

UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT
STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

PORTAL



SUMMER

2010

THANK YOU!

To the English Teachers — Todd Barry, Rebecca Devers, Emily Dolan, Sarah McIntyre, Amanda Smith, and Ivy Stabell. Your professionalism and commitment to student success are an inspiration.

To our English Tutors — Lori Carriere, Julie Cyzewski, Jeremy DeAngelo, Brandon Hawk, Christiana Salah, Amanda Smith, and Connor Trebra. The students depend on your insight, encouragement, and willingness to listen.

To the SSS Residential Staff and Counselors — As always, we thank you for the kindness and support you provide throughout the summer. You are the pillars of this program.

To Bidya Ranjeet, Director of Student Support Services, and Maria D. Martinez, Director of the Center for Academic Programs — The passion you invest in this bears fruit each year in the success of each SSS student.

To all of the CAP office staff — Without your work behind-the-scenes, we'd surely all come undone.

And a special thank you to the students whose well-wrought words you read in these pages, as well as to ALL of the SSS students who strove for excellence in their writing this summer.

With the exception of font and spacing, all student essays appear exactly as they were submitted. My thanks to you all for your enthusiasm, for your exploratory thinking, and for your willingness to share your thoughts in print.

Andrew Pfrenger, English Coordinator

Table of Contents

<i>First Place: Jaleesa Davis</i>	1
<i>Second Place: Jaslynn Tyson</i>	5
<i>Third Place: Denisha Smith</i>	11
<i>Honorable Mention: Anupam Ojha</i>	15
<i>Dionel Altreche</i>	19
<i>Gemima Apollon</i>	21
<i>Smriti Bajgain</i>	25
<i>Mahesh Bhandari</i>	27
<i>Mohamed Zaid Bhura</i>	31
<i>Betzabeth Casas</i>	34
<i>Paul Celadita</i>	40
<i>Leon Chong</i>	42
<i>Tsamchoe Dolma</i>	46
<i>Shannon Ferguson</i>	50
<i>Shapreace Fullwood</i>	53
<i>Vincent Hua</i>	57
<i>Eric Irizarry</i>	61
<i>Faris Jadacic</i>	64
<i>Alveena Javed</i>	68

<i>Sierra KaiKai</i>	71
<i>Isabel Knowles</i>	75
<i>Katie Lam</i>	77
<i>Natavia McLean</i>	80
<i>Shankae McLean</i>	85
<i>Jerry Medina</i>	89
<i>Elias Mwine</i>	91
<i>Marilyn Pinto</i>	95
<i>Ravin Rampertab</i>	100
<i>Wendy Reyes</i>	104
<i>Shanique Russell</i>	110
<i>Nikitaben Shah</i>	112
<i>Deron Smith</i>	116
<i>Michael Soukhoumalay</i>	119
<i>Anthony Suggs</i>	123
<i>Zaki Tapkirwala</i>	127
<i>Sabina Umanzor</i>	130
<i>Stephanie Williams</i>	134

Jaleesa Davis

~FIRST PLACE~

“That wasn’t love, baby girl you was dreamin’”: A Female Artist Questions the Meaning of Love

More than a decade ago, writer and song artist Eve created and introduced the world to an original piece called “Love is Blind.” By analysis of the title, some may believe the song is about the magical sensation of love; how you never see the feelings come, you just know when they arrive. But the song takes a different approach, a more expressive approach, not about the great sensation of love, but rather the lack thereof. The song incorporates images of the unfortunate circumstances of abusive relationships as depicted not by the victim, but rather a friend watching from the side. In “Love is Blind,” Eve writes as a challenger to the abuser. She analyzes a relationship, determining what love is by showing what love isn’t. Eve enters the realm of issues hidden behind the scenes in order to show the importance of knowing when enough is enough. She seeks to identify the components of an unhealthy relationship with abuse as the main target. Eve shows that love comes with sacrifice.

Eve uses the words of her lyrics, along with her tone in the performed version, to emphasize the anger and dislike she feels for the abuser. The song tells the story of a woman stuck in an abusive relationship, and Eve defines herself as the victim’s friend, watching as the abuse goes on. Her dislike of the male figure can be seen early in the song. From the beginning she says, “I don’t even know you and I hate you / See all I know is that my girlfriend used to date you” (lines 1-2). Eve means that without knowledge of who the man is, she still hates him solely based on her knowledge of his relationship with her friend. As the song goes on, Eve’s anger grows stronger. In verse two she starts by saying, “I don’t even know you and I’d kill you myself” (17). She goes from explaining her feelings as hatred in verse one, to saying that she hates him so much that she would kill him in verse two. By verse three, her anger has reached its peak. The verse begins, “I don’t even know you and I want you dead” (33). In the matter of three verses, she has gone from hatred to declaring that she wants this man dead. By increasing her anger as the song progresses, Eve is also representing the fact that as time passes, the violence she witnesses is becoming more drastic and

more dangerous. She chooses to write in an escalating manner to show that when involved in an abusive relationship, things only continue to get worse. By continuing to escalate, she is in fact leading the reader into the final events of the song, as well as allowing the audience to understand the drastic circumstances her friend experienced on a daily basis.

To understand the song and its overall meaning, the audience also has to understand the extremities of the abuse within the proposed relationship. Eve switches roles and questions the man in order to provide a reason for her actions at the end of the song. She asks the man, “How would you feel if she held you down and raped you? / Tried and tried but she never could escape you” (3-4). By just these two lines, it is evident that the relationship was an unhealthy one where the man felt that he was in control. Eve uses these two lines to create an image of how severe the situation actually was. She allows the audience to see the way her friend was treated in a so-called “love” relationship. Her friend was a victim of sexual abuse, raped by a man who claimed to love her. Eve directs this question towards the male to place him in her friend’s shoes. She asks “how would you feel” to allow him time to think about how the friend might have felt during these times. There exists an imbalance of power in the relationship, as well. Eve talks about trying to escape but never really getting out. The male figure kept her friend trapped, making her a friend of not only abuse, but imprisonment as well. An example of the power struggle would be when Eve says, “[He] smacked you down cause he said you was too tall for him” (14). In the context, “smacked you down” symbolizes the male figure doing everything in his power to make sure the female had no power, to make sure she stayed helplessly at the bottom. By keeping her down, she had no choice but to stay. Even then says, “She told me should would leave you, I admit it she did / But came back made up a lie about you missing your kids” (26-27). This demonstrates how hard it is to get out of an abusive relationship. It gives the feeling of wanting to get out, but not having the strength to walk away and stay away, which is the case in most abusive relationships. Eve intends to show how hard it is to get out of an abusive relationship, especially when one has been stripped of all powers.

Part of the purpose of “Love is Blind” is to consider the meaning of love. Eve questions what love is by saying, “What kinda love from a nigga would black your eye? / What kinda love from a nigga make you wish he would die?” (6-8). She questions love by giving examples of things that aren’t a part of love. She says love doesn’t come with black eyes, tears every night, and wishes of harm upon your partner. By considering what love is, Eve also brings up the point of substituting love for other “things.” She says, “Shit he bought you things and gave you diamond rings / But them things wasn’t worth none of the pain that he brings” (9-10). She means that love cannot be

replaced with materialistic values. Eve uses the expensive gifts as a representation of the thought that money and diamonds can cover up the pain that comes before it; when in reality the gifts do nothing but bury the problems below the surface. Eve even says, “That wasn’t love, baby girl you was dreamin’” (15). This line makes the suggestion that her friend was so caught up with the sensation of being in love that she was blinded to reality. The chorus of the song goes, “Love is blind, and it will take over your mind / What you think is love, is truly not / You need to elevate and find.” The chorus speaks to the point of being blinded by what you wish was reality, and, as a result, missing actuality. Eve mentions that “love is blind” to say that it is uncertain where love may exist.

The song reaches its climax in verse three where two lives are lost. Sadly, Eve’s friend loses her life as a result of the relationship abuse. Eve says, “Don’t know the facts but I saw the blood pour from her head / See I lay down beside her in the hospital bed / And about two hours later, doctors said she was dead” (34-36). Her friend’s death represents what can happen when a person allows themselves to stay a victim of abuse for too long. By the end of the song it is evident that the real love relationship is between Eve and her friend. Verse three paints a picture of the relationship she and her friend shared. Eve says:

[She was] my bitch, fuck that my sister
You could never figure out even if I let you live
What our love was all about
I considered her my blood and it don’t come no thicker. (46-49)

These lines demonstrate the bond the two shared and Eve’s anger at how the situation ended. She then shows the love she had for her friend by ending the life of the person who had hurt her for too long. Eve says, “I ain’t start your life but nigga I’mma bring it to an end / And I did, clear shots and no regrets” (43-44). She speaks on the fact that she had no regrets for killing this man, meaning she felt she did the right thing. Even though murder is considered a crime, she justifies her actions throughout the song by painting a picture of the life her friend was living. By allowing the audience to witness the abuse, she wants them to understand the reason why she felt the need to ultimately end another person’s life. Eve’s decision to kill the man ends her journey of finding the meaning of love. She makes the point that you know it’s love when you’ll kill for the person, like she did, and that it’s not love when you’ll kill the person, like he did.

In closing, “Love is Blind” is a song depicting the seriousness of abusive relationships and the tragic outcomes that can happen if one doesn’t find a way out. Eve approaches the song in an

unusual way, by making herself a friend of the victim rather than the victim herself. She examines the meaning of love by showing what love isn't. Eve is the representation of a strong-willed woman with a voice that people listen to. She takes the world-wide issue of relationship abuse and puts it into her own perspective. This song represents the internal struggle of wanting to get out but not having the strength to, which men and women around the world face every day. Not only does she speak to those trapped in abusive relationships by showing what can potentially happen, it also causes the abusers to think about the pain they may put their partners through. Eve takes the song to a more personal level by making it about a friend.

Works Cited

Jeffers, Eve. "Love is Blind." *Ruff Riders' First Lady*. Interscope, 1999. CD

Rockwell, Blondie. *Song Lyrics*. Swizz Beats, 1999. Web. 14 Jul. 2010.

Jaslynn Tyson

~SECOND PLACE~

The Virgin Dance

The short stories “Virgins” by Danielle Evans and “Dance for Me” by Amina Gautier portray the lives and underdeveloped sexualities of young African American girls. In each of these stories, the decision to lose the innocence of virginity is based on whim and influenced by societal and peer pressure; inevitability rather than personal choice or self resolve. The girls in these stories give the reader a tarnished idea of “the black woman,” and perpetuate stereotypes of women-of-color from underprivileged backgrounds. These stories insinuate their main characters are indifferent to the sanctity of their bodies, due to a deep need to conform to society’s idea of how a black woman should behave. This need comes from a desire to be accepted by their peers and their society; they both feel that conforming to the will of the masses is better than being alone or taking on an individual identity at the risk of rejection. By displaying young black girls as role-playing puppets, Gautier and Evans continue the negative ideas that black women are morally-deprived products of their environment resigned to take the form of whatever society wants them to be.

From the story we can see that at first our main character Erica, knew exactly what kind of girl she wanted to be. When Jasmine asked her what identity she wanted she replied with, “I’m majoring in teaching then,” and when asked by Jasmine, “What about your man?” Erica responded, “He’s in college too, and he’s gonna be a doctor, but he also writes me love poems. And paints pictures of me. He’s a painter too.”(Evans 78) We know from her responses, that Erica wanted more from life what could be expected from the neighborhood she was from. But she also had the subliminally perceived reality that that life would not happen for her. We know this by her next response to one of Michael’s questions, “He’s so great why you at the club?” she says, “Umm – he’s dead?”(78). This suggests that Erica even though she made up the perfect picture of what she envisions her life as, it is still quite tragic. As for her values, Erica knew enough to stay away from men who “wanted something” from her and that is part of the reason she liked having Michael around: “he kept people like that out of our way” (74). It is clear that Erica did not want her body taken for granted by men when she later adds, “If I’d wanted to lose my virginity to a random guy in the Bronx I would’ve done it already, not just let Jasmine give it away.”(82) Erica had every intention

of keeping control over her own body but somewhere along the night there was a change in her resolve.

In the story “Virgins,” the author placed the main character, Erica, in a lower income urban neighborhood. In the story Michael and Jasmine describe their hometown by saying, “Money-earnin’ Mount Vernon not good enough for you to anymore?” (77) - Michael, in reply Jasmine says, “Mount Vernon’s not good enough for anybody ... And do you know anybody here that earns any real money?” (77). This holds significance because the author put her there for a reason; the kind of black girl Evans is talking about does not come from a well-to-do upper class neighborhood, but from “Mount Vernon” a low income neighborhood in New York that is primarily made up of minorities. It is a case of the author using a generalized idea that a black girls who find themselves in the situation that Erica does, are usually from these kinds of neighborhoods. By using this oversimplified image and implying that the decision Erica makes to have sex is just an unavoidable part of living in that neighborhood Evans prolongs the existence of the stereotype that black girls always have little say in how their bodies are used. In reality not all girls-of-color decide that they have no choice in how their bodies are used and ultimately decide to give up hoping for their poet.

Evans chose to end the story by indicating that the undesirable sexual experience that Erica has with Ron, would have happened either way and the decision the Erica makes is somehow the safest when Erica says: “I did understand then that there was no such thing as safe, only safer, that this if it didn’t happen now [it] would happen later but not better. I was safer than Jasmine right now, safer than I might have been.” (83) Here the term “safe” is used to describe a non-violent sexually situation that will have the least amount of repercussions in the future. This gives the reader the idea that Erica inevitably giving away her virginity is the best way it could have happened and the highest she could reach for. The way she describes her experience as being safer than Jasmine’s is significant in the sense that Jasmine is with some four men she does not know at the moment giving her body away and Erica is someone she knows and trusts but does not love or want to be with. She is also safer in the sense that the four men Jasmine is with could do anything to her and she would have no way to get help; at least Erica is in a close proximity to a friend, Michael is in the house. This affects the way African American girls are seen, because in this story the idea is planted that this is just what is to be expected for a black girl in this situation because in the ghetto options are limited for finding a decent young man that will treat a women the way she deserves to be treated. That idea is wrong because for every young woman who has made the decision not to conform to societal roles and traditions, there is a young man willing to do the same. Take for example:

Michael's willingness to be Erica's "Knight in Shining Armor" when she finds herself in a scary situation with Jasmine shows that there is at least one boy within Erica's reach that has the potential of being the poet she has always dreamed of.

Some may say that Erica's decision to have sex based on an irrational ideology that it is bound to happen anyway, happened because Erica is so young but, it is clear that her race and environment play a more important role here. The author pointed out that race was a factor at the beginning of the story when she described each of the three friend's skin tones, "Never mind that Michael was lighter than Jasmine and I was lighter than Michael, and really all three of us burned." (72) This important to note because Evans is saying here that, it does not matter what their skin tone is they are all black and all from the same place so they can all expect the same thing which is to be burned. We see a race reference again when Jasmine made a comment to Erica about Michael's white girlfriend saying, "You live like your white girl you act like your white girl" (73), Jasmine meant that Michael was formulating habits that he learned from her like putting on sunscreen so he would not burn. These two references mean that all black people get "burned" so-to-speak, but that following the habits of white people can safeguard you against it what life may bring. It is fairly unreasonable to make that assumption because sometimes people make decisions that land them in trouble and it has nothing to do with race; white people as well as black people are capable of great fortune or misfortune.

Past experiences that Erica has had in her life indicate that she has always suspected that she would lose her virginity in an unceremonious fashion. One example of was the day Erica was at the public pool, "I was eleven and he was sixteen and a lifeguard at the city pool...he held me against the cement and put his finger in me, I wasn't scared or anything, just cold and surprised." (74) Erica's reaction was not that of fear, but of shock it seemed as though she blew it off when Jasmine told her the lifeguard did the same thing to her. When comparing that experience to the one she had with Ron her reaction was more of an abashed feeling, "Afterward I was embarrassed because he was embarrassed and I knew I couldn't stay there" (84). That suggest that Erica had some unsure feelings about what she had just done. So we can clearly see that Erica's first decision not to just give away her virginity was the right one and the fact that she changed her mind was a bad decision that lead to negative feelings in moments following.

In the society that Erica comes from, like a lot of societies, the idea of sex being associated with adulthood is widely accepted by young people, as being the most important aspect of maturity. But unlike most societies young people in this community decide to act upon these ideas to gain

status, feel loved, and fit in with their peers. Jasmine sees sex as a marker of power or status. We know this because Erica called Michael's girlfriend the "just the girl who's fucking him" and Jasmine replied by calling Erica, "Just the girl who ain't" (77) This was all in the context of discussing who Michael would save if he had to shoot one of them, Jasmine felt that Michael would save the more important person to him, "the girl who's fucking him," not Erica. Jasmine, however, is not empowered herself by her past sexual acts. In the story Jasmine is treated badly by the boy gave her virginity to about four months previously and is ridiculed by his current girlfriend. Jasmine does hold some negative ideas about the black woman's sexuality being openly expressed. Erica was not empowered by her experience she was mostly indifferent to what happened.

In "Virgins" clearly see that Erica does not want to be like Jasmine and let her friend give her virginity away (82), but ends up giving her virginity out of fear and anxiety that that was the only way it could happen safely. This says to the reader: the options black girls in bad neighborhoods have are limited so they should feel lucky to lose their virginites safely. Evans conveys the idea that Erica could have given her virginity away to the first guy with the smoothest words or she could have had it taken by force. Evans gives no indication that there could have been another option for Erica to choose such as waiting or staying away from high risk situations like the one Jasmine put her in. The environmental influence for Erica was a no win situation, lose it now or lose it later. This insinuates that black girls do not have a choice in the matter but that is far from the case. Waiting is a personal choice anyone can choose to make even girls from underprivileged areas.

Like "Virgins", by Danielle Evans, Amina Gautier's "Dance for Me" places the main character in a poverty stricken, low end neighborhood in New York. Unlike Erica from "Virgins", the unnamed narrator in "Dance for Me" goes to a high-end private school with affluent white girls on a scholarship. Gautier puts her character there to show the contrast between the two worlds are; vacations at the Hamptons and members only parties, as opposed to one with "[the] store two blocks down that I knew was a front [for drugs]" (184). In between somewhere is the narrator, stuck in the middle of not fitting in with her neighborhood and not fitting in with her school-mates.

In a similar way the Evans portrayed Erica losing her virginity out of inevitability, the narrator in "Dance for Me" sees having sex and doing all of the things she is expected to do as a "black girl" as something that would just happen. She accepts that the choices she was making were going to make a big difference in her life, "I saw how much of me would change; I saw that the girl I would become. And decided to go ahead and miss myself right now,"(187) Gautier is relaying the idea that the narrator, being so different from the white girls, has no choice but to give herself away

to fit in with the popular crowd. In this story the narrator is willing to trade her body for acceptance when in actuality if you put an effort into finding a friend to like you for who already are you don't need to friends that will try to change you.

Through-out the story there is evidence that race is an important part of the plot. The Narrator is just the unknown black girl. The society in which the narrator goes to school is one that expects certain qualities from her: like knowing how to dance, "Do you know how to do that new dance they're doing?" asked Heather (179) or knowing where to buy drugs, "We were wondering if you could score us some weed?" asked Heather (183), or having prior experience with sex, "a boy Heather introduced as Gabe wanted to play a version of spin the bottle", "show him how it's done" said Heather (186). In that same conversation we learn that race was something that the party goers were concerned with when Taylor says, "He's never made it with a black girl before," (186), these are all things that Heather expected of the narrator because of her color and background. Again we see here, as in "Virgins", that race and the roles of certain race groups are essential to the storyline.

As with "Virgins," the main character in "Dance For Me" gives small indications that, she would be willing to give up her self-respect and have sex with boy in the closet, whom she does not know, with her actions prior. When Heather told her that there would be boys at the sleep over she did not seem to think it concerned her, even though she didn't know any of them. Then Heather asked her to get drugs for her and the rest of the party goers. The narrator does what must be done to get the drugs Heather asked for. And finally it does not really come as a surprise that the Narrator goes into the closet with Gabe and does things she does not want to do with him because it is the wish of Heather: The in to the in-crowd. Doing all of these things proves to Heather that she was right to assume all of those things about the narrator, because she was asked conform and she did without question. This infers to the reader that all black women when forced to conform, will. That idea is completely false because many women-of-color have been pushed into different cultures and been able to maintain the values and ideals they grew up with.

The narrator views having sex with Gabe as a way into an elite membership of friends and takes her chances to try and get in. As with Erica from "Virgins," the narrator in "Dance For Me" does not feel empowered or strengthened by her sexual experience. Instead she feels like she is turning into someone else, like she is losing apart herself that her new self would not have appreciated, "the girl I would become wouldn't know how to appreciate me at all." (187) In the end she feels that entrance to the "club" is more important than staying true to her own heart. That in and of itself would be enough to convince any reader that the girl in this story holds little or no

regard for her self-respect, but the fact that she sacrificed her self-respect using her virginity showed a deep level of desperation and somehow made what she gave up more precious. Virginity is ours to give away under her own terms.

“Dance For Me”! Like a puppet on the strings bowing to the will of the puppeteer, the narrator from “Dance For Me” and Erica from “Virgins” both obey the rules and fit expectations of who the “black girl” is in societies that demands conformism. The narrator does this by letting others tell her exactly what kind of girl she is, and what kinds of things that girl does. Likewise, Erica lets social pressure and fear of inevitability dictate the circumstances of how she lost her virginity. Neither one of these girls took control of their own situations and resolved to do what they truly wanted with their own bodies. There is something fundamental to be taken away from these stories and it is this: falling into someone else’s idea of who you should be can fundamentally change who you are, and once there is a stereotype that is followed the way the girls in these stories followed; there is no longer control, someone else pulls the strings and the virgin puppets must dance.

Works Cited

- Evans, Danielle. “Virgins.” The Best American Short Stories 2008. Ed. Salman Rushdie. New York: Houghton Mifflin. 2008. 72-84.
- Gautier, Amina. “Dance For Me.” *Southwest Review*. 9.2 (2006): 177-87. Print.

Denisha Smith

~THIRD PLACE~

What's your price?

Celebrities' lives are more complex because they require a publicized medium. They seek approval from their audience and attention from the media. In the essay "Our Celebrities, Ourselves" Neal Gabler expresses his beliefs of authenticity existing in everyone, but argues they have to search for it. It is difficult for celebrities to separate real from fake when they are constantly acting out roles in society. Walker Percy conveys in his essay "The loss of the Creature" that an experience is not considered authentic if it is experienced through the eyes of others, or held to their expectations. Percy discusses the term "loss of sovereignty" as if it is extremely essential and without it a person doesn't have much to offer. Celebrities encounter a mass "loss of sovereignty" by viewing their careers through the eyes of others, while using the media for self promotion.

Celebrities are the laymen while the viewers are the experts of the entertainment industry. Percy provides me with this idea by stating, "Their basic placement in the world is such that they recognize a priority of title of the expert over his particular department of being. The whole horizon is staked out by 'them,' the experts. The highest satisfaction of the sightseer is that his sight should be certified as genuine" (487). The audience becomes experts by absorbing information about celebrities so we can formulate various characters we desire. Viewers conceal their mission by being overlooked as playing the role of consumers while secretly plotting to conquer celebrities. The tables have turned; once a person becomes famous they endure a major loss of sovereignty and converts into a consumer. Celebrities are convinced they possess sovereignty but furtively the audience use them as puppets for their own amusement. Sovereignty is taken from celebrities by constantly seeking approval from the audience and allowing them to create their identity. We can think of this as a movie seeing as celebrities become actors and the audience as directors, since they are in control and casting the roles. Gabler said the "roles that celebrities play, both on television and in movies, and the roles they assume as they project themselves in the media, operate as a kind of disguise" for who they really are or who they want to become" (4). Fame can hinder your desire to know who you are or yearn to be.

Celebrities struggle to “act” natural because they are constantly being watched. We all desire the need to know who we are in life and what our purpose is. Celebrities are real people and desire the same needs as we do, but yearn for more attention. The entertainment industry is a repeating cycle thus resembling a circle. The cycle consists of celebrities, spectators, and the media. Celebrities need the attention from the media to become famous and feel important. The media depends on the audience because they need people to buy their work. The audience looks towards the celebrities and the media for entertainment.

Viewers are manipulated by the media to perceive celebrities as objects. To sustain their careers celebrities have to comply with the audience. Anyone can become a “celebrity” if they are willing to sell their privacy to the media for entertainment of viewers. Gabler articulates how, “Celebrities existed not to entertain, though they usually were entertainers, but rather to be publicized. Their talent, as Boorstin put it, was to grab the spotlight” (7). Celebrities are treated as monkeys, placed out on display and observed for entertainment. For example, Paris Hilton has no talent but she is a celebrity because she is frequently in the media. She occasionally makes bad decisions but they are desperate cries for publicity to make sure she still is acknowledged. No one can really argue that’s not who she really is, with her millions of dollars and material objects. She must meet the standards of the audience or be looked down upon as a failure. Percy would agree by stating that her authenticity is ruined by how the media expects celebrities to act. Fame can be jeopardized if celebrities stray from the expectations and there’s no telling when the next opportunity may arise. For instance, Sammie was a teenage sensation but his career conflicted with his life as a child and a student. For the obvious reason, Sammie put his music career on standby until he graduated.

The media also influences the audience, resulting in spectators viewing celebrities under the media’s lens. Percy would agree that authenticity in celebrities is rare if not impossible to see because the media veils their true identity. However, Percy questions, “How does one see the thing better when others are absent?” (483). Percy discusses a trip a tourist took to the Grand Canyon; however a typhus outbreak occurred leaving the tourist with the canyon to their selves so they could fully embrace it and recover its beauty. Interpreting Percy’s idea, I substituted the celebrity for the canyon and the media for the tourist. The solution is to observe with a clear head thus viewers can absorb everything oppose to searching for something. Authenticity is hard to notice in a celebrity because the media drapes a curtain over celebrities concealing their true identity. Without the media in the way, viewers will be able to observe celebrities through another light or as *normal* people. Gabler

presents the idea that without the media shielding the celebrity, the audience will be able to analyze and become the celebrity. The audience creates this persona so they have the power to become the same character. Without the curtain shielding the celebrity, the audience will see a reflection of a person just like them. Though this statement is accurate, spectators use the media to their advantage and shield the celebrities from entering their world of normality.

Celebrities cannot be authentic because the audience won't allow it. The audience fears the thought of celebrities being just like us or everyone be just alike. A poet named Shihan said, "I'm sick of everyone trying to be in the entertainment industry because soon there will be no audience just a bunch of monkeys on stage". People will quickly separate themselves after noticing everyone is equivalent. Once a person becomes famous the audience will not allow them to be normal people or live normal lives. For instance, if Michael Jackson decided one day that he didn't want to be the king of pop anymore and wanted to work at Wal-mart people would go crazy. Not because he was a famous person but because he wasn't holding up to the expectation in which the audience holds for celebrities. He would be labeled as a failure for *trying* to be normal, and criticized by the entertainment medium. Even though spectators try to view celebrities as people just like them, they are blinded by the material things they possess. We don't want them on our level, because if they take that what will we have? They have everything else we don't.

Celebrities claim to have it all but fail to notice that authenticity is unattainable. Society envies celebrities for all their valuable possessions, but does not acknowledge that we attain the greatest trait. Authenticity is a process, we cannot just obtain it. It develops over time through life experiences and exercising our sovereign rights as individuals. We have to take control of our lives and define importance so we create value and authenticity to our lives, making us authentic people. People are presented experiences through life to help them comprehend who they truly are, not who they try to become. I am assisted by Percy for the solution for the reason why celebrities have the most difficulties obtaining authenticity. I am convinced it is because the way the media displays them, creating a split personality between the exploited person and the real person. Celebrities struggle to acknowledge the reason why they are having difficulties because they try to view themselves as ordinary people when they're really not. The solution to their problem is to observe themselves through their own eyes, opposed to comparing with what the media says. Authenticity is the biggest price celebrities pay for their fame. Will you pay the price of fame?

Works Cited

- Gabler, Neal. "Our Celebrities, Ourselves." *Chronicle Review* 47.27 (2003): B7. Web. 25 Jul 2010. < <http://chronicle.com/article/Our-Celebrities-Ourselves/12313/>>.
- Percy, Walker. "The Loss of the Creature." *Ways of Reading*. Ed. David Bartholomae and Anthony Petrosky. 8th ed. Boston: Bedford/ St. Martin's, 2008. 480-493. Print.

Anupam Ojha

~HONORABLE MENTION~

Women vs. Society

Every story written demonstrates a cultural background that is a reflection of its time period. As culture changes, so do the morals of the stories. One of the oldest versions of Little Red Riding Hood was written by Charles Perrault in the late 1600s but the story has changed with time. There are different versions of the story that represent distinguished culture and comparing the cultures gives one a sense of changes that our human society has gone through. Authors like James Thurber and Roald Dahl wrote their own versions of Little Red Riding Hood in which they got rid of the image of Little Red Riding Hood as naïve, weak, foolish and sexually available in order to convince readers, that women are smart, tough, and prepared to defend themselves from the stereotypes.

There are reasons why the authors chose a popular fairytale as their medium to influence their readers about their views. Fairytales like The Little Red Riding Hood have played a huge role in shaping Western culture, so the authors made their own versions to change the huge stereotype of women. The Little Red Riding Hood was read for hundreds of years; now it is a globally popular fairytale which gives the authors billions of audiences. In the traditional Little Red Riding Hood fairytale, Little Red Riding Hood is an innocent little girl who is deceived to her death by a wolf. But the authors give their readers shocking changes to make them reconsider the new image of Little Red Riding Hood and women in their society as clever, strong and prepared.

Perrault characterizes Little Red Riding Hood as a naïve protagonist who is easily fooled by the wolf into taking advantage of her. To show that, he writes, “The poor child, who did not know that it was dangerous to stop and listen to wolves, said: ‘I’m going to see my grandmother and am taking her some cakes and a little pot of butter sent by my mother’” (Perrault 12). Clearly, Little Red Riding Hood does not sense the danger of a wolf or cannot distinguish between a human and a wolf. She is described as a “poor child” because she is foolish enough to answer personal questions asked by a wolf in the middle of the woods. She tells him every little detail of her chore as if she is getting pulled over by police in the middle of a road. She could have simply lied to the wolf and would not have died. Right after Little Red Riding Hood enters her grandmother’s room, the wolf

commands, “Put the cakes and the little pot of butter on the bin and climb into bed with me”(Perrault 12-13). Perrault uses this risqué to expose men’s image of women as sexually available. With no hesitation, Little Red Riding Hood takes off her clothes into the bed not knowing that it is a wolf, not her grandmother. This shows that men thought of women as easy to be fooled when it came to sex. The wolf easily takes advantage of her naïveté to get her into her death bed. Her death not only displays women as weak, foolish and unprepared to defend themselves, but also exposes the image of women as sexually available to men in society.

Perrault writes the moral of the story to increase the awareness of sly wolves seeking to take advantage of young girls’ vulnerability. He underscores his definition of girls as naïve, weak, and unprepared to defend themselves. He describes girls as “pretty, well-bred, and genteel” (Perrault 13). Perrault identifies these characteristics of young girls as signs of their weakness. It shows that in Perrault’s time, young girls with those weaknesses were targeted by wolves or men for sex. He identifies wolves as charming yet sly enough to follow girls “right into their homes, into their [women’s] chambers” (Perrault 13). Getting into the chamber meant having sex with a female. But in Thurber’s story, the wolf is not sly enough to get anywhere near the smart Little Red Riding Hood. Unlike Perrault’s Little Red Riding Hood, she has a gun to defend herself from the wolf; she kills the wolf instead. Then Thurber writes his short and direct moral of the story as, “It is not so easy to fool little girls nowadays as it used to be” (Thurber 17). Thurber’s Little Red Riding Hood is not a fool like Perrault’s. She “used to be” a fool in Perrault’s time, but that has changed. Thurber shows that women now are smart, tough and prepared for any wolf.

Two hundred years later, Thurber changes Little Red Riding Hood into a clever little girl who is capable of defending her life against a wolf. He exposes Little Red Riding Hood’s thoughts as, “She saw that there was somebody in bed with a nightcap and night gown. She had approached no nearer than twenty-five feet from the bed when she saw that it was not her grandmother but the wolf”(Thurber 17). Little Red carefully identifies the person in bed as “somebody” instead of expecting her grandmother to be in the bed, without even trusting her nightcap and nightgown. In this story, Little Red Riding Hood knows that a wolf is dangerous so she stays twenty-five feet away from the bed just in case of a wolf attack. She is prepared to expect the wolf there, but in Perrault’s story, Little Red Riding Hood is too naïve to even think that a wolf would do harm to her. Clearly, she is smarter than she used to be. In Perrault’s time period, females were neglected from getting an education and considered dull minded, but Thurber changes the ending of Perrault’s story to show that women, especially young girls are becoming clever and smart through education.

Thurber gave his Little Red Riding Hood a weapon; it symbolizes education. He writes, “So the little girl took an automatic out of her basket and shot the wolf dead” (Thurber 17). This significant change in the fairytale’s plot is meant to surprise the reader of the change in Little Red Riding Hood’s characteristics. It serves as a way to make readers realize women have changed and their expectations were wrong. Little Red Riding Hood has already distinguished between a wolf and her grandmother which shows that she is more educated compared to Perrault’s Little Red Riding Hood. In killing the wolf, she kills society’s view of women because the wolf represents the society/men. Without a prejudicial society or man, the stereotypes of women would not exist. As Thurber’s society expects women to be innocent, weak and foolish, the wolf also expects the same from Little Red. Even a reader familiar with the fairytale would expect her to do the same things as in Perrault’s story, but she is not the same girl. She is smart and prepared; education makes her as dangerous as the wolf. Changing the fairytale was a way to change society’s expectations of women.

Roald Dahl changes his story by adding pigs as the victims of the wolf and the unpredictable Little Red Riding Hood to get his message across to his readers. He characterizes pigs with, “Pigs are noble. Pigs are clever, Pigs are courteous. However now and then, to break this rule, one meets a pig who is a fool” (Dahl 22). So, pigs can be noble, clever, and courteous but also foolish. He focuses on talking about the foolish ones and gives them the same qualities of Little Red Riding Hood in Perrault’s story. All three pigs are as unprepared as Little Red was when she got gobbled up by the wolf. They are naïve; two never expected a wolf to destroy their weak houses and eat them, and the third one did not expect a friend to kill him. The helpless one says, “I know one you’ve dealt with wolves before, and now I’ve got one at my door!”(Dahl 24). The third one was as helpless as Perrault’s Little Red without a gun. Dahl’s Little Red has surpassed the stereotypes of society but the pig, which also represents a girl like her, has not done it. Another wolf threatening another naïve, weak and foolish girl shows that it will take a long time to completely replace the stereotypes with Dahl’s perspective of women as smart, tough and prepared. And to stop that stereotype, Little Red kills the pig who had actually called her for help. This unreasonable act of Little Red Riding Hood is used by Dahl to show that killing the pig is killing the stereotype of the foolish, helpless girl she was in Perrault’s version. It implies that if a girl is foolish, then sooner or later, somebody smarter than them will always make them suffer. This unreasonable act is to show that Dahl really wants women to be viewed as smart, tough, prepared to defend themselves.

After Little Red kills both wolf and the pig, she makes use of their skin. Dahl writes, “Ah, Piglet, you must never trust young ladies from the upper crust. For now, Miss Riding Hood, one

notes, not only has two wolf skin coats, but when she goes from place to place, she has a PIGSKIN TRAVELLING CASE” (Dahl 24). Here, Little Red is described as a deceiving young lady who shows again that women were getting smart, clever and a lot tougher. She adds one more wolf skin to her collection as if she is a tough soldier getting more badges for her good work in reforming society. The pig was an example of the typical female stereotype and the wolf represented society. The wolf was oppressing its stereotypical views of women on the foolish, weak pigs by eating them. This showed that society was hesitant in changing its view of women. To convince society about his view of women, Dahl makes his smart and tough Little Red Riding Hood kill the oppressor as well as the stereotype. Little Red Riding Hood makes an image of a strong woman by wearing the coat of the oppressors. Little Red now carries a pig skin bag instead of her weak wooden basket. The bag represents the thriving stereotypes that she has erased from the society. She turns the pig from a weakness into strength. Little Red would usually travel in the woods, so she will put her gun in the leather bag to be prepared for anything that comes in her way. She displays her kills to the public, to fend off other stereotypical wolves and influence them Dahl’s view of woman as smart, tough and prepared to defend themselves.

Perrault identified the stereotype of women and warned women about it, and Thurber’s and Dahl’s version changed the plot of the fairytale to warn their readers about those old and obsolete stereotypes. Perrault added risqué in his version to show his concern about the image of women as sexually available. Thurber and Dahl added the weapon of education to show that women were getting smart, tough and prepared, as close to men were. Those changes were made to influence their readers’ mind about their own arguments and to free of the society’s image of Little Red as innocent, weak, foolish and sexually obtainable. In that way, they convince their readers that women are actually smart, tough, and prepared to defend themselves from society and its stereotypes.

Works Cited

Dahl, Roald. “The Three Little Pigs.” *The Classic Fairy Tales*. Ed. Maria Tatar. New York: Norton, 1999. 22-24. Print.

Perrault, Charles. “Little Red Riding Hood.” *The Classic Fairy Tales*. Ed. Maria Tatar. New York: Norton, 1999. 11-13. Print.

Thurber, James. “The Little Girl and the Wolf.” *The Classic Fairy Tales*. Ed. Maria Tatar. New York: Norton, 1999. 16-17. Print.

Dionel Altreche

The Shade of Green

I recall the waxy smooth touch of my first writing utensil. In fact, it was the color of the emerald city. This was handed to me by my mother; she said it was her favorite color, a color close to that of cash currency. I always used my left hand, for everyday purposes so it was clear that it would be no different with writing. I reached for the emerald rod, it was shiny, and completely intact as if it were just created at some nearby factory. As she handed me a canvas, I saw the contrast of the emerald tool, in connection to the marble slate of paper. It was crisp, and too beautiful to taint with the shade of green. I began to leave marks on the slate, leaving rubs and scratches, the residue of the utensil never seemed to fade. As I continued I realized that I was not creating phrases, words, or even letters. I created images, drawings, pictures, and that led me to learn to read through my amateur masterpieces.

As a child, my house contained two assets that I could not live without and they were a drawing pad and a crayon. It was as if I was born with those two items. I would walk around the house and mimic items I saw by recreating them on paper. Whether it was an apple, a television, a hair dryer, I attempted to draw it and figure out the purpose each one served. I collected my drawings and at the end of each day I would go back and study them. I would say that one is an apple, that one is a television, that one is the hair dryer. There would be a connection there, saying that the apples were for eating, the television is something one watches, and the hairdryer is a tool for taking moisture out of hair. I wanted to find new things to depict in my images, everywhere I went the world was my inspiration. I needed the knowledge. The shapes, the textures, and scents of the world were my interest. I developed memory skills through my images and encounters with these objects and through my documentation I was able to read.

When I learned the alphabet and how to put certain letters together I started labeling my drawings. Now, it wasn't just a question of, if I knew what each picture expel, but placing the concept I had created, into something that anyone looking at it could comprehend. Words and phrases became a part of my artwork and enhanced my knowledge of reading and writing. My words and writing began at a sloppy left handed doodle, and turned into something consistent and coherent. My photos with labels, allowed me to have high association skills in my elementary

classes. Being able to tell what picture corresponded to what letter of the alphabet was my passion. I essentially created flash cards for myself before I knew of what flash cards were.

With my first experience with reading and writing it is no surprise where I stand today. My favorite color happens to be green. I am a devoted visual artist with a concentration in graphic design, creating mixed media images with manipulated type font and images. I have a strong connection to the world and all that inhabit it. I love to analyze artwork and pieces that create the society we live in. Without drawing I would have never found my voice in writing and that is something that can never cease from my life.

Gemima Apollon

Knowledge is Power

Education is a tool used to gain knowledge. Knowledge is like brain food. It brings awareness to students about different aspects of life. Without education, an individual's mind is naïve because it is not well-informed or up to date with important issues. Authors have addressed the different aspects of education by defining its true purpose. Fredrick Douglass had to teach himself how to read and write because he was aware, even at an early age, of the importance of education. John Taylor Gatto, found that school was irrelevant because of the many years he spent teaching. He realized that going to school and getting an education were two different matters. As these two authors demonstrate, the ideal purpose of education is to provide individuals with knowledge to bring them power and freedom.

Most of the time, it can be difficult for some individuals to experience freedom. Sometimes it has to be earned or received upon the completion of a certain task. In this case, education brings power and freedom when it is achieved. For hundreds of years, Black people didn't have any power. Their freedom was limited. They were used as slaves and banned from reading and writing. This made them simple minded and unaware of the true reasons why they were slaves. They were slaves because White Americans thought that they were unworthy human beings and they should not be successful. White people tried to pin them down and keep them from getting an education because they knew that knowledge would bring slaves power. In order to keep slaves in check, White people knew that slaves had to have restrictions against learning and getting an education, because then slaves would feel a sense of power and would try to free themselves from being owned.

Although many wanted to be free, very little came close to accomplishing that dream. Determination, courage and drive are only a few characteristics of a freedom bound individual. Fredrick Douglass was a slave in the nineteenth century. Later he became an abolitionist. He believed that everyone should be equal. Through the desire to get an education, he was able to attain knowledge and find out the truth. He used every opportunity that he had to read and learn how to write. He was curious and wanted to free himself from slavery. He did not want to be a slave for the rest of his life. It was then that he went on a mission to learn as much as he could. Douglass says, "I was now about twelve years old, and the thought of being a slave for life began to bear heavily upon my heart" (Douglass 96). Douglass wanted a ticket out of just being a slave. He knew that education

was his only ticket out. There was more to life for a slave than just being owned by White people. He learned early on that he would have to face risks in order to gain the freedom that he wished for. It would be a constant reminder for him every day of his life. He knew that it would be very important for him to accomplish this task because it would be a huge failure for him if he didn't. Without having an educational background during a time period when everything seemed impossible, it is exceedingly uncommon for a twelve year old boy to make such an important decision. Douglass did it because he knew the reward that hard work would give him in the end. This refers back to the thesis because education can help individuals gain knowledge that will later bring them power and freedom.

Moreover, Douglass didn't have to go to school to get an education. He taught himself to read and write through time, dedication and careful planning. He had to make sure that he kept his education a secret because he was a slave and slaves were not allowed to read or write. He had to face his fears of being caught and tried to find the right times to learn so that he could add to his knowledge. Some individuals today take education for granted. Several might argue that going to school is irrelevant. This is very true. Some might even think that going to school is a waste of time. It involves repetitively going to the same classes throughout the year. It can sometimes become boring for both the student and the teacher. In comparison, John Gatto, a former school teacher for 30 years, argues that going to school every day is extraneous. He says:

Do we really need school? I don't mean education, just forced schooling: six classes a day, five days a week, nine months a year, for twelve years. Is this deadly routine necessary? And if so, for what? Don't hide behind reading, writing, and arithmetic as a rationale, because two million happy homeschoolers have surely put that banal justification to rest. (684)

Gatto is trying to say that going to school is just a waste time because it takes too long to complete. Homeschoolers are educated and did not have to go through the school system. They were getting an education without having to set foot in a school building. It is saying that if homeschoolers can get an education without going to school, then anyone can. Also, repeatedly making children go to school for twelve years is just a way to keep them in a box without letting them think freely. It is not necessary to go to school to learn the basic elements of education. Through dedication and the desire to read and write anyone can achieve that goal. Going to school certainly doesn't give students power and freedom because there are so many restrictions.

Knowledge is gained through education. Education is the result of learning new things that are relevant in life. Going to school is completely different. School can sometimes be an excuse to

just get out of the house. There is a giant gap between going to school and getting an education. Through my experience of going to school, I view school as a way to keep children busy and out of trouble for five days out of the week. By keeping children busy with “learning,” parents had a break from taking care of them. Then, the teachers were given the task of trying to fill our minds with facts and keeping our focus from the outside world. I felt like school was a daycare so that I would not become “a bad person.” A bad person was referred to as someone who got into trouble by staying out all day and came home really late at night. I realized that the education I received at school was irrelevant to the career that I wanted to pursue when I became older. I knew that reading stories about gods and goddesses would not teach me anything on how to become a nurse. It would just fill up my mind with nuisance so that I would not be aware of what I truly needed to learn. Instead of going to school, I could have just stayed home and learned everything that I needed to become a nurse as well as learning how to read and write. School was just a waste of time. I did not feel knowledgeable about anything. I wanted to get an education; I didn’t want to be stuck in a classroom learning about unimportant information. I felt powerless as I sat in class day after day; I left like I didn’t have any freedom.

Finally, education opens up the eyes of individuals. It brings awareness to almost everything that occurs in the world because it is constantly changing. Some people might regret acquiring too much education because sometimes what they learn can be way too much for them to handle. For example, in Douglass’s case, he felt he knew too much. It was torture to know so much because now he had new problems to deal with. He complains about education by saying:

As I writhed under it, I would at times feel that learning to read had been a curse rather than a blessing. It had given me a view of my wretched condition, without remedy. It opened my eyes to the horrible pit, but to no ladder upon which to get out. In moments of agony, I envied my fellow-slaves for their stupidity. (97)

Learning to read became a burden because he now knew all the crazy and twisted secrets that slave masters had. It made him realize how bad his situation really was. Unfortunately, it did not give him a way out either. There is no ladder for him to climb up; he was simply at the bottom with nowhere to go. This signifies his place on the power structure during that time period. He was a slave meaning that he was at the bottom of the power structure and his slave master was at the top. The slave master did not offer Douglass a ladder to climb up. He wanted him to stay as far on the bottom as possible. These findings made Douglass want to be simple minded like the slaves because they lived an uneducated life and therefore were unaware of all that was occurring around them. But

despite Douglass's struggles, he never gave up on education. The ability to read was worthy for Douglass to learn, despite of the way that it made him feel. Later he proceeded to learning how to write. This step impacted his life in a positive way. Through his drive and determination to get an education, he became an abolitionist, a writer and speaker and most importantly made himself free. He was no longer a slave. This proves that getting an education brings power and freedom.

Thus, the ideal purpose of education is to provide individuals with knowledge that will later bring them power and freedom. School and education are different because in school individuals are learning only what the teacher is teaching them and can often have nothing to do with the career one wants to pursue. Education, on the other hand is the tool that will bring power and freedom to those who seek to find it. Knowledge can be attained by having drive and determination to get an education. An education can open doors that will in time bring both freedom and power. With these accomplishments it is possible to do anything. Douglass knew exactly what his future would look like. The only obstacle was learning to read and write. When he overcame those obstacles, his dream was at arm's length. He finally had received all that he had worked for. It finally paid off. He gained power and freedom.

Works Cited

Gatto, John Taylor. "Against School" *The Writer's Presence: a Pool of Readings*. Ed.

Donald McQuade. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2009. 682-690.Print.

Douglass, Fredrick."Learning to Read and Write" *The Writer's Presence: a Pool of Readings*. Ed. Donald McQuade. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2009. 94-99.Print.

Smriti Bajgain

I am a Misfit

What is a real happiness in life? I always thought that a real happiness was when things were good in life. My life, since the day I was born I felt like an outcast in my own family. I felt that I did not belong there. The things that I did or did not do had always affected my family. I was a good boy, the one who liked math, sports, culture and had a desire to discover the world one day. I was always inclined towards philosophy and moral values, when I was a kid.

My father was not a rich person but he had all the knowledge of the world. I respected him a lot. He was more than a father to me, he was also a friend. When I was little he would play with me even though the situations at home were not good. The Great War had just ended and we had lost one of our family members in the war. My older brother, Carl volunteered to go to the war despite of my father's rejection. He was closer to my father than I was. He was the oldest and people thought he was better than me. I always felt uncomfortable around him, I felt low and nervous when he around. After he went to the war, I was the closest person to my father. Our mother worked as a seamstress in Brunswick, Georgia. Most of the clothes I wore were made by her. She was a lady with kind heart with no complains and worries. Time went by and we heard nothing back from Carl. My mother became ill because she worried too much about him and my father; he blamed me for Carl's death when we found out that he died in the trenches. Although I was nervous and uncomfortable around Carl, he still was my brother. I felt that it was my duty to suggest him do things he wanted. He wanted to go to the war. My father became apart from me I saw hatred in his eyes whenever he looked at me. My mother was already ill and could no longer bear that his eldest son was no longer alive. She passed away too. I was blamed for two murders that I did not commit.

One night, I was getting ready to go to bed and all of sudden I heard a gunshot from my father's room. My mind froze for a while then I started running towards his room. I found him lying on the floor with blood all over his dead body. I had no reaction. I couldn't think or scream. I was dead myself. While I was there looking at my father's dead body, a neighbor spotted me with my father's dead body and called cops on me. I was sentenced to jail for a false accuse. I was sentenced to life in prison. I was broken and begging for help. There was not a fly to help me, I was all alone. Alone in the world confused and accused of three deaths that I never committed.

My life went from being normal to something that I never could imagine even in my dreams. I was left alone with my pains and sorrows. But in the mid of everything I saw light. I made some friends while I was in the prison. Hiram and Bobby Lee became my friends. They approached me when no one else did. They gave me the hope of standing back again. At night we would sit together and make plans to escape from the prison. After more than five meetings together, we finally escaped and freedom hugged us.

The world seemed so much unfamiliar and unhappy. My two buddies walked with me like new born and we decided to stay together since we did not have anywhere to go. They were nice to me and wanted to know more about me. They asked me about my life and how I ended up in prison. I told them everything and asked them too. Their situation were not similar to mine. They were brothers and were born to a bad family. Since they were little, they were raised as pocket pickers. They were used to all the bad things that went through the community. They took me to theirs gang and convinced me to stay there. I was too confused to think anything for myself. I was sure if I stay alone I would die of hunger and insult.

As the time went by, I became more comfortable with them, started helping them out with their things. I was a person they depended on. They told me several times to take a revenge. They not only showed me the way but also walked with me on my ways. They became my true friends. We looted people , killed them, and made them suffer for our pains. We killed people for money and moved from place to place. We never had a permanent address in the fear of getting caught by police again. I kill people, I do not do it for fun but for the sake of reducing some of my pain. I do not think that all of them deserved to die but then again, did I deserve to go through to much in my life? Why did my life turn out to be complete different than what I had expected? Was it my fault that my family died? Did I deserved to suffer? I was with my new family now. It mattered to me, I needed my answers. I was happy with my new family. They were like a family to me and cared about me. I can never forget about Carl, Mother or my Father, they left me in this world with so many painful memories and sorrow that I can never become a normal person ever again. Despite of everything, I am happy. I am happy now with my new family. I know that there can never a real happiness whether someone is a millionaire or lives on streets. He or she always suffers. We were born crying and we will die crying. There is no real happiness for anyone.

Mahesh Bhandari

Waking up to a Culture of Hip-hop

In the 1970s a very unique culture called Hip-hop started out in the ghettos of New York, and soon took over the world. The culture took the world in many forms, from music to dance to art. However, hip-hop music has changed in many ways throughout the four decades of its existence. When hip-hop music first came to public's attention it had meaning and it represented the lower class, the ones who struggled to live every day and it gave images to listeners of what kind of environment those people grow up in. It showed people what kind of life poverty has led to in the ghettos of America. But as time changed, hip-hop was commercialized and converted into what is known as the "new hip-hop," which mostly just represents the culture of guns, drugs and "hoes". Lupe Fiasco, a well-known underground hip-hop artist, created a song called "Daydreamin'" ft. Jill Scott in 2006 to show this change of hip-hop in a very interesting way to his listeners. He gives us the overview of how Hip-hop was when he was a kid and how it is now a days and gives us the issue of what the kids this generation are going to be exposed to. He believes that hip-hop music should relate to its culture and represent the people in poverty; however he believes that "the new school hip-hop" doesn't relate to the hip-hop culture and mostly promotes the lifestyle full of vice.

To fully understand the change of hip-hop one must know what is in "the old school hip-hop" first and then the differences that take place in "the new school hip-hop" then only we can see the effects of "the new school hip-hop" that takes place in the children. Lupe Fiasco was able to convert the struggle and the corruption of what "the old school hip-hop" contained into a metaphor of a giant robot to give his listeners a clear image of what hip-hop should really represent. In one of his line he describes the robot as a giant walking building type of robot. Lupe says, "This walkin project building"(L 9), which refers to the robot's description and shows the listeners that the robot looks like a giant walking building. He specifically uses a giant robot as a metaphor for "the old school hip-hop" because a giant robot is a stereotype for robots that existed couple of decades ago. People in that era thought that future robots would look like giant robots. Lupe uses this type of robot to tell his listener that the hip-hop he is talking about is "the old school hip-hop". Lupe uses robot as a metaphor for hip-hop in many ways. For example he gives his listeners an idea of where his position is in hip-hop. He says, "As I spy from behind my giant robot's eyes" (L 1), when someone is spying it means that he/she is hidden, so Lupe is saying that he is hidden in hip-hop,

which also refers to underground rappers; since he is behind the robot's eyes, it means that he is watching from the eye of hip-hop. He sees what hip-hop sees, which is the struggle and poverty that people in the ghettos have to live thru.

The body parts of the robot represent many aspects of "the old school hip-hop" in this song. Some would be the environment of the hip-hop culture and the corruption that exists in it. Lupe describes those aspects throughout the body part of hip-hop:

Now there's hoes sellin hoes like right around the toes
And the crackheads beg at about the lower leg
There's crooked police that's stationed at the knees
And they do drive-bys like up and down the thighs
And there's a car chase goin on at the waist (10-14)

These are some strong images of what "the old school hip-hop" contains. There are business of "hoes", crack heads, crooked police, drive-by shooting, and car chase. These struggles are revealed by Lupe to show his listeners that hip-hop should relate to those who live in such condition. He specifically chose to map this cultural history onto the shape of an imaginary robot rather than any landscape because the giant robot can walk and travel, while landscape stay in one place. He chose the robot to give listeners an image of the movement of hip-hop. He is saying that the hip-hop he knew is moving or changing into the direction that he doesn't want it to. He also has no control of its movement because in verse one he says, "Keep him on auto pilot 'cause I can't drive" (L 4). Lupe isn't the driver behind the movement of hip-hop, he is just an observer and he is telling his listener what he has observed. This is that "the new hip-hop" isn't representing the hip-hop culture and it doesn't relate to the struggling people.

Lupe doesn't use the robot as a metaphor for "the new hip-hop" because he wanted his listeners to tell the difference between old school and new school so he can get his message out clearly. Lupe gives us imagery of some typical rap videos that exist now days:

Now come on everybody, let's make cocaine cool
We need a few more half naked women up in the pool
And hold this MAC-10 that's all covered in jewels
And can you please put your titties closer to the 22s?
And where's champagne? We need Champagne
Now look as hard as you can with this blunt in your hand
And cue the smoke machines and the simulated rain (17-24)

Lupe uses his lyrical talent to give us strong visual images of what new hip-hop really contains. There are images of half naked women, guns that are covered in jewels, champagne, blunt and etc. These images shows that “the new hip-hop” promotes the life of luxury that is full of vice. Lupe believes that this kind of hip-hop doesn’t represent the struggle and labor of people in poverty. “The old school hip-hop” did show violence and profanity, but it showed the listener in a way that there were messages saying let’s stop all the hate and unify each other in order to get out of ghettos. However, “the new school hip-hop” clearly shows that it is promoting the lifestyle that says “yes to drugs”. The people who produce these labels don’t really care for hip-hop. They only want to make money, so they make the beats extremely attractive and give a lifestyle that reaches people’s desires, however Lupe doesn’t want to make money by selling out in hip-hop. For example he says, “I had to turn my back on what got you paid” (L 29), he is telling his reader that he could have chosen to go with the flow and become a new school artist, but he turned it away and chose to stick with “the real hip-hop music”.

Now that we can see the differences in both hip-hop, we can see that the profanity and the message have changed in “the new school hip-hop” and it could directly affect the children in a way that rappers may not realize. Lupe addresses this problem by saying, “But not too loud ‘cause the baby’s sleepin/ I wonder if it knows what the world is keepin” (LL 25, 26), Lupe is trying to tell his listeners and the new school rappers that if we don’t control how those songs are being distributed, it could reach the ears and eyes of our kids; since they don’t understand the difference between right and wrong, they could grow up thinking that it’s ok to disrespect women, it’s cool to do drugs and carry guns. The chorus of the song is more about the children because it has that nice feeling to it by saying “he fell asleep beneath the flowers for a couple of hours, on a beautiful day” (chorus). He made the chorus nice and beautiful for a reason because he wanted the listeners to have that nice sensation feeling and then when he switched to his verse he showed them profanity and violence. This gives the listener a sense of how the kids must feel because they are awoken from their nice dreams and then introduced to the profanity of “the new school hip-hop”. Lupe doesn’t want the kids to hear the new hip-hop because he knows that it’s going to affect their lives directly.

Lupe was grown in the old school era in the ghettos, where violence was around every street corner, but since he listened to the message of “the old school hip-hop” he eventually did get out of the ghettos. In Lupe’s last line he says, “But I’d like to thank the streets that drove me crazy/ And all the televisions out there that raised me” (LL 31, 32), this means that Lupe was grown in the street, but the television use to play the old school back then, so it just raised him right by feeding him the

real hip-hop, which gave him hope and eventually he got out of the hood. He wants the kids to have the same hope when they grow up in such neighborhood, but “the new school hip-hop” isn’t giving hope to those children. It doesn’t have the right message to help them out. Lupe knows that his message is also not reaching to the children because he is only an underground rapper. He says, “Me and my robot tip-toe ‘round creepin” (L 32) to tell his reader that kids are not being awoken by his music because he is so underground. This means that they can’t really listen to him and try to get his message out. He made this song so if he can’t reach the children then he can try and change the “the new school” to something more meaningful that could eventually help the kids from the streets.

When people think about any form of hip-hop music they probably automatically think of violence, drugs and the profanity, but they overlook the message it is trying to send. Hip-hop isn’t the type of song for just anybody because it is trying to reach its audience who are mainly people who live the hip-hop culture. Hip-hop used to talk to those who wanted to listen to it. It related to those who were struggling to live every day and gave them hope. If you listen to the new hip-hop it will never talk to those working people, to those struggling people. Its commercial ways have only promoted the negative ideas to our youth generation. I think Lupe Fiasco truly did understand this and wrote this song to give some kind to message to his fans. He wanted rappers to listen to the lyrics of their songs carefully pick what kind of message it is trying to send and who it might be sent to. He also wants hip-hop music to go back to its original state or the old school ways because kids who grow up in the streets are going to need it the most.

Works Cited

Fiasco, Lupe. "Daydreamin'" Rec. 11 Sept. 2006. *Food and Liqour*. First and Fifteen, 2006. CD. 2006. July 7, 2010. <http://www.lupefiasco.com/music/daydreamin-ft-jill-scott>

Mohamed Zaid Bhura

What is the ideal education?

Many people have a different vision for an ideal education. Some may believe that you have to graduate college to finish your education. Others may think that you can stop once you're done with high school. I feel that both of these may be true, but it just depends on what your skills are and what talents you possess to achieve your goals throughout life. John Gatto argues in his essay, "Against School," that school doesn't really give children the right skills that they will need to achieve their dreams and become independent individuals. Some people may already have the skill set they need to continue pursuing their dreams. These people may have learned a few things in school, but then they also used that knowledge they gained and used it to learn more things on their own. An ideal education is a system in which you are taught only the material you will need; it is an effective system that will create a strong candidate to be employed at a company where the skills will be used.

My view of this ideal education would eliminate a few things that previously seemed to be an issue in schooling. Gatto mentions in his essay that "Boredom is the common condition of school teachers, and anyone who has spent time in a teachers' lounge can vouch for the low energy, the whining, the dispirited attitudes, to be found there" (683). This one factor can be eliminated completely if you are taught the material you only require. Since more people would be focused and take pride in the course they are going through, the boredom factor would be gone.

This education would greatly help a person from having no knowledge or skills in the subject of their choice, and end up gaining all the knowledge they require for it. They would be fully prepared to tackle challenges and projects that various companies need help finishing. Gatto mentions that "School trains children to obey reflexively; teach your own to think critically and independently" (690). I believe that Gatto is giving some good advice, but there have been several people in the past who have gone through school and became critical and independent thinkers. The reason that most kids aren't critical thinkers is because they just don't have the desire to think that way on a certain topic. If they are provided the right topics, you will see how much more they will provide questions and answers for it. Kids will also become independent thinkers as they learn more about their topic and start forming more questions in their minds.

Like all great ideas, this ideal education also has a weak point: if you are taught only the material you need for your goal in life, you will be missing out key elements that you would have learned through the standard system today. I will use myself for this example. Let's say that the ideal system I stated is real and I am placed into some course that will only teach me about programming software and games. Now this course would really benefit me and get me into a company that deals with only programming software. I have all the knowledge and skills for this job and everything is going well. But one day, I am invited to spend some time with a group of people that strike up a conversation about politics and laws. I would have no idea what they would be talking about since I wouldn't have learned anything about this topic as my education wouldn't have covered it. In short, this ideal education wouldn't really mold you into a well rounded person. However, if spend most of your time sitting in an office working on a project or trekking a forest while taking photos worth \$1 million, then you wouldn't need to be a well rounded person as most of your time would be spent doing things you enjoy.

Some other problems with this ideal education are that there would have to be specific universities set up that would follow this system. Currently, there seem to be very few universities that provide this form of ideal education. Usually they are very small and located in areas that aren't nearby to most people. Sometimes these universities only offer a certain range of majors as well which they focus on. This would mean that some people wouldn't be able to experience this system of learning like others if they went to these universities. Aside from all these downsides to this ideal education, there is another benefit which is graduating early. If you supposedly were going to graduate in four years, then you would end up graduating in two - two and a half years. You will save money and avoid the lengthy time at the universities studying material that would be rather useless in the future.

Now let's compare the outcome if you have an education that doesn't follow my view of the ideal education and the ideal education. The one that doesn't follow the system I mentioned would produce a well-rounded person. This person would know some stuff from the major they were pursuing along with a few other things. For the average person, they would have forgotten most material they learned throughout their years at a university except the ones important for their career. A honed education would provide a person with extreme knowledge in the field they are interested in, but lacking severely in other areas that may come up later in life. For example if this person wanted to do programming, they would have all the knowledge they need to work for a

major corporation right after graduating. But if you aren't going to be discussing historical topics or performing chemical reactions daily or if ever, then you would be better off with a honed education.

People should be able to control what occurs in their life. Gatto states in his essay, "The solution, I think, is simple and glorious. Let them manage themselves" (690). This saying does agree with my idea of an ideal education as people are choosing what they want for their education and taking only the courses they need. They aren't taking anything unnecessary and managing themselves well enough so they can achieve success in their future. My system would combat marketing and help stop people from becoming mindless consumers. This is because people feel that they are not in control of their life when they aren't following the system. Then as they mature and graduate, they try taking advantage of this sense of freedom that is provided but end up hurting themselves more in the end. They purchase unnecessary items and do things that could be avoided. But they are doing everything blindly as they don't see hazards of their actions. The only thing these people can see is freedom from being held back. If these people were following the system, they would be having more control over their life from an earlier age. This would result in them making more wise decisions in the future and think twice or more about an action they do. These people would end up having a far better future than those that didn't have this ideal education.

This proposed ideal education would provide benefits and a far more successful life than what you would get from the current system offered today. It is inexpensive and teaches children and young adults the proper way of making choices in life. This education system will also provide them with knowledge and a skill set they need in order to master the work they will be doing after graduation. With more people going through this education system, there will be an increase in the amount of critical thinkers and the amount of success they have. The quality of life will be improved for everyone.

Work Cited

Gatto, John Taylor. "Against School." *The Writer's Presence: A Pool of Readings*. Ed. Donald McQuade and Robert Atwan. 6th ed. Boston: Bedford/ St. Martins, 2009. 682-690. Print.

Betzabeth Casas

Sex Life in the Open

In previous years it was mandatory for girls to dress modestly from head to toe. They were not allowed to show any skin and were expected to remain pure in all aspects especially when it came to sexual intercourse. Women were given little power over who they chose to marry. Their fathers controlled who they would spend the rest of their life with. Throughout the centuries this has changed, partially credited to the feminist movement. We ladies are now in control of who we marry, or if we marry at all. We are especially in control of whom we decide to be in our sex life and how many others we may want to let in. Men view women, who expose themselves sexually as brainless and naïve because they are willing to do anything to get a guys attention. In New York, according to Tom Wolfe, thirteen to fourteen year old girls are practicing fellatio on young boys in their school (Wolfe 596). However, would those guys ever date girls that gave them fellatio? The answer is no. Women have full control of their way of life. But it should not be taken for granted or jeopardize their reputation. For if we act too freely, men will eventually lose respect for us. Furthermore, young girls will lose self respect because they may start to like the attention, and wind up forgetting the true goal of the women's movement which was created for the soul purpose to gain respect.

Children these days are very knowledgeable when it comes to sex. Girls in school talk about "first base", "second base", and "third base" as mentioned in Tom Wolfe's article "Hooking Up" which shows how involved girls get with the guys. First base is referred to deep kissing, second base is oral sex, and third is "going all the way" (Wolfe 596) Girls feel this way But do they ever wonder about the diseases they can obtain from these sexual intercourses? They can contract STD's such as: AID's, HIV, Chlamydia, Genital Herpes, Gonorrhea, and Syphilis, among others. Teenagers act this way because of their estrogen levels increases and gives them mood swing (such as sexual attraction/arousal) due to puberty (Everything You Wanted To Know About Puberty) .These young women are confused by these feeling for they can't tell the "difference between the intense, new feelings of physical attraction and the deeper closeness that goes with being in love" (Love and Romance) They are blinded by these feeling and do not understand that they can die from sexually transmitted diseases that are contracted during the sexual intercourse. Where will their man be when they get sick? Those men will not marry them because it was probable a one night stand.

One cannot get to know someone in one day and propose their entire life to them. It was merely a “Hook Up” where they probably got to third base only. For “home plate” was when they got to know “each other’s names.” (Wolfe 596) When asked why they were having these sexual intercourses without rationalizing first? They may claim that they were lost in the moment and did not have time to calculate the consequences. For instance, Oprah had a show where Dr. Berman questioned a teenage couple that was ready to have sex. However, later on the boyfriend confessed that he would only stay with her for a year or six months after the intercourse. If the teenage boy doesn’t stay with a girl who he just had sex with, he will definitely not stay with a girl who gives him fellatio. Teenagers only get involved in these intercourses as a way of recreation now days (Sabitelli); this shows that teenagers these days are not prepared to have sex.

Being known as the girl who has hit “third base” with all the guys in school is not a celebrated title. It may show that these ladies are free to choose the men in their lives but at the same time they tend to taint themselves with a title that is close to “prostitute”. What kind of girl would like to be characterized like that? Wouldn’t every girl like to be remembered by their names? Even though we have our rights and we are trying to show that we are liberal ladies but we should still “maintain a façade of chastity” (Wolfe 595). It is good to know about sexual intercourse but we should not be practicing this knowledge. Teenagers are not yet adults and they need knowledge about sex so that they don’t wind up doing choices that can mess up their life. Instead parents should speak to their daughters more openly about sex and the dangers. Elizabeth Fry summarized one of Oprah’s shows, where “one girl shared that she would feel more comfortable talking with her mom about sex if the topic was discussed earlier and more regularly”(Fry 1) this is what a young teenage girl confessed to Dr. Berman on the Oprah show. Communication with our parents is necessary to a young girl’s healthy sexual relationship for we may end up messing with our reputation as women

Not only is our reputation at risk but also our goals that we as young ladies set forth. We may without rationalizing the consequences end up getting pregnant. By getting pregnant we are decreasing the chance to get a proper education, becoming future doctors, and increasing our possibility of having a chaotic family. Getting lost in the moment at such a young age is not acceptable and mothers should be aware. The sad thing is that some young ladies get pregnant on purpose, since they feel that they have the power to choose their right man, it doesn’t necessarily mean that they’ll get that man. Thus, they in turn get pregnant on purpose for they fell in love with

the man and just to make sure he is hers, they decided to tie him down with a baby. This isn't right and it may not be her fault entirely, for the guy should've known what he was getting into. Unfortunately, he didn't stop to think and she is happy because she got the man she loved. However, ladies you are only kidding yourself and the guy is not obligated to stay with you even if you have a baby. Today in the U.S. teen pregnancy is a growing problem, statistics show that 88 teenage girls out of 1000 get pregnant every year, and that 1 in every 12 teens experienced pregnancy in the U.S. The U.S. has the highest pregnancy rate than Sweden, Canada, UK, Japan, France, and Netherland (Sabitelli). Time has come for mom's to place a big slap on the hand on their teenagers because it is a fact that teenage pregnancy is a problem, especially in the U.S.

Love does not build up when only one person is feeling it, it has to be mutual. As mentioned by Laura Kipnis, a woman who believes that love is suppose to be mutual but we do not get to achieve it for we tend to give into family/social pressure, not only your partner knows you, but he or she recognizes that you have needs and vice versa (Kipnis 752) A woman should never feel pressured into having sex with another person if your not quite sure with your partners feelings. On the Oprah show the couple said they were ready to have sex but upon hearing the boyfriend's response that he was only planning to stay with her for a year or six months, she no longer thought that it was a good idea to have sex anymore. This girl is a perfect example of someone who makes her own decision no matter the pressure that she might get from her boyfriend or the consequences her answer may cause, such as a break up. No one should feel obligated to have sex just because they are in a relationship. "Teens should really consider the future before making decisions" (Fry 1). Without mutuality, love cannot be obtained.

Thus, it would be wise to think twice before you allow a man in your sexual life. One should get to know the person better before jumping into conclusion that the guy likes them. For when you want the guy to settle down with you they may run away by saying "I don't know; I'm not ready yet" or say "Of course I love you, but like, I start weirding out when I try to focus on it" (Wolfe 596). Guys say this because they only entered the sexual life of a woman for pleasure. They took advantage of a woman who was trying to express herself more liberally. They lost respect for them. If the man had respect for her he would stay by her side but instead the men begin to plead "weakness and indecisiveness" (Wolfe 596), when the relationship became too serious. Ladies "have made sexual life easier, even insouciant, for men." (Wolfe 596) they don't know whether they should settle down with an open kind of women because they've just had a sexual intercourse with her or if they want to find a woman that is a little more conservative. Men take advantage of women's

situation but they themselves are caught in a bind. Men start to think if that is the kind of mother they want their children to have? No they don't want to have that kind of women, they want a mother who is pure, and knows how to be discreet about her sexual life.

By saying the woman should be discreet, woman should not think that they are being tied down and being told how to act. They are just being told that it is time to close the door halfway on their sexual life. Society gets the idea that ladies can choose their soul mate or participate in activities that are just for pleasure. However, beware that you could fall in love with a man that you are only trying to please, and he might not love you back. Once you figure that out, you'll know that the man had no respect for you whatsoever. He just took advantage of your neediness and told you, all you wanted to hear in the "moment". Women should try to stop this trend in trying to catch guys' attention for everything will come on its own accord. There is no need to rush things. The worst that could happen due to rushing life and sex is early pregnancy and a shorter life span due to STD's.

There are other ways ladies can express their freedom. This is by maybe, dressing differently and showing off some skin. Do not show off a lot of skin, such as ripped pants around your private areas etc. because it may then make you look like your trying to sell your body. This would mean that ladies have no respect for their bodies as well. Dress however you may want to ladies but be discreet about your body. If you want to wear ripped pants, don't buy the ones that have ripped pants around the derriere or close to your private areas. Children are walking around the streets if they see that, they may think its normal, but it's not. Then you are starting to create a vicious cycle, that revealing your body is alright.

Most women today dress provocatively but they don't really want anything to do with sex and this is where it starts to become a performance only. For instance Amy Cunningham says that women are expected to smile, however it is just a performance because there is nothing behind the smile and it doesn't benefit the person (Cunningham 325-326). This can happen and create a conflict with these young women's liberties. However, there is a time when girls are suppose to show more skin and a time where they are supposed to enjoy being a kid. A twelve year old should not go around with stilettos, heavy make up, a ripped mini skirt and a low v-neck shirt. This is attire is not right because they are just young girls who are starting to grow up and mature. Parents need to teach these young ladies to not act beyond their years for people may start losing respect for them

Furthermore, men lose respect for the ladies because the ladies lose respect for themselves first. This makes the whole women's movement move backwards because it was started to "redefine

sex equality from a man-to man or man to woman standard of comparison...and women's right to equal protection of the law", (Ireland 1). In a nutshell the women's movement started so we can gain respect from the opposite sex. Now this respect is being lost and some women are making the movement go backward through these actions. Parents should realize that they have to tackle this problem right when their children start to mature, for this is a problem that has heavy consequences. The statistics show that all of these incorrect and immature actions are leading to an increase of teen pregnancy in the United States. What image are we giving the world with these statistics? It is time for these young boys and girls to grow up.

As a result, young women should start moving forward in the right direction. We should start respecting ourselves and make sure other respect us. I believe that this is what the feminist movement meant to do by giving us back our rights and letting our voices be heard, because in the past our decision making wasn't even considered. Men didn't respect our wishes or opinions when we voiced them out loud. We should respect ourselves so that others can see that we are worthy of their respect too. We shouldn't go out there and *hook up* with the first man that we see or go out and about showing what doesn't need to be shown. We must do this to show the world that we can be mature, and become a role model who children can look up to. It's time to close the door on this immature way of acting and start expressing ourselves in a decent way.

Works Cited

Fry, Elizabeth. "Thursday, April 9, 2009 Oprah Show Recap - Dr. Berman on Talking to Your Kids About Sex Thursday, April 9, 2009 Oprah." *About Oprah - Television - Magazines - Book Club - Radio - Charity*. Web. 26 July 2010.

<<http://oprah.about.com/od/oprahshowrecaps/p/drbermansextalktokids.htm>>.

Fry, Elizabeth. "Thursday, April 16, 2009 Oprah Show Recap - Dr. Laura Berman How to Talk to Your Kids About Sex Part 2 Thursday, April 16, 2009 Oprah." *About Oprah - Television - Magazines - Book Club - Radio - Charity*. Web. 26 July 2010.

<<http://oprah.about.com/od/oprahshowrecaps/p/talkingtokidsaboutsexpart2.htm>>.

"Everything You Wanted to Know About Puberty." *KidsHealth - the Web's Most Visited Site about Children's Health*. Web. 26 July 2010.

<http://kidshealth.org/teen/sexual_health/changing_body/puberty.html#>.

Ireland, Patricia. "Women's Rights" *Social Policy* 28.3 (1998): 14-16. *Academic Search Premier*. Web. 26 July. 2010.

<<http://ezproxy.lib.uconn.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=819647&site=ehost-live>>.

Wolfe, Tom. "Hooking Up." *The Writer's Presence*. 6th ed. Ed. Donald McQuade & Robert Atwan. Boston: Bedford/St. Marting's, 2009. 596-596. Print.

Kipnis, Laura. "Against Love." *The Writer's Presence*. 6th ed. Ed. Donald McQuade & Robert Atwan. Boston: Bedford/St. Marting's, 2009. 752. Print.

Sabitelli, Rod. "Sexual Script." University of Connecticut. Chemistry Building, Connecticut. 23 July. 2010. Lecture.

Paul Celadita

Results of War

The natural assumption of war is that its most pressing concerns are the physical ones such as killing and surviving, life and death, but war also involves nonphysical aspects. The prominent idea of *The Things They Carried* is to demonstrate the emotional burdens all soldiers' bear and their harmful effects. Tim O' Brien presents these destructive aspects with the deterioration of the soldier's emotional health.

The things soldiers carried were the standard equipment and weapons; but any extra objects would reflect their personal nature and the mental state they were in. There was a link between the physical objects they carry and the emotional ones they brought. The objects they carried had underlying emotion significance. Lieutenant Jimmy Cross would bring pictures of Martha and letters from her. This shows that he wants Martha and longs to be with her. Dave Jensen carried socks and foot powder; Ted Lavender would carry dope; Mitchell Sanders would bring condoms; Norman Bowker carried a diary; Rat Kiley brought comic books; Kiowa carried the New Testament and his grandfather's hatchet. Those objects were meant to give a sense of security to the soldiers or at least "the illusion of safety" (O' Brien 360). The war strips away safety and security from the troops and replaced them with fear, grief, and paranoia.

The personal objects ranged from the New Testament to various good luck items. The mind becomes more susceptible to superstition when it reflects on large issues, such as the massive weight of life and death. The mind, when strained becomes a form of psychological torture. The fear, thoughts, worries, imagination, paranoia were as traumatizing as the battles themselves. O' Brien demonstrates this by giving us a list of questions that ran through Lee Struck's head as he searched the tunnel; "Will your flashlight go dead? Do rats carry rabies? If you screamed, how far would the sound carry? Would your buddies hear it? Would they have the courage to drag you out?" (361). The only thing worse than the expectation of a catastrophe is the catastrophe itself. The shock and horror of a dead comrade would add to the degeneration of the soldier's mental state. Death is only a continuing reminder of the harsh reality of war. This type of thinking would only let someone see the negatives in life and not the joy.

Being surrounded by death tends to bring anxiety and grief. Throughout the entire story Ted Lavender's death was mentioned over and over again even as the climax. O'Brien showed how each

person dealt with Ted's death. Kiowa's reaction was in complete shock and would replay the event, "Like cement, Kiowa whispered in the dark" (365). Kiowa would compare Ted's fall like cement falling; he saw that Ted was taken out without warning and the fact that Ted did not go out in a blaze of glory made him see how little he was. He realized just how expendable lives are in war but still showed no emotion. He eventually felt guilty that he had a lack of emotion. The war has turned him into a cold, unattached man. The responses to Ted's death had some similarities but each person had its differences. The denial and rejection of their emotions would lead to long term after effects. For example, Lieutenant Cross ordered the burning of a village and later had an emotional breakdown. Cross had built up so much grief, longing, and terror that it finally exploded all at once. Cross blamed himself for Ted's death for being emotionally distracted from his job as leader, by his longing to be with Martha. In private, each person dealt with the loss of one of their own but in public they buried their feelings and put on their "masks of composure" (369).

Soldiers are not supposed to show emotions; that would be a sign of weakness for them. One of the biggest emotional burden soldiers carry are their reputation. O'Brien states that "Men killed, and died, because they were embarrassed not to. It was what had brought them to the war in the first place, nothing positive, no dreams of glory or honor, just to avoid the blush of dishonor. They died so as not to die of embarrassment" (365). In order to show the unstable motivation people have for joining the war. O'Brien says that the soldiers were afraid to be cowards. The troop would cope with death by speaking "grunt lingo" and accepting the reality of the situation. They would smoke Ted's dope and tell jokes in order to remain calm and poise. They were restraining their cowardice out of fear of what the others would say. After Ted's death, the troop continued to "hump" on. Embarrassment is a restraint that leads one away from a healthy and stable emotional state.

Soldiers in general carry things, both on the inside and on the outside. The things on the inside are the type of things that would decay a human being from the inside out. The emotional burdens will drive any soldier insane. These emotions will show themselves in the items you carry but be hidden in front of your comrades. It is a common disorder from a majority of the returning veterans which must be prevented before it kills the soldiers.

Work Cited

O'Brien, Tim. "The Things They Carried" *The Seagull Reader Stories* 2nd Edition. Ed. Joseph Kelly. New York: Norton, 2008. 354-72. Print.

Leon Chong

How Catastrophes Begin

As seen throughout history, every catastrophe that occurs has an origin. From this concept, Roald Dahl has linked “Genesis and Catastrophe” together to show how catastrophes arise. However, Dahl has emphasized more than just the simple ideology that all catastrophes result from their birth, or better yet, their genesis. From reading the story, “Genesis and Catastrophe,” readers learn that catastrophes require much more than just a genesis to happen; catastrophes require profound and leading events to proceed. Instead, catastrophes result from the influential factors that take place after the genesis of the future disaster. To show this argument, Dahl has chosen the birth of baby Hitler to portray this concept of “Genesis and Catastrophe.”

The story begins with a woman giving birth to her fourth child. Dahl does not identify the name of the child yet. Instead, Dahl gives much sympathy for the baby and his mother. Readers discover that the first three children of the woman passed away within the first year of being born; this fourth child also has a high probability of suffering from the same fate as the first three children. Thus, the mother desperately prays for her fourth child; “I have prayed and prayed that he will live, Doctor” (Dahl 259). The sympathy displayed by the mother is significant because Dahl introduces the identity of the fourth child; the woman tells the doctor that her “husband said that if it was a boy we were going to call him Adolfus. That means he would be called Adolf” (262). From this, readers are forced into a contradictory state with their own sentiments for the child. Readers, at this point, are not feeling sympathy for the genesis of baby Adolf Hitler. Rather, readers become hopeful that the child does not survive. As one of the most recognized characters in history, Adolf Hitler is known for causing a prolific amount of pain and suffering to millions of people. Thus, Dahl has utilized the birth of Hitler for an image of “Genesis and Catastrophe.”

Nevertheless, Dahl goes further with that concept. Like the plot above, the genesis of Hitler does not automatically lead to a catastrophe. Dahl tries to explain to readers that it took much more than just a woman giving birth to Adolf Hitler for millions of people to become innocently murdered for Hitler’s vision of a superior generation of human beings. Dahl stresses this by incorporating many factors throughout the story. In fact, Dahl even portrays Adolf Hitler as a gentle and harmless infant during Adolf Hitler’s genesis. An innkeeper’s wife is introduced in the story; she is caring for Adolf Hitler after being born. From examining the newborn, Adolf Hitler, the

innkeeper's wife confronts Hitler's mother, Klara, and tells her, "Here is the little beauty!... Such long delicate fingers!" (263). In addition, to portray the innocence of Hitler's genesis, the doctor mentions that Adolf Hitler "is a fine little baby" (263). With that in mind, we begin to see that it is not possible for catastrophes to begin right at their genesis. Dahl has chosen the birth of a baby to argue this idea because newborns are serene and harmless; it takes much more than just the birth of a child to cause a widespread disaster in the future.

To go further more about the point above, Dahl has also introduced a religious reference in the story. Dahl ends his short story with the mother of Adolf Hitler praying "He must live, Alois. He must, he must . . . Oh God, be merciful unto him now . . ." (265). From this, Dahl exemplifies some irony with the mother praying in this scene. As we know from history, Adolf Hitler will grow up to become an evil man blamed for the Holocaust and millions of deaths. It is an irony because God is supposed to be an almighty being, in biblical references. God is suppose to punish those who are sinful and protect the world from something as baneful as Adolf Hitler. So how is it possible that God showed mercy on the genesis of Adolf Hitler? God showed mercy towards Adolf Hitler, and God allowed Adolf Hitler to be the only child to survive and to be able to grow up when his first three brothers and sister died within days of their births from frailty and illnesses. The contradiction of an almighty guardian, God, sparing one of the most sinful man in history, Adolf Hitler, shows that even God (all-knowing and all-powerful) was not able to predict a catastrophe from just the genesis itself. This goes to show that the genesis is just an origin; there are other elements that influence the catastrophe itself for one to take place.

Because of that, we begin to realize that the genesis of a newborn child cannot be held responsible for a catastrophe that takes place in the future. As said above, there are additional factors that contribute to the happening of a future catastrophe. Dahl includes a few of the elements that caused Adolf Hitler to become one of the most malevolent human beings in history. To exhibit this, Dahl brings up Adolf Hitler's father, Alois Hitler. Dahl shows readers that Alois Hitler "was a drunkard, an arrogant overbearing, bullying little drunkard" (260). To further portray the poor characteristics of Alois Hitler as a husband and father, Dahl mentions that Klara, baby Adolf's mother, was Alois Hitler's third wife; "This was the husband's [Alois's] third marriage, that one wife had died and that the other had divorced him for unsavoury reasons" (260). In addition, during the funeral of Alois Hitler's third child, Alois Hitler is disgustingly joyful. At the funeral, Alois Hitler "stands there with a glass of beer in his hand and tells [Klara Hitler] that he has good news" (261). It is clear that Alois Hitler does not care much for his children like any good father should; Alois Hitler

is at the funeral of his third child without much sympathetic emotion for the death of his third child. Because of this, it is likely that Adolf Hitler experienced a lot of negativity and hatred from his relationship with his father, Alois Hitler. Growing up, Adolf Hitler does not receive much care or love from his father. Because of this, Adolf Hitler grew up and became the selfish and isolated man he was, very similar to his father. This can potentially be one of the many blames and causes for the catastrophic future actions of Adolf Hitler.

By bringing up the role of Adolf Hitler's father, Dahl has also shown many of the traits that Adolf Hitler inherits when he grows up and attempts to create a superior race of human beings. The ideology behind Adolf Hitler's goal was that he wanted to eliminate the "weak" from the world. Adolf Hitler murdered countless lives because they were classified as fragile by Adolf Hitler himself. This is crucial to note because during the story, Alois Hitler complains a great number of times about how every child that Alois Hitler gave birth to were "small and weak." Alois Hitler asks Klara Hitler, "Why do all my children have to be so small and weak?" (262). Moreover, Alois Hitler refers to his children as "specimens" in the story. As Alois Hitler was examining one of his previous child "as though he were...a tiny insect...he said, "All I am saying is why can't they be better specimens?" (262). These points are crucial for linking the source of Adolf's Hitler catastrophe because they provide significant clues for the thinking behind the future disaster Adolf Hitler releases upon the world. By comparing the traits of Adolf Hitler's catastrophe and Alois Hitler, there are many similar characteristics. As mentioned before, Adolf Hitler envisioned a world where only a certain group of people that met up to his expectations had the right to live on. However, the other "specimens" that Adolf Hitler classified as "small," "weak," and inferior were to be killed for his Hitler's vision. Comparing that view to Alois Hitler's outlook of his children, both Alois and Adolf Hitler share a common trait. Dahl has done this intentionally to gives readers a sense of where Hitler's catastrophe rose from. Thus, the ideology behind Adolf Hitler's catastrophe is not a consequence of Adolf Hitler's genesis.

Adolf Hitler's genesis was just an innocuous and peaceful event that brought a newborn child into the world. The genesis could not possibly be to blame for the evil doings Adolf Hitler would later commit when he grows up. But rather, the factors that Adolf Hitler experiences and learns from are the blame for his future catastrophe. Adolf Hitler did not have a positive male role model for guidance and assistance growing up. His father was an alcoholic, and he was difficult to have a healthy relationship with. From living in such an unsuitable environment for a growing child, Adolf Hitler quickly caught on and developed many degenerate traits that later profoundly

influenced his ideas for a new world. Because of this, a “beautiful” genesis was transformed into ugly monster that would one-day place the world in catastrophic disarray. From Dahl’s insight, we see that each genesis can be misleading because it is not possible to determine if a genesis will lead to a catastrophe or not. Only the profound affairs that occur after the genesis are able to point towards the beginning of a catastrophe. It is sad that Adolf Hitler was not fortunate enough to receive the affection that each child deserves to be able to grow up normally. Rather, he experienced much anguish and hostility from his own father. The world would have probably saw a more practical and moral side of Adolf Hitler if the events leading after his genesis had been more benign and more righteous.

Work Cited

Dahl, Roald. “Genesis and Catastrophe.” *The Best of Roald Dahl*. New York: Vintage, 1990. 259-265. Print.

Tsamchoe Dolma

“Stepping Up”

In the year 1985, Michael Jackson and Lionel Richie came up with an inspirational song “We are the World.” The main motive of the song was to fundraise for the starving people in Africa, especially Ethiopia, after the famine that affected the whole country during 1984-1985. A group of famous artists, such as Stevie wonder, Tina Turner and Cyndi Lauper, volunteered to sing “We are the World” in a joint effort to raise money for the cause. Through this song, Jackson and Richie wanted to encourage people all over the world to be involved in charities and help the countries in need. The song mainly emphasizes the power of unity which helps overcome any type of obstacle, be it natural or man-made. By helping each other, one’s not only overcoming his own problem of stepping away from responsibility but also leaving behind an example for others to follow. We, the people in general, tend to wait for someone else to act for us, but this song is pinpointing that rather than waiting for someone else, one should lead his own way. People need to step up and help others because if everyone keeps on depending on others, it won’t be too long before people lose faith in each other.

The song starts with the singers trying to expose the problem (Richie, Jackson 1), which in this case is Africa, where lots of people die of starvation. They say that there will be times when a part of world might be in danger and will be in need of assistance, like Africa. What Jackson and Richie are trying to say is that this is the point when the world must unite and act together as one to solve the problem. As Jackson states “It’s time to lend a hand, greatest gift of all” (ll 4, 5), people should offer help to the helpless. Jackson and Richie use “hand” as a metaphor for help since hand signifies a part of body that is often used to help others or one self. The writers also want people to think of what they can do to help, such as fundraising, donating money, clothes etc. Talking about metaphors, Jackson and Richie also use “children” as metaphor for future. Children are the future of this world. The writers are using the word “children” to suggest that we, the people are the future, meaning the actions that we choose to take today will remain on earth forever as a legacy for future generations to follow.

People usually drift away from their responsibilities because of bystander effect. It is so because People are generally scared or confused at the moment of emergency. Moreover, the song is also saying that People should be responsible of their own share when it comes to one’s duty to his

or her country before the disaster occurs. If everyone did their own part, like recycling, avoiding the misuse of natural resources, than there wouldn't be any tragedy to begin with, and if the calamity strikes than they should be more united to resolve the problem. The song sends a strong belief of "collectivism" rather than individualism because of the moral it gives, which is to get together in unity at times of need or even before the tragedy strike.

The song was sung by inter-racial singers all over the world which sends a message that all human beings are equal and therefore should work together as one. The main messages of the song comes from the chorus which states:

We are the world
We are the Children
We are the ones who make a brighter day
So let's start giving. (13- 16)

The chorus is trying to acknowledge the sense of unity. By using "We", the writers mean to include every human being regardless of race, gender and skin color. "When the writers say we are the ones who make a brighter day" (15), they mean that "brighter day" (as a metaphor for positive change) can only be achieved with the harmony among every individual designated to achieve the very goal of building up the fallen nation.

The song writers of "We are the World" also put a huge emphasis on the power of "We." They are saying that "we are the world" as in we make up the world. Without us, the human beings, world is incomplete and we are the only one that can make this world a better place to live since human beings can express their feeling in a way that other beings cannot. Moreover Jackson and Richie also show how we can make a difference in other people's lives through the lines,

Send them your heart
so they'll know that someone cares
and their lives will be stronger and free
As God has shown us by turning stone to bread
so we all must lend a helping hand. (21-25)

The above lines depict a sense of what one should do to help the victims. The writers are encouraging people to send the victims their love which can be in form of anything that can help the victims survive such as funds, foods, clothing, or even a simple letter making them belief that hope still exists. People usually ask themselves what difference is one person going to make?" And they

often drift away from their decision to help, but if we take our time and think for a moment, one person is all it takes to make a change with others following behind him.

The song itself is a motivation for people because it symbolizes diversity and unity. The different types of singers getting together to sing a song for Africa and coming up with a good melody is a metaphor for the whole unity foundation. It gives listeners or viewers an idea of what happens when different people work together to achieve a similar goal. Moreover, the song itself started its own the trend, a trend where a group of famous singers get together and sing for a cause or charity. The trend followed when earlier this year, Haiti was struck with an earthquake and another new group of singers got together to record a song for the Haitian cause. Therefore, the song itself is an example how all kind of artists from all over the world stepped up and left an example for others to follow.

Jackson and Richies agree that there will be times when it seems like there's no way one can win or survive but if one can keep the hope alive, it's not probable that he's going to fall down of which people are usually concerned of. This is so because "Hope" is a solution to itself. If we keep on thinking that we're going to make it then eventually we do. The positivity motivates us to keep on fighting till the end and sooner or later, we'll succeed. Therefore, we should send hope to the people who are victimized by the calamities.

Change is not a one-man deal, especially, the kind of change that involves the whole world. In this case, change refers to drifting away from not caring for others and minding-your-own-business mode to actually care and help out people who are in need of assistance. Involvement of every human is necessary and in order to imply that change, everyone should unite and work hand in hand. No one should be relying on others to take a step to help the helpless. Like the artists who took charge of their responsibility and began doing their own part of spreading the message, we, the regular human being should take a step as responsible leaders to better reflect the power of humanity.

Finally, it is very hard for one person to make a commitment of helping the victims of disasters but if people all over the world work together, the load of work gets lighter and hence is easier to overcome the problem. It doesn't matter what people do to help the victims, after all it's the thought that counts. Therefore, more or less, people should just be outgoing and help the needy ones. They should step out of their comfort zone and realize the real world where things like Africa and Haiti so take place. For that matter, one should be ready to overcome any obstacle to help the needy ones.

Works Cited

Jackson Michael, Richie Lyrics. "We are the World" We are the world USA to Africa. CD. 1985. July 7, 2010. <http://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/michaeljackson/weretheworldusaforafrica.html>

Shannon Ferguson

Emotions and Sexuality: The Connection of Sex to Emotions for Young Females between the Mid 20th Century and Early 21st Century

In the article 'Playing at Sexy' Peggy Orenstein suggests that the younger generations of females today are increasingly influenced by visual depictions of sexuality in the media. The female celebrities in the media serve as figures of emulation for many young girls-especially between the ages 8 and 18. How they display themselves is seen as acceptable and thus copied by said group of people. These younger generations of females are becoming more sexually active before reaching an age of maturity. They seem to be more concerned with the performance of adult sexuality and have no real feeling attached to the act. This development shows a regression rather than progression of women's sexual empowerment (Orenstein 2). Over the course of a few years, the gender roles and expectations for females have changed as women have become more freely expressive of their sexuality and displayed more sexual pride in both their physical appearance and their attire. Standards such as exploration through promiscuity, boldness in using sexual terminology, and even involvement in sports, that were once seen as unacceptable are now relatively normal in society today (Orenstein 2). According to Orenstein, this kind of new found sexual pride may not be an actual display of gained confidence for women, but rather conformity to modern society's expectations- which has no real feeling or emotion attached to it (2). Steps ought to be taken by the parents or guardians of rising generations of females to lessen or reverse these changes of early sexualization. Such steps may include having the younger generations participate in activities and sports that have no sexual connotation whatsoever, and monitoring carefully the content that they view on television or are exposed to in other forms of media. These steps may be effective ways to reduce early sexualization of young females.

The importance placed on sexual experience versus sexual performance is a major issue underlying the disconnection between emotion and sexual intercourse. Orenstein makes reference to the 1970s as a time when "Young women felt an imperative, a political duty, to understand their desire and responses, to explore their own pleasure, to recognize sexuality as something rising from within" (2). In my opinion, this is true and it heavily contrasts with how most females view sexual activities nowadays. Back in the time surrounding the 1970s, sex was treated with a certain curiosity of exploration and had much feeling and emotion attached to it. It was more of something that

people wanted to experience through love. In contrast, sex is treated very lightly nowadays. It is a mere performance for a 'one-time' pleasure and has no long term feeling associated with it. A perfect example through media may be seen through a comparison of old movies versus modern ones. The older movies tend to depict sex as occurring through true love and long-term relationships and involving a lot of passion or emotion- "Antony and Cleopatra" (1972). More recent movies, on the other hand, depict sex through hook-ups and one-night stands- "Chloe" (2010). Back then, love was idealized as the basis of sex, but now, sex is the basis of love.

Media plays a major role in the early sexualization of young females today. Almost all (if not all) areas of media depict women as sex symbols and thus teach younger generations what is expected of them- how they should look, what they should wear, how they should act, and so on. Because younger generations of females tend to spend a lot of leisure time watching TV, or skimming through the pages of fashion magazines, they tend to believe that what they see is what everybody is doing or should be doing. Many celebrities serve as role models or figures of emulation for the younger generations of females. Thus, the celebrities' attitudes, appearances and actions inspire these young females to do the same. An example of this is the video for "Playing at Sexy." The girls performing the dance routine to Single Ladies by Beyoncé were obviously influenced by the original video in which Beyoncé was also dressed in skimpy clothing and performing a routine which included sexually provocative moves. Therefore, their performance closely resembles that of Beyoncé and many other artists in their music videos. This shows the extent to which the media influences early sexualization of younger female generations.

Another issue underlying the disconnection between emotion and sexual intercourse is the Double-standard. The double-standard issue basically says that both sexes are fully equal and thus there are different expectations of each. As Orenstein suggests, women's growing sexual enfranchisement may be stemming from the new-found sexual pride of young females today (2). The confidence they now express in their appearance and sexual performance may suggest that they are transcending the double-standard that their looks alone earn them advancement and power, whereas for men, the knowledge they possess accompanying their appearance get them ahead in life. But Orenstein's question still remains, "Is their sexual pride building confidence and emotions with sex, or is it mere confidence in skills, performance and appearance" (2)? "Are young female really progressing sexually, or do they think they 'feel' because they are encouraged to do so (2)?" Many young girls today engage in the act of sex because of the reputation that they get from sleeping with their partner-- someone who is attractive in the eyes of many. These girls attach no feeling to this

kind of sex, but the thought that an ego or reputation boost will come from sleeping with these men is enough encouragement to engage in sex with them. . Decreasing early sexualization of young girls through methods mentioned earlier: having parent monitor what they are exposed to in the media and engaging them in activities with no sexual connotation, in my opinion, will add more meaning to the girls' eventual sexual experiences, because rather than being exposed to sex too early, they will more likely experience it later, through maturity and true feelings of love. I think that if these plans were put into action, there would be more young girls participating in activities that people their age should—like sports, and thus keep them occupied and prevent them from finding alternatives that may be sexually provocative—like dancing. Also, if parents and guardians censor what their kids are exposed to in the media, there will be less media influence, causing young girls to develop a mind of their own and a sense of individuality, rather than conforming to what the media exposes them to.

In conclusion, today's society has different expectations of females than the mid-1900s. . What was seen as unacceptable in the 1960s-1970s is relatively normal today. Many factors play into the early sexualization of young females of rising generations-- the media (which includes movies and celebrity influence) for example, serves as a major influence upon teenage girls. Reduced exposure to certain aspects of the media may serve as a solution to this problem. Sex is an act that should not be experienced or acted out at an early age. It should be saved for maturity and a situation that is conducive to it; that is, sex should be an expression of love between two partners, rather than just being an emotionless performance. I think a reduction of early sexualization will ultimately lead to progression of sexual enfranchisement and the diminishing of existing double-standards.

Works Cited

Orenstein, Peggy. The Way We Live Now. Girls Playing at Sexy. NY Times.com

Shapreace Fullwood

Can Authenticity of an Experience Be Accomplished?

In his essay “The Loss of the Creature,” Walker Percy argues that people are so accustomed to allowing others to shape and influence their views that they allow preconceived notions to alter their experiences. People do not think for themselves because they have already let what someone else has experienced or told them ruin what can and should be an “authentic” (485) experience. Although some may argue that Percy’s idea is not complex, it is complex due to the fact that the essay is quite thought provoking because everyone has a different way of thinking. The way that Percy writes his essay adds to its complexity, yet it also serves a purpose. Percy uses numerous stories and constantly asks questions which make the essay come across as confusing, since what Percy is trying to explain is not always crystal clear. Before letting the reader clearly understand the point he is trying to make, Percy shifts into a different story or asks many questions at once. His writing style is distinct and not one which most people are accustomed to, which can be frustrating to the reader. However, Percy did not employ such a method of writing to confuse the readers, but to permit readers to formulate their own ideas about whether or not an experience can ever be a genuine one.

In his essay, Percy provides the reader with several stories which serve the purpose of letting readers originate their own opinions. Percy tells a story about the Grand Canyon which strongly supports his belief that people and their preconceived notions can ruin a truly beautiful experience. In the story about the Grand Canyon, the sightseer does not see the Grand Canyon for “what it is” because the Grand Canyon has already been “appropriated by the symbolic complex” (482). A symbolic complex is what Percy’s audience thinks and/or is expecting from an experience before they actually encounter it. The idea of a symbolic complex as used by Percy demonstrates that a person already had a set of expectations and therefore was not able to see the canyon, which is the down side of the symbolic complex. Since people already have an idea in their minds about what the Grand Canyon should look like because of a “postcard, geography book, tourist folder...” (482) or what a person has told them, they expect the Grand Canyon to perfectly measure up to those things and their excitement or delight of seeing the canyon changes (482). Once people feel that something is not what they expected, their attitude is quickly altered and thus ruins the whole experience because it already is being looked upon as a negative thing. Since Percy presents the story of the

Grand Canyon so broadly, it lets readers think for themselves. Because Percy does not tell the story of the Grand Canyon in a stereotypical way, his audience can feel as though their opinions are theirs and not Percy's. But since Percy is expanding on the symbolic complex, he is preparing a reader for what to expect. He makes people aware that an experience should be viewed from numerous perspectives not only one; this is where the confusion of Percy's writing comes into play. The symbolic complex appears to be that in order to fully experience something it has to be looked at from several views; Percy creates a symbolic complex by presenting his stories in diverse ways to introduce readers to unique writing styles seeing as not all writing styles are the same.

Percy argues that something as simple as going on a tour can ruin authenticity because a person is not seeing the true beauty of the canyon. The canyon is being viewed through the eyes of the tour guide, not that person. When one embarks on a tour, whatever it is that is being toured is limited because tour guides only show the sightseers what it is they feel is important. What the tour guide feels is important the person may not necessarily feel is important as well. The thing to remember is that the person will never know since by taking the tour the experience was limited and basically experienced for that person. The person only saw and was able to judge what it is that they were taken to see. If, as Percy suggested, people go off on their own, what they felt the Grand Canyon had to offer may have been totally different than what they felt because of the tour. By going on the guided tour the person is simply waiving his or her "right of seeing and knowing" (482) the Grand Canyon from an authentic view. To "recover the Grand Canyon" (483) enough in order to see it and formulate their own opinions, a person must, just as Percy suggests, go on their own tour. However, if the person goes on the tour, they must not allow the tour guides to see the Grand Canyon for them; the person must see the canyon through their own eyes by keeping an open mind. Since Percy's ideas are not given directly such as in the Grand Canyon story, there is room to originate thoughts about authentic experiences. Direct ideas are not thrown at the reader, so therefore they are able to decide whether or not what Percy is arguing makes sense to them.

Percy cleverly provides the reader with unique stories that have the same purpose, which consequently aids the reader to see things in a different light by minimally reading the different stories. What Percy does is present his stories in various ways and further emphasizes that one thing can be viewed from numerous perspectives. With the stories he provides, Percy clearly demonstrates this and that is why it is an effective method. Percy is engaging readers' minds and making them realize that in life things can and must be viewed in diverse ways. For example, the story about a boy who visits France still shows that the symbolic complex ruins an experience yet shows it in a

different way. Unlike the story about the Grand Canyon, Percy does not introduce this one the same way. The boy witnessed some students engage in an “impassioned argument” (487) which results in a “riot” (487). The boy enjoys the riot but only because he was informed about it by someone who had previously informed him about it. If he had not known anything about such situations before the experience it would not have been the same. This boy who saw such a scene transpire in a restaurant would have been “anxious” (488) and would not have found enjoyment in the situation if he had not heard about it from “Puccini and Rolland” (487). Percy demonstrates to readers that the symbolic complex played a role in the boy’s experience in France. Even though the symbolic complex influenced the boy’s experience, it did not do so the same way as the story of the Grand Canyon. By making the symbolic complex differ from the Grand Canyon story and the France story, Percy shows the various way things can transpire.

In most if not all of the questions Percy asks, he does not provide a straightforward answer. He does not provide an answer to his own questions because he allows his readers to answer the question for themselves. The purpose of not answering the question is to allow the readers to get their mind engaged in the text which thus will help them formulate their personal opinions. If due to reading the reader has to think about what they are reading, how they feel about the topic will be more than clear for the fact that they have actually thought about what the author is attempting to prove. Percy simply provides a possible solution or answer to the question; he suggests but does not answer. Just as he states that when a person reads they are usually “content” (487) with what has “been formulated” (487) by the author, as a result he wants to aim away from that. By not answering the questions he is not enabling the reader to merely be content. If an answer is not provided for a person they have no choice but to think for themselves.

Essentially, Percy states that a person should want to have an authentic experience and not let expectations alter an experience. When a person allows expectations to dictate their experience, it ends up tarnishing it. People’s preconceived notions tend to be set at quite a high standard, and when an experience does not perfectly match it is considered an awful one. In order to avoid not fully engaging and getting all that an experience has to offer, a person must go into the experience with a clear mind. People must have “sovereignty” (483), which is authority over themselves and ideas. Other people’s views become major road blocks for a person to originally perceive the beauty a place may have to offer. Improper association is the quickest way to damage something that can be good, which is why a person must never waive their “sovereign rights.”

It seems quite clear that a person learns best from actually experiencing an event, not by being told about it. This is why a person who is on the beach poking a dogfish with a “jackknife” (489) can learn more about the dogfish than a student who is in class with his dogfish on the “dissecting board” (490) in the school laboratory (489-490). Although it seems quite odd that a person on the beach can learn more than a student in school, it is true since the person on the beach is not told what to do step by step. The person on the beach has not given up his or her rights of sovereignty and accordingly can and does learn independently since they are not limited to learning or doing only what a teacher wants them to do. For that reason, actual experience is key. If a person can’t think for him or herself, what will that person have? Is there anything that a person who does not have control over his or her thoughts and life will ever experience authentically? The answers to these questions vary because everyone has a different way of thinking, which is why Percy writes his essay in such a distinctive way. So can it be considered true that people can only experience an authentic experience if they do so with a clear mind?

Work Cited

Percy, Walker. “The Loss of the Creature.” Ways of Reading. Ed. David Bartholomae and Anthony Petrosky. 8th ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martins, 2008. Pp.480-493

Vincent Hua

A Hunger Artist

The Hunger Artist by Franz Kafka is a story about the suffering of all artists. Brenda Machosky author of "*Feasting at the Feast of Literature*", says that each artist suffers from lack of acknowledgement and also has a desire that can not be filled. Mrs. Machosky also relates literature to the starvation with "We generally do not purport to eat books, but we say we devour them" (Machosky 289) This quote from her article means that instead of having the literal meaning the Hunger Artist is more of a metaphor. No matter how many books you read you always want to read more, why? For knowledge; knowledge is a substance that is plentiful and ubiquitous. Once learning something that person will seek our more knowledge, never to be satisfied. The Hunger Artist has had food but he does not desire it, instead he says that he "has not found the food he likes yet". What does he hunger for if he does not like food and does not find a need for anything of this material world? He hungers for the spiritual aspect of fasting; his fasting gives him the pleasure and the feeling of being happy. In this stage he feels confident that he can show others and make them understand his art. The artist by fasting is given himself satisfaction through starving himself, his nutrients is self satisfaction and his will to preserve his art and to show others that his art is authentic. The artist's satisfaction is dependent on his relationship with his audience. His spiritual satisfaction is directly related to his viewers.

The hunger artist fasts in order to fulfill spiritual hunger, in replace of physical needs. The physical hunger that the artist ignores is constantly there bombarding him to satisfy his need. Instead he defends himself against this attack by gathering to himself spiritual satisfaction, which gives him the strength to keep going and make people see his strong will. However, there is not only physical hunger and spiritual hunger affecting him, the artist also hungers for attention and recognition. The artist is intent on proving to everyone that his art is authentic and he does not cheat he wants them to understand the fulfillment in what he is doing. The story starts off "During these last decades the interest in professional fasting has markedly diminished. It used to pay very well to stage such great performance." (Kafka 222). The reason of Kafka making this story where the artist is portrayed as a professional is largely because this is what the majority of artists feel; the feeling of profession that is not widely known to society. Machosky also comments that "Hunger artist cannot *thrive*" the use of the word thrive here means that the artist can not prosper. He is prevented from advancing and in

context he can do nothing but the opposite which is rot and die. (Machosky 288) this profession was created to fail because in no instance can it ever be achieved. No one will ever profit from starving themselves for others to watch and more ever there was never a time it was necessary. the artist would under no circumstances, not even under forcible compulsion, swallow the smallest morsel of food: the honor of his profession forbade it (Kafka 223). The artist feels that he will be shamed and embarrassed if he were to break his fast unless it were his own will to stop. There is also a passage that describes hungering; "Hungering depends on each moment...it does not matter if you hungered yesterday, or if you will hunger tomorrow. Hungering...is not a matter of will or desire." In other words we are only given a moment of relief because the moment we stop eating we start to hunger for more.

The artist's own satisfaction is never fulfilled in the story because he feels cheated out of his fast when he can continue his fast but is not allowed and when people suspect him of cheating by taking in small amounts of nutrition when people are not looking. The artist himself is the only one who is able to make himself feel satisfied for his efforts. "he was therefore bound to be the sole completely satisfied spectator of his own fast. Yet for other reasons he was never satisfied"(224) The artist is a prideful character and he feels that his accomplishment is diminished when people doubt him and call him a fake. Machosky speaks of when the artist protests when people attribute his sadness to his fasting; the artist demands his audiences to trust that he is doing his fast honestly to be satisfied, he tries every way to prove to everyone that his fasting is not fake. He sticks his arm out through the cage to be touched and he sings for his watch guards. (Machosky 289) Even more there is a limit put on his fasting; this limit must make the artist mad for if it is his profession he should take it all the way out as long as he can, but the public does not approve and his art is cut short of its fame, "Why stop fasting at this particular moment...He had held out for a long time...why stop now, when he was in his best fasting form, or rather, not yet quite in his best fasting form?" The artist finds fasting easy and he tells everyone that it is the easiest thing that anyone can do but the artist is ignored in his efforts to gain acceptance. "Why should he be cheated of the fame...beating his own record by a performance beyond human imagination, since he felt that there were no limits to his capacity for fasting? His public pretended to admire him so much...if he could endure fasting longer, why shouldn't the public endure it." (Kafka 225) The artist tells us here how to obtain his satisfaction that his only way to gain his happiness is too fast to the point where he can no longer fast. He feels that society should wait for him so that he can change and adapt with them. As the future comes his full potential is released since he no longer has no bounds, however he is still not

happy because his viewers have now all left to see different attractions as his art has failed to reach their hearts. In other words that society is holding him back from his happiness and the way to break away from that limitation the artist placed himself in the silent isolation that he goes through at the end to prove to everyone that he is serious about his art. Machosky compares the hunger artist fasting to literary scholars. She agrees that the only way for the artist to gain happiness is he is allowed to fast to the end and when others lose interest in his art. She compares this to scholars saying that they are not part of society and they do not need to be. His secret to fasting that nobody can understand is that fasting is "easy" it is "the easiest thing in the world". He believes that the only he can not gain satisfaction is because of everyone's stubbornness on not letting him go on with his fasting. The artist said before that he could go farther, farther than human imagination but the reality of this fact is that he already has passed that point. Since nobody but him can understand the art of fasting to society he has already broken the mystery of fasting and achieved the impossible. (Machosky 299) the importance of this fact is that the artist in a sense fasts for no purpose for the fact that he is the only one of his profession that can reach that level of fasting. His satisfaction only comes from beating himself which he does not need to do but simply feels compelled to do. His mystery that he wants his audience to understand can never be solved because he himself has not realized that he has figured out his own mystery.

The artist, abandoned by everyone, has no limitations and can fast for as long as he likes. "it seemed to happen almost overnight... any rate the pampered artist suddenly found himself deserted... a positive revulsion from professional fasting was in evidence." The artist now finally abandoned by society can fast till no end but why does he choose to continue fasting and not try a different outlet of work? it is because he can not do anything other than fast; he has lived his whole life fasting and it is his only skill to change now would be no use so he chooses to do what he does best and continues on to do his last fast. "it is now too late to take any countermeasure. Fasting would surely come into fashion again at some future date..." (227-228) The artist shows his adaptation to society by placing himself to where the crowd is most gathered at which is the animal cages. However, the artist starts to regret his decision and goes into a seclusion in his own cage and ignores the outside world as he finds it too irritating. His hope is also shot down as fasting never comes back and he is forgotten by all "the fine placards grew dirty and illegible...the little notice board telling the number of fasting days achieved, which at first was changed carefully every day...seemed pointless to the staff...he was working honestly, but the world was cheating him of his

reward." The time that the artist can finally show his full potential, the world closes its eyes on him by not keeping track of his days and not giving him the attention that he needs.

The ending to this story is bittersweet as people finally remember the artist and they learn his feelings of fasting. "Forgive me everybody....I always wanted you to admire my fasting....but you shouldn't admire it...why shouldn't we admire it? Because I have to fast, I can't help it...and why can't you help it....because I couldn't find the food I liked, If I had found it, believe me, I should have made no fuss and stuffed myself like you or anyone else." (231) As the artist last words are heard the book tells us that in his dimming eyes he is no longer proud but he is firm that he will continue to fast. The insensitivity of the public is shown shortly after as the overseer of the circus tells everyone to bury the body with all of his belongings and put in a young panther. If that were not the worst, the panther is fed the food that he likes without hesitation, he does not miss his freedom. Onlookers are shocked but are entranced by this creature and gather to see the panther and never want to leave. I think that Machosky concentrates too much on the literature comparison of the hunger artist and I believe that she should have given more thought into the connection between the artist and his audience and how they influence each other to the end.

Works Cited

- Machosky, Brenda. "Fasting at the Feast of Literature." *Comparative Literature Studies* 42.2 (2005): 288-305. *MLA International Bibliography*. EBSCO. Web. 27 July 2010.
- Kafka, Franz *Ein Hungerkünstler* 1922 20 July 27, 2010

Eric Irizarry

“Virgins” vs. “Dance for me”

Both stories “Virgins” and “Dance for me,” demonstrate how young African American girls, regardless the environment, face pressure to conform to the way of life around them, either sexually or stereotypically; while at the same time each character’s awareness of these pressures are different because of the environment they are in. In “Virgins,” by Danielle Evans, her character Erica is raised in a less fortunate area of New York and is exposed to the pressure to engage in sexual activities everywhere she goes but is unsure how to react to it. Although Erica does not know what she should do, she is a little reluctant to just accept what everyone around her is doing sexually. In the other story, by Amina Gautier, the young African American narrator attends a private school, but is pressured into playing a stereotypical role that all African American’s can dance, smoke weed, and are sexually active at a young age. Unlike Erica, she embraces this pressure to fit in.

In “Virgins,” you learn Erica and Jasmine had already engaged in sexual activities before they were twelve! Erica’s first kiss was with some guy that said he would walk her home, and the first time she had been touched was with a sixteen year old lifeguard that she was chicken-fighting with. Each experience started out innocent, but lead to more because of the guy. Although as the reader you know this is not right, to Erica this this is normal. When Erica is talking about Mr. Thompson probably just being nice, she goes on to say “But we’d had enough nice guys suddenly look at us the wrong way,”(74) suggesting this was not something new to her. In the same paragraph she talks about Michael, her guy best friend, and how he is the only one to treat them differently. She says “It was like he didn’t even see us as girls, and the felt good sometimes,” which shows that she has already fell for the false concept of what being a woman is or is starting to. The author in these simple lines wants you to see that in this young African American girl’s environment, it is perceived that woman are an object of pleasure. However, the guys in this story are only part of the pressure in Erica’s environment. Even her best friend, Jasmine, whom is a huge influence on her, also pressures her into engaging in sexual activities. Throughout the story Jasmine makes sex seem like what being older is all about. This is apparent when she Erica answers her question about who Michael would shoot. After Erica’s response, Jasmine says “That’s your problem, Erica, You Don’t understand adult relationships,” as if sex is what being adult is all about. Of course, it would seem Jasmine is a victim in this story, but

the author has Jasmine in the story for you to compare with Erica. Jasmine has already given in to the pressures around her, whereas Erica is still trying to figure out the right path. So the author gives you a sense of what Erica is going to end up like in the direction she is headed. Although she is not ready for these changes, being at such a young and naïve age, Erica does not know what is right or wrong. Another example of Jasmine's influence, is when they are getting dress to go to the club, Erica says " I felt naked," but still she wore them. At this point Erica does not seem very interested in exposing her sexuality yet, but feels Jasmine knows best. The lines after that, she says " the only thing Jasmine let me do right was bring Michael with us" as if everything was up to Jasmine. Furthermore, her mother tells her that " no one does you a favor who doesn't expect something back." Those words in this story means, every time a man does something for you, expect to have to do something in return. Which seems to be the case, when she calls to be picked up by Michael and his brother. Ron makes a move on Erica after they get home, and they end up having sex. These few scenes Erica is involved in, the author seems to be trying to show a false mentality about sex that Erica has. Being an aware reader about sex, this makes you feel bad for Erica. That she is growing up thinking that sex is almost the whole point to life. Furthermore, Jasmine lost her virginity to a boy that said " he would go with her after."(Danielle Evans 75) Another example of how men know how to get girls to engage in sexual activities.

This story shows the negative influence society, and even the media can have on young girls, especially African American girls. The media makes young women believe sex or any type sexual activities are okay. The only reason this has a stronger impact on African American girls is because they are the ones that mostly grow up in ghetto areas. They are more likely to be brought up in an environment that engages in wrong behaviors more often than wealthier neighborhoods.

Of course, even being brought up in a better environment does not keep girls safe from negative influence. The story "Dance for me" has similarities to "Virgins." In this story it is not the pressure of men that this young African American girl has to worry about, but the pressure from the white girls at her school. She attends a private school in seventh grade, and being African American, she does not seem to fit in. Throughout the story, the author points out the stereotype that is placed on this girl for being black. However, the girl is actually nothing like how the white girls from the private school view her. They all assume she can dance, that she has drug connections, and is engaged in sexual activities. The author makes it clear that she is not, which shows even the ones that do not fit the typical African American stereotype can be influenced. This is evident when

the girls from the story start to associate with the young African American girl. She quickly starts to take on the role of what the white girls think all African American girls are like. She shows off the only dance move she knows, she goes to the corner store on her street to buy weed, and even engages in sexual activities with a boy she does not know. It is clear that she is only worried about fitting in when Heather, one of the white girls, begins to talk to her about the party at her house, and the narrator says “ My stomach tightened, Now she’d tell me it had all been a joke....Making me feel as though I fit in was a prank,” but she was not concerned with the actual conversation about the boys being there, or the part about buying weed.(Amina Gautier, 183)

Although these stories share similarities, they are very different at the same time as well. In “Virgins,” the gave up there innocence in order to have a good time, and fit in with an older crowd. Erica knew that she should not be going to clubs, or hooking up with Ron, but she let Jasmine talk her into going with her. She hooked up with Ron, because she felt like that is what Jasmine would do. Nothing seemed to be her own choice. In the other story, the author seemed to do whatever Heather asked. This made her feel like she fit in now. Although friends should not have to do things to be friends with someone else. The author did not seem to mind; she was finally fitting in with people. She knew the person she was becoming was not someone to be, but she did it anyways.

Faris Jadadic

The Hip-Hop Revolutionary

Hip Hop has a large influence on the youth community because of the connections it has with one another, both locally and globally. This is because it's beneficial to the communities since it allows the youth to express themselves in ways they can't. It allows them to get away from current issues and enjoy themselves while they're able to relate to the music of hip-hop. Hip-hop can affect a person in many different ways, but it targets the youth community mainly because they are influenced by the music produced. Today, music isn't mostly just hip-hop. Music isn't viewed as it has been in the past. It has become a large part of our youth community and you see it everywhere. From seeing people blasting hip-hop from their cars, to graffiti and billboards advertising hip-hop, and the outer wear the youth wears, hip-hop is everywhere. Today, many of the older age group is looking at hip-hop as unnecessary and is disgusted by hip-hop. They label hip-hop as disrespectful, it is a bad example, and it will get nowhere far. When actually, hip-hop can be effective by sending messages to the youth specifically in their songs. It benefits the youth by showing no matter your background you can be successful.

Recently, an American rapper Eminem held a concert in London, England. Looking back at it, I can see that hip-hop has grown to be a global phenomenon due to the sold-out concert. Today, the world is connected through hip-hop. No matter where the artist is from, people from all around the world have grown to be attracted to this genre, and are becoming much attached to it. Not only did Eminem's *Recovery* CD rank number one on Billboard.com for two weeks simply because the CD has music which can relate to just about everybody. It's been number one since its debut over other types of albums, and ranked number one across the world in places such as the UK. Basically rappers are connecting the people as one globally. You have rappers such as 50 Cent, Lil' Wayne, performing in places such as Germany and Croatia and even though people might not understand them: they enjoy it and are still selling out their concerts. This allows people of all kinds to get together for one event and show excitement and love for common music. It reaches out to people of all kinds at once.

Today hip-hop is categorized into many different types of music. Hip-hop songs talk about many things. It doesn't necessarily stay on one subject with stealing, girls, and money. The new thing to talk about now is being real and not just portraying life as money, bitches, and hoes. There are

some of the many focuses in a young person's life and therefore, they listen to this type of music. In Lloyd Banks song "Beamer, Benz, and Bentley", he talks about three of the nicest cars in the world today. They are like dream cars, and for a youngster, this is music in which keep them going with good cars in mind and what they like, such as what they want to have. "Like teenagers across the world, he fantasizes about working in the hip hop business and making millions himself" (McBride 469) Music can relate to a person's hobby such as sports, fast cars, or partying. For instance, I played basketball myself, and every pregame we listened to hip hop music in the gymnasium which really got me amped for the game. It can get you mentally ready for games.

In our games, songs such as Bow wow's "Basketball" or Jamie Foxx "Winner" motivated us to perform to the best of our abilities. It can motivate people in ways that can give them that extra boost to boost a certain task with a little bit of more energy. Another example is Eminem Lose yourself. It explains you only have one shot, and one opportunity so you shouldn't let this moment go. Basically, its describing don't let anything past you by, and take advantage of everything you can. Songs aren't just to listen to and nod your head. They can get your mentally set for certain hobbies and things you like to do. They may also help you reminiscing on a special someone and make you think about them over and over again. A common song for this is Bow Wow's Outta my system as he states "When I'm With somebody, all I think 'bout is you, When I'm all alone, that's all I wanna do, I miss the smilin' faces in my sidekick, outta town visits, All the time we spent together, Makes it hard to get you outta my system." (Bow Wow Outta my System) He is stating no matter where he is, he thinks of his special one, and misses being with her. That every time he's with someone, he should pay attention to that special because it's the one that matters most to him.

The youth communities mainly listen to hip hop and rap because of the connection they can make with the lyrics and their reality. "What once was just music and dance has become a new sort of communication among the youth community" (Taylor 251) Today many songs may sound like a biography. They could talk about when their parents got divorced or someone in their family got shot or died due to health issues. Although, country music talks about similar tragedies, hip hop reaches out to the youth better than country does. Like I mentions earlier, on an overall ranking, Billboard.com, a Hip hop Cd is number one over all the other cd's out there meaning it is most listened to. People hear it more, and therefore any message it is sending it will get across to the youth community. They may also have had a tough time as a youngster, such as being bullied, no friends, or just problems socially. So the kids may relate to this and see how they turned out. Whenever you can relate to a certain person you listen to it and see how they turned out. A perfect

example is when you have things in common with someone, isn't that someone one of the best people you get along with and attach to? Well the same goes for in hip hop, when you relate to a certain song, you listen to it, and it becomes one of your favorite songs.

Many elders believe rap is disrespectful and very rude. They believe rap as a whole all label girls as bitches and sluts, while that isn't necessarily true. While few songs do talk about those things, most of them actually show that they appreciate the women on this earth and that they are very special indeed. Drake, a big named artist states in his song "Baby you my everything, you all I ever wanted, we can do it real big, bigger than we ever done it" He is stating that he will dedicate his loyalty and time to showing the girl a great time and that she deserves to be treated right. So basically, I don't see that he is calling them bitches or sluts or whatever. He is simply saying, she will have one of the best times ever, and he will show her that. Like I said earlier, not all songs refer to girls as bitches, sluts etc. Instead there are artists who write songs that girls are their everything to them and they will do everything to keep them happy.

Elders, preferably, because of the way hip hop has changed and grown to new heights have a hard time not respect and meaning in these rap songs today. They believe they have no respect for elders and most important that they don't think they respect people like their mothers when they write these types of music. Well, when Tupac Shakur, one of the greatest rappers ever made the song "Dear Mama" he states how much he appreciated his mother. "Lady Don't cha know we love ya? Sweet lady, Dear mama, Place no one above ya, sweet lady, you are appreciated, don't cha know we love ya? (Tupac Dear Mama) It truly shows that even some of the people that have history of cursing and saying disrespectful things on their songs, have respect and love for the elders when it comes down to it and that they mean a lot to them.

Even though many rappers didn't complete school, they have grown to be very intellectual. In many songs and poetry you may find very big words that are high educated words. Most think that just because its rap, they use slang and nothing else. Eminem is a good example of a successful rapper, who didn't graduate high school uses some intense words in Sing for the Moment which also include a message to the kids about why they shouldn't do the things they usually. "Entertainment is danger intertwine it with gangsters/ Now how the F**K did this metamorphosis happen?" (Eminem Sing for the Moment) He is showing an example even without a father figure and high school diploma; he is using a language and sentences that other graduates would use. This motivated Eminem because he had to drop out because of the tough life he was encountered, he wasn't going to let success slip away. So this shows an example to the kids that no matter what family problems

or school problems you encounter, you should still strive to succeed. So even though they are rappers and people believe they are nothing but mouth trash talking people, they do indeed have songs which include high quality words. He also in the song includes a message to kids such as “See what these kids do, is hear us toting pistols and they want to get one, cuz they think this sh*ts cool, not knowing we’re really just protecting ourselves, We’re entertainers, of course they sh*ts affecting our sales, you ignoramus, but music is reflection of self” (Eminem “Sing for the moment”) Music is basically explaining the rappers life, and showing what happens when you work hard. So kids should take that message and work hard for themselves. It was an obstacle that even though many rappers encountered and conquered, wish they never will relive it. Rappers send messages out there. Some relax your mood, anger your mood, hype your mood up, or just make you reminiscing. Rap is the new world take over in music and as much as some people don’t want to believe it, it is true. Over half of the population listen to rap and is very overwhelming to our younger age people. There has been over millions sound in hip-hop and rap cds and have gone platinum more than any other genre type of music. For as long as we live, and the hip – hop industry has its way, we will like in the world of hip –hop. They could send messages and relate or just influence you to do well in life. Don’t pick up a pistol, or do something that you may regret just because a rap song says so. Do what’s right, if they mention how tough it is, try to avoid it, because who would want to live through tough times and hope to succeed. Try from part one. Rap does send messages like when just about every rapper was mentioning how much they hate Bush and want him out. Well they now that Obama is in office they are happy and make sure the world knows. So Rap and hip –hop isn’t just music, it’s a life, a new life containing communication, and new society. There was the old rap we lived in with songs from Sugar Hill gang and Vanilla Ice. Today, we live with rappers such as Eminem and Lil Wayne, and these rappers are the present and future in which we live in today.

Alveena Jayed

Symbolic Complex

Many people have expectations about a task before actually carrying it out. Most even imagine the scenario before witnessing the real thing. There are many perspectives similar to that of Walker Percy. Walker Percy wrote an essay called “The Loss of the Creature,” which made me think more profoundly about “symbolic complexes.” Percy describes symbolic complex by saying that it is defined by a person who has already pictured something before actually seeing it occur in reality. I agree with his idea because everyone does have expectations, some ending positively, and others getting let down.

Percy states in his essay, “...the symbolic complex which has already been formed in the sightseer’s mind...been formulated-by picture postcard, geography book, tourist folders, and the words *Grand Canyon*” (482). Specifically, he is stating that because we have resources such as postcards in a store or books about places in the world, or even information we receive from tours, we trust in this vast collection of information. We give no second thought whether to believe the information on the postcard, in the book, or in the tour. We believe it is just as seeing it in person. It is quite comedic how we, as individual human beings, put our trust into something as simple as a printout of a picture. Evidently, when we go to the actually place we have only seen on postcard, our hopes are destroyed due to the perfection of the image and its contrast to the reality.

For instance, when we take pictures, we appear to look how we would seem if we were seen in person, but this is not the case all the time. Some pictures may take a completely blurred out photo or a picture that does not seem to highlight all the features of a person. The person may look completely different in reality than in the picture. In addition, there are ways to touch up pictures right at home. By increasing the brightness or contrast of a picture you can erase all the features on your face that make you look like you. So the picture is in fact an over-perfected lie. So how do we tell the truth of a simple picture? The answer is that we cannot and we will never know for a fact unless we explore the editing that goes behind it.

We should never trust a picture or what we see on paper, but rather we should believe what we see when we view the contents of the image with our own eyes. We are given eyes to be able to view the world in any way we like and if we have the resources to go to a certain destination or see a

certain person, then why not go and view it ourselves. We get so enclosed on make-believe that we cannot tell the difference between truth and lies due to our spurious feelings.

Percy uses a great example of a couple who goes on a drive and sees a festival: "...the spuriousness of their enjoyment of the village and the festival is a certain restiveness in the sightseers themselves" (486). Percy explains here how a human can create feelings for something that might not be there. He also includes, "The village is their child and their love for it is an anxious love because they are afraid that at any moment it might fail them" (486). Percy relates the village as if it was a child and the love they have is fearful because at any moment they are afraid the child will let them down (486). Hence, we should never judge a book by its cover because if we do, we do not really know if what we are seeing is the way the contents of the book support what is on the cover.

A personal example of symbolic complex started on the day I received the letter that told whether I would join the University of Connecticut's Class of 2014. This was the day I anticipated to bring good news. As I tore open the envelope, I began scanning the letter for the words that would explain the decision. I found the words that said I would have to go through a six week pre-colligate program in order to be accepted and enrolled in the fall semester. I was curious about this new challenge that came my way. This program was called the Student Support Services program, designed to get a feel of college life. As days went by I was hesitant in whether I would want to accept this task, but I knew putting all other fears aside, that this was important to me. The only thing that mattered to me at that moment was to be a part of the community that attend the University of Connecticut, New England's top public university, or in other words, my dream school. I sent in the paperwork, attended an orientation, and met preceding students who were in the SSS program. I was informed on how this program would be fun and how it would be well worth it in the end. The scholars made a picturesque image in my head of how the SSS program would be. I arrived to the university on June 27th. When exiting the car with my belongings, I learnt this day was called "move-in day" for SSS students to unpack their luggage. I expected this day to be slow and easy but there was a schedule to follow and homework that was already assigned. I had created an image in my mind of a completely different way the SSS program would be. This relates to Percy's "symbolic complex" because before I came to UCONN and started the SSS program, I already had expectations and a picture readymade in my mind. But when I approached the school, especially on my first day, I realized my picture was totally different from what the real sight was. I as an individual became a "sightseer" who created an image in mind of what the SSS program would resemble beforehand and as of now, I realize I was completely wrong. Although I thought the SSS

program would be much more fun, I realized that I had a different picture of what kind of fun it would be. It is the fun of intellectual challenge that I did not recognize would come about. Thus, my symbolic complex created a hype of something completely different than what I expected.

In conclusion, Percy's mode of analysis makes complete sense. He uses the word "specimen" synonymous to individuals. As he states in essay, "As a consequence of the shift, the 'specimen' is seen as less real than the theory of the specimen. As Kierkegaard said, once a person is seen as a specimen of a race or a species, at that very moment he ceases to be an individual. Then there are no more individuals but only specimens" (490). Percy uses another example which relates to humans as specimens. He compares individuals as if they were some type of creature regarding their race. Once they are fit into a certain category, that person then and there is considered no longer an individual but rather a specimen (490). For example, if an individual is seen as a specimen then a picture that shows two angry people is known as two happy best friends. Once you have an image of something, you cease to consider whether what you are seeing is actuality or made-up. Moving on, as Percy continues in his essay, "Not only is the canyon now accessible to the remnant: the members of the remnant are now accessible to each other, a whole new ensemble of relations becomes possible-friendship, love, hatred, clandestine sexual adventures" (484). Percy is saying how if one goes with just loved ones, they will be able to enhance the adventure together and connect more resulting in a better wholesome experience. By doing this you be able to create more lasting memories based on your symbolic complex.

Sierra KaiKai

The Power of a Name: Usage and Misusage

Names signify identity. It's what people know us by. It can be used to form judgments. From a name, a person can find out our gender, race, or even religion. Changing your name is an act of power. In Maya Angelou's "What's Your Name, Girl?" Marguerite becomes less powerful when Mrs. Cullinan changes her name to "Mary" without her consent. The misusage of Marguerite's name shifted the power roles resulting in the lowering of Marguerite's social status. In Gish Jen's "Name Dropping" she regains power by taking the initiative of legally changing her own name. Along with changing her name, Jen's identity fluctuates as well. I can relate to both Jen and Angelou because my name tells a lot about my ethnic identity and when called out of my name my social status was altered. Angelou, Jen and I all show how changing your name has power over our identity and when a name is used or misused power is exerted over a person causing his or her social status to fluctuate.

Maya Angelou's "What's Your Name, Girl?" exhibits the problem African Americans have with being called out of their names especially by a person of Caucasian descent which dates back to the slavery era. Angelou stresses the importance of people's name in African American culture clearly when she writes "it was a dangerous practice to call a Negro anything that could be loosely constructed as insulting because of the centuries of their having been called niggers, jigs, dinges, blackbirds, crows, boots, and spooks" (Angelou 20). Being called names that have racial slurs attached to them could have serious repercussions for the person who the term was directed to. Not only is it offensive but it can affect one's social status because the person who said it views the accused person as being beneath them.

Marguerite being called 'Mary' by Mrs. Cullinan, a white lady, was a degrading act as Mrs. Cullinan executes power over Marguerite, as if she owned the rights to her. This simple act of shorting Marguerite to Mary shifted the dynamic of the two's relationship since Marguerite had already tried to accommodate Mrs. Cullinan by shortening her own name to Margaret and even that wasn't enough for her. From Marguerite's point of view being called out of her name by Mrs. Cullinan had the same repercussions as if she was called a racial slur. Her identity as an individual found in Marguerite was taken away by this new Mary identity Mrs. Cullinan constructed for her. By breaking Mrs. Cullinan's china Marguerite regains power from her through destroying a sentimental

object that was given to her by her mother in the same manner that Mrs. Cullinan destroyed Marguerite's name, her mother gave her, through turning Marguerite into Mary. This simple act of breaking Mrs. Cullinan's china gave Marguerite power over his Mrs. Cullinan because she took something she adored away from her without her permission.

For Angelou names and identities are interconnected so when a person changes another's name they exerted power. Parents have the power to name their children at birth because they own them. It was from the parents that the child came into being, so ultimately the child is powerless when it comes to their birth name. Sometimes people do not want to be called by their 'government names,' the name on their birth certificate, so they create an alternative name or nickname that they use to identify themselves by. When a person wants to cut off all ties with their name in correlation to their identity, a nickname will not work, but instead they would have to legally change their name if they are of age to do so.

Sometimes parents will place symbolic meanings within their children's names which instill certain expectations that the child has to live up to. In "Name Dropping" Jen faces this issue as her traditional Chinese parents gave her a Chinese name "Bi Lian" staying true to their heritage. Within her Chinese name meaning "Jade Lotus," her parents placed a symbolic meaning of "purity" in Jen's name. Jen proclaims that "'Bi' means jade, my mom would explain to me, and 'Lian' means lotus flower. And then she would explain how the lotus was a kind of water lily, and how it symbolizes purity because it grows out of the mud but opens clean and white" (Jen 172). This definition of Jen's Chinese name, "Jade Lotus" foreshadows her fate. Jen has always been a precious gem to her parents, their own personal Jade, but she is not as content with this fact as they are. She finds herself in a rough place in her life, the mud, unsatisfied with her birth name "Bi Lian." She is able to grow out of 'the mud' once she has moved to America and assumed an English name "Lillian Constance Jen." But it is not until Jen changes her own name to "Gish Jen" that she is able to blossom into the person she wants to be, the Lotus, staying pure to herself and her desires.

Jen connects the changing of names with taking on a new identity. As Bi Lian, Jen's identity was given to her at birth by her parents. It assigned her with the responsibility to live up to the expectations of being "pure" in everything she does. Jen writes "when asked what they most wanted in life, Jade Lotuses answered that they wanted to make their parents happy" (Jen 172). As Lillian Constance Jen, her parents still incorporated the symbolism held in Bi Lian into her American name Lillian through possessing "as a root word 'water lily.'" She is still unable to escape her parents' expectations as "in Lillian, their dreams of a daughter seemed to survive" (Jen 173). As Gish Jen, she

regains power through naming herself taking on a new identity of her own for the first time. Jen's name change compares to Marguerite breaking Mrs. Cullinan's china because both actions empowered each woman to regain power that was taken from them by an outside force.

Jen describes this as the "act of rebaptizing myself" (Jen 172). This is an interesting concept she uses comparing baptism to her name changing. In the religious ritual of baptism an individual is given salvation as they leave behind their old sinful life to enter into a new clean pure life joining the Church (community of believers of God). Jen is baptized in a similar manner as she leaves behind her old names Bi Lian and Lillian Constance Jen alongside the identities associated with each given by her parents to adapt a new identity for herself, like a confirmation name allows individuals, in Gish Jen.

Within Jen's diction throughout the piece the readers can see the transformation of identities held in each name change. She writes "I never told my parents how I felt until long after I'd turned myself into Gish" (Jen 173). Jen word choice "I'd turned myself into Gish" shows Jen regaining power over her destiny by changing her name herself. She has embodied a new identity for herself alongside this name, living up to her own expectations, not her parents. The changing of her handwriting style also displays this transformation. "But as soon as I began to be Gish, I knew this was more serious than any other name change I'd been involved in, because it seemed to be associated not with a change of hair but, even more portentously, with a change of handwriting" (Jen 173). Jen exerts her power through her handwriting. With formal documents Jen signs her name as Lillian Constance Jen using a slanted script as opposed to her upright script in informal documents with Gish Jen.

My name is symbolic in the same manner as Gish Jen original name was. My parents named me Sierra Jitta KaiKai staying true to my heritage. My dad is a native to Sierra Leone and that's where I got my first name 'Sierra' from. My middle name is Menden, my Dad's native dialect, meaning "this is my" daughter. Ironically, my middle name exhibits the ownership of my parents over me. I share the same last name as my dad, "KaiKai." My name shows my ethnic roots but Jitta places me with the responsibility to live up to my parent's expectations. I was called out of my name by a fellow classmate who addressed me as Chi-Negro. This was offensive to me because he changed my whole identity just through calling me by a different name. My name Sierra Jitta KaiKai signifies my identity as being an African American, my dad is from Africa and mom is from America. When I was called 'Chi-Negro' this name signified that my identity was being from Asian and African American descent. This name changed my identity according to social power structures

through categorizing me with a race that I have no genetic connection with. This relates to Jen and Angelou because when each name was changed our identities fluctuated as well. With Jen's she had to live up to her parents' expectations, Angelou social status was lowered, and I was categorized to a race that wasn't my own.

All in all, changing your name exhibits power. In the case of Marguerite her name was changed by an outside influence causing her to lose power which as a result altered Marguerite's social status. Her social role was change from being treated with dignity as a maid to now being treated as a slave presented in the name 'Mary' property of Mrs. Cullinan. With Gish Jen changing her own name enabled her to regain power from her parents who originally name and rename her. Jen used a political approach to regain her power through legally changing her name. She created a whole new identity of Gish Jen that contrast with Jillian Constance Jen or Bi Lian. In my name my ethnic identity is shown through the Menden language but when I was called out of my name, others perception of my identity changed to reflect a foreign culture that I have no way affiliated with. Here you can see how names reflect identity and how power plays a role in the two's relationship.

Works Cited

- Angelou, Maya. "What's Your Name, Girl?." *Writer's Presence: a Pool of Readings*. Ed. Donald McQuade and Robert Atwan. Boston, Mass.: Bedford/St. Martins, 2009. 17-21. Print.
- Jen, Gish. "Name Dropping." *Writer's Presence: a Pool of Readings*. Ed. Donald McQuade and Robert Atwan. Boston, Mass.: Bedford/St. Martins, 2006. 171-5. Print.

Isabel Knowles

Read Like You

I was a cranky three-year old girl moping around the house. Why was I so distraught? I wanted to be able to read! All the time I would find my dad sitting on the couch reading his book. I could tell at my young age that it entertained him. I would watch him smile when something funny happened, or move the book closer when the plot was tensing up. I told him, “Daddy, I want to be able to read like you.” So my dad began teaching me how to read. Every night he would make me a glass of chocolate milk and had me pick out a book. I almost always picked Dr. Seuss. The rhymes were fun to listen to and the pictures were thrilling with their funky colors.

Once I learned how to read I became hooked on books. I would beg my dad to bring me to the library so I could read more! I browsed through the shelves and found the *Pony Pals*, the *Boxcar Children*, the *Roman Quimby* series by Beverly Cleary and more. I loved opening the books I would choose and immediately begin to read them so I could move on the next one. After all, I checked out at least three books at a time. I wanted to read them all soon so I could go back for more.

As I grew older my love of books and reading only expanded. Reading in high school was my get-a-way. If I were feeling stressed, I would open up a book such as the *Da Vinci Code* by Dan Brown and immerse myself in Robert Langdon’s thrilling adventure around Europe. The way I looked at reading for stress-relief was that I would be so incredibly focused on someone else’s story that I would forget for an hour that I had a problem of my own. By the time I would be done reading, I was calm and clear-headed.

My love of books has helped me in school academically as well. Reading so much broadened my vocabulary. The playful and creative words I would encounter only helped me in writing my own essays for school. By reading so much, I was never fearful of having to read a few chapters a night for an English class. I was used to it!

I have my dad to thank for my love of reading. He showed me how wonderful books can be. Books can make you feel empowered, entertained, happy, and relaxed. My love of books and reading has resulted in a big bookcase in my room with over one hundred books. The collection is only growing and it ranges from the gruesome Stephen King and Dean Koontz to the real-life drama of Jodi Picoult. Reading is my sanctuary and last time I checked, being literate has never failed

me. To think, it all started with my three-year old self exclaiming, “Daddy I want to be able to read like you!”

Katie Lam

Video games are not Medications

Video games can become a virus, a sickness that damages the brain; don't let it ruin your life. Once this virus invades your brain then no one can help you, not even a doctor. Even though the virus is curable, you still have to ask yourself "Is your soul strong enough to say no?" For this situation, you have to be your own advocate. In a way, you have to be your own doctor. It's almost like your own medication because it helps to get out of stress and depression. Consequently, it becomes a sickness, a disease that is really tough to cure. It is similar to addictive smokers who cannot quit. Video games help us to become creative, faster problem solvers; however, it is also a path that can lead to violent and aggressive behavior, isolation, and an uneducated, unhealthy individual.

Now, children are becoming more aggressive and violent. Where does this violent idea come from? It is coming from the game that they play. For instance, my little brother used to always listen to us and he never talked back until he started to play video games. He enjoyed playing the games that had the image of a little boy holding a sword and fought against the evil or a giant monster. Sometimes, I caught him saying inappropriate words or punching his hand on the table, and his face turning as red as fire. When he received his report cards, I was the one who I checked his report card because I am responsible for him because I am older. Unexpectedly, I found out he got a "C" in his Language Art class. Subsequently, I read the teacher's comments which stated that he did not complete his projects and homework assignments. So I told my parents about his school performance. As the result, he threw a remote control and talked back to me instead of listening to my advice. Video games have seized my innocent brother away; it turned him to an aggressive person. Additionally, that invisible virus has totally damaged his brain. In the essay "Dream Machines", the author, Will Wright stated "some games will start to build simple models of us, the player" which means that the character in the game is the player of the game (Wright 608). Therefore, if a character in the game is violent and aggressive then the player will most likely become violent and aggressive. I do not agree with him because a character in the game can kill the evil without receiving consequences but in reality if a person is accused of murder or hurts another individual, they all will face punishments such as the death penalty or stay locked in jail for the rest of their life.

According to these children, video games are a medication because it helps them to get out their stressful and unwanted reality. Furthermore, video games act like a treatment but the truth it is a deadly poison. Once, it gets to your brain; it will make you act like a foolish person. For instance, my cousin, an addictive and aggressive gamer, believed that games helped him to get out of his boredom. Unexpectedly, one day, a neighbor was teasing him, and he got irritated. So he got a water gun and shot at the person. Luckily, the neighbor did not call the police. But what if it was a real gun? What if the neighbor reports to the police? As the result, my cousin will end up in correction juvenile prison.

As a child, he or she is supposed to listen to their parents most of the time. However, my cousin is different; his parents have to listen to him. Like the author Will Wright stated in his essay “Dream Machines”, “We’re invited to create and interact with elaborately stimulated world, characters, and story lines” (Wright 607). These children are living in this violent world because they thought they are the little character in game. In their imagination, people who are against them are the big monster and they have to kill them. It is an evidence of how games brainwash these gamers’ mind.

Video games are isolating these gamers away from the community, the society, and the reality. However, within these gamers’ perspective, they communicate with people around them but the truths they are just communicating with people who belonging to their game group. Further, game has divided these gamers into a little society by themselves and took them away from real world. Like my cousin whenever our family had a gathering he did not attend. Instead of celebrating with us, he chose to stay in a dark room. I haven’t seen him for a year. Last time, I saw him, he looked totally different. His face looked darker and he eyes looked very tired and exhausted. It looked like a face of an unconscious people. From his appearance, I can totally see how the virus has completely destroyed him from the inside to out. The virus has eaten up all his blood cells and left with a society of game viruses in his cells.

It also an evidence of how game makes these kids unhealthy. These kids can sit on their chairs and play video games for whole day without feeling hungry. Sometimes, snack such as chips will be served for their lunch and dinner. This is because they don’t want to get out of their chair. Like how my brother always uses the excuse “I can’t I will be dead. I will come down when game is over.” As a result, he does not eat his lunch and dinner. And his body is as skinny as a skeleton. I agree with a parent’s statement from the article “Children and Video Games: Addiction, Engagement, and Scholastic Achievement” is that “controlling the amount of time spent playing

video games is more important than regulating the type of video games children play” (Marko 568). Because these kids are too addictive, they have no time to worry about their health. Most significantly, if we don’t obstruct the developing of these viruses once day it will become the strongest terror in our world.

Video games are also the reason why many teenagers drop out or can’t stay in school. According to “Children and Video Games: Addiction, Engagement, and Scholastic Achievement”, “numerous research studies have shown a significant negative relationship between academic performance and the severity of addictive tendencies among video gamers” (Marko 567). Which is true because many gamers are paying too much attention on games; as the result, they got a bad grade and started to give up in school. For instance, one of my best friend, I knew since I came to the United States. One day I asked him what are you planning after graduating from high school. He said sat at home and played with his game. Even his mom, who convinced him to go to school, and he answered back to her “he does not like school, school is boring.” Nevertheless, he is a smart person. He can solve math in minute. He does have a talent but game has blinded his vision. What is fun and interesting about video game? I could not answer anything good about it. Instead, my answer is game is a virus that kill many careless and mindless people.

Yet, video game helps person to become a faster problem solvers. Some game helps improved math and patience skill such as chess, puzzle, and alphabet games. For instance, my father, who is a genius in math and he love to play Chinese Chess. He told me “Chess helps you a better thinker.” Like how Will Wright, who written an essay “Dream Machines”, said that gaming is creating benefits for the society because youths are coming faster math problem solving (Wright 606). However, I am a non-gamer still I am a fast problem solver in math and my math skill is developing through my daily problem solving and the math I learned in school.

However, in Will Wright’s essay, he only included those educated video games. What about those non-educated video game? For example, the fighting and shooting games, the sexy outfits, and the dirty language it’s speaking. Beside for our human kind, the more bloody and violent the games the more we want play it. The more adults don’t want children to play the more children play the game. Even though, everything has it cost and benefits, however video games has created more cost to our society than benefits

Based on research studies “Children and Video Games: Addiction, Engagement, and Scholastic Achievement.”, it illustrates that video games obstruct our youth from observing and gaining their knowledge. Most of these children are spending their time playing game instead of

studying, reading, or working on their school assignments. In the articles, it stated “Children who exhibited greater levels of video gaming addictive tendencies were significantly more likely to have lower average standardized English test scores, average standardized mathematics test scores, and average standardized science test scores” (Marko 569). This result from the experiment of hundred thirty three children it showed that the more addictive the children on video game the lower grade they will get on their standard test score. Thus games do effect children academically performance.

Therefore, our society should try to prevent the growth of video games. According to the articles, It said “In the United States, video game sales witnessed a phenomenal 43% increase from US\$12.5 billion in 2006 to a 18.8 billion in 2007” (Marko 567). It outlined that virus has outrage our youth generation because the numbers of youth gamers are increasing instead of decreasing within a year. It is unhelpful for our world because the more kids will be uneducated and unconcerned about their school and education. Then more and more kids will drop out of school. Therefore game is dangerous for our youth generation.

As the result, game does not help. It is a murderer medication. Game is just like illegal drugs like cocaine, marijuana. Therefore, it should be limited of usage. For instance, I used to play dance revolution, and the website of the game was belonged to the Vietnamese government. They made a law that people only play game for 5 hours on that computer or account. When the limits reached the game will automatically lock. In order to lower the dropping out of school rates among Vietnamese student who addicted to game. It is the best method for helping the youth generation. Our country and others should apply this method to help these mindless children, who cannot see the risk behind playing game.

Works Cited

Wright, Will. “Dream Machines.” *The Writer’s Presence*. 6th ed. Ed. Donald McQuade and Robert Atwan. Boston: Bedford/ St. Martin’s, 2009. 605-608. Print.

Skoric, Marko. Ching, Linda. Lijie, Rachel. “Children and Video Games: Addiction, Engagement, and Scholastic Achievement.” *Lib.uconn.com. CyperPsychology & Behavior*. Vol. 12. 567-572. Oct. 2009.

Natavia Mclean

People tend to either emotionally, physically, mentally (or in most cases all three) cling on to things. The reason why this holding on is taking place is because we like these certain things, they make us happy, and in some cases they make us feel whole and complete. We like these things because we were raised to like these things, they are constantly around us, and we are used to them. In the end it all comes down to what we know; what we are familiar with. A perfect example of how familiarity applies to how people conduct their lives is food, as in the food each individual or a specific group of people eat. Why do some people eat this and others do not? Why do some people only stick to what they know, or even only have a taste for what they know? This is how familiarity dealing with culture, the environment, and family plays a big part when it comes to how food affect our lives, as in, what we perceive food to be, and how do we choose what specific foods to eat.

The way familiarity determines how food is selected can be explained by looking at it in how it affects everyone in the world or viewed more on the personal levels of an individual. When thinking of how culture brings familiarity to food, it includes certain groups that share something in common, for example: ethnicity, religion, and sometimes race. These groups of people tend to all eat only certain specific things and discard other specific things. Cambodians consider fried tarantulas as a food delicacy, but people that are not Cambodian would not understand why or even be appalled by the idea of eating spiders. This is because they are not Cambodian and do not share the same mind-set as Cambodians do.

Religious factors can also come into play when discussing familiarity, for instance, cows are sacred to Hindus because Hindus respect all living beings and especially the ones that help them the most, and therefore they are not referred to as food. The cow is believed to represent divine and natural beneficence and therefore should be both venerated and protected; also, cows have been associated with several different gods within the Hindu tradition. This is why cows are not slaughtered and used as food, like they are in places such as America. Americans look at the cow as food and not a sacred living being and this is because they do not have the same beliefs as Hindus do, they do not believe in the same gods as Hindus do. As a result, what we eat strongly ties into what we believe in.

Sometimes it is not all based on the culture people are included in, but simply the location they occupy: neighborhood, state, country. People usually do not eat what others around them do

not eat, and likewise, people eat what others around them eat. It is almost considered as conformity to what foods are supposed to be eaten. If the majority rule, then it becomes the norm to eat this specific thing therefore people will conform to that norm. Even if we do not fully know if the food we put into our mouths are safe or not, we feel that it is safer to do what everyone around us is doing because we are afraid of being seen as not normal, in this case, by what we digest.

Looking at this perspective more in a way of people considering what normal foods should look like, especially what shape they should be, what smell they should be, and what color. In Eric Schlosser short essay, *Why McDonald's Fries Taste So Good* in The Writer's Presence, he explains an experiment conducted by flavor researches where the subjects would eat a meal that appeared “normal”, therefore, it tasted normal, or in other words familiar. But when the lighting was changed and the food appeared to be odd colored, the subjects became ill (528). This is because people automatically connect their knowledge with their taste buds. Just because we know this food is good, it tastes good; just because we know this food is unnatural, it tastes unnatural.

The location and environment a person lives in not only teaches them to eat what people around them eat but it can also teach them from right and wrong. In Geeta Kothari short essay about culture and identity based on the food one eat in The Writer's Presence, she touches on the idea of learning what to eat specifically from your environment. When speaking of her parents not knowing much about the food in America, she then states “back home (India), my sister and I do not argue about food with my parents. Home is where they know all the rules” (148). In making this comment, Kothari believes that her parents have this knowledge about Indian food simply because they are from India. They know this because this type of food has always been around them and the knowledge has been passed down to them. When Kothari mentions “knowing all the rules”, this is simply stating that her parents know what is right from wrong; they know the rules of what to eat and what not to eat.

Most people learn what foods to eat from their parents or guardians; this is initially part of the process of being raised. They are supposed to tell you what to eat, what not to eat, what is good, and what is not good for you; like the rules I mentioned above. They know all of this because their parents knew all of this and so on, and so on. In “If You Are What You Eat, Then What Am I?”, Kothari herself writes, “They (her parents) are supposed to help us negotiate the world outside, teach us the signs, the clues to proper behavior: what to eat and how to eat it” (148), Kothari is insisting that it is her parents’ responsibility to know these things as well as to pass on what they know, like their parents have. If this wasn’t initially apart of being raised and a part of growing up

then how would people decide what food to eat? If a family does not teach their children these decisions, then people will start to look at their environment and learn from the people around them. The environment is the only other option because they can't really turn to culture since that is also supposed to be learned from their parents.

Anyone can easily argue that none of what I have said is true and that people decide what they want to eat and not want to eat not by looking at others or base it on their own religion or ethnicity or what their parents told them to eat. They can argue that people like devouring live octopus because they like the feeling of their food still squirming inside of their mouths, and the feeling of the octopus' tentacles sticking to their teeth and roof of their mouths. Or that people enjoy eating the meat of a cow because it is one of the best meats around. But I disagree that people just randomly choose what they eat. People are systematically programmed to eat certain things based on what they learn throughout their lives. People that eat live octopus consider it as a delicacy because the people around them think it is a delicacy. People that consider beef as one of the best of meats because they are constantly around people that think beef is one of the best of meats, and they have grown up thinking this as well.

Anyone can argue that people do not eat certain foods just because they personally think it is not healthy, it does not have a good taste, or that it is not considered as food to them. These personal accusations must be learned from somewhere; no one is born with the knowledge of food. The ways that people learn the difference between healthy and not healthy is by their guardians that are usually trying to raise healthy children or from their environment that is trying to prevent obesity, diabetes, etc. In the same way, this is how people learn what specific foods taste good and they apply it to their own personal taste buds. As for distinguishing what should be eatable, it usually depends on people religion or ethnicity for example some people do not consider cows as food, some people do not consider tarantulas as food and some people do not consider live octopus as eatable.

It is good to eat what you learned to like and what you are familiar with, diversity through food is not wrong either. We do not need any solutions because there is no problem. Everybody does not need to be familiar with everything they come across in life because what would they be unfamiliar with, how would you distinguish the two? But there is a need for a warning, do not feel bad because you only tend to eat what you are familiar with and because you are afraid, appalled, or just avoidant to unfamiliar foods. This is simply how we choose what to eat and what not to eat. Why would we eat something that is outside our beliefs? Why would we eat something that we do

not see other people around us eating? Why would we eat something that we did not learn to eat while growing up? We usually do not eat foods that we are unfamiliar with, and that is why we label it as unnatural or unfamiliar when in fact, it is a familiar food to some other person of another culture, environment, or family.

Works Cited

- "WikiAnswers - Why Is a Cow Sacred to Hindus." *WikiAnswers - The Q&A Wiki*. Web. 26 July 2010. <http://wiki.answers.com/Q/Why_is_a_cow_sacred_to_hindus>.
- "Why Do Hindus Regard the Cow as Sacred? - by Marie Gerber - Helium." *Helium - Where Knowledge Rules*. Web. 26 July 2010. <<http://www.helium.com/items/1160914-why-do-hindus-regard-the-cow-as-sacred>>.
- McQuade, Donald, and Robert Atwan. "Why Mcdonald's Fries Taste So Good?" *The Writer's Presence: a Pool of Readings*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2006. Print.
- McQuade, Donald, and Robert Atwan. "If You Are What You Eat, Then What Am I?" *The Writer's Presence: a Pool of Readings*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2006. Print.
- Victoria Brewood. "10 Weird Food Delicacies From Around the World | BootsNAll Travel Articles." *BootsNAll Travel Network :: Travel Community, Travel Stories, Cheap Tickets, Youth Hostels and All Your Travel Needs*. Web. 25 July 2010. <<http://www.bootsnall.com/articles/09-09/10-weird-food-delicacies-from-around-the-world.html>>.

Shankae McLean

Good Academic Writing

Good academic essays are those that conform to the rules and guidelines of writing. Also, an essay is good when it can be distinguished from all others. In other words it should be diverse. A good Academic essay should strongly support a position and at the same time oppose that same position, but ensuring the supporting points outnumber the opposing points. The ideal way to oppose one's own proposition is to answer the "what if" question. This question asks "what if the writer was opposing the topic?" This question is often neglected and leaves the reader to think about what the opposing writer would think. A good academic essay is one of literary merit, meaning it has values in the 'literature world' and therefore should have its own style. A writer's style can be his/her creativeness, his/her vocabulary or use of words, or simply anything that distinguishes his/her essay from others. A good academic essay of literary merit should have a strong thesis, be creative, be concise and use simple precise words.

A strong thesis is a strong statement to be defended. The terms or ideas of an essay are usually first expressed in the thesis. Though theses are written at the end of some writings, it is often recommended that they are written in the beginning so the reader can know what to expect. A thesis should be the base of a writer's argument, or what a writer's argument is based on. A thesis is basically like a building. If the foundation (thesis) is weak, the building (essay) will also be weak and will be easily demolished. But, if the foundation is strong, there is a higher possibility for the building to withstand pressure. A great foundation encourages a builder to build; likewise having a strong thesis will encourage a writer to write and therefore completing a strong foundation and essay. Having a strong thesis opens the writer's mind to creative ideas. While having a weak thesis puts a writer under pressure and makes it hard for the writer to brain storm ideas for his/her essay. A good thesis is like a foreshadow to one's essay, it gives the basic idea of what is coming in the essay. An example of a good thesis would be- "There is not yet an "ideal education"; there is still room for growth, where everyone should and will be treated equally"- as opposed to -"There is not yet an ideal education."- The first thesis is more detailed and clearer, while the second thesis is vague and abrupt. Therefore one's thesis should be informative, short and creative at the same time.

Capturing a readers mind by being creative is a very important factor to consider when writing. This is a very important factor as the writer wants to keep his/her readers reading to the

very last word. To show creativity, one can use metaphors to paint pictures in a reader's mind. A metaphor is a word or phrase for one thing used for another. Therefore a metaphor is used so a reader can picture what he/she is reading. For example when Sherman Alexie wrote "Superman is breaking down the door" (Alexie 14). Those probably weren't the exact words but that is what the picture looked like to him. And in the same way that this picture helped Alexie to read, so will metaphors, by helping a reader to visualize what writing is saying. Metaphors help readers to understand what a writer is saying by visualizing what is meant like Orwell stated "a newly invented metaphor assists thoughts by evoking a visual image" (Orwell 512). Therefore, a metaphor, like one's essay should be original and not one used daily. Writing is a form of art, so it should be similar to drawings, paintings, and pictures. It should have its own origin, its own meaning and its own way of expressing itself. Hence, an essay, like an art piece, with too many words may appear to the reader as lengthy, time consuming and boring, just as the art work would appear crowded and confusing. And a boring essay may put the reader to sleep or may lead the reader to focus elsewhere. It is therefore essential that a writer puts life into what he/she is writing by being creative. An original, creative drawing gets outstanding comments from a true artist or even a non-artistic person, and likewise an original and creative essay, but this time from a reader. The use of imagery in writing will simply attract readers and encourage them to read on. Therefore, the writer must always try to ensure that his/her use of imagery makes sense and is not a nonsense image. For example, if one was to write "...and like the bark of a cat, she screamed..." Metaphors used in this manner are meaningless and as Orwell suggests "metaphors used without knowledge of their meanings and incompatible metaphors are frequently mixed, a sure sign that the writer is not interested in what he is saying" (Orwell 512). Meaning the writer just wrote whatever came to his or her mind without even thinking about it. This makes a writer's essay appear in-concise.

To produce a good academic essay, one needs to be concise and to the point by using specific details and avoiding space fillers. A space filler is a set of words used to take up space. They are usually futile to a written piece. Space fillers just elongate one's essay, and people tend to move away from long essays. One can however use specific details such as: quotes, literary, personal or historical examples or even metaphors to build his/her essay. Space fillers add unnecessary sentences and paragraphs to one's essay. These usually make the essay appear long, drawn out, and not worth reading or recommending. Using specific details however, gives meaning to one's essay and keeps the reader reading. Being concise and to the point prevents circumlocution which is a roundabout way of talking. Circumlocution is basically taking the reader around all of UCONN's

huge campus to find the Student Union (S.U.) when the writer knows exactly where the S.U. is but just wanted to prove that he/she knows the school somewhat. This often aggravates the reader who may very well be rude and ask another person for directions. This would leave one's essay with a grade not so good. Being concise leads to another factor pertaining to precision.

The next factor to consider is the use of simple precise words. Often writers try to impress readers by using complex words. It is very common for the complex words used to portray something totally different from what the writer intended to say. This is done when complex words are not carefully researched or interpreted and is placed in a sentence to enhance the meaning of that sentence. For example if a writer wrote "That is a humongous and large house" when one could have simply wrote "That is a big house." This gives a reader the impression that this writer is not spending enough time to prepare his/her work well. This may also turn a readers' mind from that piece of writing and any other writing from that person. It is better to use simple words one knows and is familiar with because then one will be saying exactly what is meant or intended. Also, the use of simple precise words is great if a writer is chosen to read his/her essay out loud. Not everyone is bold, and if that specific writer is not so bold and his/her essay has a lot of complex words, it is very likely for him/her to stutter a few times. While, if the essay was simple he/she would probably just read through with one or two bumps.

The guidelines of a good academic essay are quite debatable as not everyone views a good academic essay as one that follows the same rules and guidelines as I think. Though debateable, it is hard to disagree with the stated points, since quotes from great writers and examples were included, meaning the guidelines are not my personal opinions but guidelines for many great writers as well. To counteract these stated points would be like "eating one's cake and still have it". That is quite impossible since, if one eats his/her cake he/she cannot have it also. Unless he/she ate a portion of it, and that portion would be the part agreeing with my stated points.

A good academic essay does include the guidelines stated and the reason for this is that these guidelines have assisted me (and possibly other writers) to become better writers. Also they have taught me how to understand other peoples' writings more clearly as well.

Works cited

George Orwell. *Politics and the English Language: "The Writers Presence A Pool of Readings"*. Ed. Donald McQuade and Robert Antwan. 6th ed. Boston: Bedford/St Martin's 2009, 682 – 690.

Sherman Alexie: 'The Joy of Reading and Writing: Superman and Me. Against School: "The Writers Presence A Pool of Readings"'. Ed. Donald M^cQuade and Robert Antwan. 6th ed. Boston: Bedford/St Martin's 2009, 682 – 690.

Jerry Medina

The Importance and Necessity of Diversity

David Brook's "People like Us," explains his opinion on the subject of diversity. Diversity is a mixture of different backgrounds and ethnicities in a single setting. Brooks's opinion on the subject of diversity is that we really do not care about diversity too much (306). The truth is that his opinion is incorrect because diversity shapes who people are and sometimes what people do.

Brooks has really good points for his defense one point that really came across my head was when he claimed that people make an effort to group themselves with people who are like themselves (307). He is half-way correct, according to my personal experiences. He is correct when someone thinks about moving somewhere in the United States, especially from a different country. If someone moves from a different country to the states, he or she is most likely to move to a place where family is living and if that person likes it, he or she would suggest other family member to move to the United States. It is important to maintain around the same kind of people when moving from a different country until the new person gets comfortable and starts to feel that he or she can become social.

Brooks has even targeted institutions in his essay. He states, "...and institution by institution it is a relatively homogenous nation," (307). For the most part, unfortunately, he is also correct with this point. It is true that many schools are made up of almost entirely of one ethnicity, but Brooks is only talking about the statistics and the general viewpoint. He does not do actual research on this fact. I know, for a fact, that most homogenous schools I know have students that get bored going to school with the same kind of people every day. They get bored of talking and discussing things with the same kind of people every day. They get bored of eating lunch with the same kind of people every day. When the weekend comes, those students are the ones that drive to different cities in the state to party with people of diverse backgrounds and ethnicities those are the students that wish they went to interesting, diverse schools instead of the homogenous one they go to.

At the end of the essay, Brooks asks, "Are you really in touch with the broad diversity of American life?" (310). If I were to answer that question I would answer, yes. I do not stay in one homogenous social group, nor do I stay in one social group in general. I spend time with all kinds of friends. I am Puerto Rican. I spend my time with Dominicans, Haitians, Pakistanians, Indians,

Chinese, Japanese, Russians, Bosnians, etc. including other Puerto Ricans. Diversity is really important in my life, and I succeed in living that way. After writing this essay, I know I answered the last question Brooks asks. That question is, “Do you care?” (310). My answer is definitely.

Diversity defines how people act and how people live in American society. When a person is taken from a homogenous group to be put into a more diverse group, he or she will have to act a little bit different. Sometimes the change is to be accepted by the group. Other times, it is merely to get comfortable. People also live differently in a diverse atmosphere than in a homogenous one. I believe homogenous settings may be annoying the first few days, but sooner or later it will become a diverse setting that is exciting and knowledgeable. People can learn things from a diverse place: cultures, religions, traditions, etc. Diversity can never get boring.

Works Cited

Brook, David. “People Like Us”. *The Writer’s Presence: A Pool of Readings*. Ed. Donald McQuade and Robert Atwan. 6th Edition. Boston; Bedford/ St. Martin’s, 2009. 306-310.

Elias Mwine

Blue Scholars are a group of two artists, Geologic and Sabzi, who made their debut in 2004 when they released their first album that was self-titled *Blue Scholars*. In all of their music, Geologic is the lyricist and song performer, while Sabzi is does all of the composing. Out of the streets of Seattle, Bremerton, and other various locations in Washington, the two joined forces after meeting in the University of Washington as freshman and began creating art ever since (Wiki). Their debut album, which was self-titled, featured a song called “No Rest For The Weary”, in which lyricist Geologic raps about the message of perseverance to the audience. Geologic’s parents are Filipino immigrants and they raised him with a very low income. Geologic raps about the tough Seattle neighborhoods and growing up with poor Filipino parents, in turn, giving an image of persevering through the hardship him and his family may have faced and overcome (Wiki). The political history of his ancestral lands, the Philippines, is the big idea being used to paint this image of perseverance that he wants his audience to see. He brings his own background aside from the political and colonial history of the Philippines in order to create a more focused example and connect it with the much larger image of perseverance. The message, which can also be looked at as a lesson, of the song is perseverance. This message, or lesson, is ultimately meant to give inspiration to a would-be unmotivated listener. It is meant to teach the lesson of perseverance to the listeners, who could need it to help them get through a tough situation or a big block in their lives. The same perseverance that Geologic had when he was growing up moving from place to place with poor parents, and the same perseverance that the Philippines showed as their lands were being colonized.

The Philippines first saw colonization in 1565 when Spanish explorer Miguel Lopez de Legazpi made a permanent settlement on the island of Cebu. It may not have come easy, but sure enough the resistance began when the Filipinos declared war against the Spanish colonial authorities (Wiki). Geologic brings this history into the song by saying, “When the colonizer came with the cross and the sword / I threw the first spear and said, ‘I declare war’” (lines 8-9). This is Geologic connecting back to the message of perseverance. With those words, he may not have been speaking as himself, but rather picturing the thoughts of the Filipino natives that were around during the time of their colonization and their rebellious war. He words those thoughts to the best of his ability, and, in turn, those words bring meaningful images and examples of perseverance. With words like “cross” and “sword,” Geologic gives the notion of the Spaniards justifying their actions. He is saying that they believed what they were doing was morally right, colonizing and oppressing a

people. Within the same lines given in the quote above, he shows the Filipinos' resistance as an image of perseverance with the phrase "I threw the first spear." The spear is resistance of the Filipino people. When he goes further by saying "I declare war," he is telling how the Filipinos stood their ground and resisted oppression by colonization or any means. They fought for what was and still is theirs; they did not just let up and watch the Spaniards have their way. They showed perseverance, with action and resistance. Geologic shows images of perseverance with a historical account of his ancestry, but he also steps back from a broader perspective and instead connects it to personal experience as substance to enrich the message he is relaying to the audience.

From the information given above, we know that Geologic comes from a less fortunate background. We know that he is the son of Filipino immigrants and they were a poor family when he was growing up. In the song, he goes on to say, "I'm a battle scar wearin' heir apparent / descendent of a long lineage of proletariat peasants" (10-11). He is telling us not only who he is but his ancestry as well. "Proletariat peasants" are very poor people, and Geologic is telling listeners that his family history is a long line of less fortunate people. He says that he is a "battle scar wearin'" to show that he has been through a lot and has survived many tough challenges in his life, like growing up in a poor home with parents who hardly knew about where they lived and how to speak the language of that place. He's giving the lesson of perseverance by showing it through his own life experiences, but he also relates it back to the bigger image he gives of his people being colonized and persevering with resistance when he says "heir apparent". Like his ancestors persevered against oppression, he is also a fighter and he persevered against poverty. He is the "heir" to a throne, a throne that never really had much but perseverance.

When Geologic gives the lesson of perseverance in the song, he gives it from all directions. He gives a broad example with the historical background of the people of the Philippines, from which his family hails, and he connects that with a more focused example which is his own life experiences and struggles. But he does not stop there, as he raps in the chorus, "So when they say anything, say, 'why is it?' / Class is in session 'til the teacher gets a pink slip" (15-16). This is where the attention is directed to the listeners as he speaks, or raps, in a way of giving them approach on life. The word "they" in this sense symbolizes the governors and leaders of our society, and "anything" are the rules and regulations set in stone, the morals and ethics of the way of life and everything that is deemed good or bad. He is telling listeners to question, "Why is it?" to all of the rules set by society. He is telling them to ask themselves, is who or what we consider good really good? And is who or what we consider bad or evil really bad or evil? If something feels off or does

not seem right, question and challenge it. Do not just sit and let things go on if they feel uneasy, let your voice be heard and shape your life with action and perseverance. Perseverance through rules and morals set by society. The message of perseverance once again springs up, and the lesson of the song is once again given through the analogy that is line 16. “Class” is more or less a metaphor that refers to life. Life will keep going, or will remain “in session” no matter what the circumstances. When a “teacher gets a pink slip” it usually means they are being terminated from or losing their job. Geologic uses this as a metaphoric pun and relates it to death. He tells listeners that life goes on until the very end, until you pass. So no matter what the circumstances, no matter what the situation, no matter what the struggle, life will continue, and people have no choice but to persevere through all the sadder and harder times of life in order to move on.

Geologic gives the best example of perseverance, in my view, when he relates to his life not with his past struggles, but with what his future holds. In the second verse of the song one of lines he raps, “I’m a more mindful guy ever since finding out that I’m about to be a father / and doubt is not an option” (21-22). He is looking to the future where he will be a father, and now he has to be a “more mindful” guy not only for himself but for his child. He has to take responsibility for his actions because they influence another life as well as his own. He cannot be afraid of anything the future may bring him and his child. He is prepared to face any challenges ahead of him, “and doubt is not an option.” He is ready to persevere through any struggle he may face, because he will be fighting for his child as well as himself. This, in my eyes, is the strongest thing any man can say about themselves. That even though he is completely blind of what the future holds, he is ready to do whatever it takes to live a good life and make his child’s life even better.

Overall, the message of perseverance is given in this song; looking at the title it was almost evident from the beginning. No matter how hard it may be and will get, no matter how much you feel like giving up, no matter how much you have lost or how many times you've been knocked down in life, just get back up and keep moving, keep going. Even if you have never known true peace or serenity, even if your entire life has been a long and hard uphill battle, just keep pushing. The rhymes in the song tell us, maybe not straight-forward [as no true artist should], but in metaphoric language, to keep pressing on in life and never give in to being “Weary”.

Works Cited

Blue Scholars. “No Rest For The Weary.” *Blue Scholars*. 2005. Produced by: Sabzi. Performed by: Geologic.

No authors given. "Blue Scholars:No Rest For The Weary." Wikihow.com. 7 July 2010.

http://lyrics.wikia.com/Blue_Scholars:No_Rest_For_The_Weary

"Blue Scholars." *Wikipedia*. 21 June 2010. Web. 22 July 2010.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blue_Scholars>.

"History of the Philippines." *Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia*. 25 July 2010. Web. 27 July 2010.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_Philippines>.

Marilyn Pinto

Social networking sites are becoming a part of our culture

Social networking sites, such as Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, and many others have been around for a few years now, and many individuals have made them a part of their lives. They're a good way to communicate with far distant friends and relatives, and friends from high school that I may not see for a pretty long time. At times we even find classmates from long ago. I go on Facebook every day, once or twice a day, sometimes more. Instead of calling my friends, I just a message or comment and tell them how I'm doing and wait for them to reply back. This is what teens do most of. We all share information, pictures, and our daily life activities, letting others know what we do throughout our day. I prefer going to people's profile and checking up on them, through their status, then actually calling them and asking how they are. Calling someone and talking to them is, in our terms, whack, dumb, no point. I personally don't want to listen to someone talk and talk, until they have nothing else to say on the phone. Why is that? Why is it that a few years ago my friends could had called me and we would had talked for 3 and 4 hours about anything and everything and we wouldn't get bored? Social networking sites are taking over our lives but most importantly the way we as teens manage our time, our social skills, and the way we describe ourselves to the world.

Being on Facebook, MySpace, and many other social sites takes our focus from more important things like school. While in school, we do our best to sneak our cell phones during class time and just serve the Internet, and where do we go to first?, Facebook, MySpace, or any other social site we might have. A professor from the University of Virginia, Mark Edmundson, once asked this question to his English class, "How many places were you simultaneously yesterday – at the most?"(Edmundson 344). We can't physically be in so many places at once. Yet, the Internet allows us to feel like we are. But, how can we possibly have one main focus while being in so many places at once? We don't have a main focus. How can we teens learn if we are too busy during class having a whole conversation through Facebook or MySpace? Then when the big test comes we complain. 'Professor, you didn't show us how to do this?' Well he did except we weren't paying attention to him, if not the he said, she said on Facebook or MySpace.

Teens of today are too busy with their Facebook and MySpace sites, that they don't have time to physically socialize, instead technologically. They're too busy updating their statuses on their

cell phones or on their computer that everything around them is a blur. They don't manage their time wisely; they spend most of their time looking at other people's status and commenting on people's picture, etc., that they make that their priorities. We sometimes go home with a night's worth of homework and we decide to go on Facebook, MySpace or any other social sites for just a couple of minutes. Then we find ourselves moving the mouse pointer over someone's profile picture and commenting it, and might just accidentally started an entire conversation with them, when we were just going on for a couple of minutes. Now, it is 5 hours past the time we got home, and we're rushing to write a 5 page paper for English class, and study for Midterms the next day. Sometimes that might not be the case, but we teens can spend hours just reading other people's status and going on other people's profiles, just to see, for no special reason. In the article, "Tasking risky opportunities in youthful content creation: teenagers' use of social networking sites for intimacy, privacy, and self-expression," Sonia Livingstone interviews a girl, Jenny, 14, and she says these words, "You look through other people's profiles and look through their pictures, different pictures of their mates and that ... if someone gives me a comment I'll comment them back ... you get, like, addicted to it" (Livingstone 403). This is time consuming, going to people's profile and checking it. Livingstone states that checking others profiles takes away one or more hours of our day, every day (Livingstone 403). I can say that we as teenagers don't have control over the time we spend in our social networking sites. We are wasting most of our time on them, even to the point that it has become an addiction, and I include myself. Instead of doing something that is going to help us, like school work, we instead go on Facebook or other social sites, and update ourselves on other people's things. We are not managing our time wisely. Our priorities are changing day by day and we are becoming less aware of it.

We carry Facebook and MySpace like a shirt, a jean, or a pair of shoes, pieces of clothing that we never leave the house without. It's a part of us. Teens have become so attached to it; it has become a part of our nature, like we were born with it. It's an addiction, but not an addiction similar to drug addiction, if not a one that you can control, but sometimes abuse of. Having Internet on our phones allows us to be on Facebook and MySpace 24/7. We wake up, we check if we have any comments, messages, notifications, throughout the day we check, before going to sleep we check, in the middle of the night we randomly wake up and check. We have become so immune to it, that we don't recognize how social networking sites have become the commitment to the most part of our day. If we're not on our computers, we're on our phones, even so, that when our phone gets taken away we do everything possible to get it back, because we can't survive without them. That's how

mainly teens are logged on to their social networking sites, and it's not like they can carry their computers everywhere they go.

One of the main priorities that we teens should care and consider more is, how social networking sites are pulling us away from our socializing time with our friends and family. The new style of talking with others now, is words typed through a computer or a cell phone keyboard. Where have all our socializing skills gone? How is our public speaking going to develop if we talk with our fingers? No verbal communication is needed for social networking sites, yet are needed elsewhere, in our job, school, at the store, but, most importantly with our family. Communication is part of our culture. We interact with our friends and family through verbal communication. We go to our friends or relatives house and spend time together. We talk and we talk about what we've been up for hours, now, where has all that time and verbal communication went to? I remember when I had just first met my brother. We called each other every other day, but we talked for hours, now we rarely talk, and when we do talk, it's through Facebook. Our relationships with our friends and family are slowly changing. Our socializing skills are slowly breaking down. Social networking sites are separating us from the real world. It's like our own imagery world. Livingstone states, "...social networking is time-wasting and socially isolating." (Livingstone 395) We're the only person that matters when we are logged on and everyone else matters when we log off.

Facebook and MySpace are like our identification cards in society. It describes us, just like our State ID does; it makes us unique from other individuals. Like a State ID, our social networking sites describe everything about us, from our favorite color, to our Hometown, to the school we attend. Yet, not everyone who says who they are in Facebook and MySpace are really who they are. Some people may find that building their identity in society is hard, mainly in the school environment, and they have to start building their identity somewhere, and why not start on a social networking site. As Livingstone said, people make social networks, the center of running their own identity, daily life, and social interaction with others (Livingstone 394). Some people may find that making friends would be easier like that, yet, are they really considered friends? In the case of a girl, boys that go to school with her, start adding her because of her pictures, yet in school they didn't even bother to talk to her, but through Facebook or MySpace they start flirting with her, making her feel like she fits in, that she is beautiful and that boys are attracted to her. But, little does that girl know that all he wants is to get with her. The way she has presented herself in Facebook or MySpace, is the only reason why boys are talking to her, or just even friend requesting her. The way she made herself look in her profile, something that she is not in real life, made boys interested in

her. The uniqueness she presented in her profile is nothing similar to her in reality. Her identity is false and at the end of the day she would always be herself. Using social networks to build an identity is something that people should avoid doing. People put themselves down by doing that, instead of boosting their self-esteem up; they are actually putting themselves down, because they're one thing through Facebook and MySpace, and another at their school and in society.

Facebook and MySpace have become part of our daily lives. Sometimes it is our life. We are on it more than we're on school work or researching a paper. Social networking sites are forming our identity, are defining who we are. Our time is spent mostly on them, but while our networking skills are improving, our socializing skills are deteriorating. So how can we change that? How can we balance out reality with a fantasy world where only we matter? The matter of it is we can't. Social networking sites have been adopted into the youth culture, and now even the adult culture is adopting it. We can't go back to the days when we went to our friends and relatives house and talked for hours, because each generation is growing into social networking sites time every day. But, what we can do is learn how to balance the amount of time we spend on them and the time we spend with our friends and family, and on school work. We as teens have to manage our time wisely and make sure that the things we priorities are in the right order.

Works Cited

- Edmundson, Mark. "Dwelling in Possibilities" *The Writers Presence*. 6th ed. Ed. DonaldMcQuade and Robert Atwan. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2009. 710-714. Print.
- Livingstone, Sonia. "Tasking risky opportunities in youthful content creation: teenagers' use of social networking sites for intimacy, privacy, and self-expression." [*New Media & Society*](#) 10.3 (2008): 393-411. *Academic Search Premier*. Web. 14 July 2010.

Ravin Rampertab

Sexual Desires: Introduction to Unconventional Sex

Songwriter Stevie Wonder's 1973 hit single, "Living for the City" promotes to the production of contemporary risqué music. A portion of "Living for the City[s]" instrumental was sampled and used in the song "Lil Freak" by Usher Raymond and Nicki Minaj. "Lil` Freak" was released on March 2, 2010. The Song was composed by Usher Raymond, Nicki Minaj, Polow da Don, Elvis Williams, Ester Dean and Stevie Wonder. Usher sung the lyrics from "Lil` Freak[s]" hook, over the piece of instrumental melody that was sampled from "Living for the City." Throughout "Lil` Freak", Usher Raymond and Nicki Minaj vividly describe their desires for sex with another woman. The hook is the most sexual part of the song. Usher is well known for his R&B style of singing due to his prior tunes. American rapper Nicki Minaj's role in "Lil` Freak" is to find a girl to have sex with Usher and herself. Since Minaj's interest in women is expressed in the song, she may have significantly broadened the audience that listens to contemporary hip hop, rap and R&B music; "Lil` Freak" may have potentially gained more bisexual and lesbian female listeners. Most importantly, in the song, Usher and Minaj try to recruit sexy women and introduce them to unconventional sex. Also, they want to let their listeners understand that unconventional sex is acceptable.

Unconventional sex is the act of people having sex that may seem irregular to the general public. While in our society, it is common to see a male wanting to have sex with more than one females; it is more common to see heterosexual activities between one man and a woman. For that reason, a threesome can be labeled as "unconventional sex." The expression of unconventional sex is becoming more common with famous figures. Usher and Minaj are two of the many musical celebrities. The work of musical celebrities and composers are usually broadcasted to the community through media. By using the internet, radio, television, etc, Usher and Minaj can broadcast their song "Lil` Freak" to thousands of people. Usher and Minaj reveal their desire for unconventional sex throughout "Lil` Freak." Clearly, they want unconventional sex to become more acceptable, because they know that through media, their song will meet the ears of thousands of listeners.

Some R&B and rap artists expose how they feel about sexual intimacy. In the chorus of Lil` Freak, Usher illustrates that he wants' to have a threesome with Nicki Minaj and another woman. The phrase "If you fuckin` with me" (10) is interpreted as, "if you want to fuck me"; Usher reveals

his sexual expectations to women that admire him. The language of the song makes it apparent that if a woman wants to have sex with Usher then she also must also have sex with Nicki Minaj. In the chorus Usher sings,

“If you’re f***ing with me /
Really f***ing with me you go get some girls and bring them to me /
If you f***in with me /
Really f***ing with me you let her put her hands in your pants /
Be my little freak /
Be my little freak /
Be my little freak “ (line 8 – 14)

Lil` Freak’s chorus expresses that if you want to “fuck with” Usher then you must “let her,” Nicki Minaj, “put her hands in your pants.” (11) Usher is straightforward when telling women that admire him that they have to let Nicki Minaj put her hands down their pants. Usher repeats “be my little freak” (12-14) in “Lil` Freak [‘s]” chorus, because he wanted to show that there are multiple girls that he wants “to be [his] little freak”. For each time Usher mentions “be my little freak” (12-14) he is referring to a different female. This way Usher and Minaj will not only introduce unconventional sex to one, but as many “girls” as possible.

R&B singer Usher Raymond will try to get any girl that he finds interesting regardless of their status in a relationship; whether they are taken by another man or not. Critics may start to comment that Usher is polluting the minds of women that lack sexual experience, by trying to expose them to unconventional sex. In the song, Usher questions a girl asking her “yo where yo man at?” (3) Even though he knows that her man is “at home.” (5) Since Usher knows that she “got that,” (4) a man at home, he most likely assume that she is in a relationship and never participated in a threesome. Since Usher tells us that he is about to have a threesome with “his lady” (7) and “some freaks at the bar who like fucking with a star” (7) certifies that he is trying to introduce unconventional sex to another man’s girl. At the same time, he uses his reputation as a celebrity, “a star,” (7) to get the attention of more women “at the bar” (7) and recruit them.

Nicki Minaj’s role in “Lil` Freak” is to find another woman to have a threesome with Usher and herself. In the song, Minaj’s verse describes what she is looking for in a woman. Not only did Minaj specify that she is “looking for a cutie,” (42) but the “cutie” also need to have “a real big o’ ghetto booty.” (43) When Minaj does find a cute girl with a big butt, she’ll “take [her] to go see Usher,” (47) so they can have a threesome. In the same verse, Minaj refers to her own personal play

mates as hoes and substituted their names to those of Santa Clause's famous reindeers. Minaj did this because, in most rap songs, you will find plenty of rhyming, metaphors, similes etc. She wanted to promote the typical standards of a rap song, so she can get attention from hip hop, rap and R&B song listeners. Minaj also wanted listeners of "Lil` Freak" to know how much "hoes" she has and that she is experienced. The use of figure of speech in this verse is very explicit. Metaphorically rapping Minaj said,

"I keep a couple hoes /
Like Santa I keep a vixen /
Got that dasher, dancer, prancer, /
Dixon, comet, cupid, donner, blitzen "(48 - 51)

Instead of stating the names of the females that participated in sexual activities wither her, Minaj labels her sex buddies by calling them "hoes" (48) and names of famous animals. Minaj did this because it would be easy for her to maintain a stable rhyming pattern. Without the rhyming pattern, the song can possibly loose potential listeners of hip hop, rap and R&B music, which will negate the songs purpose; to let listeners become more accepting to unconventional sex. Knowing that Minaj "keep[s] a couple hoes," insists that she had unconventional sex with her personal playmates and is well experienced, since she has so many sex partners.

In addition, American rapper Nicki Minaj follows Usher footsteps. Just like Usher, Minaj does not take into consideration the relationship status of the women she finds interesting. In the beginning of the song, Usher expresses that he wants to have sex with another man's woman. "I swooped his girl up;" (6) this line does not represent Usher's girl, but "his" meaning another man's woman. In similar manner, Nicki Minaj is "plotting on how [she] can take Cassie away from Diddy." (56) Not only does Minaj tells us that she wants another man's girl, but it also proves that she "plots" or take into consideration of how she is going to go along trying to recruit the woman that she wants.

Accepting unconventional sexual activities may be hard for some females. There may be plenty of women that wants to have sex with multiply partners but never had the chance or courage to do so. In order to make women more comfortable, Usher tells his girls not to "be shy" (2) that he just wants to talk. Usher does this because he does not want to present himself in a negative manner when talking to a girl for the first time. By not presenting himself negatively, Usher will be able to keep the girl he is conversing with interested in furthering the conversation. During his conversation with the girl, Usher will try to convince her into having a threesome. This is a manipulative strategy

that Usher uses to get girls to accept unconventional sex, because in at first, all the wanted was to “just talk.” However, by the end of the conversation, Usher would convince the girl that he was conversing with to accept and partake in unconventional sex.

In conclusion, the song “Lil` Freak” highly promotes unconventional risqué behaviors. Usher Raymond and Nicki Minaj both express their desire for a threesome with another girl. A threesome can be categorized as “unconventional sex” because it is not the most common form of sexual behaviors in our society. The chorus explicitly described that Usher wanted many women and they had to have sex with Minaj if they wanted to have sex with him. The relationship status of women being recruited to participate in a threesome with Usher and Minaj was completely disregarded. Usher and Minaj also want to let listeners of R&B, rap and hip hop music to become more accepting to unconventional sex. To gain more listeners, they used media to broadcast “Lil` Freak” around the world. Because of Usher and Minaj’s efforts in the song, “Lil` Freak” women was introduced to unconventional sex and they accepted it as well.

Work Cited

Raymond, Usher. et al. “Lil` Freak” Raymond v. Raymond, 2010

Wendy Reyes

“How’s the Mac and cheese?”: The Dangers of Mac & Cheese

In a low income family that is a question you are likely to hear at dinner time, since the norm is eating boxed or processed foods with little or no fruits and vegetables, alongside a glass of cherry flavored Kool-Aid. A family dinner provided under \$10 dollars. With meals like this year around, it is no surprise that individuals who live in low income households have poor health as a result. While a household with a higher income is likelier to consume more fruits and vegetables in their diet, a low income family is restricted in terms of money to do so. People with lower incomes are prone to “food insecurity,” a measure of inconsistent access to adequate food, specifically “limited or uncertain ability to acquire acceptable foods [nutritional and safe] in socially acceptable ways” (Anderson 1598). A person’s income is the determining factor of why he eats what he does because being healthy comes at a high cost. Even after growing up he would choose the food he grew up on because it is familiar to him whether it is boxed food or a 5 course meal. Overall, one’s eating habits are often impacted by one’s economic status, thus lower income families are prone to unhealthy eating habits because of limited access to healthy food plus the fact that processed foods are cheaper.

Poverty is one of the most important determining factors of food. People already earning less than higher income families are forced to spend more of their income on food; in efforts to save money they rather buy processed foods and fast foods instead of healthy foods. The average income made in 2008 was \$52,029 for a household of about 3 people (US Census). During 2008, 13.2% of the total population lived under the poverty level; meaning those 13.2% were not able to have the luxury of being able to splurge on fruits and vegetables. When one goes to the supermarket one notices that the prices of healthy foods have become relatively more expensive. Evidence has shown that, “since 1983 prices of fresh fruit and vegetables, fish, and dairy products have increased by 190 percent, 144 percent, 100 percent, and 82 percent” (Finkelstein and Zuckerman 21). How can you expect low income households to afford to purchase healthy types of foods if the prices have been increasing dramatically? While the cost of processed, unhealthy foods containing fats and oils, sugars and sweets, and carbonated beverages, has increased at much lower rates which are the things that worsen one’s health. People with lower incomes are more likely to buy healthier,

processed foods which are much more affordable; since they cannot easily afford to purchase fruits, meat and vegetables as easily as people with higher incomes.

One debates buying high priced fruits and vegetables over cheap processed foods. As in the movie, Food Inc. a low income, Hispanic family debates between buying the father's diabetes medication which costs \$130 dollars or instead buying healthy food for the family such as broccoli and fruits. Maria Andrea Gonzalez, the mother, realizes candy and soda is cheaper than healthy foods such as a stalk of broccoli that costs \$1.29. She says she would rather get two hamburgers for 99 cents off McDonald's Dollar menu, which they are able to afford instead of purchasing the vegetables and fruit that are better for her and her family. This proves that people with a lower income would rather buy "calorie dense, nutrient poor foods [that] are a better deal than more healthful choices, low income consumers will naturally choose to stock up on more affordable, less healthy alternatives" (Finkelstein and Zuckerman 128). By simply replacing fresh fruits and vegetables lower income families are losing out on important nutrients that keep them in good health. Another example of income affecting one's food choices is when Geeta's mother, from "If You Are What You Eat Then What Am I?" dropped out her catering class when learning to prepare lobster and even knew "only certain people regularly eat lobster, people with money or those who live in Maine or both. In her catering class there were people without jobs for whom preparing lobster was a part of their professional training as caterers. Like us they wouldn't be eating lobster at home" (Kotheria155). Her mother on her own decides not to cook lobster for the family since it was something they would not be eating regularly due to their economic class. Geeta talks about the can of tuna which shows the economic impact on food choices. This canned tuna is preserved instead of using a real tuna fish and cooking it, lower income people might want the easy cheap and quick way (Kotheria 147). Those financially insecure would rather purchase and consume processed food in times of financial insecurity, even though they are unhealthy, because they are cheap and quickly filling than the fruits and vegetables they would actually benefit from.

People with lower incomes are able to buy more processed foods for less money. With the prices of processed foods dropping 16% the amount being spent on them increases, "about 90 percent of the money that Americans now spend on food goes to buy processed food" (Schlosser 529). Consumers are willing to spend more of their paychecks on fast food and boxed food instead of vegetables and meat. Consumers are even prone to increase their consumption of the increasing portion sizes, even as price lowers. As Finkelstein and Zuckerman state, "[an] average size coke used to be 8 ounces, a 20 oz. bottle is now the norm" (22). People are taking in more calories without

worrying about their health since it only costs a few cents more to supersize their meal. Consumers are not taking into consideration why these foods are inexpensive because they are made with cheap ingredients; high fructose corn syrup is a common additive in both processed and fast foods. High fructose corn syrup is derived from corn but is unhealthy to consume alongside the saturated fats, additives, sugar and oil being reused all week in fast food places. High fructose corn syrup is a government subsidy, thus foods that contain ingredients similar to it are cheap to produce and profitable to sell to low income consumers.

Fast food and imitation restaurants are abundant throughout low income areas resulting in higher access to processed foods. Food industry companies strategically place fast food chains in urban areas thus access to healthy foods is limited. Although fast food and imitation restaurants are unhealthy they taste good, “cheap food has more satisfying energy dense food, with great taste” (Finkelstein and Zuckerman 29). But the reason it is tasty is, artificial flavors, “man-made additives that give most processed food most of its taste” (Schlosser 529). This is actually deceiving to the consumer being that companies like McDonalds are not responsible for their taste, but a lab. Before the McDonald’s chain used to make the French fries from scratch every day” (Schlosser 528) which was actually healthier since no preservatives were being added. But during McDonald’s expansion they decided to reduce labor costs and number of suppliers McDonalds began switching to frozen fries thus, “a familiar food had been transformed into a highly processed industrial commodity” (Schlosser 529) which in result changed the way Americans eat today. Even pizza has become processed and unhealthy as Hanna Miller explains in her essay, “American Pie.” Starting with UNO, a pizza chain, then the high amounts of consumption, “An average person eats 23 pounds of pizza a year (Miller 480). This is a lot of oil and fat going into one’s system which is horrible for one’s health. It has become processed though, “the inevitable- a packaged pizza mix” (Miller 480). In efforts to save consumers time, money and be more convenient but containing harmful preservatives instead making it from scratch would be a healthier alternative. Pizza is great for low income families since a lot of people about 8 can eat 2 slices of pizza each, it is cheap and almost everyone likes pizza. Although in the US it is widely accepted by all social classes in Italy they considered pizza the food of poverty.

Geeta also indulges in American processed foods at Woolworths which is conveniently found in urban cities and is affordable to buy, “On weekends, we eat fried chicken from Woolworth’s on the back steps of my father’s first floor office. We eat glazed donuts, also from Woolworth’s and French fries with catsup” (Kotheria 148). Woolworths is a department store not a

restaurant so they probably reuse their oil for long periods of time just like the fast food places, and the products Geeta, her father and sister are obtaining there are fried, full of sugar, oil and fat which makes one unhealthy. The reason why people overlook the side effects of fast food and processed food being artificial and unhealthy is because it is so affordable and tasty. But consumers of processed foods should be wary of the dangers of this growing business. In the movie, *Food Inc.* Richard Lob, part of the national chicken council believes harvesting chickens in factories is okay because they are, “Produc[ing] a lot of food, on little land at an affordable price” and questions what is wrong with it. The chicken is altered by giving them growth hormones and antibiotics. This is unhealthy for consumers to digest. There have been cases in the long run that consumers can actually become resistant to antibiotics from eating these types of meat. This meat is purposefully being made cheap thus it is unhealthy. Even though it is hard to afford meat already, not only should low income consumers but everyone, should cut down the amount of processed meat they are eating and switch to organic meat, which is not altered with hormones or antibiotics.

Besides fast food places are imitation restaurants where the food given is not as authentic as stated in its name. In Geeta’s case the first Indian restaurant in her neighborhood was ran out of business by a new Indo-Pak-Bangladeshi combo, “they use plastic cutlery and Styrofoam cups. The food is fast, cheap and tasty” (Kotheria 150) unlike the authentic restaurants that would take their time to cook the food and use natural ingredients instead of prepackaged ingredients that are usually found in places like these. So, when Geeta’s parents had guests over her mom would usually cook them curry being that the typical food they would find in these quick, cheap restaurants that are located in urban neighborhoods instead of the suburbs.

Access to processed food through stores is another huge problem when taking into consideration the poor health of low income people and why people eat what they do besides the factor of cost. As in Geeta Kotheria’s essay, “if you are what you eat, then what am i?” she says, “and how to go from Chef Boyardee to fresh pasta and home-made sauce” (Kotheria 154) before they used to eat canned foods until her mother was able to learn how to cook real pasta dishes which are more nutritious although time consuming in comparison to the fake pasta one obtains from canned foods like Chef Boyardee. Geeta’s mother made the attempt to cook different but healthier foods that were unfamiliar to her rather than expose her children to the unhealthy alternative foods of the supermarket such as, TV dinners and canned foods and instead decides for the gourmet Italian deli across the street (Kotheria 154). The deli will provide her with better

options like fresh meats and cheeses along with fewer processed items to choose from which limits how much processed foods her family consumes.

Urban neighborhoods are “food deserts,” neighborhoods limited to little or no provisions of fresh produce or healthy food. Urban areas have limited access to healthy foods since food industry companies strategically place fast food chains there resulting in less farmers markets which they can go purchase fresh fruits and vegetables. According to Powell, Chaloupka and Bao, “lower-income areas that have the highest number of available restaurants and two times the number of fast-food restaurants compared to high-income areas” (1). They have to purchase the fruits and vegetables from a supermarket that imports their produce from afar and by the time it gets there it has lost most of their nutritional quality thus not as fresh as the produce from the farmers markets. Fast food places like McDonald’s makes cheap food, more appealing to consumers then purchasing old and expensive, fruits and vegetables from the super market. If there are any farmers markets near low income neighborhoods, inhabitants are rarely informed of these events or are very price sensitive. Usually it is more expensive to buy fruits and vegetables from a farmers market then a supermarket.

Besides the fact of healthy foods being costly and limited access to them while processed and fast foods are easier to obtain and cheaper people will always choose their food based upon familiarity. Based on the fact that the majority of people stay in the same social class as when they were growing up and not able to experience new foods or afford them. A lower income person would not recognize Es’ cargo as likely as a higher income person would. Along with this idea is, one rather choose what they grew up eating because it is familiar to them: “A person’s food preferences, like his or her personality, are formed during the first few years of life, through a process of socialization” (Schlosser 531). This means one would rather eat chef Boyardee if that’s what they grew up on then rather than a fancy five course meal.

Low income families are inevitable to have unhealthy diets being deprived of healthy and essential nutrients that come from fruits, vegetables, meat, and dairy that they are unable to afford as easily as higher income families. The government should plan on educating people about health and how if products are processed foods but say natural flavors they still contain no trace of the original food. The government should take into consideration this epidemic that’s occurring and the outcomes being higher cases of citizens with diabetes, heart disease, and obesity. Lower income families should be aware of the dangers of Mac & Cheese, a highly processed food containing preservatives and artificial flavors which when constantly being consumed because of economic

reasons, results in poor health. Although poverty may only seem to concern the group that lives it, it should in fact concern anyone who cares about our nation's poor health.

Works Cited

- Anderson, S.A. (1990). The 1990 Life Sciences Research Office (LSRO) Report on Nutritional Assessment defined terms associated with food access. Core indicators of nutritional state for difficult to sample populations. *Journal of Nutrition*. 102:1559-1660
- Finkelstein, Eric and Laurie Zuckerman. *The Fattening of America: How the Economy Makes Us Fat, If It Matters, and What To Do About It*. New Jersey: John Wiley and Sons Inc, 2008. Print
- Food Inc.* Dir. Robert Kenner. Perf. Eric Schlosser, Michael Pollan, Barbara Kowalcyk, Joel Salatin, Gary Hirshberg. Magnolia Home Entertainment. 2008. DVD
- Kothari, Getta. "If You Are What You Eat, Then What Am I?" Boston: Bedford, 1999. Print
- Miller, Hanna. "American Pie". Boston: Bedford, 2006. Print
- Schlosser, Eric. "Why McDondald's Fries Taste so Good". Boston: Bedford, 2006. Print
- Us Government Census

Shanique Russell

Does an ideal education really exist?

The ideal education for many is to be the smartest in the class, an over achiever and be able to accomplish a certain goal. There is no such thing as an “ideal education” as in each education system there is something lacking. The “ideal education” is where George W. Bush’s famous quote “leave no child behind” (Gatto 684) is practiced. Each school wishes to provide an “ideal education” so the teachers take the best of the best student so that they can become perfect students with their help. An “A” in all subject areas will also fall into that class, with that child or children given special acknowledgment. The education one should consider is one at a very diverse institution where he/she can benefit educationally and improving the views of life. Being educated allows one to draft one’s personal reasoning ability, while processing what is being presented or read. There is not yet an “ideal education”; there is still room for growth, where everyone should and will be treated equally.

This goal cannot be met because in every educational system there will be prejudice. An “ideal education” can be accomplished if there is no segregation of students. Students will no longer be separated by standardized testing, racism between teachers and students and students amongst themselves, financial standings, and popular children being able to shape the social aspects of the school. Gatto proposes the question “Why, then, do Americans confuse education with just such a system” (685), a system in which people are manipulated and taught how to live their lives.

A beneficiary of the “ideal education” would be seen as one of high stature. The person would be one who has achieved most if not all the goals that was set before him/her. They have met their full potential and in the same breath can be giving back to other individuals of similar background. Teachers are easily drawn to the students that grasp things faster; they work with these people to ensure their success. On the other hand, the other students are left to their own demise; some teachers could care less whether or not they achieve something. Thus from these weaknesses many students fail to become successful.

To be able to reach one’s full potential attending a university is not necessary; individuals learn at a different pace and some would benefit with a more interactive way of learning. Though a university education makes you marketable, it does not benefit all, due to the fact that in today’s society it all revolves around whom one knows in high places. People who attend various

universities can attest that some of the things they are taught and should know are not learned in a university but in the world. Gatto supports this theory by stating that “George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln” (684) were people who held high position in United States of America’s history without attending school. One’s ability to succeed should never be dependent on university. Universities once again are optional in order for some people to reach their full potential. In some institutions people without a university history are being paid more than those of whom that have it.

An “ideal education” varies in every country as their education system differs from other countries. In comparing the United States of America and Jamaica’s education system the first and the biggest difference is that America has it free. In a free education system students will not value it as much as they would one for which their parents have to pay. For the reason that “America is the land of the free” (689) the opportunities that the education system has to offer is given little or no regards. The educational goal cannot be met as the students have little or no respect for teachers. In Jamaica’s institutions, the teachers are not only there as a form of disciplinarian but also as an instructor. With such countless freedom being offered to these students in America they begin to lose focus on what they are in school for. The Jamaican students are reminded daily in a different fashion of the purpose of an education. America’s system gives students the ability to misbehave repeatedly and get away with it as these students are the athletic ones. They believe that because they play a sport for the school, the institution is obligated to keep them in the school no matter what they did wrong.

However, universities can be seen as institutions where life lessons are taught and personalities are tested and found. In these institutions not only the strongest and well focused students can survive, the not so strong can with the help of others. An education system is important in having the “ideal education” where as it molds you for what to expect for the future. One can be successful with or without it, but it is never wrong to be pursuing an “ideal education” at a university.

Works Cited

Gatto John Taylor Against School: “The Writers Presence A Pool of Readings”. Ed. Donald M’Quade and Robert Antwan. 6th ed. Boston: Bedford/St Martin’s 2009, 682 – 690.

Nikitaben Shah

Power of Words

Words have a power in themselves which can have negative or positive meanings. Just like one star is brighter than the other, one word is more powerful than the other. Words are like decisions that people make in life. When we make the wrong decision, there are consequences after it. Similar to the idea that making a wrong decision can ruin your life, mislabeling a person can create disagreement among people and spread prejudice. Even though a person is labeling others with respect, it is important to use inoffensive terms because they can spread prejudice and create discrimination among certain ethnic groups. Labeling a person with a wrong term can form a false impression. Therefore, using the words correctly plays a major role in giving identity to a person. “The Word Police” by Michiko Kakutani argues that it does not matter what a person is called as long as they are treated with respect. I strongly disagree with this message because from my personal experience I learned that labeling a person represents their identity, culture, ethnicity and language as itself. I agree with the message of Gloria Anzaldua’s “How to Tame a Wild Tongue” and Langston Hughes’s “That Word Black.” The language that we use to describe a person changes the view point of the person who is labeling and the person who is labeled. Therefore, it is important to use inoffensive terms because they are one way to change negative stereotypes about certain groups of people. Mislabeling a person can create a big deal of consequences.

Language plays a major role in these consequences. A negative view of language can lower a person’s self esteem. Language represents who you are and it forms a person’s identity. Anzaldua exclaims, “If you want to really hurt me, talk badly about my language. Ethnic identity is twin skin to linguistic identity – I am my language” (330). Talking disrespectfully about people’s language or giving them a false impression about their language can deeply impact the person’s feelings. Similarly, I speak three languages but my dominant language is Gujarati. I represent my language and I am proud to be an Indian. It is a part of my culture and identity. Sometimes, people get embarrassed in public talking in their own language but I will never stop speaking Gujarati because it is about my pride and heritage.

Not only mislabeling a person but a negative reaction to someone about his or her language can make a person feel lower about his or herself. According to Anzaldua’s experience, “If a person,

Chicana or Latina, has a low estimation of my native tongue, she also has a low estimation of me” (329). A person should not judge another person by his or her language. The negative perception that Anzaldúa faces is when she was teaching English to the Chicano students in High School. She was forbidden to use the Chicano literature by the school principle (330). Not allowing people to use their own languages can create prejudice between them and can form a big issue. All people have right to speak their own languages. Therefore, people should allow the use of their own language to avoid discrimination.

On the other hand, Kakutani is saying that as a society we should focus more on real issues instead of paying attention on a minor issue like labeling. I disagree with Kakutani because failing to use the words responsibly can lead into spreading prejudice. Prejudice is one of the major issues that the world is facing today. Not calling a person with a term that he or she wants to be called can create violence to an individual, his or her culture and language. Let’s agree with Kakutani for a minute and look at the following situation and ask the following questions to ourselves. Instead of Asian, someone labeled me as a Bangladeshi and they treated me with respect. Therefore, I did not worry so much about labeling me wrong and did not take a minute to correct them. Is it fair to me? to my culture? to my identity? to my language? My label of race represents the person I am today. I do not want to hide my culture, my identity, nor my language. Instead, I want to share it with others. I want to carry these valuable elements with me and honor myself.

Additionally, viewing or using the word negatively can impact people. In order to change how people view a certain race of people it is necessary to change the terms that are being used to describe them. For example, if a person heard the word “black” all kinds of negative thoughts might come to mind. Langston Hughes shows how the word black is used to describe negative things such as blackballed, blackmailed, black sheep, black candle, and black magic (710). People gave negative meaning to the word black. Using the word “black” again and again to describe negative things can create spreading of prejudice. It is not acceptable to label black people as a black or by their skin color because it can negatively impact them. Society has not yet chosen another word to describe black people but they should choose another word in order to not discriminate them.

There is a solution to the consequences of mislabeling people. Instead of labeling someone directly, it is important to make a conversation with that person and get to know more about him or her. Instead of mislabeling, people should ask others questions on what they want to know. My personal experience allowed me to come up with the solution. On my first day of school in America, I had ESL class as my first period. I met differently raced people whom I had never seen. I was

wondering where they are from. Our ESL teacher told us to give a brief introduction about ourselves to the class. Therefore, a girl went and she said that she is Mexican and her name is Angelica. I was trying to guess the race of a girl who was sitting right next to me. Therefore, I looked up her name written on the paper saying Ashley. Her skin color was different than other kids in the class. She looked more like an American. I want to make new friends in that class therefore, I asked her “Are you an American?” Her face turned red and she looked angry as I had done something wrong. She shouted “Noooo, I am Spanish. Why did you call me an American?” I replied her that she looked like an American. I remember the exact words that she said, “Do not call me American, ever. I am Spanish”. That day, I learned how important it is to know the nationality of a person before mislabeling. I have come to know the power of words and it plays big role in the language. Instead of directly labeling her as an American, I should have communicated with her and asked her few questions such as, where are you from? or what is your race? Asking these types of questions can resolve the problem of spreading prejudice and can give solution to the consequences that are created by mislabeling a person.

I also learned that words are powerful and can create consequences. The following experience taught me that people should not begin conversation with others in their own language without knowing the race and the language that the person speaks. When I was in eighth grade in India, I had many friends and my school contained people with different races. One day I was walking down the street on my way to the school with my recently made friend name Nadhira, who was from Bangladesh. As I was walking in the early morning during the winter, cold and dry breeze was hitting me in the face. I saw a girl running toward Nadhira and shouting her name. As she got closer to us, Nadhira introduce me to her and that girl started talking to me in Bengali, which is the language that is spoken in Bangladesh. I answered her, “I don’t understand your language and I am not Bangladeshi. I am Indian.” I was mad at that girl not because she called me Bangladeshi but without knowing where I came from, she started speaking Bengali. Instead of talking directly to me in her own language, she should have asked me about my race or the language that I speak to not create consequences.

In order to change what people think about others, people need to change the way they describe others, and words play major role in it. Comparing this issue to today’s world, the word “terrorism” holds a big meaning to itself. When people hear the word “Muslim” the first thing that might come to mind is “terrorism.” Because of the 9/11 event, Muslims are labeled as terrorists. Chukwuemeka Nwosu wrote an article called “Do Not Label Muslims as Terrorists” explaining the

impact of mislabeling. He says, “Muslims are not terrorists and that Islam is a religion of peace” (1). Because one Muslim became a terrorist, it does not mean all Muslims are terrorists. People should not use terms that can cause violence of their culture. The word “terrorist” holds a strong meaning and no one should be labeled with that term without knowing if they really are or not. Using the word “terrorist” to describe the Muslim race is wrong because if one person uses the word then other people are also likely to use it. In a sense, it spreads prejudice. People should label each other by their race and ethnicity because it represents who they are. They have the right to spread their culture and explore more about other cultures. Use of negative words can hurt people in a way that it leaves a mark in their heart forever. Therefore, people should think twice before using the word to label someone.

Works Cited

- Anzaldúa, Gloria. “How to Tame a Wild Tongue.” *The Writer’s Presence*. 5th ed. Ed. Donald Mcquade and Robert Atwan. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2006. 324-324. Print.
- Hughes, Langston. “That Word Black.” *The Writer’s Presence*. 5th ed. Ed. Donald Mcquade and Robert Atwan. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2006. 709-711. Print.
- Kakutani, Michiko. “The Word Police.” *The Writer’s Presence*. 6th ed. Ed. Donald Mcquade and Robert Atwan. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2009. 710-714. Print.
- Nwosu, Chukwuemeka. “Do Not Label Muslims as Terrorist.” *Haaba.com*. 9 Mar. 2010. Web. 7 July 2010.

Deron Smith

When Idealism Meets Realism

The foundation for the ideal education does not start with deciding the right course, but deciding the right school system that will be compatible with an individual's needs. John Gatto in his essay "Against School" proposed that there should be less conformity, and more of an open approach to education. Gatto later argued that schooling was not a necessity for some, and can be eliminated entirely. Gatto was right in the need for less conformity, but wrong in the idea that some do not require schooling. It is not that some do not require schooling, but a different way of schooling, because just as homeschooling can prove great for some it can be disastrous for others. In the ideal education there should be an option plan that provides the freedom to choose what to learn, and how to learn. With this, there would be a more open area of discussion, no case of students being bored, and teachers being aggravated by the lack of effort the students make. This system of schooling would achieve a lower to no virtual dropout rate, a profoundly larger literacy rate, and a society that would be utilizing its whole nation of govern whether than a fraction.

The ideal education cannot be without the ideal school system. The ideal school system has to be designed in a way that instead of sticking to one system there can be a multitude of various systems. Gatto argues that prominent individuals became successful without the need of secondary schooling, or a school system. Gatto is right that society have produced a number of successful individuals over the course of three centuries, but is clearly wrong about the need of a school system. Each individual Gatto mentioned from George Washington to Thomas Jefferson had gone through some type of schooling, in which they were directed from a teacher. They did not simple wake up with an impressive array of knowledge at their disposal, but had to expand their education across different subjects, similar to modern day students. The only thing that encouraged their education to proceed to greatness was their way of schooling. In the option plan system if a student decides he wants more of a mentoring education in which he works for an accountant, to learn the accountant trade that would be an option. If a student decides he wants an education that involves traveling the world, that would be an option, and if a student decides to stick with the more modern day of schooling that would be at his discretion. As students progress in their study they naturally come to notice their own strengths and weaknesses in school, and know whether or not an advanced math course is something necessary. Some may know that they work better alone than

with others, and some may know whether or not school is what they need. Few students will enter into a subject in which they are weak for improvement, while many will stick to their academic strengths. No matter how or why they come to that decision it should be entirely up to them to make.

However, it is imperative to consider the most important part of this, which is when will they be capable to make that decision. Gatto states that, “Maturity has by now been banished from nearly every aspect of our lives” (689). Gatto’s believes that due to a society in which nothing is sacred anymore, and responsibility is not valued as much as it once was, is causing children to remain in a state of childishness. By being stripped from the action of having to live life liable for one’s own decisions they are able to entirely ignore the process, which is maturity. So instead of creating a society of children and adults there is now just a society of children. What makes this statement indecisive is that maturity is something that cannot be lost but simply ignored. Reasoning can be found in lack of focus to pay attention, improper schooling, or more directly a want to be corrected. It is logical that a sane person can deliberately choose to not pay attention, a teacher can intentionally decide not to check her answers and get them wrong, and a sane child could decide to behave badly, because he or she wants to test how far they can push it till they receive some correction. However, it is not logical that a student will act up, a teacher simply ignore the process of checking one’s work, and a student lacks focus in a system which each the student and teacher share the same passion for their study.

An education is something that should be taken seriously, and done at an age where there should be a decent level of competence. The best time to choose which system would be when entering in high-school. Up to that point they should have had experimented with a multitude of different systems so when the transition to high-school occurs they should for the most part be knowledgeable to pick the right one for them. However, if they still feel like they do not have a clear distinction in which system they want to follow, they can decide between two and see how each one compares, and from there choose the best fit.

This way of education will accomplish excitement for learning, in a way an educational enlightenment in which not just a small few can be pleased with what they do but all. By attracting to their personal characteristics and way of study there will be no disparity of enthusiasm for learning, and the clear reason being that this is what they are interested in. Attracting to one’s personal qualities is essential, because if a person is not content with their job their work ethic will decline, and cause distress, depression, and in Gatto’s case boredom. Gatto says after thirty years of

teaching, “I became an expert on boredom” (683). Gatto, who has proven to be an impressive educator who has won accolades, awards, and conducted a successful writing career, can only say after thirty years, “I became an expert of boredom”. The reason Gatto can only say this after 30 years is because he went into a field that he knew he would be good in, instead of a field that inspired him. If Gatto had reacted to his inspirations whether than his intelligence maybe he would feel more accomplished? The school system option plan could have been helpful for Gatto in allowing him to try different approaches to better decide which field of study suited him best. In his case staying in a room all day following a limited structure of education would have not been suited for him. This option plan system in the big picture would enable a nation to reach its full potential in using it full resources, and by reaching its full potential solve many of today’s dire urgencies.

The greatest problem in today’s society is that students are not encouraged to go beyond the conventional means of education. Gatto says, “Urge them to take on the serious material, the *grown-up* material, in history, literature, philosophy, music, art, economics, theology-all the stuff schoolteachers know will enough to avoid” (690). In Gatto’s statement he comes to the conclusion that if students engulf themselves in a real study, with substance then they will never be bored. In the option plan free time will be spent devoting seconds, minutes, hours, and days to whatever it is that excites that interest, and eventually a greater appreciation will occur. Each student would ultimately go beyond the education that would have been provided to them from a more traditional schooling, and actually been challenged, not as a student but as a legit professional in that field. Questions will be raised, that were never questioned, studies will be conducted that were never conducted before, and answers will emerge that were enigmatic. The greatest minds will no longer be associated with a name from the past but a name of the present.

In this society, a true democratic society, freewill to choose a variety of schooling will become an option to people of all races, and classes. An impressive display of education will be exhibited from all, along with a unique passion shown in each individual. No more will there be a barrier hold on how far a person can stretch their education; all the power will now lie in their hands. This option plan system will essentially ignite the spark for new thought around the world covering all different types of studies, producing a society of specialized individuals. The chance however, that a state like this will ever take action is right next to never, while the chance that it will continue as it is, remains closer to definite. The solution is that there is no solution, but only a question that has not been solved. Maybe one day it will be answered and then everybody can start really living life.

Michael Soukhoumalay

A Good Story is All We Need

Over the past few years more people have begun to read Japanese comic books. These comic books are called mangas. Some of these mangas have gotten so popular that the series have been turned into television shows called anime. These anime are what engulf people into the series. One of the most famous anime is called *Death Note*. The anime follows the protagonist, Light Yagami, who is a genius high school student. The anime begins with Light detesting the current world that he lives in because of all the violence and corruption he sees. His world then changes when he obtains something called the *Death Note* which has the power to kill whoever's name is written into the note's pages. Light then plans on creating a new world order where he rules and acts as a god by killing people who he believes should not live with the notebook. This anime became very popular because of the suspense, rivalry, and the tactics that were used. Neal Gabler stated in his essay "Our Celebrities, Ourselves," "you can immediately appreciate one of [a celebrity's] primary appeals, which is the appeal of a good story" (2), but later he states "If anything, 9/11 itself delivered a narrative of such extraordinary impact that it was impossible for fictional narratives to equal or approximate nonfictional events" (4-5), but what Gabler failed to realize is that only a few years later did the most popular anime called *Death Note* appear to rival the celebrities of today. Gabler was wrong when he said it was impossible for fictional narratives to equal nonfictional narratives. Fictional narratives have the ability to be equal to actual celebrities in today's age; they just need to have "the appeal of a good story" (Gabler 2).

Suspense is one of the main parts of what makes a good story. Suspense is one of the motives that will cause the reader to wish to continue reading. Gabler stated, "Celebrity, playing out in real time, obviously has suspense, since there is no author to imagine the finish, only life itself to devise the next scene. One never knows what will happen" (3), but he did not specify if that suspense of life was worth waiting for. When an author is there to plan out how the suspense will work in the story, it can prove to be very useful unlike in life where there is no author. In *Death Note*, suspense is created from the tactics that Light uses on his path toward his goal of becoming a "god." Gabler describes celebrities as being "a cultural force with tremendous appeal" which in all essence is what a god is (1). Gabler is describing what can be considered a god of the age we live in. The

only difference between Light and the celebrities of today is the fact that Light wishes to become a god and the celebrities wish to just be genuine people.

The point of view of the character that the story follows allows the reader of the text to feel more emotions toward that character because the reader is allowed into that character's mind. The protagonist who resolves the main problem is usually the character whose mind the reader will be looking through. They are usually the star of the show. *Death Note* decided to change everything about this. The story is heard mainly through four minds "L," Light, Mello, and Near. Light is the main character of *Death Note* but is the antagonist who creates the conflict in the story. "L" is one of the protagonists that appears in this story and stays as a protagonist until he dies. Mello and Near are the successors of "L." Mello first appears as an antagonist but then later changes to a protagonist. Near is the other protagonist that stays as a protagonist and catches Light at the end. Light is shown as appealing because of the tactics that he uses and because the reader or viewer is given his thoughts the most. Mello is shown as someone who is human when stacked next to the other three since he is the most impulsive. "L" is possibly the smartest of the four and is shown as a leader which is appealing to the audience. Near is shown as being childish which many people would consider adorable. *Death Note* shows its tale through the minds of many people which will allow the reader or viewer the ability to see the story through different minds. This tactic of telling the story will allow the reader or viewer to have an easier time to find something they can relate to.

The main piece to having the appeal of a good story is the ability to have the reader to obtain motivation to continue reading or watching the text. Once the reader or viewer has something to relate to or finds something interesting about the text then the reader or viewer will have motivation to continue reading or watching the text. If the person does not have any motivation for continuing on with the text then that person will not be able to finish the story and will end up saying that the text wasn't a good story. Gabler stated "Rather we watch because we understand, intuitively or not, that these celebrities are enacting a kind of modern parable of identity, with all its ridiculousness and all its tragedy" (6-7) because he believes the motivation that we have for watching celebrities comes from human nature's need to see "rituals of empowerment through deconstruction" (1-2). We as the populace wish to see celebrities on our level instead of always looking up toward them which is why we enjoy the seeing their misery which is the process of schadenfreude. *Death Note* offers this type of motivation for the reader by having Light and "L" become rivals and they both try to capture each other by laying traps. They each then experience embarrassment when one foils the other's plan because they are both childish and hate to lose.

Death Note is a piece of text that contains all the main parts that are needed to create a good story. It contains suspense, the ability to sustain interest, and is also written in a way that the reader or viewer is able to see parts of the story through the minds of different characters of the story, and the power to motivate people to continue reading or watching the text. *Death Note* has already surpassed many celebrities that are well known in this age because of how good the story is. Some people have already begun dressing like characters in *Death Note*. How many people have dressed in the same outfit as a celebrity? That number is only a small fraction of the amount of people who walk around dressed as “L;” and that is only one character from *Death Note*. People have also bought costumes just so they may look like these characters, which are called cosplay. There is even an enormous convention that is held just for people to walk around while wearing their cosplay and talk about anime. I don’t see any large convention that contains people who are dressed like Britney Spears or Ozzy Osbourne. Gabler stated “One is likely to think of celebrities as creatures of artifice. They wear makeup and costumes (even when they are not before the cameras, the hottest ones are dressed by designers), they rely on public relations stunts and gossip to promote themselves, and they play roles and affect attitudes” (5). This means that celebrities are playing dress up and they try to find themselves within the characters they play as. The people who read or view anime dress up as characters so that they may find a piece of that character within them because they are content with who they believe they are.

Connections that the reader or viewer can make to a text are more important than just having a good story. Gabler said “the roles [celebrities] assume as they project themselves in the media, operate as a kind of disguise. They obscure the real person” (4). The celebrities hide behind their fame while searching for who they really are, yet they rarely find themselves. In *Death Note*, Light can be considered a failed attempt to find out who he really is. Light goes through many identity changes throughout the story just as we do when we use social networking sites. When Light goes through the process of morphing his identity this acts as a foreshadowing of what is to come if we continue to use these sites. The members of our society may end up being engulfed by these social networks and later project the identity they have created online through reality.

Gabler would see this *Death Note* as just a fictional narrative that has gained a bit of hype over the years. He would not have considered it as good of a story when compared to a reality show because he believes that “Traditional narrative forms are so familiar to us now... that they have become exhausted, attenuated, predictable” (3). What Gabler does not know is that fictional narratives like *Death Note* give us insight into ourselves and human nature. In *Death Note*, Light is

trying to become a god. In the beginning of the story, Light goes through an identity crisis because he killed people with the Death Note but then justifies his actions by saying he is justice and they deserved to die. Light's act of justification shows how humans are embarrassed by their imperfections. They hide behind excuses to cover up their flaws.

Gabler stated "These stories [of celebrities] are all chronicles of self-discovery" (5). What Gabler means is the celebrities are acting out and performing these stunts to find themselves. They use insane stunts as a cry for help. They even try to find themselves within the characters they play in movies and television shows. Yet what Gabler does not understand is that the people who have read good fictional stories such as anime are content with who they believe they are and are now trying to find the character from the story within them. Many people in this society we live in have gone through most of their whole lives not knowing who they truly are; therefore they turn to celebrities as role models to try and help find who they are. This method will not work unless the person is struggling with things "like romantic whirligigs, drug detoxification, and sudden career spirals, that beset celebrities" which does not happen on an everyday basis (Gabler 6). Actually reading stories is more effective than watching celebrities because then one will be able to relate more to the characters in the story than celebrities and will then be able to find who they really are in life. All we really want, as humans, is to find our true selves.

Works Cited

- Gabler, Neal. "Our Celebrities, Ourselves." The Chronicle of Higher Education 49.27 (2003): 1-7. Print.
- Tsugumi Ohba. *Death Note*. Viz Media. 3 Oct. 2006. Television.

Anthony Suggs

Modern Day Addiction

“Ring, ring, ring”, how many people jump out of their seats at the thought that it may be their phone that’s ringing? In this day and age, the new drug on the street isn’t crack, it isn’t meth, and it isn’t even marijuana. The most popular drug on the market is the cell phone. Cell phones have more kids hooked on them than fishermen have fish. Cell phones are the most addictive tool right now in this era. Everyone owns a cell phone these days. It is very rare to find a teenager who doesn’t own some kind of cellular device. I have even witnessed kids as young as about eight years old with cell phones. They are everywhere, around every corner, in every magazine, and in every television commercial. They are so easy to attain that everyone has access to them. According to Motoharu Takao who wrote the article, *Addictive Personality and Problematic Mobile Phone Use*, states, “The research group estimates that at least seventy percent of the Japanese population and sixty-two percent of U.S. inhabitants used mobile phones in 2005” (Tokao, 501). These numbers are off the charts. Phones are everywhere. It’s not just an American crisis. We are consumed by our cellular devices. Because of the addictive nature of cell phones, our youth is being over-taken by urges that come along with cell phones. This crisis needs to be controlled especially in schools. How can people expect children to learn anything if they are so much more concerned with their cell phones. This is definitely a situation that should be a concern of the people. The youth are the ones that are the influenced the easiest so we should make this primary concern that gets taken care of.

We can’t escape the temptation to pick up our phones every couple of minutes thinking we have received a text message when we know deep down that everyone is at school or at work so there is no possible way. The real question is why are they so addicting? Let’s start with what an addiction is. In my opinion, an addiction is a craving or necessity that someone needs to get through the day. It is that special thing that makes you happy whenever you get it, whether it is alcohol, weed, or cell phones. Some people are overwhelmed by their cravings and they don’t even realize that they are not in control of their addiction (Winn, 591). So how does someone determine whether they are an addict or not? I conducted a survey to what I thought a cell phone addict would consist of. The questions I asked were: Do you spend more than five hours a day on your phone some kind of way? Do you have your phone on you during meals? Do you text while other people

are talking to you? I asked over twelve people ranging in the ages of 16-21. I asked six females and six males and they all said yes to all three of the questions. There was no difference between the males and the females. They all are in some form of education at the moment (college or high school). I had one of the boys even openly admit to me that he indeed was a cell phone addict.

Is cell phone addiction a good or bad thing? In my opinion, being an addict of a cell phone is a bad and troublesome thing. Cell phones cause distractions in classrooms and in the work place. Kids focus more on their phone than they do their surroundings. Kids try to multi-task and tend to slack off in school because they are more concerned with their phones. They will tell you that they can manage school and their social life. Mark Edmundson, a professor of English at the University of Virginia, experienced this with one of his classrooms as well. In the story ‘Dwelling in Possibilities’, Edmundson states, “Do they pay attention to the class? My students tell me that they’re experts in paying attention to many things at once: It’s no problem” (Edmundson, 347). How could someone possibly pay attention to class when they have their minds focused on so many other things? It’s a great feat for anyone to take on. I guess that’s the life of an addict.

Phones these days come equipped with everything any male or female could possibly think of in the palms of their hands. They have e-mail, the internet, and the infamous Facebook. They will find a way to use their phones as much as possible. How many people do you know that sneak a text when the teacher is writing something on the board? How many people do you know that sleep with the phone in their beds? Everywhere they go the phone goes with them. If they walk out of the room, more than likely their phone is coming with them. They use it while on the toilet, in movie theatres, and even in social events like parties. According to Edmundson, “They’ve been unwired, off the drug, for more than an hour, and they need a fix.” The effects of this drug are just as satisfying as a “hit” is for a junkie” (Edmundson, 349). The trend is spreading and soon there will be fewer and fewer places where people don’t use their phones. I can definitely see it spreading in my generation. I think teenagers are the ones that are most addicted but I believe it is spreading. It’s not only starting in younger generations, it is spreading to older generations. I see parents who are glued to their phones just as much as their children. Cell phones nowadays come with things that attract all ages and that they can take on the go with them.

The one place that over-shadows all of the rest is when people use their phone behind the wheel of a car. This is the most idiotic thing that anyone could possibly do. This is beyond dangerous. You not only put yourself in danger, but everyone around you. I didn’t think it was that bad when people talked on the phone while driving a car because they are at least still looking at the

road. Then it happened, people started texting while driving. This is suicide waiting to happen. There is definitely no way you can drive a car and text at the same time. People try to be in multiple places at one time (Edmundson, 344). This is multi-tasking to a whole new extent. When this happens, you witness the addiction at its extreme stage. People are willing to put their lives in danger just to get a text done at that moment instead of just waiting.

You have to ask yourself do the benefits outweigh the costs. In this instance, the answer should be obvious. Just picture it: your life, or a text message? I would hope everyone would choose their life. I know there are people who are great at doing many things at one time and say they can do this any day of the week. But what if you're having a bad week? There are no second chances. This isn't a game where you can simply revive yourself. This is your only life that you are letting hang in the balance because of a cheap piece of metal. These costs of addiction make cell phones seem as harmful as being addicted to alcohol. Who knew that the thing that caused you so much enjoyment and pleasure could also kill you? This will give you something to think about the next time you decide it's the best idea to text while on the road. Marie Winn, a writer who received her education from Radcliffe College and Columbia University, wrote a story called "TV Addiction" where she compares an addiction like alcohol addiction to television addiction. She states, "In this way television viewing, for those vulnerable to addiction, is more like drinking or taking drugs-once you start it's hard to stop" (Winn, 591). I feel the same is true for cell phones. It's one of those addictions that most people may not even realize that they are a victim of. Is this an addiction that can be "kicked"? Once you start is there any stopping? Kids these days start with phones earlier and earlier so I think this will make it even harder to actually stop using their phones. I believe over the years, the addiction will become even stronger and kids will really start struggling in school. At this point, I believe we should start looking at the long term effects of the over usage of cell phones. They put the younger generations in trouble because cell phones are only going to get more appealing and more efficient. Everyone is always looking for the "hottest" thing out and when they come out with phone that catches the little kids' attention they are going to want them.

As the parents and them as your children, are you willing to turn them down when they come to you and tell you that they want a phone because their friend has one? It starts with you, the parent. I mean as for the teenagers I think it's too late. They're old enough to make their own decisions. As for your babies, I believe that parents should start by not buying their children phones at such early ages. This isn't going to do anything but cause distractions in school. Parents like to think that their kids need to get in contact with them, well if that's the case call the school. Just

think about all the kids who grew up before the age of cell phones, or the kids who grew up without a phone until they were about fourteen. Look how many of them turned out fine. I think there is an overreaction on the parents' part that sparks this addiction. They only have access to this addiction because you went out and spent your money on something they do not need at least until about the age of thirteen. How many people successfully "kick" their addiction to anything? You can help make things easier by just waiting. I know you want to go to work and tell your co-workers that you just brought your youngest daughter the most popular phone on the market, but just think about the long term affects. Help be a part of the solution, not a part of the problem.

Works Cited

- Takao, Motoharu. "Addictive Personality and Problematic Mobile Phone Use." *CyberPsychology and Behavior* 12.5 (2009): 501-507. Web. Oct. 2009.
- Edmundson, Mark. "Dwelling in Possibilities." *The Writer's Presence*. 6th ed. Ed. Donald McQuade. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2009. 342-54. Print.
- Winn, Marie. "TV Addiction." *The Writer's Presence*. 6th ed. Ed. Donald McQuade. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2009. 590-92. Print.

Zaki Tapkirwala

“The Things They Carried”

During the Vietnam War there were lots of things going on. All soldiers carried all those things to protect them and help them to survive in war. They carried heavy physical loads, love, and grief. Soldiers left their family, their property, and emotions. They did not think about what would happen if they did not come back. In the war they also brought those all things that kept them connected to their past and reminded them of their friends and family. In Tim O'Brien's "The Things They Carried" soldiers come to war with their past memory and their emotions of past, but during the war they should not focus on those things and focus more on war. O'Brien says that because if you pay more attention to past emotion then you are not going to more focus on the war. And it's kind of dangerous. It can put you in a dangerous situation like it can be your death or someone can lose their lives.

Soldiers use personal keepsakes to connect to something outside the war, as well as to find comfort for themselves. Dobbins carried a pair of his girlfriend's pantyhose around his neck each time he went to battle (O'Brien 360). During this war, they could not afford to carry anything that was not necessary to survive them. As it was necessary for the soldiers to remain balanced, however, these personal effects also became necessities. Ted Lavender carried tranquilizers and, "six or seven ounces of premium dope, which for him was a necessity" (355). He took marijuana to get relief from his stress and he used more often, because he was addicted to marijuana. O'Brien illustrates to us the necessity for each man to be connected to their old life. Each soldier found himself facing hopeless barriers throughout the war.

The death of Ted Lavender, Jimmy Cross blames himself for it. He thinks that Ted died because it was Cross who was irresponsible. He felt this because when Ted was dying Cross was thinking about himself and Martha buried "under the white sand at the Jersey shore (362)". Jimmy tries too hard to get off the all images, but he was unable to, for "he was just a kid at war, in love (362)". Jimmy Cross did not tell Ted to go out by himself, because Jimmy was responsible for the well-being, he holds himself responsible. Jimmy Cross comes to the conclusion that if he did not think about his love Martha, Ted Lavender would not have died. Jimmy Cross feels responsible for Ted Lavender's death and after it he decides to change his way to lead his unit.

Right now our new generation we have Cell phone, Texting, Email, and Internet. All these things make people stay connected with each other. And also these all thing are very fast to connect. During the Vietnam War soldiers did not had any of those things and they used to write a letters to their love. And it was not faster, it was taking many days to answer. Soldiers brought their love letters and their gifts. "Caption Jimmy Cross carried letters from a Girl Martha" (O'Brien 354). Jimmy Cross brought all those letters because they know what the value of it is. It is only a piece of paper but it does remind them their love when they look at in. You can get answer very quickly by new electronic device, but compare to Vietnam War its take time to answer, and they are very excited to get answer. Because they wait for it that is the biggest reason why they brought it with them.

During the end of the story Jimmy Cross feels guilty and shameful, he starts to absorb life and starts to change the way he was living. Jimmy realizes the wrong idea; he has of the love he carried for Martha. He eventually set his mind on fact that in order to survive. He needs to forget about his Dream and he should more focus on the war and the men in their unit. He already got result, he lost his friend because of his mistake and now he does not want same happen again. If he thing more about Martha so he can put himself and others in danger. It was not that he wants to, and he felt Martha was never in love with him and never would.

Jimmy's change began when he finally decided to burn all of Martha's Pictures and her letters. When Jimmy started to burn of Martha's letters, which suggests that helps him to put such romantic ideas behind him so he can more focus on his target. He tries many times not to think more about his love, "no more fantasies" (363), so he can more focus on the future things not things past. Martha. Jimmy realizes that Martha's feelings for him were not those of love. Jimmy was looking at the picture of Martha and that helped him escape from the war when he needed to be there.

Besides flake out the pictures and all those letters, Jimmy Cross also free to his innocence. He wants to concentrate on the responsibilities of leading his men, for "he was now determined to perform his duties firmly and without negligence." The new lieutenant Cross would "dispose of the good luck pebble," issue "new SOP's," and would "confiscate the remainder of Lavender's dope." Overall, Lieutenant Jimmy Cross would accept the blame for what had happened to Ted Lavender" (O'Brien 371). After Tim's death, Jimmy stops everyone to using marijuana, because after smoking marijuana they were not able to concentrates to anything and Jimmy do not want same happen to

Ted death, Distancing himself from what was going on at home would allow him to focus on the task at hand and lead his men the way he wanted to from the beginning.

Emotions are the thing that is very hard to handle it. If soldier focus on emotions then they cannot more focus on the war. And if they more focus on the war they cannot think about the emotions. People cannot think both at same time. In the story Jimmy Cross bring most of all things that keep him remind about his love Martha, and he sit there and keep thinking about his how he can escape from here. He should not bring all those things in war because those all things always going to bother him, and at a result he blamed himself for Ted death and he felt guilty about it.

Works Cited

O'Brien, Tim. "The Things They Carried". *Stories: Second Edition*. Ed. Joseph Kelly. New York: W.W. Norton, 2008. 354-372

Sabina J. Umanzor

Him and Her

Our society is made up of males and females. These two sexes have lived on the face of the Earth since the beginning of time. For centuries, males have dominated not only the planet, but the opposite sex as well. This discrimination has lessened thanks to woman rights. Women can do anything men can do with the protection of the law. Women have the option of abortion, owning property, education and voting. Before, these rights were prohibited to any woman. But just because women are equal to men by law, females are far away from getting rid of the past. The traditional lifestyle of a woman is viewed more favorably by much of the public despite liberal actions. Much has changed in recent years. But, not every negative idea can be erased from our population. Society perceives women with a form of prejudice disregarding the many freedoms given to females. Today, gender inequality is present in society with the rejection of the modern woman.

Women are put under the impression that obtaining a career is not as important as balancing a social life, motherhood and the duties of being a wife. According to society, a woman is supposed to choose a career, be a stay at home Mom (in order to let a man bring in money to sustain a family), or balancing home responsibilities with a career. In the essay, *The Men We Carry in Our Minds*, the author Scott Russell Sanders interprets the role of a woman. "Women feel such pressures to be everything, do everything," writes Sanders, "Career, kids, art, politics. Have their babies and get back to the office a week later" (Sanders 828). Although, it is possible for females to feel overwhelmed by the structures of a cultured lifestyle, the ability to multi-task permits women to stay firm in their decisions. Females are steady in choosing their way of living because at night their conscience is guilt free. A woman who does what she has to do is happy. But, society misinterprets a woman's accomplishments for laziness and irresponsibility towards a home. Professional business women who are CEO's of corporations are respected for their title, but also looked down upon for a selfish attitude. One might think, "She prefers to be at work than at home tending to a husband and watching over the little ones; how shocking!" Females shouldn't have to deal with social expectations that are outdated. Women have the right to become educated, obtain a career support themselves, and not depend on a man. I've seen women adopt children by themselves to raise babies as single mothers. These women are living life without doubts of their sexuality. Society must recognize the change taking place. Women are independent now more than ever.

Confusion exists whether or not certain jobs are suitable for women in the workforce. There has always existed the woman's job and the man's job. By human nature, a male is stronger and more built for heavy lifting. Physical power is the reason the majority of men apply for construction jobs, painting, plumbing, or electrical installations. Women on the other hand have less muscle mass and are useful for working in a factory, waitress jobs or as cashiers. The difference in work is one is more back breaking than another. Another difference is the ability of multi-tasking. One of the female traits is paying attention to multiple tasks at one time. This can be associated with caring for a baby's constant needs. But, women now are capable of working just as rough as men do. Sanders claims, "They yearned for a say in their future, for jobs worthy of their abilities, for the right to live at peace, unmolested whole" (Sanders 832). Sanders explains how females want a say in society by being in charge of their futures. Women have grown out of their shell and are willing to explore and become more knowledgeable in matters of the real world. They are ready to commit to the responsibility of paying bills. We see women truck drivers hauling overloads on the highways. It shows that there is a very short gap between what was once considered women's work. There is no written rule that states the tasks females need to do in order to have a complete life.

There are many labels placed on men which stereotype males into being less masculine. These labels can be regular words turned into double entendre terms. Guys are afraid of being called pussy, punk, weak or fag. For example, if a man is caught gardening, they are considered feminine. Women's work cannot be done by a male or else they are labeled. This tactic degrades a man's masculinity. Supposedly, men hold the power and women have to be rescued because of their weakness. Society teaches this idea to children. In fairy tales, the princess is rescued by the knight in shining armor or 'Blue Prince'. These children stories convey females as weak and need men to live happily ever after. In physical comparison, women cannot challenge a male form. This obvious lack of power makes men think of themselves as better. Superiority transcends into the real world. Scott Russell Sanders says, "I realize now how ancient these identities are, how deep the tug they exert on men, the undertow of a thousand generations" (Sanders 831) The author realizes the stupidity of measuring masculinity in a man. Men have been taught to act a certain way or else they are not fulfilling themselves. Many workplaces have codes of conduct broken because of masculine ignorance. In professional corporate offices, the men have higher positions than women. No matter a woman's level of education, male bosses tend to favor men workers over female for the cause of 'brotherhood'. Brotherhood can step over a limit whenever harassment is practiced in a work place. Woman rights take a stand and protect females in these cases. No man is allowed to hurt a woman

with sexually offensive words or touching a female's body. Men go out of their way to advance on a woman through sexual actions because of the need to act like men. Many guys excuse themselves by mentioning the old phrase, "Boys will be boys". Culture expects a separation of female and male traits, so men tend to shy away from what society considers femininity, even if it means disrespecting women. A man's pride can interfere with equality between people.

Trying to change past mentality is difficult. Grandmothers have grown up without education. Instead they were trained at home to cook and clean in order to be a good house wife. Women were considered valuable only if they knew how to make their husband happy and successful in raising children. Women have come a long way. Now a valuable woman is an educated person capable of providing for herself. Declaring independency is the common goal for females. The bar has been raised for these determined individuals of any class in society. A woman who not only cooks and cleans, but claims whether or not to have a husband and make the choice of raising children. This progression hasn't made an impact in our society though because the role a woman should play has been stereotyped. Writer Amy Cunningham, associates the effect of disapproval from society with controlling a smile in, *Why Women Smile*. Cunningham states, "Despite all the work we American women have done to get and maintain full legal control of our bodies, not to mention our destinies, we still don't seem to be in charge of small muscle groups in our faces" (Cunningham 325). This example illustrates the hardships many women have surpassed except for the trouble with genuine smiles. Women can control the most complicated situations by remaining calm and analyzing. Yet, when it comes to a smile their control is tossed out the window. A smile on the face of a woman signifies weakness. When women smile men tend to think of females as weak. The curve of lips in a woman has a hidden message altogether. Females smile to hide certain emotions that aren't proper to show in public. Females must maintain a professional act just like the opposite sex. This action makes females and males equal in the public view. By doing what men do, women have been able to push away from inequalities inflicted by men. But, we haven't decided on a mutual agreement on the role a woman should play as a wife beside a husband, not against him. What part of life is worth sacrificing? Which part of life should a woman receive from the opposite sex? Our world has changed, but some households haven't. Society isn't proud of what the modern woman can accomplish.

If a balance were to be made between female expectations and society acceptance, women wouldn't find the need to settle down. Before, females were more valued so they'd be given strict rules to follow to practice proper etiquette. Appealing to the opposite sex was drastic for marriage.

Society made it possible for males to choose a wife like candy in a jar. This is what was expected. Now that women are independent and in no need of a man, expectations play no part in living life. One is free to fly solo just like a man and by breaking society's rules. Instead, females can play the games males play. Sanders shares a memory from his youth agreeing with the wants of females, "When the women I met in college thought about the joys and privileges of men, they did not carry in their minds the sort of men I had known in my childhood" (Sanders 832). Sanders expresses the women who preferred to become like their educated Fathers. These women desired for the freedoms upper-class educated males had. Before, a woman had to have children at a young age to prosper the family name. Now women don't have to become Mothers because they are preoccupied with a career. They're busy creating their own identity. This identity that was denied to females for the sake of keeping distance in the gender divide. Women now have choices that they weren't given in the past like the right to become a Mother. Birth control is a method of enhancing equality in our society. No female is forced to care for a baby and having to rely on a male for shelter, food and other bare necessities. In our society, women can provide for themselves as well as cope with responsibilities like males in the past. The issue at hand is the effect of independent women. Instead of women waiting for proposals to get married, men will have to wait to be proposed to. Females have a better understanding of the weight guys have on their shoulders. Society will have to admit that females have more power unlike the past.

Works Cited

- Cunningham, Amy. "Why Women Smile". *The Writer's Presence*. 6th ed. Ed Donald MacQuaide and Robert Atwan. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2009. 324-330. Print.
- Sanders, Scott Russell. "The Men We Carry in Our Minds". *The Writer's Presence*. 6th ed. Ed Donald MacQuaide and Robert Atwan. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2009. 828-832. Print.

Stephanie Williams

Names, Power, and their Role in Culture

Many would say that my name is the one thing I rightfully own as a person. As this is true for me, it does not stand true for all human beings. What you allow your name to stand for determines whether you truly own it or not. As we let others identify, label, and control our names we become less and less of the person we consider ourselves to be. Most often names are used to identify different people in society; however, the works of Angelou and Jen show that not only does a name identify it also presents what social power one can draw from it.

Maya Angelou introduces herself as a Negro girl in a small southern town, whose finishing school was a white woman's kitchen (Angelou 18). This is an accurate portrayal of an African-American girl growing up in the South in the 1930's, however a white woman from Texas goes on to challenge this common happenstance, "Why, you were a debutante" (Angelou 17). She says this of Angelou after she has revealed that her grandmother owns the only Negro general merchandise store, which apparently caused the Texas lady to produce this uneducated comment. Ironically enough this quote directly contrasts Angelou's description of herself. A debutante is a young woman who makes a formal debut into society while Angelou remains a servant with no debut. Therefore, in a way by the woman calling Angelou this name she is doing nothing but presenting her with a false sense of status in the community. This woman is reinforcing the social power structure in place because she controls the misuse of "debutante" and how it falsely represents what Angelou has acknowledged herself to be.

The ultimate test of social status is during the rising action of the story where Mrs. Cullinan changes Marguerite's name to Mary. The choice of name could matter less to Angelou it is the principle that takes her by storm; the fact that Mrs. Cullinan chose to call her something other than her name, "That's too long. She's Mary from now on." (Angelou 20) When Angelou first gets wind of her new name she does nothing, she acknowledges that that is what she is being referred to as but does not respond. Her immediate thought however refers to the people she knows having been called all sorts of slurs which were offensive and insulting. By thinking this Angelou reveals that she has automatically related these slurs to her incident at hand. Afterwards, Miss Glory, the servant to Mrs. Cullinan, tells of a similar happenstance she came across. After working for Mrs. Cullinan for twenty years her name is Glory but only after Mrs. Cullinan had renamed her from Hallelujah for

her convenience. Unfortunately, Glory fell victim to the social power in place as she still after twenty years has not argued it, but instead finds meek reasons to accept it. However Angelou refuses to take the verbal abuse. She finds herself submissive to the attacks but causes Mrs. Cullinan unknowingly to suffer too, “For a week I looked into Mrs. Cullinan’s face as she called me Mary. She ignored my coming late and leaving early” (Angelou 21) At this point the two characters are pretty much even in terms of social power because neither one confronts the other on what it is they’re doing.

Be that as it may, a full revolution is made the moment Angelou breaks those dishes, or shall I say breaks Mrs. Cullinan as a whole and regains her identity. By disposing of the china, Angelou is able to hurt Mrs. Cullinan where it hurts the most; she is able to return the act of ruining or wrecking her identity. Mrs. Cullinan’s identity or the likes of it is labeled by her possessions, “There were goblets, sherbet glasses, ice-cream glasses, wine glasses, green glass coffee cups with matching saucers, and water glasses. I had a glass to drink from, and it sat with Miss Glory’s on a separate shelf from the others” (Angelou 18). This proves how even as a possession Mrs. Cullinan does not want to associate herself with Negroes as it stands true for her real identity. By the time Angelou shifts the power unto herself from shattering the dishes and therefore Mrs. C’s identity, she has conquered the social power surrounding her.

Gish Jen’s essay, “Name Dropping” also addresses a struggle within the social power structure only it does so concerning familial and creative aspects. Throughout her lifetime Gish received two other names before naming herself what she is acknowledged as today. The first name she was given, a Chinese name, was Bi Lian, which translates to Jade Lotus (Jen 172). Along with this given name came countless do’s and don’ts:

For Jade Lotuses did not wear eye shadow, and Jade Lotuses did not pierce their ears, and Jade Lotuses did not grow their hair to a length that made them look like Cousin Itt. Jade Lotuses did not wear mini-skirts so short they had to be sure their underwear was clean. No – Jade Lotuses made straight A’s, even in Conduct, and wore their hair in braids and never considered the length of their eyelashes. They did not feel doomed because their bra brand was “AA- OK,” and when asked what they wanted most in life, Jade Lotuses answered that they wanted to make their parents happy (Jen 172).

The influence of familial power structure is very evident with this quote. Jen shows the countless ways in which her parents have labeled her just by giving her a name with such traditional substance. While writing, Jen is able to clearly recall what her parents wanted from her in terms of conduct

associated with her name. By creating the scenario of what a typical Jade Lotus does and does not do when in actuality she is speaking only of herself, it reveals the disenfranchisement her parents have enforced. It shows only what they want and expect, while Jen is left with no rebuttal having to respect the familial power structure in place and thus she has no voice.

Jen is able to take back her voice and make her name stand for something she wants it to once she decides to take matters into her own hands and name herself. Gish Jen is the name she chooses to give herself as she and her friends explored new hobbies and discovered the film star named Lillian Gish. After Jen adopted the name, changes in her conduct took place, "I'd never told my parents how I felt until long after I'd turned myself into Gish" (Jen 173). Immediately after being recognized as Gish only once, behaviors such as sneaking out, drinking, and mimicking love began. Therefore, not only did she rename herself in doing which she overpowers the familiar power; Jen is also able to show the creative aspect she used to conquer it by ultimately re-inventing herself which she portrays with her new behavior.

Ultimately, the social power that names hold will determine much of one's lifetime and how it is viewed. Angelou's point of view shows misconceptions and intentional name calling "putting her in her place" according to society. Jen focuses "Name Drooping" as just that; name-dropping. She was able to drop her past two names after she was able to adhere to the social power structure and do something for herself. The pieces of literature relate to each other in the way that both main characters obtain a high position in the social power culture once they realized the meaning of their name for themselves.

Works Cited

Angelou, Maya. *The Writer's Presence A Pool of Readings*. "What's Your Name Girl?" Bedford/St.

Martin's: Berleth, 2009. 17-22. Print.

Jen, Gish. *The Writer's Presence A Pool of Readings*. "Name Drooping." Bedford/St. Martin's: 2006.

171-175 Print.