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With the exception of font, spacing, and a few minor edits, all student essays appear exactly as they were submitted. I hope you enjoy reading them as much as I did.

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# Table of Contents

**First Place:** Sebastian Colorado  
5

**Second Place:** Christian Caceres  
9

**Third Place:** Zach Holder  
13

**Honorable Mention:** Kenny Okafor  
17

Stephen A. Agbomson  20
Ektedar Alam  24
Haley Argueta  25
Shanequia Briscoe  28
Christavia Chapman  33
Aryn Clayton  37
Joshua Colon  38
Maman Cooper  42
Castella Copeland  45
Sydney Cotto  48
Alexander Stephen Cruz  51
Tanika Griffin-Heaven  55
Casey Huang  59
Jessica Jaramillo  63
Brandon Lee Lara  68
Roggie Leon  72
Marcus Lopes  74
Michelle Marquez  77
Marinela Maxhani  82
Kiara Negron  84
Martineesha Parker  86
Santiago Perez  89
Nathan Ramdial    93
Kenneth Ramos    98
Aaisma Regmi    105
Cheziray Rivera    109
Meye Sassou    113
Bryan Segura    117
Christopher Serate    122
Brenda Tejeda    126
Marie Toupou    130
Maddie Valencia    134
Jacquanna Wilson    139
Wes Craven forwards many elements from John Carpenter’s 1978 film *Halloween* in his 1996 film *Scream*. In *Rewriting: How to do Things with Texts*, Joseph Harris defines the term forwarding as “taking words, images, or ideas from [a text] and putting them to use in new contexts” (Harris 37). In *Scream*, Craven alters the message that Slasher films send about gender in a way that revamped the genre and brought it back to pop culture relevance after it had been irrelevant for years. The altered message expanded the target audience of the Slasher to include women as well as men. In this paper, I will look at the final girls of both films and how they are portrayed in terms of gender roles in order to show how *Scream*’s strong final girl brought women to the Slasher film genre. The changes *Scream* implements show that strength isn’t limited to masculinity but can be feminine too.

Before I explore the details of strength and gender, I will explain the message of traditional Slasher film in order to highlight how *Scream*’s final girl updates the role. In Carol Clover’s seminal essay “Her Body, Himself: Gender in the Slasher Film,” she outlines the common gender themes that are expressed in classic Slasher films. Clover defines elements of Slasher films that are often present, to some extent, in every iteration of the genre. These include the male psycho killer whose motives usually have something to do with sexual repression; the terrible place where the killer lives and at least one murder occurs; the mostly female victims who are sexually active and drink or do drugs; shock value stemming from the grotesque murder shown in extreme detail; and, most importantly, the final girl (Clover 194-205). The way the final girl is portrayed is most indicative of the way the director views gender roles. The final girl who survives the assault of the killer is always a beautiful, young and virgin girl (Clover 202). Feminine characters are portrayed as irresponsible, careless, and weak (Clover 200). The final girl is a feminine character for most of the movie, but in order for her to survive, she must undergo a masculine transformation. Clover says that, in the world of the Slasher film, fear and suffering are considered feminine traits, while strength and bravery are masculine traits (Clover 218).

The typical audience of a Slasher film is male because this genre sends strong messages about masculinity in both male and female characters. While the final girl is feminine, she doesn’t relate to the other girls in the movie and relates more to the boys in the audience. Clover describes this phenomenon, saying, “Her smartness, gravity, competence in mechanical and other practical matters, and sexual reluctance set her apart from the other girls and ally her, ironically, with the very boys she fears or rejects, not to speak of the killer himself” (Clover 204). The classic Slasher film’s target audience is usually teenage boys. Clover says, “The audience for that story is by all accounts largely young and largely male – most conspicuously groups of boys.
who cheer the killer on as he assaults his victims, then reverse their sympathies to cheer the survivor on as she assaults the killer” (Clover 192). Teenage boys are able to identify with both the male killer dealing with his sexual frustrations but also with the female hero as she takes on masculine traits to fight of the killer. Slasher films alienate the women who watch them. The characters that are feminine, by Slasher film standards, with whom they would be able to relate to are often unlikeable and are killed off early in the movie. The final girl is the character that women would be able to identify with until she goes through the masculine transformation.

In *Halloween*, Laurie is the prototypical final girl who fits the mold that Clover describes. She starts off feminine and gains strength through a masculine transformation. Throughout much of the movie, Laurie has a timid personality. She is sometimes treated badly by her friends, and she doesn’t stand up for herself. One example of this timid personality is when her friend Annie is deciding what to do on Halloween night. After learning that her boyfriend is grounded, she says “Oh terrific, I've got three choices: Watch the kid sleep, listen to Lynda screw around or talk to you!” after Laurie offers to hang out with her (*Halloween*). After Annie makes this comment, Laurie doesn’t say anything back to her and still does Annie the favor of babysitting Lindsey while Annie goes to pick up Paul. Laurie is also easily peer-pressured by her friends. Laurie smokes weed with Annie even though it is obvious that she is uncomfortable with it as evidenced by her coughing and by how nervous she gets when they see Annie’s father. Also, Laurie is a virgin; this doesn’t seem to be her own decision but instead it is because she doesn’t have a choice. She talks about how boys think that she is too smart for them, and Annie also mocks her saying that she scares boys off. She has a feminine personality, by the definition of femininity provided by Slasher films.

Despite her femininity, she undergoes a masculine transformation at the end of the movie. In the final scenes, the audience begins to watch the movie through Laurie’s eyes rather than the killer’s. This is when the audience shifts their identification from the killer the victim. When Michael Myers is chasing after Laurie, she hides in the closet and we are in there with her watching Michael break in. Clover says that the point of view of the Slasher film is always through a “male gaze” (Clover 206). The camera takes the point of view of male characters, and so when the point of view shifts to Laurie, it signifies her masculinity. Laurie transforms by fighting back against Michael and taking his knife, emasculating him. This transformation happens slowly and progresses as the fight continues. This is shown through Laurie’s choice of weapon against Michael. Her first weapon is a knitting needle, an object that is blatantly symbolic of feminism. Next, she uses a hanger which takes a step towards masculinity because the hanger is fairly gender neutral. Finally, she takes Michael’s own knife and uses it against him. The knife is a phallic symbol and also symbolizes Laurie’s masculinity. Laurie does more damage to Michael as the weapon gets more masculine. The knife leaves him lying on the ground for the longest time, and when he does get back up, he doesn’t seem like as much of a threat. He comes up behind her and tries to choke her, but she is able to take his mask off and stop him. While Michael puts his mask back on, Dr. Loomis comes onto the scene and shoots Michael.
Even though Laurie takes up masculine traits, she is still not masculine or strong enough to save herself because she is still physically a woman. She fights off Michael, but he keeps coming back, and it takes Loomis, an adult male, to get Michael to go away. The female transformation into a figurative male has the implication that females can’t be strong and brave. Those are seen as masculine traits. Clover argues that Laurie does become the masculine hero just based on the fact that she fights back against Michael at the end because in Texas Chain Saw, a Slasher that preceded Halloween, the final girl doesn’t fight back at all and just runs away. By contrast, Laurie seems to assume a more heroic, masculine persona and the final girl in Texas Chain Saw a weaker, more feminine one (Clover 202). However, the fact that a man had to come in and rescue Laurie still suggests that actually being a man is what it takes to get rid of the killer. Also, using Clover’s logic, Laurie can be seen as still very feminine when compared to the final girl in Scream who is able to dispatch the killer herself.

Wes Craven forwards the element of the final girl in his film Scream to challenge the views on gender that are portrayed in Halloween. The main character, Sidney Prescott, is completely female, literally and figuratively. She is also a virgin, but it is completely her choice. Her boyfriend Billy is constantly pushing to have sex with her, but she stands strong with her beliefs and refuses. Once she does lose her virginity, it is again her decision and she initiates the sex with him. The fact that she has sex during the film ensures that she cannot take on a figurative male identity. Clover says that “the male viewer may be willing to enter into the vicarious experience of defending himself from the possibility of symbolic penetration on the part of the killer, but real vaginal penetration on the diegetic level is evidently more femaleness than he can bear” (Clover 212). The adolescent males who traditionally watch Slasher films can no longer identify with the final girl in the same way that they could in Halloween, after she transforms into a male. By having Sidney violate the most important distinguishing characteristic of the final girl of being a virgin, Craven says that the final girls in past Slasher films are not portrayed in a way that is representative of how real women are. In Slasher films, women are held to standards that are unrealistic, and if they violate them, like Laurie’s friends in Halloween, they are brutally murdered.

Although she is female, Sidney has traits that, in classic Slasher films, would be associated with masculinity. She is strong and independent. Every time that Ghostface attacks her, she puts up a fight and gets away. The first time she is attacked, she is being taunted by Ghostface and she steps out onto her porch. When she comes back in, Ghostface jumps out of a closet behind her and grabs her. They fall and when it looks like she is going to be stabbed and killed, she is able to kick him and run away. Also, in a scene reminiscent of Annie’s death in Halloween, Sidney locks herself in a car and Ghostface sneaks in through the trunk and tries to choke her, but she kicks him and is able to get out of the car. Craven dismisses the notions that females can’t be strong and that they need to either be masculine or need a male to save them in order for them to survive by characterizing Sidney like he did. This message empowers women and makes them more likely to go watch this movie.
The characters who survive and the events that unfold during the final scene in *Scream* also further the idea of the stereotypical traits of the genders being altered from the traditional Slasher film. The survivors in *Scream* are two women, Sidney and Gale Weathers, and one virgin male, Randy Meeks. There is no indication that in order to survive the character needs to be masculine. Gale Weathers is a nosy news anchor who has been following the story of the murders, and she always seems to be getting herself into the action. She is at the scene of the party at the end of the movie in search of a good story to report on. After the identity of the killers has been revealed, she is the one who comes in with a gun to save the day. Gale plays the forwarded role that Dr. Loomis plays in *Halloween*. The fact that she is a woman who comes to the rescue of the victims is an example of how Wes Craven challenges the view of women in the classic Slasher film. It again shows that men are not the only ones who can be strong and who can save the day. Also, when Sidney takes the gun from Gale to finish off Billy, it shows that Sidney is strong enough to kill the killer and that she doesn’t need anyone to rescue her, male or female. That is something that Laurie would never be able to do. Randy Meeks is the only male to survive but, in terms of the traditional Slasher films, he is a feminine character. The biggest deciding factor of this is that he is a virgin. Instead of the final girl being the virgin, it is a man in *Scream*. This example of forwarding flips the convention around and works to get rid of the idea that women have to be virgins in Slasher films.

By changing the gender roles in *Scream*, Wes Craven is able to attract female viewers to the Slasher film genre. Craven forwarded many elements of the Slasher film genre that were present in John Carpenter’s *Halloween* and altered them to provide a new perspective on the traits that are commonly associated with femininity and masculinity. *Halloween* portrayed feminine characters as weak and dependent on others while masculine characters are portrayed as strong and brave. *Scream* portrays female characters as both feminine and strong simultaneously. This is a perspective that challenges the views that were previously expressed in the Slasher genre. By challenging this view, Craven opened up the genre to more female watchers.

**Works Cited**


The intention of affirmative action is to advance the individual, to actualize their potential. Affirmative action is set into place for the stated purpose of establishing and maintaining equality amongst different ethnic groups. It performs this task of sustaining equal opportunity by not only subverting, but also averting discrimination (Crosby, Iyer, and Sincharoen 3). However, with this preservation of equality comes a much more serpentine result—alienation. Individuals who have benefited from the resources offered by affirmative action may often find themselves alienated from their ethnic community. This separation from a community that had once been their home leaves them with an inability to return and lead the remainder of the disadvantaged group. Richard Rodriguez’s “Achievement of Desire” provides compelling evidence regarding the role of isolation in alienation. Rodriguez’s ambition, and consequent success, “sets [him] apart” (516). It was his hunger for success and constant paranoia of education versus heritage that left him more American than Mexican. Affirmative action often results in a separation between education and heritage, where education serves to assimilate the individual, and heritage (as we will later discuss) disables the individual from unlocking their full potential. This clear division between education and culture within the “Achievement of Desire” breeds awareness to a concrete conflict between the individual and community. Affirmative action can help one accomplish individual success, but in doing so, it forgets about the community from which the individual originated ultimately harming the ethnic group.

As an individual adapts and conforms to a culture and society different from which he originated, their cultural identity, in a sense, diminishes. A person’s cultural identity is responsible for associating the individual with a particular culture, in this case, an ethnic group. As Rodriguez dedicated his early life to education, he suffered the loss of his cultural identity. He lost the very essence of what it meant to be part of a vibrant, dynamic community, and it soon “became clear that [he] had joined a lonely community” (530). When affirmative action takes grasp of a bright individual demonstrating promise, it forgets that the purpose of aiding the individual is not only to maximize opportunity, but to benefit the community from which he came from. As a result, the individual achieves many accolades and successes but fails to advance his community of origin. Specifically, it’s the isolation caused by affirmative action that plays a detrimental role in the loss of one’s cultural identity. Because affirmative action separates an individual from their community and therefore isolates them, they lose the understanding of what it means to be part of a community. Granted, affirmative action may occasionally provide an individual with a “new” sense of culture. Rodriguez speaks of a “community of
scholars” that had given him the “pleasure of confidence” (530). However, we quickly learn that this confidence is only temporary. Through Richard Hoggart’s *The Uses of Literacy*, he describes the “stronger and more ambiguous” nostalgia that haunts Rodriguez as he writes his essay in the quiet reading room of the British Museum (Hoggart **). Rodriguez finds himself in a state of isolation without a community to associate himself with. Affirmative action may deliver the same results by isolating an individual from their community and subsequently impeding the ethnic group’s advancement.

There exists an antagonistic relationship between education and heritage in Rodriguez’s quest for success. Rodriguez views his Mexican heritage as an impediment serving only as a blockade to a prosperous future. To ensure success, Rodriguez is “careful to keep separate the two very different worlds of [his] day” (516). He quickly assimilates to American ideals and accepts the U.S. education system. This conformity with U.S. educational standards estranges Rodriguez from the Mexican culture he had once enjoyed, and molds him into a product of American culture. In a slightly different manner, affirmative action accomplishes the same task. The policy is in place to expand the opportunities of an individual and further maximize their potential. This intention is unquestionably righteous in nature; however, because it produces higher educational standards, it alienates the individual from their ethnic group without the opportunity of adhering to the same standards. While the individual advances, his ethnic group is not afforded the same educational opportunities and consequently unable to advance and flourish. Paulo Freire acknowledges the dangers associated with alienation resulting from education in his essay “The ‘Banking Concept of Education.” He discusses a corrupt method of teaching known as the banking method where students become “disconnected from the world” and are incapable of “effective communication” (321). Analogously, because of an educational “gap” brought about by affirmative action, an individual is no longer capable of communicating effectively with their community of origin. As a result, the individual conforms to a “new” culture and loses their sense of heritage. It’s this “gap” in education that erects a boundary between the individual and community preventing the individual from returning to aid the community.

W.E.B. Du Bois was a civil rights activist in the early nineteenth century dedicated to eliminating the boundaries between Blacks and Whites of his time. As the first African American to receive a doctorate, Du Bois was a strong political figure and proponent of equality. Although Du Bois lived in a time where affirmative action had not existed, he provides us with a worthy example in our argument of the policy. In his pursuit for equal rights, Du Bois wrote an essay titled “The Talented Tenth” where he encourages the top ten percent of the African American community to pursue classical education in order to reach their potential. He argues that in order to “advance” and “save” the Negro race, a group of Black individuals regarded to as “The Talented Tenth” must “guide the Mass away from the contamination and death of the Worst, in their own and other races.” By promoting the separation between “The Talented Tenth” and the uneducated individuals that exist within the race, Du Bois only invites ten percent of his race to join in the battle for civil rights. In designating a select group of individuals the role of leader, Du Bois hopes to advance the African American
population with ten percent carrying the remaining ninety percent on their shoulders. In reality, we must stay away from this approach and advance a particular group as a whole. Not ten percent, nor fifty percent of the population, but one-hundred percent of the population.

The progression of a community does not occur with only but a few members advancing. It is a group effort requiring the utmost of everyone involved. When Du Bois speaks of only ten percent of the population doing all the work, he forgets of the unfortunate possibility where the Talented Tenth may lose their cultural identity. At some point in the educational process, the Talented Tenth may lose sight of their primary objective to deliver equality to their race and instead conform to the bracket where they can further thrive and progress individually. Subsequently, they can lose that sense of heritage that at a time had given them much pride. Therefore, it is not wise to assign one in ten African Americans the prestigious title of “The Talented Tenth.” This illogical way of thinking mimics the degrading effect affirmative action has on a certain ethnic group. Although with the same good intentions, “The Talented Tenth” becomes the reflection of what it means to be a “scholarship boy”—successful without heritage (Rodriguez 518). No longer are the ten percent acting on behalf of the “Mass” and striving for equality, but in a sense, straying away from equality leaving their cultural identity behind for a successful future.

In an interview with Scott London titled “A View From the Melting Pot: An Interview with Richard Rodriguez,” Rodriguez explains his reasons for criticizing affirmative action. He believes that affirmative action helps individuals not needing of the extra aid, leaving a disadvantaged community inflicted after losing astute members. Where Du Bois unknowingly at the time agrees with the policy of affirmative action, Rodriguez separates himself from the policy. He states that its agenda is not to provide opportunities to a struggling class; rather, it only aids the “‘minorities’ at the very top of the ladder.” He continues to say, “Affirmative action ignores our society’s real minorities — members of the disadvantaged classes, no matter what their race” (London). Because affirmative action fails in providing aid to those in actual need of it, the policy only creates new middle class subjects or helps the individuals already part of the middle class. This unintended result of affirmative action delivers a detrimental blow to the disadvantaged community as they continue to lose integral members and potential leaders of the group. It is true that individuals of a community must be aided by affirmative action in order to maximize potential. However, our objective and our approach must alter so that we do not forget the community that deserves the opportunity to advance and flourish.

Affirmative action assigns itself the role of benefactor by expanding the opportunities of an underprivileged individual. That it succeeds in. However, it accomplishes this task by isolating the individual and alienating him from his ethnic group. This, in turn, leaves the community that is in actual need of aid and opportunities forgotten of, and therefore unintentionally damaged. Isolation must be eliminated as a method used to advance the capabilities of an individual. The tactic too often develops adverse effects as an individual becomes alienated and loses his cultural identity. This loss in cultural identity not only may emotionally challenge the individual as seen in the case of Rodriguez, but also may prevent a community from developing
and thriving. The stagnation of a community that results from the loss of an individual’s cultural identity is specifically caused by the fact that the individual fails to return to the community from which he originated. This lack of leadership within the community ultimately stagnates the community making any hope of advancement impossible.

Affirmative action is a policy responsible for providing hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions of individuals with the resources and opportunities necessary to succeed. Unfortunately, the policy itself is not without flaws. A crucial flaw in the policy exists in its inability to aid the community from which the individuals originate. From this imperfection stems a multitude of complications including isolation’s role in alienation. When affirmative action separates a disadvantaged individual from their ethnic group, it presents the detrimental possibility of eliminating the individual’s cultural identity. As a result, the individual is alienated from their community of origin furtherimpeding the progress made by the community. In Richard Rodriguez’s “Achievement of Desire,” Rodriguez serves as a testament to the negative effects that may inflict an individual when they rely solely on education to bring them success. Heritage must not be abandoned, for it is our cultural roots that associate us with a community. It must be the objective of affirmative action to provide the tools for an individual to one day advance their ethnic group, for without the progress of a community, an ethnic group is incapable of serving an active and essential role in society.

Works Cited


In a public school system that is failing its students, our country searches for new methods to revive the classroom. There are so many varying opinions that it is nearly impossible to find the true cause of the slump that we are seeing. If you ask John Taylor Gatto, he would claim that boredom is the cause of our nation’s education problems. The students are bored because the teachers are disconnected and all they do is sit around; they want to learn “real-world” material, and the teachers are bored because their students show no interest in the work and only care about the grade that they receive in the class (666). This boredom causes a lack of interest in the material, which in turn leads to disconnection from the teacher and student. While this is true, what John Taylor Gatto does not consider is the role that homework plays on the lives of students. In an article called “Homework vs. The Happy Family,” Gary Stager talks about the impact that homework has on American students. He compares America’s homework load to other countries and writes about the differences that he notices in the student’s lives. Speaking from personal experience, homework has in no way helped me progress as a student; it has instead consumed my life and taken away personal time which is necessary for everyone. I feel as if everything I need to know is what I learned in class. When homework is assigned to students it does not benefit them; it is instead a form of surveillance which causes an unnecessary amount of stress which leaves them unmotivated and disconnected in both the classroom and at home.

According to Gary Stager, the school systems are run differently in Australia (75). He tells the reader that he lives with an Australian family for one month out of the year every year. The three kids play sports, take music lessons, play outside and even read for fun. One might be curious about how this is possible, and the answer is simple, their schools do not assign homework. The strange thing here is that Australia is fifteen ranks above the United States on the Program for International Student Assessments in math (75). This is an amazing statistic, considering that the students in Australia do not have daily homework assignments. This alone shows that the stress that is caused by homework can affect a student’s performance negatively. When not assigned homework on a regular basis, students then have the opportunity to have personal time and enjoy themselves. Speaking from personal experience, I perform much better in school when I am not stressed out. Everybody needs the opportunity to get rid of stress and collect his or her thoughts. By assigning homework to students you are then turning their eight hour day into a ten or eleven hour day. This is not healthy. It does not benefit the student; it is simply a type of surveillance used to keep watch over the student’s life.
Surveillance is not only part of the school day; it is also continued into the children’s home life. In “Homework vs. The Happy Family” by Gary Stager, he mentions John Taylor Gatto’s work entitled, *Dumbing Us Down*, and discusses the idea of surveillance. The school system somehow finds a way to keep a 24/7 watch on their students and they achieve this by assigning homework. By giving their students homework, it then gives their parents a job to do. If their child does not complete the homework, then they will not move forward in their school career, so parents automatically support the school in pressuring their children to do the work. In the words of Gary Stager, the parents become “parole officers” to the children. They carry out the duty of the teacher at home (74). The school now has the ability to control what the children are doing not only at school, but now at home as well. By assigning students these assignments it is pitting the parent and child against each other. After around eight hours of learning and working in school, the student is then forced to listen to their parent demanding them to do their homework. This creates high tension and can often times create arguments between the student and their parent. By assigning children homework, school successfully consumes the student’s entire life. They are forced to wake up before the sun, go to school for eight or nine hours, do any extracurricular activities they may have, take the bus home, do homework, eat dinner and then go to sleep. This is repeated everyday Monday through Friday. With this busy schedule it makes it nearly impossible for the child to spend any time with their family. Even when they are in the presence of their family, they are isolated and withdrawn because they have to complete a ridiculous amount of homework. On beautiful days, children are forced to stay inside and complete their homework. They have no time to play games, go outside or hang out with mom and dad. This alienates the student from their family and forces their primary focus of life to be on school.

John Taylor Gatto says that schools control their student’s lives, and one of the main ways that they do this is by surveillance. By controlling what a child is taught and everything that a child does in school and out of school, they are then conditioned to obey authority. John Taylor Gatto calls this the adaptive function.

Schools are to establish fixed habits of reaction to authority. This of course, precludes critical judgment completely. It also pretty much destroys the idea that useful or interesting material should be taught, because you can’t test for reflexive obedience until you know whether you can make kids learn, and do, foolish and boring things. (669)

A prime example of “fixed habits of reaction to authority” is homework. I have never understood why it is necessary to review material at home that has been covered in class for eight hours. As young students, a strict curriculum full of boring material is established and eventually accepted as being normal. What many people do not know is that this is exactly what the school system wants to be done. These young students are not being treated like human beings; they are being treated like animals. They are being trained to behave and do exactly as they are told. When they do something correctly and promptly they are awarded with a golden star. When they do something badly, they are punished with a timeout or a trip to the principal’s office. The system watches and passes judgment on everything the student does. From homework to test scores, even from the
playground to asking to go to the bathroom, the system must approve everything that you do. This is a part of their training process which seems to last until about fifth grade. Once this training process has been completed, the students are then switched into their different academic groups. By middle school, this surveillance seems normal to the children. They accept the authoritarian figure of the school and do not question their methods.

Not only does homework cause problems through the stress that it is accompanied by, but it is also proven by research that it is not effective in helping a student retain information. In 2012, Valerie Strauss published an article in the Washington Post entitled, “Homework: An unnecessary evil? … Surprising findings from new research.” In this article she talks about the results that have been found when certain groups of students were studied to see how homework affects them. According to Strauss, there is no positive correlation between homework and performance in school when studied at an elementary level. As student’s progress through their school careers, homework plays a more significant role, but even at the highest level it barely makes a difference. Most of the groups of students that were sampled showed that homework does not make a difference, but at the high school level it was reported that one to two hours of homework a night led to three points of a better score on certain test (Strauss). As a student, I can agree that this statistic is true. What Valerie Strauss does not include in her article is that although the student who completes homework scores an average of three points higher on tests, it does not mean that they have truly learned the information better. If this student completes homework on a regular basis then it means the information is fresher in their head. Who is to say that they did not cram this knowledge before the test and will forget it soon after? Also speaking from personal experience, the student who tends to do homework every night is the student who tends to study extensively the night before a test. Therefore I do not think the three-point difference that was showed in Strauss’ test could truly be considered reliable. It shows partial evidence, but it is such a small number that I cannot help but question it. In addition to testing the correlation between homework and achievement on test, Strauss tested the correlation between homework and course grade. The results for correlation of homework and course grade came up different than the test results for correlation of homework and grade on test.

After testing the relationship between homework completion and final grade in a class, Valerie Strauss came to the conclusion that there is no correlation between homework and a student’s final grade in class. While homework did help partially on the test, she found no evidence to support that it helped in the long run (Strauss). If Valerie Strauss was able to figure this out through test then it is highly likely that the people running America’s schools no this as well. So this makes me skeptical as to why homework is such a big part of the curriculum. If it is proven that homework has no impact on the final grade of someone’s course, then why are students still assigned two hours of work a night. It brings us back to surveillance. Schools do not assign this work to benefit their students; they assign this work to keep complete watch over their students. By constantly giving them work to do it controls what the student does with their free time. It forces the student to fully
commit all of their free time to school and ultimately “programs” them into following everything that is said by the teacher.

From years of personal experience I am confident in saying that homework is the cause of the bored student. When so much time is spent doing schoolwork it becomes very easy to lose interest and search for stimulation elsewhere. In my four years of public high school I would very rarely complete the homework that was assigned to me. Even though I would not do the homework, I would usually score some of the highest grades in the class. This was simply because I paid attention to the material in school. I was capable of doing this because my brain was not burnt out from doing countless hours of work the night before.

When we first sat down in kindergarten we were told that it was necessary to complete our homework because it would help us become smarter and an all around better student. What they did not tell us is that the reason we would become better students is because we would learn to follow the rules exactly as they wanted us to. By following their orders and not doing things our own way, it makes it easier for the school system to oppress their students. This is why they start as early as elementary school, to get the students used to obeying to authority. Homework serves as the perfect surveillance mechanism and can also alienate the student from their family. With the constant big load of homework to do, the students are forced to spend less time enjoying themselves at home, and more time with their face in the book. Homework turns their parent into a “parole officer” and helps severe the tie in their relationship. The catch twenty-two here is that homework is now starting to cause students to have disinterest in their classes. With the amount of time that they spend working at home, it is nearly impossible for them to focus on the work that they have to do in school. With little to no free time, their world begins to revolve around the school. This is exactly what the system wants, but unfortunately it is what is worst for the student.

Works Cited

Kenny Okafor
~Honorable Mention~

The Definition of a “Nigger”

Nigger is a word that has been powerful throughout history. It is banned from almost all television networks and is recognized as one of the worst names you can call a dark-skinned person. Although it is less commonly used, the n-word continues to be a lingering part of the African American society. Not enough time and effort is put into educating Americans about the n-word and its significance throughout American history. Everyone is scared to use it, but most of our population isn’t sure why. The biggest confusion is why it is so commonly used by African-Americans in today’s society. I believe the average population is uneducated about the definition of a nigger and saying “nigga” is only a way of desensitizing the inhumane events associated with the n-word.

_Urban Dictionary_ defines a nigger as, “an ignorant, uneducated foolish individual regardless of race, color, religion, sexual orientation, etc.” (“nigger” 4). Definitions can be posted on _Urban Dictionary_ by anyone so information might be inaccurate. I disagree with this definition because it disregards the origin of the n-word. Also, it is saying that everyone, white, black, Hispanic and so on, can be called a nigger and have the same effect. When someone says the n-word it is automatically associated with a dark-skinned person. Calling a white person a nigger has no value or meaning to them. It’s similar to calling a black person a cracker or a white person a spic. All these words are concentrated on demeaning a particular race. The Oxford English Dictionary defines nigger as, “a dark-skinned person of sub-Saharan African origin or descent.” (“nigger” 1). It goes on to say, “This term is strongly racially offensive when used by a white person in reference to a black person.” (“nigger” 1, OED). Although his definition is better than the _Urban Dictionary_ definition, it still doesn’t include all the aspects of the word.

In my own words, when you call someone a nigger, you are saying that they are less than a human being and are equal to a slave. Therefore, they have no rights, no citizenship, and they are illiterate. Slave owners used nigger as a way to show their slaves that they are superior to them. It was a tool used to dehumanize slaves and make them believe that they have no good to bring into the world. No one has the right to think he or she is better that someone else. This is the reason why the n-word is so powerful.

The history of the word nigger comes from the Latin word “niger” which means black. This translates into the color negro, or black in Spanish. By the early 1800’s and slavery period it was used as a derogatory name towards slaves. It was and still is a way that white racists categorize blacks as illiterate and lazy people. Slaves weren’t seen as human beings by white people so they received no education, therefore, they couldn’t
read and write. Slaves who were whipped, over worked, and killed deserve not to be hearing the n-word used by anyone.

It is important not to forget the n-word so that history doesn’t repeat itself and everyone learns from their mistakes. It is ignorant to just forget what slaves and civil rights activists did to make something positive out of a word filled with hatred. It is a part of history that people wish to forget, but it has to be addressed and taught in classes so that younger generations will understand what happened. I know a lot more about the holocaust and I remember the morbid pictures that teachers showed to my class, but there has been nothing significant about the n-word that I remember learning. I believe that if teachers go more in depth about the n-word and not just say it was a “bad word”, people from all different races would be more sensitive to saying it.

Throughout history everyone believed that people of dark skin are less intelligent and inferior to everyone else. It was a social norm that was unfortunately widespread. Similar to the 81 words radio interview about how homosexuality was viewed as a psychological problem, slavery was mostly accepted. White people with authority set a precedent that they were the dominant race, so other white people followed in their footsteps. It was a cycle that seemed impossible to break. Only a few people spoke out against it, but it wasn’t enough. It took a large movement to show that everyone is equal and had the right to be free.

In today’s society, nigger is rarely said. It has evolved into nigga. Urban Dictionary defines nigga as, “slang term for homie, friend, buddy, etc., used primarily by African Americans but has spread to other races as well;” (“nigga” 7). Tupac Shakur compared nigger and nigga. He said, “Nigger is a black man with a slavery chain around his neck. Nigga is a black man with a gold chain on his neck.” (“nigga” 1, UD). African Americans embrace the word nigga and use it as a way to control a word that haunted them throughout history. Nigga is a positive form of nigger that is used every day. In my high school it is the way to say hi to your friend, introduce someone, or show how close you are to someone. It is so common that teachers just ignore it when a student says it. I remember the only time a teacher told a student not to say it was one of the last days of my senior year. The student yelled in the hallway to his friend, “My nigga what time we going?” The teacher said, “Excuse me don’t use that word.” The student looked at the teacher, rolled his eyes, and said even louder, “Nigga what time we going!” This anecdote proves how people view the word nigga. The student is black and he didn’t see anything wrong with calling his friend a nigga. The teacher is white and looked extremely stunned and embarrassed. It was bad enough that he disrespected her instructions, but she was more surprised that he was calling someone the n-word. Moreover, this example shows the different environments that white and black people are raised. In the student’s opinion, calling his friend a nigga is something that comes naturally to him and what he grew up with. In the teacher’s mind, the student was calling his friend a nigger, not nigga. The teacher’s parents don’t know that a nigga is a way to identify a close friend, so they raised their daughter to never say it and avoid it. So who is to blame? Both of them didn’t know any better and that is what is wrong in the n-word issue.
Black and white people from an older generation are confused with the word “nigga.” They see no difference between “nigger” and “nigga.” To people of my age, it’s just a word that has no ties to calling someone a slave and all the negativity associated with that. A black person my age would never have a conversation with his or her parents using nigga because they’ll get a severe punishment and a lecture on why not to use that word. There is a sense of confusion among older white men who hear black guys saying nigga this, nigga that.

Anyone and anything can be a nigga. You could be white, black, Hispanic, Asian, or you could call a dog, cat, or any other animal a nigga. Mostly black people and Hispanics say nigga, and white people can say it if they are talking to a black person they are close to. It is used even before you say someone’s name. I am not agreeing with Urban Dictionary’s definition because people just say nigga without any intentions of insulting someone or calling them ignorant and uneducated. For example, if I was trying to describe someone, I would say, “That nigga James with the blue shorts on.” Another example would be, “That white nigga Chris with the red shirt on.” It has become an everyday part of society especially in my generation. Black people my age get offended when a white person says it and white people always want to say it. It has led to many fights and the white person gets in trouble for using a racial slur. People always want something that they can’t have. Other than black people, Hispanics say nigga the most. Black people have no problem with Hispanics saying it and I could never get a good reason why. Some black students that I asked that question said it was because Hispanics have gone through oppression as well and they are minorities. The race that black people unofficially ban from saying nigga is Asians. They are minorities, and they have also gone through oppression for example the Japanese Internment Camps, so I don’t understand why they can’t say it according to those black students.

Nigga is also omnipresent in pop culture. Black rappers and singers say it in their songs and there is no controversy. In addition, nigga is in the title of some of the songs. For example, in his newest album Born Sinner, one of J. Cole’s songs is entitled Rich Niggas. The song is about how he was jealous of rich people growing up because he was poor and couldn’t afford the things he wanted. One of the greatest rappers of all time, Notorious B.I.G., rapped about how he shouldn’t be scared of anyone because we are all humans. This song is called Niggas Bleed. These songs aren’t talking about black people only, they include everyone. I found it interesting that in 2008 when another great rapper, Nas, wanted to name his album Nigger, it was severely criticized. It created so much controversy that he decided not to have a title for his album. This was interesting because rappers say nigga so often in their raps and get away with it, but when one of the most respected rappers wanted his album to be called nigger, black people and large organizations were against him. This event displayed how black people avoid the social conversation about nigger but yet accept nigga. Nigger is still a very powerful word in today’s modern society. Not everyone understands the demeaning connotations that goes along with it and that is why more effort needs to be put in educating everyone about such a strong word.
Stephen Agbomson  
Contamination of Culture

Culture cannot be defined without the acknowledgment of what it is made up of- a group of people. Anyone can second me on the fact that mankind is not the same as it was centuries ago, or a decade ago or even a year ago, we are constantly changing. Due to newer discoveries, more effective medications and better ways of research, the human species is fast evolving and is under constant change and improvement. The author of “The Case for Contamination” Kwame Anthony Appiah did an excellent job of presenting and incorporating his views into the various viewpoints of cultural change to be precise, the influence of western cultures on the traditions and customs of what could be seen as unaltered or authentic societies in Africa, Asia and in some other parts of the world.

This type of cultural contamination is also apparent in the life of Fredrick Douglass, which is presented in his narrative “Learning to Read and Write”. He explains in his narrative where his interest in learning to read and write came from and how he overcame the obstacles he faced- especially of those from his mistress- in trying to explore this interest. Douglass’s educational narrative could be related to Appiah’s article of cultural contamination and hybridization in many ways, enhancing understanding in both pieces. The benefits of globalization, or what the UNESCO and other like-minded organization would call “cultural imperialism” is what Appiah speaks of in his article in the *New York Times* is practically the same type of influence Western Culture had on Douglass which has made him the renounced historic figure he is known for today.

Culture is a unit that needs constant improvement as time goes on and the best means by which we could go about this improvement is learning from other cultures, taking aspects of their culture that has enabled the excel as a people-Hybridization. Appiah failed to mention/recognize that the need for a cosmopolitan enhancement (individualistic improvement) is already within us and fighting it would be to hold already deprived societies further back. There are hundreds of thousands of cultures worldwide if not millions, and we all stand a chance to learn from one another. Picture the relationship between a student and his/her teacher, the student stands to gain not only knowledge but also inspiration, and a lot more that could be unrelated to solely education. Looking at this analogy, at any point in time depending on who is gaining, globalization could be seen in this way. A western culture could gain a lot of knowledge from a traditional culture that has relied on herbal medicine for centuries and use its advance technology to perfect certain medications for both cultures. The traditional culture could also be taught how to filter its water to ensure its people get access to portable drinking water. The benefactor when it comes to hybridization is interchange, during the relationship the teacher at one point becomes the student and vice versa.
Globalization and hybridization as concepts of international relevance is not one without its own flaws. It is this same quest for new and rear cultures that lead the countries like Portugal, American, Britain and France to explore and trade with countries in Africa especially those along the coast. With this came the emergence of the Atlantic slave trade, one of the dark moments associated with globalization. But this is no longer the case, times have changed and people’s thoughts have changed – this all goes back to the earlier idea the cultures are constantly improving- and most importantly slavery is frowned upon. But the globalization we (Appiah and I) speak of isn’t about the past, it’s about the future, it’s about a future where tradition like the dropping baby ritual- A tradition Muslims in the western Indian town of Solapur line up to drop their babies off a 15 meter tower in a shrine, catching them in a white sheet. The ritual, which has taken place for more than half a millennium, is believed to make the children grow up healthy and strong- and female genital mutilation also known as female circumcision are abolished and are not kept for the reason that “these traditions are one unique aspect of a particular culture and they have been in these cultures for a long time.”

The invasion or hybridization of western cultures or any other culture into a particular society isn’t as horrible and unwelcomed as preservationists describe it in Appiah’s article “The fear is that the values and images of are threatening to choke out the world's native flora”(2). Human beings have been designed to crave knowledge and experience, we are always eager to explore new thing. It is this same curiosity that pushed Fredrick Douglass to learn to read and right, as he states it “… book entitled The Columbian Orator. Every opportunity I got, I used to read this book”(88), he was interested to find out more about this book, its contents, and its purpose. I wouldn’t say this is mere curiosity; this is the pursuit of a much better living condition, a more fulfilling life. Appiah also highlights this trait using some member of Ashanti tribe in the beginning of his article, he talks of how his neighbors all live and studied outside the country, “one, about my age, was a good friend. He lives in London. His brother lives in Japan, where his wife is from. They have another brother who has been in Spain for a while and a couple more brothers who, last I heard, were in the United States”, “The president of Ghana comes from this world, too. He was born across the street from the palace to a member of the royal Oyoko clan. But he belongs to other worlds as well: he went to Oxford University; he’s a member of one of the Inns of Court in London; he’s a Catholic, with a picture of himself greeting the pope in his sitting room”. He points out that even men with deep roots in the traditional Ashanti kingdom – himself included- have ventured out into this new more modernized world. This goes to show how certain cultures benefit from hybridization, by taking the risk of sending their children outside their cultural territory to study, they have in turn gotten back men of knowledge like Appiah himself- a professor at one of the most prestigious universities in the world- and the president, men very capable of running the Ashanti kingdom if the need arises. It was this same “bread of knowledge” Douglass was in search of the led the elders of the Appiah’s tribe to grant youngsters in the tribe to go beyond the home region and home country to further their education.

Personally, I think Fredrick Douglass’s narrative is one of the most practical real life examples demonstrating the true essence of Appiah’s “ The Case For Contamination”. We have established that culture is
a unit under constant improvement, and we can say Douglass was improving himself through his education; he had become a better person-intellectually. As you would see in the following sentences, Douglass unlike other slaves who would just take to their heels after hearing what these men had to say, thought of it critically. Taking a quick look at Douglass’s narrative, to the part where he helps the two Irishmen unload a scow of stone. After helping them, they spoke for some time about Fredrick gaining his freedom, although he was suspicious of them he listened to what they had to say. And also at this point we could consider Douglass a “citizen of the world”, a cosmopolitan as Appiah would describe him. It would be logical to assume that Fredrick Douglass knew of the plight of the Irish since he had been reading the Columbia Orator. In the book, there is a chapter on the speech delivered by Mr. O’Connor to the Irish House of Commons in favor of a bill for the emancipation of Roman Catholics. Douglass after reading this piece would know what these Irish went through and these Irish men would also know what Fredrick was going through at the hands of his owners. And also after realizing these men were Irish, would bring to mind what he read in the book about them seeking emancipation, one of the words he heard often that drew his attention, another being abolition. All these were words that meant a lot to both cultures, words that meant freedom from bondage.

Hybridization of cultures is a phenomenon culture would have to embrace at one point or another, especially in some of our tradition cultures that practices certain inhumane and degrading cultural practices, as Appiah states “we can't enforce diversity by trapping people within differences they long to escape”(1), some people appreciate change, some also have an unsettling feeling about the world changing, but shouldn’t the choice of change be up to the members of the culture? “Are we to stop the importation of baseball caps into Vietnam so that the Zao will continue to wear their colorful red headdresses? Why not ask the Zao? Shouldn't the choice be theirs?” Why does someone in an office in Paris who has access to good food and portable water have to be the one to decide if a small tribe somewhere in rural Asia or South America should aspire to want a more modernized life?

What these cultural preservationists fail to recognize is, culture can be preserved through many other ways, and we don’t have to necessarily live it and practice it daily or annually, especially the dangerous and pointless ones. Humankind has been preserving culture for centuries now, take for an example the ancient Roman empire, practices like crucifixion – death by hanging on a cross, the punish given to thieves and other wrong doers in the Roman empire- is no longer practiced but is still remembered and preserved in art form. Many cultures could preserve various aspects of their cultures- good or bad- in paintings, folktales, stories and traditional songs. "The story itself is a primary form of the oral tradition, primary as a mode of conveying culture, experience, and values and as a means of transmitting knowledge, wisdom, feelings, and attitudes in oral societies" (Cora Agatucci, African Storytelling, cocc.edu).

Human beings will always seek to improve their living conditions, and as long as that happens, our cultural unit will also be under constant change to improve our immediate and international society.
Works Cited


This just in, in the midst of walking to class, Casey Huang reports of his Samsung Galaxy knocked down by Rafid Choudhury on his way to English class. The severely damaged phone was immediately rushed to the University of Connecticut’s Infirmary. The phone is in critical condition with a shattered touch screen and batteries completely detached from the phone’s back.

“We’re trying the best we can to restore the conditions back to normal.” said the Galaxy specialist, Ivy Stabell.

“I was just texting my friends on my phone as I was entering my classroom when Rafid just intentionally knocks my phone down” said Casey as he was weeping.

Rafid Choudhury was taken into custody for further investigation later that evening. Further reports on the damaged Samsung Galaxy revealed that it has lost several capabilities. Damage to the touch screen revealed that Candy Crush could not be played anymore. Severe damage had been done to the Wifi due to contact with the surface. Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and Vine were not accessible; however, Casey was still able to tweet with his back up phone immediately following the incident.

“If it wasn’t for that tweet, no one would have noticed the incident and helped out.” Ivy reports.

“I was very glad I made the right choice of tweeting instantly” says Casey Huang.

The tweet states, “Just dropped my phone #Help #NeedMoneyForRepair.”

The Samsung Galaxy’s batteries could not be located following the incident. Replacements had to be made with no extra charge due to the donation from the Samsung community.

“I am so grateful to have friends who are caring. Texting and tweeting to them day and night has really drawn us closer to each other and it is because of them that I don’t have to buy another Galaxy or worst case scenario, an iPhone” says Casey.

The phone will be back to normal condition within six days and during that time Casey will be utilizing his backup LG for twitter and Facebook updates.
Haley Argueta

Women’s Fear of Branching Away From Society Due to Maternal Figures

Females face the fear of external judgment from society in everyday life. They are afraid of what people think about what they do or say, and how they act. It is expected of them to act and talk a specific way based on the way they were brought up. Jamaica Kincaid’s “Girl” and a passage from The Autobiography of Eleanor Roosevelt both demonstrate the struggles women and girls face due to the expectations and responsibilities forced upon them by a maternal authoritative voice. These two texts show that society creates these expectations and responsibilities that women and girls “should” follow; society makes it seem that when women do not follow the norm, they will not reach their full potential and life goals.

A passage from The Autobiography of Eleanor Roosevelt demonstrates that it is important to have your own interests and expectations rather than worrying about the standards that society has set. Eleanor Roosevelt starts off by revealing her childhood. As a child, she endured the “pain of being an ugly duckling.” (Roosevelt 411) An ugly duckling is usually referred to an outsider whether in a family or a society, and this person is usually lonely and not accepted. Children do not know any better than to follow what seems to be normal to try and fit in. This urge to feel normal shaped how Roosevelt felt about her duties because she felt they were required to fit in. Once they get older they start to realize that being true to themselves is what is important. Roosevelt presents this change in her own life by recalling her personal experiences and mistakes. Roosevelt stated, “My one overwhelming need in those days was to be approved, to be loved, and I did whatever was required of me, hoping it would bring me nearer to the approval and love I so much wanted” (Roosevelt 411). This passage displays the need for children and adults to be accepted and loved and their desperate need for acceptance. It can be assumed that her duty was drilled into her by her mother; it was not as “she saw it”, but how other people laid it down for her. So right from the beginning, Roosevelt was not able to do what she wanted; she had to follow standards set by other people. The standards that were set were mostly likely by her mother, and she set rules and duties for her to follow meticulously. As a child, she did not revolt because she only knew what she was told, showed, and expected to do. These expectations and duties she had as a child took control of her life and became a part of who she was.

As Roosevelt grew to be a young woman she still faced the issue of being afraid to do something different from the norm. The duties she had changed and focused on her own family consisting of her children and husband. Roosevelt stated, “Their needs were my new duty” (Roosevelt 412). She used “duties” to describe the things that she was required and expected to do. A woman who has a family has a duty to take care of them and provide for them. It is interesting that in this passage it does not state she had a job, so that brings me to
believe that her duty was to be a stereotypical house mother. There is nothing wrong with being a housewife and caretaker, but through this passage, Roosevelt depicts it as her having no other choice.

Even though Roosevelt had grown into a woman she was still fearful. In the passage Roosevelt declared that she was, “still afraid of doing something wrong, of making mistakes, of not living up to the standards required by my mother-in-law, of failing to do what was expected of me” (Roosevelt 412). She was afraid of what her mother and mother-in-law thought of her. This brings up the maternal authoritative voice that influences women’s choices in life. Roosevelt inherited this voice within herself and it caused her to bring up her children “properly” instead of letting them grow in the lines of her own morals and loving them. From the beginning of the passage she said her duties were drilled in her head and that is exactly what she carried on to her children because she was too afraid to be different. She became the woman she did not want to be and learned that she made a mistake not loving her children by forcing duties on them to be proper.

The concern of growing into a proper woman is embedded in the short story “Girl” by Jamaica Kincaid. It tries to show us how society influences how a girl should grow up into the proper lady that the elders of her decent believe she should be. The girl in the story is given a plethora of instructions and duties on how to do daily activities, and behave appropriately in which she is required to fulfill based on the fact that she is a woman. It is easy to assume that this advice is being given from a mother and received by her daughter. The tone in which the mother uses is quite intriguing. We can tell that the mother is speaking in a stern, strict, unemotional, and fear inducing tone because of the fact that the daughter only speaks twice in this story. The mother takes these instructions seriously and does not give her daughter much of a chance to speak. Using terms such as “slut” the mother degrades and controls the daughter, while at the same time showing us how she portrays the daughter in her eyes. The mother warns her when she states, “To prevent yourself from looking like the slut I know you are so bent on becoming” (895) as a way of saying she will become a “slut” if she continues on the path she is on; although, if she follows the mother’s given instructions she can avoid this. In this context “slut” could mean anything from promiscuous; to untidy and slovenly. Even though the mother comes off demanding and harsh deep inside it is only out of love and care for her daughter. These instructions and advice are only the mother’s best interest for her daughter. The mother believes that her daughter is going to become a slut but the advice on how to avoid becoming one shows that she cares about her daughter’s well-being and social standing. However the mothers’ perception of well-being again comes from the standards that society has set because she is afraid of what will happen to her daughter if she is different from normal.

The daughter’s voice “Girl” is very limited but we can still tell a lot from the two instances she speaks. The first instance in which she responds is a denial of what her mother is saying and shows annoyance of her mother. Her mother said that she sang benna in Sunday School and the daughter responded “but I don’t sing benna on Sundays at all and never in Sunday School” (Kincaid 895). The daughter disagreed with what her mother said about her, therefore she talked back and talking back is known as a juvenile characteristic. As the story continues the daughter goes from denying what her mother says to questioning what will happen if she
does not listen to what her mother is advising she should do. When the daughter speaks again she attempts to show her denial or avoidance towards social influence when she stated, “but what if the baker won’t let me feel the bread?” (Kincaid 896) which implies that she is not going to do what her mother suggest she should do. She subliminally asked her mother what will happen if she disobedys her orders. From this we can assume that she plans to resist what her mother desires and go on her own path. She shows courage and strength by defying what her mother demands of her.

Eleanor Roosevelt also grew the courage to have her own interests because she found a way to shake off her fear of what other people thought of her. She found interests outside of her duties to her mother and family. Roosevelt suggests that without the courage to push past the social norms women will never be able to be the person they want to be and have their own interests. By doing this she “learned to stare down fear” and reached the point where there was no one that she was not willing to face and there was no challenge that she was not willing to face. Roosevelt proved that with faith and courage women can avoid society’s standards and have their own mind and ambitions.

Once a woman gets rid of the fear of external judgment she is capable of doing anything her heart desires. These two texts were directed towards women of all ages and the point they argued was that it is important for women and girls to have their own expectations and interests. The standards that society set should not make them feel the fear of exclusion or of being different from what is custom. Women who are independent are not “ugly ducklings”; they are strong, intelligent and powerful. Eleanor Roosevelt worked to become this type of woman and learned to not fear anything and to take challenges. Roosevelt and the girl from the story “Girl” pushed to break through the barriers of society’s demands to become the women they believe are best, ultimately, to be themselves.

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What was the last movie that you saw that scared you out of your seat? Do you remember what made that movie so chilling? Horror is a genre that makes people confront death through the very real emotion of fear. The subcategory of horror, the slasher, is the type of movie that stays with you through the night and maybe even the rest of your life. John Carpenter’s *Halloween* (1978) is one of the most recognizable slasher films ever made; someone would eventually want to draw from this vintage film. In *Rewriting: How to do Things with Texts*, Joseph Harris uses the term “forwarding” to describe how a writer recirculates another’s writing, highlighting parts of his text for the consideration of others. “Forwarding happens by taking words, images, or ideas from it and putting them to use in new context” (38), as Harris states in *Rewriting*. Wes Craven’s movie *Scream* (1996) draws from *Halloween* and forwards the classic movie’s ideas to make an old concept original. In this essay I will evaluate how *Scream* rewrites the representation of gender in *Halloween* for the twenty-first century through forwarding, and how re-writing the slasher film has made it such a success in pop culture. The horror movie genre would be underrated by many viewers if the gender roles had stayed the same, but Craven put an end to this with *Scream* through his forwarding of *Halloween*.

Before looking specifically at *Halloween* and *Scream*, it is important to more completely define the term forwarding in order to understand the relationship between the two films. In *Rewriting: How to do Things with Texts*, Harris suggests that, “In forwarding a text, you begin to shift the focus of your readers away from what its author has to say and towards your own project” (38). When taking from another source, you don’t want the reader to focus on the fact that this was not originally your idea; rather, you want them to focus on the, altered idea that you present. Wes Craven’s *Scream* sets out to “extend” and “borrow” from Carpenter’s *Halloween* in order to rewrite gender roles in the slasher film; I will be defining these terms through the rest of this essay. Bringing out these elements is part of the process of forwarding for any author or movie maker, and they need to be discussed to have a full understanding of the process that Craven has taken.

Borrowing is “When you draw on terms or ideas from other writers to use in thinking through your subject” (Harris 39). Through *Scream*, the psychotic and violent state of mind and mentality is drawn from *Halloween* and its original ideas. Craven draws not only ideas but presentation from Carpenter’s *Halloween*. One obvious presentation *Scream* incorporates is drawn from the first scene in *Halloween*, which features the violent and bloody death of a young woman. In Carpenter’s film, Michael Myers first goes after his sister after she has sex with her boyfriend, and then Annie and Lynda, who are both Laurie’s friends. Craven ties the violent and long death of female victims in by having Ghost Face call Casey, taunting her and playing games,
before he kills her and her boyfriend. Ghost Face also kills Sidney’s only girlfriend Tatum. All of these young women in both films were sexually active teenagers, who were also unsuspecting victims. According to Carol J. Clover in “Her Body, Herself: Gender in the Slasher Film,” “The murders of women… are filmed at closer range, in more graphic detail, and at greater length [than the male murders],” (Clover 201). The scenes featuring the deaths of women are scenes that will stick with you until the end of the movie. They stay with you because of the fact that the girls all participated in sex before they die. Clover states, “In the slasher film, sexual transgressors of both sexes are scheduled for early destruction” (Clover 199). It makes the audience, especially the female viewers, contemplate and reflect on the decisions they have made; they could possibly be the next victim.

In *Halloween*, Judith Meyers’ boyfriend is not killed by Michael; Judith, Michael’s sister, is killed by stabbing. The scene when she is killed, even if it was a little comical to me, is violent and bloody, especially for a six year old boy to have committed. Craven “borrows” from Carpenter by including the first girl’s sudden and brutal death in the beginning of the movie. Craven makes the same scene his own because Casey is able to put up a fight against the killer’s attacks. She has a chance to run and try and save herself even after her boyfriend’s death, though she does eventually succumb to the killer and is hung from a tree. Craven follows along with Carpenter and makes her death a bloody and violent one that also stays with you through the entire movie. In both *Halloween* and *Scream*, the female death is long and brutal; however, Craven rewrites the gender role by having Casey put up a fight and not just get killed with her chest exposed. She attempted to take control over the altercation when she grabs for the knife to defend herself from the killer rather than waiting for a male figure to come and save her.

As for the other victims, such as Annie and Lynda from *Halloween*, along with Tatum from *Scream*, they are sexually active young women. Clover observes that, “The cause-and-effect relationship between (illicit) sex and death could hardly be more clearly drawn” (Clover 200). Both of the killers in these movies have some deep issues with sex; Michael despises that he was abandoned by his sister just so she could have sex with her boyfriend. Stu is bitter that Casey broke up with him to be with someone else, and Billy is angry that his mother left him because of his father’s affair with Sidney’s mother. The young women have nothing to do with the killers’ complicated minds, but they are all subjected to a brutal death from the killer. At the time of their deaths, they are all scantily clad in small clothing or none at all, and they are confident in their sexuality. Going back to the statement above, their deaths were also drawn out and long; Annie and Lynda are strangled to death trying to fight off Michael in Carpenter’s *Halloween*. Craven takes the violence a step further even though it is just one girl. Tatum’s death is quick, but her plight to stay alive lasts until the killer outwits her when she is churched by the garage door. These deaths are very different, almost opposite, from the killer’s attack on the final girl. Gender in the past has put women in the position to be saved; they are much weaker than their attacker, seemingly because they are women. In the 90’s women were increasingly independent; they were able to fight for a way out for themselves instead of depending on others.
On the other side of the spectrum are the male victims who are few and far between. Clovers states that, “The death of a male is always swift; even if the victim grasps what is happening to him, he has no time to react or register terror. He is dispatched and the camera moves on” (200). In *Halloween*, only two men are killed, and it is in passing. The man with the truck is killed by Michael for his jumpsuit, and Bob is stabbed so he would not get in the way when Michael goes after Lynda. The men are not the focus in either of these movies; they are only killed because they get in the way. Clover says, “They also die incidentally, as girls do, when they get in the killer’s way or try to stop him” (200). Death is never focused around the male characters but rather the female. Wee says, “Previous conventional target audience for slasher films was adolescent boys” (Wee 5). Any young man in his adolescent years will more likely than not only focus on girls and what role they play in the movie. Wee goes on to say, “In 1995, teenage girls were largely responsible for the $57 million US box office” (Wee 5). *Scream* takes into account the female viewers that are in the audience; Craven pays attention to the change in the gender roles of the individuals who are actually going to see his movie. Before, mostly young adolescent boys were venturing out to see movies like *Halloween*, they were who movie creators amid to please; with the unnecessary nudity. Now there is a gender shift and the movie makers are catering to a new, more female audience, which a strong independent young woman as the main character.

One big element that Craven borrows is the masked killer. In *Halloween*, we never see the killer until the end when we only get a glimpse of his shadowy face. Michael is a mentally disturbed young boy, and it continues into to his adulthood. Valerie Wee quotes Tudor saying that the killer, “A psychologically disturbed, ‘near superhuman, male masked killer who preys upon young people, mostly females’ lays at the heart of the traditional slasher film” (qtd. Wee 54). Craven borrows from *Halloween* by also having a masked killer who is never seen with his mask off even in the end; however, Craven extends this element by having not just one killer but two hidden under the mask. Extending, according to Harris is “When you put your own spin on the terms or concepts that you take from other texts” (Harris 39). Wee quotes Clover similarly saying that, “the killers are superhuman: their virtual indestructibility” (qtd. In Wee 6). Michael is stabbed and shot at over and over but never dies at the end of the movie. Through the sequels, this makes the audience identify with Michael because we grow with the character, unlike the other characters that change through every movie.

Carpenter keeps the traditional and identifiable psychotic masked killer. Craven also adds this element of the masked killer who goes after young, unsuspecting girls. But in *Scream*, the audience identifies in the opposite way. When watching a movie the character you sympathies with, who you want to be able to understand better or want to live until the end. That character is the one person you identify with for some underlying reason; it may come from the film makers themselves or from your own experiences in life. When the killer is introduced in the first scene, his face is covered by the costume; the only person who sees the killer’s identity is Casey before she dies. As expressed before, we don’t know who the killer is until the end, which makes the audience identify with the other characters, like Sidney. However, the killer is revealed to be, as Wee says, “Seemingly normal, attractive, popular people, often ‘insiders,’ boyfriends or friends who initially
appear harmless until they go on a killing spree” (55). The two killers, Stu and Bill, are presented as just human when the final girl (Sidney) gets revenge on them. We see them hurt by their self-inflicted wounds; Stu cries, “I can’t, Billy. You already cut me too deep. I think I’m dying here, man!” (Scream). These killers are much more vulnerable and nowhere near indestructible like Michael. We may not identify with Stu or Billy but we do sympathies in a way because we know that they are only young human boys.

The fact that both Stu and Billy die makes them seem less masculine than past killers who were completely invincible. They are taken down by the final girl who has become manlier than them because she has assumed the role of the killer by speaking through the voice modulator. Stu and Billy become the female victim rather than Sidney. This is an amazing element that Craven adds to his movies; he does not let the normal gender standings stay as they should; he changes them and gives us a chance to rethink what we assume about gender.

Craven also forwards his movie with extending through the final girl, who is Laurie in Halloween and Sidney in Scream. The final girl is the one person who has seen or come face to face with the killer; she is much more paranoid than everyone else because she knows that he is there and wants to come after her. Though both girls fight with the killer towards the end of the movie, Sidney is revealed as a true fighter, while Laurie is ultimately a damsel in distress waiting to be saved. The women during the time of this movie are much more independent and will do what needs to be done to live.

Laurie is paranoid from the first moment she sees Michael hiding behind the bush, and her paranoia is made worse by her friend Annie who does not see him as well. Laurie does not know that he is after her specifically, but she knows there is something wrong about her situation; she never comes face to face with Michael until the end. I disagree with Clover’s view for the final girl when she states, “They often show more courage and levelheadedness than their cringing male counterparts” (201). While watching this movie, I thought Laurie was much more helpless than “courageous.” Laurie only ever strikes then runs; for example, when she is in the closet and she stabs Michael in the eye with a hanger, she then drops the hanger and knife and runs for the hallway. Laurie never kills Michael even though she tries; as he rises for the final time, she cannot defend herself and has to let Dr. Sam Loomis save her. Laurie never overcomes her fears of Michael Myers, which is clear when she talks about Michael as the “boogie man” (Halloween). She does not grow as much as Carpenter wants us to believe she does. Laurie gets away from Michael only to be replaced by a new young woman.

Now we have Sidney who does, in the beginning, start out like Laurie. Sidney is first attacked in her home after her father leaves. She is not as paranoid as Laurie because now, years later, people know what to expect from a horror movie. This is especially true when Sidney says, “What’s the point? They’re all the same. Some stupid killer stalking some big-breasted girl who can’t act, who is always running up the stairs when she should be running out the front door. It’s insulting” (Scream). However, she falls into the cliché of running upstairs away from the killer. Like Laurie, Sidney does not fight the killer; she tries to run away, to then be saved by her “boyfriend” in the end. Craven extends this scene and element by giving Sidney another chance to
fight for her life and others. Unlike Laurie, Sidney is up close and personal with the killers, her boyfriend Billy and his friend Stu, through the whole entire movie. Sidney is much more aggressive when she hurts the killer. She has now conquered her fear of the killers and just wants revenge for what they have done. She does not just strike and run; she takes the killers’ lives as revenge for the deaths of her friends and for the rape and murder of her mother. Sidney grows as a character because she is not replaced in every sequel; we have a chance to see her develop into a new young woman and that is what Craven does that keeps the audience interested. As I said before, Laurie is from a time were women are portrayed as less capable than men. She is dependent on the Doctor to save her instead of her fighting for herself. Sidney starts out that way but ends her ordeal with killer Stu and Billy and taking her life into her own hands.

The horror movie was at one point only geared to male viewers. This changes, as stated above when more young girls are watching movies in 1995. Women and teenage girls are the main viewer and Craven caters to that audience. The final girl in this film is not a weak, innocent girl who cannot help herself; she is a strong woman who fights for the people she loves and does not give up. Craven’s update, such as gender re-identification of the killer and the final girl, makes Scream an original and creative movie that makes it so popular in pop culture today.

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Christavia Chapman

Keys to Adulthood

Many people have experienced enough to know transitions that take place during one’s life are not always easy. In “What’s Going on With Young People Today? The Long and Twisting Path to Adulthood,” Richard A Settersten Jr. and Barbara Ray reveal five ideal shifts that display growth: “leaving home, finishing school, entering the workforce, getting married, and also having children” (Settersten, Ray 20). Although these are the traditional views of adulthood, they don’t necessarily have to happen in order to classify an individual as an adult. As these are all things that people do physically, as they physically grow in age, grow mentally is an important factor while classifying one as an adult. As a result of mental growth, one’s mindset will view things in the world differently, more reasonably as an ideal adult should. For instance, better decisions will be made and reasons for these decisions can be justified. Through points in Joseph Epstein’s “Perpetual Adolescent,” characters in Young Adult, and even personal experiences, I will demonstrate how mental/emotional growth helps differentiate reality from fantasy, mutual respect affect one’s choices, and how supportive parents shape adulthood.

In Young Adult, Mavis shows first-hand how growing physically, does not automatically mean this person has grown mentally/emotionally. When someone goes through something difficult in his/her life, it may force this individual to become mature. Becoming more mature comes with being able to grow emotionally which has no regards to one’s age. Being an adult includes being able to balance things at a higher level. What I mean by this is being able to handle different things that may cause stress in a respectable manner such as, but not limited to, bills, work, taking care of children, dealing with emotions that may include loneliness or a tragedy. At this point, it is possible to distinct reality from fantasy. As an adult, a person should be able to understand what is obtainable in life. In Mavis’s situation, although she is physically grown and established, she is not considered to be an adult. Since she has not grown mentally/emotionally since high school, she remains in her high school years. She continuously tries to get her high school lover, Buddy, back despite him having a wife and new-born child. She does not realize that this is not obtainable as she only thinks of her own feelings and is selfish, just as any young minded person would do. Once a person masters mental/emotional growth, overcoming things that have occurred in the past becomes natural, and reality can be dealt with. Mental/emotional growth occurs when one makes the transition from childhood to adulthood. It occurs when it is realized that there are better ways to deal with things that may have a negative impact on an individual. People experience it because they go through things that may corrupt them, but depending on where one stands, mentally/emotionally, will determine how this corruption is handled. In the same way that Mavis fought herself, internally, with things from her childhood, her handicapped friend Matt fought as well. Alternately, his
fight was external. Due to the fact that he was beat up on as a kid, he used this as a reason for not living his life, many years later. I can also relate this to a personal experience in which I have grown mentally/emotionally. Due to this, I have been able to classify what is realistic and what will always remain a fantasy. As a young minded person, I was unable to deal with difficult situations. Already being emotionally weak, I would ignore any new troubled information that was thrown my way, regardless of who was affected or the severity of the situation. My response to every tough time was that I just wanted to die so that I would surely no longer have to deal with it. As a realistic adult, it is understood that tough times will call one’s name. It is also understood that these tough times are only temporary and dying is the unrealistic answer. The adult-like thing to do is to determine how the problem can be solved and determine what steps will be taken for recovery. Consequently, I have also been able to get over all the trauma from my young years and not let it take part in my future years. It will only destroy a soul. Without a doubt, determining reality from fantasy, as a result of growing emotionally, are steps included in the process of determining fantasy from reality. You must grow mentally/emotionally and let go of the past in order to determine what you can deal with, realistically, and what is not reality, but fantasy.

As one gains physical and mental/emotional growth, a mutual respect for others around begins to develop. It can range from this to the way one presents themselves in a certain setting. An ideal adult, normally being more respectful than a child, should be aware of how to behave in each surrounding. This individual should grasp the idea that how they act affects the people around them. Just as there can be a negative effect when a person does not have a mutual respect for others, there can also be a positive respect considering this mutual respect is demonstrated. This is shown in Young Adult when Buddy admits that it was his wife, Beth’s, idea to invite Mavis to the ceremony for his daughter. Beth is a person that can be viewed as an adult in every aspect. It is shown through her having a mutual respect for others and dealing with reality. Because of this respect for Mavis, even though she is aware that this an ex of her husband. After she notices that Mavis is going through some things personally and that she is certainly lonely, she tries to be a commendable person and do the right thing hoping she can help Mavis out in a way. She makes a choice by inviting her and this is something that many people wouldn’t do. It only does not work out because Mavis does not have this mutual respect for others around her. As a result, Mavis causes a scene after she becomes drunk, ruins the ceremony, and embarrasses herself. Having this respect for others is certainly not limited to direct relations. It has been stated that “Standards of dress actually work to democratize a situation in addition to showing respect for those around you” (The Perpetual Adolescent and the Triumph of Youth Culture 1). Joseph Epstein supports this when he writes “Today one sees men wearing baseball caps-some worn backwards-while eating indoors in quite good restaurants [...] Tony Soprano [...] finds this so outrages his sense of decorum that, in a restaurant he frequents, he asks a man, in a quiet but entirely menacing way, to remove his goddam hat” (Epstein 391). There is a time and place for everything. While having dinner at an elegant place or any restaurant is, specifically, not the time to have a cap on backwards. This can be compared to someone wearing headphones at a dinner table. Regardless as to whether or not this person is being spoken to by others, it is a sign of disrespect to everyone
else around the table. This is because it gives a sign that they are not listening and ignoring anything that is being said. That’s why one that can be identified as a real adult would not take part in any activity like this.

It is certain that supportive parents shape adulthood. In order to raise a real adult, you have to be one yourself first. More so than not, a person’s childhood has great deal of impact on their adulthood. Being that parents can be supportive or have a negative effect on a child’s life, this will determine how the child transitions into an adult, or if the child ever makes the transition to begin with. Although Mavis’s parents displayed many traits of adults, they did not have some of the most important things which had a negative impact on Mavis. Their downfall as parents was that they were not realistic individuals. When a problem occurred, they ignored it and expected it to just go away. They also had a way of convincing Mavis that everything was perfect and no matter what, she would be okay. Because of this wishful thinking, Mavis did not know how to handle tough times and became an alcoholic. She was unable to accept things when they did not work in her favor. For instance, trying to get Buddy back. Not only was she unable to accept things, she could not deal with hard times. If her parents were truly supportive, they would have supported her when things were not just ideal, but through her struggles as well.

Just as parents with negative traits can interfere with their child’s adulthood in a negative manner, supportive, positive parents also have an effect on their child, but, a good one. I experienced this personally with being brought up by my father. Although ideally, most girls tend to live with their mothers, I had a mother who was not an adult. She was unrealistic, as well as selfish and was not fit to take care of her two children. Fortunately, my father was the opposite and could be classified as an actual adult. If it were not for him, I would not have come as far as I have. When things got difficult and I was emotionally unstable, he sent me to see a psychologist. Because of this, I have grown emotionally and I also have a different perspective on life. When things get difficult, I do not want to just die, I want to make things better by any means necessary. I also have grown to gain a mutual respect for those around me no matter what type of person they are. My father taught me to always be respectful and help people in any way possible. Not only is it my father’s mindset, but also his ways as an adult that have made both, him and I successful. Both Mavis’s parents and my dad have children, are married, working people, and have even left home. Although, ideally, they are all considered adults because of these transitions, they are not necessarily. It is shown how the type of parent one is causes their child to be.

Through the movie, the readings, and also my personal experiences, it is reasonable to argue that there’s more to adulthood than just what you see. For instance, one’s mindset mentally, and how he/she feels emotionally. This is demonstrated by being able to distinguish reality from fantasy and also how having mutual respect can affect one’s decisions. In addition, how supportive parents are shape adulthood. There are many factors that come with being a real adult that most people don’t understand because they don’t witness certain situations on their own. They only know what they see and what looks good. In this case, it’s having children, living on your own, entering the workforce, getting married, and finishing school. This is not valid because today, babies are having babies. It is not limited to just that, because young people can work and not getting
married doesn’t determine if you are an actual adult as people have their own beliefs. This takes place when people mature and can view things differently with reasons to do so. Maturity does not define adulthood because a young person can be mature. Also, even individuals that have mastered the five ideal shifts as an adult, are not mature, just as Mavis.
Aryn Clayton

**New Hit Reality Series: 15 and Trying**

On June 30, 2013 MTV became the official corporate sponsor of the brand new Melrose High School of Omaha, Nebraska for the launch of their new show, 15 and Trying. With the rise of young girls entering motherhood, it is only fitting that we prepare them for the journey. Classes on the wonderful STDs people are so itching to catch are not enough. It is time to take it to the next level.

“We received a $2,500,000 grant for the school’s newest addition, a state of the art sex wing, absolutely free of charge. Besides, the money will be needed for the kids when they pop out of mommy. There are different lounges with quality vibrating beds perfect for the baby-making process. We even have candles and music to “set the mood,” says principal of Melrose High School, Hugh Jass. MTV will be getting a close look at what techniques these 15 year olds use to “get it right” within the first few tries. The school will even hold a monthly pregnancy drive to help these teens determine if they will be the lucky one to bring a new addition to the world.

The teacher who thought of this idea, Mr. Ben Dover, stated, “We know it is kind of hard for a teen to raise a child, but just think of all the money and publicity you can get. If you are 15 and Trying, you will be 16 and Pregnant, and continue on to being a Teen Mom. It is a perfect opportunity for these teens to get a head start.” The sex wing will be open during school and after hours if anyone needs a nice spot to knock boots. Students are encouraged to go raw to enhance physical pleasure and increase chances of pregnancy. If they forget, there is a sign on every lounge saying “NO Condoms Allowed.”

Since the birth rate for teens aged 15-17 dropped 11% according to the CDC, MTV has vowed to sponsor the teens that succeed in getting pregnant in order for these shows to continue and grow a wider audience. Principal Hugh Jass gave a final remark, “We are almost certain this system will be a huge success, which only means MTV will expand it to high schools across the nation.”

As we were getting ready to pack up, an ecstatic young couple came up to us with a direct message to MTV saying, “We were hesitant about sex before, but with all these benefits coming out of our high school, we are more than eager to go all the way holding nothing back. Thanks MTV for helping us get on the right track.”
Online chatting is an alteration of the normal face-to-face conversation. It is a form of communication with both pros and cons that can bring about the same results as direct human contact, but in a more beneficial manner. The MTV reality TV show *Catfish* hosted by Nev Schulman provides live examples of how normal individuals fall into intimate relationships with an online chat partner. The show provides supporting examples that online communication can lead to outcomes that only face-to-face interactions were believed to do. In today’s technological society online chatting is now able to form relationships just as effectively as physical conversation, if not better, due to the several advantages it has over the original form of interaction.

The objective of the show *Catfish* involves uniting two online chatters for the very first time, regardless of the distance. The host, Schulman, focuses on helping people who feel like a person they’ve met virtually could play a significant role in their lives. Unfortunately, the only missing step for them is meeting their significant other. This comes with a series of worries for the participant. Due to the fact that there are complications preventing the online friends from meeting, there is the notion that the other party could be lying about something. It is possible that the participant’s companion isn’t the person they portrayed themselves as, and lied about their identity to get close to the participant. This act of creating a false profile and leading people on with online interaction is called “catfishing,” thus the name of the show. Being a former victim of catfishing, Schulman has made it his goal to unite people like this in order to overcome the obstacle of direct contact, and allow requesters to find out if their online friend is truly the person they are perceived to be.

The show *Catfish* begins with the selection of a case from submitted emails. The emails are from people who seek help meeting their online crushes. Once Schulman finds an interesting lead, he and his crew pack their bags to visit the requester. At this point the requester has now become a participant of the show. The first meeting between Schulman and the participant allows Nev to obtain a larger understanding of the relationship between the participant and their companion. Then Nev runs background checks on the companion and comes in contact with them as well. He convinces the companion to meet the participants of the show, which is then organized and followed through.

There is much skepticism that comes with online chatting. Critics see online chatting as an improper way of meeting people because it’s a step away from the original norm of human society. This norm is face-to-face interaction. What these critics cannot seem to understand is that there are both pros and cons to online chatting. The participants in the reality TV show *Catfish* definitely took advantage of the pros, and disregarded the fact that they couldn’t interact with their online companion in the “normal” way. Then, just like what would have happened with direct conversations, a special relationship developed between the participants and their
Something about the communication through an online server simply clicked, and brought the two individuals together.

The show focuses on overcoming the factor of being lied to, but at the same time it presents how two people have built a relationship regardless of their true identity. On the MTV series’ first episode, the participant, Sunny, was lied to by her online crush. The man she believed she was meeting was in fact an 18-year-old girl named Chelsea, who claims to have been a victim of bullying. Regardless of the deception, Sunny admitted that talking to Chelsea was comforting whether or not she mislead her; the two women shockingly remained friends. The scenario isn’t an example of how people are falling victim to catfishing; it’s rather a representation of how close online chatting has brought two people regardless of a deceptive lie. If online chatting wasn’t a sincere form of communication then there is no way that the conversations taking place in the chat room could have connected Sunny and Chelsea as intensely.

The purpose of meeting their online companion falls on the requirement to interact physically in order to proceed into more intimate relationships. This is a con of online chatting in which it cannot follow through with things such as dating or marriage, according to social norms. Online chatting is a portal for communication and it cannot fulfill the certain aspects of a relationship in which people move in together, go on dates, and become physically active. While online chatting could serve as a replacement for normal conversation, it has a limit as to how far relationships build. That is why the participants of “Catfish” wish to meet up with their companion. Online chatting has brought them to the point where they feel connected verbally and mentally, and has brought participants to the point where they become eager to take the next steps in a relationship. Online chatting is breaking the social norm of how human beings interact, but regardless of its capabilities it limits the state in which relationships could reach.

The ability to interact through an online chat room serves as an additional form of communication that some people may prefer. After watching several episodes, it’s clear that the participants began and continued talking to their companion due romantic interest. As human beings, we are naturally inclined to socialize, and we favor the presence of other people whether physically or virtually. Virtual contact simplifies normal human contact and doesn’t require as much usage of the senses. Obviously one cannot see (unless virtually chatting), smell, hear, or directly touch the other person, but two people can still interact in a private one-on-one chat room. The negative of this factor is that it prevents people from physically seeing their companion and observing their body language. The gain is that chatting is based solely on the judgment of language and could be executed easily.

Since humans have a natural urge to interact we gain a new way to do so with online chatting. A pro of online chatting is its simplicity for meeting new people. With a few keystrokes and mouse clicks anyone can connect to another online user, thus satisfying the urge to communicate. Online chatting has made communication more accessible and makes physical communication an outdated harder process. People are no longer limited by the act of traveling in order to reach a companion because online chatting is an alternate way
of doing this. Regardless of what social network the chat room is in, whether it’s Facebook or Twitter, a person could be reached no matter the distance. Online chatting is like texting, but the likelihood of meeting new people by texting random numbers is highly unlikely. Social networks do the connecting and their chat rooms are the conversation goers. So basically people’s range of connection is increased with online chatting.

Social conversations are improved versions of face-to-face conversations that share the same concept. People, who most likely would never have the chance to meet, can interact and form relationships with online chat rooms. In Catfish’s very first episode, Jamie formed a relationship with a person from another state. The social network used served as the meeting spot, and all that was left was the engagement of one side. In person, a conversation has to be provoked by one person and chat rooms follow the same principle. Jamie approached the person she was romantically interested in because of her sister. This portrays the realistic scenario of a friend introducing a “cute guy” to another friend. Although the scene wasn’t done in person, it was able to take place in an online setting just as effectively.

Another quality of online chatting that makes it favorable compared to face-to-face conversation is that it lacks a level of familiarity. It may sound harsh, but the option of completely ignoring someone can lead to beneficial outcomes. Being familiar with some prevents you from saying things that may offend or give off the wrong impression. Therefore, when people interact in person there is a filter placed over their personality that prevents them from speaking their mind and fully acting like themselves. In an online setting, these filters are not required. Since there is always the option of ignoring a person and/ or blocking them there is no reason to filter one self. This is why all participants in the show have been able to open up to their chatting companions willingly. This type of interaction eventually forms a level of comfort and trusts amongst two chatters, and possibly at a quicker pace compared to an upfront filtered conversation in front of someone. In the show the majority of the participants quickly became attached to speaking to their online crushes.

My opinion is strongly supported by the results of a study conducted by six Ph.D. scholars from the University of Castellon, (Castellon, Spain). The study was presented in the article “Online Chat Rooms: Virtual Spaces of interactions for Socially Oriented People” and was conducted in order to observe the types of relationships created and maintained by participating users. Subjects were asked to interact freely on the web and find a specific person in which to build a relationship with while gaining results.

The subjects consisted of 34 men and 32 women. The study observed and analyzed both quantitative and qualitative data based on the traits of the relationships being built. The results showed that 31.7 % of subjects considered that their social relationship interferes with other daily activities. 81.8 % of the whole interact through chat rooms, and 68.3% are e-mail users. 41.9% of people considered their online relationship simply friendly while 58.1% have built a romantic relationship with their online companion. Out of the whole group 74% met offline and 22.9 % engaged in cybersex out of the romantic relationships portion. 25% engaged in phone sex. (Peris et al. 47)

According to Peris’ study, the intimate level could be achieved in an online chat room, just like it can
through direct interaction. The fact that such a large majority of people has engaged sexually during the experiment goes to show how online chatting could achieve the same outcomes as face-to-face talking. The end result of online chatting could actually leave to relationship where things such as sex occur. With 41.9% having stated that the relationship built was simple on friendly terms indicates that plain friendships could be obtained as well as the sexual ones. In *Catfish* the participants gain a friend when they interact with their companion. If the end result of the episode leads to a betrayal in identity the participant and companion still find a way to make the best out of the relationship that was built.

In the norm of society it is natural to physically see someone, and observe how they speak. This isn’t possible with online chatting. The participants of the show find themselves communicating with their online crushes only through texts and chat messages. The lack of full fledged interactions is what brings up the biggest skepticism about speaking to someone online, let alone building a relationship with them whether friendly or romantically. The truth is, a person doesn’t know whom they are truly speaking to unless they see them through video chat or in person. Anyone could go online, place up pictures of a random person in a social network account and lie about who they are. That is why online chatting and online-based relationship can be indicated as misleading and unsafe.

Today’s generation of people are reverting to online chatting because of the advantages it has on normal face-to-face interactions. The MTV show *Catfish* portrays participants who are subject to the change of preference. Human beings are breaking the norms of society by changing the way we interact and build relationships. Through conducted studies, online chatting has proved to build relationships just as effectively as normal face-to-face conversations. While there are many similarities between the two types of communication, online chatting has more opportunity to interact at high levels of convenience which overpowers the experience face-to-face interactions provide.

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Maman Cooper

“I wish I Can Go to School Too.”

In 2002, I was six years old, walking three miles daily to the farm along with my aunt and carrying her two year old son. I worked in the fields harvesting cassava, corn and hot peppers with the baby on my back. The price I had to pay for living with my aunt, who swore to my parents and grandparents that she would take good care of me and make sure I was educated was simple: forgo school, hand wash dishes and her family’s clothes, carry the baby on my back and work on the farm. Every morning I watched her stepdaughter walk through the yard on her way to school. Leaning forward one morning while sweeping the yard, I watched her backpack bounce up and down and I murmured, “I wish I can go to school too.”

That childish wish came to reality when I arrived to the United States in 2004. Migrating from the refugee camp in the Ivory Coast to the United States was one of the greatest challenges, I ever encountered like many people had. Living in the Ivory Coast, like many children, I did not experience education. In Hartford, CT, speaking only French and two other West African native languages made learning seem impossible. I was the only one among my peers that had zero knowledge of English; I thought I was alone, so I felt alone. I did not recognize at the time that I was one among countless number of immigrants exploring a world out of our comfort zones. In Richard Rodriguez’s essay, "A Memoir of a Bilingual Childhood," he shares his experience of migrating from Mexico to the United States. Rodriguez shared that he was different for the fact that he spoke poor English while others had confidence in their voices: "My own sounds I was unable to hear, but I knew that I spoke English poorly" (Rodriguez 189). It is amazing that this is an experience widely shared among so many people. Language has such a power over people; it is a powerful tool that can strengthen or weaken the spirit of someone. The beauty of having the experience of so many like Rodriguez is to reminisce on the ability we have transcended because of the inner desire within our souls pushing us forward. My experience learning English took a great effort from those surrounding me. Three teachers each took turns pulling me out of class and teaching me basic English words such “can,” “go,” “cat”, stop, etc. Although I fumbled on the words, I didn’t give up because the desire of learning was like a fresh fire inside of me still waiting to explore.

Finally attending school was a dream comes true, but my peers found a great pleasure in teasing the dumb girl in the classroom with the accent. However, I remained encouraged knowing that I was now privileged to attend school, and I continued to work hard. Although my English was poor and students teased me, I was enrolled in honors classes. The best thing I knew I had to do to greatly improve was to challenge myself with rigorous courses despite my disadvantage of starting school years behind my peers. Students teased me and worse of all majorities of my other peers including their friends joined in the laughter. A common ground my peers had was their dislike of me, simply because I spoke English poorly, had a strong accent, and
still took out challenges that made me outstanding among them. Few students constantly told me, “Stop trying to be smart because you’re dumb, go back to Africa where you belong.” I tried to stay strong and even while trying, I sometimes fell asleep mourning my eyes out as I dreaded to be in their mix the next day. All I wanted more than ever was to simply learn and walk in school in without the walls falling against me.

The first week of junior year, I walked to my AP Biology class. I told the teacher that I really wanted to take his class and knew it would be hard for me so he should give me tips to help me succeed in his class. He looked me straight in the eyes with a familiar look I saw a lot. “You think I am not too smart to take your class don’t you.” He nodded. I had worked extremely hard to have come as far as I had, and it upset me that someone I had simply asked for help doubted my ability to succeed. I looked at him for a long while and walked out discouraged, holding back tears. I went in his class, and sat in the front, deciding I was going to prove him like many wrong again. I had to work twice as hard as my classmates, just as I had had to in math. I passed his class with other, more students sometimes asking me for help.

Sometimes, when we are at a disadvantage, the only way to improve is by challenges. Rodriguez writes, ”Without question, it would have pleased me to have heard my teachers address me in Spanish when I entered the classroom” (192). A common feeling that people have when faced with situations such as being outsiders is the desire to have others do as we wish. But self-improvement comes from being challenged. Rodriguez came from not speaking English to being a writer in English. If his teachers spoke Spanish to him, he would not have changed from the person he was. Similarly, I was obligated to get out of my comfort zone and learn the language of the land I migrated to because all of my teachers spoke English, all the students in school spoke English, everyone around me spoke English, and I had no option but to learn. A couple of years later, I came from the girl who spoke zero words of English to the girl taking English Honors Classes, AP classes, and giving speeches at gatherings among community members. I have learned overall that to move through life is to tackle new challenges along the way.

My great improvement in English has made me confident that I have the ability to tackle any situation, and if willing, I can gain victory of the challenge. A new challenge I have chosen to tackle is my weakness in math, which has increased my interest in becoming a secondary mathematics educator. People are puzzled when I tell them my goal of teaching math because of my poor grades. At an interview for instance, I was asked, “You said you love math and want to become a math teacher, but with these kinds of grades, why your love for math?” Math has been a struggle for me just as life is a struggle to people. It is not the condition you are in that determines who you are, your character is determined by what you do with your conditions. I know that my challenges will make me a much effective future educator. When students come complaining and wanting to give up, I will be able to tell them, “I was once in your shoes and now I have mastered that obstacle.” I know that I will be more influential to my students in the future because I have personally experienced the same challenges. I want to use my obstacles to encourage others.
Rodriguez's family referred to Spanish as their family language; they felt that it was the source of intimacy they had among them. Through his education and experiences he learned that, "Intimacy is not created by a particular language; it is breathed by intimates." (Rodriguez 199). Similarly to Rodriguez realization, I have also learned over the years to step out of a common belief of those surrounding me. I have learned that becoming who you are is not about what you are now. My ability to be a math teacher is not determined by my poor performances; life offers opportunities for growth. As Rodriguez grew to fathom that intimacy was more about the experience and emotions people share among themselves, I have learned that my truth ability of becoming a mathematic educator is also based on my personal experiences that will assist me to become more relatable to struggling students especially in minority districts who I intend to educate in the future.

Life is full of challenges. People live life standing before mountains; people's mountains come in different shapes and sizes. For others like Rodriguez and myself, part of our life happens to be migrating from our homeland to becoming a foreigner. Some people lose hope while standing before their mountains. My mountain was completing chores while kids in the neighbor attended school, I overlooked that mountain. While standing in front of that mountain, you can either choose to simply stand there and stare at the mountain or pretend it does not exist or you can decide to climb the mountain. The most important though, is not successfully climbing through the mountain. While some people are satisfied they climbed the mountain, Richard chose to influence others with his experience while I choose to master my mountain. Becoming a math teacher will not only prove my ability to transcend, but will make me credible to encourage my students. Eventually my students will realize, that if I had the grades I had in math and was certified through college to become a math educator, then there's nothing to prevent them from not overcoming their own challenges.
Castella Copeland

Dreaming up a Sur-Reality within Reality

Every time I look at David Fuhrer’s *Drug Free Zone* picture, I think of how internal conflict is seen through the lens of dreams allowing the mind to understand reality by making a sur-reality. Dreaming blends thoughts and memories in a creative fashion to understand why people use society’s rules as an excuse to not be who they want to be despite the fact that society shapes the person into who they are. Society and dreams are interconnected through Fuhrer’s image and Shinedown’s song: *The Sound of Madness* because the painter and lyricist use the same symbols to prove that society and people live off of each other. Bearing this in mind, society would not be what it is now without considering how dreams make up the infrastructure that makes society what it is today. The infrastructure in David Fuhrer’s picture can be related to how dreaming creates the structure of society through the castles, roads, and bridges in Fuhrer’s image and in Shinedown’s “medicine”, “self-fulfilling prophecy” and “book on pain” (Shinedown).

Of these three main symbols, the castles pop up intermittently on the bridge with red castles that represent the new society while the gray castles represent the old society. These castles pop up in different places randomly on the bridge to remind one keep up with the new society by revising the old society by using itself as a tool for dreams to create the new reality from the old reality. In this case, the whole thought of castles represents the “medicine” from Shinedown’s *The Sound of Madness* where there is a “social disease” that
everyone is infected with before realizing that the disease itself is their own actions to take the medicine (Shinedown). For example, Shinedown expresses who they have become based off of how society has infected them with this “social disease” that further influenced them to become who they are today. Even though society has their own restrictions and rules, it is because of these rules that they are who they are now. Without any rules to break, there wouldn’t be any way to dream outside of what is already there. Fuhrer’s picture has the same connection with the audience to show them how society and dreams exist off of one another. The products that society creates are not only materialistic items that one could buy, but a new set of rules for each person to fit into to become a standard person in society. Thus, the red castles represent a product of the new society where the new brands of medicine people create act as a supplement for themselves to lose old society’s weight and create a new one from their own dreams.

Despite the fact that the new and old society compete against each other to set limits on people, is it society that enforces these limits? Or is it our own minds, our own dreams that set the limits? Society appears to be “normal” but has its flaws in the way it is structured around the rules that each person creates for one another to collectively create a version of them that society wants them to be. However, people place themselves into a sur-reality to understand the rules that change. These rules that are always mentioned here are not the law for society and dreaming, but also the law of the mind and imagination. In Shinedown’s song, they mention “the book on pain” representing the pain that society has on the mind and why each person perceives each other through ethnocentric perspective before understanding where this person’s “book of pain” derives from (Shinedown). A person’s “book of pain” is made up of the paths that someone went on to discover that they can make their own sur-reality to understand how society derives from visual pieces such as Fuhrer’s image to audible pieces such as The Sound of Madness that allow artists to express their opinions and thoughts on an issue while staying true to who they are. They do this by hearing pictures’ heartbeats and how the new society is made up of all these heartbeats to distinguish their own sur-reality from their dreams. For example, Shinedown distinguishes reality from their dreams by stating that “you can sleep with a gun” in order to hear how reality is a dream created from society (Shinedown).

Reality, is there such thing in a dream based upon society? Should we temporarily break all of the boundaries while we sleep only to wake up to the restrictions of society? The roads in Fuhrer’s image show how the paths that dreams take symbolize the “self-fulfilling prophecy” (Shinedown). The “self-fulfilling prophecy” represents the moment of epiphany when someone realizes that they can be the ruler of their own mind, their own reality by making a sur-reality. For example, dreams are made up of what people feel, experience, and imagine in their minds. But what distinguishes dreams from society is that dreams have more influence over the imagination than society since the rules of society are recreated by imagining a sur-reality through abstract and classic symbolism. Abstract symbolism can be defined as the symbols that concentrate on theoretical ideas allowing one to focus on the philosophy of who they are. Classic symbolism can be defined as the symbols that focus on the most familiar points of interest amongst big groups of people. For instance, Fuhrer and Shinedown
made their artwork surrealistic through abstract symbolism instead of realistic with classic symbolism to show how dreaming and society help each individual find themselves. However, to make this sur-reality, one must understand how to dream through the lens of society.

Dreaming is a part of society’s lens that allows everyone to create a sur-reality that’s influenced through their true identity. True identity can be defined as knowing and accepting who you want to be regardless of society restrictions. For example, in Fuhrer’s picture, the main bridge in the picture represents its true identity because without this component, the picture would not be complete. The bridge in this picture not only bridges the gap between dreams and society, but also defines how “the sound of madness” keeps everything interconnected to one another (Shinedown). This connects the version of yourself that society labeled you as in comparison to the version of yourself that you created to eliminate the excuse that it’s all society’s fault that you’re are being manipulated by their rules, but to recognize that society is the tool that everyone uses to find a way to discover and express themselves the way they want to. For example, at the end of each line in the chorus of Shinedown’s song, they ask the audience “when you gonna wake up and fight…for yourself” (Shinedown). Thus, this ending line to the song repeatedly inquires that society is a tool made up of the same castles, roads and bridge that influences dreams, imagination, and reality into a sur-reality that make up society.

While all of these rules are blending together through dreaming and society, people forget how dreams are created because of society that make up a reality for everyone to create a sur-reality within themselves to ultimately discover who they want to be.

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Sydney Cotto

Electronic Happiness

Have you ever stopped and thought about what makes you happy, or what makes people in general happy? It’s a very hard question to answer, because do certain things make everyone happy? One person could experience happiness from one thing, and someone else might not get the same enjoyment out of the same thing. I believe that in modern society today, one thing that generally makes people experience happiness is by buying and/or using electronic devices such as cell phones. It is safe that say that more than half of the people in America have one, and generally enjoy having it and using it on a daily basis. For some, it is as if they cannot live a day without using their cell phone. But the real question is does the item itself provide happiness, or is it the abilities the item has that gives us pleasure from using it? Also, does the market itself provide us with pleasure? I personally believe that the item itself does not provide happiness, but what does is the ability to communicate with others from all over the world or to just satisfy your boredom by scrolling down your Twitter feed that truly provides us with happiness. It is more of what the object does, rather than the actual object itself that gives us satisfaction from having it.

We all feel that to live in this society today that you need to best of the best in electronics. I mean, who wants to buy the Iphone 4 when the Iphone 5 has a bigger screen and better updates on it? We are always anticipating for the next, more innovative object to be released. It is an endless cycle of want and, as Rousseau argued, there is “social pressure imposed on individuals in commercial society to yearn for ever more.” (53). We always want more than what we have, we never settle for less than the best. We might even pressured, like Rousseau said, to have the best because we do not want to be behind when everyone else has the best. The market is always changing, so I would agree and say that essentially the market does provide us with happiness, but I would not give full credit to the market in providing us happiness.

Like Kc said in his essay, his phone provided him with happiness, but it wasn’t solely the phone that did it, it was the ability to communicate with his friends from New York after he moved to Connecticut. I believe that this is why we want these electronic devices, to keep, and make friendships. Through these devices you have so many opportunities to get connected. You could talk to people from across the country or even from across the world. For me, it is a way to keep in touch with my friends as well. Since I am here, at UConn, I won’t be able to see my friends much this summer, but I like how I can still talk to them everyday on Twitter or through texting. It gives me happiness to be able to still be able to talk to my friends because like I described in my essay, friendship provides ultimate happiness. Having someone to always be able to talk to about anything and everything is special, and by me having my cell phone and my Ipad, I am able to do this and it keeps my relationships with my friends and family as strong as if I was actually there talking to them. Also, this past
spring our school had the opportunity to host some French students for a week, and once they left, we all connected with each other over facebook and twitter. I still communicate with the girl I hosted and some of the other kids and I think it is so amazing that by simply possessing my Iphone, I can talk to my newly made friends from France, and it is as simple as writing a message and hitting the send button that I can talk to people across the ocean in another country.

We get the illusion that by possessing this object, it makes us happy, but it is so much more than that. What the object does is so much more valuable to our happiness than the actual object itself. McMahon showed many examples in his essay of how Locke described the endless want for an item, and how it is simply the item that provides happiness, and once something better comes out, we strive to get that because we are never truly satisfied with what we have. The market understands this and clearly uses it to their advantage by constantly expanding their products and making people want to have the best they can get.

As Locke observes in the “Essay Concerning Human Understanding: ‘We are seldom at ease, and free enough from the solicitation of our natural adopted desires, but a constant succession of uneasiness out of that stock, which natural wants, or acquired habits have heaped up, take the will in their turns; and no sooner is one action dispatch’d, which by such a determination of the will we are set upon, but another uneasiness is ready to set us on work.’” (56). This is basically saying that we always want more and that we are never truly satisfied, but Locke believes that it is only the object which makes you happy. I have to disagree and say that in this day and age, it isn’t solely possessing the object, but it the ability to communicate with it. To simply say that the object itself gives the user happiness is an understatement. I personally would not be satisfied with having a cellphone that doesn’t do anything. I want my phone so I can call my friends and family. I want the best cell phone on the market so I can do more than just texting and calling. I want to be able to go on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram and see what all my friends are up to daily.

To believe also that the market brings us happiness is not entirely true. I will say that yes, it does provide us with some happiness, but to an extent. The market is basically adopting the idea of utilitarianism, which is trying to reach ultimate happiness from as many people as it can, by always coming up with new, intriguing products that makes us keep wanting it. This is basically saying that we always want more and that we are never truly happy with what we have. As McMahon states, “those who sought happiness first and foremost in the market were looking in the wrong place. Ironically, that is the truth that the early defenders of the market examined here understood without deception, but that many since-Lord Layard among them- seem to have forgotten.” (61). What McMahon is saying is that the market has deceived us, and that those who look towards the market to provide them with happiness have missed the true meaning of the word happiness. We have been tricked to believing that these objects provide us with pleasure, and sure, they could make you feel happy, but that feeling will eventually wear off. The way we use our cell phones today really define that person. The cell phone itself isn’t what makes me happy. The market coming out with new Iphones doesn't make me happy. What truly makes me happy about having and buying the newest cell phones is that it gives me better, and
more, opportunities to be able to connect to others. I, as well as many others, have beenfooled, but with furtherobservation, I have realized that all the market does is provide these objects to make a profit. That is ultimatelythe purpose of the market, but the purpose of the phones is special to every user. Some get happiness out ofusing their cell phones to play games, such as Temple Run or Candy Crush or listen to music. Others, like me,find happiness in connecting with friends through social networks. Then there are some people that like the appsthat are helpful to day to day life, like always having a calendar, clock, or camera. That is what is so specialabout the market, is that they make cell phones to appeal to everyone. They give everyone a chance to findhappiness in using them, otherwise what is the point of buying it, to stare at your phone and not be able to doanything with it? As Locke says, “the pleasures we chose to pursue-and how- were ultimately a matter of taste. This ‘variety of pursuits shows’ Locke affirmed, ‘that every one does not place his happiness in the same thing’” (56). This is saying that everyone has different tastes. Not everyone finds happiness in the same thing. One person could find happiness in just simply walking in the park on a nice day, while another person mightrather be happy staying inside all day and watching a movie. We know that everyone is different, and thateveryone has different ideas of happiness, which is what the market is appealing to. They make so many apps tobe able to intrigue anyone that purchases their item, and they are always thinking of new ideas to add to the list.If you have ever heard the expression “There’s an app for that”, it is true. There is an app for almost everythingyou can think of, which is what the market does to get everyone to find something for them. This is their way ofsaying that if you buy my product, I will ensure that you find something that you will like. That is what is goodabout the market and finding happiness through cell phones, but I would not say that the market or the actualobject itself brings the user happiness. I mean, sure, cell phones could bring us happiness, but it is the way weuse them and what they are capable of doing that truly make the people of the 21st century.

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Is the Internet Causing Informal English?

Does the Internet reduce the ability of modern writers to write good English? Since its creation in 1994, the Internet has ultimately revolutionized global communication and writing with instant access to messaging and e-mail. Although the Internet’s goal is to enhance the English language, people misuse it by making errors in spelling, word choice, and sentence structure in their e-mail messages. This is due to e-mails that don’t have a spelling or grammar check, and people can get away with poor writing. As a result, there is an increase of informal English that writers are using to produce essays, which rapidly spreads through the worldwide web. Therefore, the Internet reduces modern writers’ capability to write good English because informal e-mailing leads them to develop bad writing habits. Writers can avoid these bad habits by using the contemporary rules of good writing in their e-mails.

When people type their e-mails online, they do not always focus on their spelling or grammar. Instead of using long, specific words or phrases, they use abbreviations such as “b/c”, “thru”, or “good nite” to make short, broad statements. In addition, people use abbreviations because they feel that typing a full, concise message is tedious and unnecessary. When a person sends an e-mail, he/she doesn’t focus on the spelling and grammatical errors because there is no spelling or grammar check on his/her e-mail. As a result, the person believes that it is acceptable to make spelling and grammatical errors on his/her formal writing assignments. Similarly, people make spelling and grammatical errors in text messaging because they want to keep their statements short by using abbreviations. According to Abrams article “Experts Divided over Internet Changes to Language”, “‘text messaging has made students believe that it’s far more acceptable than it actually is to just make screamingly atrocious spelling and grammatical errors’” (Abrams). These students write improperly because they are influenced by others who communicate using text messages. Therefore, this affects modern writers because they think it’s acceptable to use informal grammar and spelling due to the online social media through e-mail messages on the Internet.

In addition, people do not use the proper diction to describe what they mean in their e-mail messages. Specifically, individuals can’t balance using abstract (Latin and Greek) and concrete languages (Anglo-Saxon). Abstract words are intangible concepts such as truth, meaning, happiness, and life. On the contrast, concrete words are tangible objects such as computers, chairs, books, and people. For example, a person might say, “calculating board” instead of “abacus” because he/she thinks is simpler to use. However, the phrase “calculating board” is wordy and should be replaced by the Latin word “abacus” to make the person’s English sound more clear. Furthermore, people use slang words to justify what they actually mean in their messages because they feel that it’s optional to use formal diction in the English language. For instance, a person would
say, “I ain’t” instead of “I am not” because he/she feels that it’s easier to use. Nevertheless, it is unacceptable to use slang words in formal English assignments because slang words are incomprehensive, they are not understood by everyone. Consequently, modern writers violate the use of diction to lay out their ideas clearly because they have been influenced by other people using improper word choice in their e-mail messages.

Furthermore, people use incorrect syntax in their e-mails. They do this because they don’t take the time in writing a clear, formal statement, thus making their sentence structure disorganized and complicated. For example, one might type, “Me and my brother are going to ride on our bikes down the park, to the theatre entrance, to watch Die Hard, then back home to see basketball.” This message lacks proper syntax because the words are jumbled into a long, incoherent sentence, thus making the message unclear to the reader. Instead the message should be written as: “My brother and I are going to ride on our bikes through the park to reach the theatre, and watch Die Hard. Then, we are going to ride back to our home.” Although these sentences are wordy, they simplify what the person is saying in his/her e-mail. However, if writers keep using disjointed syntax in their e-mails, they will develop this terrible habit and use it in their essays. Therefore, modern writers use informal sentence structure because they frequently use this in their e-mails on the Internet; thus decreasing their ability to use proper English in their writing.

Moreover, modern writers use passive language instead of active in their e-mail messages. In passive language, the subject is being acted upon by the verb while in active language; the subject performs the action indicated by the verb. For example, “The TV was turned on by Gomez” is passive because the subject “Gomez” is being acted upon by the verb “turn.” On the contrast, “Gomez turned on the TV” is active because the subject “Gomez” performs the action indicated by the verb “turn.” Using active voice can make statements direct and clear for the reader to comprehend. On the other hand, using passive language can make statements indirect and complicated for the reader to understand. Thus, modern writers who continue using passive voice in their e-mail messages can reduce their ability to utilize good English in their writing because they think it is okay to use passive voice.

Additionally, writers use meaningless words to take up space in their emails. These meaningless words are inefficient to support the writer’s main argument because they describe nothing that is relevant to the writer’s claim. For example, in Amy Cunningham’s essay “Why Women Smile” she writes, “Women’s faces were no longer impassive, and their willingness to bestow status, to offer, proffer, and yield, was most definitely promoted by their smiling images” (Cunningham 353). This quote is an example of bad English because it contains the meaningless words “proffer” and “definitely.” The verb “proffer” means the same as “to offer” and should be cut out to avoid repetition. In addition, the adverb “definitely” should be deleted because although it modifies the meaning of women’s “willingness to bestow status, to offer, proffer, and yield,” it doesn’t add to the meaning of the sentence. The adverb is used as “filler” to the sentence and must be eliminated to make the statement clearer. When using unnecessary words and modifiers in their e-mails, writers will develop this habit and use it in their paper.
People are more prone to be wordy in e-mails because they describe everything in detail using long phrases instead of being concise and using a few words. This is translated over to their essays because they believe that it’s acceptable to use meaningless words on their e-mails since there is no spelling or grammar check. Furthermore, Nicholas Carr’s essay “Is Google Making Us Stupid?” contains meaningless phrases since he writes, “The Web has been a godsend to me as a writer. Research that once required days in the stacks or periodical rooms of libraries can now be done in minutes” (Carr 634). Carr’s message emphasizes how the Web speeds up the process of research because it seems to determine narrowly the meaning of the Internet. The word “godsend” should be left out because it is unnecessary to determine narrowly the meaning of the Web. In addition, the second statement is incoherent since it presents a complicated message of the research process being speed up. Moreover, the two statements can be connected if they are written like this: “The Web has been beneficial to me as a writer because it reduces the time to complete the research process.” Although this is reworded a different way, the reader can understand what the meaning of the sentence. Nevertheless, writers continue to use meaningless words that are irrelevant to the overall message in their paper. Consequently, writers should not use meaningless words in their papers.

Overall, the contemporary rules of good writing are:

1. Use correct spelling and grammar.
2. Use proper diction by balancing between abstract and concrete words. Don’t use slang words.
3. Use formal syntax (sentence structure).
4. Use active voice instead of passive.
5. Never use meaningless words.

Although these rules sound simple, they require a change in mind in any writer who has grown used to writing in the common style that everyone else uses in their e-mails. A modern writer could use all these rules and still write informal English but not as poorly as they used to write. If the writer makes an effort to utilize these standards, he or she will improve his or her writing overtime; each essay being formal and well-ordered than the last.

If writers stop using bad English from their e-mails into their essays, they are freed from the irrationalities of conformity. In other words, writers will not be viewed as illogical because they have incorporated the contemporary rules of good writing into their paper, causing readers to understand the overall meaning that they convey. By adopting these rules of contemporary writing, writers will enhance communication with others, making people to comprehend more on what they are saying. With more comprehension of writers’ meanings, people can cooperate more with each other to accomplish goals for the greater good of society. These achievements will increase advancements in science, health, and technology which will boost the economy, and meet the needs of all people. Overall, these accomplishments will increase power, prestige and wealth in the societies in underdeveloped nations.
Hidden camera shows bring up the fact that people can be watched by anyone at any given time and not know it. Reality TV cameras and surveillance of citizens creates a bridge for everyday government watching and control. However, to the viewers cameras are only seen as entertainment. Reality TV and the concept of catching people doing risky things is exciting to the viewer but, also an eye opener that they could be caught doing things they're not proud of, by the same hidden cameras.

Real life surveillance is both necessary and beneficial for viewers and/or citizens, a form of control. It benefits the communities by ensuring less crime and civilians acting out. This control factor created by the idea of surveillance is necessary so there isn't total chaos and people who think they can get away with anything. Watching Yourself, Watching Others: Popular Representations of Panoptic Surveillance in Reality TV programs, by Daniel Trottier, was an article I read. In this article, Trottier “... examine the manner in which reality TV legitimizes contemporary surveillance practices”(Trottier, 260). The hidden camera reality shows Candid Camera, Punk’d, and Cheaters captivate the audience to be laughing or entertained. However the control factor is integrated into each of these shows by reiterating the fact of surveillance at any time. I agree with Daniel Trottier’s position, especially when it comes to hidden Camera reality shows causing an essential form of control through the idealized surveillance factor.

In Trottier’s article the main social theorist Michel Foucault, was a French philosopher who wrote about panopticism in the book discipline and punish.

Foucault brought about the theory of panopticism and synopticism of mass media and surveillance. According to free dictionary.com, Panopticism is defined as “taking in all parts, aspects, etc., in a single view; all-embracing”, the many are visible to the few. For example, in the situation of prisons, “Guards operating from the tower have visual access to all inmates at once, and the inmates in turn are never sure when they are actually under watch”(trottier,261). This is the many visible to the few an example of panopticism, which is more common surveillance setup. Prison systems are a very common scenario in modern world control behavior. The definition of synoptic is, “taking the same or common view” (“synoptic”, merriam-webster,3). The few are visible to the many. This can be looked at as the few, being the chosen reality stars and they are visible to the audiences around the world who are the many.

This makes the audience more aware of their surroundings and hidden cameras act as a guard for the people to not act out. The viewers are able to watch and live vicariously through the actions and drama presented to us on television. When doing this they can expand their imagination and not look for excitement...
like this in uncontrolled settings. Consumer control is a major part in having a surveillance culture today. When watching reality TV, people see things that they wouldn’t normally encounter in their day to day lives, but still in a safe environment. When watching *America’s most wanted* for example, viewers feel as though they are a part of the action and social engagement of catching bad guys because they are encouraged to call into the show to catch the criminals also not putting themselves in harm’s way. “... Reality television’s recent success, makeover themed reality broadcasting insofar as they engage the audience to submit panoptic forms of consumer surveillance”(Trottier, 261). Consumer control is a major part in having a surveillance culture today.

Trottier also writes about a man named Bill Brown who did a study on surveillance. His, “findings during the filming of one of the surveillance camera players walking tours of New York” (trottier, 263). During the walking tour their where 2 types of CCTV cameras used that served opposite functions. The first camera was a hidden camera, this camera recorded the people but the people couldn’t see it so they didn't know they were being watched. The person was unaware. Government (few) sees the footage of the people (us) but we never see the video that is taken. The second camera used was a decoy camera. The decoy camera was a camera out in the open and people thought they were being watched. But it doesn’t transmit any video it was fake and displaying faulty information to the public. When people know they're being watched they usually try and be as civilized and not act out but if they don’t see any camera their still that conscious in the back of their mind that has a what if factor that relates back to the surveillance that happens on reality television programs like *Big Brother*.

“Here the security camera is seen to possess synoptic properties by virtue of its ability to communicate a nuanced relationship which implicates the few (the owners of the store, law enforcement agents who might refer to the recorded footage) as well as the many (anybody within its field of vision)” (trottier, 264).Theses cameras are the control functions and basis for all surveillance. The information is being shown directly to the few, the government but the many never see this. We as a population are relating to reality television as if it were our real lives. Since reality TV makes people suspicious and wanting to know if they're being watched at any given time must chose to have good behavior.

Reality TV is a form of active engagement between viewers perceiving the reality stars and thinking of surveillance. Also, the idea of people finding out who you are or having an invasion of privacy through social media sites is another concern in society. Most People like privacy and to be looked at a certain way.

Producers of Reality TV want to ensure dramatic behavior, setting up different scenarios to guarantee real outcome of wildness. Without conflict there will be less viewers and the main point of reality TV is to have people watch it and keep that idea of surveillance, as portrayed in the reading. Also, another form of control within the show is the guards that watch the cameras for any suspicious activities. The contestants do not know which cameras the guards or security is watching at what time.

I agree people should be watched so that our country has order of 7 billion people. However the people, who do make wrong decisions and get caught feel as though they will get caught again or under heavy suspicion, so
they usually change behavior. But it’s not always the case. People need some sort of psychological control and by the mindset of being watched it prevents a lot of things from happening. I also disagree because the network allows us to see things as in crime that we wouldn’t normally see. People try to imitate what they see on TV. They might wish to have a certain lifestyle and act as reality stars do. Just like how George Zimmerman shot Trayvon Martin. Reality TV is a form of active engagement between viewers perceiving the reality stars and thinking of surveillance. Control is different from surveillance. Surveillance causes control. Publicity implies a certain behavior. Reality stars have little to no unanimity but surveillance is protection for some. Reality stars feel it’s normalized for being watched. The idea of surveillance is becoming more common in today’s social media culture. Viewers have the most recognition of American culture being able to know where people are and what they are doing.

Also for hidden camera reality TV shows they often use Comedy as a safer approach. At the time of watching the audience feels joy and a thrill from seeing some taboo things or outrageous pranks. “The worse the prank gets, the more money is doled out. In short, the greater the potential for ugliness, the greater the sum you can walk away with, up to …” (reality TV). The reality stars endure the embarrassment for some type of incentive or reward. They sell their souls, freedom and privacy for money they are probably going to waste. The viewer’s use laughing at these people as a coping mechanism as to what is happening on the shows like Candid camera, punk’d, and cheaters.

Candid Camera is a “Reality TV show that originally premiered in 1948 and has run off and on ever since. The original show was created and produced by Allen Funt; it used hidden cameras to film ordinary people in unusual situations, such as a desk with drawers that pop open when one is closed. When the joke was revealed, the victims would be greeted with the catchphrase “Smile, you're on Candid Camera.” Celebrities were regularly featured as well, either as victims of or as participants in a prank” (Candid Camera). This show is one of the originals of hidden camera reality TV shows. In this show when people would be pranked it started with just regular everyday people but the excitement of pranking a multimillion dollar business person was priceless.

Punk’d is a show that plays pranks on famous people seeing someone who is not the average person financially and socially. This hook that brings viewers to this show is having the surveillance on stars that are put in situations that test patience and skill. When seeing them act out it’s a shock and even the wealthy and rich can be watched at any given time through surveillance. “[Taylor] Swift’s punk was particularly memorable, as the singer was left in tears after [Justin] Bieber made her believe she ruined a wedding” (vena). In this instance a country music star was brought to tears which wouldn’t normally happen and if it did millions wouldn't be able to see it. Things that were done behind closed doors are now broadcasted to the world. The comedic factor justifies her emotion of crying they (the many) look at the few in awe and exhilaration.

“In case you’re mercifully unfamiliar, Cheaters is a "Gotcha!"-style reality show, the "Gotcha!" here being: "Gotcha cheating on your spouse/boyfriend/girlfriend! She/he is in that van over there! Loose the injured
party so we can catch the expletive-ridden humiliation explosion on camera"(Gillette)! This show of cheaters displays infidelity and spouses dramatic reaction to the infidelity. The thing about this show is directed towards people who are in relationships or anyone who wants to be. It makes them skeptical about dating. Asking questions like, “will I be cheated on next?”, or “what if I get caught?” The surveillance of this show controls promiscuity and infidelity of others. Different types of hidden camera show direct towards certain aspects of life. Cheaters is the type of show where there are a lot of cussing, brawls and hair pulling when the person finds out they have been cheated on. “In one infamous episode, the smarmy host of Cheaters was stabbed by a cheating boyfriend after the boyfriend was caught with another woman on a boat and the Cheaters host confronted him”(Gillette). This is where the comedic factor is reversed and people have taken it too far. Physical pain is more serious than emotional damage as seen on punk’d by Taylor Swift.

I agree with Daniel Trottier’s position, especially when it comes to hidden Camera reality shows causing an essential form of control through the idealized surveillance factor. Hidden camera shows bring up the fact that people can be watched by anyone at any given time and not know it. Reality TV cameras and surveillance of citizens creates a bridge for everyday government watching and control. However, to the viewer’s it’s only seen as entertainment. Reality TV and the concept of catching people doing risky things is exciting to the viewer but, also an eye opener that they could be caught doing things they're not proud of, by the same hidden cameras. Real life surveillance is both necessary and beneficial for viewers, a form of control. It benefits the communities by ensuring less crime and civilians acting out. This control factor created by the idea of surveillance is necessary so there isn't total chaos and people who think they can get away with anything. The hidden camera reality shows Candid camera, punk’d, and cheaters captivate the audience to be laughing or entertained. However the control factor is integrated into each of these shows by reiterating the fact of surveillance at any time.

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Why Personal Essays Are Better

Satires, argument-based writings, and personal essays all have their advantages and disadvantages, but in many cases personal essays hold the most effective means of persuasion for important subjects. Personal essays are especially powerful because they are narratives explaining how personal experiences have helped shape lives and grant insightful knowledge. If a formerly obese male were to write to obese people about why it is beneficial to lose weight, he should approach the issue using a personal essay. His approach of using a personal essay is better than both a satire and an argument-based essay because by using his own experiences, he could establish even more credibility than if he appears to be an expert just talking about the topic of obesity or a comedian making jokes about obesity.

If the formerly obese author chose to persuade his audience with a satire, he will establish the least amount of credibility compared to the other two forms of writing. Using a satire is basically taking an idea or argument and mocking it, in this case the idea would be obesity and by mocking obesity the author would essentially be mocking his audience. The audience could take offense to, and even stop reading, when someone talks about their weight in a sarcastic and humiliating manner. So, using a satire would be an ineffective form of persuasion because the author would probably lose a lot of credibility if he talks about obesity in a careless and jokingly manner that may offend people. It is even possible for the author’s audience to turn against his views because satires generally appear to be unserious forms of writing.

A disadvantage satires pose is that they can obscure an author’s original intent. The author could have meant to say one thing in a comical sense and the audience might take it seriously and believe in what the author is saying. For example, when I read Jonathan Swift’s “A Modest Proposal” I took the text completely seriously until my teacher told me that it was actually a satire. I did not realize the text was a satire because Swift proposes a seemingly earnest idea that could nullify a genuine problem. Although his idea of consuming babies is gruesome and unethical, he maintained seriousness by saying, “I shall now therefore humbly propose my own thoughts, which I hope will not be liable to the least objection” (833) which tells me that he is being honest and hopes that his readers agree with him. So by taking the satire the wrong way, it shows that satires can be misleading and people could obtain a whole different, unintended meaning from any satire. Satires could be dangerous if people obtain an unintended argument they could in turn follow the misleading argument instead of the original argument the author tries to propose. For example, if people, like me, take Swift’s text literally, they may actually start eating infants to save money.

Although satires are not the best in terms of persuading and making papers effective, they do still have their advantages. Satires can bring an uplifting or happy side to any sad topic. They could also provide a
comical gateway for people who originally held no interest in a topic to enjoy listening about and opening up their minds about the topic. Another advantage of writing satires would include the way the author could incorporate the cold hard truths into their writings which provides the audience with facts they usually would not hear from other methods of writing. Many of these advantages are great but unfortunately they do not pertain to the situation with the formerly obese author. His audience would have already held interest about the topic and probably would not want the cold hard facts in the first place since they already live with them.

The next best choice aside from personal essays would be argument-based essays if the author wanted to persuade his audience. Argument-based essays give specific points with examples of each point. If the author approaches his audience in this way, the audience would be more tempted to agree and go along with his argument because there would be logical evidence to support his claims. In James Fallows, “Throwing Like a Girl” he argues the reason why men throw better than girls is because men had more practice in their lives. Fallows strengthens his point to readers by giving an example of what he means when he says, “If you are right-handed, pick up a ball with your left hand and throw it. Unless you are ambidextrous or have some other odd advantage, you will throw it “like a girl.”” (403). After readers try Fallows example, they would realize Fallows is correct and would agree with him. So by giving examples, specific points, and logical evidence, the author could persuade his audience that losing weight is indeed very beneficial.

Argument-based essays are great in general but if the formerly obese author were to write in this style it would not be as effective as writing in a personal essay style. If the formerly obese author writes an argument-based essay he would appear more like a doctor that only knows facts from research and studies rather than someone who has had firsthand experience with obesity. By appearing like a doctor, the author may establish a smaller connection with his audience. For example I believe Michael Pollan’s “What’s Eating America” could have been more effective if the text was a personal essay instead of an argument-based one. In his essay Pollan gives a plethora of facts about synthetic fertilizers and corn that are all relevant but I believe not the best for persuasion. If Pollan had written something like, “As an organic farmer myself, my plants and animals all still fix and produce vast amounts of nitrogen” I believe would be better than him saying “And yet, as organic farmers (who don’t use synthetic fertilizer) prove every day, the sun still shines, plants and their bacterial associates still fix nitrogen, and farm animals still produce vast quantities of nitrogen in their “waste,” so-called” (786) because he would show his readers through his firsthand experiences that organic farming does work and there is no need for the overly used synthetic fertilizers.

Lastly, the third and best form of writing for persuasion would be with personal essays. If the formerly obese author tries to persuade his audience that losing weight is beneficial, then the best approach for him would be to use a personal essay. A personal essay would grant him immediate credibility from his audience because his audience would be able to connect with him and trust him since he was once where they are in terms of weight. By using a personal essay, the author would be able to incorporate a lot of emotion in the essay to pluck at his audiences’ heart strings which makes the audience feel moved by his essay. Also since the author
is a prime example of a person who lost weight, he could move his audience even more and tempt them to lose weight for all the benefits he is currently enjoying. Eleanor Roosevelt’s autobiography is a great example of how touching a personal essay can be. Roosevelt starts by stating, “In the beginning, because I felt, as only a young girl can feel it, all the pain of being an ugly duckling, I was not only timid, I was afraid” (411) to ending off her passage with “And, having learned to stare down fear, I long ago reached the point where there is no living person whom I fear, and few challenges that I am not willing to face” (412). Roosevelt’s essay is very touching because of the way she states that she is afraid in the beginning but learns to overcome all her fears by the end of the passage. By showing her audience that she overcame her fears when she gathered enough courage, it shows her audience that they too could overcome their fears.

In general, personal essays have many advantages for persuasive topics. Most personal essays cover all three methods of persuasion; logos, ethos, and pathos. In order to persuade people there must be some evidence, but most importantly the essay must be emotional where the author shows his audience he is strongly committed to his topic. There would then be logical appeals when facts and other pieces of evidence are used to support a claim. Lastly, credibility is established by showing an audience that the author has been in their shoes and knows what they are feeling. Credibility is probably the most important element in persuasion because it tells the audience that the author is a source that knows what he/she is talking about and that they can be trusted.

Even with those advantages of how personal essays prove to be very effective for persuasion, personal essays still have their disadvantages. For starters, some people in the audience may not relate to the author’s story so they may not be persuaded or moved at all. For example, Marjane Satrapi’s “My Speech at West Point” was a personal story about her change of views on the war in Iraq (208), but it did not persuade me at all because her topic simply did not apply to me. Also some people would prefer cold hard facts that losing weight could guarantee beneficial instead of just one personal essay about how a single person benefitted from losing weight. In addition to that, personal stories are sometimes exaggerated and slandered a little which makes them a little less credible if they appear to be too farfetched. These cases are rare because I believe that the people telling the personal stories are genuinely trying to help other people get through the same journey they went through themselves. The drawbacks personal essays pose do not apply in the formerly obese author’s situation though. More than likely, he would not slander his story and make it so his audience would be able to relate to his story.

If the formerly obese author were to write to currently obese people about how losing weight is beneficial we can say, from all the information provided, that the author should approach this audience with a personal story. The author would not be likely to offend or mock anyone with his writing because if he were offending anyone, he would also be offending himself since he was once obese too. In addition to that, by writing a personal essay, the author could tell his readers the ways he is benefitting from less weight which could be new information and motivation to his audience. Lastly, the audience could be genuinely moved by the author because he would use ample evidence and logic to support his claim that losing weight is beneficial. By
writing about the subject of obesity to obese individuals, it shows that the author cares about his audience which would make his audience take in more of what the author tries to explain.

In this case, it seems as if a personal essay would cover all the things an argument-based essay would as well as leave out the disadvantages of the three essay forms. It becomes clear that personal essays are the best way to approach a persuasive essay about an important subject matter, like obesity. Satires are great for some types of essays, but just definitely not this one, there are many people that are sensitive about their weight and could be offended by any type of mockery. Argument-based essays are really great essays that could be used to persuade anyone about any topic but in this case it just does not beat the way personal essays could persuade the audience. Personal essays come out on top because of the way they incorporate personal experiences with whatever they are trying to argue or persuade, which makes readers feel a connection with the author and urges them to listen.

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The Pros of a Personal Essay on the Subject of Bullying

The most effective way of writing, as well as getting a point across, is through personal writing. Some writers use satire to convince their readers about a certain point they are making, yet it never truly works better than a personal essay. In a personal essay, various things added to make it personable and relatable. Although there are many topics to write about, not all tend to fit into a personal essay format because there is not something truly relatable to the author, or the person reading the essay. A satire lacks the details that a personal essay can easily give to the reader, and an argument based essay lacks a sense of reliability. When it comes to the topic of bullying, a personal essay is best fit to further explain the subject in order for the reader to understand the background and overall idea of an anti-bullying campaign; Of course, different topics may be suitable for a satire or argument based essay, but personal essays end up causing the reader to think deeper about a serious topic that has grown a bigger concern over the years. A personal essay is the most suitable type of essay on bullying because of the pathos factor that develops over the course of the piece, while emotions are barely incorporated into a satire and an argumentative essay; there are also risks of having the reader misinterpret a satire, and become bored or incapable of relating to an argumentative text.

A personal essay is very helpful when it comes to the topic of bullying because of pathos. The main characteristics that a personal essay has to meet are very simple, but can make a lot of difference. The first characteristic is using first person to make sure that the essay is on a more personal level, it is important to have a connection between the writer and a reader so there is a personal atmosphere created. By doing that, there is a chance for the readers to imagine themselves in whatever situation is written about. That is one of the greatest reasons why personal essays are suitable for a topic such as bullying; the writer can give an example of something quite serious, like I mentioned in my personal essay. I feel the necessity to make others aware of real life situations that many people are oblivious to, which is why I chose to write a personal essay on bullying. Writing about bullying in a personal essay really made it easy for me to express my beliefs, while being able to convince others. I mentioned in my personal essay, “It was like I had no control, and the world swallowed me whole without thinking twice about the lonely new girl who was helpless, and scared half to death” (Jaramillo 1). In this quote, I wanted to start off with something simple. Of course, I did not want to overwhelm the reader right away, but slowly introduce them to a personal situation that I had to live through. Since the target audience is mainly teens, my phrasing was very relatable, because many teens tend to have the mixed emotions that I incorporated into my personal essay. I also made sure to use a topic that teens may face, have seen, or have gone through in their past in order to consider my audience’s needs. Whether the person is the bully, or is being
bullied, the personal essay truly gives the reader an insight. Another reason I chose that certain vocabulary was
to catch the attention of the reader who may be skeptical about the consequences of bullying. If a bully were to
be reading a personal essay like mine, the bully would understand how someone was to feel after they were
targeted. Personal essays fit better with a situation like bullying, as opposed to other types of essays. The
connection made with the reader through the personal essay is the reason for why the personal essay suits best.
The tone is one thing that obviously helps make a personal essay so relatable, because that tone may relate to
the thousands of people that may be reading it.

Pathos uses situations to influence people’s feelings, in other words getting the emotions of the
audience. With a personal essay, pathos will be present, which is another reason that a personal essay defeats a
satire with the subject of bullying. Emotion should be incorporated for the overall need to relate, and have a
personal encounter with the reader, just by making sure there are personable factors in the essay. In Rodriguez’s
personal essay, he mentioned many details that were relatable, but also manages to have emotion come out from
the reader, just by reading his personal experience. If a satire were to be written about race, many people might
be offended or feel as if they are put on the spot. On the contrary, Rodriguez chose to write a personal essay and
include more details than a satire, and chose to not leave out so much personal and relatable information. The
way Rodriguez writes his essay can be quite relatable, especially to students that are minorities that have
experienced the change in culture. I was one of the students who were able to relate to his memoir, especially
when he mentions he was an, “accident of geography” (Rodriguez 187). I was able to relate right away because
I am a minority, and once I came to the United States, I felt as if I was taken from South America, and
accidentally thrown into the United States. By Rodriguez saying he was an “accident of geography”, he meant
that where he was living in the United States, he was placed incorrectly, and had a feeling that he should not
have been in the US, just like I felt. He felt ostracized in the US, which also relates to the bullying topic that
should be written as a personal essay, just like Rodriguez chose to do. This shows another reason why a
personal essay can make someone’s understanding much stronger. This is obviously an informative piece, but it
is relatable, and its personal point of view makes the text more credible.

Credibility is always meaningful in a personal essay just because you want the reader to be able to
understand what you are trying to argue, but also, believe everything that is mentioned in the personally essay.
If what you are writing is not credible, then the whole point of a personal essay is missed. Credibility is key, in
order for the author to get his or her point across. Another excerpt from Rodriguez’s personal essay that can be
quite relatable in a broader sense is when he states being, “I was a bilingual child, but of a certain kind:
“socially disadvantaged,” the son of working-class parents, both Mexican immigrants” (Rodriguez 188). In this
section of the text, Rodriguez is a bit broader when he states being “socially disadvantaged”, which is where the
reader may be able to relate even more to his first quote. According to Rodriguez, a person who is socially
disadvantaged would be one who has both working parents who are also immigrants. Rodriguez’s text brings up
a good point when he mentions this, and it supports, even further, that a personal essay is better than a satirical
essay. His experience relates to those who are socially disadvantaged which can relate, as well, to the readers. By reading his personal experiences, the reader’s perspective may shift; they may become more softhearted, or just overall more understanding. By this happening, the writer’s goals have been met. In a personal essay, emotions are quite important, which is why pathos comes into play when it comes to personal essays. The more emotion, the more credibility, and the more personal added into a personal essay, the more advantage the writer has to get to a personal level with their reader.

There are not many benefits to a satire. Yes, there is a point to get across, but there is no certain criterion. It is basically just sarcasm to prove a point, in other words, the authors of satires use their sarcastic humor to make fun of a topic that is actually quite serious, just to get their point across. Unfortunately, those who write satires may have an audience that do not exactly appreciate a certain subject being written about in a satirical form. The content can be either light or heavy, but there is always that amount of exaggeration added into it. This is where the stories or ideas of writing begin to have a less meaningful significance, if someone decides to write sarcastically about something they feel strongly about, many of the people that read it might either not appreciate the text or flat out misunderstand sarcasm. There is a chance of being effective, but why settle for a road that you know will not fully guarantee a successful point made while you have a road that will fulfill your needs and views to be put out there? It is understandable, some writers like to take a risk of writing a satire, and they do that because their target audience will understand sarcasm, or will just understand what he or she is trying to say. Unfortunately, satires are not usually understood at the same level that the author wishes to; a satire can easily offend its reader by phrasing something the incorrect way. Another reason satire may not be the best choice is because it is an extremely sensitive topic. For example, a satire paper I wrote on gay marriage and how people are so obsessive about banning it. A satire would not be a suitable way to approach this topic for the simple fact that its audience will be offended, not all, but people are sensitive about gay marriage, especially during this generation and generations to come. Using satire, I named my essay “Ban Straight Marriage,” and I used very extreme examples that many people would not understand. For example, to conclude my satire essay, I wrote, “Straight marriage will never be a success because love is only ethical if it’s between the same sex” (Jaramillo 1). Keeping satire in mind, I was referring to many people in our society who have negative ideas about gays and negative attitudes towards them, just because of sexual preference. I used straight marriage as an example to have my audience realize just how unethical the overall idea of “banning straight marriage” is. Now, satire is great, it adds some humor into the writing and has a main point about an important topic, but usually, people either need to be fully informed of the topic being written on or understand that the point of the paper is to be written sarcastically.

The subject of a satirical essay is also important in order to be a good one, but even then, the essay will not prove as much as a personal essay will. The attention of the audience will not remain the same in a satirical essay versus a personal essay for the mere emotion. There has to be a connection in a piece of writing in order for the reader to understand a point or feel as if there is a personal bond between them and the writing. For
many reasons, I did not decide to use satire with bullying; one would be because of the very large factor of offending someone. It would be quite ironic to write a paper about making fun of bullying, when the whole point is the write about an anti-bullying campaign. In satires, there is also a big limitation of what you can write or not. This is not really a written rule, but more of a personal limit that the author must have in order to have their paper appeal to others. If the author cannot sensor their complete perspective, the reader can easily disagree and feel targeted. Not only that, but personal essays need that feeling and connection that satire lacks, and an argumentative will never reach up to.

In an argument-based essay, there are aspects that a personal essay can easily touch base on. If there is a situation where information is needed, and argument based essay will be a writer’s best friend, but that does not necessarily mean that the audience will be engaged in that certain topic because there is nothing to relate to. A limit that argumentative essays have is the structure, their structure is quite rigid in comparison to the structure of a personal essay that can be a sentence, just like in Jamaica Kincaid’s “Girl”. One of the strategies of persuasion can be found in an argumentative essay, yet all three ethos, logos, and pathos are found in a personal essay. The logos, or logic, that is in an argument based essay touches on facts and evidence to prove itself. In contrast, personal essay vary from morality to logic to emotion, showing how broad to specific the essay can get.

An argument based essay can be helpful when it comes to proving a point, just like “Throwing like a Girl,” where the author argues his central question of “why exactly do women throw like girls?” James Fallows’ argument includes the wrong way to throw a baseball where he decided to criticize Hilary Clinton’s form. He said, “In preparation for her throw she was standing directly facing the plate. A right-hander, she had the elbow of her throwing arm pointed out in front of her upturned palm. As the picture was take, she was in the middle of an action that can only be described as throwing like a girl” (Fallows 400). Fallows explained the basic way that a person should not be pitching at a professional baseball game, but how does that relate to the reader? It does not. Fallows bashed Hilary’s way of throwing a ball, and criticized her form, but it has nothing to do with a personal experience. There is no connection the reader can make in his argument other than Hilary being a woman, if it was a woman reading his essay, but even then, there is no core point that will want the reader to understand and take action with. There are points that the author makes throughout his essay that are quite informative, but do not reach the same level that a personal essay does. The personal essay has the little things such as being able to relate and understanding, while an argument-based essay just spills out facts and information.

Personal essays truly give you an opportunity to sell your point of view, but also yourself. In the personal essay of bullying I was able to incorporate my huge success in the establishment of a club that combats bullying and is for the anti-bullying campaign. The question would be how would a satire sell you? If there is sarcasm, yeah there will be a chuckle here and there, or just utter confusion. In the mean time, if a personal essay is written, there is that opportunity to get personal, deep into the topic, selling you, and being an overall
credible and relatable writer. Whether it is for a stance on bullying or not, the personal essay runs over the satirical essay because of the mere fact that it just shows so much more than a satirical essay does. A certain topic will always sound better, and will have more content that can be understood easily by the targeted audience. Without a doubt, a satirical essay does not get the point across the way a personal essay does. With the support of personal evidence that enhances credibility, personal essays will always succeed in getting a point across while establishing a connection with the audience.

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"The aim of education should be to teach us rather how to think, than what to think - rather to improve our minds, so as to enable us to think for ourselves, than to load the memory with thoughts of other men."

-John Dewey

Throughout the entirety of my educational career, I optimistically walked school hallways with the notion that my actions actually mattered. Every morning consisted of eagerly rising from bed believing society had a greater purpose for me and that my instructors worked hard to assist in my success. Needless to say, my view of the education system received quite a dramatic shock after reading Paulo Freire’s “The 'Banking' Concept of Education.” Freire categorizes the educational system as a whole, into two distinct methods of teaching. Regarding the adverse techniques, my English teacher Mr. Williams used an open discussion teaching style closely related to the “Problem-posing” method. In direct opposition, my prior Math instructor Mrs. Wagnor, merely dumped information to be processed by her students in a way similar to “The Banking Concept.” However, after thinking back on how well these teaching manners played a role in my education, I found that Freire’s argument is subject to inquiry. For instance, “Are there only two distinct teaching methods, or is there a middle ground?” The thought arose in my mind after realizing that Mr. Williams, Mrs. Wagnor and many other teachers were not limited to only one of Freire’s teaching styles, but in most cases, used a hybrid of the two. Also, the emergence of a strong group community within the fused classes, became extremely prominent. When my mentors did use banking concept ideals, they made sure to establish either student-student relationships or student-teacher conversations to abate alienation caused by such an approach. Ultimately, amidst the possible aspects to education, I personally found that when my instructors used a blend of Freire's teaching styles, students learned more efficiently.

However, to fully grasp and understand the way Freire's opposing approaches may complement each other, it is important to note their specific attributes. Oppression, dehumanization, domestication and a lack of consideration for consciousness are all characteristics of “The Banking Concept.” Freire heavily expresses that such an approach to teaching is absolutely detrimental to the success of students. At this point, I couldn’t help but feel a sense of betrayal, as if the educational system was conditioning me into a mindless drone. Early into Freire’s argument, he states, “Education thus becomes an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor” (318). Due to the impersonal properties of “The Banking Concept,” students fail to be recognized as unique individuals and as a result, are taught to simply adapt to society rather than to shape it. In complete contrast, Freire formulates his own version of the ideal method to
teach students, dubbed “Problem-posing” education. On this side of the spectrum, you will find dialectical conversations, explorative thinking and improved teacher-student relations. In Freire’s words, “Those truly committed to liberation must reject the banking concept in its entirety, adopting instead a concept of women and men as conscious beings, and consciousness as consciousness intent upon the world” (323). Nevertheless, I still must insist upon the positive properties that a unison of the two styles would create. Combining the straightforwardness of "The Banking Concept" and the personal connections of “Problem-posing” education proves to be an extremely effective method of teaching.

In general, the atmosphere of H.C. Wilcox Technical High School was that of any other 9th to 12th grade institution; void of contiguous teacher-student relations. The majority of teachers were monotone at best and my following instructor was no exception. After reminiscing, I could describe Mrs. Wagnor as being a highly conservative individual that rarely, if ever, strayed from the school mandated schedule. Students walked in, pulled out their exaggeratingly heavy geometry text, and braced themselves for an onslaught of information. The amount of data my instructor could fit on the classroom white board seemed limitless. Only after filling the last vacant space, Mrs. Wagnor would then proceed to explain each and every line of material until all equations were exhausted. On this note, she perfectly adhered to the "depository" method of "The Banking Concept". However, Mrs. Wagnor never presented herself as better than us and was very cautious to not abuse her authority. Furthermore, my geometry class seemed to burst into group discussion after receiving the permission to rally and complete the assignments in groups. In spite of her colorless approach to the beginning of every class, Mrs. Wagnor allowed this organization in order to openly discuss each topic among peers with equal ignorance. Be that as it may, I found myself actually grasping the sections she covered. Even though the class never reached a healthy level of conversation with Mrs. Wagnor, we were able to develop a beneficial student-student community where learning was our main focus. From this observation, I concluded that my instructor used a teaching style that was not wholly textbook banking style, but instead drew upon a mixed approach to teaching.

A supplementary investigation into the workings of my Math instructor not only highlights key points of both "The Banking Concept" and "Problem-posing" education, but also, demonstrates how well the two methods work together. When describing Mrs. Wagnor, I mentioned she displayed very little of her authority in comparison to a majority of her colleagues. Developing an educational environment without abusing her power, greatly lessened the overall condescending tone typically radiating from most instructors. This sense of equality and respect for our lack of knowledge, nullified some of the harmful effects to student growth posed by "The Banking Concept." Needless to say, yet another crucial point was expressed regarding student communities in the classroom. I noted how students would band together in desperation to discuss key concepts in an attempt to fill the void created by Mrs. Wagnor. Instead of trying to force a relationship with our instructor, my classmates found it easier to learn topics among ourselves on a level where we could connect as friends and intellectuals. The idea of forming our own study group liberated us from the awkwardness of conversing with an authority
figure and gave us a feeling of pride in what we had become. Simply put, the fusion of a direct learning approach and a relatable group atmosphere, allowed for an absolutely positive learning condition.

Diverging from Mrs. Wagnor, Mr. Williams’ class entirely involved open discussions and personal conversations including my instructor himself. For example, when introducing a new topic, Mr. Williams would give us the freedom to read the short story individually to interpret the text on our own. After formulating our personal views, we would convene in group discussion and alternate between classmates to list each perspective. Mr. Williams emphasized that no answer was right or wrong as long as the individual could support their belief. We would not learn a topic, but instead explored what the class did not know. Often times, the classroom atmosphere felt as one would except from a "Problem-posing" instructor. Mr. Williams made his students feel as though we learned together as a class rather than feeling as if we were mere objects. At any rate, Mr. Williams still made use of the disimpassioned banking method when district wide assessments had to be taken. In addition, discussions were particularly hard to form from such direct topics like grammar and citations. However, just like the scenarios in Mrs. Wagnor's class, I noticed small groups of students franticly forming side by side to brainstorm ideas. I found this twist on student relations to be surprisingly fun and more beneficial to my understanding of what was being taught due to the nonjudgmental demeanor. Considering the flip flopping between Friere's concepts of education, I find it hard to pinpoint Mr. Williams' exact teaching style. In a similar way to Mrs. Wagnor, my English instructor made use of key intrinsic properties of both "The Banking Concept" and "Problem-posing" education.

Correspondingly, in the epigraph above, American philosopher, John Dewey, emphasizes what the true goal of education should be. In summary, Dewey believes students should be taught to formulate unique ideas and to think for themselves. The conjecture arose as a result of pragmatism growing into a prominent philosophy in the United States during the early 20th century. Essentially, pragmatism is the belief that ideas are the basis of their merit. Dewey's position on education is directly similar to Friere's stance that critical thinking approaches to education are ultimately most beneficial to students. Complimentary to both views, my concept of a hybrid teaching style that encourages strong student-student communities, gives forth to extremely positive learning environments. The feeling of indifference caused by alienation is almost entirely wiped from the equation because of the strong connections between students. I found that comfortability among peers greatly enhanced student’s willingness to apply themselves in various situations. Likewise, maybe it was the fear of being left behind that pushed classmates to study with each other rather than struggling on their own. Whatever the case, it became apparent to me that students were more likely to critically think in an environment full of peers on a relatable level instead of working past boundaries to develop bonds with authority figures.
As a child I was always afraid of everything. I was afraid of the monsters in my closet, of going on a huge roller coaster, I was even afraid to walk in the dark. That all changed in one life altering experience. I know that you may be telling yourself “of course you’re afraid of all of those things, most kids are,” but it was worse for me. I didn’t take any risks even if my life depended on it. This experience that I’m talking about wasn’t just one little event. It was actually two events. The first event was definitely the one that I remember the most.

I remember this day just like it was yesterday. It was a hot summer day. School just ended and my family decided to go to Six Flags which I was excited about because the small rides were so much fun. When we arrived my family split apart. The older people formed one group and the little kids and their moms formed another group. Although I was in the little kids group I did not mind because I was scared of the huge rides. I heard one of my cousins calling me a “little baby,” and another called me “chicken”. When I heard these words my face went completely red because of my embarrassment. After that I just walked away to the small rides with the other “little babies.”

After my family met up to eat lunch we were going to split up again when all of a sudden one of my older cousins pulled me to the side and ask me to follow him. Not knowing what he was thinking I followed him, completely oblivious to what was about to happen. Next thing I knew I was being dragged to ride the Batman ride. In the entire park this was the ride that I was completely scared of because of the size and the fact that your feet are left dangling. I began to cry and begged him to let me go, but he would not, and the next thing I knew I was sitting in the front of the ride! During the beginning of the ride I was completely petrified but as the ride really got into motion I began to actually enjoy it. Instead of screaming in fear I was screaming for joy. After the ride ended a feeling inside me started to grow. I wanted to go on more huge rides like Batman. I was no longer afraid of heights but, I was still afraid of the monsters at night.

My second event was just as life changing as the last. That same summer my cousins decided to come over my house to watch a movie. The bad part was that they brought a scary movie, *Jeepers Creepers 2* to be exact. I was so scared that I didn’t even want to see the DVD case that held the movie. That all changed when once again my cousin forced me to watch it. After a while I began to actually watch the movie without my hands in front of my eyes. I began to realize that the movie wasn’t even that scary and that none of the things that were happening in the movie could actually happen to me.
The experiences that I went through are almost as similar to the experiences of Eleanor Roosevelt when she was a child. In *The Autobiography of Eleanor Roosevelt* she says: “I was afraid. Afraid of almost everything, I think: of mice, of the dark, of imaginary dangers, of my own inadequacy.” (Roosevelt 411) Roosevelt’s fears were similar to my fears as a child but they were also completely different. She was afraid of everything even her own shadow. The other difference is that she grew up and was still afraid of a lot of things, as an elderly person is when she finally lost her fears of mostly everything like I lost them when I was still a child.

That summer was a life changing summer thanks to my cousin that helped me to face my fears so that I wouldn’t be considered a little baby anymore. His methods may have been a little too extreme but it actually helped. Sometimes a person just needs a push so that they can face their fears. Today I am an adventurous person who would try anything; nothing is too scary for me; no height is too high. It made me see that fear is all in your head. If you move past the motion that something imaginary is going to get you, then you will not have these silly fears at all. You will actually start to enjoy your life and you will want to take risks to do things you never thought of doing.

Works Cited

What does the word “Hero” mean to you? Many people, when they think of the word hero, think of someone who is intelligent, courageous, and strong. A person who is capable of completing just about anything they put effort into. Many Reality TV shows, producers try to get contestants on their shows that are very different from one another. I chose the reality show “The Hero” because it is a game show and competition which tests the strength, courage, and integrity of a diverse group of nine individuals. It is usually aired on TNT with the host being one of the world’s much loved celebrity Dwayne “The Rock” Johnson. The basic concept of the show is survivor theme; “Each week, the contestants will be tested, physically, mentally, and morally, as they try to prove that they truly deserve the title of ”The Hero” and the life-changing grand prize that goes with it.” The attraction of this show is basically America watching to see what the contestants are willing to overcome, endure, and sacrifice on behalf of themselves and their fellow competitors. On one hand, the contestants are trying to show that they are worthy of being called heroes, but at the same time they are also showing that they are just an average person who is capable of getting into arguments, and disrespecting each other. Many Reality TV series, such as “The Hero” encourage their viewers to use gender, racial, or class stereotypes towards other people in general.

Producers usually cast a diverse group of contestants for their shows for many reasons. For one, they want people who can bring something different to the show; not just in talents but in physical and intellectual abilities, and also the two most important ones, the competitors physical appearance and character. This is one of the tactics used when selecting who gets on the show and creating a successful Reality show. Random people with different strengths and weaknesses are chosen to compete with people who are either better than or worse than them at a task, and whoever is better continues on to succeed in the show. The one who fails will either resort to cheating or something along the lines, and disputes between contestants are bound to start because they are living together under conditions that eventually cause them not to get along. It’s like putting dogs and cats inside a small cage and throwing in a small amount of food and leaving a camera to record everything; eventually they’re bound to have fought. “The Hero” is a competition show so it’s mainly based around the contestants conflicting but the catch of the show is that they are all teammates so they have to work together and they need to rely on each when it comes to completing challenges. The contestants are the ones who in a sense create the shows due to the fact that their actions “write” the scripts. Getting people who will not get along and not work together would make it much easier to produce a show that focuses on drama, action and entertainment for its viewers.

Many aspects of the show I chose seem to tie in with our readings that we did earlier; such as
“Cinderella Burps” by Jonathan Gray, and “Country Hicks and Urban Cliques” by Jon Kraszewski. Cinderella Burps being about gender, dating shows, and relationships; which mainly speaks of women and how they are represented on TV. The article in a way seems to support the idea that women are looked down upon for being on reality TV because of the things they do, or how fame and money causes them to act ridiculous and humiliate themselves. An example of this would be going on dating shows, trying to find love while earning money for a certain amount of time they stayed in the round... Meanwhile Country Hicks and Urban Cliques are about race, reality, and liberalism. Nevertheless, both these articles portray one of the many stereotypes that can usually be found in Reality TV shows.

Many Reality TV show do a great job at influencing and supporting racism. Like most reality show; “The Hero” features nine diverse contestants which consist of Blacks, Whites, Asians and some mixed. This is done not only to try to appeal to the majority of the shows viewers; but at the same time to show how different racial backgrounds tend to interact with each other in real life. They also have a habit of trying to play on the racist stereotypes by either making the characters fit a certain persona, or stereotype towards a certain race. Many reality shows have used racism as a way for them to make their shows more enjoyable; they know that it’s something that people care passionately about. In addition to this, the viewer’s usually tend to have shown favoritism towards contestants that are of their own or similar to their race because they feel like they can relate to them.

Gender is an interesting topic when it comes to how it’s portrays men and women on Reality TV. Most of the people we do see on TV are based off the stereotype we see in real life. The majority of men in “The Hero” are shown to be masculine, strong and capable of completing work that consists of more physical labor, while women are more feminine and do simpler, tedious work. On Season 1, Episode 1 of “The Hero” when it came to the first competition, only six out of nine competitors were able to compete so two women and one guy stayed behind, and throughout the whole show it just showed the men always wanting to complete the challenges while the women shouted out ideas. Furthermore, the women would argue over the littlest things, for example in the beginning of the show, Athena, one of the contestants got irritated with Rachael, another female contestant when she entered the house and started socializing with everyone. This reinforces a stereotype that women usually get jealous over other women because they feel like they are trying to steal their spotlight and that they just can’t get along with each other. It’s most likely safe to assume that producers always try to select women that they know will not get along well with other women.

At the end of the day, “America watches to see what the contestants are willing to overcome, undergo, and sacrifice on behalf of themselves and others. “This is what the attraction of the show is supposed to be however in reality; the majority of viewers are just watching and waiting for the drama and conflicts that will unfold between the contestants while they are competing to win. The reason for this because just like in real life, people of all types don’t get along with each other for many reasons and what Reality TV does is basically take all real life problems and turn them into viewable entertainment that can be seen anytime. People watch
Reality TV shows every day and society loves to imitate what they see on TV. If they see celebrities or average people on TV being racist, or stereotyping, they would think that it’s only right that they do it too. Reproduce these conflicts by putting these different people that are under stress from the competitions and each other and they catch them at their best, and their worst.

In “The Hero”, the contestants don’t turn out to be depicted anything like a hero should be. They are shown to be liars, thieves, traitors, and just normal people who are capable of arguing with each other and fighting every episode. Although the point of the show is to find a person who is capable of gaining the title of “The Hero” through hard work and determination; it also shows all the undesirable traits that people believe heroes shouldn’t have. For example, the contestants are shown to be liars, thieves, traitors, who argue with each other in just about every episode. This again is just encouraging bad influences.

I believe that Reality TV has damaging effects on its viewers due to the fact that they encourage people become immoral. We watch the shows for many reasons, but mainly for excessive amounts of dramas, conflicts, romance, etc. which is just what we find entertaining. Similarly people watch TV to try to escape real life and escape their own problems, and instead to enjoy the misfortunes of others. By doing so we give producers ideas and allow them continue the type of reality shows they are airing. They alter the shows and make it even worse by portraying the actors however they want to.

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Latino; an identity that has defined who I am and how I see myself since I started elementary school. Richard Rodriguez wrote an essay that I in particular was very quick to relate too, explaining just how he felt growing up as a Mexican boy. He examined his experience through the American education system as a minority that at the time was largely unrepresented. In his essay “The Achievement of Desire,” Rodriguez explains the dichotomy of his two identities. The son of two uneducated Mexicans, and the boy who has worked his entire life to get the education he always wanted. It is by becoming this person that he was able to become so successful as a student and as a person. Not to say that it wasn’t difficult to get there. Throughout his essay Rodriguez is honest and open with readers about the critical comments that he makes about his family and their lack of education and his feelings towards them. It shows how his beliefs ultimately bring him to the conclusion that anyone who considers himself or herself to be an “American” or “Educated” needs to assimilate themselves as such. This is done by devoting themselves to school and reading wholeheartedly as well as committing to the language and way of life. It’s because of his difference in beliefs that make him so torn between his family and his education. After reading Rodriguez’s essay, I can honestly say that I identified with a lot of the feelings he had about education and his approaches to how it should work especially from a minority’s perspective, but it also showed me how I fit into the gray area of the Latin American Identity. Rodriguez’s perspective can be described to be the extreme end, while writers like Michael Nieto Garcia and Gloria Anzaldúa are more like myself, floating in the middle. It’s through analyzing these perspectives and examining these points of view that it’s easy to see that this argument is not entirely black and white, there is a significant amount of gray area. Situations where assimilating entirely would not be the most effective. Mixing these two identities; the American and the Hispanic is what can produce an entirely new identity. Although Rodriguez’s argument explains that complete assimilation is the easiest, mixing the two (producing a “hybridity” as Garcia puts it.) Is what can conform to your own personal experiences and tailor itself to who you are and how you see yourself. This is also known as a “Mestiza Consciousness,” as coined by Anzaldúa. It’s by combining these two personalities that you can create your own hybrid identity and figure out where you fit in as a product of the American Lifestyle as well as a child of Latino parents.

After reading Rodriguez’s opinion on this topic I went in search of other views on the same thing. This idea of assimilation and labels is very controversial and Americans are often extremely quick to assume that dropping everything and acting “white” is the easiest thing to do. Author Michael Nieto Garcia is a Latin American writer who chose to elaborate and expand on Rodriguez’s argument. He too understands Rodriguez’s stance on “ethnic authenticity” but begins to take into consideration the entire picture. He brings up a new point,
the idea of “hybridity.” Hybrids are a mixture of both, the American and the Latino. Garcia explains Rodriguez as a “Conservative Minority” (Garcia, 1). This term is elaborated on and used to describe someone who is technically a minority but buys into everything that requires minorities to drop what makes them culturally different. Garcia explains all the very harsh criticism that catalyzed from Rodriguez’s publication of his literary works. He caught a lot of fire for speaking his mind on the subject and revealing his harsh truth. Many of his readers didn’t identify with the idea of being Latin American, they just wanted to live here and keep their Latin identity. It’s because of the discrepancies between what Rodriguez believed to be true and the desires of other minorities that there was such a backlash of all the criticisms that came with his works. Anyone who reads Rodriguez’s opinions can understand that they are very subject to the reader and vary in terms of acceptance. Garcia understands that there is no such thing as “pure ethnic identity” (Garcia, 12) but he also acknowledges the fact that Americans have their own twisted idea of what “diverse” really is.

Those extreme feelings that Rodriguez was so heavily criticized for about wanting to be more like his teachers rather than his parents hit extremely close to home. There’s a certain feeling of guilt that comes along when you choose not to aspire to have the same future that your parents did, almost as if you don’t appreciate the chance that they’ve given you to be different and make that shift. Rodriguez’s personal experience of always wanting to be like the teacher and always seeking his or her approval is a painted picture of what my educational experience was like. Never once did I try to embrace the combination of being Latina and American, I always saw myself as American with “Latin Descent” as my Father so eloquently put it. It’s because of these choices that I made when I looked myself in the mirror that I believe I became the person I am. Coming to terms with my identity as someone who chose not to take the most well known path my parents took is what makes me see myself in Rodriguez’s experience. Although I do agree with what he is saying about assimilation and I personally can identify with it, I don’t think it’s the easiest or best route to take. There needs to be some middle ground, a mixture of the two. To say that someone moves to a different country and automatically loses everything that makes them who they are would be nonsense and completely unrealistic. Altogether I think the most effective way to understand where Rodriguez is coming from is to acknowledge the fact that labels about who you are and where you come from shouldn’t come into play in your educational experience. It sets students up to believe that they have to make a choice about where they’re going and who they want to be when in reality there shouldn’t be a choice. You should be able to keep the identity you see for yourself whether that be in keeping your cultural traditions or assimilating completely as Rodriguez believes to be the most effective. Merging the two identities is what can make you a completely different person, and ultimately it’s up to you to decide whatever choice to make.

Looking through the various Latino American perspectives it became clear that the gray area that makes up the basis for “hybridity” also works hand in hand with an identity of a mestiza. Gloria Anzaldúa is a Chicana who explains who she is as a Latina through her concept of “mestiza consciousness” (Anzaldúa, 99). In order to get to this new identity she elaborates on the struggle necessary to discover who you truly are as a Latino. A
mestiza constantly has to choose and struggle between the two identities that mix together to form one. Through these two personalities feeding into one “we get multiple opposing messages” (Anzaldúa, 100). With these we have to pick and choose what beliefs will catalyze to make this new person. The “mestiza consciousness” is all about making choices. Choices that will define who we are and how we see ourselves, this “internal strife” that results in “insecurities and indecisiveness” as Anzaldúa puts it. Some mestizo’s opt for the road less travelled, to drop everything that makes them Latin Americans. Others choose to develop this new person and adapt it to their new undiscovered territory. Ultimately the point that Anzaldúa is trying to make in her articulation of the “mestiza consciousness” is that the word “plural” is key. Bringing in more than one person to make a new one, a mestiza is already a person, but to now take these plural personalities and become aware of the new consciousness. The mestiza is a “mixed breed” one that struggles and thrives in different situations, by adapting who you are to who you have become you establish yourself as a member of the gray area on the spectrum. This combination or “hybridity” that so many mestizos know all too well. Myself included. By assimilating yourself to American culture you subject yourself to this gray area that has many different capacities. The different ratios of the personalities that these “hybrids” choose is what makes them unique to their own “mestiza consciousness”

Not many people want to go through life with a feeling of discontentment when talking about their family history or where they come from. Rodriguez went his whole life knowing that although he was of Latin descent, he didn’t want the label that came with it. “Your parents must be very proud, sometimes then they’d ask me how I managed it – my “success”” (Rodriguez, 515). This is a perfect example of how Americans always manage to set aside minorities and wonder how they got to the successful place that they did. Rodriguez always felt that distance that was put in place by Americans and did everything he could to make sure that they had no reason to treat him like an outsider, as they did his parents. It’s because of this personal experience that he has the extreme views that he does. To say that in order to assimilate completely into American society you must give up everything that makes you Latino is an extreme conclusion to make. He doesn’t believe in special treatment like affirmative action and anything that would make you different from your peers. The feeling that he got from the treatment that came with being a minority is what propelled him to excel and strive for his teachers approval as a student. His actions and choices reflected what he thought of his family and his desire to be different from them. Rodriguez also clarifies that although it may seem that he disapproved of his family and was ashamed of them, none of his choices were meant to support the idea that he wasn’t prideful of being Latino, He even said there was a certain level of “nostalgia” (Rodriguez, 531) that came with wanting to be different. He wanted to be that successful student, however he struggled with forgetting everything that made him the person he was. After going through Rodriguez’s entire essay and examining his arguments it’s clear that he doesn’t support labels as a lot of minority activists do. Rodriguez supports the idea of assimilation in its most extreme form, which I do not agree with.
Choosing to not assimilate is exactly what makes us so different from one another and to ask citizens to radically change their way of life is simply too much to ask because of how much it would compromise for our country. I believe that if you are willing to give up your entire culture and lifestyle and move to a country completely different you should be able to make the sacrifice to shift your way of life. However in doing so you shouldn’t have to compromise your cultural beliefs and change the way that you live your day to day life. This idea of combining both identities that you come into the United States with is what makes this country what it is. The exact reason for why terms like “hybridity” and “mestiza consciousness” exist. If everyone operated how Rodriguez thought that they should, there would be no diversity or change amongst the human population. These mixed identity theories are exactly what this country is built upon, the concept that not one person is exactly alike and that we all come from different backgrounds to make this melting pot of identities. Mixing these different people together forms an identity in it of itself. The United States in the spectrum of the whole world holds its own ground as a “hybrid” this mixture of hyphenated identities.

Now having read all these different perspectives it’s easy to see that there isn’t a set place that I fit in to this spectrum of identity. I’ve begun to realize that maybe in retrospect with my own experiences growing up I could have made a bigger effort to understand where my parents were coming from and possibly would have changed my mind on adapting my culture into my daily life. It’s easy for me to assume that assimilating and dropping your other culture would be an easy thing to do, and especially coming from someone who has never actually done it herself. I was born into this country; I’ve never known anything different so naturally it would be easy to advise others to do the same. Reflecting on where I really fit into this country has made me realize that I’m a part of the gray area, a concept I now am more than content with. I can see myself in the “inner war” that Anzaldúa explains in her book, I can relate to the struggle to realize that who I am is directly related to where I come from. I now know that in order to understand who I am now, I need to know what makes me who I was. Growth as a person is what makes up my “mestiza consciousness”. The choices that I’ve made make me realize that I’m not nearly as extreme with my choices as Rodriguez was, those harsh stories that I can relate too don’t necessarily mean that I shut down the Latin culture entirely. I just managed to shift my ratio of Latina and American so it felt like I assimilated more than I actually did. Physically, yes it would be easy to assume that I assimilated entirely and chose the American route. Internally, it’s obvious to me that I haven’t completely let go of my Latina flare, there are things about me that make me different from any other Latin American girl. Rodriguez was extreme, he chose to let go and absorb the American culture. He “disintegrated from the dominant culture and wrote it off as a lost cause” (Anzaldúa, 101). Mestiza consciousness and hybridity are what makes up this gray area on the spectrum, that’s how I see it. There are extremes and then there is the combination. Every combination has its own choices and struggles that accompany it, nothing is cut and dry and simple. These different choices all have different weights and reasoning behind them. These choices are what make us unique and what form lifetimes worth of experiences. Looking back at my own personal choices as a Latina and as an American I have made my own “mestiza consciousness” and defined myself and my hybrid
identity. One that I am now proud to explain and look back on. I can now say that I know my place as a Latin – American in this world and its nothing I’m able to compare to any other. My hybridity is incomparable, my ratios are different and my hybrid identity is unique.

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“Ku po ikim?” I can remember when I was five years old and I was in the car, heading toward the Albanian airport asking where we were going. “Esht per nji jave,” my mother assured the trip was only a weeklong. At the time, these words meant nothing; I look back and these words were lies that forever changed my life.

In 2001, my mother won the visa lottery. It was a life changing, million-dollar lottery that only comes once in a lifetime. In Albania, everyone dreams of winning the lottery that would bring them to America, legally. Thus, my mother paid my cousin so she could use the ticket he had bought for himself. “Per tu tal se sdo fitojm,” my mom says, stating that it was merely a joke, and she had no expectations of ever winning. Months went by and the ticket was forgotten until a notice of my mother’s name having won was seen in the papers. This was the beginning of a long process of interviews, doctors’ appointments, and a lot of tears. “Esht per me mir,” my grandmother would encourage; it was what was best for us. At the time, I was a clueless five year old who thought nothing was changing, when in reality, my entire childhood would be changed.

The early morning of my departure from Albania, relatives and neighbors surrounded our house to say their goodbyes; my family was the first to ever leave to America from the neighborhood. Life in Albania was difficult everyday and I thought a week vacation was well deserved. My father, who was forced to drop out of school at fourteen, went to work as a construction worker day after day, only to receive $200 per month to support a family of four. My mother was only allowed to finish high school causing her to stay home. My brother and I were to follow their footsteps. Moreover, My family lived in a one-bedroom house that my father built with his own hands. My parents decided to leave all they had known for over twenty-five years so that they could be free. After an emotional departure, the plane took off landing in Connecticut, United States. My family was fortunate, but there are others that are on the verge of losing what they have worked so hard for.

America is the land of the free and a place where dreams come true. Like my family, other immigrants leave their homelands for a fresh start. However, current debates of an immigration reform bill are increasing in the senate house, resulting in a “key test vote” that can depart illegal immigrants. According to “the ‘anti-reformers,’ what it really comes down to is that they are against ‘amnesty,’ which itself is polarizing shorthand for opposition to the legalization of undocumented immigrants.” On the other hand, “pro-reformers” “are in favor of the full package of reforms including enforcement, legalization, and alterations to both permanent and temporary admissions programs.” Currently, illegal immigrants must become citizens to stay in America; the process of citizenship could take as long as ten years.
Being an immigrant, my decision on the argument would be bias as I am a clear example of an immigrant wanting to leave the hardship of my homeland for the greatness expected in America. If my mother had not won the lottery, my life would be different. I have the opportunity to go to college, something girls in Albania have a small chance to. My family was lucky enough to win the lottery and earn our U.S. Passports after five years because there are others struggling and wishing to be in America. Overall, nothing should be taken for granted and opportunities should be chased; be thankful for everything because it can quickly be taken away.

Work Cited

Kiara Negron

Without Him

Who is a father to a girl? A father is the first man a girl loves. He is protective, encouraging, and providing. A father shows his daughter what she is worth and how to respect herself. He is supposed to be an example of what a girl should look for in a man. A girl should be able to find love in him until she is mature enough to truly love another man. With all that being said, many girls are growing up, or have grown up, without their fathers in their life. Why? Well, in most cases, their father either left, passed away, or their parents split up, but my situation is a combination of things.

This is my situation: my father left my mother then my mother left him. After trying to rebuild their relationship for about three years, my mother gave up on him. For the next three years, it was she and I against the world. I was seven when she got married to my stepdad. Together, they purchased a three family home where we lived and rented out the other floors. Our new family soon began to grow, with the addition of my first brother, Marlin, and we moved into our first home single family home. A few years later, my only sister, Mariah was born, and then came my baby brother, Kyle. Within thirteen years, my life and family had changed from just being my mother and me, to me having three half-siblings and a stepdad.

Where was my father in all of this? He was in and out of my life. Basically, he still had not grown up yet. He was busy living the single life. There was visitation for a few years, but then his job interfered with it. Being so young, I was not able to understand that. I thought he just did not love me; this by itself caused me to develop self-esteem issues. We continually lost contact with one another and it was as if he was not even my father. I continued living my life without him, even refusing to see him when he requested new visitation days. I figured I did not need him. I had a family with or without him.

I felt resentful about my father’s absent and I aimed those feelings towards my stepdad since he was the only man in my life. For a period of my life, I considered myself to be fatherless. I caused the relationship between my stepdad and I to become distant. I separated from all the positive male figures in my life and grew closer to all the negatives. I became attracted to the “bad boy” type, and I sought attention and love from them. I still managed to maintained good grades, but my behavior spiraled down.

A couple years later, my life took a turn in the right direction when I attended Winterfest, a teen conference in Maryland, with my church. It was there, at a three-day spiritual movement, that I began letting go of the past. I forgave my father for not being there, my stepdad for not reaching out to me, and myself for not loving me. Then I started rebuilding the relationships I had with my dad and stepdad.

Since then the relationship between my father and I has improved drastically, and I cannot imagine life without him. It took some conflict and a spiritual teen conference to realize I have many father figures who are
involved in my life; however it doesn’t take a conference or drastic conflict to come to this realization. It is key to know a father figure can be any positive male present in a girl’s life. A father figure is vital. My father figures include my stepdad, pastor, grandpa, and of course, God. All these males have helped support and raised me in different ways. On that note, a girl should know that they are never truly “fatherless.” There will always be a male figure whether it’s a relative or spiritual father.
Materialism in Society

Material things have become a bigger part of society over the last 237 years. Back in 1776 material things weren’t as important as they are now because only the wealthy could afford some of the things that we are now obsessed with. Some of those material things that consume most of modern society’s time are electronics such as cell phones, game consoles, music devices, laptops and iPad’s as well as televisions. Today the definition of happiness is to be delighted or pleased over a certain thing or to be favored by fortune and even being obsessed with using something. The material item that has become something used daily worldwide is the cell phone. The desire for material things has increased tremendously over time and the market plays a big role in conveying society’s desires for new technological devices and even though there are drawbacks that come with having these desires there are also many advantages that comes with it.

The market is a very manipulative place as well as very influential. They use various commercials, Ad’s, magazines, social networks and other ways to sell a product. In “The Market and the Pursuit of Happiness” McMahon wrote about the views of people about the market in the late seventeenth century and then he went on to quote Rousseau and how he critiqued the consequences of commercial society and how he felt they brought people sadness. According to Rousseau, “In the midst of so much industry, arts, luxury, and magnificence,”... “We daily deplore human miseries, and we find the burden of our existence rather hard to bear with all the ills that weigh it down.”(qtd.in McMahon 10). Rousseau also went on to say that, “a principal source of this predicament was the social pressure imposed on individuals in commercial society to yearn for ever more. Continually comparing ourselves to others--and striving always to outdo them--we yearned in authentically, developing needs and desires that ranged far beyond our true sources of satisfaction.” (53).

Rousseau’s idea that commercials bring about unhappy consequences is wrong because those commercials are targeting something that we need in order to communicate and it helps us to be able to use those things. He is saying that consumers are being manipulated but in reality we are able to see when the market is trying to sell us something of bad quality or an item that we wouldn’t like because we know a lot about what they are trying to sell us and what we would need them for and if it would benefit us. The new cell phones that the market produces and tries to sell enable them to do just that. The phones come with different applications that can be used to connect with others via text message, video message or any other networking application or device. My cell phone for instance helps me to communicate with my friends and family. The
function of it are to be able to face time, create group messages with others, download all the social network apps that you need as well as video chat apps and many more.

Materialism is very important to people because it appeals to certain things we need in our lives. The reason why cell phones are so popular is because we use them to communicate with family members. The market knows that we love to communicate with people that aren’t near us so they make new products with applications that we can use to see people through the phones without logging on to a computer and where we can keep up with everyone on social networks. The market knows what the customers are looking for and what we would like so it produces many commercials that grab our attention and makes us want to keep watching it and makes us want to buy whatever it is advertising. Locke believes that reason leads us to God who is the ultimate happiness. I agree with his idea because without reason everything would be pointless and nothing would hold any value. Without reason people would be doing certain things just because and it would make them seem like they don’t care about anything or anyone but themselves. We as consumers are expected to use reason with everything we do whether it be picking out clothes or going grocery shopping. Based on our judgment when making numerous decisions we can end up making a choice that could change everything. We could save money and learn many new things which can lead to our happiness. In the end we hold all the power and we can choose wisely about what we want to buy from the market and what we don’t need.

There are, however, many disadvantages to having the desire to want every new electronic device that the media presents to us. For instance if we keep buying new phones after we just brought another one it’s going to be a waste of money because the cycle will keep repeating until we have no money left. Also, society is becoming more easily vulnerable to the commercials that are out there which can make them addicted to buying more and more things without thinking wisely. It can be interpreted that many people are just buying electronic devices i.e. cell phones for their own selfish reasons but that isn’t true. The reason for it is the complete opposite; people want to have the newest cell phones in order to be able to do more in regards to keeping in touch with their families while they may be away in college as well as their friends. I use my phone to face time those with iPhones, Oovoo and Skype with my friends that I am not able to see at this point in time. I also use it to go on social media websites such as twitter, instagram and vine to connect with others and see what’s going on in their lives and show them what’s going on in my life. I use these things every day because I can’t always go visit those I don’t see a lot and while I’m at school that is the only way I can communicate with them instead of not being able to communicate at all. My cell phone helps me to know how people are feeling and how they are doing even when I can’t see them and it is not used for a selfish reason because the thought behind it is much deeper than any selfish reason. It’s the desire to keep lifelong friendships after high school or when you move away that drives our addiction to technology. It’s the desire to always want to know what’s new in other people’s lives and wanting them to know about your life that makes us vulnerable to the new technological advances. The thought behind it is merely that we want to stay connected with those we encounter
no matter where life takes us or what life may bring. Another reason could be that people want to keep up with everyone else meaning that every new thing that comes out people are going to try and get it because they want to fit in. This is something that needs to change in society because everyone is not going to be able to get the newest thing and it wouldn’t be for the right reasons. I feel like you don’t need to have everything to have everything. If you’re happy with what you have then you don’t need anything else and you don’t have to fit in with everyone else to be happy.

My fellow classmate KC wrote a paper on what brings him happiness and in that paper he said that his phone is what makes him happy. He describes it as being a tool to interact with your friends using social networks as well as play different games and text coworkers and friends. In his paper he included how he used his phone to keep in contact with his now best friends when he moved from New York to Connecticut a few years ago and how it makes him happy. In my opinion his cell phone brought him a lot of happiness because moving can cause a friendship to end because of the distance but because he had his phone and could communicate with them he was able to maintain a close relationship with them even from a different state.

The cell phone holds so much power because it can do so many things and make a person happy by either formulating a text message or allowing a call to go through. It can make someone who has been sad all day happy with one text message from someone they care about. Without cell phones communication wouldn’t be like it is now, there would be many who wouldn’t be able to keep in contact with their friends and family while they were away at school or even on vacation in another state. Communication is the key to everything and without it the world would be chaotic which is why we need phones to be able to talk to anyone when we need to. Not only do cell phones hold a lot of power consumers do as well; since the market place is so manipulative we need to know when they are telling us the truth about products and when it’s just a gimmick. We decide if something is worth buying or if it would be a waste of money and we use our reason to guide us in the right direction. The reason that we use when deciding if we want to be tempted by the market helps us in the long run when deciding many other things that can affect our happiness and our lives. Why is communication so important in modern society? What can people get out of having the latest cell phones? What is the main purpose of cell phones? Why do people value cell phones? Many of those questions are answered throughout this essay but just in case people buy cell phones so that they are able to communicate with others in different locations and interact via social networks. Cell phones make people happy not because of what they look like or what they may say but because of what they do and what kind of power they hold. Consumers also have power over the market and in deciding what they want and if something will add to their happiness. In the end materialism has become a big thing in society and it is the key to happiness.

Works Cited

Santiago Perez

What We Like To Watch: Rednecks

The funnier a TV show is, the more it seems interesting to viewers; funnier programs make us tune in weekly because it’s not just another boring. Obviously! Rednecks behaviors on a daily basis (according to the TV shows) show a lot of attraction to American viewers of reality TV. However not everyone down south likes to drink until they pass out or go mud sliding for fun. These networks like MTV, TLC, TRU TV, etc. show low class southerners doing idiotic things for the purpose of viewers. Why do these shows only poke fun at their social issues and not their rich culture? These shows have become so popular because we the viewer’s enjoy these things so much, we like to stereotype the southerners as a separate part of America and it amuses us when we watch it on TV.

Reality TV are TV shows that show the interaction between groups of people without any script, usually it’s a family filmed on a daily basis. On other cases there are competitive reality TV shows like Top Chef; in today’s world most reality TV shows are based on conflict or humor. The main focus is on three shows, three very popular shows that for the most part are lower class southerners that have no education and their behavior is represented by it. For the majority of time you watch any if these shows you will be laughing mostly at them and the situations they get themselves into. However I am not saying that this is correct but again it's what the public of American television likes to watch.

Although we are all raised not to stereotype or judge people, sadly we do it a lot when it comes to southern people. They are known for moon-shine, mud sliding, drinking, ignorance; and many more characteristics of uneducated people. This doesn’t mean they are criminals, means that these people act appropriately to their education and economic status. The ways that we see them is the way most of the TV networks or producers show them ass. On the Discovery Channel there's a reality show about moonshiners in the deep forest of the south along the states of West Virginia, Kentucky, North Carolina, South Carolina, and this general area. Not as bad as other networks portray Southerners because it is a documentary almost portraying it as an art form but yet it’s another trait, moon-shine,that we look down at Southerners. Not only have that, the majority of the shows in a sense made fun of these people and the activities they participate in. And the reason these shows have become recently so popular is because we enjoy every intended second the directors of these shows throw at us. It is because the short half an hour of the show gives something to compare ourselves so that we satisfied with who we are. I believe that works not only for southern shows but shows like Jersey Shore or even the Biggest Loser.

To begin with we have the well-known Here Comes Honey BooBoo. The family of six who live in a house next to a railroad are all cramped in a little space. Among the family stands out the star of Toddlers and
Tiaras, Honey Boo, who was the main reason the whole show began is the star of the show. Honey Boo Boo stood out for her crazy character and obesity for just a little girl, but when looking at her mom who from just a look one can say she is obese as well. The rest of the family is presented in their own show for which most of the girls are obese but the oldest, however the oldest just being 18 or so is pregnant, and the mother is 33 with five girls. The father who is sleeping half time from drinking shows no happiness or motivation to do something different. Not only that we see how little education this whole family has, from the one on one interviews that are often shown you can say they have a lot ignorant moments. An example would be "what's Egypt" and things like that. Looking at their family you can also see that the mom started having kids at a young age and apparently the daughters weren't taught differently. Summing up all these issues it what we think of when we picture rednecks or white trash who according to American live mostly in the south. I see this as an issue because the more viewers they get the more it causes them to indulge in their lifestyle. In my eyes if we celebrate them they will only get worse and worse causing moral like those caused when the Louds were torn apart after the reality show An American Family.

The second TV program is MTV's show Buckwild. Basically the show is just like Jersey Shore in that a bunch of young adults put into one house; however the difference is that they are in the middle of West Virginia. These young people aren't only reckless but irresponsible and only one the many is actually potentially doing something with their life. However the characters aren't not important what's important is their actions. In the first and only season because of a sudden death all the participants in the show went mud sliding, partying and did reckless things. They certainly met the criteria of a redneck which is someone who poor and is literally stupid this stereotype usually for the men of the south; One of the most important things for each of the men was their truck a whole episode was dedicated to the importance of it. They cared more about their trucks then they did about school. Also along the boys we watched as they went off ramps into lakes, and what made it interesting is the fact that the viewer’s knew someone was bound to get hurt. Someone getting hurt gives a sort of satisfaction especially when seen on TV. As expected the conflicts of living together grew and grew and so did the love affairs. That is where the concept of reality TV came in, producers intended or hoped for this to happen so that viewers had something amusing to watch, like stated previously viewers like to watch conflict and humor. The one positive thing we did see was Shane he was the definition of a southern gentlemen. Although he could be dumb he treated women he treated women with the utter most respect. Again the viewers enjoyed watching these rednecks pose for the cameras and make themselves look foolish, and although Shane was a gentleman the viewer’s still enjoyed watching something positive from the show. Both Buckwild and Jersey Shore were shows that stereotyped people. For southerners and Italians it was something they did that made us enjoy watching, it was a show that made a whole nation think Italians of east coast and Southerners were ignorant reckless people.

Not all southern people are the same, there are educated people, ones who go to school and have a profession. Those who actually work and make a living for themselves. This population of southern people is
beyond offended by the way their southern people are portrayed in these shows. In West Virginia the West Virginia Film Office denied tax credits to *Buckwild* because they feared it portrayed young adults in the wrong way” (bdtonline.com). This situation can be related to the immense amount of Italians offended by *Jersey Shore*, all Italian-Americans aren’t guittos.

Duck Dynasty devoted to the founders of duck calls, duck whistles meant to startle them, shows the poor family who became rich. On several parts of the family serious stereotyping is shown and on the other more educated and responsible southerners. The son the duck master runs a whole business with employees and the money flows in and out. His kids go to high school and are in touch with the modern world. His father is a serious southern man along with his wife, a stay home mom known for berry jelly and dad know for hunting, fishing and providing for the family. The rest of the relatives seem to be responsible and well mannered. However the main reason this show is enjoyed is because of the clash between the two sides of the family. At the end of the day they are still loving and caring, but they conflicts between the two cause humor therefore making us viewers watch more and more. The duck masters uncle, Si, is an elder man who on a daily basis dresses in camouflage sleeps and shows no effort to work but is still a person all laugh at for his way in words. Something southern that not all have, the way he carries himself in such a southern manner; old, slow, constantly drinking iced tea, has a southern saying for everything, also very mysterious in a sense that makes you admire him. Like a southern Guru, but it may just be that thinks like this but for the majority of the time Si makes the show funny.

Watching of all these shows gives viewers a satisfaction of the life they live. Producers and networks take advantage of things the public likes to watch. They produce these shows that stereotype Southerners into one type: rednecks. Watching rednecks on TV makes a lot of attraction because, much like the Jersey Shore cast, they are crazy which is something we don’t see in our daily lives. We often compare these people to the lowest of classes and for these reasons alone we find it good to watch these shows. Viewers find amusement in what producer’s best make of the footage they have. In this time and place Americans have proven over and over again that the public enjoys reality TV that has no purpose, that has conflict, alcohol, social issues, and most definitely one that mocks and makes the viewers want to watch again. I don’t see the change because looking at the history of reality TV the shows is only getting worse and worse. Whether producers or networks actually care about these people is questionable because if they did we wouldn’t see the things we see on TV. TLC mocks the obesity of the family instead of pursuing the family to change their diet or get healthy but the REALITY is that their obesity is what attracts to the show. A thanksgiving special was promoted how they had they a food fight from gallons and gallons of butter and mayonnaise.

The three shows highlight why viewers tuned in so much to watch southern reality TV. They show the good and the bad of southern folks; however they do mainly show the conflict of culture by the way some of these people live. One concept we can’t forget is that the south is way more different than the rest of country. Historically speaking they fought for independence from the United States. The food, portrayal of women, men,
and ways of life are completely different in the south. Networks show there racist flaws from back in the time to now with flaws of obesity and stupidity. For Honey BooBoo family a cycle of obesity and non-education must stop. And sadly to say in today’s world Shane is dead from a wreck less lifestyle, he was found dead in his truck after a night out drinking. These shows advocate their social issues and it’s like they want them to continue this way because the more attraction they get for being who they are the more money the networks and producers will make.

Networks today show these cultural conflicts because it wasn’t necessarily unknown to us but it wasn’t as immense as it is today, and it also wasn’t a popular conflict of interest. Southerners different way of life compared to the new modern day life; of celebrities, technology, and economy shows and reflects somewhat the past, that the rest of the country seemed as one and the southern seemed independent. Networks noticed this difference and saw an opportunity to make money. These networks made money by portraying the southerners as they are or by exaggerating their flaws.

The strongest reason for watching these shows isn’t because we make fun of them but because we grow attached to these people and hope for the best in them, viewers were crushed to hear of Shane’s death and showed concern for the health of Honey BooBoo and her family. Reality TV under the category of Rednecks is probably the most interesting, funniest, and most controversial. With these shows we see how stupid, dirty, irresponsible people can be. However we also see how happy these people are in life whether they want change or not the networks take advantage of these stereotypes.

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Bilingual education is beneficial to any country that contains multiple cultures within itself, such as America. It also contains many different lessons for the children of immigrants growing up in a country foreign to their family. Having the opportunity to be with two different cultures, that of your home and that of the country you live in, gives the option of having a richer multitude of experiences. Bilingual education should be welcomed and embraced, not rejected as Rodriguez would propose, so that you can accept knowledge that comes from anywhere. This bilingual education leads into a greater understanding into polyculturalism.

Rodriguez sees having another culture or language as a detriment to further your own future. But, in actuality, it makes you more worldly. Avoiding a bilingual education or even breaking away from it is foolish. It closes you off from many other opportunities that are available to you. You close yourself off from the world. Things are not just limited to the immediate space around you, in this case, your country. Reaching out beyond those boundaries, to other cultures, lifestyles, and countries allows you to expand your world views. Rodriguez shut himself away from his own Mexican culture, seeking out what he believed as his own true path to success. Choosing to deny his heritage and to “identify himself so completely with the majority culture,” Rodriguez chooses one over the other, when he had the opportunity to have both cultures. You lose the ability to intimately connect with other people of your background. Sure, you can just talk to them normally as you would any other person. But, coming from a background like his, he should have been more prideful of who he was and where his family came from, not to be so quick in abandoning all of that.

In J.A. Marzàn’s article “The Art of Being Richard Rodriguez”, Marzàn interviews Rodriguez on his book *Hunger of Memory* and, in general, about his life while growing up. Marzàn asks Rodriguez questions about his childhood education and more information on his “breaking away from his parents and his Mexican world” (Marzàn 47). Rodriguez responds with them being unable to let go of the past, which Marzàn retorts that he equates clinging to this past as them clinging to being poor, Rodriguez’s parents not committing themselves to the future and their betterment (Marzàn 47). Rodriguez generally views other Hispanics, and, by extension, other minorities, if they do not show promise or drive, as a lost cause. He broke away from his parents, as many people do, to achieve a better education, believing himself superior to them, as he strove for what he saw as a greater cause. Learning English, which is, in his eyes, what the most successful people speak, he abandons Spanish, even reprimanding Marzàn when he speaks to his wife in Spanish, thinking Marzàn was pranking him, telling him “In En-glish, please,” (Marzàn 48). With these situations as evidence, Rodriguez seems to have created his own personal stereotype, one where he places Spanish-speakers into a category of being uneducated.
In doing so, he let himself view Spanish-speakers in a static way, unable to change and seemingly always uneducated. He does the same for different groups as well.

“When he comes across a group of teenagers speaking black English, Rodriguez momentarily reexperiences the linguistic exclusion he felt so strongly and so repeatedly as a Spanish-dominant child, as he stands outside black English,” (Lim 527). This was one of the reasons why Rodriguez wanted to become a part of the public sphere, to avoid the alienation he felt with this group of teenagers. He criticizes them, saying “The intimacy that he witnesses among the teenagers is something that, to him, comes at the expense of public participation,” (Lim 527). But, why can we not have both? Many people wear different personas throughout their life, searching for their own identity. Conversing with different groups to find which the best fit is for you is part of that. As such, people tend to speak like that group, to fit in better with them. This allows people the ability to move back and forth conversing with many different ethnic groups. Adopting new forms of communication, like with “black English”, allows a person to sift through life until they find what speaking tone fits them. These personas allow them to fit into both their own public sphere and private sphere.

As some homes have both a private sphere and public sphere, other homes have just a public sphere, but no private sphere. These other homes are seen as seen as the majority. They have made this American culture their one and only culture. The minority homes still hold on to the roots of their culture, maintaining their private sphere that can only remain within their own families and families of the same culture. Having this private sphere, it changes the way the American education system affects them. While the people of the public sphere have only to do their schoolwork, seeing that their parents before them have done the same work and were educated the same way, the people that have their own private sphere see their parents differently. Children who have this private sphere most likely have parents who are of a different background or class. Parents who still retain the culture of their country they were brought up in, along with the culture and traditions that their parents raised them with. This culture, they try to pass on to their own children. But, their children do not interact with the same people and environment that their parents did. They interact with a completely different culture, learning to fit into this greater culture while trying to comprehend their own family’s culture.

Rodriguez refused to understand his own culture. He tried to escape his family. He saw his parents as uneducated; furthermore, he saw Spanish as a language of the uneducated, refusing to speak it himself. If he had grown older with this knowledge at hand, he would have learned that just because he viewed the English language as a path to greater success does not mean any other variations of English or any other languages would be any weaker. English is a mixed language, derived from many, many other languages over time, always evolving. The languages English had evolved from were able to communicate and spread education, like German. These languages were affected by the same cultures that spoke them. Likewise, each culture also has an effect on other cultures as well. This is known as polyculturalism.

Polyculturalism tells us that all cultures influence one another and are all interconnected with one another, influencing each other’s traditions and behaviors (Rosenthal and Levy 3). The term multiculturalism
encourages that each ethnic and cultural group are separate and that they are static, which also encourages the stereotypes of those ethnic and cultural groups, because they are unchanging (Rosenthal and Levy 3). Seeing that society has multiple influences upon it from all of these different groups and that these cultures are not as disconnected as one may think, that is when society can lift stereotypes from these specific groups. I believe that Rodriguez may have been a victim of his own personal stereotype, that Spanish is a language of the uneducated, as are many variations of English. Rosenthal and Levy would claim Rodriguez adopts a colorblindness ideology, also known as the assimilation ideology. This means that there is less emphasis on racial groups and, consequently, less emphasis on prejudice against other groups (Rosenthal and Levy 1-2). Polyculturalism would promote the individuality and equality of each group, as well as recognizing each of them as their own respectable group. Scholar Jeehyun Lim proposes a method in her essay to try to make connections with different cultures, cultures that do not speak the same language as the other.

“‘I Was Never At War With My Tongue’: The Third Language and the Performance of Bilingualism in Richard Rodriguez”, written by Jeehyun Lim, describes, in extreme detail, the troubles of learning through a bilingual system which heavily affected Richard Rodriguez and, consequently, pushed for his change of becoming Americanized. The idea that there is an English culture and, in the case of Rodriguez, his Hispanic culture, the former being a “public sphere” and the latter being a “private sphere,” neither of them can ever mix together (Lim 521). America, as a whole, is a melting pot, one of many different cultures mixed together. America was created to accommodate people of different beliefs and traditions to freely practice what their own country would not allow. However, its English culture has always been prevalent, from the creation of this nation, up to this very day. So, even though other cultures are welcome to enter and become a part of America, it is not to become a part of the public sphere, there being a feeling of segregation amongst them. In part, this is why Rodriguez and so many others who come from families like his feel like this. It is because coming from such a different background, they are being forced to transform and conform to this public sphere, to the norms of this society. American culture forces them to conform to the public sphere, slowly tearing away these people from their families and their cultures, to contribute to a larger society. If these people do change, they can now achieve success in this new world they have acclimated themselves to, surpassing their previous achievement of desire.

Lim proposes the idea of a third language being able to bridge the gap between the public and private sphere. She offers a more literal take on this third language, saying that Latin, which is a lot like Spanish, but is used by English speakers in places like church, can be one such example. But, having a literal third language to connect people of different cultures is too difficult and broad a task to be accomplished for any single language. This third language should be viewed in a more metaphorical sense. Something that could bridge this gap between the public and private spheres is things that are widely known and enjoyed by both parties, like hobbies. One could be sports. Many people are avid fans of different sports, be they basketball, soccer, etc. Sharing a favorite music artist, comedian, or any interest can bridge and connect to another person, even another
person of a different culture. It is just as simple as finding someone who likes the same things that you do. The big problem would be getting people to connect like this on a massive, worldwide scale. If people look and realize that there are things that connect them to other cultures, then they will realize that there is not much difference between each other. They will see that people are people, regardless of ethnicity. This bridge sounds very simple to make, but would require a huge collaboration, something akin to the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s, which promoted the rights of minorities, respectively. This would elevate ethnic groups to a level of respect for one another, increasing the chances of a more polycultural world.

Lim also notes Rodriguez’s loss of familial intimacy, or any close, homely intimacy. Having been assimilated into this English-speaking world, he felt his inclusion in Spanish being pulled away from him (Lim 527). The inclusion into a much greater, bigger group disassociated him with his closer-knit, more personal group. But, even though he feels a part like of this new group, he still feels excluded. This new group is so large in size that one may not feel that they belong, compared to the private sphere group. Being slowly pulled away from one world into another, but not truly belonging to this other world; there is a sense of “estrangement,” a sense of longing to return to that original world, but knowing that one cannot (Lim 528). Likewise, in my experience, gaining more information from your public, school environment as opposed to your own family home environment causes you to crave more knowledge from those that give it to, finding yourself slowly moving away from your family. That same intimacy I had with my family slowly faded away as I learned that they could not teach me as much as my teachers could. But, growing up, I realized that my parents had so much more knowledge and wisdom than I had originally taught. My father worked as a mechanic, but was also a carpenter, something I had no idea about. My mother taught me how to think more critically when dealing with many different situations. Getting older allowed me to learn that the wisdom that many adults have from experience is much more valuable than the knowledge you gain from school; that same wisdom gets you through life, including school. This wisdom is the foundation for understanding and living life.

Rodriguez holds that bilingual education should be abandoned and those with that choice should be assimilated into the public culture. The benefits of bilingual education far outweigh the detriments, gaining the knowledge of experiences your family went through at no cost at all. Bilingual education also allows people to have a firmer perspective on two different cultures. This leads into the idea of polyculturalism, where having the firmer perspectives for bilingual education allows you to connect more easily with different groups of people, plus understanding why it is so much easier to connect with people. It helps polyculturalism become more prevalent in the world. But, these are only a few amount of ways of achieving this.
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The horror sub-genre, the slasher captivated millions of teenagers that just looked for a simple scare. While many believe the slasher is too bland or even predictable at times, I see a very different image of this genre. In the general genre of Horror there are many features that, according to Carol J. Clover’s essay, distinguish between a regular horror film for the sub-genre of the slasher. In the movie *Halloween* by John Carpenter, many of these features like the different camera angles, the dark and mysterious past of the killer are all very present in the film. These very distinguishable elements allow for the attention of the viewer to shift to the most important people in the film. However, Wes Craven's 1996 *Scream* forwards some of these features and reiterates them based on updated societal beliefs. In this essay I will discuss both films ability to project the moral ideals of their times. These morals include the role of the woman and how greatly her freedom in society has grown. I will also touch on the killer’s identity and how his actions are a direct correlation to cultural expectations for young adults. Without taking these time periods into account, *Halloween* and *Scream* would not have been able to emulate the parental figure that is constantly watching over the teenager or young adult. Elevating the importance of mirroring the general public's beliefs and displaying them in film we can watch hundreds of years from today.

Forwarding, as defined by Joseph Harris in *Rewriting: How to do Things with Texts* is the ability to create a chain where there is room for future discussions or reinterpretations of literary works. “Intended to persuade a third reader...”(Harris 36) major works would simply be unable to evolve with society if this very chain would not link past works to today's literary ideals. If we look at forwarding in the context of films, it is clear that it is important to the survival of the horror genre, specifically, the slasher. When “forwarding” an e-mail we are simply taking an original form of text such as “words, images, or ideas...”(Harris 37) and “putting them to use in new contexts”(Harris 37). When we impose this idea on the film industry we see that forwarding is an essential way to allow audiences to sympathize with characters, scenes, and even entire movies. We also are identifying with individual character because in a sense they are a representation of our own corrupt. This investment of emotions towards a film is what makes the genre so popular to the teenager generation. Which is why the films are able to “deal with a range of contemporary issues”(Wee 52) that otherwise would be generally unapproachable. Without forwarding films today would not be a reflection of what societies are going through or need at that specific time.

Now that I have presented how forwarding affects films in general, I want to talk about two very distinct and universally known films that used society to forward or reflect society’s own beliefs. John Carpenter’s *Halloween* is a film based upon Michael Myers, a quiet psychopathic killer seeking to kill any person that is
caught doing what is thought of as wrong. *Halloween* took a different approach to using the troublesome era that was the 1970’s. During that time period which was “punctuated by protests against the highly unpopular Vietnam War...” and the controversial decision of the Supreme Court to “validated the right to abortion in its famous Roe vs. Wade decision,” (CNN) “Halloween” capitalized on the already terrorized american population. We see millions of people become scared because of Michaels presence and without issues like the Vietnam War many would have much less to worry about. While the film was a horror it served as a release to the public by allowing them to be sacred in a safe way. While the traditional slasher is about a murderer who seeks revenge and kills a crowd of people, usually women, it is why the monster kills them that is so important to future forwarding. Aside from taking part in the controversial issues like the ones stated above, two major symbols dominated the slasher film, Alcohol and drugs. Alcohol and doing drugs all alter your ability to think rationally are viewed as taboo in a time period where america was struggling with wars and other protests. Also having sex before marriage is another activity that typically is thought of as an untraditional way to live. Cultures have taught people for hundreds of years that abstinence is sacred, and that sex should be saved until holy matrimony, this is what the slasher preys on. The fear of becoming this social outcast in terms of feminism becomes the central idea behind the movie.

In the opening scene of *Halloween*, Carpenter forces the audience take the perspective of a young Michael Myers, who was abandoned by his sister to have sex. Horrifically, Michael stabs his sister repeatedly and is surprisingly emotionless after the murder. Michael just walks calmly to the front of his house as if nothing had ever occurred. This scene establishes Michael Myers as a kid with no rational thought or emotions thus giving us the “law” figure that sets the boundary to the film’s females cannot cross. When we think of a young child we usually think of innocence, and because Michael’s innocence was taken from him when he became a murder at such a young age he brings deep suspense into the movie. Because of the lack of a childhood innocence we can then assume that Michael Myers has no morals to fall back on when he is committing horrendous murders. It is this inability to sympathize, with teens who want to have sex and understand what is right from wrong that makes Michael a figure more than a person with true emotions. Michael because of this horrible murder is sent to an insane asylum where he presumably learns no human emotion. Since Michael does not have a normal adolescence he is simply unable to form or establish a connection with the typical normal human emotions. Without anger, happiness, or even sorrow, he is a figure more than a human. Michael is a representation of the rules enforced by all of society for women specifically to remain pure. However, although society wants women to be this pure figure, there has to be a way to show what exactly happens when this “law” is broken.

Consequently, the film seems to be “Drenched in taboo..”(Clover 187) and focus “vigorously on the pornographic”(Clover 187) which makes it one of the slashers that stands out even though it is entirely the opposite of what is expected of women. However, since the films are so deeply intertwined with moral beliefs like abstinence and staying away from drug use *Halloween’s* message remains the same as society’s. It just uses
the killer to “portray women as helpless victims” (Siskel & Ebert) that in fact are a parallel image to a person who succumbs to the use of these taboo activities. The killer and the women are just figures forwarded from our society who depict and “fall into the same pattern” (Siskel & Ebert) which only leads them to death. Again, by using death, which most people are scared of, Carpenter shows that a forbidden activity according to society can lead to victims “cowering into the corner...” and having “knives being brandished in their faces.” (Siskel & Ebert). This is very important to the message that the victim is suppose to represent because even the thought of have sex can get you killed.

The thought of sex can get you killed, skillfully shown in Halloween in the films second murder scene when Annie, Laurie’s best friend and the most sex crazed, out of all the girls faces her death. She is getting ready to pick up her boyfriend so he can come over. Annie does not have anything in mind other than having sex. Right before she agrees to pick up her boyfriend, Annie insists that she that she thinks “about lots of things” so “why don’t we not stand around here talking about them and get down to doing them.” (Halloween) The fact that she abandoned the little girl she was suppose to be babysitting and left her across the street at laurie’s must of triggered Michael’s past. Even though, Annie did not physically have sex she still had the thought or had in a sense agreed to have sex. Also because the young girl was abandon for sexual pleasure by her baby sister, it must have mad Michael Myers reconnect with his own disconnect from his family earlier in his life. Moreover, because of this Michael again had to assume the role of the “law.” He had to restore a sense of order and again reinforce the standards by which a woman is supposed to live. This murder in turn, is not just because Annie is alone in a dark garage, but a reflection of what could happen if a young woman's name is associated with drugs or even in this case, the thought of having sex which is exactly what society was portraying.

While Michael does serve as this strict figure we are forced to “identify not with the victim but with the killer.” (Siskel & Ebert) Carpenter forces us to try to relate to Michael from the start asserting by Michael’s point of view. Again, we see this as Carpenter not only controlling the movies camera perspective but also altering our own. He gives us the view of the killer to almost experience what the consequences of sex can be. While I do not believe this necessarily shows Carpenters own beliefs, it definitely shows the beliefs of the stereotypical parents who stress the importance of self-value and restraining yourself from sex. Moreover, we can see how more power one scene has on the entire film and even our own perspective as to who to identify with and how society influences to this film.

Gender representations in the movie are also heavily used to back up society and are a mirror image of what to do and what not to do. We see this through the many victims who all die, but the greatest impact is on the stereotypical virgin girl. Halloween and most slasher films try to represent this virgin girl as the perfect embodiment of what a person should be. According to clover the virgin girl is shown as “intelligent, watchful, level headed..” (207 Clover) but most importantly she is “the first character to sense something amiss.” The virgin is a sacred figure both biblically and in these movies because she represents what society wants a women
to be. A perfect women who explores nor desires sex but is in a sense aware of her surroundings. When we take a look at Laurie in the figure of this virgin girl the virgin girl we can see that the glove fits the hand. Laurie is smart and down to earth, her priorities are all straight which is why she is the one who first sees the slasher and is usually the one who continuously fights back to try to avoid the “law” that is the slasher. In a sense the virgin girl is avoiding the symbolic “penetration” of the slashers knife because she wants to remain a virgin. This is why Laurie or any final girl is always able to fight back. Even when things seem most bleak and like there is no hope Laurie “even at her more desperate”(Clover 204) is able to “grab a hanger from the rack and bend it into a weapon”(clover 204) These examples show how the ideal woman stands up against a monster while the teens who get involved in sexual activities all die. Without a doubt, this scene is enforcing what at the time was thought of as morally correct.

In the 1970’s the format of Halloween was the way to go. Noting that “the first “Halloween” film cost 325,00- and grossed 47 million”(Wee 52), it would be insane for anyone to try to fix something that “ain’t broke.” While for years installments of Halloween continued to succeed and films like Friday The Thirteenth were successfully released as well, there was a lack of reinvention in the slasher genre. Despite “the film’s total predictability it did not create boredom or disappointment...” (Wee 52) People still wanted more of the slasher genre, so a new era of Slasher films were spawned by a new society in America.

The traditional model established by early slasher films like Halloween continued until in 1996 when Wes Craven's Scream came along no one had thought to forward Halloween, instead everyone just copied its format. According to Siskel and Ebert all films following “Halloween” in the 1980’s were “all the same” just with different characters. However, as we started to see a change in the ideals in society, which start to get directos to move in a new direction. The tried to gear slasher films to more suit new morals of the 1990’s, thus introducing new elements. Which instead of strict morals, like maintaining your virginity and staying away from drug use, we see a new revolutionary era in which individuals “tended to focus more on personal concerns than on larger social issues.”(VanSpanckeren) As a result, the "Me Decade"(VanSpanckeren) was born, creating not only a new view on social freedom but most importantly more opportunities for women. “More women began to be elected to higher office in the United States, and 1992 was labeled the Year of the Woman, as a result.”(VanSpanckeren) The “year of the women”(VanSpanckeren) was what directly transitioned into a new type of slasher film in 1996, with “Scream.” Film industries had to revive the slasher film to accommodate this freedom that teens specifically women were seeing. In order to transfigure the classic genre of the slasher into a modern film director Wes Craven was very “keen to revive the genre”(Wee 54) by introducing a “conscious intent of making it more relevant to female audiences.” (Wee 54) This is a great example that even before the movie was filmed society had already began to influence or forward itself onto the big screen pictures. Wes Craven’s “Scream” is about a Ghostface killer who is played by two insider boyfriends, Billy and Stu, one looking for revenge and the other doing it because of “peer-pressure”(Scream).By the films end we learn that Ghostface is a different type of killer then Michael.
In *Halloween* we identify heavily with Michael because of his past, we do not get that connection with the killers in *Scream*. Since we do not know from the opening scene that Ghostface is “sexually disturbed” (Clover 195), in our mind, the killers in *Scream* have no right to kill. Unlike Michael, Ghostface is never seen to be as the traditional villain. According to Valerie Wee in her article “Ating the teen slasher of *Scream*”, she mentions that Ghostface are not like “The traditional villains are almost consistently characterized as psychotic, virtually indestructible maniacs.”( Wee 54) Since Ghostface is never seen doing anything out of the ordinary, the audience can infer that he is a normal person, with some sort of rational thought. The Ghostface killers are normal humans by satirically playing games with his female victims. Ghostface calls his first victim, Casey Becker (Drew Barrymore) repeatedly “to apologize” (*Scream*) and because he just wanted “to talk for a second” (*Scream*). Ghostface’s conversations with his victim in this scene differentiates him from a typical murder because he does seem to contain some ability to interact with others. The tone of the speaker’s voice and the fluidity with which Ghostface speaks shows that he is not this “outsider” like Michael. The Ghostface killer is not a figure that seem to be internally dead; instead, the men behind the Ghostface mask “seemingly normal, attractive, popular people, often ‘insiders,’ boyfriends or friends who initially appear harmless until they go on a killing spree.” (Wee 55) The fact that they can be anybody creates a different idea of the killers invincibility. Billy and Stu are people so the female in a sense gains some power because the “law” has become human. Making Ghostface mortal as opposed to Michael, creates a sense of hope which the female can feed off of.

Also, the killers can also reflect the mind state of the 90’s. Since it was the “me decade”(VanSpanckeren) and everyone was more worried about their own personal issues rather than what was morally correct. Not surprisingly, the killers motives to kill are in a way selfish as opposed to Michael Myers. Michael Myers represented a “law” he was society, looking over every teens shoulder to make sure the traditional idea of no sex was follow. This reflects immensely on society, because back in the 1970’s it was all about what other thought of you. However, in the 90’s era people were less susceptible to self-consciousness. This lack of caring for a bigger cause like society’s moral gave the new killers a different motive to commit murder. For example, Billy was only killing because he was left with a single parent. His father had an affair with Sidney’s mother, which is why he murders her. Billy was not thinking about society but only about himself. This self-centered attitude create a different emotional killer that was sparked by a new wave of freedom that we see in the 1990’s. Michael Myers never had a connection with his family, specifically his sister, but even though he kills other it is not from a place of anger, but rather a figure trying to uphold the law. Stu on the other hand had no reason to even be part of this, saying that he did it because of “peer pressure” (*Scream*), this is also selfish and backs up the “me-decade” because he is a representation of the free spirit. A teenager who try everything not matter the consequences. Undoubtedly, even the killers were affected by a female dominated era that produced new and evolved slashers.

The final girl is usually “distinguished from the other characters by her virginity and seeming prudishness.”(Wee 58) However, this notion is completely different in *Scream*. Although Sidney does initially
portray a virgin figure she eventually has sex. This was a twist that reflects back to freedoms that women have now that they did not have in the 70’s. In the 1990’s sex was not looked upon as taboo anymore but was embraced to the point where it became normal to talk about. Although the audience knows that Sidney is supposed to die because in any other slasher film “sex equals death (Wee 58) the film continues to break trends that were established from *Halloween* and past societal beliefs by having Sidney die. “Yet, against the established rules, she escapes postcoital death and manages to overcome the villains.” (Wee 59), because of the impact of Sidney’s new power. She is able to not only fight back and run away like Laurie in *Halloween* but actually play Ghostface’s own mind games. An Example of this would be when Sidney is all alone in her house and she answers a call from Ghostface. Ghostface tells her that he is outside in the porch, but unlike other “final girls” she doesn't simply lock all the doors, she talks back to Ghostface almost daring him to come out, she says “oh yeah?, I call your bluff.” (*Scream*) This new tough attitude was new to me when I first saw the film, especially after seeing *Halloween* where the virgin girl was always interested to find out about the Michael but was too scared to find out. Sidney’s new approach to handling a serial killer only reflects what women at that time where, young and powerful.

Consequently, The final girl in the *Scream* film, Sidney is now in a position that women were never put in Slasher movies. We see this when Sidney assumes the role of the killer and physically puts on the Ghostface mask. While many might see this as just a way to get back at her ex-boyfriend, this is actually the stand out moment in the film. Depicting the actual passing of the torch from the killer to Sidney it is the one scene where now we consider the final girl in control. While in *Halloween* we never see a moment when the Laurie was in complete control. Even when Laurie thought she killed Michael Myers he was still alive. Contrary, Sidney not only had the torch passed to her but took it and embraced it. In the last scene when Sidney kills Ghostface, Randy, the slasher geek, says tells Sidney to be carefully because “this is the moment when the supposedly dead killer comes back to life”(*Scream*) sure enough he comes back to life but Sidney takes control again and kills him with one shot to the head. Almost making fun of pass slashers Sidney replays by saying “not in my movie” (*Scream*), proving that not even in a movie can her power be taken away.

According to Sarah Trencansky “the Final Girl is depicted as more powerful than ever before,” (Trencansky 64) which directly points to the “year of the women.”(VanSpanckeren) that was established earlier in the decade. Forwarding was an essential part to the both *Halloween* and *Scream’s* success because it created parallels that people could relate to. People back in the 1970’s flooded the theaters because at the time *Halloween*’s was reproducing the morals that society was trying to integrate into their psyche. *Scream* followed this format by forwarding both *Halloween* and the changed society that was America in the 90’s. Without the forwarding ability of both directors we would not be able to reflect back each American decade and point out some of the main beliefs that were spread during that time. Without forwarding general in all types, of academic and non-academic genres we would not be able to establish conversation with future generations. Without
forwarding, we would not be able to making connections to form or even begin to argue beliefs, including those argued in this paper.

Overall, society's beliefs has had great impact on everything we can analyze. From books television shows, formal papers, and even movies. Without a distinct moral derived from a decade films like the slasher cannot regenerate to produce a more relevant version. Films simply could not paint a picture for future scholars to examine what was going on in society during those times. Without a doubt, I believe that *Halloween* and *Scream* both use these techniques to not only become more successful in terms of box office numbers but to spread knowledge what was going on during their decades. *Halloween* being the more traditional while *Scream* breaking conventions like sexual restraint. So next time you watch a movie, just remember you might be looking into your own society's mirror.

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When we approach an image without context, our interpretations vary significantly compared to when we approach it with context. Images convey different messages to each depending on who’s viewing them. Once the background information of an image is revealed to us, we automatically take on that to change our opinions. Walker Percy insists in his essay, “The Loss of the Creature”, that we need to break away from the “symbolic complex” of preconceived notions and instead be governed by our own senses (540-541). In contrast, Errol Morris, in his essay “Liar, Liar, Pants on Fire”, argues that “a picture unaccompanied by words may not mean anything at all” (754). However, a better path to an authentic experience is through Percy’s belief in constructing our own interpretations of an image without the help of contexts. Analyzing a painting without context gives the viewer a more sovereign insight while preconceived notions may interfere with the viewer’s chance to perceive it from his own understanding of the world. For example, Pablo Picasso’s Guernica, without any reliance on context, produces the message of brutality in war.

Picasso paints Guernica with numerous eye catching figures. The painting consists of many scattered and overlapping figures caught inside a building during a violent event. Among these figures, there is a horse with its mouth wide open and its body distorted with transparent shapes in place of it. There is a bull with a disfigured face; its eyes are not proportioned and it has a white face with black body. Picasso includes many disjointed figures whose hands and feet are not structured properly. Although it is recognizable that the figures are humans and animals, they’re not framed in the traditional way. There’s also a half broken sword in hands of a person lying down dead on the ground. The blown apart sketches in the painting challenge the viewers to look at it from a political standpoint. For example, it’s symbolized as being powerless to the Spanish government. Picasso’s style to paint with more abstract images gives its viewers a new perspective on Spain. Especially with the bombing of Guernica. Nothing in the painting is accidental. The artist purposely draws disjointed figures to signify how the Spanish people lack the physical power to control the things around them. Also, the broken sword near the bottom of the painting symbolizes the defeat of the people at the hand of their tormentors.

If there were to be context in this painting, it would have allowed us to look directly for the meaning of the text rather than ease us into getting the general sense of the painting first. The process of finding the meaning behind a picture should not be about searching for its truth. If our analysis comes through our own experiences rather than factual evidence, it would be much more meaningful. For example, Guernica does not necessarily need to be strictly about Spain and the suffering its people went through. It can be a universal portrait of politics and war in general where the innocent civilians are always the victims. Although Picasso’s intentions were of the painting to be specifically about Spain and the bombing, it can be compared to other
incidents as well. For example, the holocaust. The people lying on the floor dead and defeated along with the mother holding her dead child can easily be seen as the unimaginable grief and suffering of the Jewish people during the concentration camp in Germany.

The route to achieve an authentic experience when analyzing an image is to make up your own truth. There is no rule to analyze something only depending on what it’s actually trying to depict. In this case, Guernica can be compared to many brutal wars that occurred after the bombing and the Spanish civil war. But Morris argues that, “the issues of truth or falsity of a photograph is only meaningful with respect to statements about the photograph” (756). In other words, there is a truth to an image if it only it has context attached to it. Morris does not make a fair statement because an analysis of anything, either an image or a story is not meant for the collection of facts and data. It simply means that you dig deeper and find your own truth by supporting it with your understanding of the world around you. Another reason why I agree with Percy’s notion is that when an artist paints a picture, it includes many technicalities to it that help get his message across.

Picasso takes advantage of movements, lines, colors, form/shape/space, points, pattern and texture when painting Guernica. There are a lot of movements in the painting shown through the active commotion and the objects’ expressions. There is an immediate sense of feeling that they are all running away from something. That allows another chance for the viewers to give meaning to the painting. They are running away from the horrible brutality of war but unfortunately there is no escape. There is figure on the very right of the painting has his arms raised and is shown to be stuck between the wall and the other side of it. He is a strong example of how no matter how hard the figures are trying; they are still trapped.

The color schemes and the usage of lines are also very interesting in this painting. The painting is black and white and within the painting, all the figures are white while the background is black. And there is light shining from only one source, the light bulb toward the middle of the painting. The figures are drawn loosely with smooth edges and put in front of a background with straight lines and rough edges to allow the viewers to pay more attention to the foreground rather than the background. Picasso uses a lot of sharp lines to make his work more prominent. They occur on the walls of the painting and on the doors/windows. The lines help you see the flow and movement of humans more easily. It also allows you to focus on what’s in front of the lines rather than the lines themselves. And the background is the most in focus when you look at the light source, which can be symbolized as the sun. The light bulb has many parallel lines and different shades of colors surrounding it. The parallel lines challenge the viewers to focus on the ‘sun’. All the figures are seen focusing on the light as well. The sun that symbolizes the hope in the midst of all the destruction.

Guernica is seen as very chaotic and without any order. But even though the painting seems as if it’s all over the place, Picasso’s madness has a method to it. The faces are drawn the same exact way with the same expressions. The uniformity and utter chaos can be seen as a symbol for war, even without any context present. The people lying on the floor look like they’re in agonizing pain or near death. I would not have been able to identify these general details if I had known the context of the painting. But Morris says, “a caption-less
photograph, stripped of all context, is virtually meaningless. I need to know more” (Morris, 755) If we go along with Morris’ theory, it allows the viewers to neglect on the broad spectrum of any artwork. In most cases, an artwork is supposed to “speak” to the audience. The artists leave it up to the audiences’ interpretation to give a meaning to their work.

Before looking at the description of the painting, Guernica left me with a sense that whatever Picasso is trying to portray has something to do with hopelessness. It’s more noticeable when we look at the enraged animals. If it wasn’t enough for humans to have such a surge of emotion, it is even felt through the animals. There is a woman at the left corner holding her dead baby. And with that, the hopelessness becomes tangible. A mother holding her dead child cannot be taken in any reassurance way. There is a lot going on in the painting with everyone going every which way. There is a chaotic feel to the painting when we look at what the figures are doing a little more carefully. If we were to go with Morris’ theory on pictures needing a caption or a context, we would not have the opportunity to first carefully observe the pictures. We would simply base our conclusions by looking at the context rather than relying on ourselves to grasp the meaning.

As Percy discusses in his essay, the authenticity is lost when we try to converge the past to the present. He argues that for the sightseer “there is no present; there is only the past that has been formulated and seen and the future of what has been formulated and not seen. The present is surrendered to the past and the future” (Percy 542). The sightseer that Walker focuses in “Loss of the Creature” does not take the time to absorb the Grand Canyon that’s right in front of him but instead tries to “measure up the thing to the criterion of the performed symbolic complex” (Percy 541). The sightseer expects to have a certain experience when visiting the Grand Canyon. Before he is even close to the actual object he already has expectations. Is it going to be just like the pictures? Is it going to be worse? Is it going to be better? Walker sees that notion in a very negative light. He believes that if the sightseer had no idea of the Grand Canyon then he is likely to have a more authentic experience.

Guernica, the painting in of itself, is grand. It is 11 by 25 cm. If you were to visit the mural in Spain, you would have a vastly different experience than just looking at a picture of it online. Imagine walking up to a museum and seeing a mural that magnificent. And before even reading what it’s about, there is going to be 100s of interpretations about it. You feel a different kind of emotion when you look at the painting and it lets you interpret it in many ways that you wouldn’t have if you had only seen the painting online or in photographs. Percy is trying to emphasize this very point; you need to be in the scene to fully absorb what it is about. There are many other factors involved in analyzing an image than just context.

In contrast, Errol Morris believes that if the sightseer were to have a certain idea about what the Grand Canyon was, then it would enhance his experience. It would give him a chance to relate to the pre-existing ideas of what the Grand Canyon is like. According to Morris, that would lead the sightseer to have a grander experience. Especially if the sightseer is with a tour guide to guide him and tell him all about the Grand Canyon. If he were to have that he would be able to fully experience it without any questions or concerns. Morris is right
to include in his essay that, “it’s interesting to how a photographer quickly changes when we learn more about what it depicts, when we provide a context, when we become familiar with underlying story” (756). The tour guide for Grand Canyon may throw an interesting fact about it here and there to make the experience more informative. But the question remains: Does having external context help you to add to your experience or rob you of the authenticity of your experience?

After receiving the knowledge of what Guernica is ‘actually’ about, my opinions did not alter very much. In conclusion, I do agree with Morris to some extent. The context of the painting added to my understanding of it and allowed me to look at things that I had not previously noticed. But that does not necessarily mean that I viewed the painting as the specific meaning of what it’s really about. Without context, Guernica gave me an impression of how brutal war is and that too just by observing what’s in the painting and what I believed it meant. And with context, I became more aware of the things that supported my interpretations. Morris and Percy helped me recognize that analyzing a painting without context gives the viewer a more sovereign insight while preconceived notions may interfere with the viewer’s chance to perceive it from his own understanding of the world.

Works Cited

Cheziray Rivera

The Process of Contamination: Power

With the latest and most innovative technology being implemented worldwide, it is inevitable that globalization affects our lives and everyday cultures. It is similar to the inevitability that Kwame Anthony Appiah analyzes as it corresponds to contamination, the mixing of cultures. Appiah has formulated this belief that views the process of contamination as something that will ultimately happen due to modernized happenings like globalization; however, I think that the process is a bit more complex than just that. What if it is actually a power struggle that strongly influences the process of contamination? Certainly, this is apparent in Frederick Douglass’s situation as a slave. Frankly, Appiah is not wrong; however, it is essential to account for a power struggle when concerned with contamination simply because there is a certain power dynamic that strongly influences the process. The power dynamic that is present within contamination acts as a driving force for an individual to better their own situation, and this is one key component that is missing in Appiah’s analysis of contamination. As in Douglass’s situation, it is the social status of his life that pushes him to strive to achieve education which allows him to adopt a form of power. On a global scale, certain third world countries are unable to participate in the widespread contamination due to the blatant disregard for the power dynamic contained in contamination which just serves as another example as to why it is so important to accommodate for power’s presence in contamination.

What is power in contamination? In Frederick Douglass’s case, it is knowledge. Knowledge is the key aspect which ultimately serves as a foundation for him to use his intellectuality to strive to better his lifestyle. The key here though, is that Douglass was originally deprived of knowledge due to the fact that he was not seen as fit for education as a slave. Not only that, but as a slave master, they are only going to do whatever it takes to ensure that slaves are unaware of any various foreign knowledge that could potentially aid them with their captivation. Essentially, power in contamination is anything that allows you to better your own lifestyle, or anything that sparks a push for change.

The complexity of a power struggle in contamination alters what Appiah originally states is a process of passive inevitability. As a slave, the lowest possible social status at the time, Douglass was often surrounded by white folks, which begins his path towards contamination. It would not be long before Douglass began taking up lessons by his mistress to begin his foundation towards intellectuality. For this period of time, Douglass’s mistress was treating him like a normal human being, rather than the slave that he actually is. The Douglass narrative describes this encounter with the mistress. “I sustained to her the relation of a mere chattel, and that for her to treat me as a human being was not only wrong, but dangerously so” (Douglass, 87).” In time, the slave master would stop the mistress from giving these lessons because he believes that Douglass should not be
treated like the other white children that are his age and educated. Immediately, the power dynamic interferes with the flow that a passive type of contamination would have in this situation. This fact enables Douglass to pursue his education, which would have been stripped from him otherwise. Douglass sought to educate himself from that point, serving as an example of how this power dynamic pushes Douglass to a better lifestyle.

The complex feature found in Douglass’s situation is identified in a contradiction. His mistress was educating him, which acted as a source of Douglass’s intelligence; however, on the opposite side, his slave master did not want him to be educated because he was a slave and should not be treated as a normal human being. Which leads me to question why the slave masters did not want their slaves to be educated? The reasoning behind this procedure is because they wanted to keep the slaves under control and if they ever obtained knowledge, as Douglass did, it would lead them to question their captivation. Although the slave masters of the time sought to keep knowledge away from the slaves, it was Douglass that acted as a reversing factor in this method. He chose to pursue knowledge, which ultimately lead him to become aware of other groups in his position and movements that fought for his freedom. With this information, Douglass is able to establish hope, as well as the despair from being aware of the oblique path to liberation that lies ahead of him.

As a slave, Douglass has no power whatsoever. However, it isn't until Douglass can read that allows him to use his knowledge to its utmost strength. Using his ability to read, he comes across The Columbian Oratory, essentially a book featuring various arguments based on all things related to liberation. A certain line in the Douglass narrative reads, “The silver trump of freedom has roused my soul to eternal wakefulness. Freedom now appeared, to disappear no more forever (Douglass, 87).” After reading this book, he learns about the abolitionist, a group which strives for the freedom of slaves. He also becomes informed about the oppressed Irish, another group that he would link himself to. The development of a network that Douglass is able to establish now gives grants him hope that freedom’s path is becoming more clearer, and now seems like a pinnacle that Douglass will be able to reach. The link that Douglass establishes with these groups serves as a source of power simply because together they are stronger. Douglass realizes that he is not alone in his struggle, and that there are other people out there that are facing the same obstacles. I can imagine that this would give him a sense of hope, possibly another source of power, as well as the realization of his situation, which acts as a source of his despair. “I was now about twelve years old, and the thought of being a slave for life began to bear heavily upon my heart” (Douglass, 88). The collection of knowledge enables Frederick Douglass, once a powerless slave, to add somewhat of an arsenal to arm his self with the tools necessary to engage in a movement that would become so important and so huge. As Douglass establishes ties with the abolitionists, the oppressed Irish, as well as every other slave in the south, he creates a network for himself that gives him power. How is this power obtained? Simply because these groups are stronger together, rather than Douglass being the powerless slave he was before obtaining knowledge.

The acquired knowledge brings in another source of power, one different from that of the knowledge, or the strength from the groups. This power arrives in the form of hope, something I keenly believe Douglass
establishes when he learns of the abolitionist movement. Doomed to a life deprived of liberty, I can only imagine that Douglass feels hopeful knowing that there are other people in his predicament and that there are people out there fighting for his cause. Hope is often used as a driving factor to win battles whether these battles are literal or just any obstacle that one may face. The power that Douglass achieves through his education is not only knowledge, but also hope. The groups also strengthen Douglass’s position, all forms that originally derive from the contamination that he experienced throughout his life. Although he is able to generate a source of hope, the realization of how severe his situation is causes this young educated slave to be in despair at the same time. He understands that people are fighting for his freedom, but at what success rate? He is still doomed to a life as a slave, and as far as the south part of the union is concerned, they intend to keep it that way. Although Douglass establishes a form of hope after reading *The Columbian Oratory*, it is not just that simple. The complexity in this situation derives from the fact that the Oratory also opens Douglass’s eyes to the very surreal life that he is embarking upon. The contamination that he would experience as a slave cannot be this simple, inevitable process because his situation is so much more complex than that, as found in this example.

Appiah’s view on contamination has an inevitable feature, where things are suppose to mix and will do so in a passive form. However, what I believe does not deliberately disagree with that. I am simply asserting that a certain power dynamic must be considered because power absolutely plays a role in contamination, and the power dynamic absolutely alters that flow to contamination. To the people, like Douglass, that do have a power struggle, the power comes in the form of tools or anything that forces them to strive for change. How does contamination lead to power for beneficial change? Clearly it is evident in Douglass’s case; however there are certainly other cases that this can be assessed. Whenever there is a mixture of culture where one side becomes stronger than they previously were, then contamination has led to change for the better. I know that this may sound confusing, so I plan to elaborate. For example, culture A meets culture B. If culture A brings in the telephone, then culture B is immediately stronger than they were before as a group, because they now have a form of communication. What I mean by the increase in strength has to do with technology but can certainly include other methods of lifestyle as well. Globalization is a perfect term to describe the method that I am attempting to convey. The use of technology promotes the ability to mix different cultures. Globalization is an effective method to contaminate cultures fast and on a large scale. Much of the technology of the era like the internet, television, and even the radio easily provides the ability for different cultures to essentially, “contaminate”, and obtain some exposure to what other things are like. In today’s society, the ideas expressed in Appiah’s essay are relevant because we are faced with a certain problem concerning contamination. Third world countries are the “losers” in the contamination process due to their inability to have access to the globalization that is happening to this day. Again, this power struggle comes up, as unfortunately poor countries are not fortunate enough to have innovative technology like TVs or computers to participate in the sharing of ideas. In this case, it isn’t inevitable for these countries to be contaminated because they are in a black zone, where no contamination can reach them. Douglass relates very closely to these third world countries simply because like
these unfortunate nations, as a slave, he too was kept in the dark in light of power. Essentially, due to the time period, the power for Douglass was education, where as it is an economic factors that hinder various countries’ ability to contaminate effectively. Clearly, there is a power dynamic that must be accounted for when concerned with contamination, so what is it that we can do so that less fortunate individuals and people in general will be able to see contamination as Appiah views it?

Contamination is not a process that can just be left to fate. There are certainly other aspects to it that are behind the scenes. Nevertheless, power definitely has a strong influence on the process as a whole. That influence arrives in the form of an inspirational drive in order to better one’s lifestyle. What other aspects influence contamination aside from power? Are there any other influential factors that should be accounted for when concerned with contamination? If so, what are they, and how can they be solved to allow contamination to flow like it should? Should we ignore the power dynamic of contamination we would be failing to understand the process as a whole. By understanding the power dynamic, we will be able to solve the global dilemma concerning modern contamination. The mixing of cultures is on the rise, and as in Douglass’s case, a power dynamic must be considered in order to completely understand the process.
Meye G. Sassou
Corruption within Cultures

Thesis Statement

The theory of contamination toward the black slave that time of period was really discriminative because they were seem like nothing, at the age of twelve; Douglass was reading the book “The Columbian orator” that’s about a slave and his master. Douglass read this dialogue and connected himself more to the slave.

“Slave: Did I have my consent to the purchase?
Mast: You had no consent to give. You had already lost the right of disposing of yourself.
Slave: I had lost the power, but I was treacherously and kidnapped in my own country, when following an honest occupation. I was put in chains, sold to one of your countrymen, carried by force on board his ship, brought hither, and exposed to sale like a breast in the market, where you bought me. What step in all this progress of violence and injustice can give a right? Was it in the villain who stole me, in the slave-merchant who tempted him to do so, or in you who encouraged the slave-merchant to bring his cargo of human cattle to cultivate your lands?”

Locke’s idea that as soon as all human are born they are free, this give a basic meaning that all human are born free, not as a slave. At the age of twelve when Douglass was reading this, he may have the idea that he will be just like the slave in the book. The basically was telling he that his people were kidnapped from their country and had been made as a slave. In my opinion this book was one of the things that influence Douglass to learn how to wriythe and read, this book influence him in the way that he can go against the slavery, that it wasn’t right to make them as a slave and also it may give him the idea that they have the right to live as a human.

Introduction

Kwame Anthony Appiah idea of culture contamination and the reading of Douglass about how to read and write can connect together in some point. In Appiah’s reading I observed that he did not go against the idea of two cultures being mixed. He explains that “Living cultures do not, in any case, evolve from purity contamination, change in more a gradual transformation from one mixture to a new mixture a process that usually take place at same distance from rules, in the conversation that across cultural boundaries” (6). From my perspective I think what his trying to tell us is that culture has always been mixture and it also take a long time to form that transformation. Referring this to back to Douglass’s text, the exact thing happened to him. The contamination that appears in his situation was the people around him and his status of being a slave. When Douglass was around the white kids he seems to get along with them but at that period of time white and black
people did not get alone, therefore we can consider that as a contamination because for him as a slave, he will try to acquire their basic cultural material (try to learn how to write form them). “The plan which I adopted, and the one by which I was most successful, was that of making friends of all the little white boys whom I met in the street” (pg.87). So they boys in a way they help him succeed his goal of writing.

Body paragraph

What does Douglass do with the cultural materials he has acquired? With those cultural materials that Douglass learned from the white people he used it for his knowledge of understanding what going on around him. In addition to this, on page 90 in Douglass’s book, he used the cultural material to learn what “Abolition & Abolitionist” mean. On that same page he said “from this time I understood the word the words Abolition and Abolitionist, and always drew near when that word spoken, expecting to hear something of important to myself and fellow slaves” (Douglass pg90). From that point he understands that there is a way of freedom that he can use to escape for being a slave for life. On his journey of understanding the meaning of abolitionist, he discovered that people are having petitions against slavery. “I got one of our city papers, containing an account of the District of Columbia and of the slave trade between the states” (pg90). When I often think of contamination is actually a negative meaning that comes out of it but contamination in this statement is kind of positive thi. One thing we usually don’t think about is that contamination can be used in a various ways, and the meaning can also change to a slightly understanding.

Thinking of it on the negative way, why does the slave owner see the mixture as poisonous (negative) thing? Rethinking back to Appiah reading, for him cultural contamination or cultural mixture is a transformation that happen and is almost like a positive thing to him. For the white people at the time of slavery, color slave trying to learn cultural material from his owner (white people) may be a horrified thing to them. The are the owner of them from their thinking black people don’t have the same equal right to be a human being or a citizen. They feel spurious or in control of the black slaves. The may also think of it as a cultural mixture or hybridity. The slave owner at that moment they were really afraid of what the black people can do, if the takeover or become smart and try to get red off slavery. This may be a threat to the slave own because they black people who were considered as nothing, now may try to have the same rights as their owner and would be treated as a humans. My point of view out of all of this reading is that contamination is a positive thing even thus it may not be the same to others. For him to try his best to learn how to read and write just like the other white kid is an impossible thing at that time and it may not look right to others.

How does contamination work in Douglass: is it active or passive? Appiah says contamination is a process by with culture mix, but frames it is an ongoing inevitable process. Thinking back to Douglass reading contamination is an active process because he actually has to get where he’s at. Rethinking back to Appiah theory I disagree because as it shown in Douglass reading cultural contamination is not something that just happen inevitably is a process that he put work in to.
At this point we can also think about power dynamic. How is culture appropriated to acquire power? How is the item selected and interpreted in a certain way to bring Douglass power? As for the slave owners they believed if their slave change or have knowledge of not being owned by anyone they would lose their power. They won’t feel superiors or in charge of black people and then all will become equal. Just like Appiah points it out in his reading Muslim man are in charge of the women, if there become a change in these especially cultural it will bring a big controversy in to their society. Appiah state against the Muslim theory that “like many people in every nation, I believe that women, like men, should have the vote, should be entitled to work outside their homes, should be protected from physical abuse of men, including their fathers, brothers and husband” he conclude by saying that he know the change of the freedom will bring a balance of power between men and women in everyday life. For Douglass to gain that power he has to have knowledge. When the slave owner are have trouble finding how they can stay in control of black people, Douglass is trying to find a way to read and write so he can be a free man that is Douglass power referring this to Appiah quote and the idea of Douglass they both believe the equality between individuals as black and white. Douglass is gaining knowledge to prove that even human have different race such as black, white, Asian it doesn’t matter they all have to be treated the same.

The Irishman could have been another influence or contamination to Douglass. According to Douglass one of the men told him that it was a shame that it was a shame to hold him as a slave. He also tells him to run away. “Run away to the North; that he could find a friend there, in order for him to be free” (pg91). He could have taken their advised be he didn’t. At some point Douglass could have connect himself to the Irishman because they have been through the same thing as him, Douglass would have taken their idea to scape. In The Columbian Orator on page (243) when Mr. O’Connor’s gave a speech a part of that speech talks about how the contributions between the Irishman and the British were. “it is from this conviction, and it is for that transcendentally important object, that, while the noble lord and the right Honorable secretary, are offering to risk their lives and fortunes in support of a system that militates against the liberty of my countrymen, I will risk everything dear to me on earth” referring this to Douglass who is a slave trying to find a clean way to free himself after writing this statement he may try to go against the slavery just like the Irishman how say he will risk everything dear to the earth to find his principles of happiness and liberty. Considering that Douglass is trying to find his happiness and liberty throughout knowledge. Douglass was inspired by what the Irishman has to say because he connect himself to him, and also how he had strength speak out, that specifically give Douglass motives, strength, energy, to think he may also risk his life to find a clear way to free himself and find his happiness. He acquired that by getting knowledge to prove to the slave owners that slaves also have the right to live as a human and not be treated like animals, therefore the Irishman speech really get him thinking that he may also be free just like that Irishman.

Conclusion
Douglass’s interest in knowledge through connection with people of different backgrounds, what kind of identity emerges? Douglass is creating a new identity by hanging out with white people from different backgrounds because for him to be a black boy trying to fit in with the white kids is making him into a new person, now that he knows how to read and write his thinking and acting may be different. As my mom says the more knowledge, will also reflect on the way you think. For example, my mom told me that when I was little when the give my 50F I would cry and say I went the 25F because is bigger even though the amount is less but as I grew up I understood much better because my knowledge towards money as increased. The point is what you know makes you into who you are. As I start in the conclusion Douglass created a new identity by having knowledge and being around different people. Now that he has proved to the slave owners that black people and white people all have the same right to be treated like a human. People won’t see him as just a slave but someone who has education, someone who knows how to read and write. He will now be seen like a different person, someone that earns a little of respect and power.

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Bryan Segura

MTV’s Real Message behind Drama

A vast majority of drama shows are exposed out there in different TV shows, but MTV somehow portrays the best drama reality TV shows. When I mean by best drama reality TV shows, I mean that the shows are very realistic to how we interact with people with different backgrounds, race, gender, etc. They aren’t scripted, nor are they being told on what to do. Three shows in specific, starting off with The Real World first and then expanding with Jersey Shore and Buckwild, are shows that presents gender, racial, or class stereotypes. All these shows, however, have very similar people that somewhat lived in the same cultural ground, and that are all relatively the same age. The only difference that MTV does is they separate people with different backgrounds, race, and stereotypes. MTV is definitely giving out a message to us, but most don’t realize what the hidden message these shows are presenting to us because most see these shows as only entertainment. These specific shows are not put in MTV just for the entertainment, but to show the audience how different race, gender, ethnicities, and stereotypes of people react with one another. Basically, my argument is that most people see these drama reality TV shows as bad and useless to the public, but I disagree and feel as if they are important by the drama that they portray and how they relate to us as people. MTV displays both positive and negative aspects with drama shows such as The Real World, Jersey Shore and Buckwild, and with that in mind, show a great view to the audience as to how we, as people, interact with one another, whether it be good or bad. With that, the outcomes that the shows portray are how society or specific cliques gets along with one another, and it is important to know how each group of people are like.

MTV started to incorporate drama reality TV shows, starting with The Real World that came out in 1992. Described by an article from Jon Kraszewski “Country Hicks and Urban Cliques”, the show is about a group of seven to eight people that are between the ages of late teens and mid-20’s, who were chosen by MTV, to live in New York City together in one house. The show portrays the crazy daily lives that these people portray with one another. The show itself is unscripted, which shows the audience how realistic this drama reality TV show really is. In other words, the show was meant to break up different races, putting them all together into one house, and see how they will react with one another. The show itself has been so successful, that it has been having several seasons of the same thing, just with different people and different locations. The many different people have different conflicts that arise while they stay together in one house. For example, two girls in the show, Julie and Heather, were arguing with each other. Julie told Heather that she was a drug dealer because Heather had a beeper. Heather was black and because she was black, Julie assumed that she was automatically a drug dealer. As stated by Jon Krazweski in his article “Country Hicks and Urban Cliques”, this specific conflict has to deal with the racism that occurs on this show and proves to show how teen cliques and younger people
get along nowadays. That conflict happened on air, but it is arguable that this happens in reality every single day, and people don’t actually realize what is actually going on out there. That is why this show is important and not “pointless”, because it is essential to know that racism is still out there, and MTV is portraying that to us on how important it is to know that. Most saw this part of the show as “useless and stupid drama”, but knowing the true meaning as to how people are nowadays, is important. It’s important because we need to be aware of these people out there, and we need to know how to react with their response. Even though it is such a negative point of view to the public, it is out there in the world we live in, and MTV is portraying that to the audience. According to Kraszewski, racism would be “one of the show’s most prominent cultural concerns”, and also states that, “although not scripted, the show actively constructs what reality and racism are for its audience through a variety of production practices.” So even though the cast are being themselves, they are being asked to somewhat portray a racism aspect in their mind, because MTV wants to teach the public how people use racism in the actual world. That is why it’s so important to know the meaning of MTV drama reality TV shows like this. While many conflicts occurred, this show was the very first to ever start something big that expanded MTV even bigger.

Racism was such a big factor, but another key thing to also keep in mind is that gender and class stereotypes play big roles as well. Since The Real World was such a success, they made many different other drama reality TV shows that is very similar in plot. One is Jersey Shore. Jersey Shore takes place at the actual Jersey Shore in New Jersey. The series producers chose a group of young adults that are very similar to one another (just like The Real World, where they all are in the late teens and mid-20’s) and be put together into one house. Even though there might be some cast members that are not from Italy, they all consider themselves as Italians. The difference between Jersey Shore and The Real World is that people in the Jersey Shore are similar in culture, while The Real World has a mix of different races, which is why the show’s main priority was racism. Jersey Shore’s main priority is gender and class stereotypes. I watched the first episode where everyone in the cast showed their lifestyle and how they lived their lives in their homes. At the end of the episode, they all finally meet at the Jersey Shore house. I noticed that all the cast lived fairly close to each other, and they have all had something in common, which is being “well dressed”. I observed and analyzed that Ronnie, Mike, and Pauly D are obsessed with staying fit and tanning. They all will work out every day and they will tan occasionally. Just like in our specific cliques, we have those jocks that all they want to do is get fit and look good for the public, and they can relate to that. Sammi and J-Woww both are straightforward with everything; very nice but very bad if you get on their bad side. I noticed that every girl that were interviewed about their lifestyle were not classy, but very trashy. A typical “Guidette”, which is slang for basically a typical girl in the Jersey Shore (short skirts, long hair, makeup, etc), is what the girls portray and reveals their inner self of who they really are. Nowadays, they are girls out there that are “Guidettes” and that could definitely be one stereotype that Jersey Shore portrays to the audience. Once all the cast met in the house, I noticed that all got along very well. They greeted each other with respect, and they all were casually building conversations with
one another. In reality, whenever we meet someone new, we tend to greet him or her with respect and dignity in order to have a good first impression. That is exactly what they did. However, towards the near end of the episode, Snooki brought in a garbage bag to put in her clothes, and Angelina made a comment how she was “trashy”. Angelina hasn’t even talked to Snooki and yet she’s already judging on her appearance. Angelina tends to be clean and “have class” and that is why she is already making judgments on somebody she hasn’t even talked to yet. In reality, people in different cliques/groups tend to judge other people that are different to them, and MTV is saying that this reality TV show is like a reality TV show in the world around us. It is important to know the drama of how people like Angelina use stereotypes to judge different people because it is a better understanding on how our world functions, and who we are as people and how we are all different. As stated by Nancy Franklin in her article “Jersey Jetsam”, she says that “the show hinges not on our ability to identify with them but on our ability to distinguish ourselves from them.” It is not used for just entertainment, but for the reality in how we live in and interact with one another. Another example to keep in mind from one episode in Jersey Shore was when Snooki got punched in the face by a random guy in the bar because Snooki was bothering him. The guy immediately got arrested and everybody ganged up on him and lost respects for him because of the fact that this society see’s hitting a girl from a male as “illegal”. This relates to the gender roles and how one needs to distinguish what is right and what is wrong for a male and female. The episode in the end then showed a lesson on how a male should never hit a female and how you can get in major trouble for it. That is one very positive part as to what MTV and the producers of Jersey Shore portrayed in the series. It isn’t always a negative thing to watch these shows, and it’s why I argue that it’s actually important to view, to see how our world is like and how each responds to one another. Jersey Shore is a perfect set up as to getting a group of similar people together and see how well they will live with each other.

Gender and class stereotypes play a big role in Buckwild as well. Buckwild has such a familiar plot from Jersey Shore and The Real World. Described by Troy Patterson’s article “Hixploitation”, Buckwild is about a group of funny and very daring people who live in one house in the rural of West Virginia and cause drama. The only difference with this show compared to Jersey Shore and The Real World is that these people were not chosen randomly, they all were childhood friends and grew up together. MTV, in this case, is portraying that not only different people can cause drama, but also the people who grow up together can cause it as well. However, these childhood friends are still different from another, because they are males and females and most have different stereotypes. I was watching one of the episodes in the first season of Buckwild and what I noticed is that everybody got along with one another. They had set up this truck filled with water, almost as if it was a pool. What most of the guys have done was jump off from the roof of their house to the truck filled with water. Most girls didn’t want to do that, but the guys insisted and persuaded the girls to go, and they trusted the guys. What MTV is trying to present to the audience is that drama reality TV shows doesn’t always have to be negative. Sometimes, the way the people react with one another could be positive. Another part of the episode was when they all went to a night club and then a fight broke out. Some cast members were a part of it, but then
the rest of the other cast members defended their own friends. The bond that these people in the house have is strong. That portrayed a positive aspect, and MTV is trying to tell the people how important it is to watch these shows because it’s not always “bad or useless drama”, it can be good as well, and teaches the audience on how good traits can portray to people out there in the actual world. That is why, to me, it’s important that these shows exist and not because it’s “bad or useless”.

Some of these shows have applied to some of our readings that we have read in class. For example, Josh and Bilal presented the article about The Real World and how the author argued that they cast that show because they want to show the audience the “racism” that the show portrays. My main aspect was how these specific shows present gender, racial, or class stereotype to the audience, and The Real World mainly focused on racism and how that affected the show as a whole. Another example is when DiOnti presented his article on gender roles and how that can play a key role into society. He explained how girls are typically inside cleaning and doing the dishes while the men go outside and mown the lawn and such. That can relate to Jersey Shore in a sense that mostly the girls did the inside cleaning and dishes, while the guys either help the girls or fix up the patio of their house.

My theory, in general, about the cultural work of reality television has many things to corporate. Reality television is good because it shows the audience who are watching the reality TV the positives and the negatives that the people have against one another. It could be very negative, such as The Real World and Jersey Shore and how each cast member fight, while in Buckwild they are all good friends and very friendly. Everybody around the USA has TV’s that show these reality TV shows, and even if their lifestyles are different from their own, they still can relate to it because it happens in reality every single day, whether it is positive or negative.

We all are involved into different cliques. I can be in the soccer clique where I’ll just be around soccer people only. All the shows I mentioned minus The Real World have like their own little clique that they are in. Reality TV shows show us that your own clique can have some problems in them as well. All these reality TV shows that I mentioned are all on vacation, and yet they till encounter many obstacles throughout their journey. Whether it is fights in clubs in Buckwild, or fights against each other in The Real World and Jersey Shore, they were all placed in a luxury house in a good vacation spot with everything paid for them and everything. They got all this privilege, yet they still encounter many problems. That teaches the audience that even in vacation you will face situations in which you don’t’ want to be involved in.

In conclusion, I believe that what MTV is trying to show the audience is it’s not only used for entertainment purposes, but to show the audience how realistic the reality TV shows are, and how many can relate to them, no matter what group or clique you are in. My main aspect of drama reality TV shows reflected on the way the show presents gender, racial, or class stereotypes, and how each show presents those key things. My theory about reality TV shows in general is nothing but positives because it is important to know how the world functions with one another.
Works Cited


Christopher Serate

The Mixture of Educations

Paulo Freire really challenges the education system by categorizing it into two very abstract methods of teaching. The first being the banking concept, in which, the students are seen as receptacles to be filled by the teacher. Deposits of information are made and the students must learn to, “receive, memorize, and repeat it” (318). Freire expresses his skepticism for this type of teaching numerous times, and explains how the problem posing method of education leads to thought provoking questions and breaks down the barrier between the students and the teacher. It creates a harmony in which the students and the teacher learn and teach each other (319). Personally, I believe that as long as one maintains their ability to think critically about what is happening around them in the world, then it does not matter whether or not they are being taught using the banking concept or the problem posing method. To be able to do this, one must first realize what it means to think critically.

Freire describes critical thinking as one of the many important steps someone must take in their quest for humanization. I interpret it as questioning everything instead of being passive and just accepting what is told to you. There must be a constant flow of communication between the student and the teacher. Communication leads to creativity and that leads to the creation of authentic ideas and thoughts (321). Freire expresses his belief that the banking concept, “begins with a false understanding of men and women as object,” and thus cannot lead to communication (322). A teacher depositing information into an empty mind that is only concerned with knowing what is told is completely opposite to a teacher depositing information into a student who is ready and willing to learn and expand their knowledge. Another term Freire used in his writing was “liberation.” He says that one must not adopt the banking concept as a way of education if they want to be liberated (322). Once again I find that I disagree with Freire’s claims. To me liberation is of the mind. When you liberate your mind it allows you to not only absorb the information delivered to you, but you are also able to interpret it into a different way from actually intended. In my opinion, though, I do not think that the problem posing method of education is the only method that allows for this type of liberation. The banking concept and the problem posing method both have their pros and cons, but I believe that the best way to learn is through a mixture of the two. Using the banking concept and the problem posing method in concord with each other to turn simple concepts and ideas deposited by your teachers and expanding upon them to reveal a newfound meaning that you would not have thought of otherwise is true critical thinking.

Throughout the earlier years of my education, I was exclusively taught using the banking method, and even now it seems that some classes such as math and history call for that type of teaching. For a class like math, one must learn the main formulas for solving before they can attempt to branch out and try to find other
ways to solve problems. In the case of a history class, a lot of information may be left out or not discussed in the class. That is why I believe that students must seek out more than only the information that is taught. This ambition will lead to more critical thoughts and as mentioned before, the expansion of ideas and topics banked to you by a teacher. A strong foundation of banking education must precede any attempt of teaching via the problem posing method. You cannot think critically about something you do not know about. The banking method is very successful at teaching use information that can then be expanded upon if one takes the time to think about what it is they learned.

It was not until my last two years of high school that we began to delve into deeper meanings behind literature and art. My teachers taught in a way that I was never exposed to before. The problem posing method of education opened my eyes to deeper ideas that I would have never thought of before. Such questions as, “What is the meaning of life?” and “What does it mean to be a human?” came up during these courses. My teachers did not merely give us the answers; he had us think about what these types of questions meant to us and how we interpreted them. It allowed for me to gain authentic insight on how I felt about the world I was in. I cannot say I favored one type of method better than the other, however they both forwarded my knowledge and I believe as long as that is happening then it should not matter whether you are learning via the banking concept or the problem posing method.

Another claim by Freire that I tend to disagree with is that the banking concept of education is an attempt for the teachers to dominate the students (323). Throughout my high school career, my teachers were always open to learning from the students as well as teaching us. For example, my senior English teacher told us that he would never directly provide us with answers. Answers that we came up with in class were authentic ideas because they were not forced upon by the teacher. Freire’s writing, to me, lacks ethos because he fails to give any specific examples from his experience. Looking back at my experiences, I can say that both the banking concept of education and the problem posing method have forwarded my knowledge about life and the world around me. The education I received helped create a foundation in which I can expand upon, on my own, in an attempt to transform the world around me.

In retrospect, I realize that I have received both types of education and I can honestly say that they have both increased my knowledge of the world around me. Even though the banking concept of education does not uncover new ideas and beliefs that you wouldn’t have thought of before, it does instill important life skills that we all need to survive in this ever-changing world. Freire says that being taught with the banking concept people “tend simply to adapt to the world as it is” (319). His wording implies a negative connotation about adaptation, however I think that adapting to the world is an important skill that everyone must learn. You have to be adapt to the world if you want to alter it. When you adapt to the ideas of the world it allows you to gain an understanding the opinions of people and why they are that way. Once you know how the world is and have a clear perspective of things you are able to decide what you want to believe in. As for the problem posing method of education, while it does not always lead you to a definitive answer to a question you might have, it
does allow for you to think about different topics in a manner never once imagined. Freire says banking education tends to dichotomize everything, but to me rarely anything in life is ever black or white (324). The banking concept provides us with the black and white foundations of the concept and the problem posing method allows us to place our ideas and thoughts somewhere within the “gray” area.

I don’t disagree with Freire’s ideas of the problem posing method being an essential part of learning and an effective way of teaching but I don’t believe that it is the only way people should be taught. The banking concept is not a method created simply to destroy someone’s ability to think for themselves. I think the banking concept of education is pivotal because it lays down a much needed foundation of ideas that you can use to expand upon to create authentic ideas. The idea that the banking concept creates “automatons” who are only capable of receiving, memorizing, and repeating information becomes invalid if the students are open and willing to learn so they can expand upon what they receive and change the meaning to fit their needs (318). Questioning and communication are probably the two most important concepts of education. One must always question what is being taught to them. You will never learn anything if you just accept what is told to you without questioning how it pertains to you and your world. Freire believes that the banking concept of education leads to teacher “choosing the program content, and the students adapting to it,” however, I disagree because as long as those students are aware of what they are learning then the possibility of them merely adapting to information without questioning it is impossible (319). You must never lose your consciousness, because if you do become unaware of what you are learning then you become an automaton like Freire says (320). Teachers should be open to learning just as much as you are learning from them. Being able have a conversation with your teacher is pivotal to learning whether it be via the banking concept of education or the problem posing method. One must be able to communicate their ideas and not just allow the teacher to narrate to the students the entire time. It should always be a back and forth conversation with different ideas and new understandings of things being the end result. Neither the banking concept nor the problem posing method can reach this conclusion by themselves. When taught using a combination of the banking concept and the problem posing method you are given a foundation of information in which you choose how you want to interpret it to fit your world. This mixture focuses on adapting to the world you live in, so then you can alter it from the inside out. Being a receptacle waiting to be filled is not a bad thing if you are always remaining anxious to learn more so you can use that information to transform your world. Students must always remain curious in their studies if they want to learn. Critically thinking, as a process which is always ongoing, must occur to allow for authentic ideas and the liberation of one’s mind. With a blend of the banking concept of education and the problem posing method this is possible.

My education consisted of being taught using the banking method for a large majority of the time. It was not until my last two years of high school that I was really exposed to the problem posing method of education. My education I got from being “banked” instilled knowledge and values which I would later on use to reflect while learning via the problem posing method. I think an education that consists of “deposits of
“knowledge” at a young age really can benefit someone when they get older and want to critically think about their life and the world around them. This method will provide a base of information that you can use at any time. Contrary to what Freire believes, I think that the banking concept of education is a very important tool that can be used to educate students and provide and infrastructure in which the problem posing method of education can help you expand and build upon.

Works Cited

In “The ‘Banking’ Concept of Education,” Freire gives a clear statement of his idea on how the education system is operating. Freire believes that there is an evident line between teacher and student. He argues that teachers are objectifying students in such a way that he considers students to be “containers” waiting to be filled by teachers. As I read “The ‘Banking’ Concept of Education,” it was clear to me that Freire strongly believes that all education should be problem posing, instead of banking education. In other words, he feels as though the obvious path to take is that of having communication between teacher and student. In his mind, students are being oppressed and that oppression restricts growth and further creation. While I don’t agree or disagree completely, I strongly believe that Freire failed to consider the in between. When it comes to educating students, there is a way to incorporate both problem posing education and banking education into a master system of teaching. To balance out the obvious concrete facts with different creative possibilities, it helps to have a mixture of both systems of teaching. As a teenager, I know what keeps me focused and interested in class, and it includes both methods.

Imagine a world where all schools only used the banking concept of educating. Students would hate going to school, and they would feel as if they had no input on how they were going to learn. I had an amazing friendship with my teachers and it did nothing but help me succeed in class. If someone knows they are going into a class where there is no relationship between the teacher and student, interest in that class may slowly fade. There has to be somewhat of a relationship between the teacher and the student; if not the student may feel, as Freire said, like a “container” whose only purpose in life is to be filled. You can’t lead a student into believing that he won’t make an impact in the world, which was defined as one of the elements of banking education. Students need to be led to a path that allows them to imagine themselves changing the world. That then allows the world to be transformed by the imagination and creativity of students all over the globe.

Now imagine a world where the problem posing method is used in all schools. Students and teachers would be on the same level, and communication would be the most important part of learning. While I do think that problem posing is a semi reasonable approach to learning, having only that system of education would lead to no progression. Teachers wouldn’t give students the information or materials needed to grow because they would just be having conversations that would be full of opinions but not of facts. In a problem posing environment, no one is able to judge others, so there is no way a student can be graded and learn from it. As I said before, you must be given a foundation of knowledge in order to grow for the future.

When I first read the article, “The ‘Banking’ Concept of Education,” I believed that banking education had to be abolished in order for students to grow. I agreed fully and wanted to rebel against all form of
education in existence. But while my peers and I were discussing the subject of banking education in class, my professor said something that made me reconsider the banking concept altogether. He said, “You are given deposits, but you are free to use them in the future.” The majority of the time, Freire wrote of how horrible banking education is and why we should get rid of it, but he failed to acknowledge the benefits of it. In a sense, banking education can be a reasonable approach to the learning process. From the moment we were first taught lessons in life; we have used and translated them however we wanted. Once you are given the materials to succeed, you are expected to carry them out into the real world. Students are being “fed” information which will help them adapt to reality. It is essential for surviving in the real world. You must first adapt in order to change the world from within. Despite what Freire said, banking education is definitely half the method that should be used in the teaching process.

There are many elements included in the determination of what learning system works better and where they should be mixed or excluded. The way a student is educated always depends on the subject that is being taught. When I think of the four basic subjects in school, each one has its own mixture of the two methods of learning. For example, math is a subject a teacher must first “deposit” into a student’s mind. You can’t communicate and agree on whether or not a formula solves an equation. Math answers are mostly concrete; you can either get them right or wrong. The only way I can learn math and succeed in the future is if my professor teaches me the basic necessities needed in the subject. Then afterward I could be prepared for tougher things in life. When you think about English and the way it is taught, it can be used as an example of an environment that also needs both problem posing and banking education. A professor or teacher can give the student an outline or the structure of a paper, but they often let him roam off into all different kind of directions with the content. I’ve been given essays that must focus on a subject, but most of the content in the essay is basically me on paper. Students are given the materials to process them in a way that is unique in every individual. I am usually given a starting point in English, and the path I choose to take is up to me. That is the only way I can grow as a writer and as a creative thinker in that class. So I can attest that both methods in conjunctive work perfectly.

The teacher and his or her way of teaching also effects the way the student is taught. The teacher can be narrative and, “talk about reality as it were motionless, static, compartmentalized, and predictable.”(318) But he gives you the necessary equipment to build on afterwards. He may have a clear and straight forward meaning of life and why things happen. Then with banking education, the teacher just presumes that it’s human nature to pour one’s knowledge onto others. Students will start feeling lifeless and they will grow up to have no imagination. But Freire doesn’t mention that you actually need those straight to the point, concrete lessons in life in order to comprehend further life experiences. Then there may also be problem posing teachers whose thinking is, “authenticated only by the authenticity of the students’ thinking,” (322) this type of teacher explores and imagines life beyond certainty. If she were presenting a problem to her students, she would allow them to process every thought in their own way. But if a teacher doesn’t gift the student with the must know facts of the
world, the student will be blind sighted as he entered the real world. These methods each have their down sides but if used together, they will solve the other’s problem.

When I was in high school, I experienced firsthand what a banking education environment is like. My math teacher had a strict, “I give you the formulas and you solve the problems,” kind of teaching method. There wasn’t a way to express ourselves or interpret a formula with math because you’re either wrong or right. My teacher taught us formulas after formulas, and there were no relations between teacher and student; there were just numbers. Instead of making math a beautiful and helpful necessity, that teacher made it one of my worse experiences in high school. In that sort of environment, everyone felt miserable and students don’t learn when they feel as though all this information is being piled on them.

I also experienced the problem posing environment in high school. My English teacher always allowed us to view her as a student. She often reminded all of us that we were teaching her while at the same time she taught us. She would let the students have a say in most of the work we did. For example, we would communicate on what we felt would make us better writers. If we felt as though going outside to get inspiration was helpful, she would consider it. We also guided her towards being a better teacher. If we were worried or questioning her approach on a lesson, she would let us guide her with a solution for that problem. But the problem with that class was that I barely remember learning anything from her. It may sound a little harsh, but when a teacher treats herself as a student, there is no sense of authority present; and that leads to no order or progression.

The learning process is not about choosing between having a banking concept of educating or a problem posing approach. It’s about finding the perfect combination that accommodates both the students and the teacher. The banking concept of education gives you all the knowledge necessary to succeed, but is concrete and no student has a say on the way he receives information. The problem posing method gives you the ability to explore and imagine, but students may lack the foundation they may need later on. But if you mix them together, you get a system of teaching the allows teachers to give students all types of information, while at the same time letting them explore and process that information themselves. Teachers hand out “deposits” and students use the deposits in any situation that they are presented with in the future.

So instead of just looking at two different types of education, Freire could’ve looked beyond. He put the two forms of learning into a black and white setting instead of mixing it to create a little bit of gray. Freire states that banking education dichotomizes students’ perception of the world, yet he contradicts himself by just given two strategies of teaching. Why should teachers have to pick between the two when there could be a gelling of both? There may even be a completely different kind of learning process that is just as effective as the other two. Either way, you wouldn’t be able to have one learning process without slightly using the other.
Work Cited

Marie Toupou

Effects of *16 and Pregnant* and *Teen Mom* On Today’s Society

Stereotypes regarding teen pregnancy tend to be the usual thought of she must be a dumb, irresponsible, slut and sometimes even have to do with a person’s race. They follow with the thought of the mom never becoming something in life and will just drop out of school. However, shows such as *16 and Pregnant* and *Teen Mom* try to break these stereotypes as they show many responsible girls on their show who share their story with the world regarding the story behind their pregnancy and follow them post the baby’s birth as they display how their lives have changed. Although some teen moms may not turn out to be the “best” mom, some do turn around and become the best they can be. The issue with this show is not that it tends to break stereotypes of who gets pregnant but the question is – are shows such as *16 and Pregnant* and *Teen Mom* glamorizing the idea of teen pregnancy or is it actually teaching teenagers to the hardships that come with pregnancy? I believe that these two shows are doing neither. The shows aren’t telling the audience that teen pregnancy is a positive thing nor is it negative. The true depictions of the show depend on the viewers and what they get from watching the show.

In my opinion, just because a teenager becomes pregnant doesn’t mean they are automatically dumb, irresponsible, sluts because I have come to the realization that mistakes happen and not all things go as planned. Must we judge someone and call them names because they happen to show the results of having sex versus someone who does have sex but has yet to get pregnant? What makes that person worse than the next? Absolutely nothing! For all we as a society know, the condom could’ve broken during sexual intercourse or perhaps the type of birth control did not work properly. The pregnant girl could have been in a loving, committed relationship with the partner or she could have even gotten raped. The truth of the matter is no one knows why the girl is pregnant so no one should judge and I believe that is the idea shows such as *16 and Pregnant* and *Teen Mom* are trying to let society know.

Since there are many factors that can contribute to a girl’s pregnancy, I just don’t seem to understand why teen pregnancy is so deemed upon. After all, the norm in this society many, many years ago was to be married by the age of 14 and have kids right away. Now it has become completely abnormal to do such a thing and people who do so become an embarrassing disgrace to the society. This entire scandal on teen pregnancy has become a terrible thing because we as a society have made it out to be that way. This may be because of opportunities females have been given in today’s world to better themselves or even perhaps the idea of all the different birth control methods out there to prevent such a thing. It can also do with age and maturity and how certain ages are presumed to not be old or wise enough to raise a child or how life expectancy has dramatically
risen, giving the chance to have a family later on in life a much greater one when compared to the old days. Despite what the reason might be, the truth of the matter is if teen pregnancy is looked upon with negative connotations, then it will continuously be frowned upon. On the other hand, if it is looked at as a joyous celebration by the majority of the society, then becoming a pregnant teen will become normal again.

In regards to *16 and Pregnant* and *Teen Mom*, people always have an opinion concerning it, just like every other reality show—whether it is a positive or negative thing and this is a typical disagreement the viewers of *16 and Pregnant* and *Teen Mom* encounter. There are many people who praise a show such as *16 and Pregnant* because they believe “not only do you get to see the children growing up but it gives you a pretty good idea about how hard it is to raise a baby as a teenager. You get to witness the everyday struggles that the teens face and how hard it is emotionally and financially,” (cupcakeluver101) and believe the show sends a strong message to teens telling them not to get pregnant. The show constantly shows the struggles that each teen faces and emphasizes that the entire concept is not an ideal life for a teenager. It illustrates the problems that come along with having a baby not only before birth but during the pregnancy too. In *16 and Pregnant/Teen Mom*, the pregnant teens are often showed the struggles they face with friends, family, school, money, and the father of their child due to their pregnancy. A few of the pregnant moms elaborate on how they couldn’t be “normal teenagers” because they couldn’t do all the things that their friends were doing such as partying and just going out whenever they wanted. They discussed that if they do go out, they would sometimes get stares that made them feel uncomfortable to even go out to the mall or for lunch sometimes.

Others, on the other hand, seem to think *16 and Pregnant* and *Teen Mom* glamorize the idea of teen pregnancy. Some of the episodes show girls who are truly content with the idea they got pregnant and don’t regret a thing afterwards. The girls are happy with their child and speak about the joys of having a baby and how it’s not that hard of a task with help. This happiness the show portrays has caused some to think “It definitely makes pregnancy and motherhood look too easy. They don’t show any of the true financial burdens. How much do you spend on diapers a week, formula, etc.? All of the parents just seem to take care of it. That’s not a reality for a lot of teen mothers.” To me, however, the show isn’t saying go have a baby at 16 because it will make you happy, but rather the entire process of having a baby is a beautiful thing that people should experience in life if possible when they know they are able to care for themselves and children.

Because of the belief that the show is merely glamorizing teen pregnancy, numerous people say that *16 and Pregnant* and *Teen Mom* have basically sent messages to a few girls that say “If you’re pregnant at 16, then you can become a reality star” because of the fame that featured girls get on TV and the money they receive from being a part of the show. This has caused a few girls who crave stardom to come to the belief that if they get pregnant at 16 then they can become reality stars too. Although there hasn’t been anything published which proves a few teens are getting pregnant for the purposes of being featured in *16 and Pregnant* or *Teen Mom*, there are different sources who think that the constant ratings and continuous magazine covers that the previous girls on the show receive is fueling the idea of an easy way to fame and money is to try out and land a spot on
the popular show 16 and Pregnant and if the girls are lucky or interesting enough, they will eventually be on Teen Mom and grace the covers of bestselling magazines as well and be paid 6 figures for one season.

The idea of 16 and Pregnant and Teen Mom airing on MTV don’t really set well with some audience members. MTV is thought of as having showing series which constantly depict drama and entertainment for purposes of ratings.

So instead of really helping viewers understand the day-to-day responsibilities of attending to a new infant -- scrubbing poop stains or spit-up out of clothing -- or dwelling on the "mundane," MTV chooses to focus on the girls' volatile relationships with the babies' fathers or their new body piercings and tattoos. That makes for better TV.

This idea leaves viewers questioning the true motives behind MTV and this show. Is MTV really trying to show the raw and uncut hardships that come with parenthood or are they merely focuses on letting the audience see the drama that come along with it to receive higher ratings? An interesting argument I fell upon was the text messages MTV send to inform viewers on the show coming up. Messages that read "Jenelle Runs Up Her Mother's Credit Card Bill," rather than "Amber Portwood has only had six hours of sleep in two days because her baby won't stop crying!" allow viewers to think this show is negatively impacting society. (Henson).

Although the show is making the issue of teen pregnancy aware, it is still sugar coating all possible dilemmas and not letting possible teen mothers truly aware of what comes along with it.

Even though the question of whether 16 and Pregnant and Teen Mom are doing their intended job of informing girls the hardships of getting pregnant and why they should wait to have sex or stay protected if doing so is the most controversy the shows receive, I think the way it portrays gender roles is something to be looked at also. It takes two people to have a child but I don’t think 16 and Pregnant/Teen Mom is reinforcing that idea. Most of the episodes just show the struggles which the mom encounters and focuses only on them rather than both people. Yes, I understand the mom is going through labor and she’s the one showing but what about the boy? The child is as much his as it is hers and 16 and Pregnant and Teen Mom failing to do so may be positive for female viewers but can affect male viewers in a negative way.

Girls who watch the show will understand that although they didn’t conceive the child on their own, it pretty much feels like it because they get called the names and they get stared at when out in public. The show lets the female viewers understand that they must go through the everyday troubles whether they are still with their significant other or not because they are carrying the child and no matter where they go, the baby will be attached to them. Having this kind of show may leave girls having second thoughts on becoming pregnant.

This is completely opposite for the male viewers. Since most of the shows focus on the mothers rather than the fathers, the teen boys watching the show don’t truly get an understanding of how their lives change from being a “normal teenager” to being a teenage father. The obstacles that the males must overcome are never spoken about in detail and don’t allow the viewers to get an accurate grasp of fatherhood. This part of the show is a negative aspect because since the boys aren’t shown what they may be faced with, such as child support, it
may not click in their minds to think twice about being sexually active and having a child as a teen. This type of filming style reinforces gender roles in today’s society when it comes to parenting.

Mothers are usually thought of as the main caretakers in a family and must deal with all issues that have to do with the child. *16 and Pregnant* and *Teen Mom* seem to support that idea as they only show the struggles the teen mother must overcome rather than the teen mother AND father. The show doesn’t accurately depict both sides of the fence and leaves me wondering if there should be a Teen Dad series to allow boys to see the raw and uncut version that comes along with parenting on their perspective rather than the girl’s perspective only. A show such as Teen Dad will be more effective in preventing teen pregnancy because now it won’t only be the girls thinking twice about the aftermath, but more boys will think things through as well. Again, it takes two people to make a child but it still takes two to prevent the making of a child. Just as a girl can skip birth control which may result to a pregnancy, a guy can poke a hole into a condom and cause a pregnancy as well.

Even though it’s not always the female’s fault that she is pregnant, it’s pretty sad that due to the reality that they are the ones who show the physical appearance of pregnancy, society happens to blame them for the pregnancy more than they do the male. For this reason, I have confidence that if a “Teen Dad” show was to be produced by MTV, then society may have a more opening and less judgmental mind about pregnant teen girls. It won’t always have to be let’s talk to these girls but rather the boys need to be spoken to also. At the end of the day, MTV has a mission to make the public-both females and males- aware of teenage pregnancy due to their shows and having a show which boys and girls can relate to may help get their point across better to the individuals watching the shows.

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On September 11, 2001, there was a heartbreaking and unforgettable terrorist attack on the World Trade Center in New York City. It left a great deal of destruction beyond repair, pain in the hearts of Americans across the nation, and instilled a fear of terrorist attacks in the future. Prior to the attack, airport security was not a main concern and therefore was not as equipped as it is today. As the article “Airport Security,” simply states, rules and regulations were not as enforced and were much more lenient than they are today. Before the attack, only ID’s were required at certain checkpoints and going through metal detectors was often unnecessary. Objects such as pen knives, box cutters, and scissors were allowed on board along with the kitchen knives that flight attendants used to serve hot meals for out of the country flying. Even going to the bathroom near the cockpit was allowed with only a small curtain standing in between the passenger and the people in the cockpit. Nowadays it seems that every precaution is being made to ensure the safety of everyone aboard the plane. Security has since been reinforced with new rules, procedures and technology and it seems that for a long time, passengers did not rebut the idea of having such a strong security system in the airport. Michel Foucault mentions in his essay “Panopticism”, that, “In order to make rights and laws function according to pure theory, the jurists place themselves in imagination in the state of nature; in order to see perfect disciplines functioning, rulers dreamed of the state of plague” (212). In this case, the plague is the fear that arose after September 11th. This fear made it possible for people to be controlled under surveillance and rigid rules for many years, but due to controversies arising in the world today, it seems that this “plague” is finally beginning to wear off. It appears that the airport with its hidden panoptic mechanisms of surveillance, discipline, and efficiency is beginning to lose its grip of the people it once began to hold under its control twelve years ago.

In his essay, Foucault states that,

There was also a political dream of the plague, which was exactly its reverse: not the collective festival, but strict divisions; not transgressed, but the penetration of regulation into even the smallest details of everyday life through the mediation of the complete hierarchy that assured the capillary functioning of power; not masks that were put on and taken off, but the assignment to each individual of his “true” name, his “true” place, his “true” body, his “true” disease (211).

This phrase in the essay explains how the people of this plague stricken town were easier to manipulate and control because their fear and confusion made them easy targets for those in power. Because they did not completely understand the plague, they followed the rules of those individuals in power, just like any passengers after 9/11 who were terrified of the possibility of a terrorist attack let themselves be monitored, scanned, and controlled without stopping to question authorities. So how is it that 50,000 TSA security officers
control approximately 2 million passengers at least 775 security checkpoints per airport nationwide? (Delgadillo, “TSA Tightens Airport Security after 9/11”) Foucault mentions that, “Because it can reduce the number of those who exercise it, while increasing the number of those on whom it is exercised,” (220) it is the perfect way to exercise power, making airports a great example of a Panopticon. Through direct experience I have observed that passengers tend not to question the people behind the information counter or the flight attendants. They follow the directions given to them by each crew member with anxiety and follow their guidelines down to a science without ever stopping to think of the security cameras that could be observing them for suspicious activity. Because of the passengers’ lack of inquiry, crew members are given the upper hand and control over information and movement. This in itself is able to occur through the idea that by keeping a group of people in one designated area, you will be able to better control them. After September 11th it would have appeared out of line for someone to want to question the TSA’s decision of increasing security to prevent future threats. Many of Foucault’s Panoptic mechanisms reinforce why people behaved the way that they did.

Surveillance and visibility are a big part of Panopticism and I believe that when applied correctly in an airport, they could be an extremely useful resource. Personally I feel that security cameras are an essential tool in keeping people safe, especially in an airport, where the passengers’ safety is the main priority. As Foucault mentions in his essay, “invisibility is a guarantee of order” (214). Most of the people in the airport are aware that there are security cameras monitoring them, they are aware they must pass through metal detectors and scanners, and they are most likely aware that if found suspicious of any illegitimate activity they will be pulled aside and questioned. The invisibility portion of this is that although certain security cameras are hidden in plain sight, people do not know whether there is someone sitting at the screen watching them at the very moment they take no notice of these cameras. Foucault writes that a major effect of the Panopticon is, “to induce in the inmate [in this case the passengers] a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power” (214). In order for the surveillance in the airport to coexist with the mechanisms of Panopticism, it must be visible to the human eye, yet remain invisible to the mind. The passengers see the cameras, but they are completely unaware as to whether they are being watched. Foucault also notes that:

This enclosed, segmented space, observed at every point, in which the individuals are inserted in a fixed place, in which the slightest movements are supervised, in which all events are recorded, in which uninterrupted work of writing links the center and periphery, in which power is exercised without division, according to a continuous hierarchical figure, in which each individual is constantly located, examined, and distributed among living beings, the sick, and the dead—all constitutes a compact model of the disciplinary mechanism (211).

What Foucault is trying to explain in this passage is that by having passengers in a set location, under strict surveillance, with a person or people who are clearly in charge, you will be able to distribute power among them without force or added effort. The passengers will almost discipline themselves by understanding that they are being supervised.
The Transportation Security Administration (TSA), which was established in 2001, is still at the head of airport security and surveillance. Since the attack they have been coming up with new and improved ways to increase the safety and effectiveness of surveillance tools for the benefit of the public. On the TSA’s official website, www.tsa.gov, I discovered that one of these tools includes the Closed Circuit Television. A Closed Circuit Television, or a CCTV, is a sophisticated and integrated security network that helps to increase the safety and security of airport facilities, employees, and passengers (TSA Announces $3.6 Million for Enhanced Airport Surveillance Technology at Dallas Love Field Airport). This system has become an incredibly supportive part of the TSA as it helps strengthen their efforts of security. The CCTV helps resolve security threats with their high level threat detection; they can also prevent hostile activity and even enhance emergency response and risk mitigation. Yet that is only one of the many enhancements that have been made since the TSA began to work to correct and strengthen security in the airport. We are all aware that stricter ID requirements have been made and that passengers now require tickets, passports, and a driver’s license that will be verified at designated checkpoints. Most passengers are also aware of the Behavior Detection Officers that have been assigned to these checkpoints to be on the lookout for suspicious behavior. With two or three simples questions they can identify sketchy behavior and let rowdy passengers know that the TSA does not allow disruptive or inappropriate behavior. X-rays with explosive detectors and scent detectors have also been integrated to the security process to detect threats in luggage or pick up on levels of explosive material. The security enhancement that most passengers aren’t aware of is the reason for why liquids have been limited to a certain quantity aboard the plane. In a trans-Atlantic flight in 2006, Al Qaeda’s plans to blow up several flights in mid-air using liquid explosives were obstructed. What people don’t know is that two normal liquids that can be combined together to make an explosion are called binary explosives and they can be extremely powerful. To keep an explosion like this from happening mid-flight, only small quantities of liquids are safe to bring on the aboard (Airport Security Policies Post 9/11, www.boston.com). The TSA has put forth their best efforts to reinforce security in all airports across the nation and for many years passengers were content with the rules and regulations presented to them. There were never any large scale complaints about their procedures, until recently.

In current months the TSA has loosened some of the strict and redundant regulations that precede flying. Whether it was the number of years that have passed since the attack on the World Trade Center or the NSA privacy violations, people have begun to speak out against being so closely monitored. Foucault mentioned in his essay that, “There is no risk, therefore, that the increase of power created by the panoptic may degenerate into tyranny; the disciplinary machine will be democratically controlled, since it will be constantly accessible ‘to the great tribunal committee of the world’” (221). Because we live in a democratic country, people are taught to believe that they are getting a say in the laws and decisions being made for our nation. When they come to realize the corruption that is truly going on within our country, people quickly begin to care. TSA finally removed full body scanners with the push of several complaints from political-rights activists and other
privacy groups. After being widespread for three years, passengers began to complain that the scanners were a huge invasion of privacy. Because of the populations’ disapproval, TSA was forced to cancel a $40 Million contract with Rapiscan, the makers of the invasive scanners, and while only 174 of the 250 were installed in airports, Rapiscan is still paying for their removal. What TSA and Rapiscan are telling the public is that the scanner company failed to meet a congressional deadline for new software that would protect passengers’ privacy (Nixon, Unpopular Full-Body Scanners to Be Removed from Airports) and that even though there is a great dislike of these scanners, they will continue to be used in other government agencies. Their removal does not mean that passengers will not submit themselves to a full body scanner at the airport; instead, they will begin using scanners that only display avatar-like images and that can be shown outside of a back room to make the scanning process faster. TSA has also recently announced that the Pre-Check program is now open to regular travelers without a membership in frequent flier programs. What this Pre-Check program will do is reduce the time spent at security check points. Passengers are allowed to keep on their shoes, light outerwear and belts and also keep their laptop computers in their cases by enrolling online and submitting fingerprints, identification and an $85 enrollment fee that’s good for 5 years (TSA Opening PreCheck Program to Let More Fliers Speed Through Lines, www.nbcnews.com). So what does all of this have to say about our Transportation Security Administration? To connect it back to Foucaults, “Panopticism,” is the “plague,” finally beginning to wear off? Most signs are pointing to a yes as the TSA continues to make more realistic changes to airport security. On their website they mention that they are not in the business of eliminating risk, they are in the business of trying to manage or mitigate risk in a way that makes sense to promote to free movement of people with good security (www.tsa.gov).

As people begin to move on from the tragic attack in 2001, it is important to state that victims and family members of those who passed will not be forgotten. Instead, we will try to make our country a safer place and to prevent other attacks in the future. Foucault states in his essay that:

Our society is not one of spectacle, but of surveillance; under the surface of images, one invests bodies in depth; behind the great abstraction of exchange, there continues the meticulous, concrete training of useful forces; the circuits of communication are the supports of an accumulation and a centralization of knowledge; the play of signs defines anchorage of power; it is not the beautiful totality of the individual amputated, repressed, altered by our social order, it is rather the individual is carefully fabricated in it, according to a whole technique of forces and bodies (228).

He believes that the people of our society are simply fabricated into whatever the people in power are conspiring. Because our society is not one of spectacle and we had been instilled with a great fear of the “plague,” for so long, we remained silent and let those in charge put the public under heavy, and party unnecessary surveillance. Now, twelve years later, it seems that we are all beginning to face our fear of a future terrorist attack and are beginning to return to a somewhat normal routine, including one at the airport. TSA has made its best attempts to increase and stabilize security for the people. With all of their enhanced security
systems we have remained safe since their administration began and we hope that they continue to be properly surveyed in the future.

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Jacquanna Wilson

**Forwarding the Slasher Film from Halloween to Scream**

John Carpenter’s 1978 film *Halloween* is one of the archetypes for the slasher genre, and is often referred to when discussing these films. In this essay I argue how the elements of the classic slasher film show sexism and conservative values, especially in the characters, and how Wes Craven’s meta-slasher *Scream* forwards the classic slasher genre, specifically *Halloween*, to show the viewer how sexist slasher films are. This argument is important because there is a problem of sexism in these films as shown by the different aspects of this genre; the killer, the weapons, the victims and the final girl.

When writing about a certain subject or topic that has already been academically discussed, a writer can think of themselves as joining a “conversation” and using the ideas of others to back up their own ideas as stated by Joseph Harris in *Rewriting* (15). When joining in a discussion via writing, a writer will rarely write to the person they are writing about. Harris says that “a writer forwards a text by taking words, images, or ideas from it and putting them to use in new contexts” (37). A writer should acknowledge that this conversation has been going on before he/she started to write about it and that he/she is joining the conversation bringing new ideas to it and use what has been said previously to back up what their ideas or thesis is. This idea of forwarding and seeing writing as a conversation is pertinent due to the conversation *Scream* has with *Halloween* and how it forwards part certain parts of *Halloween*. This is relevant to this essay on sexism because, by forwarding *Halloween*, *Scream* shows the sexism demonstrated in slashers.

It is important to understand what not only sexism, but conservative values are due to how much they influence the slasher film and this essay. Sexism is defined as “attitudes or behavior based on traditional stereotypes of sexual roles.” This means not only women, though it is generally thought to mean women because the attitudes and views males have about women, but men as well. What makes these slasher films so sexist is the gender roles of specific characters that are customarily the same in many slashers. The instances of sexism towards women are how the killer is always male mainly killing women, and the final girl has to seemingly masculine to survive. Not only this but the behaviors exhibited by the gender specific characters. Furthermore, we see the ideology of “conservative values are best” sent out like propaganda to women. These conservative values include refraining from sex (abstinence), refraining from drinking and smoking weed, and being a “motherly” figure.

To fully understand how *Scream* forwards ideas present in *Halloween* and the slasher genre and how this genre can be presented as sexist, there needs to be an understanding of what the slasher films is and the aspects of it. The slasher film is a branch of the horror film category generally seen as the lowest form of horror. In fact,
in Carol Clover’s essay “Her Body, Himself,” she talks about how in the movie Body Double, the protagonist must go through the levels of film to get to legitimate roles. He must first go through pornography, then an independent horror film, to finally be able to perform in a legitimate role. Clover then states, “The three categories are thus ranked by degree of sublimation” (189). By this she means that this movie is ranking these categories of film with the protagonist of Body Double starting at the bottom with the “body genres”, pornography, and horror in that order and then legitimate genres (189). Body genres, a group the slasher is often categorized in, refer to how the horror and pornography film genres want to elicit a physical response from the viewer: abject terror or horror from horror films and sexual arousal from pornography. This categorization of the slasher film being a “body genre” makes the sexism in these films apparent. Pornography is notorious for its degradation of women by portraying them as licentious and often unintelligent. The slasher genre seems to do this as well, with many of the women in these films being similarly philandering and dimwitted. Going further into what the slasher is, we see, as with all genres, that there are certain characteristic that make up a slasher film; these characteristics include the killer, the weapons, the victims and the final girl.

The killer in the slasher film is the main character alongside the final girl. With many sequels and many murders, the victims always change when sequels come out, but the killer almost always stays the same (Clover 193). We see this trend in the Halloween series in which Michael Myers is always the killer and in the Nightmare on Elm Street films where Freddy Krueger is always the slasher. A trend seen in slasher films is the killer is usually male; this contributes to how sexist these films are. They help advocate the stereotype that killing is that a masculine act. Another aspect common amongst the killers of these films are there is some sort of sexual drive that leads them to kill. This drive can be psychosexual vehemence, as was the case with Michael Myers who seemed to be enraged by his sister neglecting him to go have sex with her boyfriend; or, as with Norman Bates in Psycho, it could be due to gender confusion. Another motif amongst the killers of these films is that the killer is typically male and person he wants to kill the most is female. In Halloween, Michael Myers stalks Laurie, and she is his main target. In Scream, Ghostface is after Sidney. For this very reason, Gene Siskel and Roger Elbert referred to 1980s slasher films as “women in danger films”, because more often than not, these films depict men killing women and a majority of the victims are female. The weapons these men use to kill the victims also display sexism, albeit more subtly.

Like the artist with his brush, the weapon is a tool for the killer that must be decided carefully; the film Texas Chainsaw Massacre is named for the weapon used by its killer, and Freddy Krueger is known for the knives on his hands he uses to kill. The killers don’t use weapons that can be used at a distance such as firearms; they enjoy the kill and the brutality of it and killing with a gun is too impersonal. Furthermore, slasher films are notorious for their blood, gore, and intense stabbing scenes such as the shower scene in Psycho. There is a certain kind of passion and suspense that can only be achieved by killing with a short ranged weapon. This short ranged weapon, often a knife, elusively shows sexism by representing the penis in pornography in that both weapons are used to penetrate the victims as a way to alleviate the sexual frustration/confusion that a lot of
slasher film killers have. In *Halloween*, we see how when Michael Myers kills women, the scenes are long and very violent; we see him repeatedly “penetrate” his sister, while when he kills Linda’s boyfriend, the scene is short, shadowy and there isn’t the intense stabbing.

There are certain behaviors that the victims engage in that almost always contribute to how that person dies. The victims, unlike the final girl, seem oblivious to their impending demise no matter how blatantly obvious it is; if they are being followed, they are unaware and seem to disregard any warning sign of what is coming. They often leave themselves vulnerable by wandering off alone or with only one other person, which leads to them being killed off; then, because they have been missing for a while, another victim goes off alone to find the first missing person and they get killed. The victims often say things like “I’ll be right back,” when they’re going off alone or, “Who’s there?” when they hear what they don’t yet realize is their attacker. Furthermore, the killers often disapprove of promiscuity so almost every character who has sex in a horror movie dies. As an extension of this, those who choose to drink and do drugs such as marijuana also die, as stated by Randy in *Scream* (*Scream*).

There is sexism in not only these actions portrayed by the victims who are often female but in their appearance. In *Scream*, before Sidney is attacked, she states she doesn’t like horror films because, “It’s big breasted women running up the stairs when they should be running out the front door.” This quote states how the victims are often very attractive and seemingly dimwitted; this can be the result of how the majority of horror movie viewers are adolescent males, Clover states which could explain why directors use attractive women: because they are trying to appeal to their audience (Clover 219). We see this in scream when all the guys were watching *Halloween* and the guys were huddled around the television waiting for the scene where Linda shows her breasts.

These sexist actions that are portrayed as deviant greatly contrast to those of the final girl. The final girl is seemingly innocent as opposed to her more promiscuous counterparts. She doesn’t engage in sex and doesn’t drink or do drugs or at the very least doesn’t like to. Unlike the other victims who are caught and killed unaware that there actually is a killer, the final girl has seen her friend(s) dead and is fully aware of what is coming (Clover). “The final girl always survives either by living long enough to be rescued or by actually killing the killer herself” (Clover203). We see the ending of the final girl getting rescued in *Halloween* and the final girl killing the killer in *Scream*. In *Halloween*, Dr. Loomis, the strong masculine man aware of the killer, saves Laurie from Michael Myers, but Laurie is able to fend off Michael until this happens showing her masculinity. In *Scream*, Sidney is a much more masculine protagonist is able to kill the killer herself.

*Halloween* is often seen as one of the first slasher films and is often used as an example when discussing the clichés of horror films because it was one of the first films to use the clichés and used all of the ones we typically see in a horror film. We see the killer who goes and kills off the victims that have sex and drink using a knife; we see the final girl who is innocent and survives long enough to be saved by a man, making this a slasher film. All these elements contribute to the sexism in this film and to the conservative values thrust upon
female viewers of this genre. In *Halloween*, we see Laurie staying away from boys, not engaging in sexual behavior and doing her “womanly duty” by babysitting. Meanwhile, due to the non-conservative actions of her counterparts, they are caught off guard when Michael Myers goes to kill them. Though all of these actions are sexist, what I found to be most sexist in *Halloween* was the identification of characters.

I found the strongest portrayal of sexism to come from Michael Myers and Laurie. My identification with Michael started early in the film as he proceeds to murder his sister after she has relations with her boyfriend. This identification occurs for many reasons, the most prominent being the beginning of the movie is told in first person through Michael’s eyes. In this way we are almost committing the murder with Michael because the camera is showing us what is happening through Michael’s eyes. The camera style is similar to that to in first-person shooter games, they what the viewer or play to feel as if they are committing the acts on the screen; in *Halloween* we pick up the knife with Michael, put on the mask, and stab his sister repetitively. This stabbing or “penetration” on Michael’s sister seen from first person view, forces us to commit the act with us. The camera view forces us in a way to commit a sexist act and accept sexism. There is also sexism in how Laurie is portrayed by the camera. She is seen as naïve and is able to survive because the audience, adolescent males, can relate to her because she is still a virgin. Her not being fully “woman,” male audience members can put themselves into her subject position because she has not become fully female yet. Clover acknowledges this in her essay ‘saying “penetration, it seems, constructs the female” (Clover 210). These elements of sexism are seen in the film *Scream* but in a different way.

*Scream* takes the sexism traditionally seen in horror films and parodies the sexist aspects of it in order to show how sexism is needless slasher films; this is shown through the victims and through the killer. Unlike the typical slasher film, Scream’s victims seem to be aware of the typical horror movie “rules” of what people should and shouldn’t do to survive though ironically they do these things, such as Casey opening the patio door in want to save her boyfriend and her calling out “Who’s there?!?” when the killer knocks (*Scream*). The characters are also aware of the sexism Tatum when approached by the killer, whom she mistakes as a friend pranking her, so she says “Please don’t kill me Mr. Ghostface; I wanna be in the sequel!” (*Scream*). With this quote she seems to mocking how dim witted the females in the traditional slashers are portrayed to be. *Scream* also points out the “rules” that you can’t have sex drink or do drugs or else you will die and yet the main character loses her virginity in the film and still survives.

Although *Scream* does show sexism, it’s almost sarcastically. For example, when Tatum is being attacked by Ghostface she is dressed rather licentious fashion, by wearing a skirt and not wearing a bra, yet she doesn’t just die without time to fight back like the typical horror film victim. In fact she almost gets away and is able to injure the killer unlike the typical promiscuous friends of the virgin final girl. This sarcasm shows how *Scream* forwards the ideas presented in *Halloween* on the typical slasher film elements. In fact, when discussing the traditional slasher films one of the films *Scream* frequently refers to is *Halloween*. This anti-sexism that *Scream* has is also shown by the lack of need for conservative values. In the traditional slasher, such as
Halloween, the characters seem to need conservative values to survive, if they don’t have the values the will be caught by the killer and be murdered without the chance to fight back. Scream seems to discard this rule because of how outdated and sexist these conservative values are letting the victim be able to fight back virgin or not, and in the end the girl who kills the killer is not a virgin.

After understanding all this I feel the statement the classic slasher film shows sexism and conservative values, especially in the characters, is valid because, the different aspects of this genre; the killer, the weapons, the victims and the final girl are portrayed in these films. As shown by how Wes Craven’s meta-slasher Scream forwards the classic slasher genre specifically Halloween to show how these classic slashers are sexist but yet this sexism is unnecessary.

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