



Violence as an art form

Thom Carter



Emotions are pre-determined

Ian Howard



Religious vs. spiritual--which is better?

Julia Halpin

COLUMNS



Christmas cheer should be directed elsewhere

Branden Labarowski | Staff Writer

It's the most wonderful time of the year. Lights are going up, radio stations are switching to Christmas music, and all and all, I couldn't be happier. But as much as I enjoy getting into the holiday spirit, I can't shake the feeling that, amidst all the red-nosed reindeer and frosty snowmen, the whole point behind Christmas—you know, Jesus being born—is getting lost in the gobbledygook.

Of course, it's easy for me, as a Christian, to complain about my religion being forgotten. After all, millions of non-Christians celebrate Christmas, so maybe they have some sort of right to tweak the holiday's background. But I have to wonder just why they're so inclined to in the first place.

The truth of the matter is that celebrating Christmas is hardly a religious experience even for Christians nowadays—that's what decades of Hallmark commercializing will do to a holiday. And the truly tragic thing about Christmas is that, before "Happy Holidays"-spouting humbuggers weighed it down with elves and toys, it had all the makings of a great holiday for Christians and non-Christians alike. Truly great holidays, after all, celebrate humanity's common culture and history every bit as much as they celebrate religion, and whether you look at it as God-given truth or a silly, ancient fable, the Christmas story makes a number of interesting statements on humankind. It's a fascinating historical memento from a day-and-age of emperors, wise men, and sixty-league treks across the Middle Eastern desert. It's the complex, cyclical fulfillment of scores of centuries-spanning prophecies. It's the timeless, ever-relatable story of how a couple so ostracized by society that they were forced to give birth to their son in a cold, dirty manger produced the greatest moral teacher in all of history. And whether you believe that Jesus is the Son of God or not, I fail to see what it is that makes Him less interesting than a fat guy in a red suit.

In a perfect world, we'd give Christmas, Hanukkah, Ramadan, Diwali, and all the other holidays equal standing for what they are—holy days; explicitly religious occasions with culture-defining histories that are worth celebrating whether you yourself are religious or not. But instead, we glaze right over most religious holidays and siphon the religion out of the ones that make it big, and by doing so, we're really cheating ourselves. Regardless of your religion, there's a cultural experience to be had with every holiday—if you can see past the singing elves.

People take this originality thing way too seriously. Sure it's good to be original, but it shouldn't infect your every moment. We're all different because we're different people. That may seem obvious, but we're missing that basic truth, and it's driving people to act like fools for the sake of personal glory. Each of us experiences things through a different set of eyes which makes us, wait for it, original. We don't have to strive so hard to be the odd ball and gain all of the credit for creating a following. Those things happen naturally.



Originality snobbery is for five year olds

Janica Kaneshiro | Editor-in-Chief

God forbid anybody say something that has been said before, do something that has been done before or think something previously thought.

These days, originality and superiority seem to be synonymous to high school students. No, I'm not a conformist wishing the world operated like it does in George Orwell's "1984"; that, big-brother society scares me just like the rest of us. But a world in which everyone is laying their very own (and not to mention highly original) claim to every thought, every color and every movement in contrast is just as scary.

Honestly, this trend is not as much of a trend as it is a long-standing tradition. It bears remarkable similarity to the age-old act of copy-cutting. Remember the days when copy-cutting was the worst crime in the elementary school unwritten code? Even as five year olds we wanted to be the first to do, say and think everything.

You raised your hand just because I did. I wore pink yesterday, that's why you wore it today. And my personal favorite: *I was thinking that before you said it!* Ah, childhood.

These ridiculous statements made everyday life a trial, and never failed to leave someone crying to the teacher. For some reason, that same feeling of standing trial over your own personal inventiveness has returned a decade later.

I was listening to that band before anyone else was. I had a sweater in that color before you got yours. And here's a doozie: *Oh... you probably wouldn't understand, my taste is just really original.* Ah, high school. We've taken a cyclical journey right back to those same days when we thought that being the first to tote a Furby to class made us cooler than everyone else. Now, it's just music or glasses with no lenses.

Today, if anything is deemed remotely popular, originality snobs stick up their noses because their unheard of, entirely original taste is clearly superior. Personally, I don't care if you listen to bands nobody else has ever heard of, or if you wear things that people cock their heads at, but being different just to be different and feeling the need to constantly prove it to everyone within earshot doesn't make you any better than the people who listen to the radio or shop at the mall.

If you're really different, you shouldn't have to flaunt it, live it instead.

WHAT YOU THINK

How do student loans and increasing debt affect your choice on where you go to college?

compiled by Rebekah Barnes



"I'm not really worried about [student loans or debt] right now but...I don't really worry about student loans. Debt I do worry about just because...I just want to make sure that... that I [will] be able to do what I want to after college instead of just paying of the loans and the debts, so I just want to make sure that I can... do that, so that worries me a lot."

Natalie Romaniw, junior



"[Students loans don't really affect my college decision] because I feel like no matter where I go I'm going to end up with student debts and student loans, so I think I'll worry about that after college."

Colin Heim, senior



"My parents told me they'd pay for college, so I guess [student debts and loans are] not really a big decision for me and I'm hoping to get a scholarship either academically or athletically."

Tori Blakeman, sophomore

"[Student loans and debt] really don't affect my decisions because my parents said that they could pay for basic costs of everything. I just have to pay for... what I need to eat and any other extras."

Madalyn Baehre, junior

"Definitely, I mean [student debts and loans are] the difference between the college that you want sometimes and the college that you can afford, and if you're thinking in the long run, sometimes it just has to be sacrificing what you want with what you can actually afford."

Andrew Carlin, senior



"If I have to go into a university even if it's my top choice and I'm going to come out of there with, you know, \$50,000 in student loans, I will not be able to go there because I want to have a future not impaired by extreme student loans when I go out into the wild, wild world."

Nazz Brandon, senior

