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Andrew Pfrenger, English Coordinator
# Table of Contents

**First Place:**  Eunice Omega  
1

**Second Place:**  Desiree Velazquez  
5

**Third Place:**  Barbara Williams  
8

**Honorable Mention:**  Anthony Ortega  
10

**Honorable Mention:**  Gerishma Kunwar  
15

Elizabeth Bajus  
20

Leslie Barreto  
22

Genevieve Colinet  
25

Eileen Echevarria  
28

Breanna Evans  
33

Brian Ibarra  
35

Melanie Marante  
36

Shaneca Napier  
40

Tuong Ngu  
43

Sandra Owens  
56

Marilium Padilla  
62

Renaldo Persaud  
65

Danny Pham  
67

Eric Phillips  
69
Tanisha Redic 71
Aimee Roberts 74
Deriesha Rodriguez 77
Christine Santos 80
Joseph Taitague 83
Bieu B. Tran 85
Olbelina Ulloa 87
Cruz Maria Velazquez 88
Andrew Villagomez 91
How do we identify ourselves; am I more women then I am black or am I more student then daughter. We have many aspects of ourselves that identify the individual. In Gloria Anzaldúa’s essay, “How to Tame a Wild Tongue,” she talks about language in relation to identity. She believes that language is what mainly defines her and connects her with her culture. I understand that there is no culture with the absence of language, but the point that I stress is that a few people such as my self don’t necessarily know our language and that fact should not exclude us from our culture. An individual can be linked to his or her culture in many ways without knowing the language. Those who are lacking of their native tongue are still a part of a culture through different ways. A person can be a part of a culture through their “state of soul” or the feeling they have inside them. Someone may be part of two cultures but both can still be represented. Others connect themselves to their culture through cultural experiences and material things like food. One could be a part of a culture by knowing traditions and making new ones based on the old. And although one culture may try to exclude its people one is still part of that culture.

Culture is the “state of soul” that an individual carries within themselves. This “state of soul” connects an individual to their language without having to know the language. My state of soul is the respect that I have for my ancestors; the love I have for my parents and all aspects of who they are. Their childhood and their experiences mixed with the language, food, music and even forms of punishments is represented in me. The way I was raised makes me as Haitian as anyone who was born in Haiti. Its not necessarily the material aspects or where I live that makes me Haitian but the love I have for my native land with or without the language. Anzaldúa mentions the same concept in her article, “Deep in our hearts we believe that being Mexican has nothing to do with which country one lives in. Being Mexican is a state of soul – not one of mind, not one of citizenship. Neither eagle nor serpent, but both. And like the ocean, neither animal respects borders,” (307). In this quote Anzaldúa talks about her definition of culture connected to identity. She mentions her definition of “state of soul” and it has nothing to do with where you live. Like the eagle and the serpent that she mentions culture is the same; there is no clear cut separation, they are both animals that cross territories and intermingle with each other. In this way language is not the black and white definition of identity that Anzaldúa tries to convey to us. There is no distinction on how being a part of a culture connects you to that culture. It’s the feeling that you have that connects you to your culture.
One can be a part of two cultures without compromising one for the other. In this way a person can be part of two cultures without knowing the language of one culture or the other. My father raised me with the guidelines of America being the more dominant culture because he wanted for me and my brothers to succeed. I feel as if even though I am Haitian American and English is my first language Haitian is still a part of me. I am part of two cultures; although one culture is a greater influence over the other. Anzaldúa mentions a blending of Spanish and European cultures in her article. She talked about how the German immigrants gave button accordions to Chicanos and the Tex-Mexs adapted polka from the Germans who in turn had borrowed the polka from Czechs and Bohemians (Anzaldúa 306). She talks about a blending of cultures in this portion of the text; Chicano culture is not purely Chicano, and like the Chicanos we are influenced by other cultures in many ways. As people we can’t expect to shut out different cultures and have one culture be pure. In the beginning of time we started out with distinct cultures but as time progressed we influence each other with different aspects of culture. Especially in America; living in America allows for different cultures to thrive and in turn cultures change because of American influences. This does not mean that cultures disappear, or someone chooses one culture over another. We just allow free reign of different cultures to mix and blend between an invisible line. In this way I am linked to my culture without my language because I allow for my two cultures to mix and blend without allowing one to fade into obscurity.

The connection that one has to his or her country can also come from experiences. People can have similar experiences to another person because they come from the same culture. In this way people are associated with culture through experience and not language. For example almost every Haitian child has parents with eyes everywhere. For a Haitian child the world always seems so small because our community is small. Your parents have friends in all walks of life who are watching you. One night I was out with my cousins at a local diner. Granted it was late but I wasn’t going over my curfew at all. But my father’s friend saw me outside of the diner and felt the need to tell my father that he saw me out past my curfew with a whole bunch of friends drinking beers. This is something that happens often in Haitian families. Friends of the family always have their eyes on you, sometimes for the sake of protection but other times it’s for the gossip. That was not the first time that that has happened to me and my father continues to take the side of his friend over mine. This is similar to Anzaldúa’s experiences where she would go see the Mexican movies that all emphasized the love between mother and child (306). She said that all of the Mexican movies talked about this concept of family this means that most Mexicans can relate to it because they’ve gone through similar situations such as the ones that are played on screen. In this way Anzaldúa was connected to her country through the experiences that she had while growing up. My situation may be more severe then hers but its still an experience that we could both look back on and relate to with people who are of the same culture and know what we are talking about. Our experiences attach us to people with the same culture without the need for language.
We tie ourselves to our culture through material things like food and music. These things are still an aspect of culture that isn’t necessarily language. I love my mother’s cooking from her booyan, to her sauce poiwa. Every other day I would watch her boil beans over the stove and crush maggie and scallions in her pylon. By the age of ten I could cook basic foods like rice and chicken, but I was proud of the fact that I could cook a meal like my mother. It didn’t taste as good but I was still trying. I am trying to keep my culture alive if not through my language then in other ways like food. Like Anzaldúa said in her article, “There are more subtle ways that we internalize identification, especially in the forms of images and emotions. For me food and certain smells are tied to my identity, to my homeland,” (307). At first she said that language was her identity but here she contradicts herself by saying that emotions and images towards different things connect her to her homeland. This is one of her points but she does feel that language is a strong bond that connects people to their culture. But through this example she supports my point; I may not know the language but I know the food and the music and it is internalized within in me and thus becomes a part of my identification.

While I’ve lost the ability to communicate with my family back in Haiti or my grandparents, I haven’t lost the bond I have with my people and my family. There is a generation gap but the culture within my family is not dead. It lives on still through stories that my parents pass onto me, stories that I would in turn pass on to my children through things like food. Even morals that have been passed on to me I could instill within my children over the years. As long as communication is not lost between my parents I will not lose touch with my culture. Anzaldúa thinks that this wont keep culture alive, that over time the more Americanized Chicano culture becomes it will eventually be consumed by the dominant culture. I believe that this notion is wrong, by passing on old culture to new generations we not only keep the culture alive but we breath new breath into it. In Sedaris’s story he states, “My only comfort was the knowledge that I was not alone. Huddled in the hallways and making the most of our pathetic French, my fellow students and I engaged in the sort of conversation commonly overheard in refugee camps,” (252). In his story Sedaris was able to create a new language with the other students in the class. Out of perfect French they were able to create a broken language but a language still the same that was their own. Culture can be the same. Some say that over generations traditions die and culture slowly dies with it and others think that you can’t change culture because in the end it’s not the same as the old. But it is the same, changed culture is just a child of the mother culture. And in the way a child is genetically like its parents culture is too. So although what my parents teach me is not standard Haitian culture, I am still Haitian and how I represent myself is still Haitian because I am my parents’ child.

I’ve never abandoned my culture but my own people seem willing to exclude me because I don’t know the language. People make it seem like I am an embarrassment to them or a sell out because I am Americanized; they even despise my own parents because they did not do more to teach me Creole. I feel like these people are stripping me of my Haitian title that is rightfully mine. I feel like there taking away a birth right and a part of who I am just because of the fact that I don’t know the language. Anzaldúa refers to this in
her essay, “If a person, Chicana or Latina, has a low estimation of my native tongue, she also has a low estimation of me,” (304). Anzaldúa is saying that people look down on her because of the language that she uses. If the language being spoken is not perfect then you are not a perfect version of the culture. This is true because I feel as if I am looked down upon because I don’t know Creole. I am perceived as if I am a lesser Haitian because I was born in America and my first language was English. But who is allowed to make these kinds of judgments and do their opinions of me really count? I feel that these opinions shouldn’t count because these nay sayers are killing the very thing they are trying to keep alive. How can somebody keep a culture alive when there is exclusion? The culture will eventually die because it is not able to grow and evolve through people such as myself. I am not taking away anything from the culture by not knowing the language. Haitians can still cook yellow soup on New Year, play soccer, and be the Catholics that they are without me. But because I know English and I go to American schools I can learn more, my thought is broader. If I am excluded from my own culture then Haitians can never learn what so many people like myself know. It will not grow in this technological world. There sight and thought will be one sided and in the end their culture will die.

I am predominately American because I was born here and my parents wanted me to succeed and blend in with this culture. I know who I am as a person and where I fit into my culture. I know that my language does not define me because of I am a part of two cultures that I embrace fully. I know that language does not define me because I have my culture in my heart; it is my “state of soul.” I’ve lived through Haitian experiences and I’ve breathed new life into Haitian traditions. Even if my culture tries to deny me I know that they are just harming themselves. For I’ve never denied my culture, my father tells me that it is who I am and there’s nothing to be ashamed of.

Work Cited


Desiree Vazquez

~Second Place~

Does Diversity Really Exist?

David Brooks examines diversity in the essay, “People Like Us.” Brooks refers to the existence of diversity as a dream or misconception and that the U.S has never fully attained it (348). Citizens say they live their lives in a diverse way when in reality they themselves group or interact with others according to similar interests. We see diversity in many forms such as race, religion, social class, economic status and political affiliations. The article “Red Truth, Blue Truth,” by Nancy Gibbs addresses the division between both democrats and republicans. Each group has their own form of Truth. Democratic and Republican officials tamper and misconstrue information in order to present a biased account that will favor their beliefs. This manipulation of data increases the division between both groups and further proves that people associate themselves with one another and with whom they share a similar interest. Although both articles have some conflicting ideas, Gibbs’s article exemplifies the very point Brooks made in his essay in that she provides a clear example of how people form themselves into groups according to personal interest and comfort.

Brooks’s essay provides a foundation of knowledge for his reader in order to fully understand how these groupings function and exist in everyday life, as exemplified in the article “Red Truth, Blue Truth” with political division.

In the article “People Like Us,” Brooks explains that people only interact with those that share the same interests, this sharing of interests allows individuals to feel comfortable (345). Brooks notes, “Many of us live in absurdly unlikely groupings, because we have organized our lives that way” (347). By emphasizing this, Brooks forces his reader to question society and the way society functions as a whole. People go through their daily lives without realizing how they organize themselves, when in reality they only interact with people they feel comfortable around. This derives from an inability to understand other people and their way of life, and also an inability to step outside of the norm. Brooks uses the phrase “unlikely groupings” which touches upon the fact that people make themselves interact with others because of one particular interest. Once the person establishes interest he feels more inclined to interact. If there is no initial interest established, then there will be no interaction. That is why there are “unlikely groupings,” people recognize one characteristic or belief that is the same as their own and latch onto a particular group that also believes in the same thing.

Gibbs’s article, “Red Truth, Blue Truth,” presents a clear example of groupings amongst individuals based on comfort levels and shared beliefs. She examines the division between Republicans and Democrats
and touches upon the misconstrued beliefs each group holds based on the manipulated data they receive
form party officials and other forms of authority. Each group draws in people that share the same belief.
However, the target audience is not realizing that the information presented is tampered with in order to give
a half-truth (348).

When examining how political party officials misconstrue information one must take into account the
increase in technology and how this is used as a mechanism for delivering information to a specific target
audience. Party officials do this in order to make them feel as though their belief is the right belief and the
only belief that is acceptable. Usually this manipulation of data is done so in a way that will better suit the
party sending it out. Gibbs writes, “The campaign also keeps a close eye on the blogs, using them, just as it
uses Limbaugh, to mainline information to the G.O.P faithful…republicans have relied on the internet to
spread a message” (4). This is evidence to the fact that media and authority obscure information in order to
reach a certain group of people.

Both groups go to any extreme to try to persuade and manipulate people in society. This separation
in political groups represents one form of a division. This form of diversion continues to grow because of the
increase in technology and the increase of media and internet usage. One can see that groups of people are
easily manipulated to think a certain way. Gibbs writes, “Technology made it possible to nationalize the sense
of community…but the political class also helped peel people apart. Both parties redrew districts to be more
politically homogenous…” (3). The phrase “nationalize the sense of community” shows how the political
parties by using technology influence groups of people to separate themselves from those that oppose their
belief or ideals, and also to form bonds with people from other areas. These influences are so great that
communities that share the same belief evolve. Brooks makes this exact point in his essay. People mingle
together because of shared beliefs.

To this end, the separation begins by the media and the conditionings imposed upon them. By
showing how political parties and their use of technology impact the community making them less diverse,
one can see how both articles convey the same message.

Brooks’s essay expresses the same idea when he writes, “Within their little validating communities,
liberals and conservatives circulate half-truths about the supposed awfulness of the other side. These
distortions are believed because it feels good to believe them” (348). Brooks focuses in on how political
parties create communities that only accept those that share the same belief. Within these communities or
groupings information is tampered with in order to give “half-truths.” These “half-truths” provide a target
audience with the information needed in order to preserve their beliefs. Therefore, people are more inclined
to believe any information presented to them; not only does it reinforce their belief but also makes them feel
more comfortable. Because people find a common interest in a particular party and this common interest
brings about comfort, people are more inclined to believe what they are told and do not question their
authority. In reality they take in the information and begin to degrade the opposing political party. This can be seen in many groups, this does not only happen within the political spectrum.

The stylistic approach by both Brooks and Gibbs differ in that both approach the topic differently. Brooks serves more as a foundation of knowledge, or an eye opener. This format allows the reader to take in the information and then apply it everyday life. Brooks does not take specific themes and surround the topic of diversity around it. Brooks does not go into extreme depth in any single example. Gibbs however does. She allows the reader to see an example of groupings and the problems that arise because of it. She takes the issue surrounding politics and simply discusses the division between political groups and how this division amongst parties creates communities in which individuals that share the same belief reside. Brooks writes, “We are finding places we feel comfortable and where we can flourish. But the choices we make toward that end lead to the very opposite of diversity” (345). People in the American society feel as though living in a “diverse” country means they are truly living by the ideals expressed by this concept. In all actuality they are doing the opposite. People surround themselves with people just like them and see that as “flourishing,” they never question why it is that they are interacting with the people they are interacting with. This is why society, rather than moving towards a more diverse country, is doing the opposite. People are living their lives conformed to the only life they have ever been exposed to. This is seen within the political spectrum. Democrats refuse to interact or except many of the ideals expressed by the Republicans, and Republicans have the same attitude towards the Democrats. The division is what removes diversity from society, and it is why diversity will never exist.

In both essays the concept of diversity is addressed, whether it is directly or indirectly. Brooks’s essay prepares the reader to fully understand how groups take form in the U.S, so that when reading “Blue Truth, Red Truth” the reader is able to recognize this form of groupings as explored through the political spectrum. Although it is important to examine the groupings of individuals and how this affects diversity, one must also examine whether or not it is human nature, as expressed by Brooks, or whether it is a conditioning imposed upon us with the increase of technology and the media. Nonetheless, diversity is a difficult concept to achieve and maybe, as Brooks proposes, impossible.

**Works Cited**


Barbara Williams

~Third Place~

The Essence of Becoming a Woman

To become literate in one’s own sense is to fit the category of being knowledgeable and comprehensive in one’s own community. As a child of eight years old, I remember literacy (from the Nigerian culture’s point of view) was not about reading and writing; both female and male are expected to portray a certain figure that befitted our country, Nigeria. As young Nigerian girls, we are taught the essence of motherhood and how to cater to our future husbands. Our parents want us to speak the language, understand the importance of our future children, and if education came along, it was additional, however not needed. In our community, the title of literacy is then giving to girls who are considered to be well-cultured, home-trained, and civilized.

Because education isn’t an important factor in our country, moreover it is looked upon as a negative effect in marriages; mothers would substitute education for parental and family edification. “Because of its potentially divisive, counterproductive power,” education got in the way of Nigerian girls who seek for marriage (246). Many Nigerian men saw educated Nigerian women as a treat to their homes, simply because they felt challenged by a woman’s progress. Nevertheless, an essential part, to our culture as future mothers is cooking. My mother would administer a cooking lesson, every now and then, teaching me how to cook with haste and still attain the unique flavor that made our food taste good. Being that I am slow at learning, my mother will always shout at me. I remember the first time my mother made me cook. She dictated the directions to me while I cooked. Moreover, she inspected me; skeptically she would look at the way I stand, carry myself, my posture, and my stiff movements. (Cooking was not only about the taste of the food itself; it was also how the cook carry’s and maintains her posture). Always, she’d shout with such irritation at the way I dressed or did my chores, saying “Don’t disgrace me by not knowing your position in your matrimonial home; by not doing what you are suppose to do”. My mom will always complain about my arched back, (which never seemed straight) and how I never pulled my hair back. Cooking was no longer a fun hobby or an interest: it had become a lifestyle; something I had to do because it was a woman’s way of living. As I perceived and was later taught, I saw Nigerian women as pretty maids, who satisfied their husband’s and children’s needs and wants. These Nigerian women are now shunned by society; these same women who grow to be mothers would teach their female children to be humble and bow down for their husbands, as the way society approves of it. The society played an important role in women’s lives. They are perceived as
elegant, majestic, clean, and humble people. Nigerian women, for that matter, had to maintain that stature in public and at home, to save tradition.

As I am now taught, I also had to follow the religious ways of our country. These rules are then enforced upon us young girls and it was not by choice. However, traditions began to fade, when the move to America changed my life as a home trained Nigerian girl. Seeing that I had to adjust to the environment and try to accustom myself with my country, I began to learn through people, the environment, television, and other informative resources that gave me an overview of how America really is. In a way, I found myself, “reading the world” (Friere 6). Like Eli Jr., I was able to see the big picture of America through outside information, helping me to see the rising consciousness of the new society I was placed in.

I became literate of the new environment I was in; I learned the culture quickly through school. Much of what I understand as of today comes from the influences of friends and teachers. I understood that most of what was popular in this community was fashion and music. Most girls were free; in the sense that they did not need to be taught what is expected of them. One day I asked my friends in school, “What is their culture like?” For some reason, I seemed not to be understood because my friends started laughing; from what I believed, I thought it was my heavy accent that made them laugh. But as I got acquainted with the environment, I began to see that America was completely different from where I was coming from. America had a voice for women and I liked that. Nigeria was so restricted by tradition and society; there wasn’t much of a voice; it was more of a whisper.

America had a culture where, children had the chance to experience things for themselves and seek advice when needed. Living in America, I have made decisions as a young adult and not a Nigerian girl. I have learned to search for answers on my own. I have broken away from tradition, however not completely; (I guess it’s important to know how to cook). Through my experiences of living in two entirely different countries, I learned how to become literate in both countries. Nigeria had its own mainstream way of teaching young girls how to be properly educated in their community. According to Andrea Fishman’s paper of Becoming Literate: A Lesson from the Amish, “[People] need to realize that [their] role may not be to prepare their] students to enter mainstream society but rather, to help them see what mainstream society offers and what it takes away, what they may gain by assimilating and what they may lose in that process” (247). The Nigerian culture has set tradition as the mainstream idea for its society, not allowing children to experience the world for themselves. My literacy of both cultures have enabled me the choice to pick and choose parts from both cultures and create my identity of what I believe should be literate.
“Must” is a collection of thoughts based on Martin Luther King Jr. Letter from Birmingham Jail, where he explained why they ‘must’ act as soon as possible to end segregation.

**NONVIOLENT**

Nonviolent protest is when people peacefully demand their rights. This is what Martin Luther King Jr. and the Civil Right Movement did in 1955-1968 to demand equality.

**MISSION: NONVIOLENT**

“The Macedonian call for aid” (King 739) has reached my ear

I must go,

My mission is waiting.

I am obliged to go wherever it is,

To those who need my assistance.

Thus they will become grateful with the opportunities that life offered them.

As passionate as Christ was with his mission, and Paul with the gospel,

I must be passionate to fight against injustice wherever it might be happening,

But not being like those who practice the injustice.

I must set the example for those, whom I am going to help,

I must teach them how to fight, using the wonderful tool of

**NONVIOLENT PROTEST.**

**TOOL**

The art of fighting without hurting others physically,

But morally

Has shown many that it can be a powerful tool.

A tool that will bring our desire dream of integration

And will end the separation of our nation.

A nation that has served as a model for the world
And will continue to do so, as we come together and put an end to segregation.

**The Basic Four**

When Martin Luther King Jr. wrote the letter, he mentioned the four basic steps for a successful nonviolent campaign, which are: (1) Collection of the facts, to make sure that injustice is present; (2) negotiation; (3) self-purification; and (4) direct action (King 739). This four basic steps are very important for a nonviolent protest; because they show if the protest has reasons, point one (1); Try to solve the problem in good faith, point two (2); what the people in the protest have to do before starting the protest, the preparation that they have to take, so they can be prepare for any consequences, point three (3); and what they must do, point four (4).

**It Is a Fact**

Collection of facts have been done
And we have determine
That injustice is for sure presence in this place;
Thus something must be made,
And a stand should be taken.
Do we want to promote the proliferation of unfairness?
Or, do we want to take risks and whatever it takes
To stop this unfair status of partiality?

**Let’s Talk**

We must negotiate
And not create a war among us.
Coming together as brothers and sisters
Healing this world of its sickness and ignorance.
Let the song of agreement be heard throughout the nation,
Feeling every little boy and girl’s mind with dreams and determination.

**Prepare**

Purification
Comes from inside, it is about being born again;
But before doing it
One must ask:
Why do I want to do it?
What is going to be the outcome?
A better America: That will be the outcome.
With preparation and PURIFICATION of Mind, Body and Soul
An individual will be able to resist the hard beating of injustice
And walk tall, fighting without using violence until achieving the goal;  
And reach what has been denied to many generations of black Americans.  

**NOW**  
Look straight up to the man  
Point your fingers to his face and tell him your demands,  
You must act now, before it is too late  
Waiting is not an option,  
Because this is America and the constitution says YOU CAN  
And if he doesn’t do it, it will be considered corruption;  
That will ignite an everlasting eruption  
If injustice continues forever  
It will be America’s consumption.  
**ACT NOW.**

**LAWS**  
Martin Luther King talked about how important the laws are; but he divided the laws in two groups: just and unjust laws. He disobeyed the unjust laws but did not refuse to face the consequences, he went to jail, but he showed how unjust the laws of segregation were (King 742-744). By doing this he was putting pressure on the government to change these unjust laws, while the other people who were working with him were marching in the nonviolent protest to keep pressuring the government to stop using the unjust laws of segregation.

**UNJUST**  
Unjust law that separates little children because of their skin colors  
Unjust law that keep me away from my rights  
Unjust law that send me to jail like a criminal, because I express myself  
Unjust law  
Unjust law that must change to  

**JUST**  
A just law that will let little boys and girls play together  
Holding their hands in the same park, in the same school  
And promote the brotherhood among us  
A just law that will treat us all the same  
A just law that has equality  
A just law that we will all love.  

**EXTREMIST**
An extremist is a person who believes in and support for extreme ideas (http://www.wordcentral.com/). Example: Martin Luther King was an extremist supported of civil rights.

**LOVE**

An extremist in love that’s who I am,
And essential love is what we need for a better America.
Extremist love of just laws and brotherhood is what we must teach our children,
So they won’t have the same problems that we are facing now: Segregation and racism,
And they will be all together as God’s children.

**STOP & ALLOW**

Extremist segregation
That’s what we must stop
And extremist integration is what we must allow.

**NO MORE**

What Martin Luther King wanted was the end of segregation; and have unity among americans. He did not want any more segregation, America was segregated and did not have equality for a long time; and nonviolent protest were orginize to end this unjistice and stop dealing with this ‘no more.’

**SOON**

“The dark clouds of racial prejudice will end soon” (King 752-753)
With our hard work and determination
Integration and equality
Will become a true
And the redemption songs
Will be heard in the whole nation
By black boys and girls
When they know that they will be able
To enjoy the amusement at “Funtown” (King 742)
It will end soon and the constitution will finally be taken serious
Without excluding people of their rights
And achieve the final destination of this process
From segregation
To
INTEGRATION.
WORKS CITED


The essay, “Mother Tongue”, written by Amy Tan reflects Tan’s personal experience concerning the usage of English language. Tan mainly focuses her attention on her mother who speaks English as a second language. Using her mother’s experience as a non-English speaker, Tan addresses many disadvantages her mother and Tan herself faced as a result of her mother’s inability to speak English fluently. Through Tan’s mother’s experience, it is apparent that society uses language as a tool to form perceptions about people who don’t speak English as their first language. Moreover, Tan emphasizes that one must carefully choose certain words while communicating with others in order to be effective. In American society, physical appearance and language are two tools used by society to judge an individual without actually knowing anything about the particular individual. While living in America, it is very crucial for non-English speakers to speak English fluently in order to avoid the disadvantages that result from not speaking the dominant language fluently. Language is a tool used by society to form perceptions that will exclude non-English speakers from the dominant society which is why the ineffective usage of English is detrimental to a non-English speaker. This thesis will be evident as I consider how society perceives the non-English speaker’s intelligence on the basis of their usage of language; society’s resulting exclusion of non-English speakers from English speaking community; the non-English speaker’s perceptions of self as a result of society’s prejudice and the effects of the non-English speaker’s withdrawal from the English speaking society.

A non-English speaker’s ineffective usage of the English language undermines his or her level of intelligence because society uses language as a means to form perceptions about people without actually knowing anything about the particular individual. Those individuals who don’t speak English clearly and effectively are looked down upon by those who do. This is because the group of people who speak English without any hesitation feel a sense of power and dominance while observing the non-English speaker’s inability to form one grammatically correct sentence. This allows the dominant speaker to make generalizations about the speaker. The dominant speakers tend to conclude that since the individual can’t express his or her basic thoughts, ideas, emotions in one correct sentence that even an elementary student can form, the individual must be limited in all areas including their level of intelligence. Tan argues a similar point. She says, “I know this for a fact, because when I was growing up, my mother’s “limited” English limited my perception of her. I was ashamed of her English. I believed that her English reflected the quality of what she had to say” (Tan 262). Tan’s saying that as she was growing up, she observed that her mother’s
use of English wasn’t structured correctly. As a result, Tan concluded that her mother was capable of understanding just the basic words that she used to communicate. However, when Tan grew older, she learned that her mother’s English speaking ability misrepresented her mother’s understanding of English (Tan 262). There are countless people like Tan who speak the dominant language fluently and make perceptions about those people whose first language isn’t English like Tan’s mother. When Tan drew a conclusion about her mother’s level of intelligence by observing the way her mother used English, Tan’s mother’s true quality of intelligence was undermined. Being misinterpreted as unintelligent by the dominant society is a serious consequence that the non-English speakers have to face if they don’t strive for proper English, therefore it is very crucial for them to speak proper English.

American society undermines a non-English speaker's intelligence and as a result of this prejudice, a distinct separation is formed between the English speakers and non-English speakers. This separation occurs because the dominant English speakers use language to exclude the non-English speakers from society. The ineffective use of a dominant language is detrimental to an individual whose mother tongue is other than the dominant language because he or she is going to be perceived as an outcast and worthless by the majority of the society who do speak the dominant language. Language is a very important aspect of human lives because it is the bridge that connects us to other individuals. When living in society, we meet all sorts of people and as a human instinct, we tend to connect ourselves to other individuals by using language as a medium to communicate. The method of communicating to another individual is through a common language that is spoken by both sides. In this case, when non-English speakers can’t communicate effectively to the English speaking population, there is a barrier formed between the people who can speak the dominant language and who can’t. This results in the English speakers excluding the non-English speakers from conversations or other social events such as school, work, community activities and more. When doing so, the non-English speakers become outcasts and unimportant.

Tan provides an example of such situation. Tan says that her mother had to go to the hospital to get the results of a brain tumor a CAT scan had found. When her mother asked for the results, the hospital simply replied that they had lost the CAT scan and that her arrival to the hospital was pointless. The hospital’s reaction to her mother’s concern about the tumor was indifference. (Tan 263). This is important because even though Tan’s mother said that she had spoken her best English without any mistakes, the hospital treated her as if she was a burden on the hospital or as if she didn’t even deserve to know about her own health’s condition. This is because the officials of the hospital spoke the dominant language and when they listened to Tan’s mother’s fragmented English, they didn’t take her seriously. They treated her disrespectfully because she couldn’t communicate to them in the English that they use to communicate. Tan’s mother’s inability to talk effectively with the dominant speakers placed her at a great disadvantage. The English speakers treated her as an outcast or a person with no importance because she couldn’t use her English effectively. The reason why this is true is because when Tan called the hospital and demanded for
her mother’s results in proper English, the hospital not only apologized for such discrimination towards Tan’s mother but also assured Tan that the CAT scan will be found. (Tan 263). Tan’s mother, a non-English speaker, faced a great disadvantage and disrespect even in such a serious matter as finding about her health condition was as a result of her ineffective use of English. Through Tan’s mother’s experience at the hospital, it is evident that non-English speakers aren’t treated as equally as fluent English speakers because society considers them as unintelligent and thinks of them as outcasts. The non-English speakers should avoid this event from happening to them by striving for proper English because if they don’t then there are very serious consequences related to the ineffective use of English as experienced by Tan’s mother.

The exclusion of a non-English speaker from the society causes him or her to internalize society’s perceptions, which leads him or her to lose confidence and ultimately withdraw from the dominant society. Not speaking a dominant language fluently results in the dominant society poking fun at an individual’s inability to use language efficiently. David Sedaris, the author of the writing, “Me Talk Pretty One Day”, shares his personal experience about the hardships of learning a foreign language. Sedaris claims that his French teacher attacked her students as if she were some sort of animal because they were unable to talk French fluently. (Sedaris 251).

Sedaris states that when the teacher who spoke the dominant language poked fun at the students for their inability to use French efficiently, Sedaris lost the confidence he had before joining the class. He says, “My fear and discomfort crept beyond the borders of the classroom and accompanied me out into the wide boulevards. Stopping for a coffee, asking directions, depositing money in my bank account: these things were out of the question, as they involved having to speak..now I was convinced everything I said was wrong” (Sedaris 252). Sedaris says that when his teacher made crude comments about his usage of French, he felt sensitive and at unease. The unease that he felt extended beyond the classroom and he felt uncomfortable going out in the public because that meant he had to talk to people in French. He felt as if everything he said would be wrong because the teacher who represented the dominant language French made fun of his usage of French. He had come to France to experience the French life. However, Sedaris’ internalization of the French teacher’s comments and perceptions compelled him to lose his confidence. As a result of this lost in confidence, Sedaris withdrew from society as a whole. He didn’t want to participate in activities that required some sort of socialization such as stopping for coffee or asking directions. After he internalized the French teacher’s perceptions, he was afraid that he would be a target of ridicule by rest of the French society as well.

Similarly, when the non-English speakers in America are ridiculed by the English speakers for their ineffective use of English, the non-English speakers tend to withdraw from society. When an English speaker, who represents the dominant part of the society, makes fun of the non-English speaker, the non-English speaker tends to be discouraged like David Sedaris and as a result withdraw from society. After withdrawing from society, they feel safe from facing society’s perceptions however the internalization of
society’s perception is detrimental to their internal self. They may feel discouraged to speak is public places and as a result shut down to the English society. The non-English speaker may think that their language and their culture is very worthless which will affect their self esteem and their identity. Gloria Anzaldua, the author of the essay, “How To Tame a Wild Tongue” suggests that one’s language and one’s identity are strongly connected. She argues that a non-English speaker shouldn’t sacrifice his or her language just to please the English speaking society. She says, “Ethnic identity is twin skin to linguistic identity– I am my language. Until I can take pride in my language, I cannot take pride in myself (Anzaldua 305). She’s saying that an individual’s nationality and language are strongly connected to each other. She says that she represents her language. She feels that she should take pride in her language to take pride in herself. Those individuals who identify themselves with their language will feel hostile towards society because of their internalization of society’s perceptions even after they withdraw from the dominant society. Therefore it is very important for non-English speakers to avoid the detrimental effects projected by society’s perceptions by striving for proper English. Furthermore, it is also very important to maintain pride in one’s ethnicity and language while striving for proper English to avoid losing confidence and withdrawal from society.

Imagine yourself as a non-English speaker and you’re being placed in a classroom discussion. You’re surrounded by people who can speak English fluently and all you can do is form basic sentences. The English speakers are going to use your English speaking ability to judge you and form perceptions about you. If you can’t communicate effectively in English, they will consider you as unintelligent. After questioning your level of intelligence, they will isolate you from the English speaking society. After isolation from society, you become free from society’s perceptions but when you internalize the perceptions made by the dominant society, you lack confidence in yourself and withdraw from the dominant society. This withdrawal can have negative effects on your identity and self-esteem. Therefore, it is very crucial for the non-English speakers to strive towards proper English to solve these issues while maintaining their native languages and culture. Striving towards proper English doesn’t necessarily mean that the non-English speaker has to abandon his or her identity because American society accepts the different types of culture and languages brought forth by the non-natives. However, the non-native speakers should be aware that their culture and language should be kept among themselves because the American society expects all individuals to communicate in Standard English while out in the dominant society. If the non-native doesn’t speak in proper English then the dominant society will form perceptions that will have detrimental effects as I argued.

Works Cited

Elizabeth Bajus

From Soup to Cereal

“The Wicked Witch of the Westside is home,” was the daily parting between my friends and me. This lady I was referring to was choleric, filled with emotional attitude, and extremely rude. However I had to learn how to manage with her because this lady was my mother. Our only dialogue would start by her asking the same question:

“Did you eat your soup?”

My stomach would respond, "GROWL, GROWL, GROWL.” My mind would scream, “No, you fool! You make the same nasty soup everyday and look at me; I look malnourished!”

“Yea,” I would finally respond. I laughed knowing she would believe me because I would poor my bowl of poison down the drain.


“A cow is more like it!” I would scream (in my mind of course)! It was not like there was anything else to eat.

“Umm, O.K. ma’am,” I would squeeze through my teeth.

I deliberately responded vaguely because it annoyed her. I loved agitating her; it was my passion and my daily ritual. I would snigger when she made those comments of me not being allowed to eat other food for you would not be able to find anything edible in that household except for of course the most delicious, scrumptious combination ever—milk and cereal.

I think I loved it so much because it was convenient for me. It was easy and quick to prepare. I would fill the bowl up to the top with cereal. Most times it was Cookie Crisps or Fruity Pebbles. If there were none left, I ate any other cereal I could find. I would then pour the chilled milk all over the cereal, making sure I did not miss a spot. I never poured as much milk as cereal because I liked my cereal crunchy. I would devour at least three bowls every night after she went to bed as if I was in some type of race. Sometimes she would catch me in the act and my mother would shout at me and pull my ears.

I refused to eat the contents in that silver rusty pot sitting on the stovetop. It consisted of a greenish, oily liquid with over-boiled pasta which drowned at the bottom of the pot and an unnecessary amount of peas. I was disgusted by the peas because they were the frozen kind, which meant they had no flavor.

My sister would groan and tell me to eat the soup but I disagreed with her. I did not want anything my mother offered me, which was not much because she was lacking in many areas such as love, support, wisdom, comfort; things any child would expect from their mother. She never attended my school functions. She never wanted to participate in the parent-teacher organization. She did not bring in cupcakes to school
on my birthday. She did not care about my whereabouts and could care less about my education. I used to cry but I eventually developed a new emotion which was a perfect addition to my daily ritual - I would laugh at everything.

I must admit, when I was younger, I was pretty rebellious. But I saw everything as an “entertaining adventure.” In most cases, I would not get in trouble because my mother had no time and strength to deal with me. However on one occasion I got in trouble for something I can not recall but it must have been one of the worst act I have ever committed because she almost never cared about what I did. My mother stormed into our house full of rage. She ran to me and started beating me. I tried to show no emotion, so each time she hit me with force. I couldn’t take it anymore. Who was she to care? I shoved her off of me and pushed her with all my force. My mother fell off balance onto the hardwood floor. She was appalled. My stomach was craving. My mind was yelling and for the first time, I screamed.

“You can’t act like a mother when you feel like it”

My mother was lying on the ground, gasping for air because she was crying so hard. I on the other hand had the same emotion that had always made her furious in the past, but not intentionally to make her mad but because I was happy. I felt relieved. I came to the realization that maybe I had to speak my mind. Maybe I had to give my mother a chance.

I helped my mother up and we walked into the kitchen together. She apologized and asked for my forgiveness. I think that was our first family activity together. I laughed an excessive amount that day and I also made her laugh. She passed me a bowl, a spoon, poured some milk and then some cereal (not the exact sequence I would have liked it because I like to pour my cereal first.)

The upgrade from soup to cereal was parallel to the relationship between my mother and me. When I was younger I felt as if our relationship lacked love. I solely faulted my mother but I know I had a disobedient state of mind which contributed to our unhealthy relationship. When she offered me a bowl of cereal it was a symbol of a positive change in my perception. She instantly gave me comfort. Our conversation flowed with ease. She was interested in what I had to say and responded in a caring matter. Our mother-daughter relationship was evolving.

That day in the kitchen was as if we met each other for the first time. I found all the expectation of a mother in her. But the best part was eating a bowl of cereal because this time she was not asleep; she joined me.
Who is Arvid Sato? He is just a regular twelve-year-old kid who has a mom, a dad and three sisters, one of them being me. There seems to be nothing much to say, nothing too exciting to find out about him that you can’t already guess. He’s just a kid, or is he? Many people look at children and see just that, children. Yes, their minds are like sponges and at times they can be the most adorable, cutest and amazing things while at other times they can be the most difficult. That’s just it. Rarely, if ever, is the child’s intellectuality recognized or mentioned. While conducting the interview I found myself surprised and overwhelmed at some of Arvid’s answers to my questions, because they were unexpected. I began the interview with a lack of interest or excitement because I figured that since it was my brother and he was a child there wouldn’t be anything new or interesting that I didn’t already know. But I was wrong. By the end of the interview I felt like I had discovered something new and unknown, my whole view of him and of children in general changed. I used to be one of those people who saw the surface of kids and paid attention to nothing else, but now I know better than to disregard or underestimate a child’s ability to think or connect with the world around us, I will look at them not just as children but also as intellectual beings.

The interview took place over the phone one day to rid the situation of any awkwardness that would appear in person. It started off a little slow but Arvid appeared to be relaxed and interested in answering my questions fully and honestly. He went right along with the interview just as anyone would in a regular conversation. I found it very pleasant as well as surprising that he was so comfortable with the whole thing. Arvid was in the comfort of his own home, which could have been the reason for this nonchalant attitude but, by the answers he gave to some of my questions it seems to be who he is. For example, when asked to describe himself, he said he was “nice, cool once you meet me, a good student (when I puts my mind to it), athletic, outgoing (down for anything) and lazy.” The way he answered the rest of the questions contribute to that thought as well. Many of the things in his self description also reinforce the answers that he gave for other questions such as being athletic and so on.

When you look at Arvid it doesn’t seem that he is only twelve because he looks like a big boy. He is about five foot five inches tall, which is taller than me, he has big shoulders, strong arms and legs and a big body in general. This may be the reason why he likes sports and considers himself athletic, because he fits right into that category. One specific sport he mentioned was basketball. When asked what his hobbies where, he said basketball because he was good at it. He also mentioned basketball in his self description; before he said athletic he used basketball and sports to describe himself. As if that wasn’t enough to show how much he liked basketball, when I asked him about the noise I was hearing in the background he told me
that he was playing with a basketball, a statement that made us both giggle. In addition to that, besides
describing his parents as “nice and kind people” he said that something that made him think of his mother
was playing basketball because she once had told him that she used to be good at it. He unconsciously proved
that his hobby has a lot to do with who he is and everything he does. He acts the way he described himself.

Before I asked him to describe himself, I asked him about school and what he was learning. He answered
that he was learning math, writing, reading and social studies. He said that some of it was hard and when I
asked why he said because he was not paying attention. This relates to his later answer on how he is lazy. In
school he doesn’t get the grades he should because he is too lazy to pay attention and do his work as a lot of
kids are at that age. Unlike some of those kids, however, he understands the importance of his education. He
showed this understanding when he said that he is learning what they teach in school because he is going to
need it in the future. This proves that he really might be a good student when he puts his mind into it and
that even though he is lazy, he is smart. When the topic of role model came up it was very touching and
inspiring for me. He said that I, his sister, was his role model because he wants to make it to where I am, in
college. As the interview progressed I saw how smart he really was and how well his mind worked. He
showed a lot of depth within his responses and his mature attitude.

He used the word “outgoing” when describing himself and then said that he was “down for anything” in
reference to that term. I found it impressive when he said that. I asked him if he had a best friend and
although he hesitated to say yes at first he told me that he did and that they were best friends because the boy
was not like everyone else, he was cool and he could talk to him about anything. This is the stage when young
children start making bonds with other children and form what they feel are “true friendships.” He is
obviously growing up and he is at the stage where it shows most. As mentioned earlier he described his
parents as “nice and kind people” and he also described himself as nice, demonstrating that he can relate to
his parents and that he feels influenced by them. He also feels their love; he said he knows they love him
because they tell him. He is what you would call a “good kid.” He might be a little rough sometimes but what
kid isn’t. He proves himself to be a kind hearted-kid who has a good head on his shoulders. When he was
answering these questions I felt his sincerity and the gentleness in his answers. With a little exaggeration, he is
like a wrestler who looks big, tough and scary but, when you treat him to dinner and give him the time of day
you can see how nice, gentle and sensitive he really is.

The last three questions made him shine as an astute and caring individual. What is your perfect world? I
asked him and he said one where he could say anything he wants without guns or violence against him. He
also said a world in which “people stop being bad- concentrate on what they have to do and nothing else”
referring to school and using the example of “instead of going to school to meet girls, to go to learn.” His
perfect world would also have a better president. When I asked him why he said a better president, he said
that the president was “making bad choices with Iraq and doing nothing for people that don’t have money.” I
was shocked to hear this come out of his mouth the way it did. He really meant it and he was sure of what he
was talking about. After that I asked him about places he has been and he talked about Florida and why he liked it. He said it was hot and you could never get bored, there were many things to do. You could talk to someone and play sports all day. I asked about what he wanted to do tomorrow. His answer was to “go somewhere, like the movies or do something because it’s boring.” He is an active child which is why he likes playing sports, going out and being “down for anything.” He sees the opportunity to do the things that interest him in Florida since it’s hot all year round. He added that Florida was “not the worst place to be.”

When I asked him about Bridgeport, his town, he said “not the best place to be.” The funny thing is that, he is right. Problems have been arising in Bridgeport for the past few years. The last question was about his Three Wishes. His first wish was to be rich so he could have everything he wants such as motorcycles and anything you could think of. His second wish was for world peace, and even though it sounds cheesy and corny his explanation was “so that there won’t be so many people that we miss (love) from death.” Finally his last wish was one that hit me hard because it really touched me to see my brother think that way; he asked for “no poor people, so everyone can have something, enough money for what they need.” These three questions resulted as the deepest and the most impacting from the entire interview. They showed his mature intake and knowledge of the world around him; something that I would have never thought could be in him. These last few questions showed his knowledge and awareness of the world around him. When you think of kids, you don’t think that they know about or pay attention to what is happening in the “real world.” As shown in the interview, they see themselves as part of that world and they analyze and create views just as adults do.

This interview allowed me to see my brother in a different way. I see him in a way I never thought I would. I now hold a large amount of respect for him and for other children as well. The phrase “children’s minds are like sponges” is an understatement because children are amazing people; they have the ability to contribute to their environment. Children can understand the world almost like everyone else and sometimes in ways that not many others, even adults, can think of. Childhood is probably the only time when a person’s mind could ever be so incredible because it’s free of anything else to see the world around them. In the documentary A Touch of Greatness, elementary school teacher Mr. Cullum says adults have lost their “feathered caps and wooden swords.” Children still have those caps and swords and therefore see things in a way that adults no longer can. Adults can learn a lot from children just like a children can learn from them.
Genevieve Colinet

Blabber Mouth Controls Her Speech

Being young is not easy for most children. Some want to grow up too fast and others want to be younger than they are. But what really amazes me is when a child knows too much for her own age. My nine-year-old cousin, Cynthia Laguerre, is the child who tries to think on an older level.

Cynthia is 4'8 and weighs about 75 pounds. She has cute rosy cheeks with a light brown skin complexion. She has big, dark brown eyes that never mind their own business. She has a long pair of running legs with a small round belly that can consume food like a monster. Although she may seem cute, she is a very obnoxious child; she projects her voice in an irritating way when nobody listens to her, she ignores you when you tell her to do something or to shut up, she bothers you to the point where you have to lock her out of the room, and she cries herself out of trouble. Other than that, she is a very interesting child with many bright ideas and enthusiastic things to say, and that is the exact reason why I wanted to interview her.

During my interview with Cynthia, we decided to take a stroll in the park. She chose to sit on the swings while I asked her a series of questions. I was surprised at the way she was acting during the interview. Instead of being excited and jumpy (like she normally is), she was very dull and mellow. There was no animation in her actions or her words. This is very unusual for Cynthia because normally she talks way too much and is always being ignored. Now was the time for her to shine and actually have someone listen to her instead of talking relentlessly to herself. I was shocked during the interview because I expected to have a fun and exciting conversation. Presumably, the reason she acted so dull was because felt that that was how a mature person would act.

In the eyes of her elder relatives, Cynthia is known as a sweet and respectful child. To the children of the family, Cynthia is seen as the devil's child. Cynthia is the youngest out of six children ranging from 15-25, but lives in a house that consists of four older girls. It’s understandable why she is spoiled by her parents and ignored by her sisters. She is spoiled because she is the youngest. She gets almost everything her way because she has a way of making her parents feel sorry for her. As she sat down swinging back and forth very slowly, I asked what is it that her parents see in her that's angelic. She straightened her back and spoke as if she had good diction and told me that she obeys her parents and tells them when her sisters are being disobedient. She told me she acts as a spy for her parents because she believes it’s the right thing to do. I can definitely see why she is excluded from her sisters’ get-togethers and conversations.

She is ignored by her sisters because she makes the transition of being accepted into the circle extremely hard. Cynthia told me a story of how she snitched on her sisters for talking to a boy late at night on the phone. She looked so proud of herself when she told me the story. She had a big grin on her face that
went from her left ear to her right ear. I asked her why she found that so amusing, and she said because they got in trouble and she was paid for her duties. I found it quiet interesting that she tattle-tailed on her sisters and constantly wanted to be accepted by them. I saw this as a kind of revenge and threat towards her sisters. It seemed as if Cynthia tried to force them to accept her as a sister and a friend.

Cynthia tried to adapt to her sisters by growing up too fast. She thought hide-and-go-seek was “corny,” unless we said it was cool. She never wanted to stay with the younger kids and always wanted to stick around with the older kids. Even during church, if she could choose where to attend Sunday school, she’d choose to be with the teenagers.

Cynthia was born and raised in a very religious family. She is a 7th Day Adventist and lives in a family that strictly follows the religion. From Fridays at sundown to Saturdays at sundown, they can’t do anything that conflicts with meditation, such as watching TV, listening to music (that’s not gospel), playing outside, shopping etc. They go to church Friday nights, Saturday mornings and nights, and Sunday mornings. Sometimes the church holds prayer sessions for 40 days in a row, and Cynthia’s family attends every single one of them. As she kept that same position on the swing, swinging back and forth very gently as if she was a sophisticated young woman, I asked her how she felt about her religion. She said, “I like my religion but I think it’s too strict. I wish we didn’t have to go to church every Friday night and Saturday night because then I have no time to have fun.” I wondered what she meant by that and she crossed her legs and looked towards me with a very grave look on her face. She said, “Children my age like to have some free time for themselves. The only free time I really have is basically Sunday, because Monday through Friday I’m at school.”

I pity her being at a disadvantage to actually explore the life of a child and have freedom on the weekends where not too many rules apply. Other than the fact that she is limited by her religion, she loves praising the Lord.

When I asked her what her perfect world would be, Cynthia told me “Heaven.” That caught me by surprise because normally, children her age would say they want to be rich and famous and have a big house. Cynthia’s answer was surprising and interesting. I asked her why she thought that. She said, “There will be no sins or wars and everybody would be happy.” While she was telling me about heaven, her face glowed but her tone of voice was still monotone, as if there was no feeling in her words. When she explained heaven to me she said, “Well……. I imagine there to be a lot of trees and animals, but nice animals and churches and Jesus and other people with crowns that has stars on them and stuff like that. Yeah…… hmm. Well, there is going to be a castle probably and it is going to be big. I thought there was going to be a table, but they don’t eat. But the reason I want to go to heaven is to be able to see God.” Cynthia described God as being her savior and father and someone that can’t be described physically. She said all she knows is that He has red eyes. “But no one knows what God looks like because he always has a white gown covering him.” Cynthia seemed very confident about what she believes is a perfect world in her eyes.
Cynthia Laguerre to me seems like a lonely child who doesn’t get all the attention she needs. From what I know of the family, her parents are both very hard workers and her sisters barely have time for her because they’re either in school or working. But I see Cynthia growing up to be an independent woman because she wasn’t able to depend on someone 24/7. She realized as she was growing up that everybody was not going to be able to be there to assist her.

Cynthia has changed my views of children at her age. She proved to me that she can be annoying when she wants but also be cooperative. Although I expected some great and interesting stories that amused her, she ended up giving me a different view of how she looks at life. Cynthia may be obnoxious at times but I realized that it’s unintentional and that I should sympathize. Cynthia is who she is today because of the many factors in her life that affected her.
Rape is defined by Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary as: “unlawful sexual activity and usually sexual intercourse carried out forcibly or under threat of injury against the will usually of a female or with a person who is beneath a certain age or incapable of valid consent” (Merriam-Webster, 2005-2006). It is interesting that when raped is described; it usually indicates that it is unwanted sexual intercourse against the will of a female. Men can also be victims of rape and the fact that only women victims are recognized, plays into the fact that many men don’t admit to being raped. In the play, M. Butterfly, written by Hwang, Rene Gallimard is a victim of rape. When Gallimard was younger, his friend Marc set him up with a girl named Isabelle who ended up “bouncing up and down on his loins” (Hwang, I. xi. 1313). I think that this was rape because he never gave consent to this situation; Marc was the one that initiated it and then assumed that Gallimard enjoyed this experience. Because of this rape, Gallimard lived most of his life feeling less of a man than any other. This led to his feelings of having no power and eventually led to his self-destruction at the end of the play. This paper will discuss how Gallimard’s rape and feelings of having no power led to his self-destruction.

When Gallimard had his first sexual experience, it happened with Isabelle. This was not a planned event or one that he gave consent to. Gallimard and Marc speak about this experience and he implies that he did not give his consent,

Gallimard: And in the middle of all this… I thought, ‘God is this it…’
Marc: You didn’t have a good time?
Gallimard: No, that’s not what I ---I had a great time! (Hwang, I. xi. 1313)

During this dialogue, Gallimard hints to Marc that he didn’t really give consent to the experience; he therefore didn’t enjoy it. But when Marc implies that maybe there was something wrong with Gallimard if he didn’t like it, Gallimard quickly changes his mind and tells Marc that he had a “great time.” The pause in this dialogue indicates that Gallimard had started to say something, but when Marc implied that Gallimard should have enjoyed it, he quickly rephrased his sentence. This shows a typical reaction from a man that has been raped. Researchers say that, “Men are taught that they have to be strong, and when they are overpowered, or gang raped there is nothing they can do, so they feel like they are not men…” (http://www.umm.maine.edu/resources/beharchive/bexstudents/RosaLinscott/rl310.html). Gallimard, being a man, may have felt uncomfortable admitting that he was raped or even indicating it, because as a man he needs to carry himself as a strong individual. When Gallimard was younger, women didn’t even give him the time of day so he had to act more of a man than any other, so that he could convince himself and Marc that he was a man and was able to make women fall for him. This was the reason that Gallimard may not
have admitted that Isabelle raped him; he didn’t want Marc to think that he wasn’t a man. In this situation, Gallimard did not ask Marc to set this up,

**Gallimard:** You were the only one who ever believed me.

**Marc:** Well there’s a good reason for that. *(Beat.)* C’mon. You must’ve guessed.

**Gallimard:** You told me to wait in the bushes by the cafeteria that night. The next thing I knew, she was on me. Dress up in the air.

**Marc:** She never wore underwear. *(Hwang, I. xi. 1313)*

Marc was forceful in this situation by tricking Gallimard into meeting him at a certain place knowing that he wasn’t going to be there and that Isabelle would. If Marc knew that Isabelle wasn’t “innocent” why would he plan on having Gallimard “meet” him there? As a man, Gallimard let this happen. Marc decided that he would tell Gallimard to wait for him near the bushes of the school and he would invite Isabelle. It was then that Isabelle jumped Gallimard and had her way with him. Gallimard, being a man caught in a “sexual” situation, had no choice but to let it happen. “Sometimes when the perpetrator is a woman, the boy might fear that people will ridicule him for being sexually abused by a woman” *(http://www.umm.maine.edu/resources/beharchive/bexstudents/RosALinscott/rl310.html)*.

Also, I believe that Gallimard was raped because an instance occurred when he became sexually impotent. Sexually impotent means “unable to engage in sexual intercourse because of inability to have and maintain an erection” *(http://www.m-w.com/dictionary/impotent)*. After the rape, Gallimard was not able to function properly when tempted in a sexual way. He didn’t feel the feelings that any other man would feel when a woman is presenting herself in a provocative manner.

**Girl:** I leave my blinds open and the lights on.

**Gallimard:** I’m shaking. My skin is hot, but my penis is soft. Why…

**Girl:** I can’t see you. You can do whatever you want.

**Gallimard:** I can’t do a thing. Why? *(Hwang, I. v. 1302)*

In this scene, Gallimard is watching a pin up girl. Watching her through her window is a bit of an excitement for Gallimard, but for some reason his penis does not get hard. The quote explains that he feels excited, but his sexual organ is not receiving the message. This was an after effect of the rape. “Survivors of rape suffer from Rape Trauma Syndrome. Symptoms include loss of appetite, sleep disturbance, nightmares, extreme phobias… and sexual dysfunction” *(http://www.slcc.edu/hw/level2pages/rape.htm#Men%20Raping%20Men)*. During the rape, Gallimard had no say in what happened when his sexual emotions were taken from him. As a result, he wasn’t able to feel the normal feelings that he would have felt when he becomes sexually aroused. When a man loses his impotence he may feel less of a man and somewhat powerless.
It is not unusual for a man who has been raped to feel powerless and to try their best to try to gain this power that they think they have lost. To try to regain this power, men try to take advantage of a weaker person. While having an affair with Song, Gallimard “tests” Song’s interest and his power over her,

**Gallimard:** … and then the letter that finally concluded my experiment.

**Song:** I am out of words. I can hide behind dignity no longer. What do you want? I have already given you my shame. (Hwang, I. xii. 1314).

When Song explained to Gallimard that she gave him all of her shame, Gallimard decided that it was wrong to treat her like that but he turned to Marc for advice, which told him that he was “crazy.” As a result, Gallimard was convinced that he had Song in the palm of his hand. Also, researchers state, “Men might question their sexual preferences and their sexual identity” ([http://www.umm.maine.edu/resources/beharchive/hexstudents/RosaLinscott/rl310.html](http://www.umm.maine.edu/resources/beharchive/hexstudents/RosaLinscott/rl310.html)). The rape made Gallimard question his sexual identity, “I don’t like the way that she calls me ‘friend.’ When a woman calls a man her ‘friend,’ she’s calling him a eunuch or a homosexual” (Hwang, I. xii. 1314). Throughout the play, Gallimard feels that he has to prove that he is a man. When speaking to the audience about his situation with Song he says, “Toulon knows! And he approves! I was learning the benefits of being a man. We form our own clubs…and celebrate the fact that we’re still boys” (Hwang, II. iii. 1318). His manliness is also challenged when Helga tells him that he has to go get checked to see if he is able to produce a child. He refuses and says that there could be nothing with the both of them,

**Gallimard:** Why? So he can find that there’s nothing wrong with the both of us?

**Helga:** Rene, I don’t ask for much. One trip! One visit! And then, whatever you want to do about nothing! But go!

**Gallimard [to Song]:** I feel like God himself is laughing at me if I can’t produce a child

**Gallimard [to us]:** Dr. Bolleart? Of course I didn’t go. What man would?

(Hwang, II. vi. 1321). Gallimard feels that his manliness was challenged with even the mere thought that he couldn’t produce a child. Any man’s ego would be a bit bruised if his wife hinted that he was sterile. Gallimard, being traumatized with the fact that he was less of a man than any other, was even more bruised. Gallimard’s manliness is also challenged when he meets Renee. When he met Renee he felt that he had lost his power as a man because she was the one who proposed the affair that he had with her.

**Renee:** Are you married?

**Gallimard:** Yes. Why?

**Renee:** You wanna… fool around?

*Pause.*

**Gallimard:** Sure. (Hwang, II. vi. 1322).

By deciding to have an affair with Gallimard even though he was married, it is implied that Renee was a woman that knew what she wanted. On the other hand, she may have come off too forceful. This may
have felt as a challenge of gender to Gallimard, so he accepted. During this affair, he felt challenged again when Renee started having a conversation regarding Gallimard’s penis,

   Renee: You have a nice weenie…
   Gallimard: Oh. Well, thank you. That’s very…
   Renee: But most girls just don’t come out and say it, huh?
   Gallimard: And also what did you call it?
   Renee: Oh. Most girls don’t call it a ‘weenie,’ huh…
   Gallimard: This was simply not acceptable. (Hwang, II. vi. 1323-1324).

In this scene, Gallimard felt that his manhood was challenged because Renee was very outspoken and vulgar. Gallimard is not used to listening to women speak to him in that matter, so he felt uncomfortable. He simply thought that the way she was acting was “unacceptable.” A woman had never challenged Gallimard. Song waited on him hand and foot and never defied his authority. So when Renee challenged him and tried to have power over him, he was shocked that a woman would act like that towards him. I think that he thought that this was unacceptable because he felt that he wasn’t being a man by not having power over her and couldn’t control the way that she was speaking.

When a person is raped, many aspects of their lives make a drastic change. In Gallimard’s case, his whole life took a drastic change when he lost his job and the love of his life. Gallimard’s whole world is taken from under his feet when he gets transferred back to France,

   Gallimard: And somehow the American war went wrong too. Four hundred thousand dollars were being spent for every Viet Cong killed…why were the Vietnamese people giving in? Why were they content instead to die and die and die again? (Hwang, II. ix. 1330)

Gallimard is shocked that his prediction of the outcome of the war has been wrong. Gallimard took Song’s advice and made his decisions based on what she told Gallimard that her people were feeling. Because of this, Gallimard told his captain that the Vietnamese people were going to give up the fight soon, but it didn’t happen this way. Because of this bad decision, Gallimard gets transferred,

   Toulon: Congratulations, Gallimard…not a promotion. That was the last time. You’re going home…
   Gallimard: I’m being transferred…because I was wrong about the American war?
   Toulon: …In general, everything that you have predicted in the Orient…just hasn’t happened (Hwang, II. ix. 1330).

In Toulon’s eyes, Gallimard just gave him the wrong information. Being a leader, he had to do what he had to do to keep his people from losing the war. Gallimard was shocked because he really thought that the information that Song was giving him was completely true. In addition, another factor in Gallimard’s destruction was the reality of knowing that Song wasn’t his butterfly and that she was really a man. His emotions are depicted to the audience in this manner,
**Gallimard** [to us]: This is the ultimate cruelty, isn’t it? That I can talk and talk to anyone listening, it’s only air—too rich a diet to be swallowed by a mundane world… I once loved, and was loved by, very simply, the Perfect Woman” (Hwang, II. xi. 1334).

Gallimard is brought back to reality from his fantasy that Song was his perfect woman. By realizing that she was indeed a man and that he was just being used to get information, Gallimard’s fantasy world was shattered. All of his adulthood, Gallimard was in a fantasy world where he was loved by a beautiful woman who loved and cared for him like his own wife didn’t. By being thrown into the truth, Gallimard’s whole fantasy became nothing more than that, a fantasy. After this event, Gallimard loses all of his power and committed suicide.

**“Gallimard**: Death with honor is better than life…life with dishonor. The love of Butterfly can withstand many things—unfaithfulness, loss, even abandonment…” (Hwang, III. iii. 1341). Here, Gallimard reaches his ultimate end and takes his own life in an attempt to reach his fantasy again. If it weren’t for his early rape, Gallimard would not have been susceptible to all of these mishaps and never would have entered the realm of Madame Butterfly.

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Breanna Evans

Be All That You Can Be!

Hello class! My name is Breanna and I am a student at the University of Connecticut. That is a college where I work and study all of the time. How many of you like to read and do work? How many of you want to go to college and/or become famous? You all should want to be all that you can because you all have bright futures. I know a girl that knew someone that wanted to be a star basketball player in the NBA. She told me that everyday he would say “I’m going to be a great ball handler, dunker, and shooter” of course. He always believed in himself, arguing with anyone; child or adult, that opposed his plans. He would tell them in a respectful manner, that they would see him one day on the television and that they would kiss his feet to get a ticket to see his games. “You haters are going to beg and plead to touch my hand,” he would yell as they called him conceited. Conceited means that he thought he was better than everyone else. He wasn’t conceited though, he was very confident. My friend said that one day he became everything that he said he would and he plays for the Chicago Bulls. I think his name was Omeka something?

There was this other boy I knew and his name was Brandon. He told me about this boy he grew up with that always worked hard in school with plans to become a doctor. Brandon said that his friend “Frankie the Doctor” would tell the class that he would be the first person in his family to go to college, get a degree and become a doctor at a local hospital where they needed the help. Brandon, my friend who told me this, said that one day he broke his fingers playing on the monkey bars with his nephew and he went to the emergency room. You all should be careful when you play at the park! But anyway, Brandon said he was waiting to be seen by the doctor when he saw his old buddy Frankie. Frankie was a doctor and he wore a white button down gown, some white scrubs and a stethoscope hanging over his long skinny neck. His name tag read “Dr. Frank Demarco” and he looked as if he knew exactly what to do. Well at least that is what Brandon told me. Dr. Frank used to be a kid just like you guys and he became who he wanted because he set his mind to it! With that said I want to tell you all about this last story to help motivate you to set goals in life. To motivate means to help you want to do things that you normally do not do but you will need to do to be those sports stars and doctors.

The last thing I wanted to tell you was about this place I read about in class earlier today. In this town, far away, there are people that force the children to work hard to be “somebody”, or else. I think the town was in Ireland, and the people took everything so serious. The adults thought up an idea to influence their children not to become beggars and bums in the streets. The parents did not want to see their kids suffer to get through life without money or food, which is also known as poverty, so they pinkey swore to do something about it. The parents swore to sell their children so the really rich people could eat them. Yes you
heard me correct, the people in that town would cook the children that took too long to decide what they
would do in life. Rich people eat all kinds of crazy things like squid and raw fish and even poor babies. They
found these things to be tasty and would pay parents big money for their children. Eventually kids worked
really hard to avoid being eaten. This helped to eliminate a lot of social problems in that town. Poor people
are looked down upon by the rich and fights and wars are fought all the time over “inequality” battles. It is
never a good thing to be poor or raise children in a poor surrounding, so you all should think about those
things before you grow up and it is too late. Oh yea by the way, I heard some of your parents talking about
how they had read the same story that I did in class and they seemed very interested in how Mr. Swift
suggested that parents cooked and seasoned their children.

Now do you all see how important it is to work hard to become successful? In other countries, children are
expected to set positive goals and follow every rule made in their houses or they suffer great consequences.
Now I want to ask you all how bad could it be to have to clean your room everyday? When you think about
it, it can’t be too bad when kids are consumed with steak sauce, vegetables and white rice simply because they
don’t make decisions fast enough. If I were you guys I would set a goal to become someone. What is the
worse that can happen? And do you think that is any worse than being a family’s dinner?
Hip-hop is not just music it’s a way of life. It’s the way you walk, talk, act, and view the world. To me it gives a poetic freedom to those who need voices, to tell people of their experiences and bad choices. It’s an expression of ones self lyrically, spiritually trying to paint a picture vividly for those who walk around with animosities about different cultures, races and communities. Sadly hip-hop’s meaning has been slain and crucified by those who know that sex sells and exploit it into innocent children taking away their world of fairy tales. As music keeps on evolving the world keeps revolving, music from east west north and south come together and are filtered through unique MC’s mouths. Causing for our future generations to have open minds and not believe that all music but hip-hop are just abominations. Although it’s changing our youth’s minds, the present does not show all good signs, of what the future holds by degrading women as if they were being sold. The ever changing hip-hop genre is influencing the youth many believe it to be a music revolution others consider it to be obtuse.
Melanie Marante

In Her Feminine Shoes

My interview with Shanice Acevedo took place in a one-family home in Waterbury, Connecticut. The home has three bedrooms, one bathroom, a living room, a kitchen, and a spacious basement that was converted into a master bedroom. Shanice lives with her parents and two brothers. Ten-year-old Shanice is the middle child in her home; her younger brother is five and her older brother is thirteen. As I walked into her room, I was surrounded with lavender walls and a white, metal bedroom set complete with a headboard, nightstand, and dresser with a half-circle mirror attached. On the very top of her lavender walls was an off-white border that had decorations of little fairies and feminine words, such as princess, glamour, friendship, and best-friends in bold, lavender and pink colors. She had a wooden floor that appeared to be swept and buffed to a strong shine. Her twenty-one inch television set was directly to the right of her bed. Her bed was neatly made and coordinated well with the lavender walls and border. To the left of the bed was a comfortable-sized closet covered with a pink curtain that was held by a wooden stick and floated off the floor.

Anyone would say that this young girl was well-equipped and possibly spoiled out of her mind by owning such an organized and coordinated room. Her closet was overloaded with tons of jeans, shirts, underclothes, and sneakers. There were dozens of Bratz dolls stacked up on her shelves still safely in their boxes. On top of her bed and along her nightstand and dresser were dozens of different shapes, sizes, and colors of Winnie-the-Pooh Bear. There were a row of books neatly placed side by side on another shelf on the wall. Directly in the middle of her dresser were a mini boom box and a small case of cds with various artists ranging from Destiny’s Child to 3LW. My immediate instinct was that my little cousin, Shanice, was growing up to become a girly-girl. She loves make-up, glitter, clothes, shoes, and hair accessories. However, only a few years ago, she was unable to distinguish her true feminine side. She grew up with two brothers and a few male cousins around her age. All of her female cousins were either seventeen-years-old and above or five-years-old and younger. Shanice has an older step-sister named Rita, who is sixteen-years-old. However, Rita lives across the country in Washington State and only comes to Connecticut during the summertime. Rita and Shanice do not always see eye to eye on things and almost always end up arguing on a daily basis. As Shanice grew older, she tired of being shunned by the boys and realized that she will become her own person and get involved in girl things. But first, Shanice had to learn the truth about her childhood.

For many years, Shanice believed that her mother’s husband was her birth father. Shanice Marie Acevedo was born in Mayaguez, Puerto Rico on February 1, 1996. Shanice’s birth father went to her first birthday party and never saw her again. Shanice’s mother, Rosie, departed the beautiful island to start a new
life with my uncle, Joseph, in Connecticut. Joseph was the only man that Shanice knew as her father. Shanice was told the devastating truth about her birth father by her mother at the young age of eight. Ever since the truth was told, Shanice never felt the same, however, she still considered my uncle to be her one and only father. Shanice secretly had sensed that she had always been treated different from Joseph’s three other children and soon she realized why she felt so distant. Reality struck Shanice hard and she began to distance herself from her family. She felt deserted, frightened, and deceived. However, her new discovery also helped her explore the female within. She looked up to her mother to become that female role model for her. She began to spend more time with her mother and rely on her for everything. She would closely watch Rosie apply her make-up and do her hair. She would follow her mother around the house and help her clean as much as possible. Shanice also loved to help her mother cook dinner and set up the table for the entire family. Shanice believes her mother is the definition of a woman.

Role models are extremely important in a child’s life. Children are extremely particular when they examine their role models. A child will look carefully at their role model’s personality, behavior, physical appearance, and body movements, so that they can become that person in a sense. In Shanice’s case, her mother’s daily actions helped Shanice to mold herself into the person that she wants to be in life. Ever since her revelation about her true paternity, Shanice seems to be more in touch with her feminine side with the help of her role model. Over the years, Rosie has been able to teach Shanice how to shower correctly, match out-fits, apply makeup and do her own hair. Therefore, as I sat and viewed her girlish room, it revealed a lot about her character without direct words being spoken.

I made myself comfortable on her bed and told her to sit next to me so that I can commence the interview. She revealed a small smile from the side of her mouth; a reaction she does when she is nervous. I realized that if she is nervous she will hold back information and I will not be able to receive the complete truth in her answers. Therefore, I calmly restated the situation to her and told her that her answers are completely confidential. I started the interview with a couple of simple ice-breaker questions, such as favorite colors, subjects, sports, and hobbies.

“My favorite colors are red and red-orange. I love science, math, and grammar. I like to run track and play basketball. I enjoy riding my bike, talking on the phone, and hanging out with close friends.”

She became more relaxed when she realized how easy the questions were. As I continued to have girl-talk with her, I noticed that she has stood completely still on her bed with the exception of fidgeting with her orange, Old Navy flip-flops. In the beginning of the sessions, her eyes were wandering around the room, but as I made her feel more at ease, she began to give me direct eye contact. As soon as I realized she was giving me her complete trust, I focused more on the difficult and more important questions. I wanted her to reveal her inner feelings to me about each specific topic. I began by asking her if she likes her mom and questioned their relationship with one another.

“Yeah, I like my mom,” she simply stated. My mom is like my friend but I respect her.”
She also admitted that, at times, she tends to pester her mother and realizes that she upsets her mother by doing so. However, instead of arguing, Shanice and her mother sit down and talk about the issue due to the mutual respect they have for one another.

“I get mad sometimes and I tell her how I feel. She says sorry to me but what can I do; she is still my mom, right?” she giggled.

I continued with the family related questions to see if I would strike a dislike between her and one of her family members; I succeeded. I asked her to describe her brothers and the relationship she has with both of them. Her face scrunched up into a snotty stare, as she thought back on all the mean things her brothers did to her.

“My older brother, Joey, would snatch the remote control from me as I am watching T.V. and change the channel because he says he is older than me.”

Obviously, she has a deep dislike for her older brother; although she made it clear to me that she loves both her brothers at the end of the day. She also mentioned that her younger brother is “a spoiled brat that gets whatever he wants from my parents because he is still a baby.” However, he is always asking her to interact with him and play his games.

“I am a girl and he wants me to play boy toys with him and I am not into toys. I hate toys, I can say that. I don’t play Barbie or anything. I stopped playing with Barbie when I was like five.”

With this statement, I automatically realized that she desires to reach the stage of adulthood more rapidly because she looks up to an adult as her role model. Her phase with playing with boys has passed and she is now using her femininity as an excuse not to participate in boyish activities.

The next topic that became the climax throughout the interview was the situation with Shanice, her father, and her step-sister, Rita. I asked Shanice about her relationship with her father. At first, she was describing all the positive things, such as taking her places and spending quality time with her. However, she then contradicts herself when she goes into more detail about their relationship.

“Sometimes my father ignores me and he pays more attention to his other children than me. So I get really fed up and I try to talk to him but he is ignorant. When I try to tell him how I feel, he brushes me off.”

Shanice feels as if she can not compare to her father’s other children. She feels that she does not receive the same love as they do.

“My older sister, Rita, doesn’t like me that much. She is really spoiled and she gets on my nerves. I try and talk to her too, but she brushes me off a lot. On my father’s side, my aunts don’t treat me very good and they don’t take me anywhere. My step-brother and my step-sister…yeah… they take them out, like, a lot.”

At this point, Shanice began to cry and I ended my interview. To my understanding, she feels rejected by her father, her siblings, and her father’s side of the family. Therefore, she holds a stronger relationship with her mother and views her as her role model. Shanice is basically trying to differentiate
herself from her siblings since she isn’t receiving the same respect they are getting. Therefore, her true self is being revealed and her femininity is released.

I knew all children were going through crisis in their lives, but I had no idea that it can come as such a young age with such serious issues involved. At the age of ten, I was more worried about what difficult homework assignments I would receive the next day at class. However, children are facing more complicated life issues at earlier ages. I could only imagine what complex issues will arrive in the near future for my own younger siblings.
Shaneca Napier

Brandon’s Time To Shine

At first I had a problem getting this little brat to sit still and do this interview, but after begging, pleading and bribing I got the little rascal to do it. To tell you the truth this was not an easy task. When we started out, he would not keep still for one minute. At one point I thought about giving up and taking a zero on this assignment, but everything worked out for the best.

Brandon Germaine Napier was born on December 8, 1995, at 1:15 am on a cold winter morning. His grandmother and godmother were present during the time of delivery. His father and sister were there, just not allowed in the delivery room. Someone had to watch the 7-year-old sister to be. He weighed in at an astounding 10lbs 3 ounces, 21 inches, without his ear measurement. I call him Dumbo, like the cartoon elephant, because of the size of his ears. Those things are humongous. He was the life of the house. That boy got more attention than the Jackson 5 in their prime. I use to get jealous a lot, but eventually I got over it.

Brandon is now 10 years old and he loves it. He spends most if not all his time playing with his Play Station 2, or he is outside running up and down. His favorite occupation, however is drawing. He is now in the fourth grade and he is overly excited about making it to the fifth grade. The main reason for his excitement is because he was having some trouble earlier on in the year. He had a hard time focusing in class; his attention span is very short. The No Child Left Behind program that Bush established requires students to get a certain average on a standardized test or they are not be promoted. He didn’t think that he could pass the test, but he did it.

He has a lot of fun while he is in school; his favorite subject is gym. As you can see for your self, he is quite the ladies man. According to him, “They can’t keep their hands off me.” I personally don’t believe that, but he also said, “I learn from the best.” We all know who the best is. That’s not all about Brandon.

So far so good, right? Not really. I told you before he could be a little brat when he wants to be. He thinks that the world revolves around him, but who could blame him if that’s the way he is treated? Brandon would get away with just about everything or if he did get in trouble my mother would baby him after scolding him. For example, when he was about 5 years old and we went shopping, he would always pick up a toy and say that he wanted it. By the time we got home that ten dollar toy was broken or he didn’t like it anymore. I remember a time when I was watching T.V and Brandon came into my room and changed the channel. I told him to put it back on what I was watching. He said, “No.” So I got up and changed the channel back to what I was watching. Then he hit me in the head with a shoe. So I hit him back and then he told our mother. She put me on punishment for a couple of weeks. This happened regularly, I think it was just brother and sister rivalry.
He says that there are a few people that he looks up to in his life, and I am proud to say that I am one of them. Everything that I do he wants to do. He said, “I want to be just like you because you are smart and you like to help people out in their time of need and I respect you for that.” He almost made me cry when he said that. I have always known that he would look up to me, considering that I am his only sibling. Since we never really lived with our father and our mother was always working, he spent most if not all his time with me. Sometimes it got to me because I couldn’t do anything without him being around. He said that he hated being away from me for a long period of time because he felt like I was not going to come back. We were together most of the time and basically he dragged me down into whatever trouble that he got into. He is not the kind of kid you would see getting into fights; he was the kind that ran away from a fight, unless it had to do with anything to do with his cousins. Especially the female ones. He is very over protective when it comes to his family.

Brandon is a smart kid. He acts dumb when he wants to, but he is one of the smartest kids in his class. We never knew he could talk until he was about one year old. We were sitting on my grandmother’s porch and he knocked over a glass of water and then he said “SHIT.” Everyone’s head turned and Brandon started laughing. After that little incident he started talking like it was second nature.

He has always excelled in everything that he did once he put his mind to it. He is hard headed. You always have to tell him something more than once for him to listen, but then again what kid listens the first time you say something? He was and is a special kid, but it depends on how you define special. I told you before that I make fun of his ears because they are big. He on the other hand says that he doesn’t care that they are big because, “Will Smith and Martin Lawrence have big ears and you know what else they got that I am going to have?” “What.” I asked. He said, “Money.” I said, “So” he said “People with big ears also have big bank accounts.” I believe him because he does love money and he knows how to save his money.

Brandon is more of the artistic kid rather than being book smart. Don’t get me wrong, he can get down in those books when he is ready. He just really prefers drawing. He’s been that way for the longest time; there is just something about drawing that takes him away from it all. “I like to draw because then I don’t think about anybody. If I am mad I forget about what I was mad about.” Brandon is the type of person who likes to express himself through some form of art, whether it is through poetry, rapping, writing, or drawing. He feels like that is the only way people can understand him or communicate with him. Besides art, Brandon loves to play sports, probably because he is with me most of the time, and I am always playing some kind sport. He doesn’t really have the body to play certain sports like football, but he loves them all.

Brandon will always be my favorite little brother, not because he is my only brother, but because of the things that we experienced together, like our parents getting divorced, living in Georgia, and our only grandfather’s death. I am sure we have a lot more things in life to experience together and we will be there to help each other and give each other all the support we need. He is now ten years of age and he doing his thing. He has recently been having an attitude, probably because I am in college and I don’t have any time to
spend with him like I used to. He says that he still loves me but he wants me to come home and stay there. Although he is a pain at times, I do miss him and wish that he was my twin, but things don’t always work out that way. I look out for him, but I am sure that by the time he is fifteen it is going to be the other way around. As a matter of fact, I think he has already started.
The Babe Lollipop
By: Tuong Ngu

* (Some content may be stupid and pathetic because it is just random things the author thinks about. But the author does not care about your opinions anyways because well he doesn’t.)

** (For those who were offended by the comment above this comment, we are terribly sorry. Some guy that likes moose doesn’t like the author and wrote it.)
There is a thing that we called that tells who you are and how much money you have. At the same time, it is a really annoying and stupid. That thing is called social class. Social class means how much money you have. So....
If you have money, you are rich because you can buy anything in the world. If you don’t have money, you are...
Theses people. Here is a pyramid next to the poor lad of how the pyramid is divided. Now to the story.

Could someone help me with the back? I can't see.

RICH

Average

Somewhat poor

Low income

Poor gadgets

Poor guys
This is George Orwell School, where kids are divided by how much money you have. The school is ruled by mostly rich kids, who think they are better than everyone else. But the richest kid, not to mention the worst bully, is Sam England.
Sam England was once a bully in a private school called Thirteen Colonies. Sam England stop bully when the kids in Thirteen Colonies dress as Indian and threw his favorite juice into the toilet. Not only that, they took his desk called Ticonderoga, corner him in a playground called Yorktown, and cry like a little baby.
Anyways, Sam England returns to bully poor kids, who have an allowance less than five dollars, in George Orwell School. He:

Kicks them Rob them Wedgey them and finally put this wet finger, that was in his mouth, into poor kid’s ear.
One day, a clever immigrant name Joe Irish made friends with Rag Dog, Hill-Billy Sam, Fred Potato, Roman Rabbit, and finally Dirty kid. All six kids have no allowance. Sam England reads the sentence before this and finds out that these kids have no money. So, he:

Kick Them  Wedgey Them  Rob them  and... you know the rest.
One day, clever Joe Irish thought of a plan to freak out Sam England because of his bullying. The next day, Joe Irish brought a weird lollipop that has a color of peach and somewhat red surrounding it. Sam England tried to rob the lollipop but Joe is too clever for Sam and said, “This lollipop is the most delicious lollipop I ever taste. I made it myself,” said Joe. Sam said, “Let me taste it and I’ll decide if it taste good.” Sam took one lick of the lollipop and it has this amazing taste he ever tasted. He loved the lollipop.
So, Sam said, “How you make it so good? Give me the recipe or else.” But clever Joe said, “No, I will not give you the recipe.” Joe walked away from Sam. For over five days, Sam has bugged Joe for the secret recipe. Sam notices that each of Joe’s friends didn’t came to school.
On Monday, Rag Dog was not here. On Tuesday, Hill Billy Sam was absent. On Wednesday, Fred Potato didn’t bother to come. On Thursday, Roman Rabbit didn’t come to school. On Friday, Dirty Kid was absent. But Sam England didn’t care as Joe brings in the same lollipop everyday.
Finally, Sam England said, “PPPLLLLLEEEEEEAAASSSEEEE! Let me see the recipe.” Joe Irish thought about it for a second and said, “Okay, here you go.” Joe handed over the recipe to Sam. Sam looked at the recipe, titled “Babe Lollipop” and once he saw it, he was shocked.
I forgot, the day when Sam England left the school Rag Dog, Fred Potato. Hill Billy Sam, Roman Rabbit, and Dirty Kid came back to school and looked for Sam. They said to Joe, “Sorry about our week absent because we were suspended for throwing paint into the principal’s car. Where’s Sam?” Joe Irish chuckled. “Let’s say I gave him a taste of his own medicine.” The Real End.
Sandra Owens

Power is a Great Thing: Too Bad Gallimard Never Had It

Last time I checked, “knowledge is power,” and in M. Butterfly power is control. In the story power equals man and Gallimard goes through a journey to become a man since he was never considered a “real man.” After all his best friend teased him because he didn’t have much experience with woman and never cheated on his wife. Gallimard ends up playing the part of Pinkerton in the opera Madame Butterfly and tries to turn his life into that fantasy character: being able to dominate women and sleep around. At the beginning of the play Gallimard starts out very reserved and intimidated by women. Over time his attitude begins to change when he finally meets a woman named Song who was the perfect example of the type of woman Marc said Gallimard should have. She fulfilled Gallimard’s every need sexually as well as doing whatever he may have asked. He turns into a selfish womanizer but instead of gaining power he looses it. While Gallimard thinks he is control of Song by living this fantasy life he always wanted really its Song who has the power. She’s the one controlling his fantasy by allowing herself to be dominated.

Biologically speaking Gallimard has all that he needs to be considered man. But when I think of the word “man” I go beyond what’s between the legs. A man is someone who thinks for himself and doesn’t just go along with the crowd. Gallimard starts out with this mentality.

Marc: They stripped Rene… The girls…

Gallimard: What girls? Where do you get them?

Marc: Who cares? The point is they come…Before you know it, every last one of them is stripped and splashing around my pool…their boobs are flapping…you close your eyes and reach out it’s grab, bag, get it…

Gallimard: Marc, I can’t…I’m afraid they’ll say no-the girls.

Marc: …You don’t have to ask…They don’t have to say yes. It’s perfect for a guy like you…

Gallimard: You go ahead…I may come later…

Marc: Wimp,” (Hwang I, IV, 1300).

Even though Gallimard had the perfect opportunity to sleep with a bunch of girls he decided against it. Gallimard wasn’t that type and I respected him for that. Marc was trying to convince Gallimard to go out and by teasing Gallimard he thought that would make him go but instead Gallimard stood his ground and made his decision not go. Putting your foot down and not letting other people influence you to do things you may not want to is really power. As time goes on Gallimard begins to start listening to Marc and tries to be something he’s not.
Gallimard: You told me to wait in the bushes by the cafeteria...next thing I knew, she was on me. Dress up in the air...my arms were pinned to the dirt...I looked up, and there was this woman...bouncing up and down on my loins...I thought, 'God, this is it?'

Marc: You didn’t have a good time...

Gallimard: No, that’s not what I-I had a great time,” (Hwang, I, xi, 1313).

When Gallimard was speaking about his first sexual experience with Marc he was trying to let him know that he was uncomfortable with it. But when Marc got the impression that Gallimard was going to say he didn’t enjoy himself he began to think he was weird so Gallimard just went along and said he had fun, when really he didn’t. He wasn’t honest and was worried about what Marc would think if he told him he didn’t like his first experience. This is where Gallimard decides to become a follower. Gallimard looks up to Marc as sort of role model and even though it’s good to have a role model I don’t think Marc was really the ideal “role model” for Gallimard.

Marc wasn’t the only person that Gallimard followed and used as an example to what power may look like. Gallimard felt that because people were starting to approve of his lifestyle that made him something. “I’m impressed. You had the stamina to go out into the streets and hunt one down. Some of us have to be content with the wives of the expatriate community...We were worried about you, Gallimard. We thought you were the only here without a secret.” (Hwang, II, iii, 1318-1319). Gallimard’s boss Toulon is basically patting Gallimard on the back. He is ecstatic at the fact that Gallimard is coming out of shell and is finally being a rebel. This is peer pressure and instead of Gallimard trying to be his own person and not follow the crowd he was being sucked in. “Toulon knows! And he approves! I was learning the benefits of being a man. We form our own clubs, sit behind thick doors, smoke-and celebrate the fact that we are still boys,” (Hwang, II, iii, 1319). Gallimard is acting like teenager. He is loosing power because he is loosing control of his own life. It's like Gallimard is dying to sit at the popular table at school but never was allowed but then one day he gets a really cool outfit and now everyone wants to be around him. Now that Gallimard is having an affair with this Chinese woman now he is getting more respect from everyone. That may sound good but look at what he had to go through to get this respect. He had do be something he wasn’t which was an adulterer. Gallimard doesn’t have power. He gave it away once he decided to let other people control his thoughts and his opinions.

Gallimard’s lose of power comes into full effect when he meets Song. When he meets this beautiful woman he starts this experiment to see if he can get away with mistreating her. “Over the next five weeks, I worked like dynamo, I stopped going to the opera, I didn’t phone or write her. I knew this little flower was waiting for me to call, and as I wickedly refused to do so, I felt for the first time that rush of power-the absolute power of a man,” (Hwang, I, xi, 1312). This is where his fantasy begins to come true for Gallimard. He thinks now he is officially Pinkerton. In Gallimard’s mind he has control and he is “man.” He found a woman who treats him like a king and that is what he wanted. Not only is this woman perfect but also he can
say that he is having an affair with this woman, which makes things sound even better in his eyes. Funny thing is even though he is living his fantasy he is not the one in control. Really it’s Song who makes this fantasy come true and not just because she is easily dominated the way Gallimard may think but because she is allowing her self to be dominated. Think about when Song first came into the story. She had her own opinions about the opera *Madame Butterfly*.

**Gallimard**: No! I was about to say, it’s the first time. I’ve seen the beauty of the story.

**Song**: Really?

**Gallimard**: Of her death. It’s a…a pure sacrifice. He’s unworthy, but what can she do? She loves him…so much. It’s a very beautiful story.

**Song**: It’s one of your favorite fantasies isn’t it? A submissive oriental woman and the cruel white man. (Hwang, I, vii, 105).

Song has no problem telling Gallimard that she thinks this play has a stupid message. She continues her speech by saying that if the story was about a blonde homecoming queen falling in love and then killing herself for a short Japanese man then everyone would think that she was crazy. Since the opera is just the opposite everyone thinks it’s beautiful. Basically Song had spice and was feisty and spoke her mind. That was when they first met then all of a sudden she changed.

**Song**: Please. Hard as I try to be modern, to speak like a man, to hold a Western woman’s strong face up to my own…in the end I fail…

**Gallimard (to us)**: Did you hear the way she talked about Western women? Much differently than the first night. She does- she feels inferior to them-and to me. Over the next five weeks I worked like dynamo. I stopped going to the opera, I didn’t phone or write her. I knew this little flower was waiting for me to call, and as I wickedly refused to do so, I felt for the first time that rush of power…” (1312).

Song flips the script and starts to allow Gallimard to disrespect and take advantage of her. In Gallimard’s case he feels like his dreams are coming true and that he has he control. The fact that he feels like he has power because he can make Song feel bad shows that he doesn’t have he power she does. Song is allowing herself to be mistreated and if she didn’t allow Gallimard to treat her this way then Gallimard wouldn’t have any control.

Song is proof that Gallimard isn’t as powerful as he thinks he is. Like I said before she allows herself to be dominated. So as long as she lets Gallimard think he is in control then he has power but once she allows her true colors to come out you realize that Gallimard is just the fool... Song had her own agenda all along while being with Gallimard.

**Song**: Tell me- what’s happening in Vietnam?

**Gallimard**: Oh, Butterfly-you want me to bring my work home?

**Song**: I want to know what you know. To be impressed by man. It’s not the particulars that so much as the fact that you’re making decisions which change the shape of the world. (Hwang, II, I, 1317-1318).
Song is smart and knew what she wanted right when she met Gallimard. She had her own tricks up her sleeve. Song was really a spy for China and was used to know what the Americans next move was while they were in Vietnam. This whole time Gallimard was under the impression that she really loved him when really she was using him to get information.

Chin: Okay, see if you can figure out when the Americans plan to start bombing Vietnam…

Song: The Americans will increase troops in Vietnam to 170,000 soldiers with 120,000 militia and 11,000 American advisors.

Chin: How do you remember so much?

Song: I'm an actor. (Hwang, II, iv, 1319-1320).

Here Song is talking to Comrade Chin and letting her know the information that she got from Gallimard about Vietnam. This shows that Gallimard is being used and being used by someone doesn’t show power at all. It is really a sign of weakness because he let his guard down. Gallimard didn’t stop to think that really all of this information he was telling Song was really confidential. Song manipulated Gallimard’s weakness and used it for her own advantage.

Song is an actor and a pretty darn good one at that. She knew exactly how to make Gallimard feel like he was in control when really she was the one controlling everything. She learned how to read Gallimard and understand him. If Gallimard was as powerful as he thought he would have been able to do the same. Gallimard began to have the mentality like Marc, Toulon and Pinkerton.

Gallimard: “And so I embarked on my first extra-extramarital affair…I kept up our affair, wildly, for several months…I believe because of Butterfly. She knew the secret I was trying to hide…she didn’t confront me, threaten, even pout…She would cry, alone, into those wildly soft sleeves, once full of possessions, now empty to collect her tears. It was her tears and her silence that excited me, every time I visited Renee,” (Hwang, II, vi 1324).

When Gallimard had another affair with a woman named Renee he felt like he was the powerful one. He was enjoying the fact that Song was in pain. Knowing that he had this woman crying for him made him feel in control and that was the role Song faithfully played to keep Gallimard “thinking” he was in control.

All in all, Gallimard didn’t have power because he wasn’t too bright throughout this whole play. To have control and power you have to have common sense and that is something Gallimard lacked. That is why it was so easy for Song to manipulate and trick Gallimard because he didn’t seem like much of a thinker.

Song: I’m pregnant. I’m pregnant. I’m pregnant.

Gallimard: I want to marry you! (Hwang, II, vii, 1326).

Song: No…Modesty will get you know where. Flatter yourself, and you flatter me. I’m flattered to decline your offer.

Gallimard (to us): …She went away for seven months…Until the night I received her call,” (Hwang, II, viii, 1328).
Gallimard is stupid. First of all, Song and Gallimard never had sex in a way for her to get pregnant. So for him to believe her just shows how dense he is. Then all of a sudden after seven months then she decided to show with a child in hand. He was happy to know that he was a father but it was all a lie. He never tried to question her about anything. Gallimard was so trapped up in this fantasy world that he doesn’t have enough common sense to think about reality. There is nothing wrong with wanting your life to be like a fantasy worlds because everyone wants to live that “ideal” life. But when you just forget reality all together to live in your fantasy world then something is wrong. He has no power because instead of facing the real world Gallimard hides from it and lets his fantasy take over his mind. Song was the smart cookie in this play. She was able to be the powerful one and the one that really made the desicions. She made it so Gallimard could get comfortable with this fantasy life. She knew his fantasy world would cloud his judgment.

It takes the end of the play for Gallimard to actually take some control. He was able to look the real Song in the face and realize his whole life has really been a lie and a fantasy world.

**Gallimard:** Look at you! You’re a man!

**Song:** I fail to see what’s so funny!

**Gallimard:** You fail to see…I just think it is ridiculously funny that I’ve wasted so much time on just a man!

**Song:** I’m not ‘just a man’…I’m not just any man! I’m your butterfly. Under the robes, beneath everything, it was always me…you adore me.

**Gallimard:** …Get away from me! Tonight, I’ve finally learned to tell fantasy from reality. And, knowing the difference, I choose fantasy… (Hwang, III, ii, 1340).

Gallimard takes some control and gets power. When talking to Song he strikes a nerve by calling Song “just a man.” Song was trying all of her/his manipulating tricks to get Gallimard to admit the he loved him but Gallimard wouldn’t budge. He admitted that he was in love with a woman who was really a man but would never go back to Song because now he knows the real truth. He had no choice but to separate reality and fantasy. He finally has the control. Song is practically begging Gallimard to be in love with him and for once Gallimard isn’t letting others influence his desicions. He takes a stand and says no.

**Gallimard:** Tonight I realize my search is over. That I’ve looked all along in the wrong place. And now, to you, I will prove that my love was not in vain b returning to the world of fantasy where first met her…In public, I have continued to deny that Song Liling was a man…My mistakes were simple and absolute-the man I loved was a cad, a bounder. He deserved nothing more than a kick in the behind and instead I gave him…all my love…Death with honor is better than life…life with dishonor…It is 1988. And I have found her at last…My name is Rene Gallimard-also known as Madame Butterfly. (Hwang, III, iii, 1341).

He finally found the love he always wanted and the power he needed. Gallimard had no power because he let others influence his thinking. On top of that he let Song make a fool out of him in more ways
thank one and he finally was able to flip the script. Song is now the one looking used and manipulated. What he wanted was always right there with in him. He didn’t need Song to be his Butterfly.

Personally, I don’t think killing himself was a good way to show that he gained power. In a sense, he has it because he told Song how he felt and was finally honest with himself. He knew that he was allowing his fantasy life to take over but instead of trying to face reality in the outside world he kills himself. Maybe he had all the power he needed and felt like he didn’t need to live life anymore since he found his Butterfly in himself, but power is facing everything. He faced Song but he still didn’t face reality because he took his life a way to soon.
Maxine Hong Kingston’s aunt committed suicide, but she was not the only one responsible for her actions. Although the village tried to hurt her, her family caused her more harm. She was helpless and on her own throughout her pregnancy. She didn’t want to die, but it was the only way for her to escape from her problems; since she was unable to have someone by her side to comfort and support her. She seemed to be neglected by her own family, because none of them showed any concern towards her marriage. The village only attacked the aunt because they were in need of supplies, but her family disowned her. So when the incident of adultery occurred, she was on her own to face the problems that awaited her.

Kingston’s mother could have tried to help the aunt with her problem when she realized that she was pregnant, but she didn’t. Her mother had said, “I remember looking at your aunt one day when she and I were dressing; I had not noticed before that she had such a protruding melon of a stomach” (Kingston 433). Kingston’s mother did not confront the aunt about her stomach getting bigger. She knew that she was pregnant, but she decided to ignore it, “because [the aunt’s] husband had been gone for years” (Kingston 435). I feel that this should have been more of a reason for her to figure out what was going on with the aunt. Kingston’s aunt was not going to tell anything to anyone in the family, because of the fear of what they would say or do to her. I know that she would not have been able to help the aunt by herself, so she probably would have had to ask for help from another family member. Most likely it would have been her husband, but he disliked his own sister, because he was traded for a girl when he was younger. “They must have all loved her, except perhaps [Kingston’s] father, the only brother who never went back to China, having been traded for a girl” (440). Kingston’s father would not have helped his sister even if he had known the truth about what had occurred because of his experience. The father grew up hating his sister for something that was not her fault. She didn’t have anything to do with the fact that he was traded for a girl, because she wasn’t born when it had occurred. It was as if he felt inferior to his sister. His hate for her allowed him to use ignorance as a way to feel better about the situation. He did not care about what happened to her, or about anything that she did.

This would have made it harder for the mom to help the aunt, but she didn’t make an attempt to help her. She never tried to have a conversation with her because “no one talked sex, ever” (437). She did not have to approach her with the topic of sex. There were other ways in which she could have started a conversation about what was going on in her life. Kingston’s mother could have tried to gain the aunt’s trust. She just figured that there was no possible way for the aunt to be pregnant since her husband was not around. Kingston’s mother had said that the aunt “could not have been pregnant, you see, because her husband had
been gone for years (435), that’s why “no one said anything” (435). Everyone must have figured that she was getting bigger, but it should’ve occurred to someone that her stomach would not be the only body part growing bigger.

I know that Kingston’s mother was not the only person to notice the aunt’s stomach getting bigger. No one tried to acknowledge the fact that there was a problem until the aunt decided to commit suicide. By this time the family was too late, because they had not done anything to help solve the problem. Her family did not defend her when the town had raided their home, and they showed no intent to do so. They were unable to take their time to consider the facts of the events that had really happened in order to lead to the aunt’s pregnancy. Kingston’s family had abandoned her aunt when she needed them the most.

When the village had attacked, the family did not take any action to protect the aunt and her unborn child. They “stood together in the middle of [their] house, in the family hall with the pictures and tables of ancestors around [them], and looked straight ahead” (435). It was as if the family had no problem with what the village had in store for them. They didn’t bother to leave their home and find safety. The village had ruined the home of Kingston’s family, and they had gone there with the intention to hurt the aunt. Then after the village had left, the family “swept up the rice and sewed it back up into sacks” (436). This demonstrates how they neglected the aunt, because they did not have the courtesy to ask her if she or if the baby were alright. They were so caught up with the opinion of the village, that they treated her as an outcast. They did not have any concern towards the child that she was carrying as well. All that they said to her was “Look what you’ve done. You’ve killed us. Ghost! Dead Ghost! Ghost! You’ve never been born” (441). This was a terrible thing to say, especially since the village had already caused her enough trouble. Her family did not show her any sympathy towards the situation that she was in. They did not support her because they felt that she was an embarrassment, but that did not justify the way in which they disregarded her. She may have humiliated the family, but she was still their daughter and they had the responsibility of caring for her. Their verbal abuse led the aunt to run “out into the fields, far enough from the house so that she could no longer hear their voices” (441). Their words led to the aunt’s feelings of torment and wanting to commit suicide. They had given her more of a hardship to deal with. The aunt took the innocent life of her child, which could have been prevented. But the aunt knew that there wouldn’t be anyone to raise her child. If she allowed her child to live, her family would not have taken responsibility to care for it. She questioned “how would [her] tiny child without [a] family find her grave” (442). This led her to think that the child would be better off dead than alive.

Her family had raised her to be a woman who was concerned with her looks, because she liked looking her best. They had raised her as a girl that was “usually beloved, the precious only daughter, spoiled and mirror-gazing because of the affection the family lavished on her” (439). So her family knew that she was a pretty woman, and that she was going to attract attention from men. Her family didn’t consider the fact that there are men who have bad intentions towards women. They didn’t think about the possibility that rape
could’ve caused her pregnancy, because they just assumed that she had cheated on her husband. They believed that she had brought the problem upon herself. They were basically on the village’s side, because they did not their family to have a bad reputation. They wanted the village to blame the aunt for what had happened, because they wanted nothing to do with it. I feel that they probably felt that if they stood up for their daughter, then the village would have questioned their parenting. I don’t think that the village was worried about ruining their reputation, because they were starving. They were in need of supplies, and they saw this incident as an opportunity for them to take advantage of the situation. They were also upset, because they felt that there was no reason to bring another child into the village when they were already starving. Kingston mentioned that “to be a woman, to have a daughter in starvation time was a waste enough” (437). The village didn’t care that she had committed adultery; they just used it as an excuse to break into the family’s home and take food and clothing. The family couldn’t see through this, and so they caused to struggle with her life on her own.

An understanding of the aunt’s suicide is important because it allows us to see the negative effects that a family can have on an individual. Families play an important role in the, both positive and negative, influences that occur within the actions of their family members. The family neglected the aunt, and they abandoned her as if she was stranger. This led the aunt to abandon her reasons for living and raising her child. Maxine Hong Kingston’s family was at fault for her death.

Work Cited
“And I imagine you-my ideal audience”, Gallimard refers to us as his ideal audience in the play M Butterflies, a audience that clearly listens to his side of the story and sees him for who he truly is (Act I, scene III, 1298). For instance at least someone that gives him the chance to speak positively on his own behalf. Allow us to take a step back and look at the audience in which Gallimard indicates as his “ideal audience”. As one perspective it is clearly that the readers of the play is an audience. On the other hand is can be argued that the audience that Gallimard talks about is the people in the story who watch the play “Madame Butterfly.” Through the audience of Madame Butterfly, like the audience of M Butterfly which is the construction of identity, places and things, it is common that these audiences are constructed for a reason which links together the two audience.

The audience that first comes to mind is the audience who reads the play. Gallimard would obviously find this audience closer to his needs because they on the other hand sees his side of the story for who he is in comparison with the newspaper who quotes “A former French dipolmat and a Chinese opera singer have been sentenced to six years in jail for spying for China after two day trial that traced a story of clandestine love and mistaken sexual identity... Mr. Boursicot was accused of passing information to China after he fell in love with Mr. Shi, whom he believe for twenty years to be a woman”(1988). Noticeably that Gallimard is viewed as a unusually person through the eyes of the newspaper and basically, is embarrass in front of the world. Even though this is an audience that gets an incite of Gallimard’s life, however, it is still not his ideal audience. The ideal audience would be his readers, as quoted by Gallimard, “who come to understand and even, perhaps just a little, to envy me”(Act I, scene III, 1298). In this quotes he indicates that those people who ridicules and insult him will never acquire the opportunity to hear the complete story of Gallimard. Which is why he quotes, “Men like that-they should be scratching at my door, begging to learn my secrets! For I, Rene Gallimard, you see, I have known, and been loved by… The Perfect Woman”; further more implying that he has no power here to consider him self as a man, and in fact holds his manhood with his ideal audience, the readers (Act I, scene III, 1298).

Another way one might tend to interpret the ideal audience is the audience that sits in the theater watching this play. This audience on the other hand is in better position to get a better understanding of Gallimard’s world in a more detail version. An audience that can see the reasons as to why he could have been with someone for twenty years and never knew their sexuality. Only through this audience can Gallimard make it his real ideal audience in giving an output that is not questionable by anyone. Simply this audience would see the reaction of the characters and could simply see Gallimard’s interpretation by facial expression; only by watching the play preformed on stage.
Seen through the reading, the story of M Butterfly is a construction of identity, places and things is a major point to consider when looking at an ideal audience. It would be appropriate to say that an ideal audience is an audience that is constructed a certain way that benefits the writer so everyone heeds their points. Therefore, like M Butterfly, Madame Butterfly is a construction for love, views and power. Firstly, love is something that Gallimard feels he has experienced and wants to reveal his emotions, “I have known, and been loved by... the Perfect Woman.” Secondly, views are clearly the point of the whole construction, in order for Gallimard to seek his side of the story. “In order for you to understand what I did and why, I must introduce you to my favorite opera: Madame Butterfly”; here Gallimard explains that he will tell us a story that is quite similar to the story of his life (Act I, scene III, 1298). And thirdly, power is one of Gallimard’s greatest manhood, that can only be reveal when everyone are in his control, “Men like that-they should be scratching at my door, begging to learn my secrets!” (Act I, scene III, 1298) With an audience, to listen, and get intrigue as the story progress, Gallimard have everyone in that audience wanting to know more; which makes him feel empowerment, due to the fact of even getting the chance to speak and avoiding people, newspaper for example, to get the chance to make up their side of the story is a huge self fulfilling power. Aside from that aspect, audiences after witnessing the truth of the situation will be very curious to hear all of the story. This it self is an empowerment in have the reader, as gallimard would say, “begging to learn my secrets!” (Act I, scene III, 1298)

In conclusion there are too kind of audience that Gallimard could have been referring to as his ideal audience. The audience who reads the play M Butterfly, and the audience who watches the play Madame Butterfly, as an audience in M butterfly. Clearly these are two type of audience that Gallimard would love to articulate his side of the story to; where he is not made into a joke and gets the chance to speak his emotions, about what he did and why. As we then continue to let Gallimard explain his side, we then see a construction that is pattern for the audience to receive the main points. These constructions involve, love, views and power. Through Gallimards’s protest we see all of these construction to be true. Which is why I come to my final point in saying Gallimard was only a guy who fell in love with a man that showed him a side of himself that he loves to used, power; and these interpretation would have never been conceive better, than through the eyes of his ideal audience.
The first time that I had picked up a racquet was when my sister was trying to teach me how to rally and how to play the game. I was only ten years old at the time. My sister was on the tennis team at Central High School in Bridgeport, Connecticut. I attempted to hit the ball several times, but with all the effort I put in I was not able to return a successful shot and end up hitting the ball far from the court that I was on. In a way I had great odium for the sport. I felt ashamed that I was not able to hit the ball so I just gave up on playing tennis at that moment and I just became the ball boy. I became a real good ball boy and it helped get me in shape as well as shaving away some of my youthful vigor.

A few years later, my family did some moving here and there. We ended up living in Hartford, Connecticut, where I entered the fearful freshman year in high school. I had no friends and I did not know how I had the courage to join the school’s tennis team. I was a much unvoiced boy and could never speak out loud even it depended on my own life. I had decided to give playing tennis another try because my cousins had played on the school’s tennis team a few years back. On the first day of practice I played horrible and was so embarrassed because I did not associate with anyone other than my family. I was informed that it was okay to hit the ball like that when a person starts and that no ones perfect. My coach and team mates said, “Even the professional players were not born that way, but with hard work and total devotion towards the sport, they made it happen for them. I tried with great determination, dedication, and diligences to work real hard to become a great player. I worked on all the wrong things that I do or the mistakes that I make during a match and practice. The season had ended and I felt that I needed some work on my tennis playing skills, so I played during the summer.

The upcoming year I joined again. I was returning great shots to my team mates, who were very surprised at how much I had improved, and was proof that hard work can get a person anywhere in life. That year I came back to my friends, no they were more than friends they were family, which I love and in return I was loved me back by them. I played hard against my opponents that year and I have not yet known of the word sportsmanship so I was not a great sport as many would say. I found out that the way that I want to be treated is the way that I should treat others. I started to treat others the way I wanted to be treated and realized that I was being treated the way I wanted to be treated. I showed my opponents with great respect we won the “city championship” that year, where we play other high schools in Hartford. This year I have learned the most about life and great sportsmanship.

On my junior year, I was made captain of the tennis team, a very respectful spot to maintain. I was in high spirits when my team chose me to be their captain and felt that I had to keep focused on how well I
improve as well as my team mates. As I improve to a great extent my team did the same and we did well for
players who have just started to play the respectable sport. They liked the racquet that I had and how well I
played with it. I told them that I had this racquet through thick and thin and that I cherished every moment I
picked it up. The racquet is my life and my life is towards the racquets within its metallic frame. We finished
the season with the respectable title of “city champs” and the remaining members who are coming back the
following year has high hopes for their next year on the tennis team. It was difficult for me to accept the fact
that many of my team mates had to leave because they graduate that year, but there was nothing I could do
but to wait for the next year.

My senior year was the most difficult year of my life because I basically had a brand new team. When
I got home from the tennis meeting I felt hopeless and I had no will power to deal with the new team. I felt
that I could not do anything and thought about leaving the team or not joining that year. I had on my bed
and stared at the ceiling with deep thought about quitting. I then looked at my racquet with its idleness in the
corner of my room and felt that I was giving up without trying. I felt really bad about ever thinking to quit on
my team, my friends, and the family that I made during my years on the tennis team. I had a quote in my head
from someone but I forgot who it was, but it was something like this,” Try your best and never ever give up.”
I came to practice with great determination to help the new members on the team improve as much as
possible before their first match. My “family” did pretty well against guys who have been playing for a great
deal in their lives. My friends were as happy as they can be with the way they played and are hoping to do
better in their future matches. It felt good to be their mentor because of how pleased I was with their attitude
and playing. The season ended and we earned the title of “city champs.” I was so pleased with how well we
did and I almost shed a tear of happiness.

As the season ended, everyone felt gloomy at the fact that I was leaving them. I told them that I will
come by once in a while just to see how they are doing the following year. We celebrated our win and after
we left the bus and we entered the locker room. I packed up everything I had and looked at my racquet with
enthusiasm and whisper to it, “thank you.” I put it back into its corner where it will be my little trophy of
achievement till another day where I will need it.
After reading the views of Kipnis on love as well as the views of education from Gatto, it was clear that Gatto had a stronger argument that was successful in proving its point. Kipnis argument was interesting to read about, but I feel the things she talked about had a lot to do with opinions and could vary a lot from person to person on relationships. Gatto’s argument was right to the point about how the schools were creating “ideal citizens” by fabricating the minds of young children. What made Gatto’s argument strong was he had the views of respected others, and he was in the school system for 30 years.

In Gatto’s argument he brings in an outside source of Inglis and his six functions. Gatto’s argument is strengthened through the conformity function “it makes children as a like as possible people who conform are predictable, and this is of great use to those who wish to harness and manipulate a large labor force” (Gatto 692). From this Gatto is backing up his idea of standardized testing and how it creates commonality and control of the children. The continuation of creating kids to follow the standardized test will lead to the “harness and manipulate a large labor force”. This gives people the idea of what is going on with the school systems and how they need to be changed. Kipnis doesn’t get this across to the readers. She is fun to read and makes people think of love in a different way. What could make her argument stronger would be examples that prove a better point. Kipnis list many things that can’t happen when people are in love such as “you can’t leave the house without saying where your going...The specifics don’t matter. What matters is that the operative word is can’t” (Kipnis 761). Kipnis is listing some examples of why love isn’t great because of all the things people aren’t allowed to do. To make the argument better then Gatto’s she should add in how the bad things of love out ways the good things of love. What Kipnis also lacks is that throughout the argument she isn’t really talking about love but things that people associate with love such as marriage. This is what makes Gatto’s argument stronger. The fact that he keeps on topic and enforces his points instead of questioning his own thoughts as Kipnis does when she says love is good, and then quickly talks of how she hates love. Gatto has a great point to his argument when he says “Thomas Edison, Ben Franklin, and David Farragut did great things at a young age, because at that time in life schools weren’t suppressing knowledge of students” (Gatto 695). Gatto is constantly giving significant examples to prove his point of how the school systems are suppressing the knowledge of students. Such as when he spoke of how people like Ben Franklin were able to be so successful at a young. Others could do the same if the school system would allow the students to expand there mind. If Kipnis was able to give significant ideas, it would help her with the idea of love being bad. Anyone can give basic examples of how love is bad. She does get creative about love, though as a reader
I would like to know what would there be if there was no love and marriage. Gatto is able to show both sides of the argument which gives a picture of how much better it is to not have standardized testing.

Gatto had experienced a life of teaching for 30 years, and seen the good and bad of teaching. He was able to prove his arguments to the readers better then Kipnis. Gatto’s ideas were stated, and then he showed the pro’s and cons of those ideas. The minds of the children can be free allowing them to think on there own, or you could have the children all think a like and they would all be constructed for the labor force. Kipnis argument is interesting to me and I would prefer to read that as it is comical and is true about marriage and relationships, but that isn’t all relationships are. She also doesn’t allow the reader to see the other side, if there wasn’t any love. In the end her argument doesn’t hold up to Gatto.

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Tanisha Redic

Literacy is the Key to Success

My road to literacy had not only been a trial and tribulation moment for me; I had also grown mentally as the value of education became an important aspect of my life. Growing from the silence of country life to the ruckus of city life, my environment changed a great deal as I had changed along with it.

Growing up as a toddler in Fayetteville, North Carolina had been the easiest time of my life. It was a small neighborhood where everyone knew each other. I had plenty of friends who I hung out with for the most part of the day whether we were swimming or playing at the park. In that day and age, the importance of education didn’t even cross my mind. The reason why I felt this way was because while I was in kindergarten, I thought I knew everything. I knew the alphabet, the numbers and how to write my name so I thought I was off the hook. Little did I know, there was so much more to learn. I moved from Fayetteville to Goldsboro where I entered first grade. This is when I began to learn basic math such as adding and subtracting. I believed this to be very easy as I surfed through that year like a surfboard on tidal waves. I had great confidence in myself, thinking I was a very intelligent girl who wouldn’t let any scholastic endeavor get to me.

While I was on my way to move to New Haven, CT (courtesy of my aunt) after my parents’ divorce, I wasn’t nervous or worried about leaving any of my friends behind. I was actually having fun on my journey; singing songs and eating in the back seat of the car. The George Washington Bridge and the city lights were so overwhelming that it just caught my eye. I was stunned by this new environment. Of course, from North Carolina to Connecticut was a long ride, so it took most of the day to finally reach my grandmother’s front door. I visited my grandmother a couple of times before, but actually living with her, I didn’t know what to expect. I knew it was a new adjustment, so I instantly knew things were going to be different. I wasn’t afraid.

My first day in second grade was so confusing to me. I felt like I was in another planet. The halls seemed so large, the doors led to every direction possible and I didn’t know a soul. I felt so lost and no one desired to give a little seven year old some guidance. As I entered the classroom, I wasn’t the bold intellectual anymore. Yes, I knew how to speak very good English for my age (although I had a strong accent), had good listening skills, knew how to write, but there were two borders I had to cross. Number one: The mean faces of the Connecticut scholars versus the southern girl and number two: Measurements (inches, feet, etc.) during math period. My experience in second grade was like a living nightmare. It seemed like all the girls disliked me because the teacher was looking out for me. She knew I was in a new environment. This also included the teaching methods in the north compared to the south which led to an embarrassing moment. When in the south, I hadn’t learned a thing about measuring objects, so when I looked at my fellow classmates completing
their task perfectly, I felt so illiterate in math like never before. Something must have knocked into me as I no longer believed I knew everything. When my turn came, I didn’t understand what to do or how to do the assignment. I could just visualize the insides of the class as well as the teachers going hysterical as they were probably laughing at my lack of knowledge. I could do nothing but cry. Having no friends to have sympathy for me, I became my own best friend. All of these surroundings and new ways to get accustomed to made me feel as if I was a failure. I was then scared as I didn’t think I was going to make it. The unfortunate ending of this was that I had to repeat the second grade. I knew what I needed to prepare for next year.

Although my second year in second grade felt strange because I was in the same classroom with different people, I was determined to get past this grade as I then adjusted to the teaching methods here. I hated to be the oldest student in my class, but I knew I couldn’t change the past so I had to deal with it. Not only did the challenging scholastics help me grow to pass and further my education, I met some new friends as everything began to feel like I was back home in North Carolina. This made me a more social rather than an anti-social individual. I felt very comfortable after that. All of these great changes helped me to become a better person spiritually and intellectually. I knew that I had more challenging obstacle to overcome, but as long as I focus and don’t think that I’m Einstein, everything will be a breeze for me. I kept this pattern all through elementary, middle, and high school and I am now about to endure the stress and benefits of college.

As Andrea Fishman declares in her essay, “Becoming Literate: A Lesson from the Amish,” “Rather, it was the ability that all children have long before they can read and write print text, the ability, as Friere puts it, “to read the world” (242-3). She makes a statement about how much time is needed to become literate. Moving on from the south to the north was a huge transition for me. From language differences between the southern “y’all”, “shawty”, “ain’t” to the northern dialect of “you all”, “shorty”, and “isn’t”, I traded in my individuality for the conformity of the northeastern dialogue. As I have grown older and by hanging out with my neighborhood friends with the urban dialect, my southern accent vanished and now I have the same dialect as someone from the city. I have even grown from the southern usage of words to the language that people raised in urban areas use. Some examples of this modern urban dialect are “That’s what’s up” (That’s good), “madd” (too much), and “What’s good?” (What’s happening?). From this and the experience with several types of personalities of people, both easy and difficult obstacles that I have endured to get me this far, I now feel that Connecticut is my home, but North Carolina is what makes me who I am today.

I have taken two types of literacy and conjured them together to form my own. The dialect of both the south and the north is depicted as the mainstream language in which everyone is expected to speak in such manner. According to Andrea Fishman, “We need to realize that our role may not be to prepare our students to enter mainstream society, but rather, to help them see what mainstream society offers and what it take away, what they may gain by assimilating and what they may lose in that process” (247). As I move forth toward college level experience, being raised in the north has benefited me not only grammar wise, but the
ability to be socially and academically strong. This will definitely help in my future endeavors. I’m no longer afraid.

Works Cited
It was the end of a hard day full of studying and doing homework. I was just about to start relaxing when a girl came up to me and asked me if I could braid her hair. Me braid hair? Ha! When I explained to her that I didn’t know how, she responded with “You’re black, and don’t know how to braid?” Living in Milford, CT for my entire life, I have grown up with people always telling me that I wasn’t “black enough”. Situations like this one were nothing new. When people ask me where I’m from and I say that I’m from Milford they don’t seem shocked. It’s almost as if I confirmed what they were thinking. They knew I couldn’t be from any “urban area”. I had to be from a place where “rich white people lived”. This is because I don’t talk a lot of “ebonic slang”, I prefer Jack Johnson to Jay-Z and I don’t know how to do the Harlem shake (I never will). It’s just something I have learned to deal with. In a black society there are certain “givens” that you are expected to do or know how to do. Besides braiding hair, there’s speaking fluent Ebonics, dancing …with rhythm, and knowing every rap song on the radio just to name a few. Even though a majority of African Americans wouldn’t consider themselves any of these things, it’s still a part of African American Literacy.

I may be somewhat culturally illiterate in this respect however; I realize that I am culturally literate in other things. For example, with me being a young adult I know more about issues involving our generation than say a 60 year old man. If I were to talk about my beliefs in sex, voting, gay rights, or even the war in Iraq to my grandma, the odds of her agreeing or understanding are slim to none. Times are different and there are different issues that I must face that she didn’t when she was my age. How did I become “literate” in this area? Well, these issues are constantly being addressed, may it be in books, church youth groups, school, television and etc. Andrea R. Fishman explained “reading and writing at school allowed him [Eli] to further affiliate and identify himself with and within his social group”(244). Meaning if you want to be informed on what is going on in your society you need to do your research. I made use of this information from outside my own knowledge to educate me on my own surroundings.

What happens when you get educated on your surroundings and your surroundings change? Adapting to those changes can be hard, especially when the surroundings are completely opposite from each other. I recently moved and it’s an entirely new environment. Before I lived on a semi busy street right by the beach. There was always some type of noise whether it was, fire trucks and ambulances, teenagers walking and talking very loudly and cars whizzing by. My house was really nice but my family had just simply grown out it so we needed an upgrade. Now we live in a “gated” community where all the houses look the same (Wisteria Lane) and everyone waves when we drive past them. It’s very quiet besides the train that comes by occasionally at night or the Sikorsky helicopters being tested out. Now we’re lucky if we hear anybody talking
outside, all we hear are kids playing. People around here are a little more considerate when it comes to being loud. Here, kids don’t just go from one person’s house to another like in our other neighborhood here they scheduled play dates; people kind of stick a little more to themselves. It was a little shocking at first. Since it was such a change my family and I had to get acquainted with the new ways. It was somewhat like when Eli left his sheltered ways and had to change his way of thinking and learning when he entered school. He had to realize that he had “to make some difficult choices that would have amounted to choosing between what he had learned and learned to value at home” (247).

Imagine doing things for almost your entire life and then waking up one day and not being able to that anymore. It’s such a rude awakening. Our family was used to always being outside and having visitors over. We were able to have the music blasting and not having the neighbors complain. We had an amazing relationship with our old neighbors. Our families were best friends, always doing things with each other. So when we moved we tried to form a similar bond with our neighbors. However, we soon realized that they weren’t as open as we were. Like I said before, my brother was used to going over his friends house whenever he felt like it but in this neighborhood “play dates” were scheduled. There was one instance when he was really bored so he went over some ones house and this friend was in middle of one of his “date” and my little brother was sent home. That was our real wake up call that we weren’t on Merwin Ave anymore. In, Becoming Literate: A Lesson from the Amish, Fishman explains that “Community constraints limit the number of appropriate topics and forms an Amish writer may use”(246). This was exactly the situation we were in but instead of us being Amish writers with constraints we were occupants of an area who had to limitations on our actions. We now know to kind of keep our distance and just worry about ourselves. Let friendships kind of form themselves. It’s not that this is a bad thing it’s just different. In my previous residence, I grew up a lot and went through numerous changes that make me the way I am today. So just because I’m adapting to my new environment doesn’t mean I’m going to forget about my old neighborhood. I believe that adapting plays a big part in becoming literate.

This whole transition from high school to college is an interesting lesson. This is a area that I am still trying to become literate in. The campus life or culture here is like a complete 180 from high school. In Fishman’s essay she brings up how Eli had to take his switch from home to school. It was obviously different coming from a place where reading is not based on understanding but on the facts. Just as Eli faced difference I face difference here in college. Here there is so much more freedom. There is so much freedom that I don’t even know what to do with it sometimes. There is so much stress coming from every direction. I have to learn how to manage my time a lot more. I have to become educated on my overall study skills. I have to recognize that even though the teacher is not going to check the homework the next day I still need to do it. Also, I need to know that cramming or doing an assignment that was assigned weeks ago the night before is not going to slide. There are just so many changes that I need to come to terms with and comprehend.
As I analyze my life right now there are many things I have learned, in the process of learning and need to learn. The things that I become literate in during the rest of my life time will make me a strong individual. If you really think about people don’t act like their race, culture, occupation or whatever, they act as individuals. They act the way they do because of their way of life. I mean I am proud of my heritage as much as any other African American. I feel like I exemplify all the qualities of a black person because I am black. Maybe one day I will know how to dance with rhythm but I won’t learn because I am expected or forced to I will because I want to.

Work Cited
A family gathers around the dinner table. The mother comes home from working as a nurse at the local hospital, where she is belittled by the older nurses. The father comes home from long hours at the office, not knowing if he will have all the paperwork done on time. The son comes home after commuting forty minutes from college, stressing about the midterms every minute of the way. The daughter has just recently had a fight with her long-term boyfriend, and it is affecting her emotionally as well as in her academics. They sit speechless.

In an attempt to break the silence, the mother asks, “So how was everybody's day?” Everyone looks up from their plates reluctantly and answers with the world famous one word answer, “Fine.” They return to picking at their food.

This silence between family members is a world wide epidemic. Families just aren’t talking. This is a problem. This lack of communication brings up many issues that can be avoided if only they communicated.

Communication is the key to all relationships. The most obvious form of communication is talking. When people talk about issues it is an opportunity to transfer information that will give others understanding, a sense of being “in the know,” and it helps to find solutions to the issues. The problem is families talk very little if at all. Probably the most talking that goes on within a family is when they are gossiping about each other, which is not the kind of communication we want.

There are many reasons why families don’t communicate. The main reason is because they are so wrapped up in their own lives. Each member of a family faces different things. Some go to school, some go to work, and some even stay home. Regardless of their positions in life, they all face problems. Many family members choose to carry their burdens all on their own when they don’t necessarily have to. According to sociology, the family is supposed to be an institution where the members are supposed to meet each others needs, as well as help each other cope in this society. How can the family meet each others needs if they don’t know what the needs are?

The lack of communication in families is not only a problem of the present day, or of only a few, but a problem that has plagued many past generations of families. This is proven true in Maxine Hong Kingston’s essay “No Name Woman.” It is obvious that lack of communication is an issue in Kingston’s family.

Kingston’s mother realizes that her sister might be pregnant by another man besides her husband. Instead of questioning her (sisters should be able to question each other if they think the other is in the wrong), she says nothing at all.
But I did not think, “She’s pregnant,” until she began to look like other pregnant women, her shirt pulling and the white tops of her black pants showing. She could have not been pregnant, you see, because her husband had been gone for years. No one said anything. We did not discuss it. (435)

Why didn’t she say anything? Was she waiting for someone else to ask? Why is it that Kingston’s family doesn’t want to bring the truth out to the open? Issues need to be confronted in a family, not swept under the rug. Families should be able to be open with each other. Concealing things does more harm then good. It only leaves problems unresolved.

In my own family there was a problem similar to Kingston’s. My cousin got pregnant. Not only was she unwed, but she was only 13! This issue was not concealed. My aunts, uncles, and cousins all knew about this. Some may think that individuals should not worry their family with their problems but that is not the case. A problem for one person in a family is a problem for all of the members of a family. We loved my cousin and we only wanted to help her. We did not condemn her. I’m sure she already felt guilty enough; she didn’t need her family to help her with that. The family communicated about this issue. “What does Chaz (my cousin) want to do about the baby?” “Where will she live?” “How will she be supported?” My cousin had the baby. My aunt took her in. We all made sure the baby was well taken care enough. Now my cousin is twenty years old. She has her own apartment. She supports her and her child. Not only that, she has raised a beautiful well mannered daughter. We communicated to solve this problem not to make it worse. When issues are communicated families can work together as a unit to find a solution.

Although Maxine Hong Kinston was curious about her aunt, she wouldn’t dare to ask questions. “If I want to learn what clothes my aunt wore, whether flashy or ordinary, I would have to begin, “Remember Father’s drowned-in-the-well sister?” I cannot ask that” (436). Why couldn’t she ask? Kingston has so many unanswered questions. She wanted to know what type of woman her aunt was, but her fear of her parent’s reaction stopped her from asking. Therefore, she is left clueless. In families there are certain topics that aren’t discussed, around the younger family members. They should be discussed. Young minds are curious. If these things are not discussed the young will make their own speculations just as Kingston did. They shouldn’t have to make speculations. They deserve to know the truth. They are as much members of the family as anyone else. If issues are discussed the younger family members won’t have that irritating feeling that something is being hidden from them.

In my own family, my aunt is the person that we know has a drug problem. As long as I have been living I’ve known this. It is something our family is ashamed of, but it is no secret. I think keeping it a secret takes too much work. Concealing something so obvious is a waste of time. In “No Name Woman,” I don’t see the point of concealing the pregnancy. My aunt’s drug problem is as obvious as that “protruding melon of a stomach” that Kingston’s aunt had (435). There is no reason that issues should be kept from certain people in a family, specifically the younger ones. Some may think that the young will be better off not
knowing certain things. Actually, this does them more harm than good because they spend their time trying to figure out what is being hidden from them. Maybe certain things are shameful to admit, but it is what it is. If issues are discussed the younger family members may even learn from the mistakes of those that went before them. This can’t be done if things are hidden.

Kingston has a hard time trying to believe that her aunt could have been the type of woman that would have sex with someone other than her husband. She begins to think of the possibilities; one of them being rape. “My aunt could have not been the lone romantic who gave up everything for sex. Women in the old China did not choose. Some man [must have] commanded her to lie with him and be his secret evil” (437). Why is it that the aunt never told anyone what happened? Did she commit adultery? Did she get raped? These are the questions floating around in Kingston’s mind (and ours too). If the aunt would have communicated effectively with her family there would be no misunderstandings. Now everyone that has read this essay either believes that she was raped or committed adultery. We will never know because the aunt never said anything.

In my own family as well as in every family we misunderstand each other. The person I was constantly misunderstood by was my mother. I felt as if she never understood me. The thing is she didn’t. I did not communicate with her, but I expected her to understand what I was going through. My mother could only see my actions and my attitudes. She can’t could not the source of them. The only way that she can see them is when I unleash the talk. Only then will she be able to understand why I am the way that I am and why I do the things that I do. Now that I talk to my mother about what is going on in my life, I don’t feel as if we come from two different planets. When families don’t communicate (or talk) there tends to be many misunderstandings. To avoid being misunderstood family members need to let each other know, “What’s really going on?”

In “No Name Women,” there is no doubt that there are problems within the family. The truth is most of the problems spring from the lack of communication. The parents want to keep the aunt a secret, the daughter is afraid to question, and the aunt doesn’t say a word of what happened to her. Their mouths are sealed shut. They are confined to secrecy. The whole essay is a question mark. If there was communication Kingston wouldn’t have to say “perhaps,” “maybe,” or “It could have very well been.” She would know these things. The communication problem is so severe that this essay may not have even existed at all if there was communication within the family.

Work Cited
They say that a child is always closest to its mother because she was the one who brought it into this world. It’s also the same with mothers. Mothers have a special bond with their child that can never be broken. They say that a mother can sometimes sense when something is wrong with their child even if they are not around, it’s a feeling that they can’t explain. It can be because we spent such a duration of time inside of them that they feel that we are apart of them. That’s why as a young child and an adult we always cry for our mothers because we feel that these women are our savors, someone that we can depend on forever because they are the ones that nurtured us. You can say that your mother is your significant other. The position of being a mother becomes increasingly challenging when a daughter is conceived. As being a woman mothers feel that it’s their duty to protect their daughter from harms way and guide them in the right direction. A mother’s word to their children can be golden. Everything a mother has ever told their child they live by throughout their life. You can say that your mother is your road map you don’t want to take any wrong turns and get lost.

In “No Name Woman” by Maxine Hong Kingston you see the relationship between Kingston and her mother and how the mother tries to manipulate Kingston mentally. She tells Kingston of stories of previous mistakes others have made as life lessons. What Kingston’s mother does to her doesn’t seem to be justice and unfair to Kingston and the life that she goes on to live. Her mother could have tried other ways to guide her daughter, then trying to scare her and make her cautious of every move she has ever made.

Every mother has their own way of communicating with their daughters. It could be a lecture, story or even a scold to grab the attention of their daughter. Most mothers tend to tell a story to their daughters when they are growing up. All stories that are told are not very joyful stories but what can happen to you if you ever do wrong. “Whenever she had to warn us about life my mother told stories that ran like this one, a story to grow up on. She tested our strengths to establish realities” (Kingston 436). In “No Name Woman” Maxine Hong Kingston explains how her mother expressed life lesson through stories and experiences that have happened to others. Kingston’s mother tries to use a scare tactic to make her daughter do what is right in life. What Kingston’s mother does in this story is typical of what any other mother would do. Every mother tries to protect their daughter some way and most feel that they can do this by telling a story of something horrible that has happened to someone else. In Kingston’s experience it does not seem to be a very good way of helping her because in a ways it’s as if she is scared of life. Kingston does not want to make any mistakes because she does not want what happened in her mother’s story to happen to her.
Most stories in your life that your mother has ever told you as a daughter you will never forget. Like Kingston said her mother wanted to “establish realities” and what is more real when you live your life according to a story that your mother told you about your own aunt killing herself in the family well. Her mother wanted to see how strong she was and if she could possibly not make that mistake. Kingston throughout the story seems to be controlled mentally by her mother and the thought of her aunt being looked down upon by the village affected her personal life with the opposite sex. “But of course, I hexed myself also – no dates. I should have stood up both arms waving, and shouted out across libraries, “Hey, you! Love me back.” I had no idea, though, how to make attraction selective, how to control its directions and magnitude” (440). Kingston goes on to describe her relationship with boys and how she has never dated because she doesn’t know how to go about the process. Kingston would like to have a relationship with a boy and what girl her age wouldn’t. But she has the fear of what happened to her aunt could possibly happen to her.

I feel that it’s not right for her not to be able to communicate with the opposite sex. She has no type of skills of knowing how to interact because she feels by doing this she is going against what her mother said. She also talks about having no control and it’s because her mother never helped her develop as a young woman but instead she has scared her away to hide in a shell from boys.

As a young lady you begin to experience different things as you become older mentally and physically that you don’t know much about. “Now that you have started to menstruate, what happened to her could happen to you. Don’t humili ate us. You wouldn’t like to be forgotten as if you had never been born. The villagers are watchful” (436). Kingston in the story begins to menstruate and her mother tries to warn her of what will be soon to come but in a harsh way. Mothers sometimes do not know how to express themselves when they see that their daughter is growing up and becoming a woman. They usually talk about but never in a way so that the girl can understand right from wrong but that it’s just wrong. Again in this text you see the mother use the aunt as an example again of what could happen if you begin to have sex. Her mother also goes on to torment her and say that she better not humiliate the family. Family names can be very important in some cultures or just the family itself. Kingston has a lot of pressure on herself to make sure she does not tarnish her family’s name. She also talks about the village being watchful. It’s like telling her to be careful of what you do because someone out there is watching and you don’t want to embarrass anyone because everyone is going to find out.

As a child I remember we use to play a game of who could go without stepping on the cracks on the cement ground. The saying went “step on a crack break your mothers back” this sort of reminds me of Kingston’s story and stories of girls everywhere who are frightened to go against what their mother has told them. It’s just like the game you are afraid that if you step on the crack you would hurt your mother just as if you go against her words.

From experience of being a young lady I can remember when my body began to menstruate the first thing she told me was about her teenage pregnancy and how she didn’t want me to turn out like that. Ever
since my mother has told me this I've been very skeptical of what moves I have made throughout my teenage adolescence. I have a fear that if I mess up I'm not only going to let myself down but my mother also who already warned me what happened to her. Also I know I will let down others in my community who see me as a peer leader and a very bright young individual. I will feel embarrassed because of what others might say of me just as Kingston felt that her village might speak about her if she was ever caught doing what she wasn't suppose to be doing.

To me I feel that there is another way of educating a daughter if I were a mother. You see how frightening a child like Kingston and I have reacted to what our mothers have done to use. I think that a mother should really sit down and explain to their daughter how the process of growing up to a woman really is. They should just say that you growing up now and your body is going through some changes. The mother can also tell her that she is going to be feeling different things and guys are going to be looking at you differently as a female. There’s no reason for a mother to try and mentally get into their daughters mind by telling a previous experience that will torment than rather explaining what to expect and how to react. No girl should be deprived of being scared in life they should be able to venture out and if the should make some mistakes they should know that they are not going to die.
Joseph Taitague

Chicken Adoble

Ingredients
-Vinigar
-Brown Sugar
-Boiled Chicken
-Black Pepper
-Salt

I did not know what to expect from this weird dish, which I had consumed on Saturday at New London before the firework show. I had this foreign piece of chicken with rice in which I also have never tasted before. The rice was spicy containing tomatoes, orange rice, red peppers, some kind of hot dog, I believe they call it a salchicha, and they had shrimp. I did not like that rice at all! The chicken I was a little hesitant, I knew that I love meat but this thing looked slimy covered in a brown soy sauce membrane and the meat detached from the bone with part of its ligaments still barely clinging onto the soft bone. I was baffled, the rice tasted horrible, which might lead to me thinking the chicken too was going to be horrendous. The suspense was killing me, as a man I had a duty, a duty to eat it.

Looking at it reminded me of the movie “Resident Evil” with all the extras dressed heavily in makeup, the zombies. As I said before that ooze that coated it looked like the cerebral membrane of a pigs brain which we dissected in my senior year of high school, in anatomy and physiology. The smell was not even pretty. Peeyu, I’m sure you heard of the expression oil and water does not mix, well vinegar and the human nose certainly do not mix. The smell of this chicken was enough to skin a cat and make the violin string for a violin as well as a fine coat.

The unbearable moment, I took this foreign object to my mouth, and raised my mandible jaw to slice threw it. I could hear my jaw moving down as my teeth were about to enter the threshold of no mans land. My eyes shut tight, to the point that no light laminated my eyelid, in a fully laminated environment with 80-100 watt bulbs surrounding me, which was enough to keep the food warm and negate any cool air circulating through the room. As the sweat dripped down my forehead, and hit the ground, the meat stud firm on my tongue then moved to my teeth. My eyes slowly raised and to my surprise this nasty object has sent a sensational surge throughout my entire tongue. Ironically sometimes the nastiest things, turns out to be good or even sometimes the best. In this case judging the book by its cover would have made me miss out on the flavors which lay dormant in this chicken.
For many years, my diet consisted of the following factors, if it looked appealing to my eye and smelt good it was edible but there are always a few things that has to impede upon my theories of logic. Well many thing in life, will surprise you, and this one certainly has. The flavor that was contained in this chicken was sweet, bitter, sour, and tender. One thing is for certain, you must try it! So go, go now and have a taste.
The answer to “What is comfort?” can easily be answered with a simple response—feeling good (Rybczynski 252). Therefore, the construction of my ideal laundry room was purely based on imagination to fulfill the total comfort level that I desired although the setting of the laundry room may appear extraordinary. Nonetheless, my idea of “comfort” is relevant according to Witold Rybczynski in *Comfort and Well-Being*.

I specifically chose the location of my laundry room to be in the basement of my house, where there already exists a sense of coziness thanks to the limited amount of space. According to Rybczynski, rooms in many modern houses have recently been modified and resized to a smaller scale to give them an artificial coziness feeling. Rybczynski marks, “The modern kitchen is also too small. Early studies of kitchen efficiency focused on reducing the amount of walking done during food preparation” (251). In other words, architects intentionally shrink the size of the kitchen to give it the artificial coziness. In many cases, coziness brings comfort. In addition, people may refer to the basement as a vacant and useless location where the people of the house rarely come in contact with the basement; therefore, the placement of the laundry room within the basement is usually a good idea. Nevertheless, I feel that the basement offers a feeling of ease and more importantly, comfort because once you enter the basement, you are isolated from the commotion around the house. Also, the basement if often the coolest place in the houses, which symbolizes its peacefulness and calm.

Moreover, the specific placement of each item and the location of the furniture relate to Rybczynski’s theory of “comfort”. The author suggests that, “…simple materials, appropriately sized and placed windows, and built-in furniture can create an atmosphere of cozy domesticity…It also mans a return to furniture that is accommodating and comfortable; not chairs that make an artistic statement, but chairs that are a pleasure to sit in” (Rybczynski 250). Ultimately, all these factors lead to comfort and until they are fulfilled, it may be impossible to achieve comfort because “it is much easier to measure discomfort than comfort” (Rybczynski 252). From the sketch, I carefully place the furniture so that they are not too far apart but not too close either. They are positioned so close that they are reachable within one another while far enough that they would not intervene with one another, similar to what Rybczynski mentioned in one of his examples. For instance, the television is farthest away from the sofa and refrigerator to make viewing a pleasure rather than a discomfort if the television was too close to. Also, the refrigerator is located close to the sofa so that if a person is watching television and decides to have a drink, he or she will be able to do so by getting up, yet refrigerator is far apart enough to not make the person feel cold while laying down. Next come the artworks that are on the wall, which tremendously increase the comfort of the room with their peaceful with loving message. The
bookcase is located in a far corner, away from the rest of the furniture to set an academic comfort zone, as watching television and relaxing may not be the best idea when a person is attempting to study. Last but not least, the actual laundry room is located outdoor in a dome, isolated from the rest of the basement so that whoever is doing the laundry isn’t too conscious about the clothes but instead passing their time wisely and effectively.

In summation, according to Rybczynski, “Comfort is that condition in which discomfort has been avoided” (252). Comfort can be obtained in many ways but not in a particular way as we all can design our very own comfortable kitchen, bathroom, bedroom and etc according to our likings. However, “It turns out that in practice it is much easier to measure discomfort than comfort” (Rybczynski 252).

Works Cited
Olbelina Ulloa

“When I am awake, I know I’m not dreaming; but when I dream, I think that I’m awake”

Ever since I was young I have had the same dream. I would be running with my older cousin, and we would reach a wall in an alley. There is someone chasing us, and when we reach the wall my cousin would get stabbed by an unfamiliar hand. I wake up in a jolt, and it takes a second for me to realize that I was dreaming. I never realize that it is a dream when I am dreaming. I do not know what it means, or why I keep having the dream, but I believe that it is my unconscious mind wanting to warn me about something that will happen.

We often forget that we are dreaming because most of the time our conscious minds are unaware of reality, so we don’t realize the change from sleeping to being awake. Our conscious mind only registers 30% of the things that happen around us, and unconsciously we register 100%. Dreams try to warn us about things that can happen by putting us trough bad situations. My dreams have often warned me about upcoming tests. In these dreams I fail the tests without knowing that I’m dreaming. When I wake up and realize it was a dream I study harder because I’ve met the unpleasant feeling of failure already. Dreams are like our guardian angels, or previews of lives. They put us in bad situations and make us believe that these things are happening, so that we can prepare ourselves for when they do happen. It is important for us to analyze our dreams because they always hold a bit of information for the future.
Personally I do not like children. I try to limit my exposure to them because I find them annoying. They love to say everything that is on their minds, and certainly do not think before they speak. No manners at all. Some are just spoiled brats; they throw temper tantrums to get what they want. For example, my niece is used to getting her way with her parents. But when I am left to watch her, I do not give her everything she wants. She absolutely loves candy. Once, after eating a whole bag of lemon heads, she demanded more. She was one lemon head away from jumping off walls. I said “NO!” and what a mistake that was. She started kicking and screaming, but I am not one to give up. So she continued to cry for an hour and finally fell asleep. From then on I saw children as little trolls that “awarded” me with headaches, and nothing more. But in time, my views would change because I was only looking at the surface.

I interviewed my brother Carlos Ruiz, Jr., who is 9 years old. We were raised in a single-parent home. This made it hard for us to see our mother, because she had to work to support us. Carlos wouldn’t see his father much either (we have different fathers); the last time he saw his Dad was a few months ago. At the age of 5 he was sent to live with my older sister in Beaufort, South Carolina. So he wasn’t able to see our mother for an entire year. He returned at the age of 6. This was a very awkward moment for him, because he had to get use to the fact that he was back. Since then he has felt comfortable being back and has done very well getting re-attached to our mother. He has really changed as a person, from what I can tell.

Our interview session took place in the living room, where children were running around and yelling. But he maintained his focus and felt quite special when I told him I was going to interview him. He sat down with so much arrogance. He looked over his shoulder and said to his older brother, “Yeah, she wants to interview me and not you. I am the greatest!” He illuminated with so much pride, sat down and put his shades on, as if he was being interviewed by MTV. In all my years of being around him, he never showed this confident side of himself. He was usually the shy one who would hide around the corner. Not anymore. To go along with his charade, I pretended I was taking photos of him and holding a microphone (which, in fact, was a remote control). He really enjoyed it.

“What do you want to be when you grow up?” Carlos hopes to become a Veterinarian, because he loves animals and has a heart for helping out. I think in our family there is a trend where everyone wants to practice medicine. I remembered when I was 9 I wanted to be a secretary. I just liked the thought of typing and copying stuff. It took me a while to settle on the medical field; it was around the age of 16. But here is a 9 year old that knows what he wants to do.

Next I asked him, “When you are older what do you want to have?”
He answered, “I want one kid, wife, house, car, backyard with pool, and a place where my animals can play.”

I did not know that a child can have an idea of what he wanted out of life. Especially so specifically. I still don’t know what I want out of life. I was so fascinated I had to ask why he wanted these things.

“Because everyone on TV has them, and they are very happy. Don’t you want these types of things?”

I was not prepared for him to ask me this question, so he laughed at my shocked face. I just simply answered, “Yes”. Carlos’s ideas and dreams are being influenced by TV, which was never the case with me. When I was 9 years old I was certainly not thinking about how many kids I wanted, but rather about what shirt my Barbie was going to wear that day. How much are children learning through TV today? Maybe things like what kind of lifestyle to have, what they should wear, how they should act, talk and dress. I could tell a good number of his answers were influenced by some type of media.

“What kind of girls do you like?” I asked.

He looked at me and smiled, looked at the coffee table right beside him and picked up a magazine with a girl on the cover. “I like girls that look like her because they are sexy”. The girl in the magazine had black, long hair, blue eyes, long legs, and a fit body. Things never seem to change when it comes to boys.

This is when the sensitive questions came in, and where I noticed he was being insincere; it showed all over his movements and expressions. I asked him, “What do you think of your Mom?”

I could tell he quickly became uncomfortable and chose his words carefully. Because he was unsure if he could tell me, since we have the same mother. He went for the safe answer. “She is nice.” I tried to get more out of him so I told him to give me examples of how she is nice. “She takes care of me, takes me to the beach, and the park.” He looked around and then whispered, “But when we get home she always wants me to wash the dishes, take the laundry downstairs to wash it, watch the dog, stuff I really don’t want to do, I hate it.” Then very loudly said, “But she is nice!” I laughed because I saw my Mom pass by the living room 3 times while he was answering this question. Carlos was very careful not to hurt anyone’s feelings, including myself. He is very thoughtful. I thought this was one characteristic children lacked. They usually say what is on their minds and are not apologetic about it. “Who do you like best out of your brother and sisters?” He was honest at first and said, “Denise”. I couldn’t help but to change my facial expression, because honestly I got a bit sad. I lied; I got really sad. I thought he would like me better for some reason. He noticed and said, “Well I like everyone, because you all help me in anything.” He reassured me and gave me a little smirk. I knew he was lying though, just to make me feel better; he made it so obvious by getting all fidgety and starting to look around to get distracted by something else. He has a history of lying in order to get himself out of trouble.

Afterwards, I wanted to get farther in his mind so I asked him to make up a story. A quick summary of the story: A man was going to kill the dog, but in order to do that he became his friend. And as soon as the dog trusted the man enough to get closer, he killed it. I had no idea why “the man” wanted to kill the dog so I
asked. The response I got was because the dog killed the man’s baby. I was pretty confused by his story because it was very violent towards animals. And earlier he mentioned his love for animals. He didn’t have an answer to why the story had such a violent imagery, so I tried to look deeper in the story and make a connection with the way people act. For example, people tend to be very deceitful and tricky. They pretend to have good intentions and are actually doing the opposite, and once you are lured in they attack. That’s my interpretation of the story, I tried not to focus on the violence of the story but the message it portrays.

I also touched on the views he had of the President. He didn’t know much about him except for his name, but shared with me what he has heard. “I heard that the President doesn’t know what he is talking about. Oh yeah, and I heard he is stupid, too.” It is surprising he doesn’t know anything about the important issues, but somehow still has some kind of grasp on it.

Carlos’s answers and reactions contradicted my views on children. I thought children were “little trolls”, mean, inconsiderate, selfish, and unable to make life decisions at an early age. I shouldn’t have judged them by what I saw on the surface, because to discover something you always have to look deeper. I discovered that children are miniature adults who just have more fun. They are independent, responsible, smart, and fun to be around. They are like everyone else, living their lives, figuring out where they belong, who they are, and trying to pave their way to their goal. Carlos has opened my eyes and made me give children another chance. I guess they aren’t that bad after all.
Andrew Villagomez

“When I am awake, I know I'm not dreaming, but when I dream, I think I'm awake”

Everyone has had a dream where they think it was not a dream, and that it actually did happen. Everyone has also had moments when they think they are dreaming, and they really are awake. Some people don't even dream when they sleep, and there is nothing wrong with that. I have had experiences with all three.

Usually, when we dream, we express what inhibited selves that we don't show the world. The word "dream" can mean what one would wish could happen. That's probably why many people do bizarre things in their dreams. I have traveled across the seas, flew up a building in New York City, fought along side the X-Men, won a million dollars, killed a monster, and was a tiger. Dreams seem to express things that would not happen in the real world, however each one felt real. It was like I DID see sights many have not when I travel the seas and flew. I could feel what it would have felt to fight evil, win a lot of money and run as fast as a tiger. However, When I woke up in my bed, after a minute, I could tell that it did not happen.

Despite these dreams, there are moments that when real world things happen, they can feel like dream. When the twin towers where attacked I thought that was not real. Every year on the first day of school, I don't believe that summer vacation is over. When graduation occurred, I didn't feel like school was over and that I would not see many of my friends again. Despite what I felt, they all happened and were true.