some enormous societal cornerstones. The judicial system, for example, is superfluous and evil if the way humans act is not under their own control. To be punished for gender, education level, poor parenting, or genetic makeup—all forces credited by determinism as hyper-influential is lunacy. More generally, the absence of freewill boldly flies in the face of the beliefs of most religious faiths which reward and punish followers according to belief and deed. Neither of which are acts of devotion, but rather conditioning (claims the determinist).

It is in defense of these established and beloved principles I defend freewill. Moreover, it is the overlooked moment of consideration which so many are quick to dismiss that I defend. Choice is not only real, but is constantly applied. Perhaps it is a weakened and unfashionable utility, and the laziness of people to employ and enjoy it can be attributed to this unwise dismissal; however, I acknowledge it.

I acknowledge that responsibility is real and that a runaway child, a bribed politician, and a committed husband do not operate solely according to their surrounding forces but by the desires of their soul and act in line with their personal choices. I maintain that a force can be a powerful influence, but that the ability of one's parents, the thickness of one's wallet, and the safety of one's neighborhood represent so much more than that. They are subtler than a determinist would claim. They are not the cables which hardwire the brains of human robots, but the experiences which enable more beautifully enhanced decision-making.

We possess will and it has the capacity to convince the body to act in any way, to convince the mind to contemplate any issue. It is a powerful tool whose existence and strength are undeniable. It is not a rigid, predetermined object comprised of the forces of our past, but a willy-nilly thing of beauty. The undertakings which influence it are not objective, but subjective causes for growth in understanding and maturity. With this growth comes a better comprehension of morality, of life, and of the choices by which one achieves happiness or sadness, success or failure, freedom or slavery.

ADVICE COLUMN:

ALL ABOUT U

BY BLU



Dear Blu,

I been with Johnny A for about six years off and on, and our relationship is having problems. Recently I've been conversing with Johnny B for the past year and now he's really attracted to me and I'm starting to have some feelings for him too. But I really want to try and work things out with Johnny A. What should I do?

Signed,
Ms. Indecisive

Dear Ms. Indecisive,

Now I understand your name. It seems to me that you have some strong feeling for "Johnny A," and I take it that's why you've been with him so long. You too have history and I know that can be hard to break from, so think about this: is Johnny B worth having if that means losing Johnny A? And are the problems that you two have so detrimental that you have to find love somewhere else? Or can both of you work them out? Also, is Johnny A willing to work for you heart and you for his? Lastly, who could truly make you happy?

All of these questions are very important and need to be considered in order to make your decision. Overall, I say do what makes you happy...history is great to have with someone, but writing a new future can be exciting and adventurous!

Live life and don't let it pass you by.

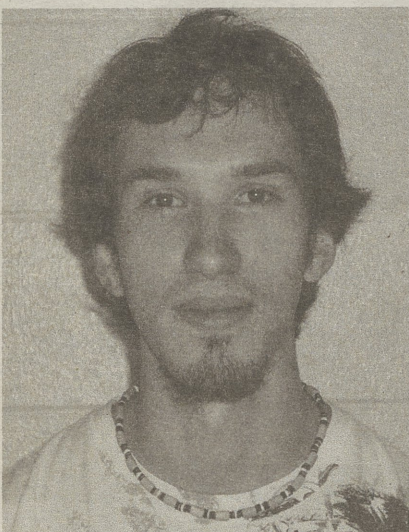
As always your friend,
BLU

Having trouble at school, need some relationship advice, or just want to get something off your chest?

Feel free to write in to allaboutu001@yahoo.com and be heard! Send in your response by a Wednesday and you'll get your response the following Wednesday in the Lion's Eye's Op/Ed section. Your identity will always be safe and you will always get a reply...try it and who knows - maybe the next published question will be yours!

People Poll with Adrienne Showalter

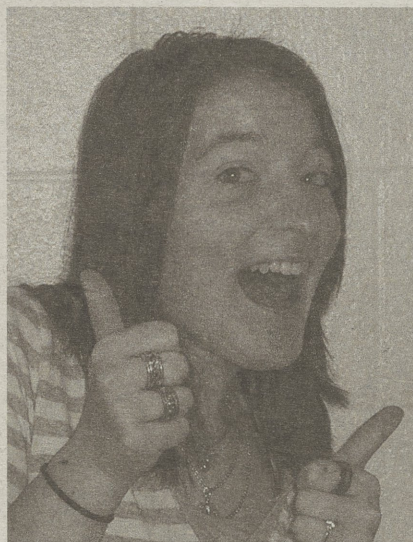
What was your favorite summer movie?



Sebastien Galvez

International Politics

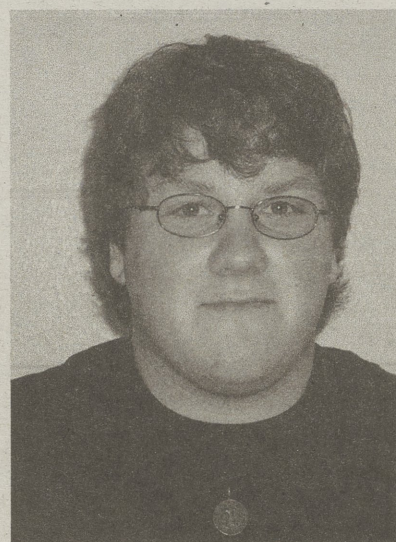
"District 9"



Katie Lizza

Undeclared

"Up!"



Nick DiBello

HDFS

"District 9"



Hannah Grinwis

History

"Star Trek"