Featuring the work of our students, faculty, staff, and alumni.

Please submit poetry, short stories, plays, essays,
black and white photographs, and art
to rooms 154 or 158 for our 2013 issues.

Submissions requested by email address at RiverVoices@muskegoncc.edu.
Save your work in Word. No anonymous submissions accepted.
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47th Annual MCC Student Art and Design Exhibition

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POETRY

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Honorable Mention LAND Writing Contest
Private

Josh Williams

She wanted to marry him the first time they made love. That was before he had left. Now they did it all the time, as if to remember that. From the day he came home, they waged war on each other’s bodies. Their apartment became a battlefield strewn with clothes and barricaded with take-out boxes. It was a desperate effort on both fronts. He was losing and knew it. She knew it and couldn’t stop.

So when he finally surrendered, it wasn’t a surprise. He was on the couch. Half naked. Defeated. Blinded by the television. Peter Jennings was reporting on the offensive strike in Afghanistan. She was launching her own. Lying prone against his body, ready to pounce, she clawed her way up. Troubling news today... Her eye shadow smeared like coal across his chest. Insurgents near Kandahar... His heart pounded in her ear. Roadside bomb... She kissed the cold sweat on his neck. Troop deployment... He quivered beneath her while she nibbled his ear. Exclusive footage... She slid her hand up his thigh.

Invading higher.

And higher.

Until something exploded from half the world over.

And then his fingers pierced into her arm like shrapnel, tearing her away. She crashed to the ground. Stunned. Lying in the rubble. He left her there and marched to the bathroom without saying a word.
Mourning

Joshua Williams

I woke up alone this morning
in an ocean of empty sheets
swathing over my naked blue body
bristling with goose bumps.
It was the first time I’ve slept
without being tangled in a briar
of prickly legs, crocheted awake,
wrestling with your warm
flesh. Instead I was a dead man floating
like driftwood through my dreams,
no shore to bury my face upon,
yet burdened with the entire sea.

I still lock the bathroom door,
thinking you’ll forget to knock.
Maybe it’s the leaking faucet
that reminds me of your foot
tap, tap, tapping against the floor.
Or, maybe it’s the strands of hair
I still find knotted in your brush.
If I tie a tress around my fingertip,
it should balloon just enough.

The rest will swell inside,
while I eat breakfast for two,
listening to the solitary smack
of my lips, churning my stomach.
I call your phone to drown it out,
watching it moor across the table.
You answer with leave a message,
and I play it like a broken record
all morning.
Wake up and Wash

Adam DuHame

Wake up and wash
your face and hands
not because you want to
but because the scientist says
you have to. Don’t notice
the warmth of the water
or your waking limbs filling with holy blood.

Eat your meals out of paper bags
alone. Pay no attention
to the lines on the face
or the sweat on the uniform
of the woman
who hands you your cheeseburger
through the window.
When you ask her how she is
do it in such a way that she knows
that you do not want to know.
Turn up the music
and try to enjoy the neither good nor bad
taste of the substance filling
your mouth and your stomach
with chemicals.

Work hard under fluorescent lights.
Work as long as you can. Work
because if you do in the end
you will win. Don’t ask what
you are for or when
you will die.

Simulate all human interaction
with backlit screens.
If you must
be close
to other warm bodies
Be sure to dilute
the experience with beer or pot.
Never look
directly into the eyes of anyone
because you might
see yourself.

And when you close your eyes
sleep, but do not rest.
When She Wakes Up with Fleeting Dreams

Elizabeth Hanley

Huddled in bed, the scent of her own
mild skin is her company. She hasn’t prayed
or if she did throw sprays of words like diamonds
out of the watering can it’s all the same.
The tracks between the words are worn and wide.

This morning she heaved cold water
from the echoing well to wash her eyes.
Now between her shoulder blades, cold and naked,
the hills of her spine are fragile sparrow bones.

When she lifts her face she hopes
to see him wandering north, the apple
blossoms heaped in snowy drifts
beneath her door. Before she pulls
wool blankets back around her shoulders
she looks up to murmur, “Well,
and he won’t be gone for very long.”
The empty room gapes far behind her silver hair.
Art: Self-Portrait by Sarah Lindstrom
Bobby Pin

Nicholas Kanaar

In the limbo of life
I look for your past
to reincarnate itself
into my future. Today
I found it, invisibly
small and weightless.
Your bobby pin
on the bottom of my bare foot.

I held it in my palm
and remembered
the army of these pins
that tucked and shoved
and prevented your hair
from covering your pale
eyes. Small enemies that never
let the captives loose.

And yet, they infiltrated
every table, every shelf,
and every dark trench buried deep within
the couch. I hated
the purpose of these tools,
and their territory.

I never liked your hair
held up, or your carelessness
to their discard. I loved the girl
who didn’t wear them
and only had a few.
Now I stare at the lone soldier
who was left behind.

And in the shadow
cast by your detachment,
I’ll stand devoted
to devotion.
Boundless

Nicholas Kanaar

I can catch stars
without the use of my arms.
Or conquer kingdoms
without concern for the crown.

I can break bread
with the best of men.
Or scour back alleys
for the smallest of crumbs.

Alone I float,
but with others, I fly.

I can cause chaos
with both of my eyes closed.
Or help a blind man
see the season’s first snow.

All of this can be done
when I become the horizon.
Which, my friend, I can erase.

You see me now, calloused
and brittle, but tonight

I’ll catch stars
without the use of my arms.
A Morning, Not so Ideal

Nicholas Kanaar

A lipstick smudge
on a dried out glass.
Faint finger prints planted near the base.

A proper form
when drinking wine,
with legs crossed and eye contact made.

A correct girl
will swoon her company,
and offer everything that she is able.

Listen well to what
Mother always said:
To be wise, my dear, is to be willing

Patience will become a power.

The choice is made,
and eyes flutter in the morning sun.
She looks at him
still lingering with lust,

And remembers:

You have to bend the rules
in order to look good in white.
Road Bike

Nicholas Kanaar

The passerby walks on
the cracks of cool concrete
barefoot, with little to no worry
about velocity and impact.

The motorist drives on
the smooth surface of tar,
restricted by dashes of yellow
and the tug of a clipped in belt.

The children look both ways
before entering the street,
the mothers look in mirrors
before backing into sidewalks.

The biker teases the cars
with every sway and foot,
demanding a situation of
ill-timed and terrible results.

The driver directs left
as the biker continues unpredicted,
the mother ignites reverse lights
as two kids fight off the rebels.

The biker looks down
as the motorist, too polite for greed,
crossed over the yellow pulsating line.

The mother saw the kids, who
were fighting off the rebels.
The motorist saw the biker, who
stared straight ahead.

The passerby and the kids,
They all saw the mother,
Who blocked the motorist,
Who saw the biker,
but none of them
saw it coming.
Art: Self-Portrait by Matthew Kravelic
The Run
Nicholas Marcinkowski

Once upon a sunny Sunday, I pouted waiting, for a muddy Monday, This run that feeds my spirit starves my body to its core- How I long for this experience that tests me through and through Running down the fields and shore, waiting for 70 minutes more- “Do I have more” I said “yes I say so I push a little more- I only do this and nothing more.”

Ah, vividly I remember the pain I pushed through in November, As we stepped to the line our hearts were inline- He motioned the gun and again the pain began, There it stood oh so fine ready to be mine- I don’t quite recall the line by that day I had gotten mine- By my heart forever mine.

I thought I was a man when I was a freshman, Wanted more to be like him rather than before- I may have been delirious because I took nothing serious, Had nothing before and I gained no more- I thought I could give more as a sophomore- That year was nothing more.

When I grew a little more and became a sophomore, My mind could not find its mind- When I heard the crack it hit in track, I felt my mind like it was in a bind- The bind was what I could not find- So I sit here waiting to find.

As I look to my land then to my right I feel no fright. The gun goes and I feel more as I knock on their door- As they hear me suffer, they die like Puffer, Wanting more but I feel oh so sore- They gain more even though they are sore- I wish had just a little more.

As I round the corner turning hard, as all my soul was burning My heart was yearning more as I had seen this once before Mind and body I began to stride with pride, I thought to myself I love this feeling so I must explore- Running more I wish with my body to explore- I always want too much more.
Ready as I start my plyos, this all I do but warm up,
I think myself I am like a boy and this brings nothing but joy-
I conquer my fears for my team, who is all in tears,
The big ones toss me around like a toy-
They want me to think that I am a boy-
   Then I toss them like a toy.

As I look to my left, my eyes see those Kenyan spikes,
I look to him his eyes look drawn to breaking dawn-
We race from dawn to dusk,
I am drawn forward into the new breaking dawn-
He is drawn back into the darkness away from dawn-
   I pray for him until dawn.

My team is my soul, they are what drives I just sit,
More together now than before-
I want all of them to be great they just have to do it,
We all want it more so we have to give more-
State unlike before will be more-
   That’s all we wish and nothing more.

When we finish, we finish as one,
I want more so I give more-
We see the people as they line up to watch,
We want more so we give more-
Our coach before told us to give more,
   So we did and they ask nothing more.
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  Hon. Men.  LAND Sponsored MCC Writing Contest
Our road is a tight rope, long and yellow striped. It splits the world in two. And when we’re bored, we try walking down the middle, waiting for the next car to come blow us over. It’s a contest to see who’s bravest, and Casey double dog dares me to stand in front of the next car we see. Unless you’re chicken he says, and I’m no chicken.

So I stand there, walking down the yellow line. It doesn’t take long for a rusty pickup to come my way. I can hear it rattle and shake down the road. I count One Mississippi. Two Mississippi. Three Mississippi. At four my hands start sweating and I try rubbing them off on my pants. Five Mississippi. Six Mississippi. I ain’t moving. I’d rather die than be called a chicken. Seven Mississippi.

Just as I think I’m about to be knocked over like a bowling pin. I hear a screech and a thud and a “Hey kid, get the hell out of the road!” So I do. I run over to the other side of the road. It’s not my side. It’s the side with the spongy flat grass and velvety flowers. Where the trees aren’t meant for climbing, but for looking. Where they eat fruity pebbles, and they watch cartoons, and they have cold lunch, and their bike brakes work, and their hair is always cut, and their clothes always fit, and they never, ever move away.

When the truck drives by, I’ll run back to my side, where everything is splotchy and safe. It’ll only be a second, but a second is long enough to pretend.

***********

Sometimes you can’t feel your toes in your shoes. That’s when you know it’s the coldest, and you have to do something or else you’ll freeze. We blow rings of smoke in the air. That’s what we do. Warm, moist rings of smoke. Floating higher and higher. We swallow all our breath until it’s warm like, until our cheeks are about to explode, and then we let it go. Sometimes in tiny puffs, or in little streams, or even in one big gush. But mostly just in rings.

They don’t make us warm. They just make us forget that we’re not. But then afterwards, you’re always forced to take another gulp. It stings your throat and leaves icicles down there. It’s hard forgetting that. so we stand and shake and wait for the yellow bus to come take us away.

One day though, it doesn’t come. It’s so cold that even our rings of smoke freeze in the air. We shove our hands in our pockets, because our fingers won’t move. It’s then that Casey pulls something out in one of his hands. He stole it from his sister. It’s white and mysterious and dangerous.

He wants to blow real smoke rings now. He’s been practicing he says. It doesn’t take much. A flick and a switch. And then all of a sudden the warmest thing outside is hanging out of his mouth. He looks like a real professional. He closes his eyes trying to hold it all back. And then.

Puff. His rings are dark and swirling in the air. Puff. They’re eating away at mine. Puff. I can’t feel my toes. Puff. I want to go home.
Tick tock. Two o’clock. That’s when the bars close. My brother and sister are fast asleep. I put them to bed long ago. On the stove is left over Mac’n cheese. It’s spoiled and soggy now. I’m trying to ignore the noodle that fell between the fridge and the stove. I tried clawing it out, but my fingers wouldn’t squeeze far enough back. It’ll gather dust now until it rolls away.

I sleep on the couch, because it’s closest to the door. When I hear a noise outside, I close my eyes. Like a blind mouse, she’ll sneak through the front door. I’ve picked everything up, but she still stumbles and tumbles in the dark. Even when it’s clean, there’s not much room to walk. She won’t make any noise though, because she’s a true lady and even if she trips, it will be quiet and soft. That’s how I know if there’s someone with her, because they all crash, while she floats. No one is with her tonight.

That’s how the night ends. She kisses my brother and sister and then comes back for me. I know she’s coming and I bury my face in the cushion. I don’t want to smell it. Not tonight. I’d rather smell this old cushion. And so she comes and stops and doesn’t know what to do. There is no kiss to give. Instead, all she can do is tuck me in and walk away, while I pretend to sleep.

But you don’t know this. I’m always awake at two o’clock when you come home.
Fiddlesticks

Shelby Shavalier

There’s the girl, working at the local video store. She knows every customer. It’s a small town, everyone knows everyone. There’s the young couple that comes in every Friday night, never fails. There’s the single bachelor, father of two boys, comes in every Tuesday for the mid-week special. “Hello,” she’ll say. Every time the door opens, and the bell goes off. She will always get a “Hi Laurie” for a response.

Old man comes in, comes in every Monday. Every Monday he’ll get a couple old dollar movies. Wife’s in the nursing home doesn’t have much longer. “Hey sweetie” he’ll say. “Can you clean them for me?” “No problem, Art.” It’s the same conversation every Monday. “How’s the misses?” “She’s doing just fine.” said thought misty eyes. “I’m on my way there, I’ll tell you said hello.” Art can’t drive. He takes a taxi everywhere he goes. He takes a taxi every day to the nursing home.

Woman in the nursing home, her heart’s failing. Doctor’s given her a couple of weeks, at most. Not sure of her surroundings, only hears her sweet husband’s voice and the movie in the background. She can’t talk, let alone barely move. “Mmmm” she’ll groan when she’s thirsty, and “Errrrgh” when she’s ready to turn over. She could have let go long ago, but something just isn’t right. Just a little bit longer.

There’s a normal guy behind the wheel of a taxi, same route, different people. Well, except for one, Art, the nursing home guy. The sweet old guy that always brings Jason a slushie from Wesco. Knowing the red flavor is his favorite.

The young, handsome, successful man, lives out of town, a couple hours away, doesn’t come in town very often. He lives away from his family. They’re not that close anymore. No kids, nor no girlfriend to have kids with. Even though his mom would love to be a grandmother. His work is his family now. And he doesn’t regret it, well not yet.

Laurie’s sitting at the front counter she knows all too well. Looking through an old high school yearbook. The door opens and the bell goes off. Laurie says “Hello” without even thinking. She doesn’t even look up to see who opens the door. She’s glued to a picture in her yearbook. A picture of a boy, a boy no one paid any attention to in school. He was the “outsider”, the “scary” kid down the road. “I wonder what happened to him” she thinks. “I hope he’s doing well.” Laurie’s examining the face of the boy. “What was so scary about him?” She now notices he was actually good looking. “Wait, what?” She takes a double take at the last name. “Shinder? Art’s last name is Shinder. Wait? Art did have a son. Man, ten years can do a lot on the memory.”

Jason’s finally home from a long night of driving drunks around and listening to talk radio. House is still a mess. He hasn’t had a chance to clean it since his wife left. “What a bitch” he thinks, as he throws her picture in the trash. “Screw her. Right Rosco?” The small boxer looks up and wags his
“You’re hungry huh?” The boxer starts barking. “Alright, alright, let’s get you some food.” The tables cluttered with magazines, fast food wrappers, and bills. “Shit! I didn’t pay the heat bill!” His hands sweating from his clenched fist, he rests his throbbing head into his sweaty palms. “Rosco, you won’t leave me, right?”

“Pleasant Meadows is now closing to visitors.” The intercom was overpowering. It made Lucy flinch in her bed. Art grabbed his beloved wife’s hand and kissed her goodbye. “See you tomorrow sweet pea.” Lucy was all alone. She is alone in her room. But not all alone in her mind. She sees the light. The light everyone talks about, it’s completely real.

He fell asleep in his office again. Lately it’s become a bit of a routine. He hasn’t been on a date for months, hasn’t even been out for a drink with the guys in weeks. He needs to go back. Back to the shit hole of a town. But facing the reality of it all is what he’s the most afraid of. “Jeanette!” His voice is still raspy from sleeping. “Jeanette! Please get in here!” “Ken? What’s going on? Did you sleep here again? Ohhh boy. Look your dad called and ...” “Jeanette please slow down. A man in the morning can only take so much.” Rubbing his eyes, Ken sighed, and looked at his watch. “Can I just have some coffee please? Oh and a change of clothes. Please.” Huge drool marks covered the desk and the sleeves of his shirt. “Shit.” The right side desk drawer was open, and there laid the train ticket to his home town. It’s time to go.

“Fiddlesticks, answer. Please answer.” The voicemail came on. Art leaves a message. “Hey, call me please. Love you bud.” Art received a call from the nursing home ten minutes earlier. They told him it would in the next day or two. He takes a look around. The house holds so many memories. They lived here to thirty years. Thirty years with the love of his life. Art takes a last look around the living room, at all the family pictures. “It’s amazing how a picture can capture a moment so pure and heartwarming. And the feeling never goes away, no matter how many times you look at it.” Art smiles a little. “It’s time for bed.”

She lays in bed thinking about the boy from her high school. “It’s so weird” Laurie says to herself. “He just disappeared after graduation.” Uneasy, she tosses and turns in her bed. “What about Art?” His son’s gone and his wife is dying. That must be so hard.” She would call Art tomorrow. Ask him if she can help in any way possible. Yup, she would call first thing in the morning.

Jason grabbed the gun from the top shelf of his hallway closet. He was looking around the house that still wasn’t cleaned and smelled like a landfill. The bills still lay on the kitchen table, untouched. “I’m always going to be alone Rosco.” Looking at his sweet baby boxer, Jason was thinking about Art and his wife. “They are a couple of the lucky ones Rosco. Love like that doesn’t exist anymore.”

Ken walked into his mother’s room early that morning. Not knowing what to expect. “Mom? You awake?” The place smelled exactly like her. She’s been in here so long, it almost felt like home. But anywhere his mom was, was home to him. “Mom, it’s me Kenny.” Leaning over his mother, she whispered. “Kenny? Oh Kenny?” His mother’s hand felt cold, and boney in his hand. “Mom, there’s something I need to tell you.” Tears were falling from his eyes now. “Mom, I’m so sorry I left. I, I can’t
believe I did that to you. I never told you something mom. I, I found them, my birth parents. They said I was a mistake mom, they said they never wanted me. I can’t believe I was so stupid in high school. I’m so sorry I ran out when you told me you adopted me. I love you mom. You are my real mother and pops my real father. You were and are the best mom in this world. I’m so, so, sorry mommy.” Sobbing into his mother’s hands, Ken felt her squeeze.

Waiting for Jason to arrive in the morning was a wait that would never end. Well, that’s how Art felt. Jason knew that Art needed a ride this morning. He’s always been dependable. But where was he? “Man oh man, Jason. Where are you?” Waiting by the curb outside his house, a car pulled up, but not Jason. “Laurie? What are you doing here?” “Hey Art! Just coming by to make sure everything’s okay. Is everything okay?” “Well you see Laurie, Jason was supposed to be here this morning. He’s thirty minutes late. He is never late.” Fumbling around with suspenders, Art looks up at Laurie. “Well, we could try to call his work? See if he came in today?” A moment of silence and the phone call ended. “Well, Art? What did they say?” Jason didn’t show up to work. He must be sick. The darn cold going around will get ya.” “Well, I can give you a ride, Art. I’m not working until this evening.” “Oh Laurie, that is so nice of you. We should get going. I’m already late.”

Walking into his wife’s room was nerve racking. She tried to leave but he insisted she come up. That darn old man. The room was silent; all was still but a man, lying next to the old woman in the small bed, holding hands. She couldn’t help but notice Art. He was crying and immediately walked over to the man and held him close to his chest. She was frozen in her tracks, watching them. Ken looked up from his father’s chest and gave Laurie a smile. Laurie left quietly out the door, into the lobby. She couldn’t help but feel pleased with herself.
Her Father’s Reflection
Joshua Williams

Only daughter, holding his arm. Dressed in white. White like clouds. He’s pulling her forward, but she’s dragging her feet. Down a pretty hall, with flowers that climb the wall. It doesn’t help. She’s scared, because dentist sounds like goodbye. And when they reach the end, she knows that’s what it means. He hands her off to another man. A stranger dressed in blue. Blue like the sky. Which is what she stares at when he steals her teeth. The metal drill makes her lips shiver, but she forgets the taste. It drones on in her ear. Like a bumblebee. Floating from the pretty flowers in the hall. Hurray please. Take it all. But there’s nothing left for him to steal. So the bumblebee dies and she springs free. She glides across the linoleum. Maybe there’s still time. Yes. He’s still there. Looking in the flowers on the wall. Searching for the dead bee. She clasps her arms around his neck. Tight enough to punish him all the way to the car.

************

Only daughter, holding his arm. Dressed in white. White like wine. She’s pulling him forward, but he’s dragging his feet. Down a pretty aisle, with flowers scattered on the floor. It doesn’t help. He’s scared, because I do sounds like goodbye. And when they reach the end, he knows that’s what it means. He hands her off to another man. A stranger dressed in black. Black like his ravenous eyes. Which he knows is what she’ll stare at tonight when he steals her flower. But maybe there’s nothing left for him to steal. The organ drones on in his ear. Maybe there’s still time. The metal ring clamps onto her finger. No. There was never enough. His stomach withers away when she springs into the stranger’s arms. They glide across the aisle, showered with rice. Her arms are clasped around his neck. Long enough to make it to the car. But he’s still there, looking at the flowers on the floor. Trampled. Searching for what’s left.
III

ESSAYS

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In Defense of the Swooners

Alida Boon

Parents fret about it, most boys roll their eyes at it and pre-teen girls swoon over it. What is this controversial thing, you ask? *Twilight.* Now don’t be concerned. I am not going to rant and rave about Edward’s impeccably good looks or Jacob’s rock hard abs. I’m not going to babble about Jasper’s smooth southern accent or how Carlisle is the most beautiful father figure I’ve ever seen. That would just be ridiculous and undoubtedly quite boring as I have already mentioned all of those things. I am, however, defending the swooning girls.

Girls in middle school are like fish out of the water. Even the popular girls who put on a fake smile, straighten their already perfectly smooth hair, and have bodies some models would kill for, are insecure. They want to be liked, they want to be popular, and they want to be successful, even if it means not liking themselves. For these popular girls, *Twilight* is a drug, an escape from their mundane, perfect little lives.

Now, consider the unpopular girls. The ones no boys will even consider talking to. The ones that barely have friends. The girls that have acne so thick it will leave scars and hair so curly even a clothes iron wouldn’t be able to tame it. Consider how they feel every day waking up, going to school knowing they will be made fun of; knowing that today will be just as bad as every day before it. For these unpopular girls, *Twilight* is a friend, someone who would never hurt them.

Lastly consider the girls no one considers, the girls that even the teachers eyes slide over when taking attendance. The ones that could slip away and no one would even take the time to ask where they had gone. For these transparent girls, *Twilight* is a savior, someone who reminds them they are real.

But these are not the only things *Twilight* provides for such girls, most importantly, *Twilight* provides hope. Hope that one day, their Edward will come for them. Hope that somehow, someone special will see that they’re someone special too; hope that good will prevail over evil. Hope that everything will work out okay, hope that middle school will not be the epitome of their existence and hope that there is something much better, a whole new world, waiting for them just outside the door.

And as sneakily as this hope leaks into their hearts, unity does as well. Girls, who would have never had anything in common, somehow now do. While they may not like to admit this, they will all become equals in the ticket line, falling victim once again to the next installment of the *Twilight* saga unfolding in front of them. They will gasp together in the tense moments, cry at the sad parts and laugh as one.

While most generations of girls stop believing in fairy tales as children, *Twilight* has relit the flame and once again made believers out of non-suspecting tweenagers around the world. *Twilight* has been published in twenty different languages and is available in thirty-four countries. This means that not only are the American Twihards unified, but millions of others around the world as well.

I understand that parents do not like their young daughters to obsess over fictional fantasies, and that some boys may vomit over the idea of this odd love story, but I do not ask you to like it, or even to read it. Just to understand why these girls do, and to understand why reading something that creates hope and unity isn’t such a bad thing after all. Who knows, perhaps the producers of this next movie will stealthily slipped the answers to world peace in the middle so that after fans around the globe watch it, they can set the plans into action! Unlikely, I know, but a girl can hope and if nothing else, *Twilight* has taught me that.
In most literary communities, Robert Frost is unfortunately regarded as the archetypal romantic poet. Though aesthetically pleasing, his work is often mired in by its simplistic structure and nature based metaphors. For this reason, most scholars respect Frost, but they fail to appreciate the mastery of his art. Like a model ship building, he pieces together an intangible thought within the confines of traditional poetry. As a testament to this craftsmanship, his poem “Nothing Gold Can Stay” is often misinterpreted because it appears deceptively simple. It is an eight line poem that utilizes predictable couplets and a generic rhythm. As the title of the poem indicates, the speaker is lamenting the inevitability of change. But beneath this singular meaning, Frost goes beyond the obvious. Rather than simply stating “Nothing Gold Can Stay”, he examines why that must be the case.

True to style, Frost chooses nature as the basis of his poem. In the opening line he states, “Nature’s first green is gold” (line 1). The alliteration of “green” and “gold” creates a euphonious reading of the line, which is then strengthened by the pleasant connotations of the words. This also creates an interesting juxtaposition between the organic “green” and the metallic “gold.” Though contradictory in color, both words convey a sense of warmth and splendor. “Nature’s first green” (1) can be interpreted as the early buds of spring, because they are the first sign of life after the winter. The speaker is then able to compare the beginning of spring to “gold,” because it stands as a beautiful contrast to the dull, wintry months.

In the following line, the speaker then states that this “gold” is the “... hardest hue to hold” (2). Once again, the line is laden with alliteration and punctuated with an obvious end rhyme. Not only does this create a pleasant combination of sounds, but it also reinforces the meaning of the line. In this case, the letter “h” works as a voiceless glottal fricative, making it difficult for the words to feel stationary in the reader’s mouth. Having no necessary pause for enunciation, the line sounds as if it is impossible to contain. As a result, the reader is left with a somewhat ambiguous and fleeting impression. Though the line could be read as this “gold” is the hardest to hold onto, it could also imply that this “gold” is the hardest to behold. The former interpretation lends to the obvious theme of change, while the latter leads to a deeper understanding of its actual nature.

Frost echoes the sentiments of these first two lines in the succeeding couplet. He states that “[Nature’s] early leaf’s a flower; / But only so an hour” (3-4). This creates an interesting comparison between the typically dull leaf and its vibrant rival. The “early leaf” (3) conjures an image of the infant buds of spring, which coincidentally resemble the bulb of a flower. By describing the leaf as “early,” the speaker refers once again to the glimpse of spring. It is cherished as a flower because it is a welcome sight after the lifeless winter. This particular moment in time, when spring unfurls its leaves, is like nectar to the speaker’s beleaguered eyes. He relishes its comparative beauty, but it only lasts “... an hour” (4). The word “hour” characterizes the relatively short amount of time that this moment actually lasts. As demonstrated before, the line could be interpreted in two different manners. While the
speaker may be describing how the beginning of spring is short-lived, he may also be noting how quickly the appreciation of it dies away. The very gravity of this line signals a quick change in tone as well, which is symbolic of the actual change occurring in the poem. While the first four lines create a pleasant image of nature, they quickly fade away before the image can be fully elaborated.

Most misinterpretations occur at this point in the poem, as the following lines are often read as the changing of seasons: “Then leaf subsides to leaf / So Eden sand to grief, / So dawn goes down to day” (5-7). While the inevitability of change is obvious in these lines, they fail to actually signal a change in the season. Instead, it appears as if spring has taken on its full bloom at this point in the poem. The leaves are not falling but becoming encumbered by an innumerable mass of fresh foliage. Rather than the dawn giving way to the night, it gives way to the brighter day. A superficial reading of this poem would suggest that the metaphorical “gold” begins to disappear at this point. But in reality, its vibrant presence grows even more. Why then does Frost imbue these lines with a sense of loss? His speaker treats the situation as a tragedy, using signal works like “subsides” (5), “sank” (6), “grief” (6), and “down” (7). The speaker is no longer rejoicing in the liveliness of spring. Instead, he is lamenting an unexplainable loss the reader fails to understand.

What has the speaker lost then, if nothing has substantially changed? Contrary to the title of the poem, at no point does the “gold” physically disappear. Instead, only the speaker’s appreciation of the “gold” vanishes over time. At first, “Nature’s first green” (1) seems to be the most magnificent sight possible, but then over time its initial impression fades. Though the “early leaf” (3) was once cherished as a sign of life, it becomes forgotten in the now crowded branches of a tree. In the same respect, “dawn” (7) is often praised as the end of a dark night, but then its glory is quickly muted by an excess of daylight. The biblical reference in the sixth line expounds upon the same idea. “Eden sank to grief” (6) because Adam and Eve grew accustomed to the radiance of the garden. Despite being surrounded by the perfect paradise, they grew bored and yearned for more. Therefore, contrary to popular belief, all things gold are not inherently fleeting. Instead, it’s mankind’s appreciation of this “gold” that inevitably disappears.

Ironically, Robert Frost’s poetry tends to suffer the same fate. Its vivid imagery and perfect structure spoils the reader over time. As demonstrated in “Nothing Gold Can Stay,” even his simplest poem is saturated with meaning. In this case, it takes eight lines to create a substantial argument as to why “Nothing gold can stay” (8). To further prove his argument, Frost uses repetitive couplets to lull his reader into a state of indifference. After being drowned in flawless imagery, rhythm, and rhyme, it’s no wonder the reader fails to appreciate the ambitious scope of the poem. It’s not that everything “gold” must disappear over time. The gold is often still there. It’s just that mankind forgets where to look.
Speak Now or Forever Hold Your Peace  
Samyrah Reid

Jane Campion’s *The Piano* is the story of the consequences of one woman’s silence in colonial New Zealand. The protagonist, Ada, played by Holly Hunter, is a self-made mute whose arranged marriage to Stewart, a colonist played by Sam Neill, leads to her ultimate destruction. In feminist analysis, two opposing views of this work may be found; either Campion has created an anti-patriarchal film that depicts the failure of pacifism or Campion is guilty of creating a film that functions as a tool of patriarchal oppression. Although both analyses are supported by evidence in the film, the former of the two is more accurate when considering the entirety of Jane Campion’s *The Piano*.

The argument that this film functions as a tool of oppression is based on the fact that the character Baines (played by Harvey Keitel) is rewarded, rather than punished, for his sexual abuse of Ada. In this film, Baines offers Ada a choice between allowing him to “do things” to her or sacrificing her piano, which functions symbolically as her spirit. Ada sacrifices her body for her soul, but inevitably ends up losing both, because Ada’s body is a part of, not apart from her “self.” In the end, Baines is given Ada, by her husband Stewart. Ada and Baines’ new life seems secure and even happy. He has fashioned her a new fingertip. Her actions are now the product of his mind. In other words, because hands are symbols of autonomy, and because he has fashioned her hand, she has only the autonomy he has granted her. She has become a piano teacher and a happy wife. Many would say that audiences will walk away from this film believing that the sexual objectification of women leads to a happy home. Others would argue that Baines’ success and Ada’s loss of self demonstrate that pacifism is an ineffective method of abolishing patriarchy. Ada serves as a martyr in the film whose story is meant to increase awareness and discontent in audiences. A deeper look at *The Piano*, in its entirety, confirms that Jane Campion artfully explores the means through which systems of patriarchy function. Campion depicts patriarchy as an oppressive and harmful institution and suggests a militant approach to obtaining women’s rights by showing the ineffectiveness of passivity.

In her film, Campion establishes that patriarchal traditional gender roles are the learned means through which we limit, or oppress, our natural human potential. Characterization is Campion’s primary tool for addressing gender socialization and its outcomes. Stewart, a product of patriarchy, outwardly displays many of the characteristics looked for in the patriarchal male. He is independent, a colonist who has left his motherland in order to make his own way in the world. He is rational, refusing to waste time and resources in order to satisfy the emotional needs of his new wife. He is dominant; watch as he rapes Mother Earth, steals her creations, cuts her limbs and separates her from herself with fences and then compare all of this with his treatment of Ada. Yes, he behaves as a patriarchal man should. Yet, there are moments in the film, which show that it is not his nature to behave thusly. A brief role reversal, wherein Ada becomes the victimizer and Stewart the victim, reveals that he too can be sexually objectified, weakened and afraid. Stewart is a villain in the film, but one can’t help but feel sorry for him in the end. This is because he only does what he was taught to do. He, like Ada, is a victim of patriarchy.
Campion depicts adherence to gender roles as learned behavior through conditioning, rather than a part of human nature. The characterization of Ada’s daughter, Flora, is her tool for doing so. Flora serves as a demonstration of humankind’s inability to bring into accordance chaos, that is in nature, and order, of which convention is made. In this context convention, being an instrument of patriarchy, is depicted in a negative light. Viewers are meant to consider which “Flora” they like best; do they prefer Flora pre or post patriarchal influence? Flora is a precocious youth who, even in the beginning of the film, realizes that she must choose sides in a black and white world. Just after her arrival in New Zealand she instinctually tells her mother “I’m not going to call him Papa. I’m not going to call him anything. I’m not even going to look at him.” This display of loyalty seems unnecessary at this point in the film, but it becomes apparent when Flora’s loyalties change, that her first instinct was right as she is influenced by Stewart in a way that causes her to betray her mother and by extension her sex.

Throughout the film, we witness as Flora imitates the behaviors of the people around her. She is shown washing her doll’s clothing, imitating her mother’s lovemaking and lecturing her mother on what is appropriate behavior and what is not. For a time she alternates between opposite ends of the spectrum; first she is wild, then composed, then wrathful, then compassionate etc. This is the transition period between the old Flora, who was loyal to her mother and the new Flora, who is loyal to her father. Children learn by observation. Therefore, children’s limited exposure to outside influence leads to limited outcomes when they grow into adulthood. Campion’s characterization of Flora is anti-patriarchal, because it is the influence of patriarchy that leads Flora to betray her mother.

Jane Campion shows that once a system is established it will perpetuate itself through tradition, creating a prison. In the beginning of the film, before her arrival in New Zealand, audiences are made to view the world from Ada’s perspective. It is, at first, black and then, gradually, blurry slices of light begin to form. Slowly, the lighter bits grow broader as the narrower lines begin to look more and more like bars, as though she were looking out from her prison. Finally, it becomes apparent that these are not bars, but her fingers. She is her own means of imprisonment. As the film progresses viewers realize that her passivity makes it easy for men to ignore her will and enforce their own. Ada’s extreme pacifism manifests itself most obviously in her refusal to speak, but it also demonstrated in the ways she actively communicates her will. When her new husband, Stewart, refuses to retrieve her piano from the beach, Ada protests by carving the image of piano keys into the kitchen table. This peaceful demonstration only confuses her husband. When Baines returns Ada’s piano to her and asks her to leave, in order to make her feelings known, she chooses to perform a sit-in protest. Again, it is ineffective. It isn’t until becomes angry and proceeds to beat him that he finally understands that she wants to stay. Passive action, according to The Piano does not get the message across, because there is too much room for interpretation.

Campion makes use of foreshadowing and doubling to establish a thematic element of fate as well as the repetition of negative consequences in a flawed social structure such as patriarchy. There are at least three important instances of foreshadowing that take place in the film. The first takes places during a demonstration given by the Reverend (a person whose livelihood is guaranteed and supported by the system of patriarchy). At rehearsal, the Reverend raises a prop axe and swings it so that, on the wall, it appears as though he has chopped off his volunteer’s hand. Here we see that patriarchal men
will deprive women of their autonomy, if women allow it to happen. The second instance of foreshadowing is the play itself, which is the story of a wife who disobeys her husband and discovers that he has murdered all of his previous wives. He, of course tells her that for this she too must die. She cowers but volunteers her neck for his axe at his command. This is Campion’s depiction of patriarchy in action. The patriarchal woman is so conditioned that she would act in accordance with patriarchy event to her own detriment. The third instance of foreshadowing is that the Maori tribesmen (believing that the play is real) interfere by attempting to rescue the woman who is apparently in danger. This shows that the patriarchal woman will not take her life within her own hands, but would rather passively allow men to do with it what they will. Later, Stewart chops Ada’s finger off, in a jealous rage. Following a conversation wherein Stewart tells Baines to leave with Ada, Ada departs with Baines who has the facial tattoos of a Maori tribesman.

There is a sequence wherein Ada throws herself overboard tied to her sinking piano in order to commit suicide. She changes her mind and resurfaces. Later, she fantasizes about having succeeded in her task, as she regrets her decision and wishes that she had made a different one. Had she committed suicide, it would have given her final ownership of her soul and, perhaps most importantly, suicide leaves very little room, in this context, for interpretation. She would have been saying, “I refuse to change hands again, I’d rather die than live imprisoned.” Indeed, she does what Baines would have wanted her to do and, by doing so, has allowed patriarchy to triumph and the traditions that support it to continue undisturbed. Flora, therefore, will have no greater advantage than her mother had.

Jane Campion’s *The Piano* is an anti-patriarchal look at patriarchy. Yet, Campion does not sugarcoat her depiction of patriarchy with a fabricated happy ending, but approaches the problem of patriarchy in a realistic fashion. The protagonist, behaves as most people in her situation would, rather than heroically. She does nothing, and nothing happens. This, of course, makes audiences aware that the need for a heroic defender of women’s rights prevails. Campion depicts patriarchy as a harmful institution that causes women and men to objectify and oppress one another and themselves. *The Piano* places victims’ rights in victims’ hands. Some might say that Campion is in effect “blaming the victim.” She is not blaming anyone. She recognizes that everyone is the victim of patriarchy. For this reason, there is no one else to take on the responsibility of abolishing it besides its victims. If they will not do it, it will not be done. If today’s victims neglect patriarchy, the children of tomorrow will become victims as well.
Dylan Thomas’ poem “Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night” is a touching rendering of his feelings as his father is slowly and ignorantly passing away. It is also a message about the inevitability of death for all of those who live, despite the fight, wisdom, or joy that one holds close. Thomas recants the efforts of the wise, of the old, and of all wild men, all who have lived lives full of what they deemed important, but who, though they “rage, rage against the dying of the light,” cannot muster the strength to fight the impending darkness.

The dimensions of Thomas’ poem are variegated in many ways, and the easiest way to examine his work may well be through compartmentalization of the verses. So, in Thomas’ opening stanza, we are presented with the concept that “old age should burn and rage at close of day,” telling us that no one should succumb to death without first standing his or her ground against the impending doom. The choice of words, especially “burn” and “rage”, evoke imagery of war – building the urge to fight the unbeatable foe for the sake of some form of honor or respect. The word “burn” also elicits the image of a flame, which with one last burst can blaze brighter and bolder than ever.

In Thomas’ second verse we see the destiny of the wise men, those who “at their end know dark is right,” that ultimately struggle against death as a means of pride. This is the beginning of a structure in which each verse peers into a different facet of man’s heart, and different sorts of men, and then pulls the men into the night. These men, those who have swelled their breasts with pride in search for wisdom, are dominated by the inescapable demise in the light that their “words had forked no lightning,” that they had left no legend or spark in the mind of society by which to be remembered. An auxiliary interpretation is drawn in context of the biblical story of Elijah and the prophets of Baal. In this short story we are told of how Elijah and the prophets each stood on their own mountaintop and called upon his god to light their sticks aflame. While the prophets of Baal chanted and danced around their fire pit, Elijah had servants douse his own in water. In the closing of the story, Elijah’s logs are struck by lightning and burst into flame, while Baal’s prophets’ “words had forked no lightning.” The interesting observation between the two interpretations of this line is how the verse itself manages to play between the realms of the present life and the afterlife, which creates an ethereal, multidimensional feel. Ultimately, because of their failure to ignite the passions of the people, these thinkers “do not go gentle into that good night.”

The third collection of men consists of the “good men,” who are “the last wave by.” They are “crying how bright their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay,” which begs the question of whether or not these “good men” were indeed worthy of their title. That they lament that their deeds did not dance in the green bay, that they were not seen or praised so that they might feel exalted, shows a deep characteristic flaw in the men. It shows that Thomas is using “good” in a euphemistic manner, to show that many great men are solely interested in their own gain. This evocation is enhanced by the biting phrase “frail deeds,” portraying their actions as weak, feeble, and fake. The “frail deeds” are not strong enough to protect these men from the irresistible onset of death, as they too are swept up in “the last wave by,” but still they “rage, rage against the dying of the light.”
The next men to pass by are those who “caught and sand the sun in flight, and learn[ed], too late, they grieved it on its way.” These are Hedonistic men, having lived their lives in the pursuit of joy and transient pleasures, while forgetting that the night was on its way. That they “sand the sun in flight” shows how their days were those that burned the brightest, they were known for their revelry and Dionysian lifestyles that portrayed them as gods among men, but yet they had no power to fight the onset of night. The “wild men”... learn, too late, they grieved it on its way,” an observation that they had experienced plenty the “eat, drink, and be merry” motif of their culture, but had avoided that “tomorrow, we die.” They escape the fear of the inevitable clench of death by drowning themselves in the false happiness and trivial delights that provided no comfort at the end.

The fifth verse is the tale of the “grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight,” the deeper-than-sight knowledge of what is to come. Their “blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay” represents their fierce, passionate joy, that their preemptive acceptance of death has gifted them with self-satisfaction in their last moments, for they have always known. But still, these men have truly been dying their whole lives. With no thought given to the everyday, but rather to the setting of the final sun, they have deprived themselves of living, an injustice to the gift of life itself. It may also be said that their denial of life is in fact an act of anger towards it, for its lack of fairness, and its temporary nature. In this way, filled with ire towards life, these men “rage, rage against the dying of the light.”

The final man Thomas writes about is his father, who presumably is close to death, although he may not be aware. Thomas puts his father “on that sad height,” a pedestal on which all boys place their father as a paradigm of manhood, that has been stricken by the mortality of his father. “That sad height” also represents that his father is on the brink of life and death, about to fall into whatever waits beyond. Thomas’ next line, “Curse, bless me now with your fierce tears, I pray,” is a cry for words from his father. The words “curse” and “bless” show that he is begging for any form of attention that he can get, that he only wants that his father speak to him. He wants his father to shed “fierce tear,” to realize that he is on the edge of death and be sad for it. It can even be taken so far as to say that Thomas wants his father to feel regret for having either scorned or shunned his child. We are left with the impression that they have not spoken for a while, that some rift has separated them in life, and Thomas wishes to be close on last time before death takes his father. If only his rather would not give in so easily, if he would fight to live, it may show that he still cares for his son. He begs his father to “not to go gentle into that goodnight,” to “rage, rage against the dying of the light.”

From this poem, we can accrue a new perspective on life and death with every verse. Thomas has shown us the vanity behind the wise men, the empty rewards of the good men, the terrorized existence of the wild men, and the banal lives of the grave men. In this we see an assembly of ways not to live, each a warning against excessively relying on certain traits, and reminding us that, no matter how we choose to live our lives, others’ lives will inevitably carry on without the acknowledgement of our contributions. Still, we also see that the man who resists death is glorified by Thomas, and we are encouraged to fight to live as long as we can. Ultimately, we should all “rage, rage against the dying of the light,” so be encouraged, when your time comes, to “not go gentle into that good night.”
In Defense of Animal Rights
Jason MacDonald

The subject of animal rights has been controversial since the seventies. What is the foundation for animal rights and how far do these rights extend? These are some questions I intend to clarify in this essay. I shall confirm that human and non-human animals share an equal intrinsic value and therefore deserve an equal moral standing. With the aid of Tom Regan’s publication, “The Case for Animal Rights,” I will explain some flawed philosophies which lead to inequality for both human and non-human animals. I will also examine Regan’s argument and conclusion with comparisons to his colleagues’ theories and my own perspective.

Tom Regan begins his argument by declaring the belief that the only duties we have towards animals are indirect duties to humanity. We only owe an animal consideration if it is cared for by another human. So, this consideration is directed towards the human’s interest for the animal rather than the animals own interests. This idea most closely relates with contractarianism, the idea that there is a set of moral rules that individuals agree to follow for the good of society. The problem with this theory is the question of who frames these rules. If it is simply the majority, then this theory can easily justify racism, sexism, and all other forms of discrimination. Furthermore, children, the mentally handicapped, and animals are unable to understand or “sign” this contract. While some may be protected from harm under this moral contract due to sentimental interests (e.g. parents or pet owners), others are abandoned simply because there is little to no interest for their well being.

Regan goes on to describe what he calls the “cruelty-kindness view”, the idea that we have a direct duty to treat animals with kindness and without cruelty. He states that although it sounds comforting, it does not answer the questions of moral right and wrong. Regan explains that a kind act, as well as an act absent of cruelty, is not always a right act. He mentions, for example, that a doctor who performs abortions does not have cruel intentions but the abortion he performs might be viewed as not morally right. Kindness and cruelty are susceptible to both cultural and subjective relativity and therefore cannot be used as a basis for morality.
Regan’s third critique regards utilitarianism. Utilitarianism revolves around the idea that everyone matters and everyone matters equally. The right act is one which brings the most pleasure over pain for every individual involved. Although this theory avoids the possibility of discrimination, it places value on the satisfaction of one’s interests rather than placing the value on the individual itself. Utilitarianism cannot be used to justify equal rights for animals and humans since it lacks the idea that an animal or human has intrinsic value, value in and of itself. Another problem with this theory is that what is best for the whole is not always best for the individual. For example, if we follow the principles of utilitarianism, then it would be morally right to kill an individual, remove their organs, and transplant them into several other individuals in order to save their lives. This scenario is obviously absurd. An individual has rights and value of their own and should not be used as solely an instrument for the greater good.

Tom Regan’s solution begins with the basic principle that all individuals have value which he refers to as inherent value, a value independent of its usefulness to other individuals. He also specifies that all individuals possess this value equally. He calls this the “rights view.” Mending the predicament of possible discrimination through contractarianism, the “rights view” also avoids the use of an individual as a mere means to an end, the defect of utilitarian views. He believes this is the best moral standard to base our treatment of fellow humans but does not feel we should exclude other species. Regan notes that we cannot deny a human’s inherent value based on their specific abilities. If we were to deny an animal’s inherent value for its inability to understand mathematics, prepare food, or read, then we would have to similarly disregard the inherent value of a human who is incapable of such tasks. Likewise, Regan stresses, we cannot edit the amount of inherent value placed on a human or animal based on their capabilities. The most crucial connection humans share with other species is the ability to experience life. All species of animal, whether human or other, are conscious entities and, therefore, share an equal inherent value. This is the reason that non-human animals deserve the equal right to be treated with respect by their human counterparts. Regan concludes that, because of these basic
principles, animals should not be used in science as test subjects or for the commercial agriculture business as products. These industries treat animals as a resource which lacks an independent value.

In comparison to Tom Regan, his contemporaries, Peter Singer and Mark Sagoff, have both parallel and conflicting views regarding animal rights. As presented in his essay “All Animals Are Equal,” Peter Singer shares with Regan the idea that animals have moral standing and deserve respect, but differs on two key concepts. Singer believes that human and non-human animals have equal value because they share sentience, or the ability to feel pain and pleasure. Regan takes this idea a step further and dictates that they have equal value because both human and non-human animals are conscious subjects experiencing life. More importantly, while Singer believes animals deserve only equal consideration, Regan believes all animals deserve equal treatment as well. As for the consumption of animals by humans, Regan would say that Singer does not go far enough, in that animals should not only be treated more humanely in the process but that no process should exist. Mark Sagoff considers the implications of Regan and Singer’s theories to be insurmountable. He supposes that if we were to end the human-generated suffering of all animals, then we would also be inclined to limit the suffering they would naturally experience in the wild (e.g. starvation, disease, becoming another animal’s prey). Furthermore, Sagoff disputes both men and proclaims that the rights of animals are a humanitarian issue, not environmental. He believes a more general appreciation of nature and its ecosystems would help establish a stronger groundwork for environmental law.

Personally, I believe Regan offers a very persuasive argument supporting the equality of all animals and therefore demanding an end to their treatment as test subjects and human nourishment. His premises are as follows: all humans have an inherent value, these values are all equal because all humans share the conscious ability to experience life, animals also share this ability, and finally, it is not acceptable to consume fellow humans or perform unnecessary, harmful laboratory testing on them. I feel these premises are true and clearly lead to his conclusion; the use of animals as food and test subjects is morally wrong. That being said, I have a few minor divergences I would care to indulge. First,
both Regan and Singer fail to mention the use of animals for entertainment purposes, most notably in circus acts and zoos. Wild animals are either removed from their natural habitat or are born and raised under unnatural conditions. Often, they are subjected to abuse and neglect by their “caretakers.” These are obviously immoral treatments of non-human animals and should be addressed alongside issues of consumption and experimentation. Second, using the framework of conscious entities having moral worth excludes unconscious entities such as soil, water, plants and stone. I believe these elements of the environment have a significant value that should not be denied due to their lack of consciousness. In this matter I must side with Sagoff in the possibility that animal rights would be categorized as a humanitarian issue. However, this does not minimize its importance rather leaves a more open platform for the treatment of ecosystems as a whole. Finally, I feel the act of hunting non-human animals, as long as it is done responsibly and respectfully, should not be prohibited. We must recognize that the absence of many natural predators (caused by human inhabitation) would allow for rapid overpopulation of certain species without human intervention. The effectiveness and long-term consequences of non-human contraceptives in the wild is still unknown and therefore cannot be conscientiously relied upon. Also, just as we do not hunt or consume our own species, carnivorous non-human animals do not resort to cannibalism unless threatened with survival. Therefore, while we do not find it morally acceptable to hunt our own kind, I do not find it perverse to responsibly and respectfully hunt other animals for our personal consumption.

In conclusion, I believe that animals of all species share an equal intrinsic value and therefore deserve an equal moral standing. This moral standing entitles all animals to an equal level of respect. I believe hunting other animals for purposes of consumption and population control, not sport, can be justifiably included within this equal respect. Nevertheless, the intolerable and perverse treatment of non-human animals associated with factory farms, laboratories, and circuses must not continue. These practices only benefit one species at the expense of other morally equivalent species and thus are unacceptable.
Works Cited


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