“Fearing the Unknown: Mental Health in Current Day America” (critical introduction)

“One, Two, Three” (fiction)

Both my critical introduction and fiction piece focus on the interplay between society and those with mental health illnesses. My critical introduction looks back through America’s history of treatment toward those considered “insane,” and compares it to current treatment. My thesis argues that while extreme strides have been made in America’s acceptance of mental illness, there still exists a sense of discrimination against individuals with mental illness due to society’s lack of knowledge and fear of what is unknown. My critical introduction uses historical, scientific and literary references to help identify potential causes of this treatment. The critical introduction discusses the themes of my story in order to give a realistic view of mental illnesses that are currently stigmatized. The introduction discusses the strides America has made since the 18th century in dealing with and addressing mental illness, but details the ongoing stigmas that remain.

“One, Two, Three,” my creative fiction piece, is written to be the beginning of a novel. The work not only examines the treatment and stereotypes surrounding mental disorders, but it also delves into the minds and thoughts of those afflicted with mental illness. The story is in first person and switches between two characters who both have different mental health issues. Throughout the evolution of the story, the stigmas associated with specific mental illnesses are examined and forced into question. As readers navigate through some unexpected territory, the story tests their knowledge of mental illness and what they associate with certain diseases. The characters display the vulnerability found in those with mental illness and the absolute strength of people who have to fight against an illness that originates in their own minds. The story shows stereotypes associated with certain mental illnesses that do not hold true when looked at with an objective eye. Ultimately, the beginning of this story attempts to create a conversation about mental health and challenges the reasons and ways in which society accepts those around them.