

Allow artistic freedom

by Niamh Doyle
People Editor

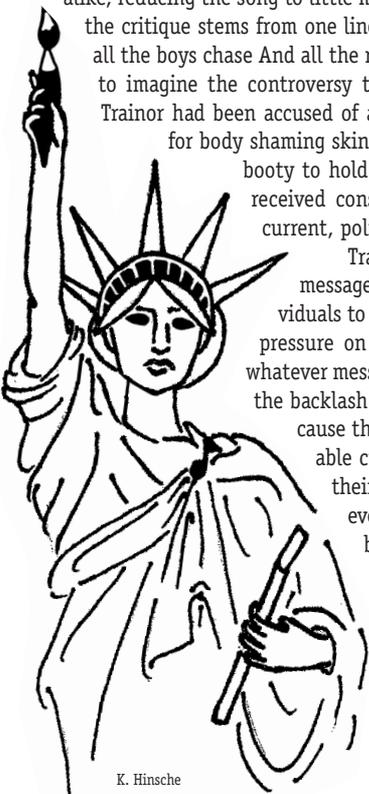


There was a time when popular music was created to be bold, to send a message. Classic rock of the late twenty-first century is a perfect example of this; the edgy, rock'n'roll attitude of popular groups like Nirvana and the Rolling Stones defined an era of grunge, confrontation, and rebellion. In those days artists had so much creative freedom; it was cool to be rebellious, so these famous groups essentially did what they wanted, as this was the message they were trying to send. I'm not going to start

talking about how music was so much better in the 80's and 90's, but my contention lies in current pop artists' utter lack of control over their own music. Music is so quick to be analyzed, probed, and discussed by activists on the internet and people on social media, that artists have to censor their music and reduce its quality in order to ensure that it offends absolutely no one.

Recently, up-and-coming artist Meghan Trainor released her new single All About That Bass. Little more than a catchy tune and a simplistic chorus, All About That Bass is a song to be enjoyed in the moment, and very quickly forgotten. Or so you'd think. This single has recently received a host of criticisms from music critics and misinformed feminists alike, reducing the song to little more than its insubstantial lyrical content. Most of the critique stems from one line in particular: 'Cause I got that boom boom that all the boys chase And all the right junk in all the right places.' It is not difficult to imagine the controversy these seemingly anti-feminist lines could cause. Trainor had been accused of advocating for sexist beauty standards, and even for body shaming skinny girls with lines such as "boys like a little more booty to hold at night." Though still a rising star, Trainor has received considerable rebuke for her misalignment with our current, politically correct standards for media.

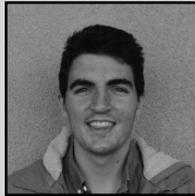
Trainor is obviously trying to send a supportive message with her song, perhaps encouraging heavier individuals to love their bodies, or trying to ease the unrealistic pressure on girls to have super lean physiques. Regardless, whatever message Trainor is trying to send has been obscured by the backlash she has experienced. This response is part of the cause that is diminishing the quality of already questionable current pop music: artists are too afraid of having their music rejected due to their not conforming to every politically correct lyrical standard that have been set for them. It is not the responsibility of the artist to be accountable for the sanctity of their audience. Regardless of the message Trainor and other artists intend to send, it is their right as musicians to express, with ultimate liberty, any opinions or beliefs they might happen to possess. Whereas Nirvana and the Rolling Stones were graced with the artistic liberty of the era, artists like Trainor are little more than slaves to our current societal standards.



K. Hinsche

Avoid military intervention

by Cole Potter
Web Editor



If the "war on terror" has made anything clear, it is that the United States is much better at creating new enemies than it is at exterminating old ones. Conflict in Asian countries throughout the twentieth century revealed many inefficiencies in American overseas intervention, and those problems persist today. The historic American practice of "military advisement" and similar hawkish policies must be avoided in dealing with the modern terrorist threat the Islamic State poses.

As the US has emerged as a military superpower over the course of the twentieth century, its intervention became necessary in multiple conflicts overseas. However, as combat commenced in Korea and Vietnam, it was quickly revealed that the US military was not nearly as effective as was once believed. In fact, its military aid seemed to do little to quell tensions in these already contentious regions, and if anything precipitated from its intervention, it was merely increased violence. Groups such as the Viet Cong in Vietnam and the People's Army in Korea actually used the United States' involvement in their countries as rallying calls against the foreign intervention to those ambivalent to the fighting. As US troops defeated their enemies, they created new ones to assume their place.

Some of these same themes are all too clear in ongoing warfare. Especially in recent interactions with the international terrorist group ISIS, it has become clear that the US continues to make more enemies than it could ever hope to vanquish. However, qualifying ISIS merely as an organization of terror and intimidation is extremely problematic. The Islamic State seeks to do more than murder American civilians and target those who do not endorse their ideals; they aim to completely uproot Western influences in their territory. The Islamic State is opposed to the principles of "Americanism" and has indicated that catastrophic violence will occur in response to military intervention from the United States. Multiple online videos created by ISIS officials have depicted

executions of American and European journalists, and have included warnings of further loss of civilian life should the US continue to provide arms to their opposition. If the United States responds to the threat that ISIS poses in the Middle East in a similar fashion to that of the Vietnam War, the resulting bloodshed and loss of civilian life would be so destructive that the majority of Middle Eastern countries might turn against us.

As international pressures increase due to Islamic State intimidation, spending from Western nations on military and economic aid for Middle Eastern sovereignties will continue to grow as well. While I understand the intent of American aid given to these areas, any assistance past medical services for those wounded and financial support for civilians in contested regions would be extremely detrimental to both the international relations and noncombatant populations in the Middle East. All direct military intervention and persecution of Islamic State combatants must be conducted by the nations in which their presence is most strongly felt if further acts of violence towards the West are to be avoided. While the US should provide medical and monetary assistance to those civilians affected by the ongoing hostility, actual deployment of military personnel should be avoided if there is ever to be hope for diplomatic relations in those regions once again.



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Label accurately

by Jonathan Friedland
Editorial Editor



In America, we care more about identifying criminals and terrorists with sensitive names than appropriately serving them justice. Illegal aliens are now called undocumented workers and the Global War on Terrorism was renamed the Overseas Contingency Operation. These names are a preposterous, embarrassing attempt to

tend to criminals' feelings.

On Oct. 24 of this year, two Sacramento deputies were shot dead by an illegal alien. Marcelo Marquez had been deported twice previously after spending almost no time in prison for drug trafficking charges. After his third illegal re-entry, Marquez fatally shot two California state troopers after a high speed car chase.

However, journalists such as Charles Garcia of CNN are focused on the feelings of illegal aliens such as Marquez, rather than those of the two police officers' families. He set out on a campaign to eradicate the use of the term, "illegal alien," calling it "racially offensive language." Yet Garcia ignores the fact that illegal immigrants committed a felony while crossing the border, exemplifying why they are called illegal immigrants or aliens, another term for immigrant. Thinking that way, we should call burglars "uninvited house guests" and bank robbers "people who just make unauthorized withdrawals." Our country should focus on enforcing immigration laws, rather than thinking of ludicrous names to care for criminals' tender feelings.

In a similar situation, in 2009, the Obama administration required Pentagon staff members to replace the overall naming of America's involvement in the Middle East from the War on Terror to the Overseas Contingency Operation. Not only does this sound like a poor attempt to take the word "terrorism" out of the name, it detracts from the terrorism-based problem of the war. Regardless of whether the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan were justified, they were launched as a result of 9/11, a terrorist attack. Thus, the most appropriate name for the war would be -- pause for suspense -- The War on Terror.

Constantly changing the names of controversial, issues does not make them less controversial but instead makes the advocates of such name changes look foolish and ill-informed. Our government should stop rewording the names of existing problems and instead try to fix our problems, of which we have a lot.

Don't exaggerate the Ebola threat

by Hyuntae Byun
World Editor



Ebola is pretty terrifying. It has a high mortality rate, as it kills more than half the people that it infects. Symptoms include fever, severe headache, muscle pain, weakness, diarrhea, vomiting, and stomach pain. Additionally, Ebola is a hemorrhagic disease, which means that it can cause internal and

external bleeding. The most recent outbreak of Ebola has killed thousands of people in western Africa. The United Nations estimates that every hour, five more people in Sierra Leone contract Ebola. Even more terrifyingly, there are no known cures or vaccines for Ebola.

Luckily, the potent deadliness of Ebola is largely inhibited by its slow method of transmission; Ebola can only be contracted through direct contact with bodily fluids or secretions such as blood, sweat, or saliva. Additionally, Ebola cannot be contracted from an infected victim who has not begun showing any symptoms, which makes it relatively easy to contain at an early stage.

Nevertheless, the outbreak of Ebola has precipitated a veritable avalanche of criticism of the US government's delayed response. The Center for Disease Control has come under attack for having a weak response to the initial outbreak of Ebola in Dallas, where a patient who contracted Ebola ultimately died and infected two other nurses. Additionally, the Obama administration has received negative publicity for its initially slow and ineffective policies to fight Ebola.

Despite its lethal potential, the sudden flurry of Ebola-related concerns and action is almost comical when compared to the characteristically gridlocked and ineffectual US responses to other pressing issues. To date, there have been nine cases of Ebola within the United States over the course of several months.

Meanwhile, the largest causes of preventable death in the United States, such as high blood pressure and diabetes, result in hundreds of thousands of deaths yearly.

In the case of Ebola, it is easy to see a disproportional relation in the amount of media coverage in regards to the magnitude of the threat. Ebola has only led to nine cases of contraction within the United States and is not transmitted easily; on the other hand, there are many preventable deaths occurring on a yearly basis that greatly outweigh the magnitude of Ebola and can be addressed today, yet receive less media coverage than Ebola.

For example, tobacco usage and cigarette usage lead to about 480,000 premature deaths in the United States every year, including about 41,000 deaths resulting from second-hand smoke, according to the Center for Disease Control. This averages to about 1,300 deaths every day. Despite the

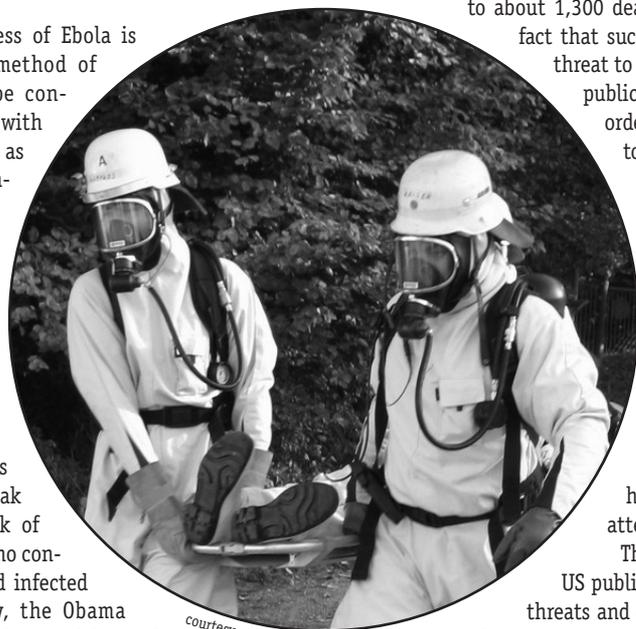
fact that such deaths are a much larger threat to the safety of the US general

public and statistically are many orders of magnitude more likely to lead to death than Ebola, there is a sharp juxtaposition between the public response to smoking regulations when compared to that of Ebola. Whereas Ebola elicits the general response of desire for immediate action, the staggering amount of preventable deaths from tobacco and cigarette usage hardly receives any media attention.

There is a tendency within the US public to over publicize dramatic threats and overly underplay the severity of more common but incremental dangers.

Subsequently, issues with mass market appeal such as Ebola are featured in many news outlets, whereas less glamorous but more prolific problems rarely get intense media coverage.

As a society, we should begin to start to address the more practical and pressing issues rather than continue to focus on the more far-fetched and niche problems.



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