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~ FIRST PLACE ~

The Autonomy of Immortal Technique

Hip hop was once used as a way for the community of minorities to engage in politics. As times passed, hip hop became more known to the media and was changed. Hip hop went from representing the voice of the people to controlling “corporate white men who really don’t understand what the culture is really about” (Chennault). Hip hop was changed from a form of an artistic expression to a way of making money. The majority of people identify rap as a negative music genre that portrays sex, drugs, and money. Although there are a lot of positive elements in hip hop, the negatives are far more noticeable and far more numerous (Harris). What people don’t know about rap is that there *is* a difference between the more commonly known gangster rap (mainstream rap) and underground rap. While most mainstream rap artists of today utilize rap as a way to entertain and make money in the music industry, Immortal Technique isolates himself from conforming to the mainstream genre, and uses rap as a way to express his perception on the issues of our society. In his albums *Revolutionary Vol.1* and *Revolutionary Vol.2*, Immortal Technique separates his music from what we know as “rap” and targets the issues of poverty, class conflict, and corruption within our government.

In the twentieth Century, rap music and hip hop culture played a large role in shaping the United States and gave voice to minorities “who had previously existed on the periphery of the nation’s consciousness” (Bynoe). Rap and hip hop “not only highlighted their struggles, but also shed light on their aspirations (Bynoe). Political rap was born; and continued on from the early seventies through the twenty-first Century from Gil Scott-Heron, KRS-One, De La Soul, Native Tounge and A Tribe Called Quest. The genre of political hip hop was something new for the mass to look into. Issues like racism, violence, and corruption became a trait of political hip hop that was never introduced to the public before. Political hip hop has become more apparent in recent years; artist such as Tupac, Public Enemy, Jedi Mind Tricks, Dead Prez, and Immortal Technique, are expanding their revolutionary message. Even though some of these artists were mainstream, they weren’t really known in their time. As rap and hip hop became more known to the masses, the fundamentals of hip hop were discarded and was replaced with making money.

Before there was mainstream rap, there was Tupac Shakur and the Notorious B.I.G and their influence in the hip hop community. Tupac and Biggie were two of the many influential rappers of their time. Although their music was “street” and “gangster,” they talked about issues of our society whether it may be about poverty, corruption within the government, or any other political issue. After the shootings that lead to their death, 50 Cent was introduced to the rap industry and he changed the way people viewed

rap. Using his adverse past of drug dealing, the death of his mother, and surviving 9 bullets, 50 Cent became widely known to the mass of the country. His past “earned him the most important credential in corporate hip hop, street credibility” (Watkins). With the help of corporate music industries and his respected street credibility, 50 Cent was able to spread his music throughout our country. “In exchange for global celebrity, pop prestige, and cultural influence hip hop’s top performers had to immerse themselves into a world of urban villainy that by the new millennium had lost sight of the line between pop life and real life” (Watkins).

The problem with corporate hip hop, also known as mainstream hip hop, is that when people think of rap, people think of the stereotypical definition. People think of rap as a pessimistic genre that focuses on the “negative stereotypes that black men are thugs; interested in violence, sex, drugs, money, and materialistic things that satisfies the self” (Harris). Corporate hip hop encourages black leaders of today to maintain the stereotypical definition instead of recognizing that they are “leading us in the wrong direction” by “characterizing our [hip hop] culture” as something negative rather than positive. Underground rap is entirely different from the rap that we normally know as “gangster” rap. It’s music that isn’t influenced by fame or money. Underground rap is music that strays from corporate hip hop and focuses on the fundamentals of hip hop; whether it’s about making music for themselves or about the issues of our society.

Although Immortal Technique lacks the advantage of being widely known to distribute his music, being a freelancer allows him to write about what ever issues he wants without the restriction of record deals. Unlike the mainstream artists who are about fame, making money, and being restricted on what they sell, Immortal Technique doesn’t care about his fame or making money because he has declined record labels, so he clearly doesn’t get any advertisement to sell his music. His history of living in poverty and dealing with drama and altercations influenced him to express his thoughts and emotions through the physical form of poetry known as “rapping.” The issues that Immortal Technique dealt with as he was growing up in New York motivated him to write about the issues that affected him. He was focused on expressing his opinions on the issues of our society; not about making money. He declines to sign with a major record labels because “it’s about principle and about [his] success rate as the president of his own label.” Being his own VP, and the president of Viper Records, he sold “80,000 copies of *Vol. 2*” and about “35,000 of *Vol. 1*” (“Immortal Technique”). Before Immortal Technique was with Viper Records, he sold 10,000 on his own, so money isn’t an issue with him. He does everything himself from using his own money for production to making his own records. Immortal Technique says that he “represents the streets here in America, and [he] represents the people from other countries that come here as a result of what happened to their homeland.” Immortal Technique is his own person, he doesn’t let things like money or people’s opinions change the way he portrays his perspective on politics.

Immortal Technique is different the majority of the mainstream rap artists because of the approach he chooses to express his perspective on political issues. Instead of casually addressing the issues, he blatantly targets the flaws and corruption of the issue. In comparison to the mainstream artists such as 50 Cent, The

Game, and Lloyd Banks rapping mundane subjects about how much money they make and how they survived the ghetto, Immortal Technique “fills his lyrics with violent imagery that is oftentimes misogynistic, homophobic, and far from constructive” on political issues (Chennault). Immortal Technique differs from many mainstream artists because he isn’t afraid to speak his mind, and address the issues that are important to him. Even though Immortal Technique is perceived to be a hardheaded rapper who is harsh and is inconsiderate in what he says, “his lyrics are more than inflammatory, they're complex, evocative, and oftentimes poetic, and they've got the ear of hip hop's revolutionary intelligentsia” (Chennault). Most mainstream artists rap about sex, money, and portraying women as “ho’s,” whereas Immortal Technique focuses on the issues of our society whether it’s about poverty, racism, or corruption.

Immortal Technique uses poetry as a way to speak his mind on what he feels about the issues of our society. The language that Immortal Technique uses will affect the listeners because most mainstream rap artists tend to focus on making music for the audience where as Immortal Technique focuses on making his political music to spread his views. In *Revolutionary Vol. 1* and *Revolutionary Vol.2*, Immortal Technique portrays his perception on the issues of poverty, class conflict, and corruption through his language. Even though Immortal Technique may come off as offensive, he at least is saying something rather than wasting his potential as an upcoming artist.

“Harlem Streets” is one of the songs that Immortal Technique wrote to express his views on our society, and how poverty is consuming the minority community. In “Harlem Streets,” Immortal Technique says that there are people making an effort to live from “check to check, constant struggle to make the payments. Working [their] whole life wondering where the day went. The subway stays packed like a multi-cultural slave ship” (Immortal Technique). Immortal Technique focuses on the hardships that minorities have to live with by portraying the image of laborers working day and night just to live a half-decent life. There’s a “generation of babies born without health care, [and] families homeless, thrown the fuck off of the welfare” (Immortal Technique). Immortal Technique uses harsh and inflammatory language to prove his point that poverty exists and is alive as ever.

In “Harlem Streets” and “Crossing the Boundary,” Immortal Technique goes over the issue of class conflict whether the conflict is between the minority and the majority, or within himself and the mass. In “Harlem Streets”, Immortal Technique said how people “vote for us to go to war instantly, but none of their kids serving the infantry. The odds are stacked against us like a casino, think about it, most of the army is black and latino” (Immortal Technique). There are people who support the war only because they have reason to, but if a variable such as a family member were to serve the military over seas; then people would think otherwise. Immortal Technique establishes that “[he] used to be a Christian and a political pawn, the bible is right and all your native culture is wrong” (Immortal Technique). He says that people have to understand who they are and can’t allow themselves to change for the worse. Immortal Technique says that if he allows variables to affect their way of life then the “next thing you know you telling me ‘bout making a

song, come in the studio, and tell me that I'm making it wrong" (Immortal Technique). The issue of class conflict shows how people are affected by it and how they have to realize that there will always be variables that may manipulate one's mind, but one has to acknowledge it and have his/her own opinion on whatever the issue is.

Immortal Technique is known for directly targeting the government, whether it's about a conspiracy or corruption within the government. Although what he says is controversial, it is the only way for Immortal Technique to get his point across. In "Cause of Death," Immortal Technique raps about the September 11th incident. He:

Sees the world for what it is, beyond the white and black, the way the government downplays historical facts, 'Cause the United States sponsored the rise of the 3rd Reich. Just like the CIA trained terrorists to the fight, build bombs and sneak box cutters onto a flight" (Immortal Technique).

Immortal Technique uses his music as a way to target our corrupted government. He says that the attack of the World Trade Center was a conspiracy, and even though the thought of attacking our own country is unthinkable, Immortal Technique gets straight to what he says. He uses history as a way to target the corruption of the government. Immortal Technique says that the government "gave Al Qaeda 6 billion dollars in 1989 to 1992, and now the last chapters of revelations are coming true" (Immortal Technique). Not only does Immortal Technique use the history of the government, his experiences with 9/11 influenced his beliefs of the corruption of our government. He said that while "[he] was watching the Towers, and though [he] wasn't the closest, [he] saw them crumble to the earth like they was full of explosives" (Immortal Technique). Immortal Technique pointed out that "they thought nobody noticed the news report that they did, about the bombs planted on the George Washington Bridge. Four Non-Arabs arrested during the emergency, and then it disappeared from the news permanently" (Immortal Technique). He only states facts that affect his perception on how corrupted the government is and uses political rap as a way to address his views. Whether or not he speaks the truth of what happened on 9/11, Immortal Technique puts his knowledge out for society to take into consideration. That alone means that he has done his job as a hip hop political activist.

As much freedom as Immortal Technique has with writing whatever he wants, he sacrifices the possibility of spreading his perspective to the mass. If Immortal Technique were to sign to a major record label, then he might give up writing freely and be restricted in his own music. Immortal Technique is in a dilemma because even though his music is influential enough to create a movement, he can only influence so many people in our country. As revolutionary as his music is, we have to come to terms with the fact that where he is now, is only for the good. If Immortal Technique were to become popular and still be able to have control of his music, then the government would for sure target him back. We have to understand that the government doesn't really care about Immortal Technique because of him only influencing a small

population of our country. So as much flexibility as Immortal Technique has with his music, what he gains in freedom, he lacks in spreading his perspective.

It is important to understand that the majority may not really know what rap is. They assume that rap is what the media portrays it to be so they are unaware of the true essence of rap. It is essential to recognize that there is a difference in corporate mainstream rap and underground rap. We as a society should try to acknowledge that not all rappers fall into the stereotypical genre. Immortal Technique separates himself from what we perceive to be rap as something negative and uses rap as a way to announce the issues with our society. There are rappers out there including Immortal Technique who aren't about making the money or becoming famous, they are just out there to make the music and if people listen to their music, then better for them. Immortal Technique strives to be his own person, and rather than just peacefully addressing issues within our society, Immortal Technique speaks his mind in a way where people acknowledge the intentions of his music, and whether it be positive or negative, people are unconsciously affected by his music.

Merlin George

~ SECOND PLACE ~

The Many Components of A True War Story

A war story cannot be limited to the combat zone. In order to share the experience of war, it must take into account all the facets of war, what happened before, during, after and how war changed it all. Ernest Hemingway presents many stories in *In Our Time* that may not be considered war stories but upon closer observation their relevance to the effect of war on the human spirit becomes increasingly apparent. War does not end at the battlefield so in order to be a true war story; it must encompass all areas of life that are affected by war, which is what Hemingway did with *In Our Time*.

The point of including all the components that are affected by war is that otherwise it would not be a complete story. In order to gain the entire experience of war it is necessary to see war from all points of view. Vietnam veteran Tim O'Brien writes in *How to Tell a True War Story* "a true war story is never about war... It's about love and memory. It's about sorrow" (183). The soldier does not necessarily experience all of these feelings that O'Brien, a survivor of war, mentions. A mother or a friend could tell a war story because they are a part of all the things that are changed by war. Even when the setting is the actual combat zone, the story is usually more concerned with the soldier's emotional experience rather than the action. This definition of a war story insists on looking at war from all perspectives resulting in a very long account but as O'Brien says "you can tell a true war story by the way it never seems to end" (178). War continues to influence the way life is seen well after the last battle is fought; even our outlook of the past is changed by exposure to war.

"Indian Camp" is a glimpse into the childhood of Nick Adams who will fight in the war during his early twenties. The story offered by Hemingway has no mention of WWI or any war for that matter but it is very much a part of Nick's war story. At this point he is inexperienced and young enough to think that he will never die; a sharp contrast from the wounded Nick seen later in chapter VI. "It was going well. Stretcher bearers would be along any time now... Nick turned his head carefully away smiling sweetly" (63). After getting shot in the spine Nick seems to be submitting to his possible death with a quiet acceptance. To many this is not the least bit surprising because "at its core, perhaps war is just another name for death..." (O'Brien 181). The death of a soldier is expected and Nick has come to realize this fact but if "Indian Camp" is taken into account, Nick's outlook on death has shifted a great deal.

Before the war Nick was just a child unable to even imagine the possibility of death. At the end of *Indian Camp* Nick reflects, "he felt quite sure he would never die" (19). He shows himself to incredibly inexperienced because otherwise he would never have such a thought. The life of a soldier before the war is probably the most overlooked part of a war story, but if Hemingway didn't include this account of his

childhood we would never know how drastically different Nick became after gaining some experience. No longer has a naïve child, the Nick in chapter VI found himself not only contemplating death but even accepting it with a smile. A part of him does indeed die, for the rest of his life he will never think of death as impossible but as a certainty. It is common knowledge that war numbs soldiers into a state of almost complete indifference but without “Indian Camp”, a story taking place before the war, the extent of Nick’s damage could not be seen. The reader now understand how much war can change a soldier from what he used to be before going into combat.

The most obvious part of a true war story is the account of actual warfare. Many times it will be portrayed as incredibly grotesque and chaotic but that doesn’t even begin to describe the truth found in war. The battle line is where the change takes place and as a result it is given the most consideration when telling a war story but what’s really important is what resulted from this change. “It was absolutely topping. They tried to get over it, and we potted them from forty yards...We were frightfully put out when we heard the flank had gone, and we had to fall back” (Hemingway 37). At this point the narrator is saddened when he can no longer kill other soldiers. Chapter IV is not about how gruesome war itself is but how gruesome it makes the participants. There is no blood or gore in chapter IV yet it is one of the most disturbing stories in the novel.

The absence of descriptive bloodshed shows that the story is not about how disgusting war is but how the setting can actually change a teenage boy into a killing machine. By observing this scene it becomes evident that the emotional damage is far greater than the “awful majesty of combat” (O’Brien 181). Many times war stories will go into great detail about dead bodies and destroyed villages but Hemingway ignores the dreadful environment and focus on the soldier’s mental state. War results in a great number of casualties but every single person that goes to war experiences some type of emotional damage. Of course war is horrific but the real horror comes with the realization that a young boy’s innocence has been eliminated in the harshest way possible.

The war story doesn’t end there. The loss of innocence is really just the beginning of the story. What’s going to happen when that twenty-year-old killing machine comes home to his wife? *Cat in the Rain* is probably considered the least war-like story in all of *In Our Time* but it truthfully portrays the last part of a true war story. “George was not listening. He was reading his book. His wife looked out of the window where the light had come on in the square” (Hemingway 94). It is implied that George is a WWI veteran and his total disregard for his wife more or less proves this assumption. His wife is obviously distressed and it took nothing more than a cat sitting outside in the rain to cause her to break down. Any normal person would be able to sense a problem at this point. George, however, continues to ignore her and hides behind his newspaper.

Cat in the Rain is the prime example of what happens when a soldier comes home and is unable to be his former self. Like millions of other men, George returned home completely numb from war. He’s not hostile towards his wife, just indifferent towards everything. This is the part of the war story that

encompasses not just the soldier's feeling but the emotions of those close to him who become almost just as affected. George doesn't care about anything anymore and like many of the other veterans in this novel he refuses to pretend. His wife has found out the hard way that the man she married doesn't exist anymore. George can never go back to who he used to be and as a result not only does he suffer but his wife must bear that burden as well. She is stuck living with a complete stranger. This is the part of the true war story when a soldier and those close to him must deal with fact that the boy that went to war is never coming back home. This is especially difficult for his family because they don't understand what happened to him. All they can do is what the wife in *Cat in the Rain* does; she just keeps trying and maybe the extent of the damage will lessen. He survived war and she was left with the aftermath. He lost his ability to care and she lost her husband. Most war stories focus on just the soldier but the wife in *Cat in the Rain* is just as much a survivor as her husband.

It is very rare for one story to be able to convey all the aspects of war because it is so hard to describe, which is why Hemingway wrote *In Our Time*. It is full of fragmented scenes and they come together to form one complete war story. A true war story is something that includes everyone involved. The destruction found in war is not only physical but also mental and scars not just the soldier but also all those around the soldier. Tim O'Brien wrote that "...in the end, really, there's nothing much to say about a true war story, except maybe 'Oh'" (179). The knowledge that comes with experiencing combat is unforgettable and O'Brien is saying that nothing can be done about it. Hemingway on the other hand tries to make sense out of the waste brought about by war by writing *In Our Time*, a true war story. That is the point of true war story; they seek to educate people about all the aspects of war so hopefully something that devastating won't ever happen again.

Travis Sullivan

~ THIRD PLACE ~

“The Reality of Truth in Regard to ‘True’ War Stories”

Rather than being based upon fact war stories are based solely upon the stories of those who were not swept up into the dustbin of time or, even worse, the graves of history. This being said, it is no wonder that in “How to Tell a True War Story,” Tim O’Brien struggles to define exactly what a “true” war story is and how it can be to. Rather than present a definitive definition of a true war story, he informs the reader of qualities that a true war story should or should not have. As a consequence of reading this chapter my understanding of “In Our Time,” by Ernest Hemingway was enhanced and altered. At the same time a question presented itself. Does Hemingway succeed or fail to tell a “true” war story according to Tim O’Brien’s rubric of what a true war story is? I would have to say that yes he did succeed in meeting Tim O’Brien’s terms however he did not meet my conditions of what a true war story should be. Let me elaborate on my position on whether the collection of short stories “In Our Time,” can be considered as a “true” war story according to the stipulations set by Tim O’Brien’s chapter “How to Tell a True War Story.”

When I think of a “true” war story, many things come to mind. A true war story is unbiased. It does not put one character over another. Also, to tell a war story you would have had to go through some type of war. Don’t be mistaken when I use the word “war.” There are many types of war, many which have nothing to do with a battlefield. It is commonplace to find a person fighting a war mentally as well as physically. Furthermore, a true war story is just that; truth. It must be simply the truth. No additions or subtractions. In a way a “true” war story is unattainable. They truth is so rare, so lost in the clouds of lies that base our society, that at times it seems that reaching it is an impossibility. In turn, if we cannot reach “true” truth then a true war story is inaccessible. There are exceptions to this rule though. Anyone, who is displaced from society and has their humanity and emotions stripped only to uncover the true form of a human; primitive. The less complicated things are the more truth becomes apparent. That is why I say a person that has their humanity stripped and begins to see things primitively and simpler is the only person who can tell stories of truth. A soldier or a person involved in war fits this description, thus are the only ones who can tell “true” war stories; but keep in mind that you do not have to be on a battlefield or even in conflict with another person to be in war.

Originally, I had many views about Hemingway and his book, “In Our Time.” I found Ernest’s writing style and work unique. Most writers would have maybe avoided controversy; ultimately compromising their styles and messages. Hemingway, however, showed no fear. He did not hide the fact that a lot of his writing was racist, sexist, and depressing. Readers may not have liked that fact yet he gained a lot of respect

because he would give you reality. For once readers were given the truth rather than a sugar coated carbon-copy. An example of the truth rather than writing what the reader wanted to hear is the short story “A Soldier’s Home.” It was expected that a soldier coming home from battle would just reenter society and have a happy ending. This is a misconception because many times they came home with serious emotional and psychological problems. Hemingway feeds us truth, rather than stuffs us with lies, and sites many of these problems in his main character Krebs. For instance, Krebs and his mother were having a conversation and she asks him if he loved her. He responds, “No, I do not love anyone.”(Pg.75-76) This shows Krebs’s emotional detachment from the world and also that he is not in a well mental state. This is not the expected condition that most readers would have wanted out of Krebs.

In terms of his book “In Our Time,” he addresses issues in which he has problems. He confronts commitment and marriage, love vs. lust, and also introduces the idea of brief happiness. It is a reoccurring theme in the collection of short stories to find that a character only experiences brief moments of happiness that are followed by long periods of pain. An example of this is in the chapter “A Very Short Story.” The main character falls in love with a nurse named Luz while hospitalized and when the war ends he wants her to come with him. She says that she wants him to go to America and make a living then she will come. She then writes a letter to him telling him that she cannot come to America with him because she has been having relations with a major who she plans to marry. In terms of Luz, the major never marries her. This quote depicts what happens to the main character. It reads “A short time after he contracted gonorrhoea from a sales girl in a loop department store while riding in a taxicab through Lincoln Park.”(Pg. 66) This shows how the main character had a brief period of happiness and now has a long period of pain; gonorrhoea never really goes away. Those were a few understandings that I dawned upon me while analyzing Hemingway and the book. I find it very ironic that Hemingway never sees the battlefield, he was a mere ambulance driver; many readers were under the impression that all his war stories were true. All his stories of gore, sadness, carnage, brief happiness, monotony, despair, and mislaid humanity were thought were of fact. After reading the chapter “How to Tell a True War Story,” by Tim O’Brien, my views were altered.

O’Brien has a great deal of conditions that classifies tales as either “true” or entertaining yet fictional war stories. He first says that “You can tell a true war story by its absolute and uncompromising allegiance to obscenity and evil.”(Pg.175) What he is saying is that you can tell a true war story by the way it is littered with craziness and cursing and almost undoubtedly is evil. He also says “You can tell a true war story if it embarrasses you. If you don’t care for obscenity you do not care for truth.”(Pg.175, middle) He is saying that a sign of a true war story is the usage of language that would not normally be used; like cursing, racial slurs, and derogatory statements. For the most part this will cause embarrassment but if there is no glorification but rather a few instances where there is embarrassment, this shows the truth is being spoken. Another regulation a war story must meet to be called “truth” is explained in the quote, “In many cases a true war story cannot be believed. If you believe it, be skeptical...often crazy stuff is true and the normal stuff isn’t because the

normal stuff is necessary to make you believe the truly incredible craziness.”(Pg. 176, middle) What he is saying is if a war story can be believed then it probably did not happen. Most all true war stories have an element in them that is incredibly abnormal; to the point where you have to question its truth or not. This is the case when he remembers a situation when he was talking to Mitchell Saunders, a fellow soldier. Saunders says “This next part you won’t believe. You won’t and you know why?” The author responds “why?” Saunders replies “Because it happened; because every word is absolutely dead on true.”(Pg. 177) Saunders realizes that in the world, truth is so rare that when it is given to someone it is denied and downplayed as too far-fetched to be reality.

Tim in addition believed that a true war story is never ending. He means that a war story leaves a reader or listener unincorporated. It is imperfect, so does not follow the rules of a general story; so most of the time it does not end. Tim O’Brien goes on to describe a true war story as non-generalizing. What he means is that a true war story does not come to conclusions and does not analyze. He goes on to say that a “true” war story “If told right makes the stomach believe.”(Pg. 179) What he means is that if told, a war story would be so graphic, so tasteless, so repulsive, and so real that it would stir you as deep as your stomach. He goes on to say “And a true story tells the true story no matter how ugly it is.”(Pg. 181) He, in basics, is trying to say that a true war story does not alter the tale or cause a person to make additions or subtractions to the truth for sake of dramatization and beautification. His final thought was “in war you lose your sense of truth and perception so in a true story nothing is ever very true.” He basically means that when a person goes to war they lose touch with the world and the line between truth and lies becomes so blurred that it becomes almost impossible to tell them apart. So he means that because the person telling the story really doesn’t know the difference, then how can anything he said be true. Those were O’Brien’s views on what a true war story.

When looking at O’Brien’s standards of a war story, Hemingway did succeed in creating a true war story. However, it is hard to say because Hemingway never truly experienced war. He simply drove ambulances; but Tim did not say that a creator of a war story, as a requirement, had to go to war. Hemingway succeeds, in basics, because he almost fits O’Brien’s criteria perfectly. “In Our Time,” shows a weird allegiance to obscenity and evil. There is always cursing, racial slurs toward the Turkish and Jews and Indians, and derogatory statements about women and others. Then there is the scenes of death; for example the Indian suicides and the soldiers killed by the grenade. “Our Time” is filled with moments of evil and obscenity. At the same time this is a true war story because it embarrasses Hemingway. It shows him as a womanizer, a racist, a coward, and realist. Like described of a true war story, “In Our Time” is hard to believe. Some of the stories are just that far off and often it is the stories that are unbelievable that are the truth. Examples being the chapters, “Very Short Story” and “Soldier’s Home.” These stories are so true that they seem rare and fabricated but deep down are believable because the reader many times could put themselves in Krebs’s shoes and would do the same things he did. Also, Tim says a true war story doesn’t

seem to end. This is the case for many of the chapters. Example being when a character just dies or is jailed, then it is over, "The Revolutionist"; or of a character who simply runs into bad luck then the chapter ends, "A Very Short Story." It never really ends. Hemingway however often generalizes and presents analysis. He many times presents situations were a character does or acts in the general way that most soldier's are perceived to act; like rowdy and vulgar but in a way heroic. This is not O'Brien's view of a true war story but Hemingway works it in a way that you cannot help but believe him deep down in your stomach. A true war story tells the truth and Hemingway does this even though the truth is ugly. He seldom tells or speaks of happy endings because in actuality they do not exist, only in bull-shit fairy-tales. In "In Our Time" the characters happiness is irrelevant which is a sign of a true war story. A happy ending is rare in this book which is the case in life. In basics Hemingway succeeded in telling a true war story according to the terms set by O'Brien. There is one problem that presents itself. Is it possible for someone who did not go to war and experience battle to write a true war story? I believe no. So in that way Hemingway met O'Brien's standards but failed to meet mine. It seems almost idiotic to even think that someone who probably either was told or made up all his stories can be said to be telling a true war story. There are no true war stories; there are simply instances that speak to what you heard from someone else is what a true war story is.

Whether "In Our Time," by Ernest Hemingway, is a collection of true war stories or not was addressed, however by addressing this more questions present themselves. One final thing bothered me though. Is it possible that war in itself is truth? That society and all the things that come along with it are things simply that are implemented to mask the true nature of humans? I believe that soldiers do not fit in when they come home because they reached a level of truth about life that when reintroduced back to the lies of society that it is hard. It is true that a true war story cannot exist in society because we hold standards that are not true in themselves.

Jeff Gillespie Jr.

HONORABLE MENTION

Mother's Day

This is a picture of my dad, my two sisters, my brother and me. I'm the one with the plaid pajamas grabbing my dad's ear; my oldest sister Maria is wearing the turquoise pajamas my younger brother Marcus has the black and white shirt on while my sister Valarie is wearing a logo white shirt showing the peace sign

down. It is a picture we took after we surprised my mother for Mother's Day. I found this picture in a Nike shoe box with the rest of my family's photos. The reason that pictures are inside of a shoe basement got flooded when we moved houses and the pictures were in the basement. So we saved all the pictures that still



placed them inside of a shoe box. That explains why the picture is wrinkled and has bent corners. But I don't remember why the picture has tape on it; maybe it is because somebody probably had it hanging up somewhere (which is strange because nobody usually hangs up pictures in the house).

An hour before this picture was taken my mom walked into the house and her face had the expression as if she just won one million dollars. My father, sister and I surprised my mother with a clean house and breakfast for Mother's Day.

In the picture you can see the fatigue expression in my dad's face. He looks this way because we were cleaning late into the evening and woke up early to finish cleaning. The previous night we cleaned the kitchen and bathrooms; this seemed to be a lot of cleaning because we didn't do much cleaning. We had to start cleaning up late because my mother starts work at seven p.m. but she usually leaves the house around six thirty p.m. and gets off at seven a.m. however she usually don't return home until eight in the morning. This reminds me of when my sister and I had to walk one mile to school or get to school late everyday. We usually walked because we would get candy, chips and juice from the corner store and ate it on our way to school. When my mother got home she would take my brother and sister to pre-school and daycare. (My brother and sister would stay with the neighbor when my sister and I left for school)

A week before Mother's Day my mom was probably complaining how bad the house looked. She was probably giving out demands on what needed to be cleaned inside the house. Since my sister and I were the two oldest we had to do most of the cleaning but we usually "half-cleaned" (a term that my mother my mom used when we didn't clean up properly) everything we were supposed to clean. In the picture you can see that I'm holding a vacuum cleaner because it was left in my mother's room after I finished vacuuming it. (Vacuuming was my chore and I hated doing it). Seeing that vacuum cleaner brings me back to the day when I first started vacuuming and my mom discovered that I needed glasses. She was teaching me how to use and she would say "Get that dirt over there" and I would say "What dirt? There is no dirt over there." A week later I got my eyes checked and the doctor told me I needed glasses but I never wore them because I hated the pair she got me.

That morning we woke up at six thirty in the morning to complete the cleaning which we started the previous night. Since my mom usually comes into the house where the kitchen is we had the floor mopped (she later said it looked like a new floor). Also all of the dishes were clean except for the ones used by the food we had cooked. My dad cooked pancakes, grits, bacon, sausage and biscuits. The big breakfast we had probably explains why we looked so active in the picture; we always pour a lot of syrup on our pancakes so the sugar probably gave us so much energy. My dad cooked breakfast food, although he wasn't good at making lunch and dinner for us; so we usually made our own sandwiches for lunch and my mother made dinner before she went to work.

We finished cooking the breakfast with perfect timing. Once my younger brother and sister (Marcus and Valarie) had finished setting the table my mother walked into the house. She shrieked "OH MY GOD" with joy. She then ran to us and gave us all kisses; starting with my oldest sister then me and my younger sister and brother. She kissed us in order from oldest to youngest. Then the last kiss was for my father. While we were eating breakfast we all bragged about what we did to help clean the house. Then we gave her our mother's day cards while we ate breakfast. The drawings are in the background of the picture mine is at the top right hand corner, my older sister Maria is to the left of mine, my younger sister is the bottom left and my brother's picture is under mine. My oldest sister, Maria and I had a contest to see who will have the best Mother's Day gift overall. My card had a poem inside of red and blue stars that made a box. While on my older sister's card she had drawn a picture of my mother and a happy mother's day title. We ate breakfast and talked for about an hour because we usually don't eat together all the time.

Looking back at the picture now I clearly lost that contest. My sister's picture is way neater than mine. Maria was always better than me at the things we did together. In school we would always get awards but she would leave the award ceremony with way more awards than me. Or when we would have a running race she was faster than me. These things didn't make me jealous of her it just made me want to work harder so I can be better than her and anyone else that I competed with.

This idea of doing this for my mother was my sister's idea. It started when we started the competition of who would give my mother the best mother's day gift. So she said I'm going to make the card and clean the whole house by myself. My dad over heard the conversation and said that we can all clean up the house when my mother goes off to work later that night. And that is what we did. I hated the thought of cleaning up somebody else's mess. My house wasn't always clean due to my parents demanding the schedule. In the picture you can probably see there is a mess in closet; that is where we put some of the things that were on the floor in the closet door.

The chair is in the background because that it what I used to hang up the pictures. Since my mom was exhausted she really wanted to go to sleep; my father was also tired as well because he had to go to work later on that day. My father told me to hang the pictures up with some scotch tape. After I hung up the picture we got a camera and started to take pictures. My siblings and I show a very happy side by grabbing on my father and pointing at him. This pose shows happiness we were because we accomplished something as a family.

The significance of this picture is that my family came together (not as if we were separated or didn't like being around each other) to reach a goal that we set for ourselves. This goal was difficult to reach because my family including myself didn't like cleaning up anything. This picture shows us all together as one (except for my mom) because no we all do our own things in life. The only times we do get to come together is the holidays or if we just so happen to be watching television together. My sister Maria has her own family now, while I have been involved in sports, being out the house and now off to college, my brother is doing a lot of sports and my younger sister is a teenager so she doesn't pay us much mind. Also my mother and father are divorced and I don't see my dad too often. In the end my family has a very tight bond and will do anything in our power to make one another happy.

Justin Miller

~ HONORABLE MENTION ~

Individuality At a Cost

A democracy ruins any person's chance at becoming an individual. Many different forms of government have ways that make many of its peoples conform to its same standards. However, by influencing public education and the work force, democracy has had a greater impact on diminishing the chances of individuality surviving. Individuality will no longer exist if we are forced to continue to these conforming rules and regulations set for the by our democracy.

Public education requirements that are now in place are impeding individual thought. With the classroom consisting of twenty to thirty kids, the curriculum must be formed for the average student. Requiring these large groups of kids to comply in equal education, and individual intellect is not challenged and has no room to, or cannot, become stronger. Since our democracy's goal is to give all of its citizens an equal education, students that are above or below the standards are being wronged. With a child not being exposed to different levels in difficulty of classes until high school, a person's potential for academic growth is wasted. Standardized testing requires educators to teach students to write what a scorer wants to hear. Because of this, students rarely have to have a deep thought about what they are writing on. This also affects the individuality of teachers. Instead of teaching a curriculum that is made for their unique teaching style, educators must teach students what is needed so that they can pass these standardized tests. Instead of America having citizens who can have deep thought on certain topics, America has drones that spit out facts they were taught.

Our democracy has too much focus on people feeling good about themselves instead of actually getting work done. Now, a person's effort instead of their knowledge has a larger effect on grades. Whether a person understands or doesn't understand a topic does not matter as long as they showed that they tried to do their best. Consider the following example; two kids in a class both receive an A on their report cards. The first student got an A because he showed that he knew the material well, and mastered the subject. The second student barely understood what was being taught in the class and received very low test grades, but, still got an A because he tried his hardest. Because of this, both students feel good about themselves, and feel equal to the person next to them. Schools should re-evaluate their grading criteria because this does not benefit the students who do not understand the subject, but are still given a passing grade. My English teacher in high school told us that although GPAs are going up, SAT scores are decreasing. This shows that trying to make students feel better about themselves will hurt them in the long run.

Since our democracy has all of its citizens go through the same education, all of our people are expected to think in similar ways. There are unwritten laws about how to act in the work force that everyone is expected to know and comply with, such as dress code. Although it is never taught to us, we know not to wear shorts and sandals to the office and not to go to the beach wearing a \$500 suit. With everyone expected to act the same in these environments, it is unlikely that anyone can stick out of the crowd more than anyone else. Everything around us has brainwashed us in to knowing what is and isn't the way to act in certain situations that we have never experienced.

Democracy has also set up rules and regulations in the workforce that assist in the demise of individuality. Affirmative Action makes sure that people from different social and racial classes get jobs. This forces employers to look more at a person's heritage than his or her ability to do the job right. Because of this, many well qualified men and women cannot find jobs just because their social class is over represented in that field. Although Affirmative Action assists in making under-represented classes feel better about themselves. Productivity and perfection suffers because the best person for the job might not be hired because they're from a social class that is not needed to fill ethnic quotas. Affirmative Action makes the work force more like schools, where the focus is on making people feel better about themselves.

Individuality cannot exist when how people feel about themselves is a variable in education and in jobs. The attempts that our democracy is making to have its citizens feel equal to each other is killing everyone's chance at becoming an individual. Although we all like to feel as if we are equal to our peers, we would have more unique ideas and people if everyone were looked at according to their abilities and skills, and not their effort. In the Declaration of Independence, it states, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal." If this is true, then why does our government try so hard to remind us that we are equal?

Mismak Abebe

Art is an International Language

Art is a kind of language that serves as a means of communication between the artist and the viewer. It is a stylistic expression of the artist's feelings, thoughts and emotions to the world through images, words or actions, which makes it an international language. It is a way where the artist shares his ideas with other people by putting his work in writing or drawing. Even though all kinds of art play a significant role in people's daily life by raising questions, the kind of art that has to do with images, pictures or drawings play important roles in the artist's and the viewer's life because they can be expressed concisely without confusing the viewer. The value of art is that it is an international language that can be understood by everyone all around the world. Due to the fact that art is an international language, it opens people's minds, shows different perspectives and helps to diversify the different cultures among people.

What makes images an international language is that it could be understood by everybody all around the world, even without a sharing the same native language. It is a style of communication that everybody from the different backgrounds has in common because when people see an image of a drawing, they can understand it and know what the artist is trying to say without speaking the same verbal language as the artist. For example, if an artist writes a book in English and also paints a painting to represent his book, the book could only be read by people that can read and understand English. Consequently there are many people in the world who do not speak or understand English which would make the book inaccessible to those people. On the other hand, the painting could be understood by anybody who does or does not speak English because images can be understood by anybody who sees them and the viewer could get something out of it, which makes it an international language.

During the process of communication by using images, the artist is not the only person that is passing his ideas; the viewers also get to think in a creative way and put their own ideas while interpreting the painting. Because paintings do not have a set of one concrete meaning, it leaves places for the viewers to put their own idea and originality into what they think the painting means, which makes art an open international language. For example, when Simic was describing what he thought about the picture of the people standing in the middle of the street, he talked about them by making stories of what he thought they were doing. He said "they work together in the same neighborhood, but there is something else going on between them too" (Simic 571). When Simic said these things about the two people in the picture, he might be right or wrong about the people relationship because in the photo it does not say that they work in the same neighborhood. He just assumed they were neighbors from the way they were conversing among each other. And the person who took the picture might have taken that picture to show the relationship between the two people or for some other reason. But the thing about images is that they leave an open space for the viewer's ideas so, that

the viewers can to put their imagination in to the way they interpret the images which means that it could relate to anyone who is looking at it. It could also be understood by anyone which makes it international means of communication.

When an artist puts his ideas in his painting, he is expressing his ideas that he wants other people to share with him. And when the viewers see the painting, they are basically getting the idea of the artist through his art. So the artist and the viewers are communicating in the language of art. For example Allison mentioned in her essay that artists “stand outside the city gates and look back at a society” (Allison 639). Artists look at the society from the outside and they see things that other people are trying to ignore or do not see at all. Artists put the things that they think is being forgotten in the world in their drawing because it is easier to communicate with other people through art. It could be interpreted in the way the audience wants it to mean and people can also comprehend with images easily. So, when the artist puts the things that he saw about the society in the drawing, he is passing the message through his images; this will open people’s mind and make them aware of the things that is going on in their environment.

Most people do not appreciate the good things they have until they see what is going on in other places that are facing many problems. For example, the children in the movie *Born into Brothels* took pictures of the things around them. When some of the children explained what the pictures meant to them, they all described things that involve the way they live. For example, when Avijitti was explaining his thoughts about the pictures he took, he said “Even though it is sad, we must look at it because it is the truth”. This shows that the pictures hold a key to face the reality because pictures capture everything exactly the way it is without hiding anything. When people see the movie and the pictures that the children took, it makes a difference in the viewers mind because it will help the viewer understand how other people in the world live and it will make them appreciate their live better. The pictures serve the children as a way of explaining to the world about their lives. When people are aware of the children lives through their pictures, it can make people analyze about the different way the children live, but also the way other people live too. And when people analyze and become aware of the problems the children in the movie are facing, such as poverty, abuse and prostitution, they might feel bad for them and try to make a difference in those children’s lives in any way that they can. Because when people become aware of the problems, they might offer to help those kids to have a better life by giving them money or by taking them out of the environment they are living in. This makes art, a way of passing message and communication. In this situation the children would not have any other way of telling the world about their lives except through the pictures.

Most of the time people get so caught up in their daily life that they forget about some things that are really important. Those things might be disturbing and people do not like to see things that are grotesque. For example, the pictures in the “The Boston Photographs” by Nora Ephron’s were very disturbing, but at the same time very controversial because it showed a woman and a kid falling down the fire escape where the woman ends up dying. Most people who wrote to the news paper said that the newspaper editors should not

have published those pictures because it showed a woman while she is on her way to her death. But as Nora Ephron has mentioned “had she survived the fall, no one would have protested; the pictures would have had a completely different impact” (Ephron 682). If the woman has survived, people would have thought that it was a miracle and that it was alright to put it on the same newspaper. People mostly want to see things that portray happy and good things in the newspaper, which is not the way life works. As much as love and happiness exists in this world, their also exists hatred, death, violence, and poverty. Even though some people might think those things do not exist or happen very often, they do. So pictures like in “The Boston Photographs” essay reminds people how the world really works- when people see the photo they are communicating with it in some way which reminds them of different perspectives of life. This will result in making those people think about the other dark side of life that contains misery and death.

Artists put things that are controversial in their drawing without hiding anything and when the audience sees those drawings, it creates different emotions in them and it might even change the way they thought about different things. For example, in some countries people are not allowed to talk negatively about their government. They cannot write about how they feel about their government because they will get in trouble. So, they use different cartoon drawings that look funny but at the same time that represents some of the unfair things that the government is doing to show the reader that something needs to be done about the government, which is creative and smart way of expressing feelings and making people aware of their surroundings. So, in this case the cartoon drawing are used by the artists to communicate with the people of the country that something needs to be done about the government because that could be the only way the artists could pass the message to the reader without getting themselves in trouble. And these cartoon characters in the newspapers open the reader’s eyes and make them think about the things that needs change in the society and this will force them to take actions.

Pictures or images not only act as a tool of sharing ideas or changing the way people think, they also help blend the different cultures in the society. Most of the pictures or drawings reflect something about the artist’s cultures such as the way people dress, some kind of cultural food, the way people celebrate different occasions or some other activities that are connected with the individuals habits. For example, the hip hop culture especially the way people dress has been able to influence people not only in America, but also in other parts of the world in many ways. The reason why the hip-hop clothes have been able to have great affect in many people is that the different pictures of very popular hip-hop artists have been able to attract the attention of many people. And as people thought that the way those hip-hop artists dressed signified individuality, they started dressing like the artists. Currently many people wear clothes that represent the hip-hop culture all around the world, which mainly originated from a group of African American people in America. This shows that the hip-hop culture by the help of pictures have been able to diversify a culture that was of certain group of people into many groups of people.

While some point out the negative aspects of art such as how it could influence people to do negative things if interpreted wrongly, the value of art as an international language overpowers. Yet the negative aspects should be looked closely, particularly in regards of audience. For example, if an artist portrays violence in his pictures such as people shooting each other with guns, it might make young people think that violence is glorified. As most young kids do not analyze things thoroughly, they might think it is cool to do things that they saw in the picture, which will lead to think that violence is acceptable. So, if art is not used carefully to pass positive messages, it can lead to destructive behaviors.

Thus, art shows the reality without holding back anything and it is a concise way of expressing the thoughts of the artist to the audience. It creates a direct communication between the artist and the viewer by acting as an international language that is common all around the world. Despite the diversity in the world it creates common ground. If art did not exist in the world, it would be difficult to communicate or express thoughts internationally. And without such communication, there would be little to challenge people in their daily life.

Alexander Ashley

Adaptation of the Mind and Tongue

Since the dawn of time, every living creature has had to adapt in order to survive. Every now and then, we are placed into situations where we must either learn to adapt to a new environment or leave before we are overwhelmed by confusion and are rendered powerless. The greatest ability any person can have is the ability to adapt to change. In this rapidly changing, technological world we live in, one cannot afford to be close-minded and unwilling to step out of his or her comfort zone.

For 4 years I simultaneously attended two *very* different high schools: Weaver High School and The Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts. Weaver and the Academy are only similar because they are both institutes of learning, but the intricate traits that differentiate them are vast in many ways. Weaver High is built on students of predominantly Black and Jamaican heritage, while the Academy consists of students from several different racial and religious backgrounds. Weaver is located in the north end of Hartford, which is where most of the Blacks and Jamaicans in Hartford are located. The Academy on the other hand is located on the south end of Hartford, where most of the Hispanics are located, yet the majority of students that attended the Academy were neither Black nor Hispanic, but in fact White.

When people are sheltered from the outside world, the world around them becomes a little “box” that they live in. But, when those people are taken out of their “box” and are placed in the real world where there is diversity and the ideals of millions of other people, many of them will lose their minds. Some people have the ability to adapt to their new environment and learn how to survive, while others will be lost and helpless, begging to go home. It is not easy transitioning from a familiar environment to a foreign one, but to make the situation more interesting and challenging for myself was the fact that I was going back and forth from one environment to the next on a daily basis.

Weaver and the Academy were like two completely different extremes: Weaver being the school of ignorant, close-minded “urban” people, and the Academy being the school of open, supportive, artsy people. My first day at the Academy was full of surprises. The first one was when I stepped on to campus and noticed the abundance of white people that attended the school. Many of them were just socializing, a few people were laying around on the grass and one kid was playing an acoustic guitar next to a tree. I thought I was surrounded by hippies until a group of white girls walked by sounding like stereotypical “valley girls”/“cheerleaders.” Hearing “like, oh my God...” in a real conversation was like seeing one man walk up to another man and slap him with a white glove to challenge him to a duel. The reaction was the same, “They actually do that in real life?”

The next shock I received was when I noticed the *unusual* abundance of homosexuals that attended the school. Men acting like little girls, and girls dressing like men; I never encountered so many gay people in

one place before. Then the realization that I would be attending school with them for the next four years almost blew my mind. I come from a Jamaican family and Jamaicans are known for being very homophobic, so even though I personally had no problem with gay people, I felt uneasy associating myself with them.

Being one of the few black people in my classes, I felt like I was the odd one out. At the same time, I felt like the only normal person in my class because, growing up in my “box” (the north end of Hartford), I had a hard time being comfortable around people that were so different than I was. Over time though, through several class exercises, projects and plays, I started to become more flexible and started to interact more with my peers of contrasting backgrounds and interests. Over the years I attended the Academy, I started to become more of who I *really* was. I became more open minded to different peoples, ideals, religions, and I started to broaden my tastes in music and different forms of entertainment.

The more I grew at the Academy, the more I felt as if I didn’t belong at Weaver. I soon started to disassociate myself with people who I deemed too ignorant and kept more to myself. I started to feel like I couldn’t truly express myself the way I wanted to at Weaver; there were certain things that I couldn’t say or do there that I could normally get away with at the Academy. I couldn’t randomly hang out with any of my gay or white friends without people giving us dirty looks, or assuming that I was gay myself. I couldn’t listen to the music that my friends at the Academy got me into too loudly because I knew that if anyone at Weaver heard what I was listening to they would tease me. My interests were broadening and my level of awareness and maturity became much higher than my peers at Weaver. Unfortunately, in public high schools, teenagers are ridiculed and looked down upon for rising above their peers. The best way to avoid conflict is to stay out of the spotlight and avoid drawing attention to oneself.

By my junior year, I eventually started to hate going to Weaver. I wished that I could *only* attend the Academy because the ignorance at Weaver started to literally make me sick. I never knew succumbing to the ignorance of adolescence would actually hurt inside. It seemed like every month another girl would get pregnant, and because they were mothers-to-be, they all of a sudden felt as if they have transcended to a new level of maturity. Students had the nerve to skip their classes, get into fights, and come to school with *only* a pen and a notepad and wonder why they *still* can’t graduate. There actually were a few students that were legally able to drink that still went to the school! These are the disgraceful things that I began to notice at Weaver, and that’s when I realized that it wasn’t the environment for me. It’s like how Frederick Douglass began to detest living in his environment as he became more educated. I can relate to Douglass when he says, learning “had given me a view of my wretched condition, without the remedy. It opened my eyes to the horrible pit, but to no ladder upon which to get out. In the moments of agony, I envied my fellow-slaves for their stupidity.” Like me, he even felt sorry for his peers because they were so unaware of how horrible they were *truly* living.

It’s ironic that Weaver was a reflection of the environment that I spent most of my life growing up in; but the Academy, which was extremely new and different to me in every way, became my new comfort

zone. I could have easily dropped out of the Academy and continued to attend Weaver full time instead of seeing it through. I'm glad that I did stick it out, because I was able to get a dual perspective of high school life. I feel like I'm much better prepared to step into the world because of such an experience. Like I said earlier, the best ability any person can have is the ability to adapt to change and adaptation is all about learning to deal with unfamiliar situations. Natural selection doesn't only pertain to the evolution of species, but also to the evolution of perspectives and ideals. If one is able to adapt to the new customs and ideals of successful people, then they too will have the opportunity to be successful. When a generation of people can adapt to fruitful ideals and ways of life, then they too will become wiser and can leave their ignorance in the past.

Jordan Bennett

Against War in Iraq

We should not have gone to war with Iraq because innocent lives are being lost, for a cause not even Americans know. When we decided to go to war our decision was not only based on helping the Iraqi people; partly, because no one knows the real reasons for going to war. The reasons originally given were not the real reasons for going to war. When America made the decision to go to war with Iraq, there were two main reasons given that caused America to push through with the decision: eliminating weapons of mass destruction, and to help promote democracy.

“The reason most often given by President Bush for going to war with Iraq is to reduce the risk of a WMD (weapons of mass destruction) attack on the United States. Such an attack would be devastating, and vigorous action is appropriate to prevent it” (www.alternet.org). Supposedly, eliminating weapons of mass destruction in Iraq has been a big concern, while other countries who pose a bigger threat are not a concern.

“Both North Korea and Pakistan pose greater WMD threats to the United States than Iraq for several reasons. Pakistan has several dozen nuclear warheads along with missiles and planes capable of delivering them hundreds of miles away; it is also suspected of having chemical weapons. North Korea is thought to possess sufficient plutonium to produce one to two nuclear devices along with the capacity to manufacture several more; it also has a large chemical weapons stockpile and a wide array of ballistic missiles. Iraq, by contrast, possesses no nuclear weapons today and is thought to be several years away from producing any, even under the best of circumstances” (www.alternet.org).

Both North Korea and Pakistan have bigger weapons of mass destruction arsenals than Iraq, and Britain is not far behind, also having weapons of mass destruction. Iraq is not even close to coming up with weapons of mass destruction. Iraq is so far away from actually achieving weapons of mass destruction that there was no reason to even go to war with this country. Another interesting fact is that when America decided to go to war with Iraq (a country with no weapons of mass destruction), it was, and still is an ally of Pakistan (a country with a big arsenal of weapons of mass destruction). By American standards, any country believed to have weapons of mass destruction is considered an enemy because President Bush believes everyone is either with us or against us. It seems to me, that if weapons of mass destruction was one of the real causes of war, America would be at war with Pakistan, North Korea, or even Britain, but definitely not Iraq.

Another reason that caused America to push through with the decision was its hope to bring democracy. Democracy is a form of government in which the supreme power is vested in the people. A

system where people rule, make laws, and elect officials to govern their country. “Many of the top leaders of the current administration...happily embraced Hussein’s dictatorship in the 1980’s when Iraq was an enemy of our enemy (Iran)” (www.alternet.org), and even after by “continuing the practice of supplying Iraq with secret intelligence data” (www.alternet.org). As you can see, America claims to both dislike dictatorships and push forward with the spread of democracy. This is a lie because America has developed close relationships with “the post-Soviet dictatorships in Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan -- all ruled by Stalinist dictators who once served the Soviet empire” (www.alternet.com), and become close allies with both Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. The truth is, America does not hate dictatorships and does not want to push through with the democracy. When America made the decision to go to war with Iraq, it was not really to push forward with democracy; it was just another excuse to go to war.

Some people in opposition, who may feel that these are not the only reasons that we went to war, believe that we went to war to help a country in need, whose people were being killed. Although this may be true, the Kurds, who were rapidly being assassinated by Saddam Hussein, stopped getting killed in 2002, a year before America decided to go to war with Iraq. When the Kurds were in need of help, we did nothing. It was only after the killing slowed down and almost ended that America decided on war. The crazy part is that the weapons that Saddam and the rest of his men used to kill the Kurds were given to Iraq by America during the Iran-Iraq war, when Iraq was an ally. America has a habit of doing things like this, watching people get killed and not doing anything to stop it. Like what they are doing right now in Darfur, where so many people are being killed. In the end, the Kurdish killing had nothing to do with the decision for America to go to war on Iraq.

Soldiers are being killed for a cause that not even they themselves know. Bush makes it seem as if America is being a good Samaritan by helping out Iraq, although the only thing we are helping them do is kill their people. America has neither completed nor worked toward either of their two goals for entering into war with Iraq. Some people believe “other motives must be at work. Control of Iraq could give the United States control over the Persian Gulf area and two-thirds of the world's oil -- an unrivaled prize in the historic human struggle for power and wealth”(www.alternet.org). No one knows the real reasons for going into war with Iraq. We should not be at war with a country for an unknown cause, because innocent lives are being lost for a reason no one knows.

Muna Bhandari

Women and their interests...

Ever since humans discovered sports, there have always been stereotypes for those who are not necessarily good at it; among those people, women have appear to be inferior at sports. So this was where the phrase “Throwing like a girl” emerged. Some people accept the fact that girls cannot throw whereas some people do not accept it. I am among the few of those people who believe the fact that girls can not throw. It is surprising for some people to face the fact that I believe in this because I am a woman as well and it sounds like I am stereotyping myself.

Most girls can not throw simply because they do not want to learn how to throw, simply because they prefer to go shopping or do other typical things that girls do; For instance, they would rather get their nails and makeup done instead of playing sports. I believe that playing sports is only for boys since they are manly enough to handle it. Men define manly as someone who protects smaller and weaker people such as women and someone who is strong, fast and muscular. For example when a girl breaks her nail it’s like the end of the world for her. She will cry and complain about the little crack in her nail until she gets is fixed thus this proves my theory that girls are not manly enough to handle sports.

Even throughout their childhood when compared to boys’, girls have different views towards what they want to do with their free time. While boys prefer to play with cars, trucks, video games and other violent toys, girls just want to lay back and play with Barbie dolls or make teddy bears in a Build A Bear shop. Even when both girls and boys go shopping with their parents, girls want to go over to the toy section where they can buy little Barbie houses to play around with. This shows how girls logically want to become a housewife when they grow older. They also show a lot of interest in playing around with fake dishes in their fake doll kitchen and other domestic chores. While the boys play outside throwing balls, or any other sports that they are interested in. Boys also have an interest of playing outside more than girls have.

Girls naturally act and behave differently than guys do. Girls talk, walk and act a certain way whereas boys are just vulgar. Girls are also very gentle and polite which leaves them with no time to fool around playing sports. It is also very harmful for girls to get involved in sports because they might end up getting injured, resulting in a lot of pain. Since girls are very sensitive to physical injuries and mental stress; they would not be able to get over it.

Another female trait is love of domestic works, such as cooking, cleaning and taking care of their family. We females prepare to become a perfect housewife. It is common for the women in the family to teach their daughters to wash dishes, clothes, cook and clean the house, Girls are basically raised to become great housewives. Males also treat girls like how they are suppose to be treated. They understand that girls are here in this world just for them to cook, clean, take care of the family and work around the house. It is evident

that girls want to become that great wife so that the husband would stick with them for a long period of time. Females always want to make their husband and everyone around them happy that is also one of the reasons why God created girls. God did not create women so they can be just like men and play sports. He or she created male and female so they can balance each other out. Men are good in sports whereas women are good in domestic works.

Not only does a sport require skills and risk, but also energy and strength. Girls are physically structured differently than guys, they naturally act tough and stronger than girls. If a girl in our society acts as tough as a boy, she will often be criticized a lot by people just because girls are considered to be weaker than males. For example, “She is well aware that she’s not looking graceful and reacts murderously to the condescending tone in his voice (“that’s more like it, honey!”) (Fallows 421). This quote also proves my argument that women do not know how to throw at all. The evidence shows that the husband is trying not to make his wife feel bad about the fact that she can not throw. Looking graceful in sports means knowing and being able to play sports perfectly, but as we all know that women do not even know how to position to throw the ball at all. Sports and women just can not be in one sentence together at all because they do not go well together.

Although almost all of the family members are males in my family who are very passionate about sports, I was told not to ever get involved in it. My mother taught me to how to cook, clean the house and do laundry so I would make a perfect housewife when I grew older. She also used to tell me that if I was involved in manly activities or sports no man would ever want to marry me. So she always made sure that I was not into any kinds of sports instead she made me take dance lessons, so I would be more girly. Even though I was always taught not to play sports I did try to play baseball, and throughout my own personal experience I can definitely say that I can not throw as well as the males in my family or males in general.

Even famous and well recognized females can not throw; look at Hillary Clinton throwing as the first lady at the baseball game in 1994, “As the picture was taken, she was in the middle of an action that can only be described as throwing like a girl” (416). This quote clearly states that even well known females can not throw because we are socially taught not to get involved in rough activities such as sports. In my opinion for her reputation she should not want to get involved in sports because being a first lady means being gentle and playing sports is not really considered as being someone that is gentle. We also consider famous and well known people as someone we look up to. Especially for a first lady she was a national a role model, and as a female myself I would not want to look up to someone who plays rough sports; I would rather look up to someone who is like a typical housewife that my mother would want me to look up to.

In my thoughts, I believe that girls just do not have any personal interest in participating in sports, simply because it is not part of their daily life. I also believe that if girls started to have an interest in sports they would take the fun out of sports. Overall woman do not have any potential to play any sports because their time is too precious to be spent on something that is not meant to be.

The satire above is meant to be strong and to convince the reader to act on what they read. When one writes in the satirical style it is similar to reverse psychology in the way that it will make people argue more about what they read. This reverse psychology method makes the reader go against the writer's argument; for instance in Swift's essay "A Modest Proposal" he says, "I rather recommend buying the children alive, and dressing them hot from the knife as we do roasting pigs" (Swift 829). This quote shows how the author is trying to get what he wants from the reader by using satire. Swift is trying to get the government of England to realize the situation of poverty in Ireland and act upon it. He wants the government of England to ease up on the taxes, send them food, and provide more job opportunities so they do not have to go through the situation that he wrote in his essay. A satirical essay is more influential rather than a straightforward form of an essay because it convinces the reader to ponder on what the author is trying to convey in his argument to spur them towards action.

Earnest engagement and vicious wit are both great ways to write an essay however, one of these ways to write an essay gets the readers attention more often. Vicious wit is more convincing to read. It also captures new audience because it gets everyone talking about the story. For instance, Jonathan Swift's essay "A Modest Proposal" made me want to read more of his essays because of the form he used that made his essay interesting and unique. In my opinion, his essay held a hidden meaning so the British would act upon the situation in Ireland which made the reader look below the surface.

Satirical essay helps the reader to argue with what the author is trying to prove. In Swift's essay "A Modest Proposal" he argues, "I am assured by our merchants, that a boy or a girl before twelve years old is no salable commodity; and even when they come to this age they will not yield above 3^l. Or 3^l. 2s. 6d. At most on the exchange; which cannot turn to account either to the parents or kingdom, the charge of nutriment and rags having been at least four times that value" (Swift 827). This quote displays the hidden meaning inside the essay, where he wants to get attention of the British to inform them that the poverty in Ireland is getting worse everyday. This also shows how desperately they are in need, so they decide to use the children in order to survive their daily life. This is trying to show the British that it's more profitable for the Irish to sell the children who are under 12 because it costs even more to take care of them and raise them.

Straightforward essays just give out direct meaning of the story, which doesn't make you think as much as you should be thinking while reading. For instance in "Throwing like a Girl" the author basically tell us the meaning of the essay. His essay has a clear meaning to what he is trying to tell us. His essay is full of investigative, methodical, scientific and informational ideas. "Throwing like a girl" did not really make me think, it also did not make me want to argue with the author's opinion. In Fallows essay he says, "It's not gender that makes the difference in how they throw" this quote does not make the reader want to argue against what he is saying. It is obvious that everyone would agree that it does not matter what gender you are, the only thing that matter is how much experience you have playing sports. Straightforward essays are usually

boring to read because as you get towards the end, you can clearly have an idea of what the author is trying to say. It also does not convince the reader to act upon the author's goal.

By merging the satirical style into Fallows essay, it goes from a bland straightforward essay, to one that is more convincing to people and is likely to spur people into action which may result in an argument. I think the sarcastic way of writing an essay helps the readers spur into an action. For instance in part one of this essay I wrote "Throwing like a girl" in a satirical form, and I can prove my argument that the satirical form of the essay is better by saying that it would get women talking after they read my essay . However if they read the straightforward form of it, they would most likely not argue against his points. As mentioned in my essay, "Girls always want to make their husband and everyone around them happy that is also one of the reasons why god created girls. God did not create woman so they can be just like men and play sports" (Bhandari 2). This satirical quote will cause an argument between the readers on a number of grounds, which will drag the reader's attention towards the main issue; these thoughts may change the reader's mind towards women and god. The reader is then most likely to disagree with the author's view about god and women because people believe in different beliefs.

The satirical style brings forth a unique way of writing an essay to prove one's argument inside the essay. So In my opinion, satirical way of writing is more informational than a straightforward essay. It also captures the reader's unseen ideas on what the author is trying to express. Satirical essay helps the reader think over the argument made by the writer, which makes the reading much more fascinating than a plain piece of writing such as straightforward essay. After reading a satirical piece of work a reader might get aggravated but be encouraged to do something about the situation in the essay.

Jocelyn Cerda

Truth within Art

Even the most direct of realist would not divulge in certain truths. People are often in denial of particular events that take place in our society. They do this either to avoid negative thoughts, or to prevent anymore events of similar matter to occur. Having this mindset causes people to become more ignorant and naïve; making them forget what are the real truths to this world. Staring at photographs of bombings in Hiroshima, visions of starving children, even the events of 9/11 are all occurrences that people would never want to admit happening. The most difficult concept to realize is that these events did occur and a majority chooses not to live in such a reality. Photography is truth. It has the responsibility to portray the truth to people to display what we do not want to normally think about each day. Art gives people further incentive to discuss truth and become stronger realists.

Not knowing how something looks like or feels like always causes fear within a person. An anonymous writer once stated that “Experience comes with age”, whoever this writer was probably was not familiar with true experience. Experience comes from exposure, how much a person witnesses in their life time and what they do. Those who have really seen it all or done it all are truly experienced. The children from Calcutta, (*Born Into Brothels*) were around the ages of nine through thirteen. Those children have witnessed events that children here in America would not normally witness on day to day bases. Until the age of sixteen I have never witnessed anything of big importance, life changing if at that. I always used to contemplate about death, always asked myself “What does death look like, how does it feel?” I was very naive for my age; my mother, I remember always tried to protect me from life. A lot of my friends would know so much more than I did about rape, sex, death I would question them of course and that would be followed by the looks of non belief and “You don’t know what molested means”? I thought about this frequently until my great grandmother had died and I saw her body lying in the coffin. Reality had hit me, not only was she dead but I was seeing her lifeless; for the first time in my life I had an experience that dealt with death. My curiosity was sustained for a short while but still satisfied. Photography fills in a void; it answers just about any question that its viewers may have. *Born into Brothels*, is an example of photography letting the viewers experience an idea directly. The photos that each child took demonstrated how a child born into prostitution really lived like. Questions that covered poverty and innocence were definitely answered through the children’s work. Gour, one of the children featured in the film even mentions, “I want to show pictures of how people live in the city. I want to put across the behavior of man”. Photography gives experience to those who have not seen it yet up close, to prevent or eliminate any uncertainty that one has with a certain subject. Experiencing life can be defined as living life to the fullest. As human beings we should experience just about everything from start to finish, life to death; if we stay without experience we forget what truly happens

among us. To believe that we are invincible is only a thought that can stay with us for only a period of time because reality sets in eventually; and for those who are not as aware it will only come as a shock to them. Becoming true realist is possibly the only answer to prevent ignorance. In order to prevent ignorance people must be introduced or exposed to reality and through art (photographs) that can be achieved. As I witnessed the true face of death, it was easier for me to accept things as they come. Even if they were minor like failure or perhaps embarrassment it is simply easier with knowledge.

The photograph of the woman falling in Nora Ephron's essay expresses reality bluntly. The photograph purposely portrays this to prove what really occurs in society. The importance of truth within art is to remind the viewer that they live in a less than perfect world, that event such as the woman falling does happen, and that we should become aware. Not aware by becoming overly protective of weak fire escapes but aware that death does occur. For instance, the Holocaust, was one of the most terrifying and devastating incidents in history. Many people remember the horrific things that had happened; others deny it of ever occurring. Why would this happen, is it because the Nazis were trying to keep Germany in good favor or not wanting to admit to such an appalling crime? It is incredibly hard to cope with, the knowledge of such an event; it is mainly because of guilt that persons have such a quandary with telling the truth. Though we would never admit it, we would always feel responsible for things that happen in our society. For instance, like in the holocaust photographers would take grotesque pictures of emaciated bodies; a horrific sight for the viewer. Unbearable even for the stronger realist. Why wouldn't people want to get reality exposed more, why can't we tell the future generations that how death looks like or what is rape? What makes it so difficult to accept life the way it was created; humans were around for centuries why are we still discussing an issue that has no real solution? "I recognize that printing pictures of corpses raises all sorts of problems about taste and titillation and sensationalism; the fact is however that people die" (682). Nora Ephron stated this in her essay, people are so eager to put up a fight about showing pictures of death when they know that they too will die some day. Photographs show reality to its viewers, whether it's a picture of children playing or a horrible car accident; photography is life. Art was not made to teach a lesson, there is not a lesson of the day in real life. It comes at you hard, it is unpredictable and no one ever knows what is going to happen to them in the past, present or future. A photograph is only a reminder of what life is it does not necessarily have to display the bad things in life. There are many aspects of life to enjoy, and yes there are a few bleak moments but its only reality. In order to become a stronger person, learning to accept life the way it was created is the easiest way to follow.

Ephron trusts that "photojournalism is often more powerful than written journalism (683)". In agreement, words do not relate to the reader as much as a photograph would. In written journalism, the reader would often "sugar-coat" while writing an article. Defining something as horrid such as rape would never really be found in a newspaper or magazine. The journalist would never truly describe word for word the scenario exactly how it occurred. Why? Since the readers would feel offended and disturbed by such a

subject. Conceivably a photograph of rape, will become twice as disturbing because the photographer has caught the essence of rape. Twice as many arguments will occur, but the idea is described in a way that written journalism will never be able to accomplish. Capturing detail using certain artistic methods can convey all truths. Truth cannot be half told or made sweeter; it can only be shown exactly how it happens. With writing an author can only tell how poorly society has gotten, but with photography one can only show you and the viewer can interpret how badly society has truly gotten. Photographs are incapable of “sugar-coating” though much interpretation is left for the viewer all analysis would compare with one another or perhaps revolve around the same topic. There would always be an argument on to how much truth the world need not know but it is imperative that it be shown in such cases in the documentary knowing the truth will only change peoples’ views. For instance, making that documentary and showing people what really goes on in the lives of the children, it has a strong affect on its viewers. While watching it, and observing the photographs on a personal level I was touched yet shocked at the directness of the film. They did not censor any of the foul language, they were able to capture the line of prostitutes, they showed what poverty really looked like and even the babies without any clothing. Written words are no comparison to the raw coverage that the children’s photographs provided. Photography does not need to prove a point the directness of the picture displayed is all it needs. A person does not need to write a five page essay just to describe a concept. They do not need to write at all when we have art (photography) at our very fingertips. The truth in photography is what makes a human being become so aware about their society, being able to envision death without the use of “sweetened” words but with a raw photograph portraying that very subject. Photographers put themselves on the line so that their audiences are aware, to deny their pictures, denying their truth it has become useless. With only words one cannot even describe the intensity of such a situation. Any one is capable of visualizing images in their minds, but cannot imagine every detail that a photograph provides. Often writers would use fancy wording Latinate, Germanic, and Anglo-Saxon, but photographs show it like it is.

What does one think while looking at a photograph of someone falling from a building; a photograph that was taken just twenty seconds before someone’s death? What would they say? From experience in my household a picture of someone dangling from a fifty five story building will have my mother saying “Oh my God, that is so sad I can’t look at that no more... ugh no”. I would simply shrug and stare at the photo, taking a glance detail at a time. Then I would wonder if this happened to me how would people react to my photograph? I would hope that they realize that it can happen to anyone, randomly of course; no one really ever can guess when it is their time to die. If anyone did witness that horrific event, would they suddenly change their perspective on reality? Experiencing something can change someone’s life forever, views would change as well I know for a fact if I so happened to survive that fifty story fall my view on life would change completely. Becoming a realist, would be the next step of course since I experienced such a great fall (hypothetically speaking) I would not even begin thinking naïve thoughts any more. That is what photography does; make people experience things that they may have never experienced before. It

makes them live through that moment even if the viewer only glances at it for a while. Photography makes people see the truth without any added sugar; it does not need any that is not its purpose. Photography creates realist out of humans, exposes them to reality so no one will no longer live in denial.

Annee Chau

The Price of Expression

Art is an infinite medium used to convey emotions that are buried within the core of a person. Its self-expression can be used to make a point, to symbolize an idea, or to depict a hidden meaning that leaves the viewer wondering about its significance. Its expressive ability identifies one's creative characteristics and judgments. The versatility of art is that anyone can use different interpretations to describe how one feels; the secrets that lingers inside, the anger that boils, or that happiness that makes one glow. The value of art lies in the eyes of the beholder and its viewer; it can freeze a moment of remembrance or tell an unknown secret. But it can also relate to information that the public wants to ignore. So what happens when art becomes less of an art and its priority is no longer an impact to society, but is now a marketing business? Consequently, art's significance has lost its value. Art is meant to grip reality in its finest moments, but when reality is replaced by sheltered messages, where does the truth lie? The power of self-expression within art is the impact of truth that is revealed in the honesty of the creator who creates the gripping image that haunts the mind or the tragic words that hits the heart.

The symbolic meaning behind art is the creative use that expresses ones ideas to reveal the truth that society fears to accept. It depicts an image that society wants to perceive in real life, but one that is feared to be un-accepting within ones unconscious reality (Johnny Lam). Thoughts and emotions can be seen within a captured photograph, a hand-drawn image, the free-verse of writings, or even the way a plate of food is presented. It can also be enclosed within a frame with protective glass for one's own private viewing or spray painted on a street wall for the world to see. Art gives the artist the ability to affect the emotions of those who come across it. Within this creativeness, there is no right or wrong art, just endless possibilities. It is a powerful medium that links fear with the truth.

The ability to create objects can range from a sketch of a flower to an abstract design with numerous twists and oddly looking details. One's opinion of art may vary from person to person, although, one that perceives a particular art may or may not have the same opinion as that of the next person. The interpretation is anything but concrete. Art is meant for society to realize things that were never realized before; it moves the viewer emotionally and mentally as they take a step back and admire its captivating beauty. The feelings that rises makes one feel overpowered by the hidden meaning left to be understood. As stated by Allison, it is within one's own bare hands that signifies what provokes themselves with the greatest power of a heartfelt vision (635). Art arouses the inner emotions to come alive as the sheltered mold that one hides itself in is broken. It is the identity of life that society is trying to understand, if not ignore.

The spotlight of art is not always as glamorous as it may seem; it has moments when it transitions from beauty to gruesomeness. The beastly side of art lies within the context of its shock value. Art shows

how brutal certain aspects of life truly are; one can not hide or dodge it. Photographs can reveal the heartache of a broken family or a life stolen from an innocent child as within *Born into Brothels*. The children are the photographers taking in images of their surroundings in a way that mirrors the truth of their future. Contained within the film are images that disturb its viewers. The magic of a camera is that it has the power to capture death seconds before a life ends, but the controversy that surrounds “The Boston Photographs” is that the viewers argue about the privacy of the woman’s death. The major issue was that newspapers saw it as “sensational photos of rescue attempt that failed,” they ignored the fact that a woman died and showed no regards to how the public will respond to the images being broadcasted (Ephron 679). “The Boston Photographs” exposes the power of how quickly a life can be taken away as it brings the viewer that much closer to witnessing the reality of life and death. The hard truth is that an image of death acknowledges the public that life should not be taken for granted. The way that an image is created escapes morals that take the viewer in awe.

The lens of a camera captures human frailty in action. Glimpses of poverty and the struggle to earn money through prostitution as seen in *Born into Brothels*, is a heart wrenching movie that provokes remorse in the more fortunate’s eyes. Zana Briski takes the opportunity to make a difference for a group of children with the magic of film. Like Allison, Briski captivates “The wonder and astonishment of the despised and ignored” as she brought the beauty of India, the way that was never seen before; its heartache and its beauty through the eyes of its children (Allison 638). As images of the red light district freezes the still-life of pain and guilt of prostitution, it grasps the reality of a cruel life that they can not run away from. The photographs are a token of reassurance to perhaps steer the future for the innocents into a different direction. It is a constant reminder of the truth. These moments provide stories of a difficult life and their aim at surviving it. The photos that were taken compel others to witness the suffering that society themselves lack to bring to attention.

The value of art loses its importance as it transforms into another fulfilling object that feeds the public. What they want to see is being shown, what they want to hear is being said. The bittersweet images of the unknown identities of life are those that many have turn their heads at and looked away. It is these kinds of images that produces a strong impact upon the mind of the viewer by pointing out the truth, that life is filled with pain and guilt and there is no escaping it. But how far is too far when art’s main objective is now focused on profits and becomes attached to a hefty price tag? It no longer is art. When artists are seeking money, they turn commercial values of their works. They are in desperation so are willing to write happy endings and paint portraits of sunsets for a lousy check. The significance of art is to make a statement, to allow others to see the profound events that go on within society, but when the value is gone, where will the truth lie?

Art is not always a clear picture that can be understood by a single glance. When the media takes art into its own hands, they limit the content of art and attach a censorship. With censorship there comes the

distortion of information. Their actual meanings now become a story of lies and deception. Within “The Boston Photographs,” the attention illustrated the claim of potential hazard of fire escapes and even raised questions about living in the ghetto (Ephron 679) The funny thing is that the photographs were far from representing fire escapes, it captured the essence of death in the last seconds but the media empathized on the conditions of how dangerous it is to live in the ghetto areas when it is clear that the setting was nowhere near it. Stories that want to be publicized are often made to fit the idealistic standards of the media. The standards are that editors must censor pictures of explicit content and withhold images of death. At times, actual information is twisted so that a message will go out with more excitement and controversy.

The reality is that everyone is afraid of the truth, but in this case society will go against all odds to stray away from it even if it means to pretend that life is anything but perfect. Billboards with images of happy families are blown up to cover society’s insecurities. The truth is that there are families with broken homes all across the globe and as much as they try to cover up this not-so-perfect world, it will not stop the violence or prevent poverty from happening. It is within these creations that Allison states she “...choose subjects to force the congregation to look at what they try so stubbornly to pretend is not happening...combining the horribly serious with the absurd or funny” (638). It is the tragedies that society strays away from; the violence, the innocents, the victims, and the chaos. In order to survive in this corrupted society, everything comes with a price. Nobody wants to see pictures of car crashes or read novels that deal with the raping of little girls, so as a result, authors are willing to wander into a fantasy-like world where there are lands of make-believe and unicorns.

Contradicting arguments that certain images cannot be broadcasted such as that of the apartment fire in “The Boston Photographs” as it reflects death in living color, but then to see images of similar circumstances across the sea is acceptable? American society has this very unusual outlook on the way that different people and their incidents are viewed; as long as that person being shown is not an “American,” it makes it alright that everyone sees the naked body of an innocent girl running from America’s bombing. Where was her privacy? Why does America humor themselves with images and articles that shows the most brutal acts but cannot allow a showing of an open casket American soldier? The fact that America tries to be nothing but the strongest and the powerful, fails to come eye to eye with the value of art. It allows publicizing images from around the world but refuses to denounce its own citizens? Art is free expression of oneself: it is their story, their words and their images that creates anything but ordinary. The controversy that rises is one that relates back to images of death and those of explicit nudity like that of exposing a bare breast.

The media represents art for its commercial value by hiding the truth and filling in the gaps with faulty information. Painting objects to sell for money instead of admiring the story that it tells within the colors and its objects that portray a piece of the artist. Concocting a novel that is anything but reality; according to Allison, “The world is meaner than we admit, larger and more astonishing. Strength appears in the most desperate figures, tragedy when we have no reason to expect it” (639). Artists and writers value their

works with a price tag, drawing anything that looks appealing rather than throwing their soul onto the canvas; writing stories that sugar-coat fantasies and humors tragedy as the truth is too harmful. Society resists acknowledging the pain, the sorrow, and the desperate attempt to survive. The truth is that the world is not what the media is portraying.

The public has a strong influence on the way that self-expression is presented. To justify art is to say that it should have no limit, no permanent rule to be followed. On the other hand, the media has set strong contradicting limits that regards to what can and cannot be aired. Take for example, an image of America's own men being shot down by the enemy, there is no way that that photograph will be shown across the country, however a photo of the enemy will be more than likely headlined in front covers of newspapers with titles that cannot even be imagined. Society challenges what they claim to be right and what is wrong although they themselves are hypocrites to the idea of self-expression.

As stated by Allison, "Art should provoke more questions than answers and, most of all, should make us think about what we rarely want to think about at all" (638). It is the kind of thoughts that society is scared to recognize, as the truth is much too hard to handle. Society would rather believe that they live in a fantasy and be oblivious to the hatred and violent acts that surrounds them than accepting it. Deception is much easier to bear. What one feels inside is expressed through the identity of words, in drawings, in art. We take a piece of ourselves: our emotions, our thoughts, and we glue it down on paper for which that is our concrete message for the world to see. Interpretations are never meant to be similar; they can be complete opposites in regards to the creator's actual message but it sparks the viewer a connection. It is powerful.

Art has no wrong or right answer. It is directly from how the looker perceives the images or writing to mean. It is what moves them to determine the influential aspects of the underlying story. According to Allison, art in its greatest form is one that impacts its viewer to understand something that they just did not understand before (637). These questions cause the looker to find it within himself the answer. It is the power that art holds that questions everything and perhaps does not even have an answer. To uncover the meaning behind another person's art should leave one pondering away at all unanswered questions. There is no right answer but by making one feel unsure at the correct answer, questions themselves to look deeper, perhaps there is no right answer just multiple meanings (Allison 636). Art is not something that can be understood quickly, it takes patience and the ability to interpret ones own thoughts into an original idea.

The price of expression has the ability to cause arguments and fear as it captivates its lookers by the attraction of vivid colors or the authentic words free flowing from pen to paper. Some images are disturbing, but it fascinates in one's mind as the story behind it tells an unforgettable tale. It is the words and the pictures that contribute to society's ability to informally tell the world their story; the objects that moves them or the pain that won't subside. Artists are motivated by personal accounts to send different messages. While the vast majority would rather stare at an image of beauty and perfection, it is those that stand out that receive the

most controversy. The purpose of art is to expand one's mind and open up to the realism of good and bad; it is about the value of art, the truth that shocks.

Chisela Chisanga

Art, What Art Thou?

Over the years, art has taken on numerous definitions; it no longer carries just its standard definition, people have each developed their own interpretations and perceptions of art. As art has evolved, so have people's ideas of art and their thoughts on it, thus creating a wide range of what art can be and do for society. But, what exactly is art? How do people define it and what significance does it hold? Is it something that can provoke uncertainty in people, or one of the few things that can expose a person's true colors? Can art evoke nostalgia and reveal the truth at the same time? There are limitless questions and answers that pertain to art and its relevance. Art plays an important role in society today because it emphasizes diversity and individuality, people find that through art they are able to be and express themselves freely. The fact that the definition of art is ambiguous in a sense is one of the many reasons why art plays a significant role in people's lives and celebrated by society. Art has no standard value-- art influences people differently, it influences them as individuals not as a community and as a result people determine the value of art as individuals. Art's ability to shape-shift into countless definitions renders its value to conform to different people based on who they are; the value of art is based on how a person perceives art itself.

Art is seen as a way that people can reveal themselves, communicate with others, assert their opinions, or even tell a story. Art can be seen in almost anything, it can be a photograph, a poem, a dance routine, a sculpture or even an article of clothing. In "The Life of Images," Charles Simic presents his interpretations of art and how he is able to relate to old photographs. His interpretation of art is that art can bring about "nostalgia for a time and place that one did not know" (Simic 572). Simic strongly believes that art is something that can transport him into the past so vividly he is able to live in moments captured by photographs (Simic 572). Simic analyzes photographs by making up stories based on the details that appear in them; in order for him to live in the moments of photographs, Simic applies the photograph to himself and his life. To him, the value of art lies in its power to stop time and take him to whole new times and places. He is able to connect with the old photographs by recognizing every aspect of the moments captured and drawing conclusions based on his opinions and what he can read from the photographs. Not everyone would agree with Simic's views on art and its values, they wouldn't be able to create the same stories that Simic does because everybody sees pieces of art differently. He interprets old photographs as an individual and his judgments are shaped by his experiences. Simic proves that there is no right or wrong way when it comes to interpreting art and its value; he expresses his feelings about art wholeheartedly without worrying about any opposition from society.

Society cannot set universal standards on what art is or its meaning. Art is not like a math problem that requires one correct answer; it is much like a puzzle that has infinite solutions. Art takes on various

meanings in people just like it evokes different emotions and responses from them. An artist creates a piece of art by putting all his feelings and thoughts in it and the outcome is a broad variety that allows people to derive whatever thoughts and theories they can. The conclusions that people draw when they look at art are based on their lives, their experiences and their emotions. One would find sculptured art to be a meaningless manipulation of metal, but another would look at the same piece and feel connected to it, and that they can relate to it. Viewers' interpretations of art pieces sometimes do not even come close to the artist's intended message, but that is the beauty of art, explanations of art are boundless.

Art is not meant to be understood right there and then. According to Dorothy Allison in "This Is Our World," the best kind of art is one that you see but do not understand. When it comes to good art, one has to seriously ponder it and hope that they can understand something that they did not understand before (Allison 637). Art is a mystery. Even the artists' true feelings on the piece of art are a mystery. Art presents something that its viewers do not know about but want to understand. People want to figure out art because they are curious to know what secrets it holds. They are intrigued by what the artist has to say through the art piece. Mystery is important to today's society, it adds excitement and liveliness to people's lives. People get fulfillment when they are able to figure out the mystery behind a piece of art and that satisfactory feeling stays with them. Society values the mystery of art and the impression that it leaves on them.

Art has the ability to bring out people's unique perceptions on not only art but everything around them. Art can bring out or represent a person's personality; it can bring out a side to a person that they themselves did not know about. According to Dorothy Allison, "art is supposed to have—the power to provoke...;" people are both scared of and drawn to the fact that art provokes their senses and provokes uncertainty in them (Allison 635). There are certain attributes in art that people unconsciously pick on, those attributes cause people to feel or think a certain way and that is what they are either attracted to or try to avoid. Art does "make everyone a little nervous and unsure" of themselves and their feelings (Allison 636). Through art, artists can expose their true selves and what is on their minds. Art triggers distinct reactions and emotions in people, and artists want their art to do that. It is a scary thought for the readers to know that just by looking at or listening to a piece of art, one is actually staring straight into the artist's soul, staring at a direct product of the artist. People are able to decipher a little part of the artist from their art, they can relate to some aspects of the art piece and the artist himself. Art sparks a fear in people, a fear that "if 'they' say anything about what 'they' see in a work of art 'they' will reveal more about 'themselves' than the artist"(Allison 650). It is only natural that people are afraid of exposing themselves through their interpretations of art; they believe that if artists disclose themselves through art, then they would totally expose themselves by interpreting it. A person with a tormenting childhood will holdback from making it known that he sees a troubled child in a painting because it is very personal to him. It's like Alison puts it, every time people look at art, they "run the risk of exposing 'their' secret selves, what 'they' know and what 'they' fear 'they' do not know, and of course incidentally what it is 'they' truly fear" (Allison 639). Art sparks

uncertainty in people, they are uncertain on the how to react to art itself and the feeling it evokes in them. They don't know how their reactions to art will affect them and their relationships with people. Art doesn't only spark off fear in people, it is capable of bringing about all kinds of feelings that people may or may not choose to embrace.

The truth is not something that everyone wants to see, but art clearly displays the truth with no regards to the criticisms it might receive. There are many things that people do not want to admit, such as the fact that “the world is meaner than we admit, larger and more astonishing” (Allison 639). In Zana Briski and Ross Kauffman's documentary *Born into Brothels: Calcutta's Red Light Kids*, Truth is revealed in photographs taken by the children in Calcutta, India. The truth is seen through the eyes of children, the photographs taken by them reveal the fear that they live in, fear of ending up prostitutes or drug addicts like their parents. The documentary shows the mean side of the world that people do not want to accept. Truth is able to live and be seen through art; it gives life to art just like art gives it life. Although people try to avoid it, truth is there, art exposes it and every time viewers look at art they see it, whether they choose to acknowledge it or not. The fact that art displays the truth is a both a reason why people are attracted to it and why they hide from it. Some claim that art is provocative because it shows them exactly what they do not want to see, either the truth about themselves or the world around them. Nora Ephron's “The Boston Photographs” explores her viewpoint on the truth that photojournalism portrays. Photojournalism is a perfect example of art that people either strongly disagree or agree with. The Boston photographs display “death in action, of that split second when luck runs out, and it is impossible to look at them without feeling their extraordinary impact...” (Ephron 679). Some newspaper readers strongly disagreed with the publication of the photographs of the woman facing death, saying it is a violation of the woman's privacy. But that is photojournalism, that is the truth, and the truth is that things like that happen everywhere and can happen anytime. If the story was published without the photographs, not a lot of people would have cared that a woman just lost her life by slipping off the fire escape. The photographs made the article powerful; the truth was made vivid as it was accompanied by a powerful and vivid photograph. Truth is something that people all around the world value, truth made present in art makes art valuable to them.

While it is clear that art is perceived differently by people, some might argue that it has standard values such as educational value, commercial value, historical value, and shock value. Their argument might include the fact that because art has a standard value all around the world that is what makes it a universal language. For some, art is a universal language in a sense that it carries a specific message across, a message that the artist intended to convey as he created the piece of art. A photograph of a child wailing in the middle of the street by herself will most likely evoke the feeling of sadness to all its viewers. And that is why art is perceived as a universal language with a standard definition; it can provoke the same emotions and reactions from people. But, reasons to why the child in the photograph is crying may vary; the fact that the viewers do not know what caused such an image leads to them each interpreting it differently. Art has numerous values

in this diverse world and it is a universal language in spite of the numerous interpretations it gets. It unites people by giving them each something different to bring to the table and adds color to life. Art is appreciated for its contribution to society and it continues to grow, creating more opportunities for people to express themselves.

Art has no concrete definition; it has different meanings for people as individuals. Art allows people to express themselves freely and communicate with others. It can even be traced back to earlier times when drawings were used to communicate. Stories are told through art and those stories are passed down for generations because art can live forever. Through art people are able to reveal who they really are inside just like art can bring out inner most secrets that people try to hide about themselves. Art has the power to act as a voice of truth and reason among people in a community. Art is significant in the sense that it is simple and yet so complex; society has grown accustomed to many values of art that have surfaced overtime. The world today rejoices diversity and individuality, everywhere one goes, one is bound to find that no two people are the same or share the same values. Art helps keep that diversity strong and growing. People have the freedom to express themselves in whatever type of art they choose, and that in a way contributes to their voicing of the distinctive meanings they find in art. Art is present in every aspect of life, and it is no wonder that people are able to develop their own perception on the value of art. Their opinions on art differentiate them from the next person. Art makes people think about not only what they already know but also about their surroundings. It allows them to reevaluate themselves and see what they can change about themselves. Their views on art are created mainly based on their backgrounds, pasts and their environments. In today's society there are no limitations on how people generate their personal values that are affected by art. Individuals each have their own unique perceptions of art that represent them in many ways.

Alison Corbett

Small Yellow Boat

I chose a painting by Paul Resika. It was the first one that caught my eye. It reminded me of back home, where I spent each and everyday for the last four years. It reminded me of my high school. My high school was located right on Long Island Sound in New Haven. It was an aquaculture vocational school, so we got to learn about boating, fishing, and fish production. Everyday my friends and I would walk down our ¼ mile campus admiring the small boats, the students built, in the water. In this painting by Resika there is a small yellow boat docked by a boathouse. The boat looks like one of the dories we used to learn sail. Each spring we painted them bright colors just as the one in the photograph was painted a bright yellow. The water is a greenish blue, just like back home. New Haven Harbor had never a place I wanted to go for a swim in. The boathouse reminds me of our boat shop, where we kept the life jackets and the sails. It's an oil painting and everything sort of blends together.

This painting wasn't of my high school, "Sound School" but I'm sure it was a small boat yard or something very similar. Art has a different meaning to everyone. Everyone sees a boathouse when they look at this picture but not everyone is reminded of the same thing. I was reminded of my high school days and the walks we used to take down the docks. This painting made me appreciate what I had even more than I already did.

The painting had caught my eye when I first walked into the room because of the small yellow boat. It right of way reminded me of home. Maybe this was because I am missing my friends and miss going to school there. I am excited to be going back home this afternoon. What one interoperates from art is based really based on one's history and the mood they are in. I think if I wasn't missing being home and never went to the high school I did, I would have passed right by to the next painting.

Danisha Daniel

I'll Be Whoever They Want Me to Be

As people grow and discover who they truly are through their walks of life, they tend to step back and wonder how they got to a particular place in life. Was it through personal hard work and tireless determination or through the influences and pressures of those around them? The truth is that people today try so hard to conform to the beliefs of their peers that they lose sight of who they truly are. Not only that, but people today also go the extra mile to act according to the beliefs and ideas of the people who surround them. Therefore, they do not think for themselves or act for themselves, making them lesser individuals. No one truly knows who they are because everyone feels as though they must act according to the predilections of others.

People lose connection with themselves due to the pressure to conform. The social order today is always pushing the general public to buy a new brand of something or to taste a different flavor of something else. This may seem to give them a variety of options, but in reality both a person's original choice and a "new and improved" choice are still the same. For example, if a teen girl were to say that she owned a Dooney and Burke designer bag, it would be accepted a great deal more by her peers than if she said she purchased a cheap pleather bag from Kohl's. However, if the bags have the same features and can serve the same purpose, there should not be anything wrong with purchasing the pleather bag because they are both bags!

The worst part about this fact is the immediate reactivity to the influences around us. Most people readily accept the opinions made by someone other than themselves. This is because they want to gain acceptance in the worlds of others around them. The beliefs and ideas of those around us mean a great deal to most people today. However, this does not make us any better people individually. To conform is to lose oneself in the shadow of others. People no longer have their sense of individuality because they feed off of the tendencies of a person or a particular group of people.

People's beliefs are often influenced by the tendencies of a social group such as a high school clique. Most modern day teenagers in high school dive into their high school careers as different people from different middle schools and very different backgrounds. Most high school teens will do whatever it takes to fit in and be considered part of the in-crowd. Some will try to do so by *any means necessary*. If this means stepping out of themselves and becoming exactly like their peers, they will do so, as long as there is a place where they know that they belong. In C.S. Lewis's "Screwtape Proposes a Toast," Screwtape states that "conformity to the social environment, at first merely instinctive or even mechanical...now becomes an unacknowledged creed or ideal of Togetherness or Being Like Folks" (Lewis 119). People who choose to change the way they truly are as individuals do it so naturally that conforming has transformed itself into an

unwritten rule. Being like someone else gives them the feeling of togetherness. It also makes people feel as though they have the capabilities and personalities that will enable them to be better individuals, when in fact it just makes them similar to those people.

Conforming also causes the conformers to act according to the beliefs of others. Let us now revisit that high school clique. After becoming “in with the in-crowd” a young teen feels accepted and feels that he or she finally belongs to a group. Now, it is only a matter of *staying* in. Soon, the members of this clique (especially the most popular of the bunch) have a huge impact on the young teen’s life: what they do, what they say, how they say it, what they wear, where they go, etc. For a while, it seems as though the young teen is finally a big important person within the group. However, the influences of the popular teen within that clique have turned the young teen into someone completely different than who they were originally. He or she has become a slightly less prominent person within the clique. Not only that, but he or she suddenly finds themselves hanging onto the “fearless leader’s” every word. The young teen finds that he or she depends very much only on the opinions of his or her leader. Basically, the young teen no longer thinks or acts unless the “fearless leader” sees it suitable for he or she to do so, but the young teen is unaware of the fact that the “fearless leader” is aspiring to be up to date with what is popular on a larger scale; for example, the style of a celebrity. This proves how ongoing the trend of conformity is in every social environment.

This situation is not only seen in high schools. People in every environment feel that the need is so great to conform and fit in to the right social setting that they choose to let the opinions of those with more influence over them take over their entire lives and they can no longer be the person they are individually. Mark Twain says, referring to people today, “if he would prosper, he must train with the majority; in matters of large moment...he must think and feel with the bulk of his neighbors, or suffer damage in his social standing and in his business prosperities” (Twain 854). So, not only do people have to conform to everything surrounding them today, but also, when they manage to conform and fit into their social climates, they eventually lose who they are entirely because the opinions of others take preference over their own opinions. They can no longer think for themselves or act on their own thoughts. They also find themselves constantly consulting the “more influential” people in their social climate in order to make proper judgments. This proves that they have stepped entirely out of themselves and conform only in order to please everyone other than themselves.

The funny thing about the current social situation mentioned above is that most people either completely deny this happening to them, or they are completely unaware of the effect it has on them personally. No one realizes that by circumstances in or out of their control, they have succeeded in letting themselves become a conformed machine, living and breathing off of the opinions and beliefs of someone other than themselves. Why is it that a person becomes who someone else wants him or her to become? It is a shame that people must accept themselves based on the opinions of others before they accept themselves

based on how they feel inside. Conforming people's beliefs and actions to suit others will only leave them with less knowledge of their own individuality.

Stephan Darden

Are We Illiterate?

What is literacy? Why is it important? Is it important? In fact, without it we would be nothing. The traditional definition of literacy is considered to be *the ability to read and write, or the ability to use language to read, write, listen, and speak.*” (wikipedia) That’s true under certain circumstances, but I believe literacy has many aspects. It’s more than just knowing how to speak a certain language or being able to read and write. It’s our posture, how we carry ourselves, knowing what to wear, and understanding context. It means being able to communicate in a literate society in a way that is acceptable in others’ sight.

There are many different kinds of literacies available. Though some are absolutely necessary, we can choose which ones we want to learn. Since every person is different and every individual may be in a different state of mind, everyone will know and learn different literacies throughout their lifetime, as there are different ones for different situations. Which one we choose depends distinctively on our setting and circumstances, as these can directly affect our attitude and state of mind.

Every time setting changes, a new literacy must be learned. In order to do this, one has to be open-minded and susceptible to change, as they may have a hard time adjusting. I have experienced this many times in the past. My most difficult change would have to be when I started attending school in the inner city. I am originally from Hamden, CT, which is more rural and laid back. As a child I was extremely proper; I was a “momma’s boy” and I had never taken a bus to school. So, having to attend school in New Haven, CT was very awkward for me.

On the first day of school, I had no friends, since all the people I knew attended school in Hamden! I was a loner and that can be quite overwhelming. No child wants to have no friends. Of course, over time, I made some friends and some of them seemed cool. But certain others didn’t! They would make fun of how I talked since I never really used slang and they would make fun of my clothes as they weren’t so “loose fitting”. I felt like a total loser and I hated my mom for making me change schools.

That’s a problem many kids have these days. We all think our parents are wrong whenever they make decisions for us. I say “we” because I still consider myself somewhat of a child inside. Though adults make mistakes just as kids do, for the most part, they do know what’s best for us. I speak from experience because I thank my mother for making me attend school in New Haven! Not only was the land polluted at the school I wanted to go to but Betsy Ross, the school I did attend, sort of made me who I am today.

Attending school in New Haven opened my eyes to numerous things; some good and some bad. I saw things that no kid in Hamden ever saw in their life; not at that age anyway! I was introduced to fighting and drugs, though I didn’t partake in them. I saw the so-called “hood” for the first time! Betsy Ross is also an arts school so I saw different forms of dance and expression. That prepared me for life outside of Hamden!

Eventually I would've had to experience it anyway. I'm glad it was sooner than later. As I said, to learn a new literacy, one must be susceptible to change. Now I am able to adapt to almost any environment I come across.

That wasn't the only time I've had to adapt. It happened again and again and again. I elevated to high school, got my first cell phone, had my first interview, got my first job/check, and even became more comfortable around the opposite sex. The list goes on and on. I'm even adapting now; attending college! Having to come up with a new thesis every week is NO JOKE, though it'll be helpful in the long run.

It's important to change as much as possible as long as you don't forget your morals so that you change in the right way. Morals and values play a big part in this matter as well. Some people aren't allowed to learn certain literacies because of morals such as religion. In high school, two of my friends were 7th Day Adventists! As a result, they were very different from other students. I would ask questions like why didn't they ever wear jewelry or were they going to the party on Friday night. They would reply "no" because, according to their religion, they can't wear jewelry and can't be away from their house on Friday nights as they considered it to be the Sabbath. They chose not to attend parties and go to clubs at all. That's one literacy they chose not to learn.

Literacy is merely a matter of comfort. As said earlier, it means acting in a way that is acceptable by others so that you do not feel left out. Being comfortable in a given environment is learning a new literacy. The twins might have felt odd if they went to a party as they hadn't attended one before. You can't thrive with only the ones you have already learned. If this were the case, we would all be miserable and isolated. We wouldn't be able to function because everyone would think that what we were doing was weird or unacceptable, such as when I switched school districts, I felt horrible and people would laugh at me because I didn't know the New Haven literacy. But I eventually succumbed to it and made new friends.

Though *that* change was voluntary, some literacies are compulsory! We need them to survive and to be comfortable in our primary environment. First, you must learn the native language. This is to be able to communicate with others in an unwritten manner. Second, you must know how to write so that you can communicate. Next, you must know context! This is vital for not only communicating, but understanding your other in performing specified actions. If you were asked the time, you would naturally look at your watch.

Those are the basics, but I believe literacy is present in social environments as well. We must know how to dress for the occasion. If someone worked at a law firm, they wouldn't show up in jean shorts and flip flops. They would wear a suit or a blouse and skirt; be presentable in that context. You must also know how to carry yourself. If a girl is wearing a skirt, she shouldn't sit with her legs open; they should be closed or crossed. These small things make all the difference. We don't think about them as persons because of context. We automatically know what is right, wrong, and acceptable in the mind of others. To us, it's basic knowledge.

We know what's acceptable in the majority of our available settings. Though, many think they do on the basis of what they see others doing, such as on the street or in the media. They try to imitate the people they see and make a fool of themselves. That's why it's better to be yourself than to try to be someone else; something you're not. Learning a new literacy takes time and patience. You can't just jump into it thinking you know everything about it. Personally, I would rather a person go on what they know and be different than me than for them to try to be like me and do a bad job. And as a side effect, I can learn new things from you that may help me out. In return I might be able to show you a thing or two.

Our society is like a large network. We are all interconnected and share common bonds in the larger culture. Though many people don't know or realize it, literacy bonds us together so that we can function as a people. In sociological terms, without literacy we would be a latent dysfunction. This means that we had multiple unintentional problems because we were unable to communicate.

We didn't become this way by accident! Our society is a product of hundreds of years of planning, research, and innovation, meaning that literacy has been around for quite a while. But when you look around, you can obviously see that we are nowhere near perfect. Literacy is knowledge and knowledge is a lifelong pursuit. How much you pursue is what determines your literacy!

Sheryl De La Cruz

Who Are You To Tell Me Who I Am?

No one really knows who they are because everyone feels like they must act according to other people's liking. I have found myself in this situation all the time, as I am sure many other people have also. There are times when I don't know how to act anymore because it's hard to figure out who I am. This usually happens when I am around people like my family for example, where I have to think twice about my actions and what I say. It places me in a situation where I am not exactly sure about what is right and what is wrong. The only times that feel that I am being myself is when I am comfortable, whether it'd be around certain people or in specific situations. I believe that I am being myself when I don't have to think too much about my actions or if I am offending other people.

In the Mark Twain article, "Corn-pone Opinions," there are a few examples of how people act so that they are accepted by others. "If he must prosper, he must train with the majority; in matters of large moment, like politics and religion, he must think and feel with the bulk of his neighbors, or suffer damage in his social standing and his business prosperities" (Twain 854). In other words, people have made themselves a label and in order for them to keep that label they have to act according to its standards. For example, the "bad girl" from school must not associate with well-behaved students in order to keep the "bad girl" label. If she were to start hanging out with students who never break the rules or if she suddenly started behaving herself, she will not be looked upon as the "bad girl" anymore because she is not acting according to her label. The "bad girl" usually doesn't stop living up to her label because in order for her friends to accept her she must act according to what they know her as.

I find myself in situations where I realize that I don't act the same with my friends as I do around my parents/family. If I were to act the same way around my family as I do my friends, they would reject me. I have to limit my personality for them to approve of me. I have younger cousins and siblings that look up to me, as well as older family members that expect me to do right. The fear of disappointing people who care about me and people who I care about is what makes it hard to be me. I remember a few years ago when I had started getting into trouble. It was the time when I would sneak out of my house to be with boys and my friends. I would have my friends over my house when there was nobody home, I would go places and tell my mom I was somewhere I really wasn't. To me, all of this seemed perfectly normal because I was acting like a "teenager" and all my friends were doing it. When my parents found out about how I was acting behind their backs, they felt ashamed of having me as a daughter. I wasn't the person they thought I was or wanted me to be. The family members who looked up to me as a role model for their children didn't want their kids talking to me or me being around them in fear of me "corrupting" their children. After finally moving on from this "stage" in my life I worked really hard to get the "role model" image back. I wanted my family to accept me

again because I wasn't a happy person when the people I cared about disapproved of me. I worked hard, focused in school, and got accepted into college. I proved to everybody that I was better than what they thought I was. I am considered a "role model" again. I needed their approval in order for me to approve of myself.

Another example is that I wouldn't act the same with my friends if my boyfriend was to be around me at the time. The fact is I have always gotten along with boys more than I do girls. I act differently around them than I do when I am with my boyfriend. If he knew how I act around my friends, he would probably feel uncomfortable about my actions. I wouldn't have a boyfriend. The fear of disappointing people is a big disadvantage for me. The responsibility of making others happy controls my life whether I like it not.

An example mentioned in Twain's article is how fashion takes part in how people act.

A new thing in costume appears--- the flaring hoopskirt, for example--- and the passers-by are shocked, and the irreverent laugh. Six months later everybody is reconciled; the fashion has established itself; it is admired, now, and no one laughs. Even the woman who refuses from first to last to wear the hoopskirt comes under that law and is its slave; she could not wear the skirt and have her own approval; and that she *must* have, she could not help herself. But as our self-approval has its source in but one place and not elsewhere--- the approval of other people. (Twain 855)

I believe this is true. When people feel like no one approves of who they are, they think that they must change. They change because they don't feel confident about themselves anymore, they are insecure and start to question who they are as people. When they change for other people's liking, they are not being themselves any more. They imitate and follow the crowd because it is what's approved by other individuals. "We are creatures of outside influences; as a rule we do not think, we only imitate" (Twain 855). An example of this is when I moved from New York City to New London, CT. I was halfway through my middle school years when I left New York City. Before I moved to New London, I never worried much about how I dressed, what type of shoes I wore, and I never wore make-up. When I got to New London I was exposed to a way of life that was not my own. I always worried more about school than about the way I looked. At my new school people got horrible grades in class, but they looked good doing it. I started to pay more attention to what type of brand name sneakers I was going to wear the following day than worrying about whether or not I was going to pass that math test. I spent more time making sure my make-up and outfit looked good than I would spend time studying. I wasn't doing as well as I should be in my school work, but it didn't matter because people accepted me.

Unfortunately the world we live in is very discriminatory and those who give in to the pressures that surround them must act according to its liking in order to subsist. We feel as though we must have other's

approval in order to approve of ourselves. When we don't have self-approval we feel like failures, failure to people who look up to us, and to people who expect great things from us.

Johann Delgado

Shift Change at Pratt and Whitney

This picture, even though it is quite ordinary, brings some of my interest to it. For one thing, it is a black and white photograph, a really good one also because it takes time and effort to develop a high quality picture like this one in the dark room, and I am speaking from personal experience. Its contrast is perfect, not too dark or light around the edges. It also does not have any black spots. It looks like whoever developed this photograph was a true pioneer of the dark room, and knew everything about his chemicals from beginning to end.

There are two buildings in this picture: one on the left and one on the right. There are also two smaller ones around the horizon of this picture, one of them hidden behind the trees. Between the two big buildings, there is a walkway in which several men are walking towards the horizon. All of the men are in their work clothes: long-sleeve shirt, pants, and dark shoes. Some of them even have belts around their shirts. A few are engaged in conversation while a some are hanging back, especially the two guys at the bottom left corner of the picture. The windows' reflections from the sun are aimed to the ground, making awkward shapes as the men walk by. They are heading to work, and this is the usual routine of an industrial workplace. When I look at this, a sound effect of a blowing train whistle signaling lunchtime or the end of the day blares in my head, just like in those old-time movies.

The picture has a lot of importance. It is illustrating everyday life as it is; nothing too abstract about it. Its symmetrical image makes it seem like we are all living in a world where all is the same and ordinary. Art's purpose is to convey a message, no matter in what language is shown, because in the end, it is universal. The meaning of art may be different in every person, but its display has one thing in common: it is always saying something.

Michelle da Fonte

The Potential of Pictures

Pictures have much more depth than words in the media because they convey messages quicker and they are easier to register in the mind. Street signs for this reason, usually have pictures, a picture of a person walking not only provides a universal understanding; but also, when a person is driving quickly, she processes a reaction to slow down quicker from a picture than from words. Televisions, newspapers and magazines use pictures to inform viewers. There is a picture in almost every article in the newspaper. As an illustration of what the article is about, pictures stand side-by-side next to the most important articles. Publishing images of death, or near-death, is appropriate and crucial to include in media and news. Powerful pictures grasp the reader's attention by provoking interest in the story. Pictures teach the public about dangers like playing with fire, the irresponsible use of weapons, and hate crimes. These pictures affect the readers more than written words. Though some viewers do not like seeing the pictures, they should still look at them to learn, because otherwise they would be ignorant of what causes death. The pictures are also not "invading the privacy of death," for one has nothing left to be ashamed of (Ephron 679). Only the family of the victim should be given the opportunity to refuse the broadcast of a picture. The family should still reconsider refusing, for the family member's death can be used as a learning device for the young and the fearless.

Photographs are the best way to get a person to see or know what another is seeing or feeling. One can know how another is feeling through the innate human trait, empathy. Some things cannot be described in words, but pictures are captivating and hold much information. As stated by John Schauble, "One powerful image speaks as loudly as a page of text" (Schauble). The purpose of distributing photos of the dead in the media is not meant to be offensive to anyone. The picture's power is used to make a statement for the reader/viewer that some accidents can be prevented.

The ideal purpose of printing a graphic picture is to make audiences aware of the dangers that can unexpectedly happen to them. Schauble also agrees that, "If the publication of a photograph of a car accident or footage of the grief of distressed relatives prompts just one driver to slow down or stop using their mobile telephone or think twice about drinking and driving, then it should be published" (Schauble). In my Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) class, I watched a graphic commercial called "No Seatbelt, No Excuse." In the commercial, four teenagers are driving in a car, all with seatbelts, except a boyfriend in the back seat (No Seatbelt). The four get into a minor car accident where the car hits two other cars. The boyfriend is thrown around the car, killing himself, his girlfriend, and another girl in the passenger seat (No Seatbelt). This commercial was extremely graphic and difficult to watch for those in my EMT class and those who I have shown, but I know I have not ridden in a car since without everyone in it wearing a seatbelt. The class's reaction was initially a gasp and then pure silence. Afterwards, during the class discussion, many

commented that they would wear seatbelts, and try to get others in the car with them to do so. This commercial is not aired in the United States, but only in Europe. I was angry that this video was not released on television here in America. If I had never seen this video, who knows if I would ever have been persuaded to wear my seatbelt, or force others to? In the case of an accident, I would no longer be alive, or someone I love might be killed by my being thrown around. Because of this commercial, I prevent the death of myself and others in the car with me.

Pictures of accidents that can relate to the viewer can help them make the right choices. Car crashes due to drunk drivers including pictures of cars engulfed in flames with people who have jumped out, are strikingly persuasive images. Perhaps we still have a great majority of drunk drivers because we are not showing gruesome enough pictures of a car crash's effects on a human body. Showing pictures of mangled cars on fire are not enough to persuade an audience of humans; but pictures of a mangled body are. The average teenager feels invincible, but coming to reality with death in pictures can sharply weigh down their fearlessness. It is perfectly all right for the audience to feel fear upon seeing pictures, because the possibility of saving a future life is a greater goal than protecting the audience's feelings. It is the empathy the watcher feels upon seeing photos with violence or with death. The person seeing the picture puts him or herself in the position of the dead person, vicariously feeling what the person in the photo might have been feeling. It is the "what if it happened to me?" realization that pictures place on the reader. It is a horrible idea to think about, no doubt, but death happens to everyone. This is why it is better to learn from others' mistakes than to ignore the deaths around us and be ignorant.

Seeing disturbing pictures helps move people to fight against what is making those in the picture suffer. Jacob Riis is a good example of this. He was born in Ribe, Denmark, in 1849 (Simkin). Being born into poverty himself, was self driven to spread the word about the inner-city slums (Simkin). Being a photographer, he took pictures of poor living conditions, where there were dozens living in a single room. His book "was seen by Theodore Roosevelt, the New York Police Commissioner, and he had the city police lodging houses that were featured in the book closed down" (Simkin). There are also charitable foundations that use photographs to communicate their message. For instance, there are those "help the starving" funds. These funds have commercials that show the audience depressing pictures of a child and a mother clutching onto each other crying, and a picture of a child who has no meat on her bones (Drought). These pictures show the fear someone has of dying, but they are used to spread the knowledge that there are people hurting and starving somewhere. By showing this, it pushes the viewer to act on saving those children like Riis's pictures called the attention of Americans to close down slums.

There was an argument in "The Boston Photographs," by Nora Ephron, that cameras were "invading the privacy of death" (Ephron 679). If this is true, then why do we not get defensive about seeing documentaries that use real footage where we see everything except the face, which is sometimes blurred? Audiences tend to believe it is all okay when a face cannot be seen. For instance, on September 11, 2001,

pictures were released of men and women jumping out of the burning Trade Centers. There was not as much of a reaction this time that we were “invading privacy,” but yet, in the “Boston Photographs,” the woman and child were falling from a burning building as well, but we saw the faces and made a huge reaction. Do pictures also make the situation more invading? If we change the picture to just have the text, and we include the name, no one goes “Look! Jill’s privacy is being attacked!” It is not the people in the pictures that are making it “inappropriate,” it is just the fact that the readers feel violated because they do not want to come to face with death for personal sensitivity.

Seven years ago when September 11 occurred, I know if I was never shown the bombings on television as it was happening, I wouldn’t have been as worried as I was. If my teachers had told me “the Twin Towers got bombed,” or “the World Trade Centers have been hit by a plane by terrorists,” I would have been like “oh, okay...anyway?” Seeing what was happening play by play helped it sink in that America at that point was under attack. I doubt that America would be as patriotic as it was after the attacks if the media had not shown American’s pictures and videos.

We cannot allow the faces in the pictures to be blurred out or in any way changed. If the viewer cannot relate to the picture, then it has no purpose in the paper because the viewer does not learn from things that he or she does not relate to. Not many viewers are offended by these disturbing pictures anymore. Some movies are currently being released like *The Hills Have Eyes*, which would never have been released years ago during when the “Boston Photographs” were published. In that time, movies did not show much blood or gore. Usually those scary movies would have a scream in the background and the audience would assume the person was dead. Over the period of time, audiences have been becoming desensitized to those movies, and gradually, the demand for more gory movies has skyrocketed because “the shock factor appears to have a higher threshold” (Schauble). This is why, in Nora Ephron’s “Boston Photographs,” there were so many offended viewers. The audience was living in an age where the only time they saw gore was if they were doctors or if they happened to randomly witness an accident. We are living in the age where we live in a very picture-driven world, where no one likes to read anymore. So we need the pictures of death because otherwise, no one will read articles that contain an educational theme or message.

Photographs are an essential tool in the media to inform the audiences of dangers, while teaching them to prevent daily accidents. This teaching method is to cause the audience to fear for the possibility that they too may die. I am not condoning that we live our life in total fear, but we are better off to fear for a moment to *prevent* a stupid mistake in the future and help us live our life with good judgment. Pictures are used to show viewers what happens daily, and that anything can be an accident. Families are the only ones who have the option to declare when to include or not include the deceased’s picture. Even if the family chooses to not show the pictures, they should still consider showing the picture as long as all names are not exposed and the faces are blurred. The negative reactions of the viewers do not come from concerns that the

publishing is inappropriate, it comes from the viewer's inner fears about death and his natural empathy towards those dead in the pictures.

Roberto Garcia

The Myth of Equality

I believe the word equality is meaningless because equality amongst people does not exist. Equality is a myth, a widely believed concept that is false. So like Adam and Jamie do on Mythbusters, I will be attempting to bust this myth. In this essay I will prove the point that equality does not mean being equal. Equality, in this day and age, means being as good as, if not better than the next person. Over time the meaning of the word has changed. When someone says, “We are all created equal,” what does he or she mean? Does he or she mean equal as in a chance of success? The statement has become so broad that each person seems to have his or her own definition of the word. One definition stated that equality is “the quality or state of being equal” (Dictionary.com). That does not really define anything. The state of being equal with what or with whom is the definition referring to. The most interesting definition I found was “a state of being essentially equal or equivalent; equally balanced; “on a par with the best” (wordreference.com). This definition is basically stating that equality is an even playing field, which is never the case. Whether it be in schools, jobs, or sports someone is always at a disadvantage.

The school system tries to diversify its community by accepting more minorities into their school. By doing this the school system is trying to say that everyone has an equal chance to succeed. This is not true because not everyone is blessed with the opportunity to have the same success as the next person. This is not to say that the school system should not try to allow equal opportunity. I am just stating that not everyone has that opportunity. A student from Fairfield, a majority Caucasian city, is more likely to get into a better college than a student from Bridgeport, a minority city. Some people say that students in minority schools get the same, equal education as the students in upper class school. This is also not true because upper class schools are able to afford more qualified teachers and supplies than lower class schools. More qualified teachers means that the students are more qualified to do the job or to go to the better college. If more qualified teachers were hired to work at the lower-end schools the opportunities for students to succeed would increase. Also more up-to-date books and technology would help. Computers that are not running on Windows 98 any more or calculators that need the sun to start up. Some schools in Greenwich, Fairfield, and New Canaan are even using smart boards while schools in Bridgeport and Hartford are still using chalkboards. So to say that everyone has an equal chance to success or equal education amongst schools is a lie.

The most apparent factor that makes schools unequal in opportunities and education is money. Lower class communities receive less money from the government, than upper class communities. People in Fairfield make more money than people in Bridgeport. Therefore, the people in Fairfield are taxed more and receive more money for their schools and such. The money is not equally distributed through the cities. To

make it equal amongst the cities the money taxed should be evenly distributed. This would not be necessarily fair but it would be equal. This would largely increase a student's chance to be successful.

As I previously stated equality most nearly means being as good if not better than the next person, attempting to out do the next person for the number one spot. People take equality to mean being equally qualified for a certain job or a certain opportunity. Lewis states that the concept of equality is flawed because no one tries to be equal, everyone attempts to be better. A guy might ask why his fellow employee got a promotion that he, himself, was equally qualified for. In reality that guy was probably not better or equally qualified than his fellow employee. "No man who says I'm as good as you believes it. He would not say it if he did" (Lewis 123). People that say that probably feel inferior and are trying to make everyone else, including themselves, believe they are. People that honestly know they are better than someone else do not go around saying it, they just keep trying to climb the ladder over the other hundred people attempting for success. Ultimately proving they are better than everyone else and not equal.

So to say that equality between people exists that is a false statement because it does not exist. The word has become more of a competition between people, a fight for the same success and opportunities as the next person. Ten people competing for a job one of ten will win. Most like each will try and step on the other nine to get the job. If it were equal everyone would have the job. This is why equality does not exist because there is always a winner. It is always the better man who wins, the one who bettered himself for success. That is just what equality has come to be how we improve our personal chance of success. So like Adam and Jamie would say on Mythbusters, "This myth is busted!"

Annie Gayle

Parent Child Relationships

When a child is conceived he receives his first experiences from his parents. He looks to his parents for food, warmth, love and most of all, guidance. The guidance from a parent is one that has a lasting effect on one's life; this is why parent-child relationships are important, given that as the child grows into a teenager he will be able to make his own choices in life. I sincerely believe that parenting doesn't stop children from forming their own individual identity; however, it is possible for parents to influence one's identity. In Gloria Anzaldúa's "How to Tame a Wild Tongue" and Amy Tan's "Jing – Mei Woo: Two Kinds" the children's parents were from different cultures. Transitioning from their culture to an American culture impacted these children because; they were given a chance to succeed in a culture that their parents could never achieve because of limited opportunities for themselves. These parents were not able to have what they wanted in America so they pushed their ideals onto their children in order to have them experience and succeed at what they weren't able to.

Being born in a different culture Gloria Anzaldúa's mother was very hard on her daughter. She wanted her daughter to succeed in America and to have what she didn't have. As a child in America, Gloria Anzaldúa's mother wanted her to only speak English, "pa' hallar buen trabajo tienes que saber hablar el ingles bien" (Anzaldúa 300). I believed that Anzaldúa's mother only wanted her to speak English because she wanted her daughter to become someone and make something out of herself, and if she spoke English like a Mexican I believe that her mom feared that she wouldn't get very far in life. This fear is a realistic one because even the American educational system wanted her to lose her accent. Since Anzaldúa was only a child and had to follow her mother's authority this led to her mother's influence on her identity. However, as she grew into adulthood and began to have more control on her own individual identity. She was able to speak *Spanglish* and fought for what she believed in when she continually argued with various advisors about implementing Chicano literature as an area of study. Anzaldúa's language was of grave importance to her, she believed that her language was a part of who she is, and until she took pride in her language she wouldn't be able to have pride in herself. (Anzaldúa 305). Anzaldúa was really secure with her culture because she felt that in order for anyone to hurt her they had to talk about her language (Anzaldúa 305).

I believe that Anzaldúa's individual identity overpowered that of her mother's. Anzaldúa was able to overcome the tribulations that she had to endure because of her strong personal beliefs in her language and culture. She had confidence in herself and her language and she wanted everyone around her to be aware of that. Even though Anzaldúa's identity overpowered that of her mother's, I believe that her mother didn't want her daughter to forget her language, she just wanted her to get somewhere in life. I believe that Anzaldúa understood the necessity of learning the English language, but she also knew that she needed to

keep her original language because it was a part of who she was, and what she loved, she wanted to be true to both of her sides (her American and Mexican side). Anzaldua ended up going to graduate school and was able to express her language and culture to her students.

In Amy Tan's "Jing - Mei Woo: Two Kinds", Jing - Mei's mother pushed her own dreams and expectations onto her daughter. She wanted her to become a prodigy, which was something that Jing - Mei believed that she wanted until she noticed how hard her mother was going to push her. After not making her daughter into the Shirley Temple that she wanted her to be, she then moved onto the next idea of making her a pianist. Jing - Mei's mother was so involved with the idea of making her daughter into a prodigy that she provided house cleaning services for free in return for piano lessons for her daughter. Her mother even went as far as to bragging about her daughter without hearing her play, "if we ask Jing - Mei was dish, she hear nothing but music. It's like you can't stop this natural talent" (Tan 883). I believe that Jing - Mei's mother only said these words because she was jealous that her sister's daughter was bringing home a lot of trophies, Jing - Mei's mother also said these things so that she could have something good to say about her daughter and how extraordinary she was, when this wasn't the truth.

After Jing - Mei realized that who her mother wanted her to be wasn't who she truly was; she finally found her own individual identity when she looked at her reflection "the girl staring back at me was angry, powerful. This girl and I were the same. I had new thoughts, willful thoughts, or rather thoughts filled with lots of wants. I won't let her change me, I promised myself. I won't be what I'm not" (Tan 880). Jing - Mei said these words because she was sick of seeing her mother's disappointed face, she didn't like how her hopes were raised to believe that she could accomplish anything only to arrive at the harsh truth that this was not true in her case. This angry side of Jing - Mei became more apparent to the reader when she began to stop caring; she began to act disobedient to her mother and finally taking shortcuts when practicing the piano. I believe that Jing - Mei began to act disobedient to her mother because she wasn't allowed to find her true self. This conflict between mother and daughter arrived because she was forced into doing things that she didn't want to do, she finally blew up at her mom after having enough of her dreams and expectations and always seeing her disappointed face, because of Jing - Mei's mothers high expectations for her daughter, both began to feel the frustration of Jing - Mei's disobedience, which in the end caused her to give up hope of making her daughter into a prodigy. If Jing - Mei was able to choose something that she wanted to do, I believe that she would have put more effort into practicing which in the end would have made her mother proud of her.

The conflict between mother and daughter are very common now a days. These conflicts can arise when teenagers want to go and do things on their own such as dating and parties, and because parents want to remain in control and constantly want their children to do what they are told they clash and everyone begins to tell the other how they are feeling, even if these feelings hurt the other. An example of this is when Jing - Mei told her mother "I wish I'd never been born! I wish I were dead! Like them" (Tan 885). These

words that Jing-Mei spoke were very significant because her mother moved to America because in China she lost everything such as her family, her home and twin daughters. American was where she believed that you could be anything that you wanted to be and this is where all of her hopes were. Jing – Mei’s mother pushed her daughter so hard because when she left China and lost all she had, she moved to America to give her daughter Jing- Mei a better chance of surviving. She hoped that Jing – Mei would not be prone to experience what she went through or what her twin daughters experienced. I believe that the mother wanted to replace the memory of her daughters by making Jing-Mei into someone great. Throughout the story both mother and daughter were haunted by the ghost of the dead twins. Jing-Mei felt as if she had to be perfect in order to be adored by her parents while her mother tried to leave in the past the memory of her dead babies.

As a child growing up I was never really influenced by my mother. She left Jamaica to come to America so that she would be able to provide for her family, so I was raised by my father. As I turned seven years old I was reunited with my mother in America which was when I learned of how hard she had to work to provide for her family. She did housekeeping jobs, never once complained about it and never denied me of anything that I wanted. My mother has had a great influence on the formation of my identity. She has always instilled in me that education was the best thing that I could gain and she made it a point to tell me that she didn’t want me to follow in her footsteps. My mother made it a point to tell me not to follow in her footsteps because as a parent she wanted me to go further in life than she was able to and to become anything that I wanted to be. My mother continually told me that education was everything because as a child in Jamaica she was only able to go to school until the seventh grade then she started working. As a child in Jamaica I was able to go to school when my mother had money to pay for lunch, if she had no money I was not allowed to go because she didn’t want me to have to beg others for lunch. Now as an adult I always try to be my best at everything, I value my family and wish to take care of my mother after graduating from college. Even with the influence of my mother I am not exactly like her, I have my own views on the world and I have the power to make my own decisions and if they happen to be bad decisions I have the chance to learn from them by myself. My mother supports and encourages me, she treats me as if I was equal to her and doesn’t interfere with my decisions.

The mothers from Amy Tan’s short story, Gloria Anzaldúa’s story and my mom are similar because they were all born in different countries and migrated to the United States in order to provide a better life for their children. They all expected their children to be the best that they could be and fit into a new culture to ensure that they achieved success, something that they weren’t allotted to do. These mothers are also different because each had different parenting skills and different ways of making their child do what they wanted to. In “How to Tame a Wild Tongue” Gloria Anzaldúa’s mother spoke to her and told her not to speak Spanish and to stop speaking English like a Mexican, but she didn’t explain the importance of why she needed her to only speak English. In Amy Tan’s “Jing – Mei Woo: Two Kinds” Jing – Mei’s mother led Jing – Mei to believe that she could be anything that she wanted to be, but that wasn’t accurate, instead of allowing

her to be who she wanted to be Jing Mei's mother instead tried to make her daughter into who she wanted her to be, a prodigy. Also, when Jing - Mei was disobedient to her mother she would hit her. Whenever my mother spoke to me she explained what I needed to do and why I should do it, she explained to me that to become someone in this world I had to always try my hardest and to present myself in a way in which people would only speak good things about me. My mother at times was similar to Jing – Mei's mother because at times when I was disrespectful I would get slapped.

Jing – Mei, Gloria Anzaldúa and I are alike because we were moved from our home country to a new one where we had to be taught new things such as how to speak English without an accent and also to know about the American culture by learning the capitals of states. I am more like Gloria Anzaldúa because even though our mothers told us what to do we listened to what they said at times but we also added our own identity to it. An example of this is when Anzaldúa kept speaking Spanish behind her mothers back even though she was told not to. An example of me having my own individual identity was when my mother wanted me to go to school, go straight home and study. I showed my individuality when I disobeyed her and instead of studying after coming from school I went and played with my friends outside. Jing – Mei is different from Anzaldúa and I because she never put any effort into anything that she was told to do by her mother.

In closing, while these mothers tried to push their ideals unto their children it didn't hinder their children's individual identity; instead it helped in the formation of it. By these parents pushing their ideals unto their children, their children made their own individual identity when they realized that what their mothers wanted for them was not what they wanted for themselves. The parent-child relationship is one that is important because they provide us with guidance whether we decide to follow it or not. The cultural differences was also very important; because of these cultural differences these parents pushed their children to take advantage of what America had to offer such as education, which was not readily given away for free to those who were not able to afford it.

Jarvis D. Graham

“Benefits and consequences of learning a new language in a different environment”

Language is communication. Languages could include urban slang, business language, and educated language. There are benefits and consequences for learning and adapting to a new language in a different environment. For example, learning of business language can make a person very insecure and conscious of their shift to an unfamiliar way of speaking because they are worried about how people would judge them. They are also concerned with the shift because it could create tensions and altercations between themselves, their family and their friends because they might feel that one is changing from one normal self. On the other hand, learning business language makes a person better equipped for the real world and gives them the ability to communicate with a lot of different people.

A benefit of learning a new language is being able to communicate with a lot of people in different environments. Language is very important because if a person knows more than one language, they can communicate in more than one type of culture and environment. It is important to expand one’s mind to other languages because one’s life and world should not be closed minded to just one language. A person would become very open by understanding of other languages and cultures and how they communicate with one another.

A consequence of learning a new language is that it takes time and hard work to actually understand the language. Learning a new language is like starting from scratch. It is very new to a person and one knows very little about it. To learn a new language, one has to practice and practice so that one is very comfortable with it. A person is not going to learn a new language over night, so one should study and practice over and over again because practice makes perfect. It is especially hard for people who have learning disabilities or have trouble learning. There is a lot of memorization involved, so people who have a hard time remembering things will have their work cut out for them.

This reminds me of an incident in which I had to learn the language of business in order to thrive in a new environment. The first time I experienced this new language is when I got my first job at Sears. Working at Sears or any job for that matter, one would have to talk and act differently than one would normally. Sears is a job and I had to act professionally in that working environment. I had to speak properly and could not use any urban slang. I also could not use curse words or act silly while I was at work (or at least in front of the customers and managers.) Sears is a business, so I had to dress in business attire such as a white or black collared shirt with a black or khaki pants and black dress shoes. I had to adapt to Sears’ new language because I was not use to it. I was used to talking anyway and wearing jeans and sneakers. Speaking properly at Sears and wearing khakis and not jeans is important for me to do because I want to be respected

in that environment. Because I am a black male, I already have a strike against me. So, if I was to wear my urban street clothes and talk urban slang to the customers then customers would feel scared and very uncomfortable because customers are not use to that type of language.

At Sears, I have to greet every customer and say “Hi, How are you doing today?” When a customer checks out, I have to ask “Did you find everything that you were looking for?” and at the end of the transaction I have to say, “Thank you for shopping at Sears and come again.” Since I am a cashier, I am one of the ones that communicate with the customers the most so I have to be extra nice. I had to put on a fake smile because it was my job. I have been doing this for two years. I am expected to do these things at Sears because I have to uphold Sears’ reputation as being a business in a professional environment. Sears has strict standards for their environment such as, dressing a certain way and speaking a certain way. But most importantly, customers expect associates to behave a certain way because that’s why they shop there in the first place. Today, the words just practically roll right off my tongue without me thinking about it. I am so used to the language and also comfortable with the language that when I go to other stores, I start to greet random people. When I am in other stores I feel like I have to talk to every person that walks by because that is what I would do at my job. Even though adapting to a new language is hard, it was one of the best choices that I have made in life.

People who know only one language are in their own little world and tend to stay in their own environment. People should learn a lot of different languages in order to survive in the real world because the real world uses a lot of languages to communicate with people and not just one specific language. One does not want to be put in a different environment and do not know how to speak their language. It will make one feel very uncomfortable and distance from that environment. For example, there is a language that a person uses to talk to their friends and their parents. One would not disrespect or play games with their parents as one would with their friends. With friends, one would probably use urban slang but with parents one probably would be respectful and kind because they are one’s elders. Of school, a person probably would sound more educated than one would with their friends and at home. A person’s speech is probably going to be more proper and one would use bigger words, trying to sound more educated, intelligent and more impressive to the teacher. It all depends on the environment that a person is in and who one is talking to in order for one to determine what language to use. Adapting to new languages and knowing when and where to use that language is good because one could communicate with a lot of people.

A consequence of learning a new language is being judged by one’s family and friends. I was very conscious of the shift when I learned a new language at Sears because I was insecure and afraid of what my friends might think of me. I was afraid that they might think and look at me differently. My friends’ opinions and feelings are important to me because I didn’t want them feeling jealous of me or start to envy me. I didn’t want my learning a new language to get in the way of our friendship because I cherish what we had. I did not want my friends to think that I was weak by sounding perky and cherry all of the time. That is why during the

first month, working at Sears I received a lot of complaints because I used urban slang. The only reason I changed was because I did not want to lose my job because I needed it. This was a choice that I had to make in order to learn and adapt to a new language in a different environment.

When I first was hired, I used that urban slang because I did not want my friends to judge me while I was at work. My friends are very important to me so if they disapprove of my new language and are very opinionated then that would make me feel very conscious of continuing with the job. I also did not want any problems or tensions being created between my friends, my job and I. I did not want to lose our friendship because my friends thought that I was better than them or “too good” for them. Just because I learned a new language, I did not want my friends to think I changed into a “white person” because of the way I talk at work. They might think that I was weak and a punk because I sound so different. My friends were concern with me working at Sears because they thought that I would change and just forget about them. They thought that I would spend more time with the people at Sears and begin to talk like them all of the time. I had to let my friends understand that I had to use this new language in order to survive at Sears and make money. I am two different people from at home and work. I have to know when and where to use these languages and know when to turn it on and off in order succeed. I wanted this to be a win-win situation for both sides because I could teach my friends something new and open their eyes to the real world.

The consequences of failing to shift would be that I would get written up or fired from my job. Customers would not hesitant to tell a manager if they feel like the way I am talking is very disrespectful and not appropriate for a work environment. Customers are attracted to the language at Sears because it makes them feel more comfortable. They wouldn't want to shop at Sears if they saw that I looked like a thug off the streets and used urban slang because it would scare and intimidate them. Authority dictates what type of language is off limits at Sears because they want to run a successful environment with the attraction of the customers and the good reputation from the customers.

Sears language is different from the language that I use at home with my family and friends. At home, I have a different face on. I am very happy and excited all the time. With my friends and parents I am cooler and laid back. I am being myself when I'm acting crazy and stupid. My vocabulary is very small and limited because I just talk without thinking and I tend to say anything even if it does not make sense or if it sounds ignorant. At work I am very serious because it is a professional environment but at home with friends and family, I like to have fun and let loose.

Language is the most important thing to a person. Languages are very powerful, so if one knows more than one then one will be able to survive and succeed in different environments. With every cause there is an effect, whether it is bad or good. Learning a new language will create different benefits and consequences for people. Sometimes that benefit could be an improvement with communicating with different people or it could create consequences such as one's friends or family disapproving of their new language.

Michelle Hunt

Unmask Me

Nobody knows a person's true self by looking at them. Not only do people hide their true identity in our society but in other places too. People tend to hide their true identity from the world. It like placing an iron mask on that person and nobody could take it off except that person who placed the mask on themselves in the first place. But in our society, one doesn't put the mask on them but rather the person's parent put the mask on for them. Parents tend to place masks on their children at a young age to protect them from the society judgments. They will make an identity for their child and tell the child how to act in society. The child doesn't choose their own path in life but have to live by alternative identity that the parent made for them. Their secret identity can't come out and revealed itself. Just like in Jamaica Kincaid's short story *Girl*, Amy Tan's short story *Jing-Mei Woo: Two kinds*, and Judy Ruiz's essay *Oranges and Sweet Sister Boy* that suggested that children should listen to their parents and put a mask that was provided from their parents on themselves to be accepted and protected from society's judgment, I believe that parents shouldn't force children to wear a certain masks for their pleasing. Instead, children should place their own mask on themselves that will show their true identity while protecting themselves from society's judgment.

Jamaica Kincaid's short story *Girl* is a dialogue between mother and daughter. In this story, the mother is doing most of the talking in which she commanding and warning her daughter on what to do and what not to do to be a proper young woman. Jamaica Kincaid writes, "This is how you behave in the presence of men who don't know you very well, and this way they won't recognize immediately the slut I have warned you against becoming" (Kincaid 841). It seems like the mother in the story was trying to convey that if her daughter didn't perform the instruction that she gave her she will become a "slut." But all the mother wants is to protect her daughter from people's judgment by placing a mask that she designed for her daughter to hide her identity from the rest of the world. She believes that her daughter's lifestyle now will portray her daughter as a "slut" rather than a young lady that she supposed to be. The daughter only has two lines in the whole story that seem to protest the mother's command but is still listening to what the mother have say to her. In *Girl*, the daughter says, "but I don't sing benna on Sundays at all and never in Sunday school" (840). The girl reaction toward the mother's command shows that she don't want to presented herself to society with the mask on but rather show her true self. One can only guess the daughter true self since she only say two lines. But through those two lines we can tell that the daughter is rebellious and want to control her own life. She wants to play with the boys, present herself to people the way she want, even do chores when she want. But because her mother's ideas that her daughter will become something that is not appropriate for a young lady she was force to wear a mask that didn't display her true self.

The short story *Girl* is one example on how parents tried to force mask on their children. Some parents have logical reason why they want to place mask on their children. Throughout the story the mother warns the daughter of acting a certain way that made portray the daughter as a “slut”. This may be because the mother may have been portraying as a “slut” when she was younger and fears that the daughter would have the same title. The mother needs to understand that the daughter needs to make her own identity to find out who she is. Identity making is the way a person will find out who they are. By making your own identity, you not only find out who you are but also figure out how to protect yourself from society judgment. This will help you understand the world better if you take it firsthand rather than having someone pick your path and the way you present yourself to the world for you. Fearing that the daughter made turns into a “slut” has cause the mother to be stricter to her. This may have caused some problem with the parent-child relationship where the daughter may envy her mother.

Forcing the child to wear a mask may result in poor parent-child relationship. Some parents force mask on their child because they want their child to be like someone else that they saw was better. In Amy Tan’s short story Jing-Mee Woo: *Two Kinds*, there was a conflict between mother and daughter when the mother wanted her daughter to be a prodigy. The mother felt because they were Chinese that the daughter should have a special talent like every other Chinese. In *Two Kinds* the mother says, “Of course you can be prodigy, too, you can be best anything. What does Auntie Lindo know? Her daughter, she only best tricky” (878). Even through this line seems as if the mother want to use her daughter to shows that she is better than her sister, the mother only wants the best for her daughter. She believes the best will come from her daughter’s special talent. At first, her daughter wanted to find her special talent too. In *Two Kinds* the daughter says “In fact, in the beginning, I was just excited as my mother, maybe even more so. I pictures this prodigy part of me as many different images, trying each one for size” (879). This shows that she also wanted to find her talent that will make her unique from everyone else. But because her mother kept forcing her to tried new thing that she saw other children accomplish, her interested on finding her special talent disappear. She saw that her prodigy self was trying to change her and she rebel so that it won’t change her. The result of her rebellious at cause her mother-daughter relationship to lack and caused problem between the two.

Parents that try to change their children into something they not tend to have their children retaliate with rebellious act. The daughter in the stories retaliates by not trying to become a prodigy. She chose not to learn to play the piano even when she was being compared to her cousin that she hated. The result of these retaliations have cause many hardship in her life. As mentioned in *Two Kinds* the daughter says, “In the years that followed, I failed her many times, each time asserting my own will, my right to fall short of expectations. I didn’t get into Stanford. I dropped out of college” (885). If a mask was forced on the child, that child will lose confidences in themselves. The daughter in the story didn’t believe that she was a prodigy and there was nothing special about her. Because the mother felt that society will judge her daughter as someone that was worthless and not special to notice, she forced her daughter to wear the mask that she thought will protected

her from society. All the mask did was caused problem for the daughter socially that she soon tear off her mask and became her own person. Since she took her “ready made” mask off and put her “self made” mask on she became more successful and even learns how to play the piano. The daughter in *Two Kinds* was able to break away from her mother’s expectation of her and was able to make her own expectation of herself at an earlier age, others waited later in their life to find what they want for themselves.

Some children feared what their family will think of them if they show their true identity. Judy Ruiz’s essay *Oranges and Sweet Sister Boy* is about a sister and brother relationship whereas the brother want have a sex change operation. The brother knew since a young age that he wants to be a girl. He use to wear makeup and tried on his sister’s clothes when nobody was home. This drove the sister to go crazy because she always knew that someone was in her stuff but could prove it. Because of the brother’s interest in being a girl he was abused by father on some occasions. According to the brother, “The first time I got caught in your clothes was when I was four years old and you were over at Sarah what’s-her –name babysitting. Dad beat me so hard I thought I was going to die. That was the day I made up my mind I would never get caught again. And I never got caught again” (Ruiz 245). This shows that the brother abused by the not only by the father but also by society that he was forced to put a mask on. He covered up his true identity by dressing like a man and acting like a man. He even had a wife and children and did manly thing. His manhood was his mask that hid the woman inside him. Once his father died, he felt that he could take his mask off not one spiritually but also physically. He left his wife and kids and performs the sex change operation. After he took his mask off, he felt proud of himself and he was accepted by society. Nobody judge him for being trustworthy to him and to other.

Abused made caused a lot on a person. It can change how a person feels about themselves as well how they feel about the world. They tend to become antisocial and don’t like the company of other. Parents that abuse their children to act a certain way put fear in that child perspective of their parents. They will act a certain way to please their parents so they could stop the abuse. This will make the child unhappy and depress all the time. Parents need to stop abusing their children because this will force their child to put on a mask that will please their parents. They will show that they are happy but underneath all that happiness and achievement, there is a child crying to be heard. Mask will only show what the parents want, not what the child want. The child needs to make a mask for themselves because it the only way they will protect themselves from society. A child shouldn’t have to wait to parents passed away to feel they could show their true identity. They should feel that their parents should accept them for anything they choose to do. No matter what they choose their parent shouldn’t care what they want to be.

I too wore many masks that my parents made for me. I was taught that I could act a certain way not only in public but also within my own family. They place the mask that I couldn’t choose my own goals or motivation in life. I couldn’t go off to college and study what I want to study. I couldn’t go to a public high school like I want because they say I was too intelligent for public school. In their eye I was never a true

genesis even though I was smart until I made high honor. They push me so hard that I was depressing most of my life that I became antisocial. I will never make friends anywhere I go because I wanted to impress my parents. Through all this I never rebel or told my parents that I won't do something.

Children shouldn't go through what I went through. They should make their own mask for themselves and understand who they are. They shouldn't fear what their parents think of them or what society think of them. Societies only judge someone when you make yourself be judge. The only way you can make yourself be judge is by not understanding yourself. When your parents make your mask and plan your life path you don't understand yourself. Your parents understand you better than you understand yourself. You need to stand up to your parents like the daughters did in Jamaica Kincaid's short story *Girl* and Amy Tan's short story *Jing-Mee Woo: Two Kinds*. Or take off your mask and reveal yourself like the brother in Judy Ruiz's essay *Oranges and Sweet Sister Boy* did when he had a sex change operation. But most importantly, you need to go to your parents and says "Unmask Me".

Heidy Jimenez

Boys With Boys, Girls With Girls

As a child, about 8 or 9 years old, my parents would always tell me not to play with boys. They would say, *los nenes con los nenes y las nenas con las nenas*, (the boys with the boys and the girls with the girls). They said that boys were supposed to play together and girls together, but not both genders combined. I never believed this to be true. I believe that if you have friends when you are a child it should not matter if they are male or female. At that age it is important that a child interacts with both genders to become familiar with them, rather than form a phobia or be unfamiliar with them. In my neighborhood at the time there were a lot of people my age, both male and female. We all considered each other as friends. It was also about the time I started to play basketball. I enjoyed watching the others play, but all I wanted to do was get some play time of my own. Of course everyone playing was a boy so I was not allowed to. My parents would say, “You can get hurt, they *are* boys. They are too rough.” But I still wanted to play, and I did whenever they were not paying attention I would play. I would play with my friends just for fun or with strangers as if we were playing the last game of our lives, with great intensity. We would also play baseball, kickball, tag, etc. We would do other things like ride our bikes, scooters, or skates. We enjoyed each other’s company and the fun we had together. A lot of times I would go home in the late afternoon and get a questionnaire and a lecture about playing with the boys again. I would hear that I am not supposed to do it and I am going against the rules established by my parents. But all my friends were both boys and girls, not just boys, and I did not want it to be just girls either.

I believe my family had this rule about girls not being allowed to play with boys because they were trying to protect me. I was young and they did not want anything to happen to me. They were trying to make sure I was not hurt in any way. There were a lot of older guys that lived in the neighborhood. They were always playing basketball. I was always pulled to them because they were more competition than the guys my age. They were also almost always looking for a game and people to play against. I always jumped at the chance whenever my parents were not around. I knew a lot of the older guys because most of them were my brother’s friends. I almost considered them my friends. But with my brother there was an unwritten rule that I could not call them my friends, and he could not call my friends his. My parents did not want me to see them as friends anyway. Especially my father, he hated seeing me on the court when he got home, even if I was not playing. He would almost always call me inside. Sometimes when he did let me stay it was because of the people that were there, if he knew them, or if I was with my brother, but it would not be for long before he or my mother called me in.

I knew that I had to be careful with the older guys. They always fooled around in a way not suitable for someone my age. They cursed a lot and a lot of them stayed in the recreation area and smoked or drank

alcohol. They would be there until very late. I lived right across the street from the basketball court and I could hear everything that happened from my room at night. They caused all kinds of trouble and often left the empty bottles of liquor on the bleachers for little kids to find. I knew it was the wrong crowd to want to be a part of. However, all I was doing was playing basketball with them, which I did not see as dangerous in any way. I was careful not to get hurt while playing or when I was not playing. I also always made sure I knew where my brother was in case of any problem that I encountered. He would look out for me and made sure his friends were careful when I was playing as well.

I think my parents wanted to protect me from any physical or even sexual abuse from the guys. However, there was something else they were trying to protect me from. They were trying to protect me from being looked at as different. People in the neighborhood and in the family believed that girls are not supposed to act like guys and vice versa. They were trying to keep me away from the emotional feeling of unacceptance and becoming a social outcast. In “Oranges and Sweet Sister Boy” we saw the boy’s father trying to protect his son from the same thing, from being shunned by society. He physically abused the boy and, as we read, he really did not help him, his son ended up wanting to dress and look like a girl anyway. Sometimes when we push people to change it makes them want to be more like themselves. They want to be individuals rather than follow a norm set by any institution.

This belief, as my parents would say, *los nenes con los nenes y las nenas con las nenas*, was almost impossible for me to follow. I was surrounded by friends and people of both sexes and I did not understand how I would be able to stay away from the boys. I did not realize that my parents were trying to protect me. I just thought they wanted to make life harder for me, just like I felt about many of their other beliefs. Like the belief my father had about not wanting me to wear any loose clothing that made me look like a boy, or saying that I was not supposed to cut the grass or do any dirty work and that I was supposed to be cleaning or cooking. Even people now train their kids to behave a certain way that society believes they should behave. I saw this, and still do, as a way of limiting females to do what they have done for years, leave the hard work for the men and worry about making things look pretty and cook for them, and have the men work a manly job that is not feminine at all. I did not think it was fair that my brother was able to go play and run around and I was not. They always used the excuse, “he is a boy, and it’s different.” It was different because if something were to happen he probably would not be a target, as a lot of women are, and he could probably defend himself and I could not.

In the essay, “Oranges and Sweet Sister Boy,” the author talks about a woman and her dealing with her brother’s sex change operation. In her mind this decision was wrong because of the beliefs taught to her as a child. She was taught that a boy is supposed to act and look like a boy and that a girl is supposed to act and look like a girl. This is the same ‘norm’ set by many parents including my own. Children are trained by people like them to only act the way others act. Boys get cars for Christmas and their birthdays and girls get dolls that pretend to cook and take care of children. A boy is not to play with a doll and a girl is not to play

with a toy car. When they do they are looked at funny and told by their parents they are not supposed to. They have to learn to act the way people think they are supposed to if not they will be looked down upon and/or be shunned by society. We saw this in effect in the film, “The Education of Shelby Knox”, and the essay, “Twenty One Questions”, where the gay/lesbian community was not accepted by the ‘normal,’ or heterosexual, community. The people against it were following a norm set by their churches, families, government, and other institutions and have adopted these norms and beliefs as their own. In contrast, I have not adopted this belief that girls should only play with girls and boys should only play with boys. In a way, I am similar to Shelby Knox because there is an institution, family, that brought me up a certain way with certain beliefs and I took them, while also having my own beliefs and practicing them. She did this with her beliefs about sex education in school, when she tried to get the board of education to allow it, and her beliefs about the gay/lesbians deserving equality within the community. I do this with my belief that children should be free to interact with opposite sex children as well as same sex children.

Finally, beliefs can come from many institutions. Some come from family, school, government, church, friends, etc. Most of my beliefs came from my parents. Many of what are not my beliefs came from them as well, I just did not take them up. The ones I did take up I will probably use to guide my own children. The ones I did not, like the one that goes, the boys with the boys and the girls with the girls, I will probably modify to fit my own standards for my children, because I do believe that girls should be very careful, especially at a young age, around boys of the same age or older.

Joslyn Joseph

A Certain Kind of Lingo

As a child no one wants to feel left out or be the target of another child's cruel jokes. In reality however, it happens. Everyone knows there is always that one child who gets picked on; usually one would suspect that the "popular" child would pick on the child who has been labeled the class "bug-eater" or "bed-wetter." Those are the popular categories for getting picked on in elementary school. As for me, I was not picked on because I ate bugs or wet the bed; I was picked on because I was a black girl who talked as if she was white.

From pre-k to fourth grade, I attended school in Farmington, Connecticut. Farmington would be considered a suburban town to most. I was never made fun of or ridiculed because of my grammar. Everyone spoke the same way. All the kids were perky when they spoke and never used contractions. I just thought this is the way everyone spoke. When I watched television (usually Full House), I did not notice anything different from the way I spoke and the way the people on the screen spoke. I first notice that I spoke a certain way, when I had to attend my district school. My district school was in the heart of Hartford, Connecticut's north end.

My first day in my district school was fine because I did not talk to anyone, I just observed. I noticed that the other kids spoke differently. They were not as perky or happy. The other kids' vocabulary was filled with slang terms that I never heard before. I was surprised. The next day I saw a girl sitting by herself so I went to talk to her because I was always a friendly child. I went up to her and said, "Hi! My name is Joslyn Joseph, What is your name?" She responded, "Home gurl why you talk like that?" I said, "What is a home gurl and I sound regular, why do *you* talk like that?" and she snapped at me and said, "Who doesn't know what a home gurl is, you trippin, and gurl yes you do talk different, where you from the bonnies?" (Bonnies are the boondocks). She did not even give me a chance to respond she just walked away. I noticed that all the other kids had this certain swagger, which I did not. Along with their swagger came a way of talking too. From that day on I knew I would be the outcast. I tried to make friends but everyone rejected me because of how I spoke and went about things. I never raised my hand in class because I would be mocked by the other kids. I was soon given the name "Hostess." This was because I was black on the outside but my vocabulary was filled with white filling. Everyone called me that or "Black-White Girl". This teasing occurred, both inside and outside of school, I also heard it from my cousins.

My fear of speaking out loud was somewhat similar to what Sedaris said, as he talks about his experience learning a new language.

My fear and discomfort crept beyond the borders of the classroom and accompanied me out onto 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. Before beginning school, there'd been no shutting me up, but now I was convinced that everything I said was wrong. (Sedaris 276)

I felt the same way; I never spoke unless I had to, I thought I was wrong because I did not speak the other kid's lingo. It was hard trying to make friends because I felt so insecure about the way I spoke. There was nothing I could do. So I said to myself if you can't beat them join them. I picked up on all the slang terms, and all the vocabulary everyone else used so that I could fit in. As a result the other kids accepted me; I started to make friends and be happy. However, my friends would let me know when my "white side" would slip out, and I would tell them, "Home gurl you trippin."

I found my fifth grade experience to be helpful because I knew when to switch up my lingo. In other words I learned when to act "black" and when to act "white." I would switch up the way I spoke whenever I was talking to my teacher, or some other official. I would speak very properly.

What is exactly "talking white" and what was "talking black?" I looked it up. As a result I came to the conclusion that most people would say that "talking white" is speaking correctly, properly, or using big words. And "talking black" was speaking with slang, broken English or using terms such as "yo" and "who dis" I wonder who actually declared that type of language, who came up with the slang dialect. I suggest that historically black communities tended to be isolated and insular, so they spoke using slang. It was easier for them. However that was then this is now. Why is it that when a black person speaks with correct grammar or proper they are ridiculed by others and are considered a traitor? It is because different communities white and black have their expectations. The same would go for if a white person would use a lot of slang and what not, that person would be ridiculed or questioned about the way he talks. It goes both ways. It has always been this way, and will never change.

Then there are those who just can not help the way they speak whether it is with friends or family. Regardless of race. In the inner city there are not many white people, and if one comes across that person may talk as "ghetto" as they want, but they know when to switch up their lingo, and vice versa. On the other hand there is a big difference when there is a white person who *acts* as if they are from the "ghetto," because they are surrounded by people who they think is from urban areas. It is noticeable, and is somewhat offensive to the person whom they are talking to, but it is the same thing when a black person switches their language. But who does not do that, everyone does it, because they know how because they were brought up into an environment in which they had spoken a certain way, however in order to get out that particular environment one must know how switch from language to language. But who does not know how to do that? Everyone does it. Everyone knows when to talk proper, and that does not mean talking white; it just means talking properly. I think it just the way it is.

Society has learned to adapt to a certain way of speaking, and that is correctly. I mean, in school everyone gets taught how to read and write the same way, it does not matter. So it is only right that everyone

one speaks and understand the same language, regardless of race and up bringing. Yes, everyone has their own way of speaking to friends and family, but that should not be categorized as “talking black” or “talking white” Slang should not be looked down upon, sometimes it is just more effective. The same goes for speaking proper, it should not be looked down upon it should just be accepted.

Arron Lloyd

Uncertainty

Uncertainty...all our lives seem to revolve around it, don't you agree? That's all life is, uncertainty. I was sitting on my bed with tons of pictures of me playing football in high school, graduation pictures, baby pictures, pictures of me and family, some with friends, prom, me acting, and some of me expressing myself in different ways, but they are all scattered on the floor because I just got up; I forgot they were there. I'm so into this picture. This one picture, just this one sticks out to me.

Is it because I'm sitting in my room, the same room that I took it in? Is it because I'm bored? No, no what would boredom have to do with it...but then again its usually when I'm bored that I usually drift off

and ponder things. What things? I couldn't tell you, my mind seems to puzzle even me sometimes. This thought connects to this thought and that thought to the next; it's an endless chain of thought and I eventually get lost. Half the time I'm thinking about what I had just thought in an attempt to try to retrieve the forgotten thought. Are you lost? So am I. On occasion I just think about my life though. Or what happened during my



day. Perhaps that's what is captivating about this picture right now. Not that I can exactly point out what I was thinking about in the picture. It's that uncertainty that draws me to this photo. Yes, that's it. The uncertainty. I've been feeling this way all day today.

The photo was taken about a year ago. I was the photographer. I felt the need to capture a moment in myself that was real. I needed to capture the feelings I felt. I wouldn't have let anybody else take the photo for me. Taking it myself made it all the more important to me. No "1, 2, 3 cheese" just simply me having the urge to capture a moment in my life to express feelings, emotions, and thought, all of which I am reflecting on now. The day I took this photo was after a regular day of school. It's easy for me to point this out because of the unraveled white du-rag I have on under my fitted cap in the photo. I usually unravel the du-rag before taking off the hat. I never reasoned with myself as to why. I've just always loved hats, and I'm always hesitant to take them off. My grandmother was the first to buy me a hat. It was a baseball cap and had a curved rim rather than the straight rim on a fitted cap. My grandmother gave me the hat on a trip to an Amusement park; I believe it was Lake Compounce. She couldn't have "the sun beating down on [her]

baby's head." I was 5 years old. She'd told me continuously to keep the hat on so I wouldn't lose it, but it made my forehead itch, was a little too big for me, and kept covering my eyes. I took it off several times, one of those times was on a ride where the hat was swept from my hand and swallowed by a body of water. I didn't know whether to be happy to have gotten rid of it or sad because I'd lost this item that I'd never had before. Yeah it itched and I hated the way it felt but I loved the way it looked, I felt some bond to it. It was something new. All of my hats were winter caps with little cotton balls hanging from a string. This cap my grandmother gave me was unique and I couldn't wait to go show it off to my friends, to differentiate myself from the traditional stretchy cotton hats that everyone wore. However, my way of attempting to make myself unique and different from everyone else was sinking in dark murky water.

I'm looking at my collection of 27 fitted caps now and it amazes me how I went from taking a hat off constantly to never wanting to take it off now. How did I get from baseball caps to fitted caps? I'm guessing it's because fitted caps are more comfortable, less itchy, and are more visually appealing to me. Perhaps I've collected so many fitted's because the feeling of being set apart still hasn't left from when I was 5, and after I lost my first one on the first day I had the urge to get a lot more to make up for the lost one. Yeah a lot of people have them, but even still, having my fitted's and du-rags underneath help satisfy the image that, that 5 year old created for himself. It's just an image that hasn't gotten old yet, and I'm 18.

Anyway, back to the day this picture was taken. The only thing that set this day apart from any other was the fact that seniors were taking pictures for yearbook. I wasn't that excited about it, nor did I care as much as others did. In fact this picture that I hold in my hand now seems to mean more to me than my senior photograph. It's nice to be all dressed up in a tux but it doesn't reveal much of who I am. I don't wear a tux every day. This photo I hold reveals feeling, emotion, and thought; whereas the senior photo is just a photo I took because I had to.

Now that I think about it, today I feel the same way I felt the day I took the picture. I'm looking at the seriousness of my face bolted in the picture and it says so much. Normally I wouldn't be able to indicate exactly what I was thinking about, but considering that this picture was taken on the day I took my senior picture and that every time I look in the mirror or a picture I see characteristics of my father I do recall a few things. I favor my father in appearance a lot. My family thinks it's scary how much I look like him, my eyes, my nose, my mouth, and the figure and structure of my face all are like carbon copies. Looking at this picture now and seeing myself is reminding me so much of my father, the seriousness of my face also reveals how I long to know him. Though I can look in the mirror or a picture everyday and see a little bit of my father in my face, I only know that I look like him from what I've seen in pictures. He died when I was one. From what I hear he was a great man. He was very humorous, caring, and a bit of a knucklehead (not knucklehead as in bad or disobedient but more like living life to the fullest and taking risks that happened to get him in trouble; if he was alive he'd probably crack the family up with the stories he had to tell). Though he may have been a knucklehead I also always hear that he expected great things. He was determined to be successful, and

I believe he would have been, if he was given the chance to live. Though I can sit here and go on and on about what I've heard about my father, it's not what I hear that would create the unbreakable seriousness of my face but rather what I don't hear. Hearing how great my father was makes me smile, whereas not hearing his voice, not hearing his fatherly advice, and most importantly, not hearing a straight story of how and why he died is what would create a face like the one I have now and the one I have in the picture I'm so captivated about.

There are several stories of how he died. Some say –and I loathe to even think that he did, I know he didn't- it was suicide, some say the women in the car killed him, some say he was playing with a gun and the car went over a bump and the gun triggered. I try not to think about it because it's an unimaginable feeling, a feeling not expressible through words, of how a son has to feel with the uncertainty of not knowing exactly how his father died, besides the fact that a bullet was lodged in his head. My father was 19 at the time of his death. I was 17 when I took the picture. Once again considering that I was thinking about my father that day. The reason I probably wasn't excited about my senior picture is the fact that my father died two years after he took his. It made me realize life isn't guaranteed. Life is uncertain. It was also astonishing to know that I was soon going to be living longer than my father ever had the chance to on earth.

I'm standing at my Malcolm X poster running my hand across it slowly still looking at the picture. I realize that I had to be thinking of some other things in addition to my father. My face, in addition to showing seriousness, and thoughtfulness, also shows uncertainty and wonder. I notice the Malcolm X poster is in the picture. I look back at the poster before me and in big bold white letters is "BY ANY MEANS NECESSARY." It may be a coincidence that my poster is in my picture, because I hadn't intended it to be there, and it may be a coincidence that Malcolm's finger is pointing my way. However I do know this seeing this just helped me to realize what I may have been thinking about in addition to my father. My father's death affected many people. One of them being my mother. After his death it was her responsibility to raise a man. I can vouch for my mom and say it isn't easy for a woman to do this. The wonder in my face has to be me wondering if I'm going to be able to live up to my family's expectations. Not only does my family expect me to carry on in life in place of my father, but I want it for myself. I always question myself and wonder if I'll be able to do this and how I'm going to do it. I don't want to disappoint my family. However the "what if" always gets to me. What if I'm not good enough? What if I can't carry out what I need to? I've grown up in a rough city and overcome a lot of obstacles. I've managed to occupy myself so I'm not one of the gang bangers or drug dealers you hear about ending up dead. I've managed to not give up just because my mom is struggling with three children, and not accept getting bad grades, but I've made that the very reason I earned the grades I have now. However I always wonder, will I be able to continue without going astray in college? Can I continue to not let things like parties, friends, and girls be a major distraction? It makes me wonder and this is sketched all over my face in the photo. However it is Malcolm's "BY ANY

MEANS NECESSARY” that reminds me that I will have to sacrifice to succeed. I will have to make these sacrifices “By any means necessary.”

I find that I am really analyzing this photo just as much as Jamaica Kincaid and Zadie Smith did for theirs. I look over the photo and I look at what has captivated me the most; the blinding light. This I know for a fact I intentionally wanted. I’m looking out into the distance at the sun. Maybe the white symbolizes my father in spirit being a half of me; maybe the white symbolizes the unknown and the uncertainty of my future, and how desperately I want to succeed so my mom’s struggles won’t be in vain. This blinding light is mysterious. It’s just the effect I had wanted. Though this light always brings a different meaning each and every time I look at it, today I determined that I think its one half of me being certain and the other half unknown and uncertain.

Every time I look at the picture I just go into a frenzy of thoughts. About my life, where I’ve come from and where I am now and where I can possibly be going. I get one more step closer to making sense out of my life. I’ve been feeling uncertain all day; this photo is what helps me think, think enough to think I’m certain about life. Certain to know that I am going to be successful in life, certain enough to know I won’t have three different baby mothers, certain enough to know that I won’t get involved with drugs. Maybe that’s what keeps me going, knowing that me being certain isn’t enough because of the uncertainties of life. It’s knowing that one little slip up in my uncertain future can determine whether my uncertain future will be what I want or end up differently. It keeps me focused because I know that though uncertain, *I* am the only one that can influence whether my uncertain future will be positive or negative. It’s what should keep us all focused because what does any person know about life besides its uncertainties?

Amy Lu

Untitled

The bombs exploded, bursting viciously into the night sky. The explosion rattled the ground, nearly knocking the trench to pieces. Terrified, we cover in the trench lying still for fear of losing our lives. And all I can hear is the desperate plea of the poor fool next to me. He was whimpering and crying out for Jesus to save him. He prays "oh Jesus Christ get me out of here. Dear Jesus please get me out. Christ please please please Christ." I shook my head. In this desperate moment, he was appealing to God for help. He was a coward, and this is a disgrace to all the soldiers putting their lives on the line. He repeatedly promises that if he make it out alive, he will believe in Jesus and tell the world about him. At last, the bombing ceases, the fighting stops, and we emerge from the trench, bewildered. I didn't know whether to thank him or not. Grateful that my life was spared, I was determined to devote my life to God. I will spread the word unlike the coward soldier who did not live up to his promise.

Amaris Breyonna Lumpkin

Chapter 7

Their trench was being bombarded in Fossalta. I mean one side had fallen in and the other was more rugged than John the Baptist clothes. Lay there as flat and still as he liked, that Soldier wouldn't have made it if he hadn't begged me to save his life, promised to do anything for me, to tell the world what I did for him. Of course I listen to his pleas and send an angel down to direct the fire else ware. I save his life and do you know that only a night later I look down only to find the man in Mestre at a whore house with some man looking woman. Can you believe that in a single evening he has forgotten all about me? Its moments like these that I wish I had drowned everyone in the flood.

Shanique Mighty

America End Poverty by Meeting Childcare Needs

Throughout the United States there is a huge population of mothers who have become dependent on the welfare system; they've been figuratively trapped in this circle of poverty and because of the lack of resources and aid it becomes extremely difficult for them to unweave themselves from that web and seek independence. Childcare has been a major issue for many mothers over the years. The lack thereof causes a struggle for them to attain a job and a strain to maintain one. Many teenage parents are forced to sacrifice their education and forever remain in poverty because of the expense of childcare. The Government criticizes these mothers for not attempting to remove themselves from the poverty pool, but if a greater effort was put forth to meet the need for childcare, they would be more successful in moving welfare recipients toward employment, education, and self-sufficiency. I believe that education is the root to all success and childcare should not be a reason for teenage parents trying to escape poverty to remain in that state.

The emphasis on education seems to have faltered over the years. The U.S. government puts out the idea that education is the key to success in the land of opportunity for all, but yet every year more and more teenage parents are forced to drop out of school because they can't meet the price for childcare. Many teenage mothers have been accustomed to poverty and although many have become so dependent on the system and not want to better themselves, there are the few who want to change their way of life by removing themselves from poverty, but when they can't find childcare that task is impossible. From a personal standpoint, I am a teenage mother myself. When I first found out that I was pregnant I was devastated. I didn't know what would become of my education and how would my boyfriend and I raise a child. When my son was born it hurt me everyday because we were a family in poverty and I didn't know where I would find money to feed him and just seeing his tears brought tears to my eyes. My boyfriend and I were both in school and I remember days when we each had to miss weeks at a time so that one could go to school while the other could stay home and watch our son. Daycare for infants was typically about \$170 and that was just too much money. I filled out an application for this government sponsored program called Care 4 Kids which aimed to provide the funds for childcare that my family could not afford, but what they failed to highlight was the requirements to get into the program; both parents could not be in school, one had to be working a stable job. Hearing that left me in a state of stress. My partner decided to drop out of school to make ends meet and never stopped pushing me to get the best education possible for all of us, but that should not be the case. There is a large group of people who are in poverty and because the government gives them a home, food, and healthcare they don't want anything better out of life. They abuse the government and never want to move out of that state, but my partner and I were different, we were trying to get an

education, to get a well paying job, and dissociate ourselves from that poverty group; and when you think the government would appreciate our effort because that's one less dependent family they would have to worry about, we literally get shut down because of something as simple as childcare that the government could easily provide. I'm determined to get the best education for my entire family to end that cycle so that my son doesn't grow up in poverty, but in most families poverty is a condition that has been passed down for generations and it is often impossible for them to escape that because they do not have the support or aid. Everyday I think about how unfair the system is; why should he have had to sacrificed his education because we couldn't afford a childcare provider when the United States is the wealthiest country in the world. It's been over a year since I filled out a Care 4 Kids application and I still haven't been approved. One of the reasons I applied to the University of Connecticut was because it was one of the few colleges that provided childcare, but there was always a catch behind that notion, they charge \$240 weekly which is a arm and a leg for the average broke college student, there waiting list is 2 years long and with the constant rise in prices I can only imagine the price in 2009. We want people to attend college but without the support and assistance that goal cannot be reached for many teenage parents. According to Vivian Fisher, chair of the Partners' Education Attainment Committee, "Education is the best way to break the cycle of poverty"(Shearer), but if the United States put more of their wealth toward providing childcare for teenage mothers struggling to make it in life opposed to spending it on irrelevant affairs (i.e. war), they would see a drastic increase in the number of mothers who attend school to get a financially stable job and a massive decrease in the number of people trapped in the cycle of poverty.

The United States is known world wide to be the wealthiest country, the land that offers the most opportunity but when it comes to helping teenage mothers pursuing their education with the cost for childcare, the U.S. holds no competition to many other nations considered "inferior" to us. Throughout many counties there is a national program called Daycare Trust which provides quality inexpensive or free childcare for parents working. In Denmark the public spending on early education and care is approximately 2% of the GDP, parents pay no more than 33% of cost of childcare, with reductions for more than one child and for children with special education needs. There is no waiting list and no demand is unmet. In the UK the parents pay 75% of the cost of childcare, which seems like an large number, but that's 75% of childcare which is typically only \$41 a week, leaving the parents contribution extremely low (Anderson). According to Hilary Clinton, "More than 90% of French children between ages three and five attend free or inexpensive preschools called *ecoles maternelles*. Even before the age of three, many of them are in full-day programs". People attempt to have the issue of childcare addressed but the government just rejects their ideas. In the early 1970s, Senator Walter Mondale pushed the Child Advocacy Bill through Congress, only to have it vetoed by President Nixon (Siddiqi). The government in Sweden has said that its vision is that childcare in their country will be available to all and among the best in the world so why can't the United States politicians have that same vision on their agenda. If the U.S. is so determined about their superiority, then why are so

many countries able to provide the essentials for childcare and the U.S. government cannot meet those needs?

Childcare is an issue that is affecting many teenage mothers in the United States. Parents are children's first teachers and we see more and more uneducated children because their parents never got a chance to receive an education due to the expense of childcare. Many are trying to work their way out of the world of poverty but without help to meet the prices for childcare that task is unable to reach. This call to action is for the government to realize that if they could just set up a national childcare system that aims to give all teenage parents, who have the drive to turn around their situations despite their circumstances, the chance for the best education, the number of population in poverty would be minimal. Poverty is a circle that will never end and will never be decrease unless the government is willing to take the action of providing needed childcare.

Mark Montalvo

Losing Individuality

There are many ways we can lose our identities. Social pressures are some of those things that alter our lives as individuals and cause us to live life how others view it. Social pressures ranging from a school atmosphere, a select group of teens, the latest fad, and even parents may prevent us from being who we truly want to be. There are different times these things may occur, either way they do not set us apart. We still come out acting the same because of social pressure. There is nothing that can define us as being an individual if we conform. While living life according to someone else's standards we are not individuals.

We encounter social pressures at different points of time. Some of those points of time could be standards on how we should look. We have these commercials that advertise the latest looks by showing what is conceived to be popular. There are the common clothing fads that may not look good to the person actually purchasing the items, but they do so because they want to be in the "in crowd," like in the Old Navy commercials where we see ecstatic actors displaying different styles of conformity each fashion season. They are conveying the supposedly new way to dress because "it's the present fashion available." Some people realize that the "new present styles", were vintage styles. Why should it be "common to want to be exactly like someone else" (Daniel 1)? By doing so we are conforming to another person's liking and losing our individuality. If a person is just doing so to fit in then he or she is not being him or herself.

There are times that people lose their true selves when they are introduced to the idea of having to be like others to be "truly successful." To me there are different types of success and reaching success by acting like others contributes to the loss of identity. We should not accept the idea of conforming only to obtain personal success. Social pressures will always be around trying to make us fall into their traps causing us to not focus on bettering ourselves. Instead, we lose focus on what is important in our own lives because of the many social pressures that surround us. What is important is that we face each one so that we come out being ourselves instead of conforming to others' ideas. We do not have to conform to "the beliefs and ideas of others we admire" (Daniel 1). We have the right to admire someone who is successful. That does not mean we should reach success the way others have done so. Doing so would result in a negative, in that we wouldn't be working as hard for ourselves if we focus primarily on others. For example my R.A. James Rico is a very successful student here at UConn and he is from Hartford. I admire how James has made it this far. I will not try to follow his exact way to reach success, to make it here in UConn, but I would take any advice he gives me and I would work hard to develop myself as a better person and student.

We are influenced by our own families all the time. I know for a fact that my mother has high standards for me regarding my education. I always let her know that I'm doing my best, but I do not follow her standards. I feel as if those standards are there in my mind to encourage me, but if I don't make the

grades my mother wants me to make, I just try harder. I follow my own pace. My family and people close to me know who I truly am. I do not feel as if everyone needs to know me personally. Who I am in public is who I want to be, not what others want to see me as. If I were to act like my cousin, then I am crossing over into who he is rather than being me. People feel that everyone should notice who they truly are and by putting a façade on they feel as if others will accept them. When it comes to family it should be no different. If they do not like the way we are, so be it. Changing who we are just because they are insecure of our actions would cause us to lose our personal identities.

We are surrounded by people that want our downfall. They do not want us to succeed and they would do anything in their power to stop us. There are instances in life that prevent us from moving forward. These people can be our co-workers or even our very own families. The sad thing is that we can lose our identities by letting people walk all over us. For example, when someone in a work place is looked upon as being the most involved, other employees will follow and imitate the most involved employee to better themselves in their work place. People do not want us to succeed in the work place so they would offer us assistance so they could look good. Intern we are the ones that look inferior compared to our co-workers. They supposedly are trying help us but they are secretly outdoing us by making themselves look good. We do not notice that we are acting exactly like them and when we do we lose our identities.

When people seem to get confused due to the factors of equality they compare being an individual to being equal. “On the other hand, some would say that people do not have their own identity because of equal opportunity and equality” (Triplett). When someone wants to be treated equal they would be losing their individuality because they want to be treated or compared to someone. Others may think, “All social pressures change people, but do they change their identities” (Triplett)? The answer is that they do lose their individualities because they are conforming to the social pressures because they feel they have to. They consider the thought of being like another person because of an insecurity or obstacle in their way. Social pressures change us and they change our personal identities because we lose who we truly are to ourselves.

Not being who we truly want to be causes us to give up our true identities. We will feel more secure about ourselves when we know that we have reached our own personal success if we don't focus on another persons' success. It does not matter if we “don't receive the same opportunities as other people do” (Triplett). If we receive the same exact opportunities as others what would make us distinct? We want to work our own to reach the ultimate success rather than conforming to be exactly what others want us to be.

Abigail Morales

An Inspiration to All

Most places have something that represents the people, culture traditions and values. America celebrates World's Children's Day and a song was chosen to clearly represent the message that the fundraiser is trying to get across to the nation. This foundation helps families in need of financial assistance. Destiny's Child's song "Stand up for Love" is inspirational and motivating because it challenges the world to make a difference to those in need of assistance. The lyrics in this song are directed to people who are struggling. It might be because of financial, emotional or physical reasons. The foundation that helps different families all over the world is very resourceful to many lives and is represented by this very heartfelt song. The emotion and passion this song brings to the ear is what makes it so wonderful. The structure of the song and melody impacts the listener in a variety of ways. Some people cry and feel bad about but do not do anything. Then there are those who try and take a stand and make a difference to the point where they might donate to a charity. This song "Stand up For Love is the best song that could have been chosen for this project.

The song "Stand Up for Love" was written as the World's Children's Day Anthem. The song "was written and produced in the year 2005 by 14-time Grammy Award winner David Foster and his daughter Amy Foster Gillies in cooperation with Destiny's Child's Beyonce Knowles" (Lamb). The song was performed by Destiny's child lead singer, Beyonce Knowles, Kelly Rowland and Michelle Williams. World's Children Day is "The annual fundraising program, which raises money for Ronald McDonald House Charities (RMHC) and other vital children's causes, enters its fifth year in 2006" (RHMS). With a symbol like this song representing it more people will contribute money. The message is clearly understandable and will assist the cause grow. The Duchess of York Sarah Ferguson declared a few days in November World's Children Day "Nothing is more important than helping the children of the world," The Duchess said. "Through my role as global ambassador for World Children's Day, I represent the voice of the children and families in need and I help bring greater attention to the critical issues they face today" (RHMS). The lyrics in this song clearly state that people need to make a big difference and the Duchess of York Sarah Ferguson is definitely leading by example This fundraiser helps out a lot of charities that helps better the lives of many children. This fundraiser has really helped out the different charities so much that "McDonald's customers from around the world have raised more than \$75 million for children's causes since the program's inception in 2002" (RMHC). As a result of Destiny's Child being so famous these numbers will surely rise. The way that they vocalize the song absolutely makes people want to make a transformation in society. "The Ronald McDonald House provides a comfortable, supportive alternative. It serves as a temporary residence near the medical facility where family members can sleep, eat, relax and find support from other families in similar situations. In return, families are asked to make a donation ranging on average from \$5 to \$20 per day, but if

that isn't possible, their stay is free" (RMHC). This is perfect example as to how the song "Stand Up For Love wants people to help for instance by starting organizations that would benefit everyone. This goes more into depth as to the importance of this program and how it has actually contributed to the lives of family. More and more people in this world do not have the financial recourses to pay off medical expenses when a child needs medical attention. This charity really helps relieve some of that stress by offering such valuable support.

The lyrics to "Stand up for Love" really do move the listener to want to do things better in life and take a positive step towards happiness of mankind. For example the first line says, "There are times I find it hard to sleep at night. We are living though such trouble times" (Gilles). This is clearly stating that there is a problem in the world that needs to be addressed. Problems that need to be addressed are poverty that children are living. The issue that schools in the suburbs educates the student then school in the city. The issue of children that are being abused and killed and know has any answers. Issues like these should motivate the listener to want to make a change in the world even though it might not be directly related to the individual they should still aid others. Children are getting the wrong message from their elders. Children are seeing how people fight and argue over foolish things. Children are witnessing domestic violence. Therefore as they get older they themselves become very violent starting a chain of events. The listener should be inspired by event like these to listen to the song and make a modification. The amount of crime that is being committed is unbearable and hardly manageable.

It continues, "And every child that reaches out for someone to hold for one moment they become my own" (Gilles). Many of children are being neglected and overlooked. The problem is relevant to many people and should be addressed as a country of one. To help all children succeed and conquer the situations and events that are in front of them. People should make the problem personal and help each other out. The song then questions the world saying "How can I pretend that I don't know what going on when every second and every minute another soul is gone" (Gilles). Clearly the song is reprimanding the world accusing them of having an unclear conscience. Not understanding why with so many people in poverty a person can just turn the other cheek. This person is considered to be selfish and egotistical not realizing how badly they are affecting the world. People are hurting left and right and it does not mean anything to them. Children in this world are dying of illnesses that could easily be cured if it were not for their economical agony. As time passes by the world gets worse and worse and yet still no one takes the step to make an adjustment. While time is passing so are the dreams and aspirations that the children have for their future. This is where the listener has the option to make a difference in the world.

Suddenly, optimism for a change that will occur is clearly expressed though words of hope and imagination, "And I believe that in my life I will see and end to hopelessness or giving up or suffering" (Gilles). The singer tells the nation that tomorrow will better for all. There is a bright future where all children will be heard and will be happy. The lives of many will be improved tremendously. It will be a result

of the world working together as a family for the common good. And that is when the song would have made a difference in the world. I believe that the most effective part of the song is the chorus of the song; “Then we all stand up together this one time then no one will get left behind. Stand up for life, stand up and hear me sing, stand up for love” (Gilles). At this point the singer powerfully demands that the world come out of the box and make a big alteration to the way life is lived in America.

If the world comes together as a unit and as one person then a drastic change will occur. Everyone will prosper and achieve what they want to make America resemble a utopia. It takes time and effort but desire and power will persevere the best will thrive. It has to be as if America were a team trying to win the championship trophy. Everyone has to work as a team and stand up like in the song, in order to accomplish the goal and dream of a utopia. This song is supposed to motivate and inspire people to work together and that is why it reminds me of a great American sport, baseball. Like in baseball the batter at the plate cannot always be expected to hit a home run and win the game. All the players have a position that they have to play. The pitcher needs to pitch a good game and not give the other team so many balls that they walk. The people on the field have to make sure that they do everything in their power to catch all the balls coming at them so that they contribute to the game. America is the number one team and can triumph over all the negatives. What is stopping America from becoming a team is the self-interested approach that people bring to solve issues. For example in politics I was taught that the democrats always want to help the poor people and the republicans always want to help the rich people. People live like were in the ages of social darwinism where the world is an obstacle course and only those that are strong enough will survive. This song “Stand up For Love” completely states that the people in the world have to make the difference. It is not going to happen on its own or it would have done it already. The residents of the world need to physically stand up and move to make the change happen. No child should ever have to live in poverty. All children should have a home and be happy.

The emotion put into the song by the singers is so over the top in efficiency that it makes the listener want to be apart of the change in America. They can definitely represent the message of change and virtue. The strength that they put into this song motivates people from different cultures, customs and races. It brings goose bumps to any one who hears it. It helps when the melody is organized so meaningfully. Inspirational music has to be a gradual change from the beginning to the end. It has to start off small and little then grow to be big and aggressive. For example a thunder storm which makes changes to the environment affecting people in the way that they lose electricity or trees falling in the middle of the road changing the routine of everyday life. Thunderstorms impact and so does this song. At the beginning of the song the lyrics are passive and soft as if it were just little drizzle of rain. Then the music slowly begins to get louder and louder as the singer puts more emphases on the words. This is like a heavy rain falling and smacking the ground with all its might. As the volume of the melody raises so does the intensity and demand of the lyrics. As this occurs the message that these women are seriously trying to make a change in the world

becomes even clearer. Then the melody starts to speed up a little more giving off the feeling that the rain is getting stronger and more powerful. The thunder is roaring the trees are falling and the weather has completely taken over. The lyrics are strong and powerful. The world has gotten the point of the song and the feeling to jump up and help is like the lightning that strikes and creates a fire. This is the feeling of fire building up in your blood and the only way you can only it is you move and make a difference. One of the best things about this song is that it shows no bias toward and culture, race or traditions. It can be connected to any type of country and is an example of legendary music.

The members of Destiny's Child are proud and thrilled that they were chosen out of the many celebrities to sing the World Children's Day Anthem. A couple of the girls from Destiny's Child express how they feel about the song they sing. Beyonce says World Children's Day gives us a purpose other than music," (ET). She also says "These kids have no idea how inspirational they are to us and our lives go by so fast and we work so hard, it's a treat to go into the houses, especially outside the country" and continues to say that "These kids just have this light inside of them and it makes you feel really silly to complain that you're busy or tired because they are so happy and have this amazing spirit," she says. "It makes you want to be like that" (ET). Kelly Rowland another member of the girl group says "You think about what kind of struggle or illness they're dealing with and it makes you very emotional," (ET). The girls really feel proud to be apart of such an event. They seem grateful that they were given the opportunity to sing this song and be a crucial part of the whole event.

The song "Stand Up For Love" has affected the world dramatically and is recognized by being the World Children's Day Anthem. The passion it gives off to the audience increases the amount of support that people are willing to give to others. It will and has united people to create organizations for the benefit of the less fortunate. People in the world live their lives day by day not thinking about their neighbor and this song make people realize that the good life their having is not the same for everyone. Brothers and sister around the world need to help, each other out so that the planet can prosper successfully.

Taliah Muhammad

Social Justice for All

Michael Jackson is among many music artists who take the time to look at their surroundings and offer to change the things that are unjust and to help those who are affected by these unfair situations. Jackson uses his strength as a well known music artist to create a song that sends a message out to everyone around the world to help make a change and fix the corrupt circumstances our society faces. While creating such songs, Jackson is sure to leave a lasting impression with his listeners as his viewers are sure to capture the message he conveys. While the lyrics to Michael Jackson's song "Man in the Mirror" focuses only on poverty, the video is centered on poverty as well as other social issues. However, the video is more successful with amplifying the song's message more than the lyrics alone since it broadens the perspective of the viewers.

"Man in the Mirror" was released in 1988 and was one of Jackson's biggest hits. "It was the fourth consecutive U.S. #1 single from the *Bad* album and it stayed at #1 on the Billboard Hot 100 for two weeks" (answers.com). By this year, many historical events had taken place including those from many years ago up until those that occurred around the time the song was written. Each of these events were both life changing and proved that attention needed to be brought to each of them. Michael Jackson, as well as others, took this opportunity to grab the attention of the rest of the world and bring their focus to these issues by creating the song "Man in the Mirror." This inspirational action is an example of Michael Jackson's caring and giving personality translated into an uplifting song.

"Man in the Mirror" was written by songwriters Siedah Garret and Glen Ballard, along with Michael Jackson. Siedah Garret is a singer, songwriter and performer. As mentioned on her website, "Siedah has written for a diverse selection of recording artists from Aretha Franklin to Al Jarreau, from The Korrs to Vanessa Williams, and from Barry White to Amy Grant" (Siedah.com). Siedah is probably best known for co-writing and singing along in Michael Jackson's worldwide hit, "Man in the Mirror" (siedah.com). Glen Ballard as well has worked with many singers and artists in the business including Aretha Franklin, George Benson, Van Halen and, of course, Michael Jackson (glenballard.com). Both Garret and Ballard along with Jackson, wrote "Man in the Mirror" to inspire everyone to make a change in the world.

If one were to read through the lyrics of "Man in the Mirror," it'll be obvious that Garret, Ballard and Jackson each wanted to offer words of advice to Jackson's listeners; each artist use their creativity and inspiration to further reach out to the rest of the world with intensions to acknowledge that something needs to be done to address the world-wide issues. They collectively decide to advise the world that it is time to take a step back and figure out what it is that one as in individual can do.

Jackson first directs the song to himself and uses himself as an example for his viewers. He says that he is “starting with the man in the mirror” (“Lyrics Zone”) in which he is referring to himself. He says that he is going to make the first attempt to look at himself and “[ask] him to change his ways” (“Lyrics Zone”). By using himself in the song as an example, he sets the stage for his listeners to follow in his footsteps. This allows for the song to be a more personal song as he uses first person pronoun, therefore allowing the listeners to better grasp the message being conveyed. Since Jackson’s purpose of the song is to make his listeners aware of the major problems we face and to help encourage change, he is successful with showing his listeners that change is possible by using himself as an example. As he directs certain parts of the song to himself, the chances of his readers doing the same are greater; the listeners can relate themselves to what Jackson admits about himself. As Jackson admits that “[he’s] been a victim of a selfish kind of love” (“Lyrics Zone”) and that “[he’s] gonna make a change, for once in [his] life” (“Lyrics Zone”), Jackson’s listener’s, as they look up to Jackson, will follow in his lead. By using himself as an example in the song, Jackson demonstrates that realizing what the issues are and admitting your wrongs as an individual is the first step in taking an initiative to make a difference.

As he continues through the song, Jackson turns the focus of the song around to the listeners and directs advice to them. Again he makes the lyrics of the song a little more personal as he now uses second person pronoun, therefore directly relaying the message to his listeners. Jackson includes lyrics such as “You gotta get it right, while you got the time/’Cause when you close your heart/You can’t close your mind!” (“Lyrics Zone”). He warns his viewers that ignoring what you know is the right thing to do results in being ignorant towards social unjust situations that occur in society. Jackson also informs his listeners that “if [they] wanna make the world a better place” that they need to “take a look at [themselves] and make a change” (“Lyrics Zone”). Just as he tells the listeners that he will make a change, he also tells them that they need to as well. Jackson let’s the listeners know what is necessary to do when it comes to solving a certain issue which is the next step in making a change.

As Jackson as well as Siedah Garret and Glen Ballard creatively use these combined strategies to show the necessity of changing the wrong, the message is further exemplified. The majority of the lyrics consist of the chorus of the song which include the lines “If you wanna make the world a better place...Take a look at yourself, and then make a change” (“Lyrics Zone”). This is the main focus of the song as he stresses to his listeners to make a difference and to put humanity in a better position. However, the listeners are only left with words which aren’t as effective as a demonstration. Words can be easily forgotten and sometimes an individual may not pay so close of attention when they are reading or just listening; it doesn’t leave as much as an impact on an individual. However, an image provides an actual illustration where an individual can engage in what’s occurring and can remember the images more easily than words being read by the listeners or being sung to the listeners. In the lyrics to “Man in the Mirror” Jackson tells what’s wrong and what needs to be

done instead of actually showing as he does in the video. Allowing viewers to see and feel how crucial it is to make a change is more effective than telling.

Unlike the lyrics which provide minimum emphasis on the message conveyed in the song, the music video reinforces what's being communicated to the listeners through the provided graphic images. The video provides a more diverse perception of the song's message. From the lyrics alone, it seems as though Jackson is only telling his listeners that it's time to make a difference as he repeatedly mentions this throughout the course of the song. However, in the video, it is as if Jackson is showing his viewers how important it is to make a change and what can happen if that initiative isn't taken. The video flashes numerous graphic images ranging from young children starved to the funeral of President John F. Kennedy.

The music video to "Man in the Mirror" was directed by Don Wilson who played a part in showing the effectiveness of conveying the song's message through the images provided. Music videos are "vehicles for promoting singles" where "certain music videos are notable for their cutting-edge techniques and artistic innovations" (answers.com). "Man in the Mirror" is an example of a music video that is unique where Wilson creatively provides specific images in the video to make this video different from others; this video is meant to be an inspiration instead of entertainment alone. Music videos were "popularized by the MTV cable network" which had "wide popularity and influence in the early 1980s" (answers.com). The video to "Man in the Mirror" was debuted on MTV in the 1980s; the time MTV began to become popular. It is proof that the video to the song has a stronger impact since "the style and content of music videos have strongly influenced advertising, television, film, and popular culture as a whole" (answers.com). Since the video to "Man in the Mirror" premiered when videos were a popular thing, both Wilson and Jackson were able to gather a bigger audience while influencing the viewers.

Wilson uses this to his advantage as he tries to get the song's message across to a larger audience. He uses the video to emphasize the necessity for change. By including images that depict controversial events in the video, Wilson provides more angles of the song's message to broaden the perspective of the viewers. Including such graphics reinforce the necessity of change and how important it is to make a difference.

One of the most dreadful and miserable images provided in the video is the famine that claimed most of Ethiopia in 1984. "Drought and political instability contributed to the severity of the famine, which is estimated to have killed over one million people" ("1984 - 1985 famine in Ethiopia"). This is obviously a serious issue and the fact that images of this epidemic are provided in the video only reinforces the intensity of the situations at hand. To see young children crying and barely hanging on to what's left on their undernourished and bare bodies is an image that alone causes viewers to feel the ambition to want to make a change. Wilson demonstrates how drastic the dilemma is as he repeatedly flashes clips of the Ethiopian famine after clips of the other issues provided. This seems to be the central focus of what needs attention since he repeatedly shows these images throughout the video and he repeats lines such as "I see the kids in

the street with not enough to eat” (“Lyrics Zone”) and “there’s some with no home, not a nickel to loan” (“Lyrics Zone”).

Besides the famine, Wilson provides images of those in history who actually tried to make a difference in our world. He includes Martin Luther King Jr. who fought for equality among all; Coretta Scott King who stood by her husband’s side and helped toward reinforcing equality; and the celebration of Nelson Mandela’s release from jail, a former president of South Africa who fought against apartheid. These images are a reminder to the listeners that making a change and believing in fixing something that is morally incorrect is possible. Listeners are able to look at “Man in the Mirror” from the viewpoint of being willing to make a change and taking such actions to further obtain that goal, which Jackson stresses throughout the course of the song.

Wilson also reminds viewers of what it would be like when those who aren’t for social justice take over. He flashes images of Adolf Hitler and the Ku Klux Klan. This is a perfect reminder of the restrictions that were put on certain groups of individuals and the trouble and chaos it can raise for these groups and others around. Wilson uses these images and this standpoint to demonstrate what the results may be when leaders with ideas such that social unjust is morally correct: the world will once again repeat the cycle and become corrupt with twisted leaders controlling society.

Wilson finally shows what happens when there isn’t a unified decision to help make a difference. He provides clips such as President John F. Kennedy’s funeral which further demonstrate why it is important for everyone to take a stand and agree that the world needs changing. Former President John F. Kennedy was for the advancement for discriminated groups and wanted these groups to have a chance in society. He did what he could to make a difference. However, because there were those who didn’t want to accept change or help with making a change, Kennedy was eventually assassinated. Jackson provides clips of Kennedy’s funeral to remind everyone what the outcome of everyone not taking part in making a change can be. Wilson, therefore, stresses how important it is to have everyone take a look at themselves, find out what issues are occurring that need attention, and finally start to make a difference in the world around you.

Through each of the varying standpoints Wilson provides in the video to “Man in the Mirror,” listeners are able to see what the issues are, why it is important to make a change, and what can happen if no one tries to initiate change. He is able to provide more angles to the song through the video as listeners are able to see different viewpoints of the message provided in the song. Wilson as well as Jackson wants to be sure listeners aren’t “a victim of a selfish kind of love” (“Lyrics Zone”), and will hopefully make a difference.

Michael Jackson demonstrates how important it is for the world to take a look at the occurring unjust issues going on in society through both the lyrics and the video to his song “Man in the Mirror.” The video however, presents the message of the song in a more memorable and affective fashion leaving a stronger impact on the listeners through the vivid images provided in the music video; whereas the lyrics lack the

ability to amplify the message being portrayed by the song because readers can't capture the true emphasis through just the lyrics alone.

Marissa Nettleton

Mastery of Language

Learning a new literacy is both complex and time consuming but meaningful in that literacy is indispensable; literacy brings clarity and unity to the world and provides society with a form of knowledge and understanding that allows one to function as a contributing member of our culture. Literacy is the mastery of language which comes with the possession of education. Therefore, learning a new literacy is important considering that an individual is expanding one's knowledge in order to advance in life. Learning a new literacy gives one the ability to "use language to read, write, listen, and speak" thus having this ability opens the door for numerous opportunities (Wikipedia Contributors). To benefit in the modern world, one must assimilate an appropriate form of literacy depending on one's environment.

At work, I speak with a positive and professional tone in order to please the customers and other employees. As a waitress at a restaurant, I must always appear people-friendly and considerate of others. Having to adapt at work was once a difficult task considering that working in the restaurant was my first job; At first, I was unfamiliar with working in a place of business. I did not have the professional experience so, I had to learn and adjust to being at work versus being home with family and friends. At home, I was able to speak in a colloquial and informal manner however, while at work, I was required to learn to be proficient in my role as a waitress thus, had to speak in a positive and formal tone. Failing to shift into this new language could result in complaints from the customers, ultimately forcing my manager to become involved and facing the consequences of my actions, perhaps being let go and forced to find a new job. Professional speech is important in the business world, thus speaking as I would around friends and family would be inappropriate in the workplace. My language at work now almost unconsciously shifts into a professional and friendly manner since I have been in the work environment over a matter of time. The environments in which individuals are placed often make one learn a different language in terms of altering one's speech whether it be consciously or unconsciously, in order to thrive and benefit in that particular environment. Learning a new literacy may sometimes appear to be complicated and time-consuming, for an individual is required to expand one's knowledge and become accustomed to using the language. In the end however, having learned a new language is advantageous because of the social and economic opportunities that may arise.

Learning a new literacy introduces an individual to numerous career opportunities therefore, is greatly beneficial in the business world. Literacy is essential for an auspicious and successful life, thus literate individuals become confident and positive about the world around them. By speaking in a positive tone of voice and approaching individuals among the workplace with a friendly attitude, I have benefited greatly. I've gained the respect of my boss and other employees and pleased customers by meeting their demands which consequently results in an increase in monetary tips. Frederick Douglass' "Learning to Read and Write"

describes the struggles Douglass overcame dealing with the horrors of slavery and the prohibitions against teaching slaves. This work exemplifies the fact that Douglass was successful in learning to read and write therefore, became one of the most “eloquent orator’s and persuasive writer’s” of his time. Douglass was prohibited from reading and writing out of the fear of the masters that the slaves would become too smart, but managed to do so despite what was said because Douglass understood that being literate was his opportunity to become a free man. Douglass faced political and social ramifications but managed to surpass the obstacles that held him back in order to prosper in life. Literacy allows for individuals to prevail over society’s expectations. In “The Joy of Reading and Writing: Superman and Me,” Sherman Alexie conveys his admiration for books and reading through his experience of learning to read in which he used the images in comic books to formulate words. He says that, “As Indian children, we were expected to fail in the non-Indian world.” Similar to Frederick Douglass’ situation, Sherman Alexie was not expected to be intelligent simply because of his Spokane Indian background. Alexie later states, “I loved those books, but I also knew that love had only one purpose. I was trying to save my life.” Alexie was aware that others did not approve of his abilities to read but reading was his chance to surpass others expectations. Literacy provides individuals with an opportunity to escape the burdens of one’s life and to open the door to numerous opportunities.

To be successful in the modern world, one must possess a certain level of education which enables an individual to not only read and write but to master language in terms of speaking in an appropriate manner depending on one’s environment. Diverse kinds of “languages” are necessary to master depending on the social and economic importance present in one’s environment. One cannot be truly successful in the world if one is illiterate, for today’s world is revolves around literacy. To succeed in life one must familiarize oneself to today’s literacy. Simply being literate allows one to continuously upgrade one's literary skills to a higher level. Without basic literary skills in one's possession one will become lost in our rapidly changing society. One must be able to use language to read, write, listen, and speak appropriately depending on the surrounding environment. Employees must be able to adapt to the constant changing workplace. It is evident that highly skilled jobs require a high level of literacy; therefore, literary skill level is an important factor in predicting an individual's economic success. Literacy may affect an individual's income, employment stability and employment opportunities.

Literacy can act as a window, opening one's view to the world. Literacy brings clarity and a sense of unification to the world for without literacy, society would have no common language. Without sufficient literary skills, one cannot benefit and prosper in life. Learning a new literacy is an intricate task but an advantageous one for numerous opportunities may arise. Individuals who are illiterate are constantly being suppressed for they constantly miss out on many of life's benefits, socially as well as economically. Without sufficient literary skills one cannot fully function in our current world.

Truc Linh Nguyen

Ernest Hemingway-*In Our Time*-Arranging Short Stories

It is very interesting how Hemingway arranged these three stories together. It was like a set of the continuity of the soldier's life. Each story contains different meanings, different soldier's situations, and the author's purpose. Hemingway has arranged these stories in sequential order to help the readers to have a realistic vision how the life of these soldiers during the revolution war.

In "A very short Story", the soldier was in love during the war. He always thought that they will marry after the war. They wrote to each other a lot to maintain the relationship; they hated to say goodbye because they wouldn't see each for a long time; and the soldier believed that were meant to be together. But the girl he loved ended up with someone else because of the war condition. She told him "it was for the best" as a reason to break up with him, and he never replies her last letter. Hemingway's war love story is the opposite from most of the other war love story that we usually read. His story is the reality truth about love during war time. It was hard to maintain a relationship when the soldier can die in any day; his life was between live and death almost everyday in the war, and the chances of the girl become a widow was really high. It is better off if they can find someone at home to get marry with instead of waiting with hopeless.

In the inner "Chapter VII", the soldier was in a battle and he was in a seriously emotional break down. He was scared and prayed God for help. Even though this situation makes the soldier seem very disturbing for some readers whose believe in soldiers suppose to be barbarian men, but believe it or not this was the truth about human nature. Hemingway wanted the readers to see the reality of these soldiers while they were in the battle and understand the condition during the war for these soldiers. They were not barbarian men who always brave, strong, and have no problem of killing people, but these soldiers in reality are just normal teenager boys at the time, and they were just human being. They do have those moments that they feel helpless and powerfulness; they scare of death, and they have nightmare at night from killing people during day times.

Then in "Soldier's Home", was about the life of a soldier after the war. His life has become opposite including the environment, the emotions, and his way of thinking about life. It was difficult for a soldier who come home from the war and be back to a normal life. Once again, Hemingway wanted the readers to see the consequences of the war and what has it done to these young boys. The lifestyle when they had in the army and the lifestyle they had when they came back home were completely opposite. It was difficult for them to make choices and take the next steps of their life. They could be either ignore the fact that they had kill people during the war or seeing their roommate laying death next to them with a missing head, and moved on and built up a normal life which they suppose to have before they started to join the army, or they could be back with the lifestyle that they had been training to have during the war.

The three stories give the readers a clear picture of how these soldiers life would be before, during, and after the war. Although, the three stories have different author's purpose and different soldier's situation, but its commonalities are the keys of how it joined together as one. These stories happened during the revolution time and it tells how the conditions at that time to these soldiers. Then the meaning behind each story is the reality of these soldiers's life at the war time. Each story is like the next steps for these soldiers. First they fell in love during the war and have a vision of how their life when they got back alive. Second, they finally in the battle and see the dark side of being in the army. Finally, the life after the war, they were not the same person like they use to be before, they have changed their personality and it was impossible for them to have a normal life like their parents expected. Once you in the war, your life will never be the same.

Emmanuel Omokaro

Diamonds from blood

In the song “Diamond” Kanye West talks about how the worldviews diamonds in a very high standard. Therefore diamonds seem more valuable than people. The general topic of the song “Diamond” is about blood diamonds also known as conflict diamonds. “Diamonds” is about issue of blood diamonds that happened in the 1990’s in Sierra Leone, Africa. Many Americans did not know about the conflict that had happened before “Diamond”. The song is more than a topical song you would hear on the radio that are about girls and how much diamonds one has. Kanye West added Jay-Z to the remix of “Diamond”. Also Lupe Fiasco who is not in the same record label, has written on the topic of blood diamonds as well entitled “Conflict Diamonds”. It is very common in the hip hop industry that other artists share beats. “Conflict Diamonds”, “Diamond”, and “Diamond Remix” all share “Shirley Bassey's classic Diamonds Are Forever” (Throw) has there choir. The three artists all send a clear message to the rap community about how they have helped aid war in Sierra Leone through their desire for loving diamonds.

Kanye West is a rapper as well as a well-respected producer. Many of his rap songs deal with issues in the society, issue that may not seem to be politically correct to mention. West raps to educate his listeners with issues that are usually not in other rap songs. “Jesus Walks” was whipped by the media for the music video being too controversial. Kanye West did not care about what the media said he just wanted his fans to hear his opinion on the subject. When he wrote the song “Diamond” it was not to win a MTV music award. It was to tell his listener what is going on across the ocean in Africa.

“Diamond Remix” feature one more artist included in the song. The other artist, Jay-Z, is a well-respected artist who is known worldwide, not only for being a rapper, but also for being a businessman. Jay-Z also founded Roc-A-Fella Co. and he is the President of the Roc-A-Fella Records which is one of the largest rap record label in the United States. Many will call him the best rapper in the industry as of right now.

Lupe Fiasco has the same beat and sends a similar message but a lot more in depth. Lupe Fiasco has a rap style very similar to Kanye West. Many rap fans love Fiasco for putting so many details into his song so you could illustrate it. “Conflict Diamonds” is a representation of one of his best works.

A blood diamond is a diamond sold from a place that is in a civil war to aid the military. The diamonds are sold to countries that have a very high demand for diamonds, which mean a very high profit gain to the seller. Then the profit is used to help aid the military need for the war with the gains made (Conflict). The United Nation defines blood diamond or conflict diamond as “diamonds that originates from areas controlled by forces or factions opposed to legitimate and internationally recognized governments, and are used to fund military action in opposition to those governments or in contravention of the decisions of

the Security Council" (Stop). The only other thing that should be included in the definition is a part that explains the worst part of conflict. The loss of body parts, which is talk very highly by each artists.

Kanye West was quoted in the Business Wire, an article based on the success of his second album *Late Registration* saying that "he had a mindset of informing his listener about the issue of blood diamond" (Throw). After he was informed about the situation about what was going on in Sierra Leone, he was motivated to write the song. If one look at what a blood diamond is and how rebel groups benefited from diamonds sold, you could see why an artist like Kanye West would make a song about it, since West his always be driven to educate his listeners.

Kanye West starts the song by saying "good morning, this ain't Vietnam still people lose legs, hands arms, for real little is known of Sierra Leone, and how it connects to the diamonds we own" (West). West set the tone of the song from the beginning that this song was not about how lovely diamonds are, which can be easily assumed from the title. West went right into rapping about body parts being lost as if it was Vietnam. Also, West lets his listener that wear diamonds know that this song connects to them and that they should listen up.

Kanye West also applies the song to himself, "see apart of me saying keep shining, but how? When I know of the blood diamonds, though it's thousands of miles away, Sierra Leone connects to what we go through today. How could something so wrong make me feel so right?"(West). A great statement to how self image is what drives us to put diamond in such high standards. We force ourselves to believe that diamonds are needed to live.

Kanye West said "people asking me if I'm gone give my chain back that'll be the same say I give the game back" (West). It was sending mixed messages to people. However, West was saying that he still needs to keep his image as a rapper, however, his diamonds are not conflict diamond. West wants to stop people of buying diamonds that are conflict diamonds because they help aid the war over Sierra Leone. If one still feel the need of buying diamonds just make sure of where they came from.

In the remix of "Diamonds", Jay-Z verse in the song delivers a message on how the public views one when wearing diamonds. Wealth is determined by how much diamonds one has. "The chain remains, the game is intact" (Jay-Z). Rappers are held in such a high figure in the urban society to their life style. Rappers have to live up to the demand of what their fan wants and in reality that might not be who they are.

"Conflict Diamonds" the song written by Lupe Fiasco was more in depth with the issue of blood diamond than the other song. "Conflict Diamonds" has many eye-popping lyrics that drew one into the song. Fiasco analyze the youth of Sierra Leone by say "Making paper with slave labors and hitting little kids with life time bids making them cut and shine stones. Inflating the price and making them look nice and I wasn't thinking twice when I was putting mine on" (Fiasco). Listening to that I had an image of a little kid I knew being forced to sell diamonds.

The most powerful message to me in the whole song is “didn’t have a clue that the rapper was helping the rapist, raiders of the villagers, pillagers of the schools. Shooters of the innocent, torturers of the witnesses, burners of the businesses and my bracelet were the fuel” (Fiasco). Fiasco attacks the rap community for aiding the cause of blood diamond. His statement was very strong in the way he talks about the rappers that are helping the rapists. The quote is very graphic but very much true. Fiasco ended it by saying his bracelet helped fuel the war. Also again not taking himself out the picture including himself in the process as well. Fiasco does not feel correct wearing the diamonds, and states the results of what happened to the miners that got the diamonds for him. An interesting part of the song is when Fiasco mentions another country in Africa that also had a blood diamond conflict as well. Angola has gone through the conflict of blood diamonds the same way Sierra Leone did.

The History Channel’s series entitled “Precious Gems” describes what went on as “rebel armies have forced tens of thousands of people to mine diamonds in brutal, dangerous conditions under the threat of death, their pay as paltry as a cup of rice per day. In Sierra Leone, rebels chopped off people's hands, arms, feet, lips, and ears indiscriminately for years during a civil war financed in part by the trade of illicit diamonds” (Precious Gems). “Diamond” and “Conflict Diamonds” both cover the issue of how the people of Sierra Leone lost body parts very well.

The three artists all illustrate how body parts were during the conflict and who was to blame. Kanye West reported that the rap community was the blame for what had happened. Jay-z blames the society for putting diamonds in a very high standard so one could feel the need of it to fit it. Lupe Fiasco blames himself and also the rap community for helping the crisis.

People don’t seem to care where or how they receive diamonds because we are very materialistic. We could care less about the struggles of the people who have loss their arms due to our needs for diamonds. Kanye West expresses it in a verse say in “see apart of me saying keeping shinning, but how?” (West). West is implying that people are materialistic and don’t care about other lives because how could one still feel the need to wear conflict diamonds after knowledge of the situation. West expresses that Diamonds seem to be more value to one than other people lives.

Blood diamond is a very interesting issue and it is sad that it has happened. If it were not for artists like Kanye West, Lupe Fiasco, and Jay-Z many people would not know about the issue. The songs were made about a year before the movie came out so most of the rap community knew about the situation already. Their lyrics are very detailed about what went on in Sierra Leone. The issue of blood diamonds also shows a dark age in the world when humans lose body parts during the fight for diamonds and a different political view.

Each artists has different verse but the same mind of educating a community that only see music videos of rappers with jewelry that they dream of. Each artist in someway disagrees with that. They feel that diamonds should not be held in such a high standard in the world. If the table were turned, what would we

want the people of Sierra Leone to do? One would want help and also want people stop buying diamonds as well.

Sonique Paige

True Stories

A story is something that someone tells us or that we read; we believe it to be true because things that actually happen are real to us; we feel them deeper. War is obviously a very emotional experience for the people involved and also those close to them. It is common to be generally curious about these big monstrosities that governments spend trillions of dollars on and that tear the world apart. *In Our Time*, by Ernest Hemingway, is a collection of war stories, some obviously about war and others not so obviously. In regards to Tim O'Brien's definition of a true war story, I believe that Hemingway succeeds in telling three war stories which are *Soldier's Home*, *On the Quai and Smyrna*, and *Cat in The Rain*. Reading O'Brien's definition of a true war story made me realize that Ernest Hemingway's war stories were true war stories.

Naturally I believe that a war story is plain and simply a story about war. I would hope that the story teller is telling the truth when they tell me the story; however according to Tim O'Brien, "In many cases a true war story cannot be believed" (176). When one tells a war story, only the story teller knows the veracity of the story and those listening to the story may not believe the story but that does not mean it is true or a lie. People will believe what they want to. Normal people may not understand war stories because they were not there to experience it since war life is drastically different than civilian life. A true war story may be outlandish—outside of common folks' ideas about war, which are shaped by the media. O'Brien argues that, "You can tell a true war story by the questions you ask. Somebody tells a story, let's say, and afterward you ask, 'Is it true?' and if the answer matters, you've got your answer" (182). If someone tells a story about being chased by a wild pack of wolves for two miles it would make you feel a certain way, whether you believe it or not. A true war story, as I understand, is so powerful that it doesn't matter if it actually happened or not. It would evoke such emotions from you that it wouldn't matter if the happenings of the story are actually valid. It would make you feel that you learned a piece of what war is really like, so you would not ask after hearing it, if it is true or not. Furthermore, "a thing may happen and be a total lie; another thing may not happen and be truer than the truth" (O'Brien 182). O'Brien however contradicts himself much in his definition of what a true war story is. It leads me to believe that he himself is shaky on what it is, but he knows more so what it is not. For example, "A true war story is never about war. It's about the special way that dawn spreads out on a river when you know you must cross the river and march into the mountains and do things you are afraid to do" (183). This passage helped me understand what O'Brien was trying to say through his ranting about what is true and what is not true. What O'Brien is trying to say is that a true war story is about perseverance and accepting one's responsibility like a man. Krebs was drafted as a young man still in college, he had no choice but to take the role of a soldier and make it happen.

A Soldier's Home is not a moral story, which fits Tim O'Brien's definition of a true war story. While reading a Soldier's Home I looked at it for what it was. When I read Tim O'Brien's definition of a true war story I made the connection that Soldier's Home is immoral—which makes it a true war story. A Soldier's Home has no moral or remorse because Krebs has lost his want for love; he doesn't love anyone and he doesn't feel bad about it. All the while Hemingway doesn't denounce or praise Krebs behavior he simply says that is the way it is, plain and simple.

Hemingway uses subtle clues that let the reader know his inner thoughts, for example he explains how Krebs spent some of his leisure time while in France, "There is a picture which shows him on the Rhine with two German girls and another corporal. Krebs and the corporal look too big for their uniforms. The German girls are not beautiful. The Rhine does not show in the picture"(Hemingway 69). Many people would fawn over the opportunity to go to France; it is beautiful, pristine, and historic, however Krebs does not seem to be enjoying France the way it should be enjoyed. The fact that Krebs is a soldier and doesn't get much free time he should be ecstatic that he gets to see the lovely Rhine River but the Rhine isn't even visible in the picture. The setting of the picture does not seem all that pleasant. Although there are girls in the picture, which he undoubtedly fooled around with, it is still an ugly picture, there is something unfit. They are not beautiful because he does not care about them; there are mere objects of his sexual desire. The fact that Krebs's uniform doesn't fit points to the fact that Krebs and his fellow corporal were not highly valued in the U.S. Army, if they were they would have uniforms that fit them and much more. I was lead to believe that Soldier's Home was a war story because of the fact that Krebs was involved in World War I and the story was about him.

One of O'Brien's main criterions for a true war story is, "If a story seems moral, do not believe it. If at the end of a war story you feel uplifted, or if you feel that some small bit of rectitude has been salvaged from the larger waste, then you have been made a victim of a very old and terrible lie" (175). After reading "Soldier's Home" I did not feel like I took a moral from it I felt like the story left many parts unstated, which fits perfectly with O'Brien's definition of a true war story. His definition was all over the place, just like Hemingway's book.

"Krebs found that to be listened to at all he had to lie, and after he has done this twice he, too, had a reaction against the war and against talking about it" (Hemingway 69). After reading this I felt that maybe Krebs wasn't the best person to be telling a war story, but I found that this quotation closely relates to Tim O'Brien when he says, "In other cases you can't even tell a true war story. Sometimes it's just beyond telling" (O'Brien 176). Perhaps Krebs is withholding information that he would like to share with his mother, he even shows it. Krebs is capable but does not tell a true war story according to Tim O'Brien's definition because if he did no one would want to listen. For example in Tim O'Brien's chapter "How to Tell a True War Story" one of Bob Kiley's very dear friends, Curt Lemon, dies because he was playing catch with grenades. Bob Kiley writes a horrific letter to Lemon's sister about her brother, his death and mainly about how much he

loved him –she never responded so he calls her a dumb *cooze* (O'Brien 175). Lemon's sister didn't respond because she did not want to hear a true war story. She thought that Kiley was being excessive maybe too graphic for her taste. If I were Lemon's sister I would have appreciated the letter from Bob Kiley since he was the last person who talked to him before he died. It's like Lemon's sister doesn't care about him enough to want to discuss her brother's life.

On *The Quai and Smyrna* is a war story because it is obviously about war but after reading O'Brien's definition I believe that it is more of a war story because it shows the disturbing nature of war but also the impossibility of certain happenings. Tim O'Brien says, "There is no virtue. As a first rule of thumb, therefore, you can tell a true war story by its absolute and uncompromising allegiance to obscenity and evil" (175). Since there is no virtue in a war story the story teller can be as graphic as they desire. The lack of virtue is more relatable to the soldier. In war the soldiers learn lessons of courage that none of us will ever get to experience, but that is not what they have the desire to tell. Soldiers have the desire to tell you about the things that made them feel most deeply; not what you want to hear. The women are holding onto their dead babies, which is outlandish; no one would ever think of this happening. This short chapter shows the hidden meaning behind Hemingway's emotions. After reading O'Brien's chapter it made me see that war stories are not pleasant in nature. Reading "On the Quai and Smyrna" made me feel upset.

The one chapter in *In Our Time* that stood out to me was "Cat in the Rain." This chapter is obviously not about World War I, but Tim O'Brien says himself, "A war story is never about war" (183). A war story doesn't technically need to be about war but if you read the novel with a closed mind; perhaps not understanding O'Brien's opinion you would think that "Cat in the Rain" was nonsense.

When I first read the chapter *Cat in the Rain* I thought that it had little to do with war myself, and that it did not fit in well, however I thought it to be relevant and touching because of the battle between the wife, who remains nameless, and her husband George. George's wife is quietly battling with him to be treated as an individual. In the short chapter "Cat in the Rain" the wife says, "I wanted it so much, I don't know why I wanted it so much. I wanted that poor kitty. It isn't any fun to be a poor kitty out in the rain" (93). I feel that the wife feels like she herself is like a cat out in the rain because she feels a sense of helplessness within her marriage. Since she can't have happiness she wants something material to keep her somewhat satisfied. To take it a step further one could consider the wife as a greedy nation that wants more and more. But the idea that Hemingway was trying to convey is the same idea that Tim O'Brien put into words. It is never all about what it seems to be.

Like many classic works of literature I believe that *In Our Time* is a valuable text to read in contemporary times because of the commonalities of World War I with present time. One cannot read a novel and take it for fact; one has to believe that the author is trying to convey a certain message, which is open for discussion. Just because Ernest Hemingway released the novel *In Our Time* as a novel with World

War I stories that doesn't mean that every story is going to be about combat or war veterans. There is more than meets the eye when it comes to reading any piece of literature.

Dan Quach

“I’m a Big Kid Now”

As we grow up, we constantly discover and learn new ways to communicate with one another. Whether we are children just beginning to mumble or teenagers in the business world learning how to speak formally, we are constantly adapting to new situations with language. As we grow older though, the language we used while we were young changes in meaning to us. How we view the language we used as children drastically changes as we become older and more mature.

I recall a time when I was about ten years old. At this age, vulgarity was a big thing. Swearing was the cool, rebellious, kid thing to do. The cool kids swore, and the pretty girls giggled in amazement. Meanwhile, the other kids gasped in shock, and the adults discouraged us from using such forbidden language. The kids that mouthed the vulgarities always seemed to be the most popular. I wanted to be one of those kids. I wanted to be part of the attention, part of the craze. One time, while I was riding my bicycle around a local neighborhood, I saw two teenage girls walking through the park. I wanted to be accepted and cool—just like the other kids I saw in my school. Without hesitation I decided to throw out a few words I had heard before: “Fuck you, bitches!” It felt so cool using them for the first time in my life. The two teenagers looked at me like I was crazy and giggled away. I felt cool in conforming to this forbidden language. This incident was a step that would result in me using this type of language in my later years.

At this young age, I was becoming introduced to a new way of speaking with other people. I did not realize what any significant importances of what the words meant, or even why they were looked down by adults. All I knew was that I was boosting my charisma around my peers and being the cool person I wanted to be. So I continued to use vulgarity without thinking what it meant, or why I was even saying it until it became a regular habit in my life. I would see my friend and exclaim, “How the hell are you?!” I would hear something I liked and scream, “Hell Yeah!” Likewise I would see something I did not like and respond, “Oh, Hell No!” Without any regard, phrases and words like these had become a habit and a normal way for me to communicate within my peers. I used those words as a way to connect to my peers, and to become accepted with friends. The way I was speaking would earn me my friends and certainly the respect from them. I had standardized myself as a normal kid just like the rest. As result of this, the language I used as a child would eventually catch up to me when I became older.

The language I used became so regular in my life, that I oftentimes found myself using these words out of place or in front of a mature audience. If I had burned myself on the heater or dropped something, I would find myself saying “Shit!” and try to play it off as if I hadn’t said anything. Using words of vulgarity, I found myself with two identities: A self-confident personality in which I would swear freely in front of my friends and a less confident personality which dared never to curse in formal areas such as my parents,

teachers, or elders. This new language had become part of my identity since most of my time was spent around my peers, and friends.

Becoming addicted to this language, made a lasting imprint in my vocabulary and how I used it as a young child. In almost every social situation would I find myself using swear or curse words. But as I grew older, I also became accustomed to controlling myself and being mindful. I found other ways of socializing with people besides using curse words. I began to understand the meaning behind the words that escaped my mouth. I became conscious that these vulgarities were disrespectful, informal, and made me look unintelligent in the face of others. With older age, I view vulgar language as unnecessary because no longer do I feel the need to become accepted through these once rebellious words anymore. They are not words that impress anyone anymore. As a teenager, I encounter many other variables besides just screaming out profanity that make me able to successfully communicate with others to gain the social status I sought as a kid. The language, usually depending on whom and where I was with would change to a mature dialogue with others.

The difference is how I saw using profanity as a child to how I see it today. As a child, I saw it as a tool to create an image for myself and for the people around me. Many years later as a late teenager, I view profanity in a whole different aspect. Profanity now serves as a habit which has developed from my childhood. Rather than using the language of profanity to make me who I am, it is now an extremity of my personality. Profanity no longer serves as a tool to define who I am today as it did in the past. As I began to get older and more mature, people around me were not looking for the cool rebellious kid that yelled out ridiculous words. The age I was now living in did not look for my childish swears and curses. To remain interactive with the people around me, and for them to like me, the language I used with others would have to change. I would have to adapt to a new of speaking to those around me.

Continuing to grow older, I was constantly being placed in different environments with different people. The language of vulgarity no longer worked in achieving the same effect of gaining the respect of my peers. Instead the vulgarity would create the effects of portraying me as an immature teenager. Because of this reaction, I would have to transform when, where, and how often I used this type of language. Subconsciously I had controlled my profanity to a point of will. I abandoned overusing swears and choose to swear or curse only in social situations I now deemed appropriate. Importantly though, this change did not occur in one day, or one week. Rather, the change in how I talked and communicated changed over a span of time throughout many years. Slowly adjusting to different scenarios I went through, I had the opportunity to experience more, and learn from them.

From experiences we go through, the way we communicate with those around us constantly changes. The language we would use as a child changes dramatically to when we become teenagers, and the language we use as teenagers can also drastically change when we become decades older. The way I viewed profanity as a way to gain friends, and appear cool, gradually changed to become completely different. The language

we use connects us to the people around us whether it is family, adult figures, or friends. As we become older and mature, the language we used as children adapts to those around us and the things we said when we were young no longer have the same meaning to us now.

Tamika Riley

What is the Value of Art?

“Art is more than a product of our efforts- it should be about feeling, life, attitude, and soul” (Bongart). Art is not about what the work looks like when it is finished, but the emotions and thoughts the end product provokes. Through art one communicates ideas, thoughts, and feelings. Something is considered art when it expresses what cannot be expressed with words. Photography, for instance, is a form of art through which people express themselves. People take images of special occasions that have value to them. The feelings that are attached to these occasions cannot be explained with words. Art is like a breath of fresh air. It should be different from what people see in their everyday lives. It should be unique and intriguing. Art should evoke emotions, and captivate the viewer. When one sees it, one should want to look at it a bit longer. Through art, people form a connection with the artist on a personal level, because the work allows them to see how the artist thinks. Art is not simply using pretty colors to paint something beautiful; it is capturing something significant and meaningful in the moment that it happens. It is also about showing the reality of life. The value of art is truth; helping people to see things the way they have never seen them before.

Most often there are stories or underlying messages behind why an artist created a work of art. Through the art the artist reveals emotions that he is feeling at the time the piece was created. Viewers sometimes scrutinize his work and try to figure out exactly what emotion he wants to provoke within them. Many times the viewers create stories that they think might be the reason why a photograph was taken. This is exactly what Charles Simic does; he analyzes pictures and creates stories to describe what is taking place in the image. He describes every detail as though he was there when the picture was taken. Simic describes what is happening in one photograph by stating “What he wanted was for the lady of the house to feel how soft the silk was but she either did not understand him or she had other reasons for hesitating” (Simic 570). Simic does not know if his description of what is happening in the photograph is true. But that is what art viewers do, they create stories to help them understand the image. One looks at a photograph and wonder why the lighting is the way it is and why the people are doing a certain action. Sometimes people are even puzzled by the story that it should be telling or what the image symbolizes. This is what art does “... Art should provoke more questions than answers...” (Allison 638). It should make you wonder what the artist was thinking when he created his work. It should make you want to know the story that the art is supposed to be telling. Many of the times people are puzzled by a piece of art but it intrigues them even though they do not know the story behind it. They keep looking at it hoping that they will figure out something they did not understand before. Sometimes viewers look at images and immediately form a bond with them. This happens because the images in it remind them of a past event that happened in their life or they can feel the emotions that the artist wanted them to feel. When people view a piece of art, they often feel emotions such as sadness, despair,

anger, happiness, love, fear, and yearning. This is a part of what art does; it brings out emotions in people that would never otherwise be revealed.

More than anything, art portrays realism. Art shows the world as it is. It shows the behavior of humanity and how life is in any society. No matter how badly people want to believe that the world is perfect, art shows the cold truth that life is sometimes sad and painful. Photography is the perfect form of art through which reality is shown, because the events captured in a picture cannot be altered or formatted to change what happened. It is there for everyone to see whether they want to or not and they cannot ignore it. Art shows that unlike fairy tales, life does not always have a happy ending and for some individuals, life is not what they want it to be. However, many times pictures show things about life that are not true. They try to cover up what the world really is like. Dorothy Allison explains how images sometimes give a false sense of what life really is like in "This Is Our World". She says,

I wonder how many other people look at the constant images of happy families and make wry faces at most of them. It is as if the illustrators have television sitcom imaginations. I do not believe in those families. I believe in exhausted mothers, frightened children, numb and stubborn men. I believe in hard pressed families, the child huddled in fear with his face hidden, the father and mother confronting each other with their emotions hidden, dispassionate passionate faces, and the unsettling sense of risk in the baby held close to the man's chest. These images make sense to me. They are about the world I know.... (Allison 638)

This is an instance in which a photographer tries to portray that a family is always perfect and happy, which is not true. Families have fights and disagreements in the real world. Men abuse their wives, people are raped, and some children do not have a father to look up to. Sometimes family members even hate each other. The world is mean and people should accept that instead of pretending that nothing bad ever happens. Violent acts are committed everyday which cause people to live in fear. But many in society often pretend that these people do not exist and that their problems are not real, because if they were real then the world would not be perfect. But that is the world.

Pictures allow people to form their own ideas and opinions about a particular situation. They show the good and the bad. Photos show what is happening in the world and lets the audience decide whether they want to believe it or not. With pictures there is no one forcing his version of the truth on the population. Individuals see what is real with their own eyes. In writings there is often only one point of view. All of the readers' ideas are being swayed in one direction and it leaves no room for them to form their own opinions. Many times important issues that can be seen in a photograph are omitted from writings. The big picture is shown in a photograph so that one gets a better understanding of the events that were captured in the image. One connects more with pictures because one forms thoughts about the image and can relate life experiences to the pictures.

Why is the truth important in art? People need to know what is happening in their communities. They need to know some of the devastating things that are happening in other parts of the world, so they can change their attitudes about life. For instance, wealthy people who seem to think that the world is a bed of roses need to know what is happening outside of their community. They need to know that not everyone is as fortunate as they are, and not everyone is living a happy and peaceful life. They can help to change the way people live, because they have the resources and the power to do so. Wealthy people became rich because they had other people helping them. They should think about where they would be if they never had anyone providing them with the resources that they needed to become successful. They should help people because someone helped them. The truth in artistic photography shows that there is suffering and pain around us. It opens our eyes to a reality, a reality as omnipresent as death. People die everyday, but when pictures show death as it is happening everyone seems to have a problem with it as Nora Ephron discusses in "The Boston Photographs". She argues, "Death happens to be one of life's main events" (Ephron 682). Death is something sad and tragic that happens everyday, but no one wants to believe that it does. No one wants to know the truth about death, but photographs force us to believe that death does happen and most often in a tragic way. Art is capturing life as it is, unscripted and unedited. A photograph does exactly that.

Art does tell the truth, but the truth is not always sad and tragic. The truth about life is sometimes good things happen and sometimes bad events occur. Photographs capture all of life's events. Ephron demonstrates how both good and unfortunate events are caught on film, in "The Boston Photograph." It was good that the child had survived the fall from the fire escape, but very unfortunate that the mother died. In the essay Ephron raises the question "Why doesn't the press print the good news?" (Ephron 682). But it was good news that the child survived the fall. If the child had died, then the event would have been even more tragic. Photographs also show the good things that life has to offer, such as, happiness, prosperity and love. Photographs are a friendly reminder of the good times that were shared with close friends. It gives us strength, faith, and courage. Sometimes people are even inspired by art. They get inspiration to do the right thing or the courage to do something that they have never done before.

According to Dorothy Allison art is a type of revelation: "... It should make us think about what we rarely want to think about at all" (Allison 638). Photographs are a constant reminder of things that happened in the past. Things that one might want to forget but cannot. Things that one want to cover up and lie about, but the picture is always there saying that, this is the truth, and one cannot hide from it. A picture is always there, reminding people of the tragic things that are happening in society. People can either choose to help and put a stop to the suffering of those around us, or they can just sit back and watch them happen. Art makes the viewers think about the bad things that they try to avoid, such as terrorism, the poor, and starvation. It does this by captivating its audience in the images because they are so unbelievable the audience cannot look away from them. The film *Born into Brothels* is a perfect example of how pictures show things that some people do not want to think about. These young children were given cameras to take pictures of things

that interested them. They did not take pictures of happy moments that ordinary children would have taken. The pictures that these children took were of their lifestyle. They took pictures of the devastating environment in which they lived where they were exposed to things like prostitution, drug abuse, and alcoholism on a daily basis. People do not want to think about things like this so they turn a blind eye to the truth in the pictures that these children take. But that does not change the fact that everyday these children are abused, and prostituted by their families. This is something real that is happening in the world and the children's pictures prove that.

When one learns the truth through art, one gets a better understanding of one's society. People value art because they are free to express themselves and learn a social truth. Art reveals that problems exist in the world and it keeps us in tune with the realities of the world. It is important because it is the truth and it opens our eyes to the world around us. One poignant example is the art show that was put together for Hurricane Katrina victims. These artistic photographs showed the devastation and damage that Hurricane Katrina caused. The art show was a way to make sure that people do not forget the tragedy that occurred.

Kwabena Sarfo

Song of Solomon, The Movie: A Guaranteed Seller

The film version of Toni Morrison's novel *Song of Solomon* will be a hit and bring an audience of high school kids and their elders to box offices nationwide. It would have to be rated at least PG-13 in order to maintain the original themes and symbols from the story. This would include sexual content and humor such as when the character Freddie is laughing hysterically after seeing an 11 year old boy being breastfed. While leaning towards a comedy film, some scenes of lynching and racial slurs will also be added to make the movie complete.

In the opening scene of the movie, Mr. Robert Smith can be played by Will Ferrell dressed in blue making funny faces as he prepares to commit suicide from a tall story building. A woman is singing from down below and Ferrell's character sings along with her like a drunken man. Right after that, there can be jump cuts; scenes of women in Mercy hospital followed by scenes unrelated to each other. These jump cuts can include some skilled minority children playing soccer in the street during the early to mid 90's. This would be an attempt to attract sports fanatics to the movie. Throughout the movie, Freddie who can be played by Dave Chappelle will be the focus of an audience looking for comedy. Further into the movie, there can be scenes of Pilate's youth and scenes of her father. Then later, the scene where Hagar strikes Milkman's collar bone should be central and therefore emphasized in the movie, showing him to be some kind of "Superman" figure. Milkman can be depicted as a person well known and loved who, in a supernatural way, seems to never die. There could be a twist to the plot in the end of the movie in relation to Milkman's character. These highlights of the movie take up about 45 minutes leaving an additional 45 minutes for the addition of content based on slavery and segregation during the period of the World Wars. The different roles characters and their personalities should be made to stand out.

There should be a careful selection of the character that is to play the role of Pilate, who is an important character in the novel. But along with Chappelle and Ferrell in the movie, Jaime Fox can be Guitar and Bernie Mac can play the role of Macon Dead. The rest of the characters' roles can be played by lesser known actors who can best bring the characters to life.

TV ads can best promote the movie. Quick clips of scenes such as Mr. Smith, played by Will Ferrell, on a window sill will attract a large audience. Two African Americans could be shown on the street down below talking about how black guys always die first in movies. Then ironically, Ferrell's character leaps to his death. Another ad on television can feature Dave Chappelle as the character Freddie who sees an 11 year-old being breastfed and makes a comment such as "got milk" with his renowned 'Dave Chappelle' voice. It'll sell.

The purpose of any changes made to the book version of *Song of Solomon* is only to add comedy while maintaining the seriousness of the text itself. For example, reference is made to "ghosts" as the killers of the

character Guitar's mother on page 109 of the novel. A comical scene of KKK members acting like ninjas can be included in this movie. I interpret these "ghosts" to be members of the KKK in their white cloaks with hoods on. So then, the deeper meaning is that there was confusion during this time period of racism and little children saw the badness of the white man as if these men were ghosts.

The movie can be shot in New York and Virginia. Mercy Hospital and other locations can be all digitalized in order to cut expenses. No special effects will be necessary. With such a full lineup of comedians and actors, this movie will not only be profitable but many will enjoy it.

David Solis

The Complexities of Hemingway's relationships

In Hemingway's stories of *A very short story*, *Interchapter VII* and *Soldier's home*, Hemingway intends to create a storyline that starts with a story which tells of the infatuation of two World War I characters; where an American army soldier and an Italian military nurse fall in what they believe is love. After this story comes *Interchapter VII* where Hemingway gives details of the conditions a soldier had felt in the trenches of World War I and shows the hypocrisy in the soldier's plea with Jesus Christ for deliverance when he promises to tell everyone about him and does not do so when he goes to a brothel. Lastly, he tells the story of a man named Krebs who comes back from the war and detaches himself from many relationships within the story that primarily involve women. The way Hemingway does this throughout these three stories is in a way that conveys the digression from war onto the matters of love; a love never quite fulfilled by the characters in the stories.

In a way of displaying how often a man can change, Hemingway decides to take his characters and make them characters which fit a criteria of being typically impassive and unemotional and adding the most significant emotion to human nature; love. In *A very short story*, he takes two characters; the soldier and Luz, and has them fall in love in the same way two average individuals fall in love. However, because Luz ends up telling him that it was a "boy-girl love", Hemingway hints to the reader that in life, anything can come and go and that includes love. No one is immune to the heartache love can bring; not even the most bold soldiers in war. In *Interchapter VII*, Hemingway wanted the reader to quickly understand that devotion to someone or something one second may not last the next. Similar in the way Luz left the soldier in a *very short story*, the soldier leaves Jesus Christ because of the lack of motivation to hold on to the relationship. Luz let the soldier go like the soldier let Jesus Christ go all because there was no perceived incentive on holding onto the union. Ironically, Luz and the soldier both left their loves in their stories in search for love. When I realized this, I asked myself, "Isn't that everyone's life story?" In my opinion, Hemingway was trying to show the reader how this situation can be commonly in today's world and will forever dwell on man for as long as love exists. After preceding to *Soldier's home*, I understood that Hemingway now displays the lack of a relationship between Krebs and anyone else, including women or God. He does this in a manner that shows the loss of emotion and lack of love found in the first two stories.

Sequentially, the story is the work of a man and a woman who fail to connect with one another because of their want for more love from someone or something else. At the end of these three stories however, the main character seemingly is reminiscing on the things that used to attract him and why he no longer wants the things that he once wanted before going to war. Hemingway wanted to show the repercussions and circumstances a man who has been exposed to love can go through. He shows that

something so violent and loveless like war can turn a man into something he dreads to be. Hemingway arranged these stories in this order because initially, men and women are looking for the same thing; love. After the inevitable heartache we all one day encounter in our lives, it turns into a want that satisfies us for the moment being. In the end, a man is so numb to love and every other emotion in their bodies that these is hardly a want for it anymore.

These three stories serve as an example of the many aspects of catastrophic events in life like war can take on individuals. The limitations of what happens overseas does not end on foreign lands; it follows soldiers home and haunts them forever. It takes a toll on their emotions, their families and their lives. The devastation felt in war does not end on the frontline and Hemingway depicts that successfully in his stories. The loss of love is found in the first story, the loss of commitment in the second and the loss of the want for love in the third. Hemingway wants the reader to bear the soldier's burden and sympathize with those individuals who have a difficult time like so many of us who cannot find what love means and determining what is best in our everyday relationships like the characters in his stories had done. We all can relate to the soldier in the story and Hemingway intended to make it like so.

James Taing

In Our Time, Assignment #1

If I were to tell the story from the point of view of another soldier, I would make it look completely unfair to the rest of the squad that the soldier cowered in the corner. TO do that I would contrast him with another soldier who put his life on the line for his country:

That day the Germans were pushing hard against us at Fossalta. One minute I saw German tanks crawling in and out of the trenches far in the distance, then the next bombs and mortars fell all around us; causing dirt around us to shoot up and cover us. Behind the deafening sounds of the blasts, I could hear people screeching and screaming. I saw people above the trenches running from the attacks of the Germans only to run right into a shell that they had hoped to dodge. All of a sudden I heard the words, "Reinforcements are coming, stay low until the reinforcements come." So we all got low as possible and waited. Inside my trench there was a soldier who was tucked away in the corner, cowering like a dog; muttering the words, "Oh Jesus, Oh Jesus." Some soldiers began to crying and weeping, while others were exhausted and sat there lifeless trying to catch their breath. Many soldiers pulled out their prayer beads and began to recant prayers; while some soldiers casually took out a cigarette and began to smoke. All of a sudden the explosions got louder, and the ground shook vehemently. Above me, I could see American tanks flanking the German tanks from the backside. However, the German tanks outnumbered the reinforcement ranks, so our Commander Finch ordered us to hop from trench to trench, sneaking up on the Germans. We did as commanded, but it was no easy tasks. As we advanced, the Germans began to launch shells and missiles at us. Out of fear everybody made a mad dash towards the Germans trying to jump into the trenches every time they launched their attacks. Then right before they could resume fire, we mad another sprint for the Germans. However, this was with cost, as the Germans were able to kill many of the soldiers as they ran towards them. It was essentially a massacre for us. Then half of the German tanks began to advance on us the infantry. So we all ducked into the nearest trenches and readied ourselves for when they came. We waited patiently upon Commander Finch's orders, while hearing the wheels of the tanks screeching closer and closer. All of sudden Finch said, "FIRE! FIRE! FIRE WHATEVER YOU HAVE!" Almost simultaneously we all began throwing whatever explosives we had on us at the tanks. All we could hear was shrapnel flying, metal clinging, and flames would gushing into the sky above. It all sounded like goods things. But in the distance we could hear more tanks inching closer towards us. We all ducked down as close as possible, scared because we had thrown everything we had already. Then the tanks came to a screeching halt, and there was a long silent pause. I looked up and saw an unarmed German soldier on his knees; and I thought that it was over. Without thinking, I pulled out my rifle and shot the German right in the head, bursting several rounds through him. In the back a silhouette screeched with pain and anger, and my heart quickly sank. I later

realized that behind the German soldier was an American soldier who was locking submission the enemy in submission. I was later told that I shot and killed a high ranking American officer and an important German spy who had information of where captured American prisoners of war were. That night, while everybody was getting drunk and courting women I was held under captivity and was told that I was going to be court martial for treason. I kept looking outside the tent thinking how close I was to victory, how close I was to be celebrating like my buds out there; drinking all my thoughts away. I then saw the soldier who was cowering in the corner walking into the brothel and I suddenly became angry. I began to ask myself, "What if I hadn't fought so bravely for my country, would I have been rewarded well?"

Richard Tompkins

The Big Essay

In the play *Oleanna*, many things were left unsaid in more ways than one. The play itself is riddled with misunderstanding through miscommunication. It is repeatedly, filled with incomplete statements, and one-sided monologues referring to much of what is needed to be interpreted about learning. In essence, I've realized what the characters, John and Carol, don't understand about each other. They don't understand each others ideas on what lies within the real meaning of learning.

To begin, I've come to notice what Carol believes about education. Carol relies on the teacher's narration and her ability only to keep hold of information, as Paulo Freire would say. Evidence of this can easily be found in the reason why she fails the first two semesters of the class. John reads an excerpt from one of Carol's papers and it states " I think that the ideas contained in this work express the author's feelings in a way that he intended, based on his results" (Mamet 8). This monologue relays her belief of stating her opinions being irrelevant because of how this exert was devoid of her own opinions. John's following comments, in which she misunderstood, was only to question what exactly did she mean, knowing that this excerpt of her previous work was only a mere summary in which she was spitting out what she retained. In reality, John was only trying to encourage Carol to notice that she has to express more of her views in her papers to have any type of success in his course. I mean, what's the use of even reading it back to Carol? He was only trying to influence Carol to write what she felt in response to "the author's feelings."

Ironically, Carol's argument is that she follows his directions; therefore, further pushing away from John's method of understanding when he encourages that she needs to also follow her own when stating "I'm not your father" (Mamet 9). When analyzing the role of a father I came to the realization that a father would be more of an enforcer and less of the teacher. I say this because I always knew my mother as the one who influenced understanding of instruction while my father made sure that I was given it. Carol misunderstood this and with the addition of the phone call interrupting Carol and John's conversation, came Carol's irritability portrayed in her not even letting John finish his explanation that may have been the potential solution to Carol's problem with understanding. He states after the phone call, "What do you want me to do? We are two people? Both of whom have subscribed to..." (Mamet 10), and Carol immediately cuts him off during what I believe might've been essential to her intervention. I believe the conclusion of this statement was going to be his manners of saying that they're subscribed to two different types of learning because his next statement, "certain arbitrary" implied that at random "certain institutional" methods of learning encouraged them both to go in two different directions.

Related misunderstandings lie in John's attempt to make Carol realize that it was his job to provoke her as a student. In John objecting to her common belief that education is an "unassailable good", he

provokes her not to try to understand but to misjudge his methods of teaching. This is due to the many incomplete thoughts and ideas that weren't discussed due to both the characters themselves and their circumstances. For instance, John tries to reach Carol in a more brash way by stating, in general, that everything we do to develop our intelligence through education is "garbage", "a joke", and "nonsense". In essence, he only was doing what he thought was possible for her to truly grasp his way of learning because he himself was a teacher. He was, in more relatable words, provoking her to challenge his views with her own. When it comes to education, Carol is so attached to Paulo Freire's "Banking Concept" which states that "Instead of communicating, the teacher issues the communiqués and makes deposits which the students patiently receive, memorize and repeat"(Freire 260) that she is taken back by his statements on education. Instead of provoking Carol, John offends her with his statements as well as in his attempt to give her an "A" in the course. In result, I believe that John's ideals were too much for Carol to swallow as she saw John's actions as exploitative and were due to him wanting abuse his power. Her anger due to the misinterpretation of John's thoughts about education clouded her inability of understanding him further and this influence her to take the actions to ruin his life later on in the play.

In the midst of these many complicated misunderstandings, there is significance that lies in them. These moments of misapprehension are significant due to my belief it encourages us as students analyze and discuss; as luck would have it, similar to the discussions we have in class, thus far. In trying to analyze and interpret these many miscommunications we make the bond between teaching and student that much make stronger, in realizing that we aren't meant to just be a class of one thought but of many thoughts and ideas.

In my opinion, it's similar to what John refers to in the play when talking to Carol about making amends. The same way stoical philosophers believe that removing the phrase "I have been injured," is being as if the injury was removed, is the same way we can also attribute to dealing with the many issues of the teacher truly teaching the student. In admitting that we don't understand we do understand because it's the beginning of a new way of thought. We accept the fact that we don't know it all and in essence, accept a more vivid way of interpreting it because we are now more open to it.

The significance of these moments of misunderstanding may lie in our ideas of a solution. By brainstorming on the many different issues of this relationship among teachers and students, we make it easier for both in the future. The perfect example of this is depicted in the relationship that I have my English teacher now. As a student today, I am instructed to understand and depict information given in my own way and this is due to the transformation of what a teacher is supposed to represent, supported by opinions of countless students and teachers before me and my instructor. It cancels out Freire's idea that the teacher is but a "narrator" to the students because we communicate back and forth with our teacher about our many situations showing that we aren't just to, as Freire would put it, "memorize mechanically the narrated content"(Freire 260).

With such problems with both instructor and instructed Freire implies in his own words that “Education is suffering from narration sickness” (Freire 259). From what I’ve derived from my own academic career is that there has to be a certain amount of both narration and as well as the influence of own understanding. There has to be learning in the beginning guided by narration and ending in the influence of understanding in our own outlook. My reason for this is because I support that we must be narrated to, in order to be able to compose a narrative based on our own ideas.

Do I believe that too much narration is detrimental to a student’s development? Yes, but narration even to its smallest extent is essential a teacher’s narration needs to be present only due to the fact that we as students imply that it is the structure that we have to follow and what we as students should use with own individuality accompanying it. I find it comparable to Sesame Street’s method of influencing learning. For instance, a letter is introduced, in the effect that children retain the knowledge of it and then it is put into use in a way that influences them to use this letter on their own. Narration is somewhat essential in this manner of learning as it should be in all education.

In essence, we all need to be open to other methods of learning. It is possible to say that there are more diverse ways to interpret education and if we aren’t prepared to be open to such ways of dealing with education, then how can we move forward in the world? A world where communication is crucial and where miscommunication has always been an obstacle.

Yarelys Tifa

Violence?... Everywhere

Violence happens everywhere. Violence happens in the streets, in video games, and even in photographs. Young people of this generation are exposed to this type of violence. They are too young to be exposed to all this violence, and therefore I think that violence should not be shown.

I believe that children have the power to obtain violent video games. People like my opponents, Dibash and Roberto believe that it's the parents' fault that their children have these rated mature video games. However, by today's standards everyone has the potential to get whatever video game they want, regardless of skin color, sex, race, or age. If the children don't have the violent video games that they want to play, they could just easily go to their friends' houses and get these video games. This shows how easily someone can even obtain a video game and how many young children have these video games themselves. These video games, like Gran Theft Auto and Halo give kids ideas of how to be violent; therefore most of them are raised with this mentality. "...Children who played violent karate games duplicated this type of behavior while playing with friends. These findings demonstrate the possible dangers associated with playing this type of video game over and over again" (<http://www.apa.org/releases/violentvideoC05.html>). If they are exposed to the violent media, there is a possibility that they can become violent individuals. An example of someone becoming violent through violent video games is Seung- Hui Cho. "Seung-Hui Cho was a mind-controlled assassin, whether you believe he was under the influence of outside parties or not, the fact is that the cultural brainwashing of violent video games and psychotropic drugs directly contributed, as it does in all these cases, to the carnage at Virginia Tech on Monday morning" (<http://www.prisonplanet.com/articles/april2007/190407mindcontrolled.htm>).

In this quote, one of the reasons that led to this horrible tragedy was the "brainwashing of violent video games." Not only was Cho mentally disturbed, but he played the violent video games that helped him get ideas and strategies on how to kill people. This is what happens when kids and people in general, like Cho, are exposed to this type of violence. This, one of biggest massacres in American history, shows how violent video games have a great impact on the individuals' behavior. How would the family of the students that died because of Cho feel about this topic? I am very confident that if they were asked that question, they would probably say that if eliminating violence (especially violent video games) would decrease the amount of deaths or massacres in history, then violence in video games should be immediately eliminated. A massacre of thirty-two people is more than enough to show that violence has to be censored.

There are so many resources and the technology is booming that all children have the potential to get a weapon or video game any day. "A 15-year-old freshman at a San Diego-area high school who had talked about taking a weapon to school killed two schoolmates and wounded 13 others Monday, police and

witnesses said” (<http://archives.cnn.com/2001/US/03/05/school.shooting.07/index.html>). This fifteen year old actually told his friends that he was going to bring a gun to school, eventually he did, killing two people. How did this 15 year boy get a hold of a weapon? This is a bad situation because that teenager could have killed more people than he did. People sell weapons illegally probably to get more money from the buyer. But, this bad decision is hurting and corrupting the whole US. If the parents don't do anything about it, it is up to the people in charge of selling weapons to make sure the individual they are selling the weapon to has a background check. But can we really stop the young generation from taking actions in buying weapons? Kids are going to do this because they are stubborn and curious. Therefore, enforcement of weapons should increase everywhere, so that the youth doesn't have access to any kind of weapon.

Violence would not become any better in the community if someone watches it to learn from it or avoid it. This is just not going to happen. Knowing how corrupted our surroundings are, most people would not try to avoid a violent scene that they watched. Most likely, they would corrupt their mind with malicious ideas that would not lead to anything good. There are a lot of sociopaths that probably got ideas from violent shows that killed many people in a terrible way. A person that was corrupted with his surroundings and excessive resources was Seung-Hui Cho, who killed thirty-two people in Virginia Tech, a college campus. This person had a legal gun license, but had two weapons in a college campus. Nobody did anything to stop him. This is where people have to take action. The professor that realized Cho had mental issues should've done something more, like sent him to a psychiatric hospital or tell the Dean. No one has to wait for violence to happen to prevent it. That's ridiculous. How can someone wait to see thirty-two people die to say, "Oh we have to do something about that." If someone can stop a tragedy from happening, like this case, they should. This goes to show that we can find violence everywhere and people can get away with anything, even where there is tight security, like in a college campus.

Violent pictures that display terrorists' attacks and scenes of 9/11 shouldn't be shown because they can affect the viewers that watched them. Some people that witnessed scenes of 9/11 can be scarred for life. These events are recurring in their mind over and over again. I don't think they want to be reminded of horrible scenes that happened in the past. Some people think that we shouldn't hide the truth about reality and it's just the news. However, to all the people that think that way, I would like to ask them, how would they feel if they saw a family member with his/her head cut off in the front section of the newspaper? Would they still think that these pictures should be shown to the public? I think not. "Assigning the agony of a human being in terror of immanent death to the status of a side-show act. A tawdry way to sell newspapers" (Ephron 679). I think the editors don't even care about the morals and emotions behind the pictures, they are just interested in making money.

In conclusion, violence in video games and TV shows should be censored and the government should get stricter with the gun possession laws. Kids are watching violent video games, teens are obtaining guns without a problem, and violent pictures are showing horrible scenes that people, like me, don't want to

see. This is all happening as we speak. Somewhere in the US, someone is killing someone. It's sad, but it's a reality check. In the end, it will get worse if violence keeps increasing like it is now.

Elvis Vasquez

What Works Better For You?

I have done it! I have come up with a plan to eliminate the phrase “throwing like a girl”. This problem has been going on for way too long and it is time for a change. It is simple: girls need to just learn how to throw, and if they do not, punish them. Girls have been embarrassing themselves for way too long now and they are starting to bring down some men who are being told that they throw like girls. It is time for them to take on some real punishment. There have been previous writings that explain why there is no reason for girls to throw the way they do in throwing like a girl.

You hear it all the time at a park, “you throw like a girl”, that is the most embarrassing thing you can hear while playing any sport. Most guys “dread the accusation of doing anything “like a girl”” (Fallows 417). Deservedly so, because all boys know that girls are not at the same level as them physically or mentally. Unfortunately not all boys are lucky enough not to throw like a girl so the boys who do throw like girls or do anything like girls should get taken care of in a bad way. First, any boy that throws like a girl should be removed from whatever team he (or shall I say she) is playing for. But even that is not enough ridicule for the boy; they should have to stand in the front of any major local event with a sign that says, “I am a woman”. This will hopefully deter any other boy who throws like a girl not to. If the throwing like a girl continues there is only one thing left to do, lock the boy in a cage with a ball and do not let him out. That will show him the restrictions that women once had and that will hopefully convince the boy not to throw like a girl because it can lead to him becoming a girl, because his boy friends will abandon him and that will leave him with the girls and picking up on girly habits.

We all know that women cannot do things as well as men, and that is why I discredited most of Fallows research in “Throwing Like a Girl”. He asked a “well educated woman” about the difference in joints in females and males. He should have went to a male and got an opinion from them. He did not do that instead he continued on to ask for the opinion of a women’s softball coach and she said, “There is no structural reason why men and women should throw in different ways” (417). What does she know, she is a women’s softball coach. This is going to be a recurring problem because females will continue to come up with more and more excuses on why they throw the way they do. Another reason why women throw like girls is because they do not have the work ethic as men. For example “According to her press secretary, Lisa Caputo, Mrs. Clinton spent the weekend before opening day tossing a ball in the Rose Garden with her husband, for practice.” (417). This quote shows that she did not care that she was going to be in front of thousands of people throwing like a girl. She had ample time to learn how to throw but because of the lack of work ethic that women have she only practiced for the weekend. Women need to just face the fact that they cannot do everything men can, but then again men can make this a game of torture for throwing like a girl.

There can be many consequences for a girl throwing like a girl. There should be steps in the severity of the penalty girls will face when they throw like a girl, but first we should make it even. Every time boys and girls are playing in the same baseball game for instance, the boys should use their off hand. This will make the game more even, and give the women in the game more enthusiasm to learn faster because if they do they can actually be better in the sport than the males. That is still not enough of a handicap. If the sport is still baseball, every time a boy is up to bat they should bat on their knees to make the game more even. Then after those two adjustments the game is fair and the consequences for every throw thrown like a girl can begin.

The first penalty for throwing like a girl will be to simply call the local police and have you arrested for breach of peace. This is because we feel that you do not care about what other people are subjected to see. This simply means we do not want anyone to see girl throwing like a girl anymore, and if you continue to do so the penalties get a little more personal.

The second penalty for every throw made by a girl that can be identified as a “throw like a girl” would be to have a toe or finger whatever you choose cut off. Now we are breaking the law because you just do not care about our movement. This is not just to be cruel it is just to show the severity of the offense. We are trying to get rid of people throwing like girls, and I know if I saw someone losing their pinky over a bad throw I will learn quicker.

The next penalty would be to lose a family member. No we are not going to kill them; we are just going to make that family member go very far away so you cannot see him/her anymore. If the offense is committed a second time then that simply means that the girl does not care to learn how to throw so they lose a family member.

Finally the last penalty is to get rid of you, and yes this time we mean get rid of you. This is a serious movement; we are tired of seeing girly throws. I know you must be wondering who “we” is. We is whoever reads this and agrees with my movement to get rid of the phrase “throwing like a girl.”

I am not proposing this method as something that I want to happen. I am just writing this to aware the public that there are crazy people in the world who may start a crazy movement like the one I proposed. There should be camps opened to teach people who do not know how to throw which teaches them how to throw a ball properly. Not only should a camp for throwing be opened there should be a camp opened for every sport so that there would not be any disadvantages when these games are played.

Society has always faced many problems, and they can range from political, poverty, economical, and even small things as an offensive phrase. As an author there are a couple ways to bring attention to these issues. Writing about these issues can be an effective way to start a movement against the issue, and can hopefully help resolve the issue. One method to get the message out to the people is to use satire, as in “A Modest Proposal” by Jonathan Swift. This method can be useful at times but at other times an author can lose the reader because of the proposal may be too explicit. The other method is to use facts and it is more straight forward as in “Throwing Like a Girl” by James Fallows. While the satirical method can grab the

reader's attention more, it can also divert the attention of the reader to something other than the purpose of the text. On the other hand the non-satirical style, like the "Throwing Like a Girl" essay by James Fallows allows the reader to comprehend the text more because everything relates to the main purpose of the story. The author wants to make sure that the reader understands his/her point clearly and in a way that they were persuaded to believe what the author wants them to. Using a straight-forward method is safer because the point is easier and all the reasons why you should be persuaded are right in front of you.

I used satire myself on the above essay and I found it very easy to write. At the same time the temptation to make the story gruesome may lead the reader to stray from my main point. For example, "The second penalty for every throw made by a girl that can be identified as a "throw like a girl" would be to have a toe or finger whatever you choose cut off" (Vasquez 2). Quotes such as these do not make the point of my essay clear. It makes the reader stray off down a different road because they start to wonder "what type of person thinks of things like this?" Yes, satire does grab the reader's attention at first, but after a while it may raise many questions from the reader about the essay. That is not something that author would want because they want the essay to be clear for the reader to understand. While using satire to recreate "Throwing Like a Girl" it did not help me understand the meaning of what Fallows wanted to get across. What Fallows wanted the reader to get out of his essay was that everyone throws like a girl at first. It is just about the amount of practice one has to develop into a better thrower. On the other hand in my satirical revision of his essay I tended to state that throwing like a girl should be taken care of. Satire does not help clarify a story in fact it can cause the meaning to be a bit cloudy. This is why I included a disclaimer at the end of my version of "Throwing Like a Girl" because I was afraid that the reader will think that I am serious in saying the things that I said. A disclaimer should be included in all satirical literature because someone someday can take the author serious and act upon what he proposed.

The method that I find more effective is used in Fallows' original "Throwing Like a Girl". The opinions in this essay were limited and when an opinion was heard it was from an expert. This method is not used in Swift's essay where nothing is fact, it was all speculation as in this quote, "I am assured by our merchants, that a boy or girl before twelve years old is no salable commodity" (Swift 827). This quote shows that this is not a fact. He was just assured that whatever the merchant said was true. In fact Swift's essay was full of uncertainty and estimated numbers. For example, "I have reckoned upon a medium that a child just born will weigh 12 pounds, and in a solar year, if tolerably nursed, will increase to 28 pounds" (Swift 827). This quote is full of words that show that these numbers are estimated and are not very convincing. Swift went overboard with his proposal and by doing so was very ineffective because midway through his essay I lost track of the purpose of the essay.

On the contrary James Fallows' "Throwing Like a Girl" had an approach that works for me. He basically gave us a question and then answered it with an expert. For example there is a theory for women who throw different than man and it is that their shoulders were hinged differently. Fallows answers this

theory by using this quote, “What you’ll hear if you ask an orthopedist, and anatomist, or (especially) the coach of a women’s softball team is that there is no structural reason why men and women should throw in different ways” (Fallows 417). This quote ties directly with the point of Fallows’ essay. That is why this method is better. There is no straying away from the point or confusing the reader which can lose the reader. An author wants the reader to walk away from reading the paper and be persuaded to believe what the author wants them to believe. That does not happen unless the author stays on topic, which occurs throughout the whole essay. Every line is relevant to the main purpose of the essay. For example, “I know many women who can throw a lot harder and better than the normal male, says Linda Wells, the coach of the highly successful women’s softball team at Arizona State University (Fallows 417-18). This is another reason why Fallows method is better. His sources are experts and more reliable than just any merchant.

There is another thing to show that Fallows’ straight forward writing is more effective at getting its point across, than Swift’s satire. Fallows uses one more technique that proves his point and gets the reader on his side, that technique is the use of science. For example, “The kinetic chain, which is Branden’s tool for analyzing most sporting activity, operates on a principle like that of crack-the-whip” (Fallows 419). This method makes it easier for the reader to agree with the main purpose because all the proof is right there in the text, and there is nothing left to the reader’s imagination that may stray away from the purpose of the author’s paper. Unlike the satires that make the reader wonder and bring up many questions about the proposal.

If you do not agree with my argument, you write an essay using satire. Sure you will have fun writing it, but when you are done the point of the essay will be difficult to comprehend. Sure satire can be a good method to use, but the appropriate situations for satire are limited. Most of the time it will leave the reader thinking about other things then the main purpose. This is not the feeling an author will want the reader to have; using Fallows’ method will make the purpose of the essay easier to follow.

Shanado Williams

Look at this Photo

The picture is expressing what one can assume to be a happy occasion; an occasion where smiles fill the room. A room that seems to doesn't care what it holds but what it fits. Maybe it is a corner? It is a Reserved corner for the rich and famous; famous with rich smiles. A man in the middle dressed in what can be the best suit of clothes he own. Did he really own it or was it borrowed? This might be the reason as to why the bows tie not

being the exact match. Besides that he seems to have everything under control. He seems to have the choice of and loving on the left and loving on the right. One of the ladies to love- is draped in black with exposed shoulders. She might be expressing her demeanor because look



how close she is to the guy and how she seems to love his touch. She is wearing- a dark dress for a dark lady. She is a dark lady wanting everything, like the money, car and house this rich looking guy has. She wants everything besides the face to face laugh; maybe just the sex or money? I know so. Her posture portrays intense needs. It can be a new pair of what the famous world calls, "Boobs," yes indeed implants. Her hands to her chin pushing her laugh higher to create an even laugh. She seems to be signaling her equality to society or even to others around her. She is expressing the passion she feels from the touch of a man. A touch that makes her laughs brighter and harder. Enough! She is full of herself and the man to her left. The man seems to be also very compassionate to his left side; my right; a lady to the right that is. She is portrayed to be the lady who is not interested in the tough competition. The competition between the opposite lady. She seems to be interesting in the material things. I remember once when I was caught up in the things of the world and not my education. I was caught up in the hot clothes, girls and the party. At one point I thought it was too late because it had so much control over my life. This was about middle school but by high school, I got it together. She seems to be too wrapped up in the bracelet and not trying hard enough to be a part of the affectionate conversation, or maybe, could she be listening to the beat of the man's heart. Sometimes we

might hear the words but who has time to listen close enough to the heart. She has the middle man's hands grasping her. It looks to me that she is unappreciative considering the hand of the other man is touching that of the other woman. She is also bending over striving to be even with the man's lap. Can this be expressing her weakness as a woman? Maybe, or she is expressing her personal necessity. She also seems to need a better beauty designer or a new pair of "boobs herself." The lady seems to have her back facing a dark region. This is probably expressing the greatness in her. She seems to be a very nice person; a person that does not have a lot of darkness inside of her but instead having darkness pushing against her. She does not even seem to be that happy for what looks like a happy occasion. Well! I can't beat that, besides I believe that "life is like a box of chocolate you never know what you are going to get." The hair style of the lady is done in an up-do style. I can remember my first updo as a male it was actually cool. I had the Mohawk style; even though, I thought it was cool, I was still brutally mocked by my classmates. Also, from what I can make out of this photo is that, she is displeased with the night, besides she has less glass of something that looks expensive to drink in front of her. Overall, both lady and lady is seeming to be interested in the man in the middle. He seems to be flirting with the one to my left. Or maybe he is trying to get lucky with to my left because he has already gotten lucky with the lady to my right. Well! What so I know, I am only 19, but what I do know is that he is a man.

