

SUBMERSION JOURNALISM

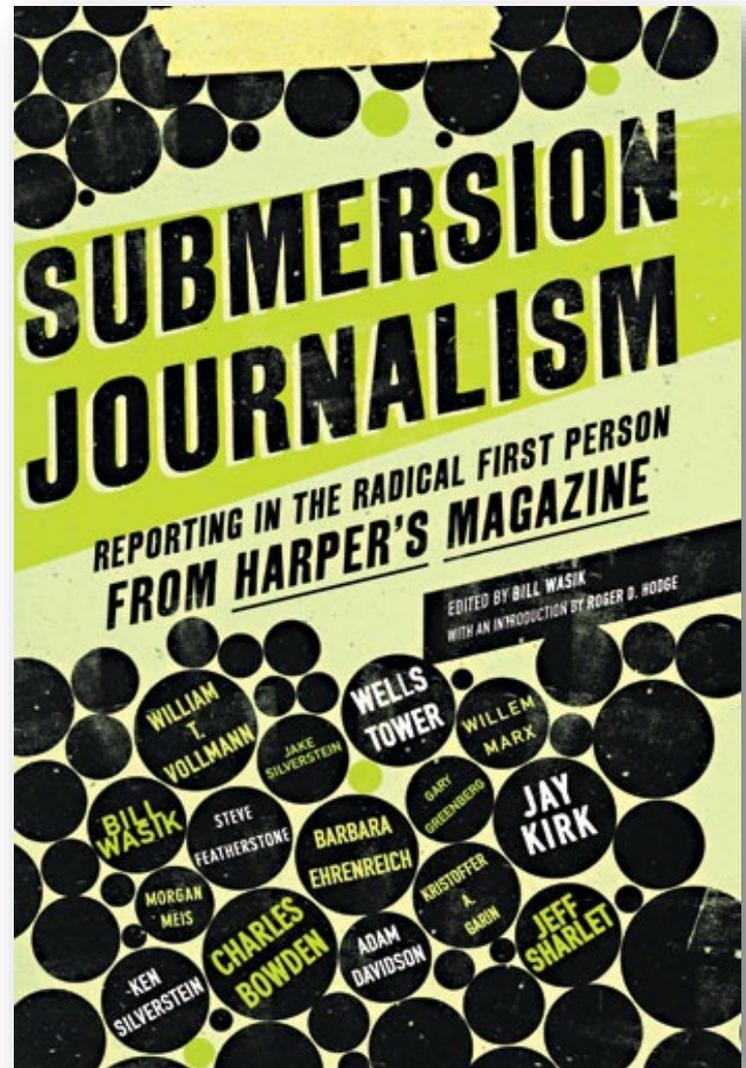
**EXPOSING THE TRUTH VIA FIRST-PERSON
REPORTAGE AND COMPOSITION, ENGLISH Q**

Andrew Rusnak

"If I had to choose between government without newspapers, and newspapers without government, I wouldn't hesitate to choose the latter." –**Thomas Jefferson**

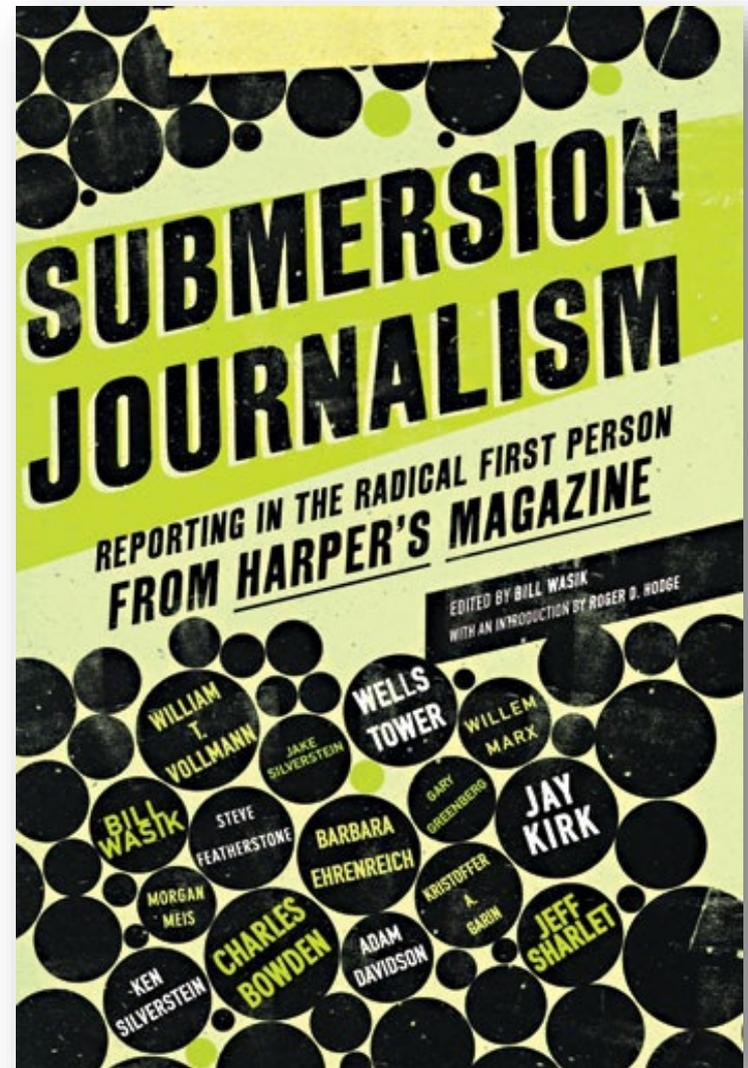
"During times of universal deceit, telling the truth becomes a revolutionary act."
-- **George Orwell**

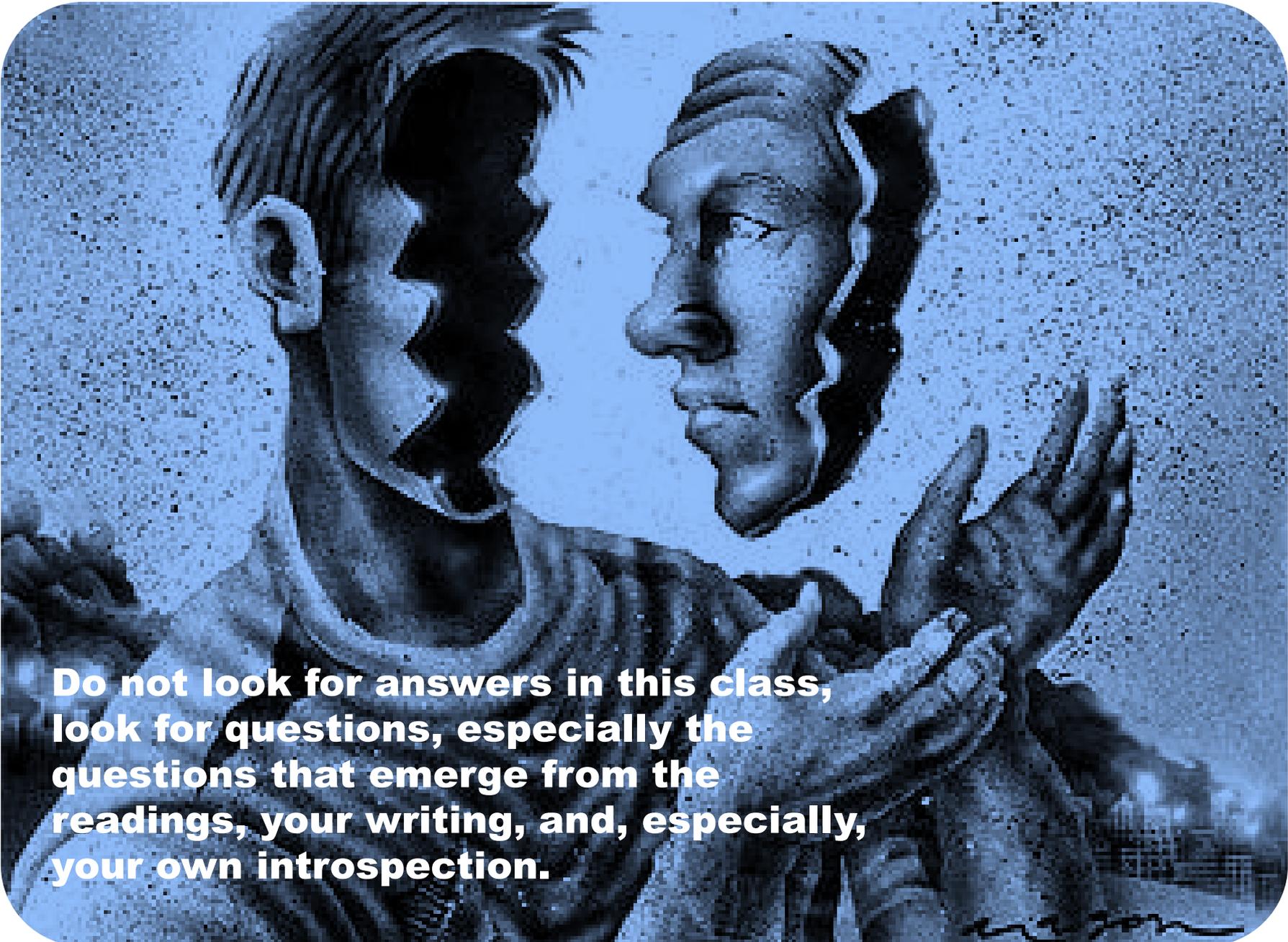
"The surest way to corrupt a youth is to instruct him to hold in higher esteem those who think alike than those who think differently." – **Friedrich Nietzsche**



“But if thought is to become the possession of many, not the privilege of the few, we must have done with fear. It is fear that holds men back — fear lest their cherished beliefs should prove delusions, fear lest the institutions by which they live should prove harmful, fear lest they themselves should prove less worthy of respect than they have supposed themselves to be.” – **Bertrand Russell**

The great masses of the people...will more easily fall victims to a big lie than to a small one. – **Adolf Hitler**





**Do not look for answers in this class,
look for questions, especially the
questions that emerge from the
readings, your writing, and, especially,
your own introspection.**

Write to find questions, write to be creative, write to discover who you are and what the world is really about. Write so others will hear you. Write about subjects that matter.



Creative, first person, non-fiction, composition about you and about the world you live in.

I



Journalism



There are millions of images that we record either on film or in words. Your job is to move people with your first person accounts.

The role of social media and free press ...

Freedom, the Press & Social Media

For centuries, dictators and tyrants have depended on controlling the information consumed by their citizens. Control the propaganda, control the minds of the people. The printing press revolutionized access to information and history shows that empowered people were the result. Now, Iran's unrest demonstrates again that communication and information have the power to change the world. Although the regime with big guns may win this round, the Facebook and Twitter empowered youth of Iran have tasted freedom of the press in the Internet age. Things will change. Whether you are a world leader seeking to win the hearts of the people or a company seeking to dominate an industry, effective use of social media in a well-orchestrated **public relations campaign** is just as important today as was the printing press of the past.

<http://pilmerpr.com/blog/uncategorized/freedom-the-press-social-media/>



Introduction to Submersion Journalism. This is a complicated analysis, but spend time with it until you understand:

In the introduction to *Submersion Journalism*, Harper's Magazine Editor Roger Hodge uses a medical metaphor to claim that in the first decade of this century, the "American republic succumbed to a kind of auto-immune disorder ... that we are now exiles in a strange land; America is no longer America." Hodge's main contention is that opinion in the form of self-aggrandizement dominates media and that "there is little the responsible American citizen can do except turn off the television and radio, cancel newspaper subscriptions, shun the movie theater," and meditate each day on the "mantras" or penetrating writing of social critics such as Mark Twain, H.L. Mencken, and Ambrose Pierce. Consider this quote from Thomas Jefferson, a man who was vilified by newspapers much of the time:

"If I had to choose between government without newspapers, and newspapers without government, I wouldn't hesitate to choose the latter."

There is perhaps nothing more critical to maintaining our democracy and the principles of the constitution than a free press, one that is critical and scrutinizes corruption and wrongdoing in government and business. Not one that exploits opinion mongers, that pushes its own agenda and creates its own truth. In 1,000 words write an essay that explores what this means. In another 500 words write a response to what Hodge means when he says (maybe paradoxically) that in order to cure this affliction of government, culture, politics, that we now live under, “what we need is an experimental subject “I” sufficiently armed with narrative powers both literary and historical, gifts of irony and indirection, and the soothing balms of description and implication to go forth and find stories that might counteract the unhappy effects of our disorder.” And from this, he claims, “the results will be not mere consumable opinion, which is the mystical commodity of mediated capitalism, but the raw material of considered judgment.” In other words, what’s the difference between the rancor that we now identify as media and an attempt to solicit this “considered judgment?” For this 1,500 word essay, you will need three outside sources, a strong thesis statement, and a Works Cited page. MLA or APA format is acceptable.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OYGk1qNUrbI> – Freedom of the Press – 7 min.

Bird-Dogging the Bush Vote: Undercover with Florida's Republican Shock Troops, Wells Tower:

In Tower's piece, "Bird Dogging the Bush Vote," he starts out deciding to "come to Florida and undertake a vigil for election-theft tactics from inside the Bush campaign's grassroots ranks" and ends up not finding any illegal behavior. He also makes a comment that "almost none of my fellow telecanvassers fits an established stereotype of a Bush supporter." Given all the witty, erudite and penetrating sarcasm that laces this story, respond to what Tower found? Use two examples from the text. Then, draw a stereotype composite of a typical democrat or republican voter today? Remember you need three outside sources and works cited page.



p.13: *Almost none of my fellow telecanvassers fits an established stereotype of a Bush supporter.*

Their Men in Washington: Undercover with DC's Lobbyists for Hire, Ken Silverstein:

In "Their Men in Washington" by Ken Silverstein, cite five examples from the text that strike you as unethical practices by Washington D.C. lobbying firms. Complete your essay by configuring a solution that would either prohibit such practices or support/promote/endorse them if you believe there is nothing wrong with what they are doing. Three sources, strong thesis, works cited.



<http://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=lobbying+disclosure+act&view=detail&mid=FE18AE8833CE7C5E2023FE18AE8833CE7C5E2023&first=0> – Wall Street Lobby – 4 min.

http://www.dailymotion.com/video/xoh8oy_columbia-professor-sachs-on-u-s-corporate-lobbying_news
Unethical Lobbying – 7 min.

<http://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=Corporate+Lobbying&view=detail&mid=927269CB7B8D38A3C381927269CB7B8D38A3C381&first=0> Legislation being written by corporate lobbyists – 4 min.

http://www.liveleak.com/view?i=20e_1249665318 Rachel Maddox, Health Care Lobby, 12 min

Lobbying Disclosure Act Guidance

Effective January 1, 2008

Reviewed June 15, 2012/Last Revised December 15, 2011¹

Section 1 – Introduction

Section 6 of the Lobbying Disclosure Act (LDA), 2 U.S.C. § 1605, provides that: The Secretary of the Senate and the Clerk of the House of Representatives shall (1) provide guidance and assistance on the registration and reporting requirements of this Act and develop common standards, rules and procedures for compliance with this Act; [and] (2) review, and, where necessary, verify and inquire to ensure the accuracy, completeness and timeliness of registrations and reports.

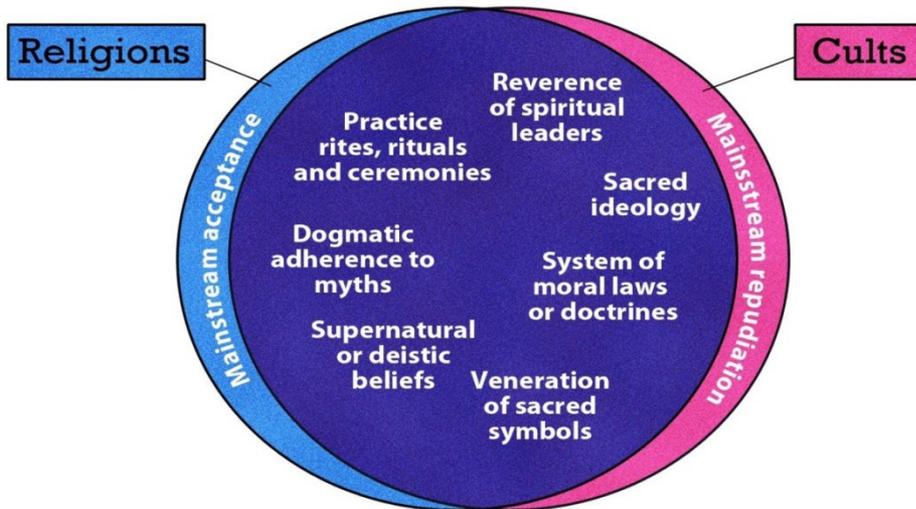
The LDA does not provide the Secretary or the Clerk with the authority to write substantive regulations or issue definitive opinions on the interpretation of the law. The Secretary and Clerk have, from time to time, jointly issued written guidance on the registration and reporting requirements. This document is both a compilation of previously issued guidance documents and our interpretation of the changes that were made to the LDA as a result of the Honest Leadership and Open Government Act of 2007 (HLOGA).

This compilation supersedes all previous guidance documents. This combined guidance document does not have the force of law, nor does it have any binding effect on the United States Attorney for the District of Columbia or any other part of the Executive Branch. To the extent that the guidance relates to the accuracy, completeness and timeliness of registration and reports, it will serve to inform the public as to how the Secretary and Clerk intend to carry out their responsibilities under the LDA.

Jesus Plus Nothing: Undercover Among America's Secret Theocrats, Jeff Sharlet:

Is the Family a cult? By definition? (Look it up!) What are the underlying ideas that twist men's minds in the Family? That support Sharlet's claim that "... [W]hat the Family desired ... was power, world power, with which Christ's kingdom can be built, cell by cell." Does it surprise you that there is this kind of influence on American politics? Use three in your response to these questions.

Religions and Cults: A Comparison



Concept: Sac City Freethinkers Design: Don Button

"The only difference between a cult and a religion is the amount of real estate they own."

- Frank Zappa (1940-1993)



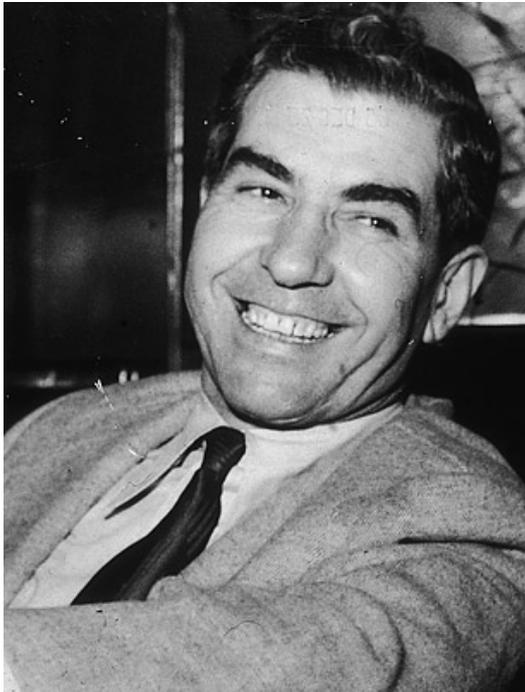
MyConfinedSpace.com

BUMP

**Abraham Vereide,
founder of The Family
with President Dwhite
Eisenhower**



**Examples of Prominent Figures
Admired by The Family**



Lucky Luciano



Mao



Hitler

CIVIL LIBERTIES

By [Lindsay Beyerstein](#)

Worse Than Fascists: Christian Political Group 'The Family' Openly Reveres Hitler

In his new book, [The Family](#), author Jeff Sharlet reveals sordid details about this power-hungry, inside-the-Beltway fundamentalist group.

June 11, 2008 |

Did you know that the National Prayer Breakfast is sponsored by a shadowy cabal of elite Christian fundamentalists? Jeff Sharlet's new book, ["The Family: The Secret Fundamentalism at the Heart of American Power,"](#) offers a rare glimpse of this remarkable network, which is known variously as the Family, the Fellowship and the International Foundation.

The Family was founded 70 years ago by Abraham Vereide, a Norwegian immigrant evangelist based in Seattle. In 1935, Vereide said, God appeared to him in a vision and revealed where Christianity had gone wrong: preoccupation with the poor, the weak and the suffering.

The down-and-out were in no position to bring about the Kingdom of God, Vereide realized. Some Christians believe that the rapture is imminent, but not the Family. They're convinced that Jesus won't return until we get our collective house in order. If they were to wait for the down-and-out to remake the world in God's image, we could be here forever.

Besides, in Seattle in the 1930s, union agitators were making a play for the down-and-out. Christianity promised rewards in the hereafter, but workers in the Pacific Northwest were starting to wonder why they had to wait so long. Instead of competing for market share with the Industrial Workers of the World, Vereide sought a different niche.

His new plan was to target men who were already powerful and turn them to God -- and wouldn't you know it, God hated unions, too.

Through personal relationships and small group encounters, Vereide united captains of industry and politicians as a Biblical bulwark against the increasing power of organized labor.

In the late 1940s, the Family helped roll back key pro-labor provisions of the New Deal. Later, the Family did its part for the Cold War by cultivating anti-communist strongmen around the world, including repressive leaders like Suharto of Indonesia and Jonas Savimbi of Angola.

The roster of current and former Family members includes senators, congressmen, Fortune 500 CEOs, generals and at least one Supreme Court justice. The Family does not publish membership lists, and its members are sworn to secrecy, so a full accounting is impossible.

Sen. Hillary Clinton has been involved with the Family since 1993 when, as first lady, she joined a White House prayer circle for political wives. Clinton has also sought spiritual counseling from the current head of the Family, Doug Coe. Sharlet argues that Clinton's longtime association with the Family has helped her forge working relationships with powerful religious conservatives such as Family member and anti-abortion crusader Sen. Sam Brownback of Kansas

<http://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=religious+cults+news&view=detail&mid=D17AEC1BBD680509574ED17AEC1BBD680509574E&first=0> Difference between religion and cults – 58 min.

<http://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=the+family+religious+group&view=detail&mid=282434C5D27B01FA2857282434C5D27B01FA2857&first=0> – NBC – The Family – 4 min.

<http://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=the+family+religious+group&view=detail&mid=35146FD23300B64C21A535146FD23300B64C21A5&first=0> – Jeff Sharlett – the Christian mafia – 14 min.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tD1QHO_AVZA Richard Dawkins vs Cardinal George Pell on Q&A (10-4-2012) – 1hr

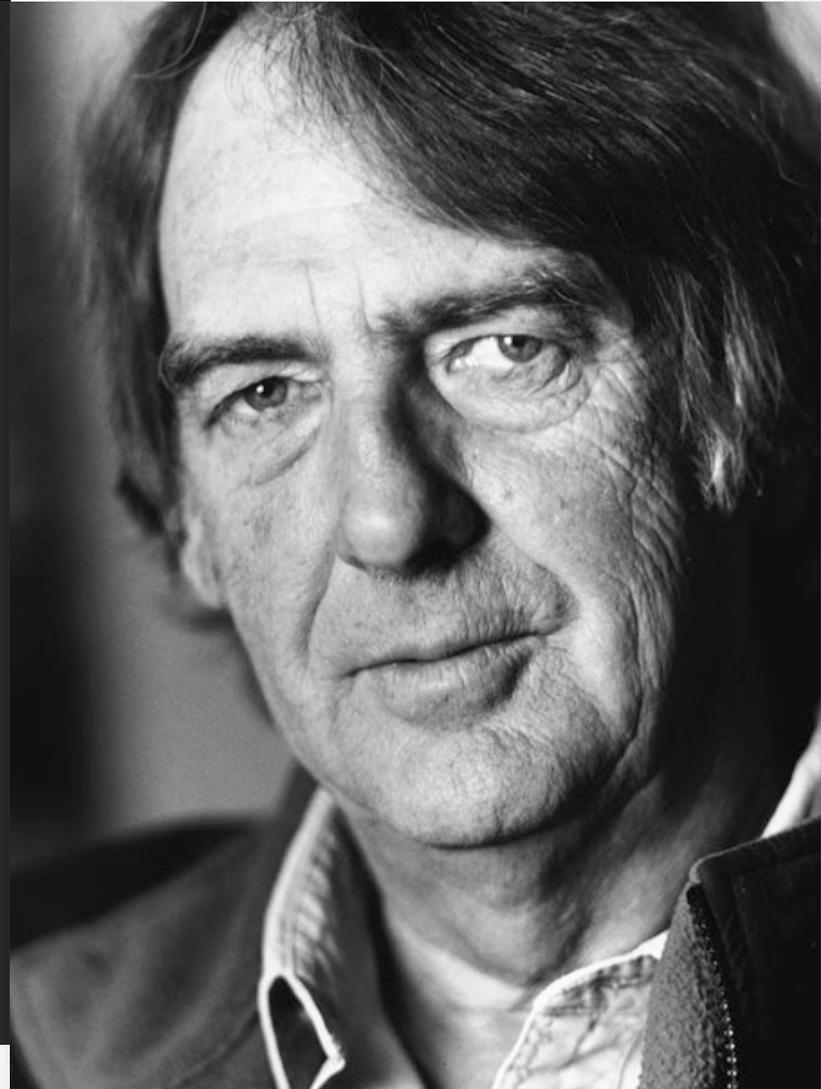
p. 56: Watch out for magazines and don't waste time on newspapers and never watch television. Eat meat, study the Gospels and play basketball. God loves a man who can sink a three-pointer. Pray to be broken.

p. ... [W]hat the family desired ... was power, world power with which Christ's kingdom can be built, cell by cell.



Teaching of Don Fernando: A Life and Death in the Narcotics Trade,
Charles Bowden:

You cannot write a story like this without getting extremely close to the subject matter, total “submersion” if you will. Or, in Bowden’s words, “I listen, I win trust, I pour coffee and cook dinners. I lean close until I disappear inside their hearts and fears and dreams. And then I tell.” And you cannot get this close to your subject matter without it having a profound psychological/emotional impact. In a clear thesis statement, construct an accurate essay that describes ways how writing this story on Don Fernando and the Mexican narco-trade affected the writer Charles Bowden.



Los Angeles Times



Mexico's President Felipe Calderon speaks during a news conference. (Virginia Mayo / Associated Press)

MEXICO UNDER SIEGE

Mexico reports capture of alleged Zetas cartel commander

The Mexican navy says it hopes Said Omar Juarez's capture in Coahuila state will lead authorities to the cartel's remaining top leader.

By Tracy Wilkinson, Los Angeles Times November 8, 2012, 5:52 p.m.

[MEXICO CITY](#) — An alleged local commander of the Zetas paramilitary cartel in the troubled border state of Coahuila has been captured, the Mexican navy announced Thursday, expressing hope that he might lead authorities to the notorious group's remaining top leader.

Said Omar Juarez was taken into custody on a prominent street in Saltillo, Coahuila's capital, the navy said in a statement released as the suspect was presented to reporters in [Mexico](#) City. In his

possession were weapons and packages containing what may be cocaine and marijuana, the statement said.

Juarez was described by the navy as the Zeta operative in charge of Saltillo, who "presumably" has direct ties to Miguel Angel Treviño, the Zetas' top leader. Treviño emerged as the undisputed Zetas capo after Heriberto Lazcano was killed in a shootout with navy special forces last month.

Coahuila, which borders Texas and is Mexico's third-largest state, has recently been the subject of increased scrutiny after a series of high-profile events that revealed the extent to which the Zetas had grown to dominate the region.

In addition to Lazcano's killing, the subsequent stealing of his body by armed commandos, and the acknowledgment by officials that he was living freely in Coahuila, there were other events:

The former governor's son was slain in October, allegedly by Zeta operatives working in cahoots with local police, and in September one of the largest mass prison breaks in history took place, in the Coahuila town of Piedras Negras, staged by Zetas to free Zetas.



The warden and 16 guards and other officials were detained on suspicion of aiding the escape; eight of the officials were released Thursday.

All of that was followed by a stunning series of interviews by the former governor, Humberto Moreira, who accused the state's lucrative mining industry of entering into a devil's pact with the Zetas and helping to finance their murderous ways. Moreira, who is mired in a scandal involving a \$3-billion debt that he saddled the state with, offered to supply proof of the complicity but has not yet done so.

With less than a month left in office, President [Felipe Calderon](#) has sought to vigorously fend off a mounting chorus of criticism of the military-led offensive against drug trafficking networks, which he launched in the first days of his administration but which has yielded mixed results. More than 55,000 people have been killed in what authorities describe as drug war-related violence, and the two largest organizations, the Sinaloa cartel and the Zetas, have grown to dominate large swaths of territory throughout Mexico and deep into Central America.

The Calderon strategy has been to go after cartel leaders like Lazcano and many others in hope of fragmenting the groups and making them easier to contain. But often, more violence follows as power struggles erupt, and new leaders eventually emerge.

"There are fewer leaders, but the operational capacity of the criminal groups does not seem to be weakened," Ernesto Lopez Portillo, executive director of the Mexico City-based Institute for Security and Democracy, said Thursday. "Organized crime is more powerful today than ever. wilkinson@latimes.com

<http://projects.latimes.com/mexico-drug-war/#/its-a-war> - LA Times Multi Media Photos



Quotes for discussion from the Bowden story:

p. 74: *I have learned a simple lesson. You can trust no one. But in the end you must trust someone. And when you are betrayed, and you will be betrayed, the ruin will come from the person you trusted.*

p. 74: (On trust.) *I have never had a candid conversation with a DEA agent when a third party, even when another agent was present. Never. Distrust is a growth industry in our culture, as the tiny microphones and cameras multiply and the strange hands paw through cyberspace, reading our lives.*

p. 76: *Assholes never kill you. Anyone who shows you a gun won't kill you because he's a coward.* – Don Fernando

p. 82: *They want you because they want your strength. They have money and they have power, but it is not enough. That is their weakness. Nothing is enough, because they do not really know what they want. They do not really know who they are. And so they must keep doing deals, expanding, reaching out, Fernando continues, for this thing they cannot name.*

<http://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=Charles+Bowden&view=detail&mid=BFAC3CBC9C0DA3B28B13BFAC3CBC9C0DA3B28B13&first=0> - Bowden, first trip to Juarez – 2min

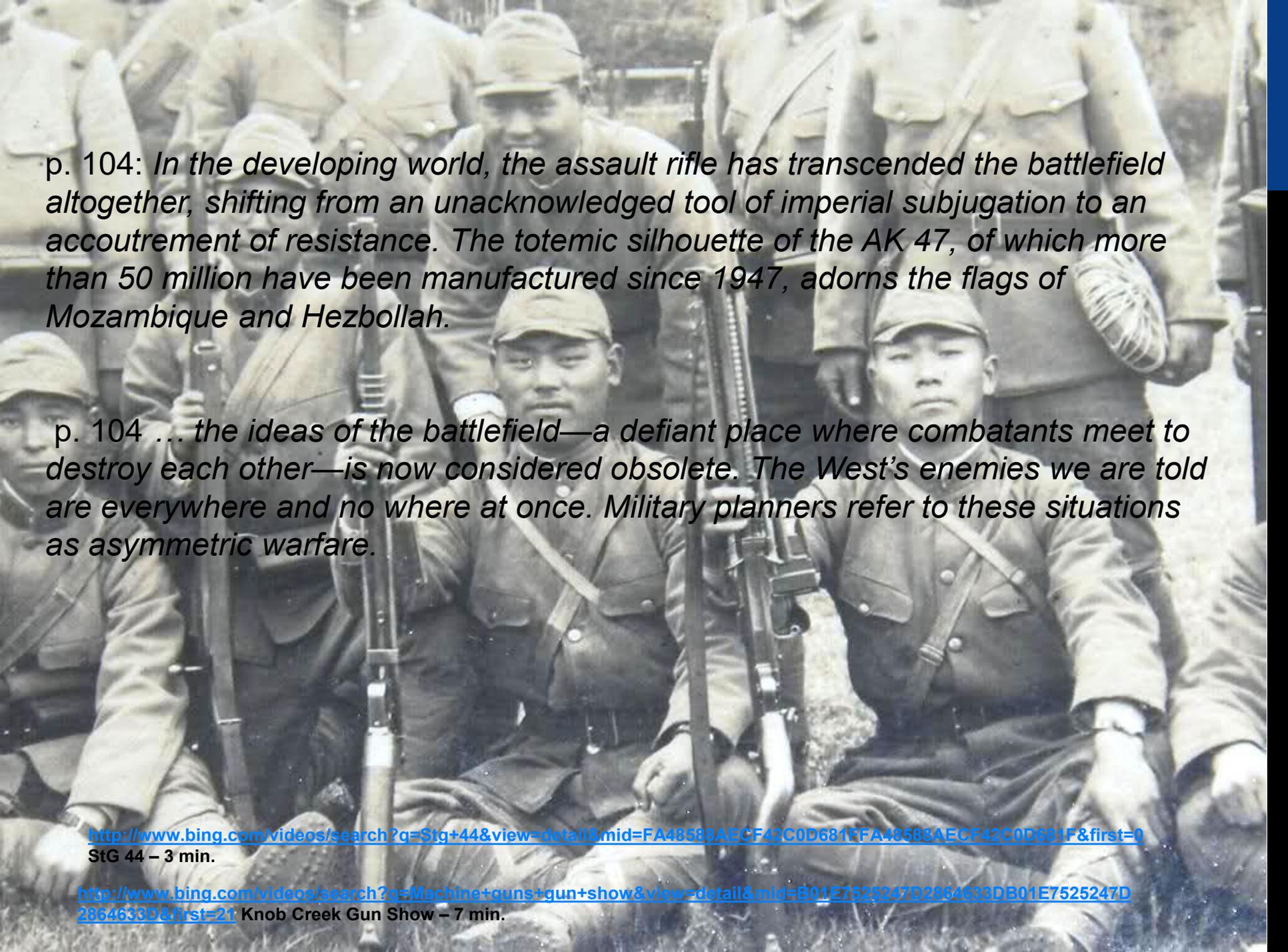
<http://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=Charles+Bowden&view=detail&mid=BFAC3CBC9C0DA3B28B13BFAC3CBC9C0DA3B28B13&first=0>
– Charles Bowden on Drug “War” – 11 min.

<http://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=Charles+Bowden&view=detail&mid=3BA87C22067EA23EF00F3BA87C22067EA23EF00F&first=21>
Bowden on Juarez, the most violent city in the world 8 min.

The Line is Hot: A History of the Machine Gun. Shot: Steve Featherstone:

It's hard to tell in this "history of the machine gun, shot," how Featherstone feels about guns. On the one hand, he is literally enraptured during the act of shooting, and his description of guns carries experience and research. On the other hand, there are traces of questionable character that he points out, references to Nazis and elaborate, somewhat ironic, or at least suggestive, descriptions of men lining up to blast the hell out of old appliances and cars. Decide where Featherstone sits when it comes to guns. Is he for them? Against them? Or neutral? Use at least three examples from the text to support your answer. Include a discussion on whether you support gun control or not.

MP 43**StG 43****Browning Automatic Rifle**



p. 104: *In the developing world, the assault rifle has transcended the battlefield altogether, shifting from an unacknowledged tool of imperial subjugation to an accoutrement of resistance. The totemic silhouette of the AK 47, of which more than 50 million have been manufactured since 1947, adorns the flags of Mozambique and Hezbollah.*

p. 104 ... *the ideas of the battlefield—a defiant place where combatants meet to destroy each other—is now considered obsolete. The West’s enemies we are told are everywhere and no where at once. Military planners refer to these situations as asymmetric warfare.*

<http://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=Stg+44&view=detail&mid=FA48588AECF42C0D681FFA48588AECF42C0D681F&first=0>
StG 44 – 3 min.

<http://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=Machine+guns+gun+show&view=detail&mid=B01E7525247D2864633DB01E7525247D2864633D&first=21> Knob Creek Gun Show – 7 min.

Welcome to Cancerland: A Mammogram Leads to a Culture of Pink Kitsch, Barbara Ehrenreich:

Ehrenreich claims, “the feminists want a cure.” And after eliminating bad genes and poor diets as being major contributors to breast cancer, she focuses on environmental factors. But environmental factors as a cause would totally dismantle the euphemized, infantilized, comodified culture of pink and all its corporate support. If environmental factors are focused on, corporations, who are some of the main contributors to environmental pollution would be targeted as a major cause of, not only breast cancer, but all cancers. Write an essay that focuses on whether there should be a “race for the cure” or another race, a “race for the cause?” How, if the focus was on cause instead of exclusively on cure, would this effect the current pink dynamic? What would a new dynamic look like? Use two quotes from the text to support your answer.

<http://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=breast+cancer+causes&view=detail&mid=08D98126209381D38E1708D98126209381D38E17&first=0>
– 30 sec. dress for the cause

<http://abcnews.go.com/Video/playerIndex?id=6118891> Breast cancer causes – Dr. Susan Love – 5 min.

<http://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=breast+cancer+causes&view=detail&mid=08D98126209381D38E1708D98126209381D38E17&first=0> chemical cause of breast cancer – 3 min.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fxlc-ASgB9Y> - Pink Ribbons, Inc. - Theatrical Trailer – 2:30



p. 126: *Some women diagnosed with breast cancer will live long enough to die of something else , and some of these lucky ones will indeed owe their longevity to a combination of surgery, chemotherapy, radiation, and/or anti estrogen drugs such as Tamoxifen. Others, though, would've lived untreated or with surgical excision alone, either because their cancers were slow growing or because their bodies own defenses were successful. Still, others will die of the disease no matter what heroic, cell-destroying therapies are applied. The trouble is we do not have the means to distinguish between these three groups. 'So, the sole effect of early detection is to stretch out the time in which the woman bears the knowledge of her condition' (Plotkin). These women do not live longer than they might have without any medical intervention.*

p. 126: *To the extent that current methods of detection and treatment fail or fall short, America's breast cancer cult can be judged as an outbreak of mass delusion, celebrating survivorhood by downplaying mortality and promoting obedience to medical protocols known to have limited efficacy. And although we may imagine ourselves to be past the era of patriarchal medicine, obedience is the message behind the infantilizing theme in breast cancer culture as represented by teddy bears, crayons, and pinkness. You are encouraged to regress to a little girl state, suspend critical judgment, and accept whatever measures the doctors as parent surrogates impose.*

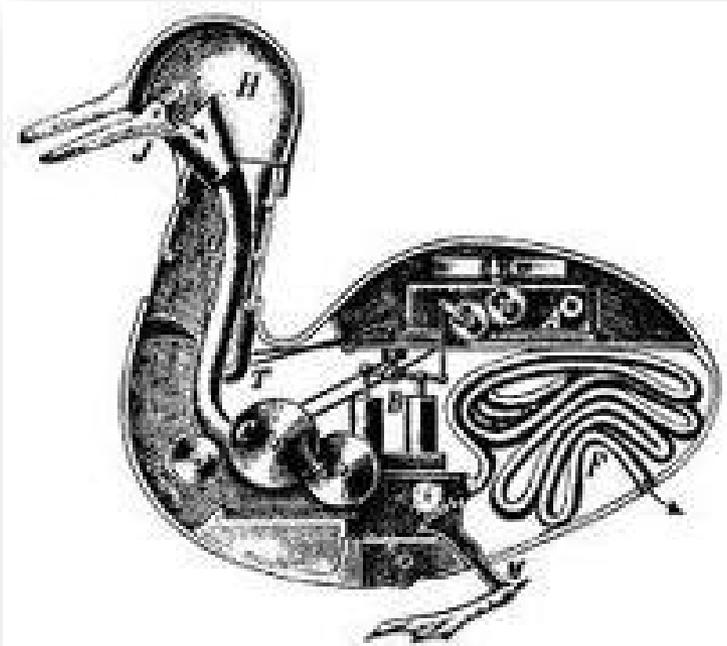
<http://www.cnn.com/video/?/video/health/2009/11/17/cohen.mammogram.confusion.cnn#/video/health/2009/11/17/cohen.mammogram.confusion.cnn> - Mammograms - CNN – 3:30



Manufacturing Depression: Notes on the Economy of Melancholy, Gary Greenberg: This article focuses on an ongoing debate, not just in psychiatry and psychology, but in many physical and social sciences , exemplified in the following:

Conventional/Popular View of Science =

deductive reasoning, reductionism, positivism/empirical evidence, objectivity, either/or, black and white, finite, cause and effect, left brain, “all the answers.”



Creative view of science =

inductive reasoning, subjectivity, abstract, exploration, innovation, imagination, creativity, gray matter, infinite, entrepreneurial, art, “mystery embraced,” right brain, “answers are always and forever suspect and susceptible to reinterpretation.”

Vs.



“The Self” in the Future: Will it be Extinguished, by Neuroscience?



[Hank Pellissier](#), [Ethical Technology](#)

Posted: May 16, 2012, *This interview was conducted via email, in early May 2012.*

Will “the self” survive because it can provide people with a greater sense of happiness? Or is it - perhaps along with the constructs “Free Will” and “Determinism” - doomed to the dustbin of history? **Should cyborgs, avatars, and a rewired human brain be developed with a stronger or weaker sense of self?**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iRlcbRXQ0o> Sam Harris Free Will, 12 min.

An interview with [Dr. Garret Merriam](#), Assistant Professor of Philosophy at University of Southern Indiana.

Hank Pellissier: My understanding is that the notion of the “self” was rather “invented” by the Greeks; then it faded until it was brought back during the Age of Enlightenment - is this correct? Does this mean that the notion of the self is primarily a European idea?

Garret Merriam I think that while there is some truth to that, it's also an oversimplification. There is something like 'the self' that transcends cultures; even in prehistoric China people realized there was a difference between their being hit over the head with a stone axe and their neighbor being hit over the head with a stone axe. That basic sense of 'self vs. other' is neurologically hardwired and is not unique to humans; other primates, cetaceans, elephants, some bird species, octopi, and dozens if not hundreds of other species exhibit it, so it cannot be a cultural artifact.

But there is a more sophisticated sense of the term 'self' that is built upon that more basic sense that does seem to be a cultural creation. When we think about a written biography, an account of a person's whole life, character, personality and accomplishments as belonging to/constituting this single unified thing that we also call 'the self'? That has a distinctly Greek texture to it. It is this sense of self that's the controversial one, and what I think most philosophers mean when they debate the nature of 'the self' (and how I'll be using the term from here on out.)

Ancient literature in other cultures—Egyptian, Hindu, Chinese, etc.—that predate classical Greece don't seem to emphasize the significance of the individual ego in the way the Greeks did. It isn't wholly absent in these other cultures, but a rather arrogant Eurocentric bias blinded scholars to its presence in these cultures for some time. But the did Greeks focus on it more, develop it more, make it a more explicit and central part of their thinking on human nature. And while it did fade away during the Middle Ages, it never fully disappeared. (Stories from the high Middle Ages, like *The Decameron* and *The Canterbury Tales*, while not as 'self' centered as the plays of Sophocles, nonetheless have well developed characters that reflect their author's sense of 'self'.)

It came back like gangbusters in the Renaissance, with the invention of the personal essay (Michele de Montaigne) and later, in the Enlightenment with the development of the modern biography (Samuel Johnson). It reached its apogee with the Romantics (early 19th century) and started to crumble thanks to the work of Sigmund Freud by the turn of the 20th. The existentialists made a go at resurrecting it again, in the mid-20th century, but it's hard to say how well they succeeded, and inasmuch as they did, their notion of 'self' is pretty far removed from what the Greeks or the Romantics thought of as 'the self.'

Hank Pellissier: In your opinion, is the future going to be an era where philosophy and psychology gets increasingly influenced by new neuroscience knowledge? In 50 years, will the notion that we have a “self” be outdated? In 100 years, will the idea that we have a self, free will, and self-determination, be entirely laughable?

Garret Merriam: I definitely think philosophy—like nearly everything else about culture—will become deeply influenced by developments in neuroscience. I doubt it will be COMPLETELY saturated; you will still be able to do philosophy without mastering neuroscience. But much in the same way that psychology became something of a parallel discipline to philosophy in the 20th century, and most philosophers took the psychology literature very seriously in their own work, the same will be true of neuroscience in the 21st.

I’m more hesitant about the idea that neuroscience will kill the idea of ‘the self.’ I think it might be a good thing if it did, but some ideas are recalcitrant and just won’t go gently into that good night, and I suspect that ‘the self’ will be one of them (it has so far, in spite of thinkers like Freud.) The notion of ‘self’ will transform, as it always has in times of great cultural upheaval, and mold itself to the new contours of the culture, but I bet we’ll still be talking about ‘the self’, at least in our unguarded vernacular, 100 years from now. After all, we still talk about ‘sunrise’ and ‘sunset’, even though we’ve known for nearly 500 years that it’s not the sun that’s moving, it’s the earth.

“Free will” may prove equally recalcitrant (it certainly has despite powerful philosophical arguments against it), but I personally have an ambition to help send it to the dust bin of history. I think both the notion of ‘free will’ as well as its presumed default of ‘determinism’ are both useless concepts and I have high hopes that neuroscience will be able to eliminate them in favor concepts that can do a much better job of explaining human action. My recent research has been focusing on this.

Hank Pellissier: Are humans happier with the notion that we have a self? Is that why the notion was constructed? Happier with everything that accompanies the notion of a self, i.e., identity, individualism, alienation, “self-awareness”, personal growth, contemplation of the self, etc.? Are we really happy with all that, or would we be happier with regarding ourself in strictly neurological terms?

Garret Merriam: I don't think the notion of 'self' was a deliberate creation, so it would be wrong to say it was constructed in order to make us happy, or for any other conscious purpose. That having been said, there is a fair amount of empirical evidence, principally from positive psychology and social psychology, that suggest that people with a strong 'sense of self', a healthy ego, are happier than people without it.

Cross culturally, there is a key balance between what you might call a 'radical individualism' (in which the individual is the only thing that matters) and 'radical collectivism' (in which the community is the only thing that matters). Happiness seems to happen most when you're somewhere in the middle; you have strong community ties with good social capital, but a high premium is placed on individual rights and liberties. That is, cultures that have a healthy sense of self are happier, but when that is taken to an extreme you get what the sociologist Emile Durkheim called 'anomie'—a breakdown of social belonging and cultural identity. When that happens, people are just as miserable (but in different ways) as when they live under the thumb of a dictator.

How neuroscience will impact this is a complicated question, and I think it will depend a lot on how we as a culture manage the use and direction of neuroscientific research. Ideally, positive psychology will fuse with neuroscience (as it already seems to be doing, at least in a preliminary way). That will make the increase of human well-being one of the central goals of neuroscience in the 21st century. This will require a deep understanding of the sources of human flourishing, not simply medicating us until we stop asking troubling questions.

Suffice to say, I think it would be very peculiar indeed if neuroscience told us both that in order to live happy lives we have to have this very specific notion of 'self', while at the same time disproving the existence of such a 'self.' That's not to say it won't happen, but it would be ironic, tragic and just highly unlikely. Why would evolution produce such a tragic species as that, that so crucially depends on this rather culturally specific notion of 'self'? It's certainly not an adaptive trait, so it would have to be a side-effect of some kind. If so, then perhaps we could use neuroscience to correct for it.

But here of course is where the nightmare scenarios start to creep in. Once neuroscience starts tinkering around with those deep aspects of human nature, such as our (alleged) need for sense of self, where does it end? We may end up in a *Brave New World* where we don't just jettison the things that inhibit our

flourishing, but we also jettison the things that make us who we are. And if who we are is valuable, worth preserving, then neuroscience may become a threat our very existence.

I don't think there is any easy answer to problems such as these. But I am sure that the best way to position ourselves to find the answers is through neurophilosophy, by studying the developments in neuroscience and bringing them to bear on these kinds of traditional philosophical problems.

Hank Pellissier: This next question is rather far-out. The question is, if humans decided that it was more "fun" to have a "self" would it be possible to rewire the human brain, in any possible self, so that the notion of a SELF made more sense? Would it be possible to construct a cyborg, for example, that actually did have a self? Would that cyborg be at an advantage over humans, in terms of less doubt, stronger sense of identity, clearer goals?

Garret Merriam: Like I said in response to the last question, I imagine any engineering would likely work the other way: enhance human well-being by making us less dependent on such philosophically and scientifically dubious notions as 'the self.' But in principle it should be possible to work it the other way around. Whatever exactly the 'sense of self' is (assuming the 'sense' is real, even if the 'self' is not) it must manifest in the brain somehow, hence we should be able to measure it, manipulate it and control it.

In practice, however, I doubt it will work that cleanly. 'Sense of self' is not a specific thing, like levels of serotonin or norepinephrine. It's some kind of emergent property, and those are notoriously difficult to pin down and dissect. I think by the time we have enough technical facility to get our hands around something like that our conceptual apparatus will have changed drastically and we won't be nearly as invested in our notion of 'self' as we think about it today.

Hank Pellissier: Here's a (set of) questions—looking 200 years into the future, and imagining numerous different scenarios of advanced civilizations, what percentage of these possible advanced civilizations do you see as having: 1) No Self at all, no regard for the notion of Self, just seeing as an antiquated notion. 2) Same sense of Self as Earth today, general popular belief in it, except among scholars and neuro-intellectuals. 3) 100% Belief in a Self, either through some type of enhancement, or mind-file feature, or cyborg overthrow, or redefinition of the term.

Garret Merriam: 200 years out is a very long time-horizon. It's hard to grasp how many turns of the screw that is in terms of scientific advancement. I'm about as confident in any prediction that far out as I would have been in Socrates' predictions about the year 2000. That having been said, I don't think that should prevent us from trying, so long as we take our predictions with a large block of salt.

As such, I actually don't think any of these three is terribly likely. (1) & (2) both seem ruled out by historical patterns; our notion of self always changes with the culture, and given how many cultural changes we're going to experience in the next 200 years it's highly unlikely that our we'll have THE SAME notion of self. But by the same token, some notion of self has stuck around, in spite of these big upheavals, so I doubt it will be completely eliminated, either.

(3) seems like the most plausible of the options because there is some reason to think that a sense of self does make us live better, so enhancing that would make sense. However I think the very process of pursuing that kind of enhancement would change our understanding of what self is, so I don't think "100% belief in the self" would be a terribly accurate description. It will mean something pretty different. I'd call it something more like 'Self 2.0' (or rather 5.0, or 10.0, or even larger, depending on how you parse the history.)

Hank Pellissier: Do you think the notion of the "Self" is a wishful-thinking fantasy, a desire for something positive that doesn't exist? Do you see it as misinterpretation of how the brain works? Do you think "the self" has desirable qualities that future advanced civilizations will seek to incorporate into new minds?

Garret Merriam: I think 'misinterpretation of how the brain works' is probably it. We've known since Freud that we're not terribly good at understanding what's going on for us through simple introspection, and the 'evidence' (such as it is) for 'self' seems pretty much entirely from introspection. As I've said, there does seem to be some positive value in it, but I suspect we'll figure out a way to keep that value without holding on to this particular concept—we can take the cake out of the box, as it were.

Dr. Garret Merriam was previously interviewed by Kristi Scott in an IEET article entitled, ["Transhumanism and Neurophilosophy"](#)

Assignment #8

Manufacturing Depression:

The reductionism side of science is what Greenberg is lamenting, the idea of human behavior that it all can be reduced to “the instruments of science,” and “the sum ... of [our] electromolecular outputs,” that we are in danger of forfeiting our conventional notions of self, that “they [modern psychiatrists] alert you to what it is in your ‘self’ that is diseased.” Greenberg writes, “Because the point here is not to teach me anything about myself, or for them to learn anything about me. It’s not even to prove whether or not omega-3s work. It’s to strengthen the idea that this is what we are: machines fueled by neurotransmitters at the mercy of our own renegade molecules.” Using three examples from the **Garret Merriam** interview above, along with two examples from Greenberg’s piece, write an essay on what you think the future of the self, the future of consciousness, our awareness of ourselves and who we are, is. Are we more than the reduced, cause and effect, bio-electro-chemical reactions in our brains? Will scientists and physicians see humans like a mechanic sees an automobile? Set your essay up with a strong thesis.



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jTWmTJALe1w> Consciousness, Qualia, and Self (V.S. Ramachandran), 8min

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TvmOjGMnap8> What Is Consciousness? - What The Bleep Do We Know, 5 min

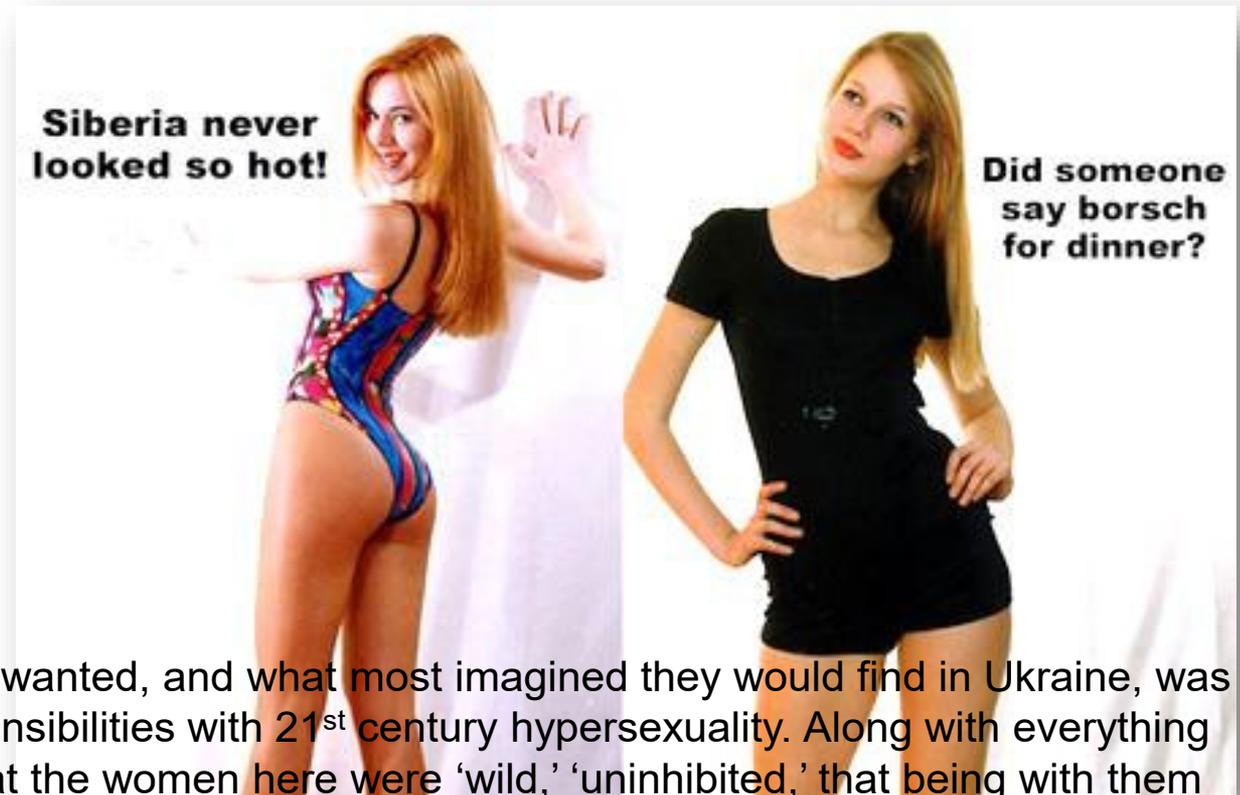
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y4y8mTRqXAo> Quantum Consciousness (Stuart Hameroff) 9 min

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qjfaoe847qQ> what is consciousness? 7min.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zGv1Nay2z-U> What is the self? 3min

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cC-Je_Nt6Cs Dr. Quantum - The Real Self behind the Ego, 15 min listen only

For this essay, using three examples from the text, is what was said about American women in Garin's piece, "A Foreign Affair" true or false? Why?



P. 164: But what they really wanted, and what most imagined they would find in Ukraine, was a fusion of 1950s gender sensibilities with 21st century hypersexuality. Along with everything else, the men had heard that the women here were 'wild,' ' uninhibited,' that being with them was "a whole different ballgame.' As always, Dan the Man had done his part to stoke this fantasy, peppering his talk of traditional vales and wifely devotion with just the right amount of lasciviousness.

<http://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=Ukrainian+brides&view=detail&mid=49C43CA187EF9C9BC3A949C43CA187EF9C9BC3A9&first=0>
Ukrainian Brides Tour – 5 min.

<http://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=Ukrainian+brides&view=detail&mid=87CD86323B24747EF1CE87CD86323B24747EF1CE&first=0>
Ukrainian Bride story – 5 min.

<http://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=foreign+bride+&view=detail&mid=053A3D5745CDF5A910D2053A3D5745CDF5A910D2&first=0>
Foreign Bride 101 – 7 min

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vbsdjBDS03s> Dr. Phil Mail Order Brides – 41 min

Double standards anyone?

My Undertaker, My Pimp: Looking for Grace in a Desert Brothel, Jay Kirk

Kirk writes, “Mack walks the line of the law as deftly as he walks the line between grief and lust. How very blurry that line is in a free market culture that survives on the myopic propaganda of manufactured need, in which need is predicated on fear of loss, fear of not having, in which images of grief are routinely brought into focus as images of desire. Between grief and nothing, nothing sells better than grief. Except maybe pussy.” Kirk spends this whole piece ironically (the piece is



hilarious) trying to understand how Mack synthesizes his business and personal feelings between the grief business and the lust business. He does this in order to better understand his own obsession with grief and, we can almost surmise, lust. Consider the quote on “manufactured need” above. Develop a thesis and essay that explains how two examples you select from print advertising conveys this “manufactured need ... predicated on fear of loss, fear of not having.” How do these ads convey products that we cannot live without? Conclude this essay with the truth about these products. Can you live without them? How much of your life is dominated by things you can really live without? Attach the two ads to your essay.

P.170: Death is ultimately a problem of the imagination ...

P.184: When it comes to grief and lust we are all tumbleweeds.



Angel's Ladies

Rating: Unrated · **Genre:** Documentary · **Run time:** 1 hrs 20 min

Synopsis: 70-year-old Mack Moore and his wife, Angel, have made their careers pandering on behalf of 'independent contractors' aka prostitutes. Running their business out of a ranch in Beatty, Nevada, the couple prides themselves on keeping up a Christian whorehouse, complete with hooker/john Thanksgiving Day dinners. ...

<http://www.brothelangelsladies.com/> Website

Mexicali Chinesco



They Came Out Like Ants! Searching for the Chinese Tunnels on Mexicali, William T Vollman: This stylistic narrative conveys Vollman's compelling search for a somewhat known, elusive history of Chinese immigrants (and resident Chinese) inhabiting tunnels and using them for various vices like gambling and prostitution. There is little confirmed

record other than the abandoned tunnels and word-of-mouth of Chinese and Mexicans living in the border town of Mexicali. **For this essay experience**, search out a mystery in your own life, maybe your own family history, and set out on an investigative journey. Be descriptive and write it as a "process of discovery." Write up a short paragraph of your intentions and confer with me before you start working on this assignment. Come up with a clever, relevant title—*The Came Out Like Ants!* You must read Vollman's story first.



They came out like ants.

Many of the Chinese labourers who came to the irrigation system stayed on after its completion, congregating in an area of Mexicali today known as Chinesca ('Chinatown'). During Prohibition in the U.S., many Chinese laborers and farmers came to the town to open bars, restaurants and hotels to cater their American clients, Chinesca eventually housed just about all of the city's casinos and bars, and an underground tunnel system to connect bordellos and opium dens to Calexico on the U.S. side. Bootleggers also used this route to supply the U.S. with alcohol purchased in Mexico.



**Sacromonte
gypsy cave
dwelling
(Cordoba,
Spain, 2008**

I had heard about the Chinese caves/tunnels of Mexicali Mexico before I read Imperial. Independently of that awareness, I maintain an active interest in cave/tunnel dwellings of any sort. I think it's the idea of "living in the earth" that attracts me. Above is a photograph of the gypsy caves of the sacromonte district just outside of Cordoba, Spain. The settlement of the caves in Spain is related to the utter collapse of society in between Roman and Muslim control and so the caves, despite their historical pedigree and attempts by the government to class the place up for educational purposes, maintain a tingly sense of nascent (or on going) collapse.

Vollmann Diaries V

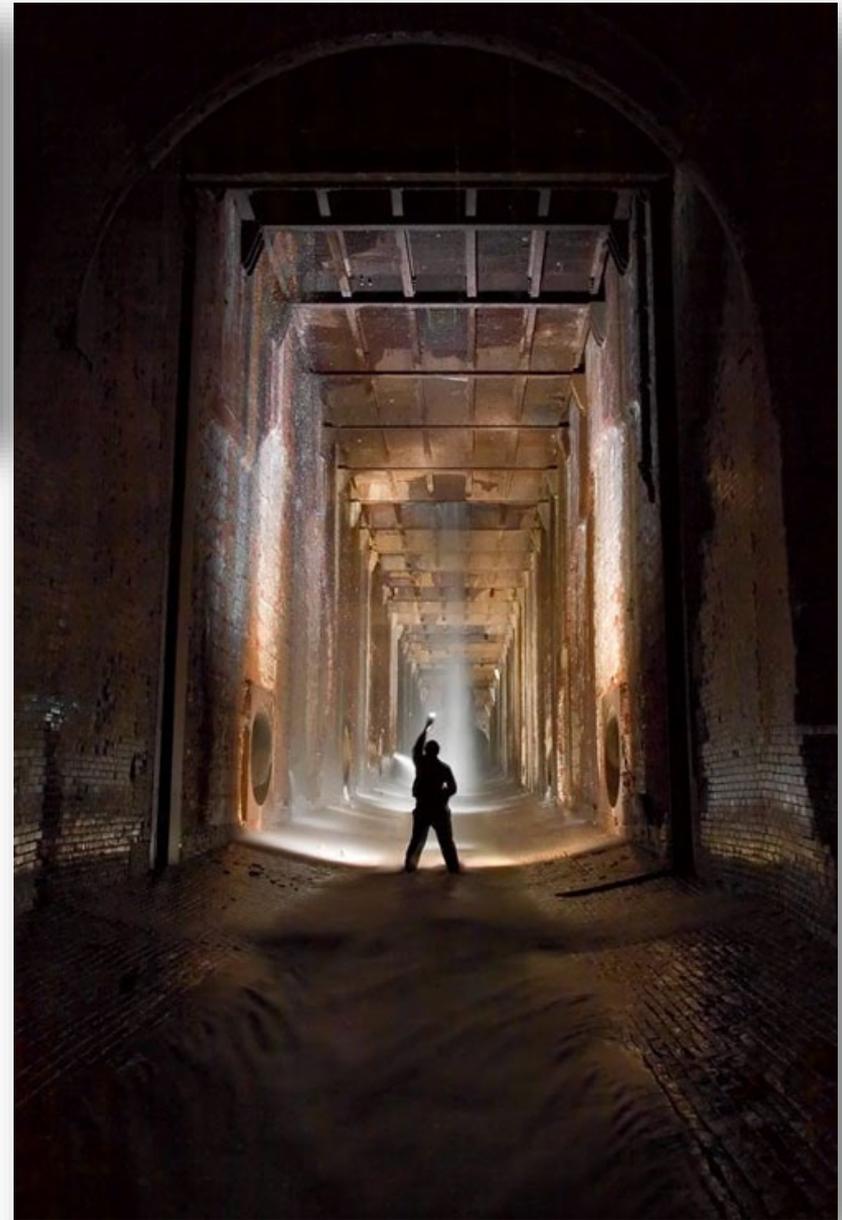
It's funny living in caves in Spain, versus tunnels on the United States/Mexican border. In the course of writing a central chapter of one of the best books written in a long while, Vollmann conclusively proves the existence of Chinese created tunnel networks underneath the streets of Mexicali. These tunnels exist in an "urban legend" state on the United States side of the border. I can attest personally to that attitude among residents of El Centro CA. This denial/ignoring of a very real, interesting phenomenon is a microcosm of Vollmann's approach in Imperial. Here, he is working with a real myth: His trips into the tunnels underlying historic China town in have all the excitement and tension of your standard Indiana Jones movie.



Downtown Mexicali



72 years ago, a man named William Zimmerman sat down to tell a story about "mysterious Chinese tunnels" to the U.S. government. That interview was conducted as part of the Federal Writers' Project, and it can be read online in a series of [typewritten documents](#) hosted by the [Library of Congress](#). Zimmerman claims that "mysterious" tunnels honeycombed the ground beneath the city of Tacoma, Washington. These would soon become known as "Shanghai tunnels," because city dwellers were allegedly kidnapped via these underground routes – which always led west to the docks – only to be shipped off to Shanghai, an impossibly other world across the ocean. There, they'd be sold into slavery.



Chinese tunnels exist in many places

Digging into China's nuclear tunnels

By William Wan | [The Washington Post](#) – Tue, Nov 29, 2011

The Chinese have called it their “Underground Great Wall” — a vast network of tunnels designed to hide their country’s increasingly sophisticated missile and nuclear arsenal. For the past three years, a small band of obsessively dedicated students at Georgetown University has called it something else: homework.

Led by their hard-charging professor, a former top Pentagon official, they have translated hundreds of documents, combed through satellite imagery, obtained restricted Chinese military documents and waded through hundreds of gigabytes of online data.

The result of their effort? The largest body of public knowledge about thousands of miles of tunnels dug by the [Second Artillery Corps](#), a secretive branch of the Chinese military in charge of protecting and deploying its ballistic missiles and nuclear warheads.

The study is yet to be released, but already it has sparked a congressional hearing and been circulated among top officials in the Pentagon, including the Air Force vice chief of staff.

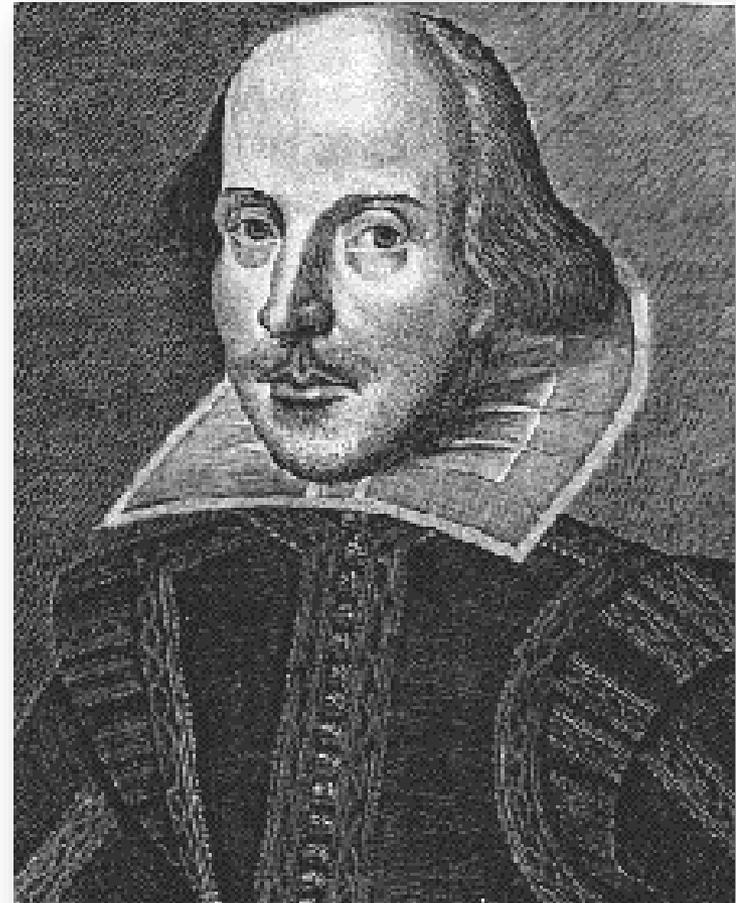
Most of the attention has focused on the 363-page study’s provocative conclusion — that China’s nuclear arsenal could be many times larger than the [well-established estimates](#) of arms-control experts ...

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fGweDRqj1iU> Chinese Nuclear Tunnels 15 min.

Image as shown at: “我军东风31导弹简易阵地这样被曝光了！
[Dongfeng-31 missile army positions so easy to light it!], Sino Military
Forum (2010-11-15) <<http://club.mil.news.sina.com.cn/viewthread.php?tid=245876>> [accessed 15 Nov. 2010, translated by IP-1011].

What is Poetry? And Does it Pay? Jake Silverstein: **What is Poetry? And Does it Pay?** Jake Silverstein: Does this very ironic poke at professional poetry organizations answer the title's question: "What is poetry and does it pay?" For this essay assignment, write on whether you think this poetry contest was a scam. Use three outside sources, a strong thesis, works cited page. Here is the website of the organization:

<http://www.famouspoets.com/>.



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AIYfCst16dA> Reputable Poetry Contests and Ways Poets Can make Money, 2:30

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uTe_rsl5x14 How to win poetry contests – 1:30 sec.

p.239 – Tattooed Dude: I came out here (Reno, Poetry Convention) with just my shirt on my back , all the way from Jersey without a penny, and now I’m gonna have to ride the train cars back, which I don’t mind because a freight car is a fuck of a place to write some poetry.”

p.240 – end of piece. “At the center of the world were Bobby’s lips, singing the immortal verses, and in these verses we took our solace and our hearts were gladdened. This was poetry.”

In Class – Write a short definition of what you think poetry is.



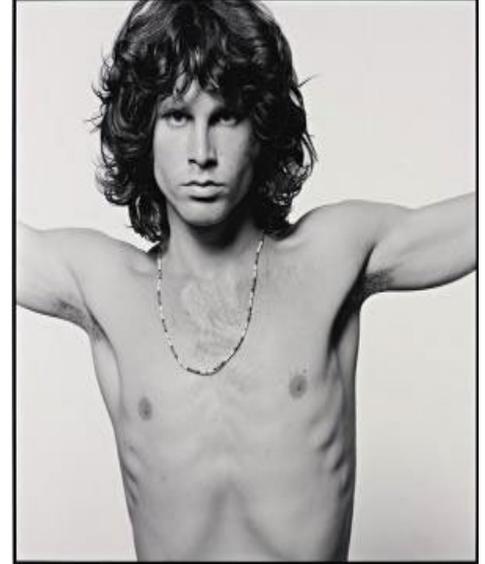
Emily Dickinson



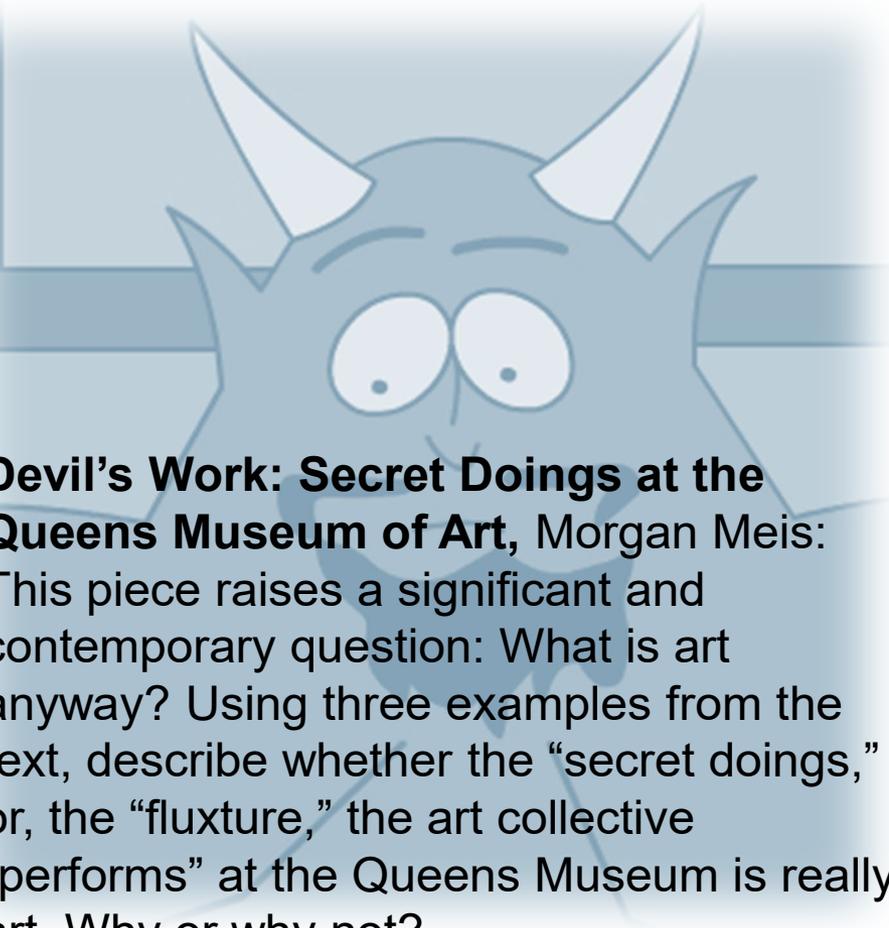
Maya Angelou



**Wole Soyinka
Nigeria**



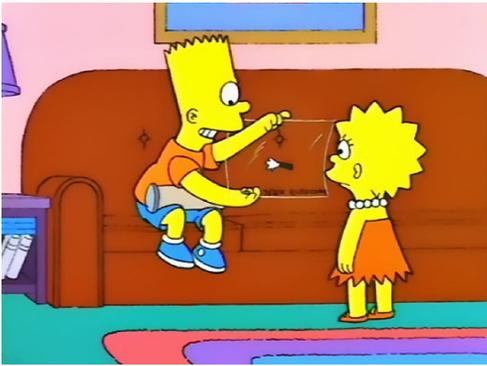
Jim Morrison



Devil's Work: Secret Doings at the Queens Museum of Art, Morgan Meis: This piece raises a significant and contemporary question: What is art anyway? Using three examples from the text, describe whether the “secret doings,” or, the “fluxture,” the art collective “performs” at the Queens Museum is really art. Why or why not?



Art Quiz



Yes ____
No ____



Yes ____
No ____



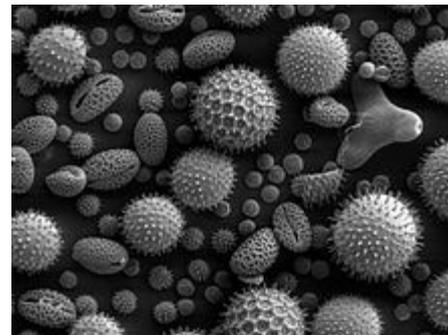
Yes ____
No ____



Yes ____
No ____



Yes ____
No ____



Yes ____
No ____

Pollen under E-scope

My Crowd: Or, Phase 5: A Report From the Inventor of the Flash Mob

Bill Wasik: If you dare, organize a flash mob as Wasik defines it.

Initial contacts should be made via social media and the occurrence not last more than 10-15 minutes or so.

You may work on this project with other classmates, but you must write your own reflection paper. Using two examples or definitions of behavior Wasik alludes to and three outside sources that support your thesis, describe not just if you felt similar emotions while participating in this flash mob experience, but where these emotions come from. Don't be scared off from this assignment because there is no right or wrong answer here. This essay, however, will require some penetrating insight on your part.



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MhYyAa0VnyY> – anti-bullying flash mob 5 min

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ao4DkbGbx10> Flash Mob Bondi beach 5 min

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bQLCZOG202k> flash mob Antwerp 4 min

Misinformation Intern: My Summer as a Military Propagandist in Iraq,

William Mark: This is an interesting foray into a young, aspiring, idealistic journalist's experience as a "propagandist" or "misinformation intern" in Iraq. In your essay, using two examples from the piece where propaganda or misinformation was used for political purposes, answer the question whether there is any value in issuing misinformation or propaganda to a society that consumes news that is distorted and believes it to be true?



Remember way back to the introduction to this collection and our discussion about truth in what you read and how the digitization of information can have profound effects on the idea of truth. (One idea is that truth does not exist, or is different for everyone, which, philosophically, it is hard to argue against.) Do not rewrite the essay response from the introduction. Be specific here in your composition, about how Mark was essentially used for political purposes. You must also use three outside sources, set up a works cited page.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TJic51MeVaU> Psychology of Belief, Part 4: Misinformation Effect 8 min

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T_H60GNQCPY Consequences of the CIA's deliberate misinformation (19 min)

Out of Iraq: The Rise and Fall of One Man's Occupation, Adam Davidson:

This little ditty explores the logistics of covering a war, the irony in wanting better digs while everyone around you expects to suffer. This essay is rather simple, but you still have to read *Out of Iraq*. Write an essay, on whether or not you would accept a reporting assignment into a dangerous part of the world? Where would it be? What exactly would you cover? In other words, what would your story be about? Include in your answer what kind of living arrangements you would expect/make.



Assignment #16

Iraqi children playing war games



Writing the Iraq War: The Notes, Photos, and Audio for 'Generation Kill'

By Evan Wright

<http://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2012/12/writing-the-iraq-war-the-notes-photos-and-audio-for-generation-kill/266375/> Wright's piece in *The Atlantic*. F-18 audio