

Fly Free:
An Anthology of
Student Writing

Gorman Learning Center
2003-2004 Anthology



Spring Art Contest Winners:

Front Cover Art: Casy Griggs and Jaeger Rydall

Back Cover Art: Paige Griggs and Willa Rydall

Inside Front Cover Art: Evan Edwards

Inside Back Cover Art: Victoria Hodge

(Winner for Best Use of the Gorman Learning Center Slogan in Art)



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Dear Gorman Community:

Welcome to the first of what should be many editions of the Gorman Learning Center Anthology. Included are some of the best student writings submitted to the Writing Program throughout the past year, as well as the spring art and slogan contest winners. The anthology's title, "Fly Free," taken from the four winning artworks that grace the front and back covers, is the theme—let us all fly and range freely in and through the imaginative possibilities of writing, just as the students represented here have done. Throughout is a diversity of modes and subjects: from expository essays on various animals to reflective essays on the future; from creatively re-imagined fairy tales to researched essays on marriage and on the influence of media; from a narrative on recycling from the recycled object's point-of-view to a persuasive paper on the significance of the Florida Everglades.

Recognition is due to Executive Director Waldo Burford for planting the seed that became this anthology, and to Director of Public Information Adam Cornish for his invaluable service in ensuring that this collection could fly. But of all the effort that went into this project, it is that of the students represented here, along with that of their ISTs, which most deserves honor. For without the individual students' enthusiasm and energy, effort and creativity, there would be no anthology to write of. This, then, is for them—the students whose diligent work has made it possible—and for future Gorman students who, inspired by the writings herein, will find their names and compositions highlighted in subsequent editions. Indeed, the high quality of the writing collected here, as well as the active and enthusiastic participation of all students in the Writing Program, signals the success that is Gorman: student achievement, in writing and in other educational endeavors, is the foundation of the Gorman community.

The Writing Program now has a home on the web. On Gorman's homepage, you can find all of the writing prompts and rubrics used to evaluate student essays, and links to two emails set up for student inquiries about both academic and creative writing. These and other additions to the Writing Program should facilitate further developments and improvements in student writing, as well as help to generate anthologies of excellent quality in future years. We hope all in the Gorman community will take inspiration from this anthology and fly freely through, and beyond, its pages.

Sincerely,
Greg Grewell and Eric Magrane
Gorman Writing Program
August, 2004



My Community: The Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Refuge

My favorite community is the Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Refuge. As soon as we get out of the car, I feel the warm sun on a hot day or the cold wind on a cloudy day. Some days we can smell freshly cut grass.

My favorite time of day at the refuge is morning. We sit quietly, eating warm Egg McMuffins and drinking creamy hot chocolate. We sit on a warm blanket to protect us from the cold, hard bench. The mist as it rises off the lake looks like something out of a fairy tale. Everything looks and smells fresh.

The Canada geese are floating on the water. Then, all at once, the geese start taking off in groups, going to the grass on the opposite shore. It's like they all have to be at the office by 8:00. We always know when they're going to take off because they start honking.

My second favorite time of day there is sunset. First, the pelicans do their dinner dance. They go into a tight group somewhere on the lake. All at once, they tip their heads underwater with their rear ends sticking

straight up in the air. Then they pop back up with a fish for dinner.

Then the cormorants do a bedtime dance. They fly into the trees on the island to rest for the night. They are usually silent, so all we hear are their wings beating. Sometimes, though, we can hear a loud snap followed by a splash. This happens when a branch breaks and a cormorant falls into the lake.

Lastly, when it is completely dark, off in the distance we can hear honking. The Canada geese, announcing their arrival, hit the water with a splash.

The evening show over, we head for home. Along the way, we stop at the ramp to check for catfish feasting on algae. We climb into the car while listening to croaking frogs and chirping crickets.

*IST: Erica Waring
Mode: Expository
Grade: 2*

Yummy Tummy Ache

One day my friend Cita had just come from the candy store with a bag full of candy. I said, "Hey Cita, where are you coming from?"

She said, "I'm coming from the candy store." Cita asked me if I would like to have some of her candy. I told her that I was not allowed to eat a lot of candy, but that I would like to have some of her candy.

Cita then asked me how much I

would like. I said, "Three pieces would be just fine."

The candy was kind of small. It was wrapped in silver foil and it was shaped like a cone. I popped one piece into my mouth and began to suck on it. My eyes opened wide and a big smile spread across my face; I had never tasted anything like that before. That candy was so delicious; it was rich and creamy; it was so smooth that it just melted in



my mouth. I quickly ate two other pieces. I just couldn't believe how good that candy was. I asked Cita for three more pieces.

Cita said, "Hey, I thought you weren't allowed to eat a lot of candy."

I said, "Six pieces isn't a lot."

Cita said, "Okay," and gave me three more pieces. After I had eaten those three, I again asked for more. Pretty soon, Cita's candy had disappeared.

I said, "Oh my goodness, Cita, I ate all of your candy. I will buy you another bag tomorrow after school." We both said goodbye to each other and we went home.

While my family and I were having dinner, I told them about the new candy I had eaten earlier. I told them how rich and creamy it was, how it was so smooth that it just melted in your mouth. My father said, "Silly, that's not a new candy, you just never had it before." He then said, "Stop talking, your potatoes are getting cold."

I could not stop thinking about that candy. I even shaped my mashed potatoes into the shape of one of those candies.

Later on that night, my tummy began to hurt. I called for my mom; I told her that my tummy was aching. She asked, "Carly, how much of that candy did you eat earlier?"

I said, "Not much, only twenty-five pieces."

She said, "Sweetie, you know you're not allowed to eat that much candy. It's no wonder that you have a tummy ache." I couldn't sleep at all that night. I tossed and turned all night long.

The next day my tummy felt better, but I was so tired because of not getting any sleep at all the night before. I had a hard time staying awake at school. After school I went to the store, so that I could replace Cita's candy. I went to Cita's house to give her the candy that I had bought for her. I handed her the bag and said, "Thank you for the candy, but I don't want to see any more of that candy for a very long, long time."

IST: Dana Blood

Mode: Narrative

Grade: 3

..... Juliette Boberg

This Story is About Me, Kate

This story is about me, Kate. I'm 12 years old and I love animals. My real name is Karolla Ate Thycarpentor. It's a strange name, and I really don't like it, so people call me Kate. I also have a dog named Jack; he's a mutt, cross between a Westie, Golden Retriever, maybe a bit of Poodle, I don't really know. He's about two and a half feet long from nose to tail, maybe less. He likes chasing butterflies, but he especially likes getting dirty.

I have two brothers, too. One is Jeremy. He's six and his nickname is Jer Bear. I think he's growing out of the name, but people still call him that. My other brother is Daniel. He's 15. He has a girlfriend, and I

don't know why I just told you that. He's actually pretty nice, but sometimes he tries to hide it and becomes mean and strict. Sometimes it gets on my nerves, but I try to act like it doesn't.

My father died last year, so we moved into our little holiday house just west of town and sold our town house. Daniel wasn't happy about it at all, and he did not hide it. He shouted at anyone who came in his room, even Mom, and he barely ever came out of his room for weeks.

Now, the closest house to our house was about half a mile away. It was a little blue house that a little old lady named Janet lived in. Jeremy and I walked there almost



every day. She sometimes made us cookies, and sometimes we helped her out. She had a little dog about the size of Jack. She even looked a bit like Jack. Her name was Athena. I was quite fond of little Athena, and it didn't take long for Janet to figure that out.

It was a rainy, boring day, and I was sitting on the couch watching the fierce drops of rain scatter across the ground, surrounding our house. I watched the raindrops racing down the window, seeing which one could get to the bottom first. I was bored. I had been thinking about Janet and Athena. I wondered if it was a good idea to walk to their house on such a rainy day, but I wanted to so much. Finally, I decided that the worst thing that could happen to me would either be to get soaking wet, or to

get sick. Janet could easily fix those problems; I knew she could. If I got soaking wet, she'd give me a dry sweater and let me sit by the fire. If I got cold and started sneezing, she'd give me hot chocolate and let me sit by the fire. I put on my warmest waterproof jacket and started to walk down the hall to ask Jeremy if he wanted to go. Then I had second thoughts.

The only reason Jeremy ever really wants to go is to get lemonade and cookies, and he never really wants to play with Athena and talk to Janet. So I decided to go alone. I turned around, put up my hood, and out the door I went.

The raindrops were fierce as they poured down on me every second. I started to run. I was about halfway to Janet's house when I came across a mud puddle. Well, next thing I knew I was sitting in that mud puddle, wet and freezing cold. I had slipped. I got up and found a bit of cement under a tree, a perfect place to sit and rest, just for a minute. I sat down, and just as I did, I heard a sound, but I didn't hear it well enough to know what it was. So I held my breath and listened a minute. I heard it again. It was a strange sound, a sort of...whimpering. I looked around, didn't see anything, then I heard it again. It seemed to be coming from a nearby bush. I heard it again. It was coming from a

big bush next to a dead tree about ten feet away from where I was sitting.

As quietly as I could, I got up and tiptoed over to the bush. I pulled the twigs and leaves apart and there in the bush was... Jack? What I was looking at was a little muddy dog, a dirty white color and a tiny bit of a peachy color on its back and ears. There was something different about this dog, different from Jack, I mean. I gasped, "Athena!" I said it so loud, I scared her even more than she was already. There in front of me, wet and soggy, was Athena.

I have to admit, I was a little afraid before I found out that the sound was coming from Athena, but after I did, I forgot all about being scared and all the other things in my head. I didn't move: all I did was crouch down, staring at her, wondering how on earth she ever got there.

Well, she was obviously happy to see me. She jumped up at me and licked me all over.

Through the raindrops I heard what I thought was music coming from behind the bushes. I picked up Athena and tucked her underneath my sweater. Then, I crawled through the bush and there before me was a beautiful flowing river.

But where was the music coming from?

I looked around cautiously and saw something on a rock across the river. It looked like an instrument of some kind. I walked down the bank so I could get a better look. It was a golden harp... but no one was there to play the beautiful music. The strings even vibrated, but I couldn't see anyone!

I decided to cross the river and check it out. There were not many rocks to step on, so I had to step in the water a few times, but my feet were so wet already that I didn't really care. When I stepped on to the bank where the harp was, the harp started playing a soft tune. When I put Athena down, to my astonishment she fell upon the ground like she had fainted and started sleeping soundly. What was going on?

I have to admit, I was a little afraid before I found out that the sound was coming from Athena, but after I did, I forgot all about being scared and all the other things in my head.



I sat down and tried to figure it out. I sat for a long time thinking. The harp was playing. I don't know how long I sat there, but by the time I looked up and actually noticed it was getting dark, more than an hour had passed. The harp seemed to have put me in a trance. A sleepy one.

I rose to my feet and picked up Athena. As we stepped off the bank, the harp started playing the same music as when I had first heard it play. Athena was wide-awake again.

I started off to Janet's house.

Quicker than I thought possible, we were at Janet's house. I knocked on the door and Janet opened it. "My goodness! You certainly need a cup of hot chocolate! Come in, will you?"

I went in and sat on the couch. Janet went into the little kitchen and poured some hot chocolate into a cup. She carried it over to me, and then sat on the couch, too. "Well," she said, "how are you doing today?"

"Fine."

"Is that Jack you have there?" she asked as Athena moved a little.

"No." I held up Athena. "It's Athena." Just as I said that, she went flying out of my hands and ran to the old lady.

"Where was she?" Janet asked in surprise.

"She was in a big bush about halfway here," I exclaimed.

"Why, how did you ever get there?" Janet said to Athena. "You must have gotten out when it wasn't raining, and then went in that bush when it started to rain. Go get some rest, Athena." Athena went into the corner and lay down in her bed.

"Janet," I said.

"Yes," she replied.

"Well, I didn't just find Athena in a bush."

"What do you mean?" Janet asked.

"Behind the bush there was a beautiful river. And across the river there was a strange golden harp. It..."

"Was it playing music though no one was there?" Janet interrupted.

"Yes," I said.

"Why, that harp has been there for 100 years!" Janet exclaimed.

"But who was playing it?" I asked.

"Little fairies were playing the beautiful music. They are very interesting creatures. Each fairy is in charge of one string. You cannot see them because they are invisible."

"How do you know all this?" I asked.

"When I was a little girl, I found that harp by the river just like you did today. I made friends with one of the fairies, and she told me everything. I would go down there every day and talk with her."

Janet started telling me all about when she was a little girl. It took her a while to figure out how late it was.

"It is already dark. You better get going," she said. We said our goodbyes and I ran home as fast as I could.

After that, every day I went down to the riverbank to listen to the wonderful music. One day, just like Janet had said she had done, I actually met a fairy.

IST: Erin Havrilesky

Mode: Narrative

Grade: 4

..... Lily Chen

Comparison of Two Nations of California Indians

I love taking nature walks in the forest, and I love eating salmon, so I would have enjoyed being a member of the Yurok tribe. The Yurok tribe lived in the northwestern

corner of California, near the Klamath River. They were surrounded by green forest, and it must have been a beautiful place to live. Not all tribes were so lucky. The Mojave, for



instance, lived in the southeastern desert where few trees grow. They lived near the Colorado River, however, so they grew crops along the river banks.

The basic foods of the Mojave were the corn, squash, and beans that they grew. They also grew melons and pumpkins, and they could fish in the Colorado River. The Mojave also hunted small game like rabbits, but there would not be as much game in the desert as the Yurok found in the northern forests. The Yurok were lucky because their river was teeming with salmon, and they could also dig for clams. The northern forests supplied the Yurok people with more acorns and berries than they could ever need, so life was easier for them than it was for the Mojave.

The Yurok traded salmon for dentalium shells, soapstone bowls, or tools. They also traded acorns for other things that they needed, and always had plenty of trade goods. The Mojave people traded some of their crops for wooden bowls, dentalium shells, and horn spoons, but if their crops failed, they would not have anything to trade. For this reason, the Mojave sometimes raided other tribes, and were not as peaceful as the Yurok.

The geographic location of each group decided what type of house they were going to live in. The Yurok lived in redwood plank houses with an interior pit, a gable roof, and a small entry hole to keep bears out. The Yurok also made dugout canoes from the local trees, and these were an important part of their culture. The Mojave built rectangular pit houses with mud-covered grass roofs. Art was not very important to the Mojave because they had to struggle in a hard place. They wove plain, irregular baskets, and had little time for dancing. Life for the Yurok was fairly easy, and they had time to practice art, make nice twined baskets, dance, and take part in lots of ceremonies.

Because of their different ways of life, the two groups had different legends and religious beliefs. The Yurok had sweat lodges, but the Mojave did not have the building

The Yurok also made dugout canoes from the local trees, and these were an important part of their culture.

materials to make them. The Mojave creation story talked about quarreling brothers, but the Yurok creation story was called “Man across the Water.” The Yurok had female shamans who received payment when they helped people and who were greatly respected. The Mojave shamans were male singers, but they might be killed if the crops failed.

Dreams were at the heart of the Mojave religion. Their stories, songs, and religious beliefs were all based on dreams, and they used a plant called Datura, or Toloache, to put them into a dream state. Neither the Yurok nor the Mojave used drums, but they both used clapper sticks, whistles, and flutes for music.

During the Gold Rush, many miners entered northern California, and the Yurok suffered terribly. In 1700, there were 2,500 Yurok, but by 1900, that number had gone down to only 700. Today, the number has again increased to 2,300. As for the Mojave, they have more members today than they did in 1700, and currently number over 3,000 members, so perhaps it was lucky to live out in the desert, away from the new cities.

I used information from the Houghton Mifflin Grade 4 Social Studies book, *Oh, California*.

I also used information from the Internet at http://www.fourdir.com/california_indians.htm, where I followed links from information pages on the Mojave and the Yurok to sites where I could find some information about houses, religious beliefs, and shamans. The pages below were the most helpful:

http://www.fourdir.com/culture_northwestern_california.htm

http://www.fourdir.com/culture_colorado_river_california.htm

<http://www.fourdir.com/yurok.htm>

<http://www.fourdir.com/mojave.htm>

IST: Anita Webb

Mode: Information Report

Grade: 4



Wild Horse Report

Wild horses live in many different places today, such as South Dakota, Nevada, and California, but there are no truly wild horses left, only feral horses. Feral horses are horses that escaped or were set free and went back into the wild. There are many interesting facts about wild horses that I'm going to share with you.

First, once these horses are set free, they will have to learn how to survive on their own. In order to do this, one of the things they need is food. A wild horse's diet is different from a captive horse's diet in many ways. For example, a wild horse's diet doesn't have any hay in it. Wild horses eat mainly grass, but they also eat things like flowers, leaves, and berries. In fact, they can eat pretty much anything that grows. While they mostly live on the plains, they can survive almost anywhere, like forests or mountains. This is why it's very helpful that they are so adaptive to their environment.

One physical feature about wild horses is that since they eat mainly plants, their teeth are dull to chew the plants by grinding them. Another helpful physical feature is their light bones. This helps them run long distances. Cheetahs are faster, but a wild horse would always outrun them in a long-distance race. They are the fifth fastest animal on land. Flies can be irritating to anybody, including horses. While a horse munches, flies will land on it, so a horse will use its tail to swat them away. This is a useful trick because flies love horses, but they aren't the only ones!

Next I will share some physical adaptations. The first horses used to be as small as a small dog. When horses were introduced to the plains, they had to grow longer legs to outrun predators. They also had to grow longer necks so they could reach the ground for grazing.

While horses are helpless when it

comes to humans using guns, they are perfectly capable of surviving animal predators because of their strong muscles used for running and swimming. When afraid, a horse will use its long legs and powerful muscles to run away. Horses can't survive without each other, though. Usually, while a herd of horses is grazing, the leader is watching for danger, such as mountain lions, wolves, humans, and coyotes. (Oh, my!) Horses look up a thousand times a day to keep an eye out for danger. Even when the herd is sleeping, there is always one horse awake keeping watch. Another helpful survival feature is their knee joints. They can lock them so they can stand up while

sleeping. This way, they are ready to run. Another way to escape predators is swimming. They can actually swim better than humans! If a lion is chasing a horse, the horse can jump into the river, but the lion would just stay on the edge. Eventually, the lion would just give up.

Now I'd like to share with you someone who stood up and made a difference. Some humans love horses, but some have so little respect for them that they turn them into dog food. In 1950, a woman named Velma Thurston from Nevada noticed some blood dripping from a truck ahead of her, so she followed it. What she found shocked her greatly. Wild horses had been injured and packed in a truck and were sent to a dog food factory. This is already sick and wrong, but this is even worse: these actions were perfectly legal, too. Hunters called mustangers were licensed by the Bureau of Land Management to rid the range of the mustangs. The helpless creatures were captured for fun, slaughtered, or just gunned down, as the panicked animals were hunted by plane or truck. In 1952, Velma, among others, convinced the Storey County Nevada Commission to ban shooting

Horses look up a thousand times a day to keep an eye out for danger.



horses from airplanes. Velma wanted more. Next, she lobbied the Nevada Legislature, where a heckler derisively made fun of her and named her “Wild Horse Anna.” His teasing backfired. The name stuck and spread like wildfire. Wild Horse Anna got in the newspapers and on TV. She encouraged school kids to write to Congress. This massive letter writing paid off. In 1959, the hunting of wild horses was banned in the U.S.A. On December 15, 1971, the United States Congress passed the Wild Free

Roaming Horse and Burro Act, protecting these living remnants of the Old West. Wild Horse Anna died in 1977, but she’ll always be a great hero to the graceful horse.

Now that I have shared many facts about the wild horse, I hope you have found it as interesting as I have.

IST: Erin Havrilesky
Mode: Information Report
Grade: 4



Siana Duran



Wolves

Wolves are an endangered species. Wolves were on the brink of extinction because of the actions of hunters, farmers, ranchers, and poachers. The wolf population was dying off. Hunters would kill them by accident or shoot them for trophies to hang on the wall. Poachers wanted their skin for fur coats and to make money since wolf fur is very valuable. Ranchers and farmers lay out poison and set traps because they believed that wolves eat livestock. The government finally decided to protect the wolves. Now it is illegal to kill wolves, and the wolf population is slowly rising.

How did this happen? Many people fear wolves because they are afraid that wolves will attack them. Often, they feel this way because of stories they have read, such as *Peter and the Wolf*, *The Three Little Pigs*, or *Little Red Riding Hood*. When they see a wolf, they presume that it hunts farm animals, so the wolf deserves to be killed. Farmers and ranchers are afraid that wolves will eat their livestock, but that’s incorrect. Wolves usually don’t eat livestock unless there is no food available in the wild. Farmers don’t know that the coyote is actually the villain. Wolves eat animals like moose, caribou, mice, rabbits, and other animals.

The hunters also make mistakes

about the wolves. Unfortunately, many hunters thought the red wolf’s den was a rabbit’s burrow. The red wolf’s den is made smaller than the size of other wolves’ dens. Hunters would mistakenly put their snares in front of the wolf’s burrow so they could trap dinner. They caught a red wolf instead of a rabbit. The red wolf population was very close to being extinct. Soon hunters changed the way they hunted. Instead of putting snares in front of the burrow, they would get their gun and shoot a bird, a deer, or a rabbit.

I think wolves should not be hunted because they play a grand role in the balance of the world. If it weren’t for them, we would have too many animals. Wolves eliminate the old, weak, and sick animals that are in big herds. They also eat rodents. Wolves by nature are shy and gentle creatures.

Wolves are magnificent in the wild. Wolves live in groups called packs. Packs mark the territory where they live. Packs stay near the animals they hunt and try to avoid people. The leader of the pack is called an alpha male, and his mate is called an alpha female. The alpha male and the alpha female are the only ones in the entire pack who can have pups. The leader protects the pack in case another pack tries to move into their hunting ground. The number of wolves in



one pack is between 5-20 wolves. Their howl is a beautiful song and also how they communicate. They tell each other if a pack is coming, to begin or end the hunt, or just for the fun of it. Scientists are learning more about these intelligent animals and their place in nature. I hope I have inspired you to care

about wolves more, and to help the wolf population go up by educating people like I did.

IST: Robert Jackson
Mode: Research/Persuasive
Grade: 5

..... Christian Waldemar

The Great Aluminum Search

I was a 2002 Coke can in a family's fridge for two weeks before they picked me up and started to drink out of me. They got my wife, Amelia, a 2003 Root beer can, too. When they were finished with us, they put us on the counter for two days. We met some new friends, Kiko, a 1999 kiwi and banana can, and Zade, a 2001 Coke can.

Finally, a woman about the age of twenty cleaned the kitchen. My wife, Zade, and I were put into the recycling. Kiko was sadly put into the trash can, with nothing to look forward to but the smell of other trash in the landfill.

We were in the recycling for one week. We met some other nice cans. Finally, we were put onto the side of the road for the recycling truck. He came and dumped us all into the back. We rode until, at long last, we were at the recycling center.

We were dumped out onto the conveyer belt and were pushed along to a huge stomping metal flattener. We were now just a plate of aluminum. Then we were cut up into little pellets and we got all the color taken out of us. Then I realized I had lost Amelia. I looked and I looked, but I couldn't find her. I looked around and saw I was about to be dumped.

I woke up and found that I was a spoon. I was sitting up high, on the top shelf. I sat there for a month, all alone. Finally, I saw a family coming towards me. They picked me up, examined me for a minute, and then bought me.

I was in the house for three years. I

met a few friends, but I still wondered where my wife was. A dog chewed me up and the family put me in recycling. Two weeks passed in the bin, and I was put by the road.

When I got to the recycling company, again I was flattened, cut, and un-colored. The next thing I knew, I was put onto a new Sergeant's chest. I wondered what I was doing there for a moment, and then I finally thought that I must be a badge. I spent forty years on that one chest. I was put away into a drawer of a house for another sixty years. The last I had heard about my wife was that she was a binding to a beach chair.

Finally, a family moved in and recycled me. It had been a while since I had gone to the big house. I woke up next as a German fruit soda can. I was shipped to Germany, where I was filled and bought. Someone drank me in his car two weeks later and threw me out into a school parking lot. A five-year-old boy picked me up and buried me in a back yard. Three years later, a German shepherd puppy dug me up. The puppy brought me inside and dropped me on the carpet. The owners picked me up and recycled me.

The next thing I knew, I was a computer motherboard for a space shuttle. A year after waiting, I was shipped off to the moon. The other motherboards told me my wife was the rim of a basketball hoop. We landed on the moon and we were all badly damaged from a crash landing. Another space shuttle came to rescue the two space-men and us.



We landed back on earth and I got recycled. I woke up the next morning. I looked around. I thought for a minute. I was a soda can again. Not only that, but I was back where I started, in the same house as the beginning of my life! I was next to a couple of my old friends. The family got me out one week later. They drank me, and then they recycled me. I was on the side of the road.

I went through a lot in my life. I was shipped to Japan as a fork one day. A nice family picked me up there. Then I was an aluminum plate in Great Britain. I met a nice spoon there named Calisto. I also met a nice fork. His name was Kirsto. I met a knife, but he just tried to cut me. I got recycled after about twenty years.

I found myself poking down on fabric at a very fast rate. I wondered for a minute, then realized I was a sewing machine needle. I spent thirteen years poking away at a sewing shop. I was finally recycled after my owner got poked. I heard that my wife was an attachment to a cappuccino machine.

I got up the next day, feeling a little sore from all the recycling. I opened my eyes. I was a part to a printer. I worked there for six years. The owner sold me to a guy that owned an electric parts store. He took me out of the printer and sold me to a thirteen-year-old boy. The thirteen-year-old boy traded me to a fifteen-year-old girl for two tickets to a show of some kind. She put me inside a strange machine. When she tried to turn it on, it blew up.

I was a lot of different things, like a napkin holder and a video camera. The last thing I had heard about my wife Amelia was that she was a computer chip to a video game system.

I set off to Asia as a highly decorated fork. I stayed there for a couple of days before I set off in search of my wife. I went to Africa as a birdcage, and I heard she had gone to Turkey as a drainpipe. I searched there for several years as a bottle cap before I heard she went back to the U.S. as a cooking pan. I went there as another soda can. I

finally found a family who bought me and took me home to where I found my wife.

She was a soda can just as I was when I found her. We rejoiced and had a party with all the silverware and cans. Just when we thought we had it together forever, she was put into the trash can.

We had an aluminum funeral for her. I went on as several different forms, like a computer chip, and part of a stove. I went on with my aluminum life for about seventy years. I was a soda can my last form before I was thrown away. I sat by the side of the road for two nights, next to a very rude banana peel and a grumpy soda can.

I was taken away in a very badly-smelling truck. It dumped me into a landfill. I waited for thirty years, just sitting there, with all the other trash. Then some people saved me. They dug me up and took me out. I found out they were called the Klutz Company. They took my picture and put it into a book. I was recycled and I was recycled. Then I was a watch. I was in the good U.S.A. just being a watch. I was too sad to do anything else. I waited for a while as a watch – twenty, maybe thirty years. I wasn't keeping track anymore.

I got recycled one day, but I really didn't pay much attention to this. I was flattened and cut into pieces, decolorized, and dumped. I was just waking up when I felt someone's lips were drinking me. I was put back into the fridge and there I saw my wife. I sputtered, too shocked to speak. She spoke for me. She said she was dug up by the Klutz Company and photographed into a book. I told her my story of everything. We were so happy.

So this is what I say:

"Recycle us, please! Just don't dump us!"

**I went to Africa as a
birdcage, and I heard
she had gone to Tur-
key as a drainpipe.**

IST: Eileen Mastro

Mode: Narrative

Grade: 5



The Fragile Everglades

The Florida Everglades are precious wetlands that teem with life and beauty. From the tiny algae particles to the biggest Florida panther, all the animals are part of the fragile ecosystem. The Everglades' plants also make it a wonderful place. Tall grass and dense groves of trees line waterways, and flowers are also plentiful. It is impossible to not see birds of all colors, shapes, and sizes. Many endangered species, such as the manatee, only live in this precious wetland, and rely on its water to live. Many fish and other animals also live in the Everglades. Fresh water wetlands as vast as the Everglades are rare; therefore, it is important to protect the Everglades from all threats.

One of the greatest threats to the Everglades is not having enough water. For the Everglades to survive, water must flow from Lake Okeechobee into the Everglades. Unfortunately, this flow is being diverted, and the Everglades are not getting enough water. The water diversion began in 1905, when the Army Corps of Engineers started building canal systems in Florida for transportation and flood control, and people began farming the land around Lake Okeechobee. They took water from Lake Okeechobee to water their fields. After that, the largest canal yet was built. It connected the Miami River with the ocean and brought water directly to the ocean instead of through the Everglades. Currently, water is also being taken for Florida's ever-growing population. So much water is being diverted from the Everglades that parts of the park are not getting enough water. This

Many endangered species, such as the manatee, only live in this precious wetland, and rely on its water to live... Fresh water wetlands as vast as the Everglades are rare; therefore, it is important to protect the Everglades from all threats.

causes the tiny aquatic organisms there to die out. The creatures that eat them die out, too, and the creatures that eat those creatures die out, and so on. With so many people taking water from the Everglades, this threat grows daily.

Another threat to the Everglades is water quality. Polluted water is very harmful. Farms produce much of this harmful pollution. Excess nutrients from fertilizers in farm runoff cause fast growth among certain native plants. In one area of the Everglades, the cattails were growing at a rate of four acres per day. When the cattails spread, they covered up animals' homes and clogged the waterways. The big animals in the area died out because they could not walk through the dense cattails. Not only does farm runoff contain excess nutrients, it also can contain pesticides, which are very dangerous. They poison the animals. Farms are not the only source of water pollution. Mercury pollution is also a problem. It was first detected in the fish from the Everglades, and later in other animals. Once a Florida panther was found dead with a mercury level that would kill a human. The source of the mercury is still unknown, and it is worrisome that mercury flowed into the Everglades because it is possible that another dangerous poison might follow it.

Almost everyone wants to protect the Everglades, but it is very hard to find the right way to go about it. People are starting with the basics. The protection groups are working on public awareness and education, and groups are being pulled together to work more as one. Some other objectives are improving public policy and following growth management plans for Florida's growing population, but it will take



more than that to fix the Everglades. Building pumps to pump water into the Everglades has been considered to increase water flow into the ecosystem. There is another idea, too: the Everglades Construction Project. It would convert 45,000 acres into a stormwater treatment area. The area would be made into a swamp to filter extra nutrients and pollution from the water naturally. The plan also includes converting 60,000 acres of sugar cane farms into a water reservoir for the Everglades. The plan is a good idea to protect the Everglades.

I think that a big project is necessary to save the Everglades. Public awareness is important, too. Pumping water into the Everglades might work for a little while, but it is not the best idea. More water needs to flow in during the summer and spring, and less in the winter and fall. If this natural pattern is not continued, nests will be flooded and birds will not be able to find food. The Everglades Construction Project is a much better idea. Unlike the pumps, the water would come naturally at the times when the water was needed because the reservoir would fill with seasonal rainfall. It would also be cleaner, due to the stormwater treatment area. It may be expensive at first,

but it would need less upkeep than the pump project. I believe that the fragile beauty of the Florida Everglades can be saved with the Everglades Construction Project.

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IST: Cindy Hamman
Mode: Persuasive
Grade: 6

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Trevor James

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The Fire That Walked

T.J., an eleven-year-old boy, was watching cartoons when the news popped up and said, "Breaking news, fire in Fontana, California." T.J. got up and smelled something burning; he looked out of his window and saw enormous flames. They looked like they were 100 feet tall. He went to get his mom, to tell her that there was a brush fire on the mountain. Suddenly the fire was racing down the hill, but then it stopped. The fire changed directions and started

towards the freeway, where all the towering houses were.

An hour later, the news was back on, and the newscaster said that the fire might jump the freeway. The firefighters were having a hard time fighting the fire because they could not get their equipment on the mountain.

The fire got larger every day, absorbing all the plants and trees. Soon the fire was uncontrollable because it was so



massive from the wind moving the flames in many different directions.

The fire made it all the way to San Bernardino and was starting to threaten people and their homes, along with their pets. The fire was too big; it could not be stopped. It had burned sixty homes and destroyed a lot of land. T.J. thought to himself that he had had enough, so he went into his garage, pulled out a red fire extinguisher and some rope, and tied them on his back. Just as he was about to leave the house, his mom asked where he was going, and T.J. said, "to fight the fire." His mom laughed and told him "no," and sent him upstairs.

One morning, it was dark and smoky. The streets were deserted, and you could not see the sun. When you looked in the sky, you could see ash falling like snow. T.J. thought, I have to stop this fire! He snuck out of his window, got on his scooter, picked up his fire extinguisher and a mask, and took off. When he got to the top of the mountain, he got off his scooter and started walking towards the smoke. He looked up and saw the fire, and it was tremendous! He had never seen anything like it before. The fire said, "What have you come here for? Have you come to put me out with that pitiful fire extinguisher?"

"Ye, yes," T.J. said. He was so afraid that he could hardly speak! Then, T.J. thought he heard the fire say that it would go burn Lake Arrowhead, and in a matter of hours, the fire was in Lake Arrowhead. T.J. was just standing there with flames igniting all around him. Thankfully, he got out of there in time.

He went back home with no luck at all. His mom came racing down the stairs, and asked, "Where have you been? I was so worried about you! Look at you, you

are a mess, and why do you have a fire extinguisher?" she asked. "Were you trying to fight the fire by yourself?" T.J. nodded his head. His mom was very upset and sent him to his room.

That night, when T.J. was watching the news, it was talking about how fast the fire was moving and that it might stretch to Big Bear. T.J. said to himself, they do not know what the fire is like, and I am the only kid to witness its power and to hear it talk.

The next day, when T.J. got up from his bed, he looked out of his window and saw the fire. He was staring it right in the face. He raced down the stairs and told his mom that the fire was a block away. Just as he told his mom, the police knocked on the door and said, "You must evacuate because the fire is too close, and the winds are getting stronger." T.J. and his mom got all of their valuables and got out of there. Everyone had to wait at a shelter until the fire was out, but that would be a long time.

T.J. said to himself, I must try harder to beat the fire. He went to the car and got the fire extinguisher and headed back up the mountain. When he got there, the firefighters were trying to do everything to put an end to the destruction, but the fire was too great! T.J. tiptoed around the firefighters and got very close to the fire. The fire was so powerful that it shot out fireballs and chased the firefighters away. T.J. was still standing there, watching all the destruction that the fire was making. He was trying to hide in the bushes, but the fire saw him, threw a fireball, and lit the bushes on fire. He was so afraid, but he had to be strong. T.J. pulled out his extinguisher, shot it at the fire, and used up all the liquid, but the fire was still standing there, not even a dent. Then the fire seemed to put its hands in the air and make a gigantic fireball, and launched it at T.J. As the fireball was getting closer, it was getting bigger every second. It was not

The streets were deserted, and you could not see the sun. When you looked in the sky, you could see ash falling like snow. T.J. thought, I have to stop this fire!



even rolling on the ground; it was getting bigger in the air. The wind continued to blow, and the fire increased its power.

T.J. bolted down the hill and went to the shelter, but then the fireball dropped and lit the ground up in a fiery blaze. Everyone ran out of the shelter to see what was going on. There were flames everywhere. Everyone scrambled inside, because they were terrified.

T.J. had a great plan. He snuck out again, ran back home, covered himself with water, and went back to the fire. The fire turned around, threw a gigantic ball of fire at T.J., and hit him. There was a big ball of smoke, and when the smoke cleared, T.J. was not hurt. He seemed fireproof. The fire was furious that T.J. was still standing there, not even hurt. The fire seemed to be amazed by T.J.'s strategy. Then the fire lunged at T.J. with all his power. T.J. was knocked down, but he was fine. Then, he also realized that

he was starting to dry up, and if he were hit again, he would not survive. He realized that the only way to defeat the fire was for it to rain.

The fire continued to burn more land every day. Homes were lost, and there seemed to be no end to the destruction. People prayed for rain, but it had not rained in months.

It seems as if the fire had won, but finally, on the second week, the clouds seemed to weep from all the smoke. It started to rain.

I realize that fire doesn't talk, but this is my story!

IST: Rick Wiersma

Mode: Narrative

Grade: 6



Éric Barceló



The Rescue

The fall winds blew gently across the well-kept lawns of Kirkley Manor, a beloved old mansion snuggled deep into the lush green valleys of Wales, England. Through a large window on the second floor of this house, a boy could be seen pressing his round, yet handsome, face against the polished glass.

“Mother,” he said quizzically, “when will Uncle Jack arrive?” By the look on her face and the sigh she let out, one could easily tell that this was not the first time the same question had been asked.

“Your Uncle was delayed at La Rochelle when he could not find a boat. That was the last we heard of him. But don't worry, Phillip.”

Mother's reassuring gaze made Phillip feel better. Once again, he took up his position by the window while the servants, glad for a little extra chance to clean, hurried about dusting, cleaning, and making preparations.

A quarter of an hour later, while the church bells of the town pealed out 4:30, a coach could be seen coming up a long driveway and driving through the many flowering trees which created an archway over the driveway. Quickly, the entire family assembled downstairs, in the anteroom, from Papa to the littlest baby, all eager to welcome the much-anticipated relatives. Finally, the weary travelers entered and were received with a hearty greeting from the family. Next,



the servants came in, announcing to the hungry assembly that dinner was ready. After washing up, the adults sat down and the children followed suit, according to custom.

The dinner consisted of a thick stew, lovingly prepared with dark brown bread on the side. The platter next to it contained a golden, succulent turkey. After the meal, the adults stayed talking while the children ran outside to take advantage of the last rays of sunlight which they could enjoy in their play. Soon, the children reentered the house, lured by the promise of an adventure story narrated by Uncle Jack.

The next morning, after breakfast, which consisted of a grain porridge, both families loaded up the family carriages and took a ride into the lush countryside, where they spent most of the morning. Phillip and his cousin Harold greatly enjoyed the ride in the carriage, since they had not seen each other in three and a half years, and had much catching up to do on each other's lives.

Soon, they arrived at a crystal-clear lake, surrounded by beautiful pine and oak trees. The children could hardly wait to swim in the lake and climb the highest trees. Some hours later, the family sat down on the heather and grass to enjoy a delightful snack the servants had prepared and packed for the occasion.

During a lull in the festivities, Phillip asked his uncle, "Uncle Jack, may I drive your carriage?"

"Well, now, my boy, you are almost fourteen by now; I think you can drive safely around," said Uncle Jack. "What do you think, Henry?"

"Could I go, too?" piped up Cousin Harold.

Phillip's father looked up from his sandwich. "I think the boys are old enough to handle a carriage," he drawled in between bites, "but stay in the meadow," he warned.

Soon after that, the boys discovered that they could freely drive in the meadows surrounding the lake without too much trouble. A short time later, they decided that the forest was much more interesting than the open meadows, and they sought its shady excitement. As the trees began whizzing past them, they realized that they were getting farther and farther from the lake and their families. They were just about to turn around when a small, red fox leapt into their path, spooking the horses into a mad gallop through the densely wooded forest.

Thankfully, the horses had enough sense to go back in the direction of the meadows, although they were still galloping at breakneck speed. In spite of the boys' best efforts to control the frightened steeds, the animals ran on with apparently endless energy.

By this time, the two boys had come to the shocking realization that, at this speed, the adults might not catch up to the runaway carriage. This thought did not brighten their day at all. Yet, Phillip's proposed plan did. It was the following: that they would scream their voices hoarse and, if help still did not arrive, they would jump off the carriage onto the soft grass of the meadow.

As they prepared to jump, the horses reared up and were stopped cold in their tracks. What was this sudden force that stopped this runaway stampede? It was none other than Uncle Jack and Phillip's father, standing in the middle of the road, willing to risk their lives in order to rescue the boys. After a strong scolding for going into forbidden territory (the forest), their family picnicking was cut short and they headed back to the house.

The boys proposed in their heart not

Thankfully, the horses had enough sense to go back in the direction of the meadows, although they were still galloping at breakneck speed.



to be so foolish, and also to obey their parents' rules and regulations. That evening, for family worship, the boys listened closely as Uncle Jack read from Exodus 20:12, thinking all along that this verse had been inserted in the Ten Commandments especially

for their situation.

IST: Cynthia Hayes-Perez

Mode: Narrative

Grade: 7

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Amy Matsumoto

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Family Memories

With the holidays approaching, I've been thinking a lot about my family, and as I go around trying to find the perfect gift for everyone, it reminds me how special and unique each person really is. I start to realize what an important part these people have played in my life. It makes me wonder what had happened in *their* past and who had played key parts in *their* lives to make my family into who they are today.

So I decided to do a little research, asking people questions about their (and my) family history. Since Christmas is coming up, some of my relatives are visiting, so it is a great time to gather information. I interviewed my mom's parents, my dad's mom, and my great-grandma on my mother's side (Nana), who is visiting us from Hawaii.

Here's what I found out:

Hatsuhei Tsunoda (Nana's father) decided to move from Japan to Hawaii for business purposes, somewhere around 1910. He was the first person in his family to come to the United States of America.

In 1914, his eldest daughter, Helen Hiroko Tsunoda (Nana), was born in Honolulu, Oahu, Hawaii. She had two older brothers, Nobuyoshi and Hiroshi, one younger brother, Robert, and two younger sisters, Gladys and Joyce.

Their mother, Tokie Tsunoda, never worked, but my great-great-grandfather was in the sugar cane business. He often took Nana to his working place on his horse to oversee the laborers. Hatsuhei Tsunoda also had a farm equipment and supplies shop and a commercial fishpond. Nana's favorite childhood memory was being taken

everywhere with her father (meetings, official dinners, to meet dignitaries, etc.).

Nana also loved (and still does) the color purple and enjoyed playing bean bags. She was interested in basketball and volleyball. She continued to live in Honolulu and walked to her schools, Likelike Elementary and later Konawaena High School. Her best friend was Helen Kimura, who, unfortunately, passed away.

When she grew up, Nana got her first job as a sales clerk in a Japanese department store. She later worked at a pineapple cannery as a packer forelady, did some substitute teaching, and had a job in traffic violation.

In 1933, Nana met Kaneki Honda. The year after, in 1934, she married Kaneki (who we call Grandpa) in the Tenrikyo Taiheiyo Church, becoming Mrs. Helen Hiroko Honda. They were married almost 60 years (Grandpa died on February 18, 1992, from cancer). Together, Nana and Grandpa started the North American Tenrikyo Church, where Grandpa was the minister. They had two children: a daughter, Janice Takako Honda (Grammy), born on January 12, 1935, and a son, Glenn Tadaomi Honda.

Grammy was born in Honolulu, Oahu, Hawaii. During the war, she took care of her younger brother, Glenn, while her mother (Nana) and grandmother worked. In 1941, Grandpa was interned at a relocation camp for four years because of the war. After the war was over, her mother continued to work, and her father (Grandpa) stayed home with them and did his ministry work.

She took the bus every day to her



schools: Na Lei Kindergarten, Likelike and Lincoln Elementaries, Stevenson Junior High, Maryknoll High School, and the University of Hawaii. As you can see, she moved a lot throughout her childhood. Although she'd always lived in Honolulu, her family moved to many different areas inside of Honolulu, including Palama, Kalihi, Nuuanu, and Palolo.

As a people person, Grammy had many great friends, one of whom she is still in touch with. Even though she and her brother hardly had any toys, she found many fun things to do. She enjoyed playing baseball, designing paper doll clothes, riding bikes, hiking, swimming, and surfing. Grammy was also interested in football and volleyball. Her favorite childhood memories were going to Kress Store and eating spaghetti with jelly sandwiches at the counter, and being babysat by her oldest cousin, who took her to the sumo matches ☺.

Her first official job was as a packer at the Pineapple Cannery. Later, she worked as a clerk, an entertainer, a keypunch operator, a bookstore manager at her college, and a teacher's aid. She had jobs as a delicatessen co-owner, a manager at a large retail store, and a human resources senior manager at the retail store. Grammy also worked as a stewardess at Aloha Airlines, where, in 1956, she met a man named Ronald Kondo.

In the year 1912, Sango Kondo arrived in the United States as an apprentice carpenter. At the age of 18, he was the first of his family to come to the U.S.A. He had decided to move to Hawaii because in Japan he could only be a farmer, and he wanted to become a carpenter.

Twenty years later, on February 18, 1932, Ronald Yoneo Kondo was born in Lahaina, Maui, Hawaii, to Sango and Susan Etsu Kondo.

As they grew, Ronald (Granddy) and his seven brothers and sisters all helped out at

their parents' bakery. They all walked from their house behind their bakery to the elementary school, Kamehameha III School, and later caught the bus to Lahainaluna High School. He had several best friends, some of whom he still keeps in touch with by Christmas cards and at reunions.

Granddy's favorite childhood memory is when his older brother, Hideo, took him with him and his friends on an outing to dive for fish, had a dinner of the fish and lobster that they had caught during the day, and stayed overnight on the beach. He also enjoyed playing basketball (eventually becoming captain of the varsity basketball team in his senior year), baseball, riding his favorite balloon tire bike, going hiking up to the Lahainaluna gulch, and diving for fish.

He got his first job at his parents' bakery, helping with the bread, pastries, doughnuts, cleaning, and other things. During the summers and weekends, he worked in the sugar cane fields. After helping his parents, he had about 30 varied jobs: from a surgical technician in the Army to a baggage attendant; from a police officer for the city and county of Honolulu to running the Kondo Okazuya (delicatessen) after his father passed away; and from being appointed to the House of Representatives for the state of Hawaii to serving as an administrative law judge, from which he retired.

When Granddy was working as a baggage attendant at Aloha Airlines, he met a woman named Janice Honda. He was on his way to Maui for a short vacation, and she was the stewardess on his flight. On August 4, 1956, about four months after his flight to Maui, Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Kondo were married in Honolulu. It was there that they had their three children: Diane (my mom), Ronald Jr., and Janine.

Now, Granddy and Grammy live in Los Angeles, about a five minutes' drive away from our house. They have two more grandchildren in Hawaii: Brandon (6 ½) and Emily (2). Painting, ukulele, a new house, and many other activities keep their lives with

In the year 1912, Sango Kondo arrived in the United States as an apprentice carpenter. At the age of 18, he was the first of his family to come to the U.S.A.



“never a dull moment.”

Today, Nana (my great-grandmother) is 89 years old, and still in great shape. Nana now lives in Honolulu with her son, Glenn (who took over responsibility for the Tenrikyo Church, where Nana still faithfully attends), his wife, Lynn, and their son, Reid. She visits us here in Los Angeles at least once a year, for Christmas.

Ronald and Janice Kondo (Grammy and Granddy) are my maternal grandparents, but now I only have one grandparent on my dad’s side: Rose Matsumoto (also known as Bachan, the Japanese name for grandmother).

The first person to come to America in Bachan’s family was her father, Kakudo Ohashi, who moved from Japan to California for business purposes, in 1917.

On February 1, 1924, Rose Kaneko Ohashi was born to Kakudo and Fusa Ohashi. She was born in Sacramento, but her family moved to Los Angeles when she was three years old. Her brother and sister were both older than her, and she was well taken care of. Her mother made all of her clothes, so she always had plenty of variety in colors and styles. She was interested in baseball and basketball, and read a lot of books.

She and her siblings, George Yoshio and Mary Yoshiye, walked to their schools. Bachan went to First Street School, Hollenbeck Junior High, and Theodore Roosevelt High, and her best friend was Mary Ann Masuda.

She had her first job working in a custom dress shop. In January 1941, because of the war, Bachan and her family were sent to Manzanar, California, to the WRA

(Relocation) Camp. There she worked (though it was optional) as a cashier in a food canteen, and in a co-op office. She lived with her family, but she and her family got to know their neighbors very well (with whom she still keeps in touch).

Bachan also met Mas Matsumoto at the Manzanar Relocation Camp. In 1949, Rose Ohashi and Masami Matsumoto (Jichan, the Japanese name for grandpa) were married in Los Angeles. They had seven children: Kristine, Jean, Michael, Ted, Paul (Dad), Janice, and Linda.

On September 11, 2001, Jichan died from cancer. He and Bachan had been married for almost 52 years.

Today, Bachan is healthy and up and about, with lots of great friends and fourteen grandchildren. She still lives in Los Angeles, with her eldest daughter and son-in-law close by.

As you can see, my relatives had different reasons for coming to America, different experiences that made and changed them through the years, and special people who greatly affected their lives. They have different memories, friends, and families, but all of these extraordinary people are very important to me, and they have each had a unique and large effect on my life. I’m very thankful for everything that they’ve gone through, the good and the bad, because without it, I wouldn’t be who I am today.

IST: Dianna Costanzo

Mode: Expository

Grade: 7



Julian Cubillos



Theme in Alice Walker’s “Everyday Use”

“Everyday Use,” a short story by Alice Walker, portrays an African-American mother who struggles to understand the relationship between her and her two daughters. Walker’s work conveys a significant idea using characters and dialogue; however, it is her use of setting at three locations that best

supports the theme that “true heritage can be saved and should be used the way it was intended.”

The first location is the house of the mother and one of the daughters; it is a very small, modest home: “[The house] is three rooms, just like the other one that burned,



except the roof is tin; they don't make shingle roofs anymore...this house is in a pasture, too, like the other one." From reading this, it becomes evident that they are carrying on a heritage of past generations by living in the same condition that their whole family could have been living in for years. They are continuing a tradition, just as those before them did.

The second location, which supports the theme even further, is the recollection of the family's past home, "the other one" mentioned above, and the fire that consumed it: "Sometimes I can still hear the flames and feel Maggie's arms sticking to me, her hair smoking and her dress falling off in little black papery flakes." Although this event destroyed the old house, something as powerful as fire could not even stop their heritage from continuing. Their heritage endured through the flames and returned. The old house returned from the ashes and represented the same thing that it did before, only in a different physical location.

The final location in the setting of the story takes place inside the family's current home and involves various objects—things in, as the title says, "Everyday Use." Benches on which "you can feel the rump prints," and a butter churn, "the milk in it clabber by now," with a dasher covered with small finger-shaped imprints from years of churning. These objects, with evidence of past use, show that they remain useful to the family to the present day. The objects are significant; however, the most important objects, two quilts, are found in the final location inside the home.

Quilts, especially in this context, represent 'living heritage,' because they were created in many years previous by a grandmother, with bits and pieces of

different clothing from different people:

In both of them were scraps of dresses Grandma Dee had worn fifty and more years ago. Bits and pieces of Grandpa Jarrell's Paisley shirts. And one teeny faded blue piece, about the size of a penny matchbox, that was from Great Grandpa Ezra's uniform that he wore in the Civil War.

The quilts display the history of the family. Additionally, when the quilts were constructed, those who were sewing them intended that they be used. The two daughters become involved with possession of these items: one who hopes to use them, and one who plans to display them. In following the theme, the former acquires the quilts, and heritage is saved.

Quilts and various objects within the story, along with Walker's use of location, are essential to the reader's understanding of the theme and its meaning. The title of the story, "Everyday Use," proves to be very fitting to the theme and the main idea. Using only very few items and ideas inside the setting, Walker is able to clearly convey that family heritage is something that cannot be destroyed, and should be put to use in everyday life.

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IST: Jennifer Sanchez
Mode: Response to Literature
Grade: 8

..... Bevin O'Connor

The Diversities of Acting

Movie acting and theater acting: the same thing, right? Wrong! However, most people are not aware of this. The average

person will hear the word 'acting' and automatically think of movie stars and filmmaking, yet there is the whole other world of



theater acting, and these two types of acting are not at all as similar as most people might think. Most people won't notice the difference at first, but the fact is that there is a big difference, actually *many* big differences, between the two types of acting.

One of the biggest and most obvious differences is a live audience (no, this has nothing to do with the audience being alive or dead, although a "dead audience" is a term often used to describe an unenthusiastic audience). For instance, movies do not have a live audience. This means that there is not an audience watching the movie being made. After the movie is done, and running in the theaters, people can go see it, in which case they then become the audience, except that the acting they are seeing is not live and happening right at that moment. Theater acting, on the other hand, is happening in front of a live audience, and everything is being done right at that moment. The audience is seeing things right as they're happening. So if actors mess up, forget outtakes and bloopers.

They have to cover for themselves! Nobody can just shout "cut!", go back to the beginning, and start over. Sometimes the other actors can help. For instance, if actors forget a line, one of the other actors can say something to help trigger their memory, but in the long run it's up to them. This does not mean that an audience is a bad thing. It can actually be a very good thing. For example, a play that has a really enthusiastic audience, that laughs when it's supposed to and cries when it's supposed to, can really get the actors' energy up.

Another difference, although it may not be as obvious as the live audience, is sound. In the movies, sometimes the actors will have mikes hidden underneath their clothing. These mikes are there so that the actors can speak in normal voices, instead of having to shout for their voices to get picked up by the sound equipment. In theater, however, mikes are not usually used.

Therefore, actors must project. They have to focus their voices so they are coming straight out of their mouths towards the audience. They have to make sure that the people sitting in the back row can hear them.

One difference that most people overlook is the acting styles in both movie and theater. In movies, the acting is usually subtle as far as body language goes. The actor can act as he or she normally would in that circumstance because it is the cameraman's job to focus in on the actor so it is clear what the actor is doing. On the other hand, in theater, everything needs to be over-exaggerated. The body language must be huge so that a person sitting in the back row,

for instance, can see what's going on. For example, if an actor is supposed to disbelieve something another actor is saying, in a movie he or she could simply roll their eyes, but in theater the actor would have to do an eye roll and some hand gestures to get the point across to the audience.

Lighting is another difference. In movies, lighting is very important because it sets the mood for a scene, and it can flatter the actors to put them in lighting that suits them. So if actors are acting with someone in a scene, and a

specific light is supposed to be shining on them, it is very important that they don't walk across the other person's light because they might cast a shadow on that person that would ruin the shot. In theater, lighting is also very important, but in a different way. In theater, lighting is not only used to express mood, but it is also used to express the time of day that the scene is taking place. This type of lighting is not usually an issue in movies since a lot of the filming is done outside. Also, with theater, usually the lighting is the same for all the actors, although occasionally they will use isolation lighting to draw attention to a specific person or thing.

The last difference is set scenery. This is one of the most important differences. In movies, the actors and actresses can go to the actual place that a scene takes place, so they don't have to convince anyone that they're at a specific

The audience is seeing things right as they're happening. So if actors mess up, forget outtakes and bloopers.



place, because the future audience can already see that they're there. In theater, however, it is up to the actor to make the audience believe that he or she is at a specific place. For example, if a scene takes place on the beach, the actors have to sell that idea to the audience. There may be something to help them, like the sound of seagulls or ocean waves, but mainly it's the actor who has to sell it. The actors also have to convince themselves that they're somewhere. For example, if the actors are doing a scene that takes place on a boat, it is much easier to believe that they are on a boat if they are, well, actually on a boat. So movies have the advantage of being able to go to different places to make the scene more realistic. In theater, though, the actors are always on the same stage, so it is up to the actors, set decorators, and sound technicians to make the scene as real as possible, because

not only do they have to sell it to the audience, but they also have to sell it to themselves.

Acting, although it may not seem so at first, actually has two very different categories. Although some people might think that theater acting is more difficult than movie acting, or vice versa, they are actually equally difficult, and they each have their strengths and weaknesses. That is without counting sitcoms, which are totally different subjects all together! It should be easier now to understand the different types of acting, and next time someone mentions acting, you will ask them, "what kind?"

IST: Stephanie O'Connor

Mode: Expository/Comparison/Contrast

Grade: 8

..... Erin Pearson

L.M. Montgomery and Ernest Hemingway

Two of the most famous writers of our time are L.M. Montgomery (most known for her *Anne of Green Gables* series) and Ernest Hemingway (most renowned for *A Farewell to Arms* and *For Whom the Bell Tolls*). Even though they are both best-selling authors, both led extremely tragic lives, and both wrote works that are still recommended today—their writing styles vary dramatically. One of the most prominent differences is in the development, growth, and depth of their characters—each has a style uniquely her and his own.

For instance, Ernest Hemingway's characters are very realistic in the sense that they have many facets—not entirely bad, not completely good—and different aspects of their personalities are revealed, bit by bit, as the story continues. This is the case of the character Wilson, from Hemingway's novella *The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber*. I, by nature, tend to make snap judgments of people, even characters in a short story. So when Wilson has an affair with Francis Macomber's wife, my first reaction to him is

that he should be labeled as a "bad guy." But as the story continues, another side of him is shown—his bravery, his sympathy for Francis Macomber, and his acute observations of the people around him.

L.M. Montgomery's characters are, by contrast, more one-dimensional. And their personalities rarely change. When they do, it is sudden and almost awkward, as opposed to Hemingway's gradual transitions. Don't get me wrong: Montgomery's characters are just as interesting as Hemingway's. However, the people in Montgomery's stories tend to stay categorically labeled as either bad or good. In particular are the two "enemies" of Anne from the *Anne of Green Gables* series, Josie and Gertie Pye. From the first book to the very last, they remain snobby and cruel, never wavering, never showing a more kind, compassionate side. Therefore, I am left with the conclusion that Hemingway's characters are, if anything, more realistic than Montgomery's. But that isn't the only way their characters differ.

In addition to their personality



development, their characters relate to each other in very different ways. Their emotions tend to be, generally, drastically different. Hemingway's characters are filled with regret and angst. Most are struggling to survive, to regain—and/or retain—their bravery and pride. They are filled with turmoil, trying to forget the past, and searching to find some meaning in the present. Those who aren't filled with anguish are usually portrayed as exuberant, idealistic youths (almost reminiscent of how Hemingway was before the war). These more optimistic characters are soon shown Hemingway's idea of the "real" world, full of tragedy, rejection, and shattered expectations. This is illustrated in the case of Paco, in *The Capital of the World*, whose youthful hopes of becoming a prize matador (bull fighter) are dashed when he is suddenly killed under ironic circumstances. In contrast, Montgomery's characters, while they experience tragedies, tend to be more at peace and happier. They face life pretty much optimistically: sometimes more excitedly, as with her most famous heroine, Anne Shirley, or sometimes with a quiet understanding, as with Marilla Cuthbert (also from the *Anne of Green Gables* series). Exactly opposite Hemingway's characters, in L.M. Montgomery's stories, the pessimists are in the minority, the ones who complain and are filled with bitterness. These people usually come around to the idea of what Montgomery believed to be the reality of life—that true joy and love can be found, and that you should look for the good in everything and everyone. This affects the way her characters relate to each other as well. By contrast, in most of Hemingway's stories, the characters are rarely filled with true love—and if they are, it displays itself in the form of gruff, almost reluctant, affection, as is the case between the son and father in *A Day's Wait*, or ends in tragedy, as in *A Farewell to Arms*. In most cases, however, the lovers are together for more material reasons and are, in reality, still in love with a different person from their past. Even most of the family

Hemingway's characters are filled with regret and angst. Most are struggling to survive, to regain - and/or retain - their bravery and pride.

members aren't exceptionally close. On the contrary, Montgomery's stories have more romantic settings, and true love is often vividly developed and made known. Both of these details can be shown in Marilla's growing fondness of Anne Shirley, or in the long "saga" of Anne and Gilbert Blythe's romance (both in the *Anne of Green Gables* series).

Another difference in character interactions is developed through conversation and thought. In Hemingway's stories, most conversations are short, simple sentences bantered back and forth between characters—before lapsing into silence, portrayed through *pages* of thoughts and descriptions. However, in Montgomery's stories, one character might talk for a few pages at a time. It is the *thoughts* that are only a paragraph, at most. The interaction between characters betrays the general emotion and tone of the personalities. Hemingway's are brooding, more often than not depressed, people who don't have the best of relationships with other people. Montgomery's characters are more upbeat, social; some even use a more poetic language, and tend to be on the talkative side. As you can see, this all principally ties into the mood of each author's writing style.

Additionally, the overall feel of the writer's style and settings is integrated with the types of characters as well. In Hemingway's stories, the setting is almost always some place foreign and exotic, such as Spain or Africa. These are places most of his readers, then and now, have probably never been to, and will probably never go. They are the type of places that would interest you even without the plot of the story. But it just makes sense to have locations like these, since the events that take place, and the people in them, are probably unfamiliar to most of the people reading his stories as well. While L.M. Montgomery describes her scenery just as vividly, her characters and locales are more common. Filled with schools, churches, and homes, her stories tend to take place in villages not unlike the ones many of her



readers live in.

In addition to adventure-filled scenery, the events in Hemingway's books and novellas are tragic and desperate, but the characters face these events with an eerie calm, especially in regard to their quiet resignation towards death. This is clearly shown in *The Snous of Kilimanjaro*, with Harry, a man who is consumed by the mistakes of his past and present. He marries for riches, but longs for his first love, and the talent for writing he once had. When death comes upon him, he merely looks at it as an escape, at first to be avoided, but eventually to be accepted. This must have closely coincided with the views of Hemingway, himself, as he later committed suicide. Montgomery, on the other hand, looks at death as a tragic end to life, and at life itself as the better of the two (not death, as Hemmingway did). In addition, Montgomery's stories have many ups and downs. She portrays the high points in people's lives as well as the low. She shows achievements, friendships, and other treasured experiences. Hemingway tends to focus on the negative: death, betrayal, and many of the other aspects of despair he had experienced in war and other times of his life. Rarely is there much happiness in his stories.

He focuses on courage, especially, and the defeat and conquering of it; on love, and the loss of it; on life, and the destruction of it. Montgomery's stories are messages of hope, of never giving up, achieving what you want, of finding the things, as well as the people, you need.

These are but two of the many talented, prolific, and interesting authors that completely allow us to experience the full depths of human emotions—such as joy, sorrow, despair, and faith. It is more often than not important to understand an author's style of writing before choosing a book, as reading can affect our own moods—and maybe even our actions and views on life—as well. I have enjoyed reading the books and stories of these two very different authors, as it has allowed me to better understand the lives of other people. It has also given me different viewpoints on life itself, and on everything that comes with it—love, relationships, death, and the mistakes we make along the way.

IST: Bobbi White

Mode: Response to Literature

Grade: 8

..... Katie Matsumoto

Pearl Harbor: It Was Just the Beginning

It started out as a normal day, a regular Sunday. A young boy in Hawaii went to church with his family. Exhausted from celebrating her twenty-seventh birthday, a lady watched her six-year-old daughter play marbles with her cousins and friends. A California teenager stayed home, enjoying her day of rest before going back to school. None of them expected anything out of the ordinary to happen that day, but it did. In fact, what happened would affect their lives forever. It was a day they would never forget: December 7, 1941, the attack on Pearl Harbor...and their freedom.

It was 7:53 a.m. when the first bombs fell. The attacks were directed toward the Pearl Harbor Naval Base, the core of U.S. naval power over the Pacific Ocean. The attack damaged or sunk eighteen U.S. ships, destroying almost 20 planes, and caused around 3,700 casualties. This brought the U.S., along with the British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, to declare war on Japan. That day, many people would change the way they were living, but not necessarily for the better.

The little boy was Ronald Yoneo Kondo of Lahaina, Maui, Hawaii. He was



the sixth of eight children. After he came home from church, his mother told him about the attack on Pearl Harbor. His thoughts concerning the matter concluded that Japan was stupid to bomb Hawaii because there were so many Japanese living there. Ronald's mother, Susan Etsu Kondo, didn't know what to expect, and wanted her family to gather everything that was related to Japan and destroy it. She and her husband, Sango, spoke Japanese and not much English, so instead they took to speaking pidgin, a mixture of English, Japanese, Filipino, Portuguese, Hawaiian, Chinese, and other languages. Ronald's whole family was afraid to speak Japanese for fear that others would think that they supported Japan.

As a nine-year-old, Ronald understood a lot of what was happening. There were many changes in his life that were confusing, but he eventually figured everything out. Many people thought that he and his family, along with many of their friends, supported Japan. They were called "Japs" until others realized that they were loyal to the US. Most of the older Japanese often talked about making enough money to afford going back to Japan to live. Other people assumed that because of this, all of the Japanese people living in Hawaii felt this way and were prejudiced against them. Ronald's parents, however, felt that Hawaii was their home. Their business was in Hawaii, along with their children. All eight of the Kondo's children were born in Hawaii, were American citizens, and wouldn't think of going to live in Japan.

The bombing affected Hawaii as a whole, right along with the Japanese people. Since Hawaii was made up of islands, many goods were shipped from the mainland. Because of the war, troops had priority over Hawaii for shipments and goods. Canned goods became scarce, and people could only buy with the food ration cards they had received. Instead of relying heavily on the goods that weren't being shipped, the people in Hawaii were encouraged to grow gardens for their

vegetables and raise some animals, such as chickens, rabbits, ducks, and pigs. While the people on Maui were suffering, the people on Oahu, where Pearl Harbor is, were going through the same things, if not more.

The young woman who was watching her daughter play that day was Helen Hiroko Honda. She and her children were at their home in Honolulu, Hawaii, when they heard about the attack from their neighbors. Helen turned on the radio, and they heard about the attack in further detail. Then the neighbors shouted to look at the sky. When they looked out, they saw airplanes and black smoke filling the sky.

Helen couldn't believe what was happening. Until that day, she had led a pretty normal life. She lived in Honolulu, Hawaii, with her husband and two children, and worked as a sales clerk. She lived a regular, everyday life. But then it changed drastically. Her husband, Kaneki Honda, was a minister in the Tenrikyo religion, and was taken to a concentration camp as a leader in their community. She was afraid that she too would be taken to camp and separated from her children, ages six and three. The day after the attack, she was fired from her job as a sales clerk in a Japanese-owned department store. No one else would hire her until the

pineapple crop came in and they needed workers. Life was different without her husband there at home, but she worked out the differences and continued to raise her children and lead a life as normal as possible.

Her daughter, who was playing marbles, was Janice Takako Honda. At age six, she didn't really understand what was happening. Jan knew what war was, but not what the effects would be on them and Hawaii. She was afraid that Hawaii would be invaded and everyone would be taken prisoner—not just the Japanese, but everyone in Hawaii. Her father was taken to a Relocation camp soon after the attack. She didn't realize how hard it would be for him or how long he would be gone. Kaneki was held at the camps until the war was over four years later.

Ronald's whole family was afraid to speak Japanese for fear that others would think that they supported Japan.



Meanwhile, in California, a seventeen-year-old girl was at home relaxing before returning to the last few days of school before she graduated. She was listening to the radio when she heard of the attack on Pearl Harbor. She was shocked. "How could such a thing happen?" she wondered. "Will something else follow?" A month later, something did. Rose Kaneko Ohashi and her family were to be taken to a Relocation camp in Manzanar, California. The government, believing that the Japanese living in America were still loyal to Japan, gave them the option either to move east, go back to Japan, or go to Relocation camps. Lacking the money to move, they were forced to go into camp.

Camp life was definitely different from their life in LA. They were allowed two suitcases per person, which were filled with mostly clothing. She, her parents, and her older sister lived in barracks. At first the barracks were bare of side plasterboards and wood floors. They were able to see the sand on the ground below. The floors and siding were installed later. It was not at all like the home she left behind.

Even though their surroundings were different, they tried to live a normal life. Rose would fill her days with exploration of their new living arrangements, hanging out with her friends, helping out her parents with chores or other odd jobs, or working in the camp general store. After two years, they were moved to Tule Lake in northern California where they spent another two years.

When they were released in 1945, Rose felt great to be out of camp at last. She strongly regretted spending four years in camp instead of going to college, and went to sewing school instead. Though the camps limited her life during those years, she brought many things out of that experience. She made lifelong friends who she still keeps in touch with 59 years later. She also met her husband at Manzanar through a mutual friend, and married him four years after the camps. Though times were hard, some of the experiences were worth having. Many lessons were learned, people were met, things were done; life went on, so she lived it.

Four separate people lived through

what is now our history: a mother and her daughter, a young boy, and a teenager. While they were experiencing this, none of them knew that somehow their paths would cross and they would have many things in common. Young Ronald grew up, met a beautiful stewardess on Aloha Airlines, and fell in love. Her name was Janice Honda and is now Janice Kondo. They got married and two years later had a baby girl named Diane Tokie Kondo. While this was happening, Rose had been married to her husband Masami Matsumoto for nine years, and gave birth to her fifth child ten months after Ron and Jan got married. His name was Paul Masanao Matsumoto. The Kondos later had a boy and then a girl and raised them in Hawaii. Rose and Mas had seven children altogether, four girls and three boys.

Diane Kondo and Paul Matsumoto met at Loyola Marymount University in 1977, where they fell in love and got married four years later. The four people had all met now, but what was in common besides their experience and now wedded children? Grandchildren, of course! In September 1987, they had a baby boy named Jeffrey Masanao Matsumoto. He was Mas and Rose's fifth grandchild, but Ron and Jan's first. Then, two years later (this is the good part...), Paul and Diane had a baby girl in October of 1989 named Kathryn Takako Matsumoto (that's me!). I was Bachan and Jichan's (Rose and Mas's) eighth grandchild and Grammy and Granddad's (Jan and Ron's) second. Then came along my sister Amy, born in February 1991, numbers ten and three, respectively.

My maternal grandparents and great-grandmother and my paternal grandmother are all alive today, and have given me the information that has been stated. They lived their lives not knowing that they would one day have wonderful grandchildren (or great-grandchildren!). They shared an experience, though they were separate, and it changed their lives. The attack on Pearl Harbor was absolutely a horrible part of history not only for the U.S. (especially for the Japanese-American citizens) but it became an even bigger one for Japan (the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki).



Hearing the firsthand experiences from my grandparents brought to life the history on Pearl Harbor and its aftereffects, something I'd only read about in books. Real people, my family, were affected by the decisions of our government and of Japan. I admire the way my grandparents took life and

the prejudice head on. They grew despite adversity and became the wonderful people they are today.

IST: Dianna Costanzo
Mode: Expository
Grade: 9

..... Katie Matsumoto

They Were Two Boys From Two Different Worlds

What could two teen characters from two very different worlds, separated by 1900 years, have in common? Ponyboy Curtis is a 14-year-old “greaser” from the 1960’s living in the United States. Daniel bar Jamin is an 18-year-old blacksmith from 30 AD who lives in Israel during the time of Jesus. Though their lives may seem so diverse, there is a lot to be learned by comparing them and the characteristics they share, like loyalty, doing what’s right, and a sense of wanting to belong.

Loyalty is a wonderful quality, one that both Daniel and Ponyboy possess. They are both loyal to their families and friends. Daniel, from *The Bronze Bow*, takes a vow to have vengeance on the Romans for killing his father and uncle, which in turn causes his mother’s death. Daniel becomes part of a band of outlaws fighting for freedom from the Romans. He takes care of his younger sister Leah and is very protective of her. At one point, Daniel’s best friend Joel has been taken captive by the Romans and is to be taken to the galleys. Daniel makes plans to ambush the Romans and save Joel. He is willing to die to save Joel and get him to safety.

The most important rule on the “greasers” side of town is to “stick together.” Greasers live on the east side of town, which is the rougher, lower-middle- class side. Loyalty is the number one thing. Ponyboy, in *The Outsiders*, doesn’t have any problem with this. That’s just how things are. In the beginning of the story, Pony defends his brother Sodapop from the brashness of

their older brother Darry, and takes the wrath himself. Even though Darry, the toughest one in the gang, isn’t his favorite person and he doesn’t agree with some of his ways, Pony will still defend him and stand up for him. “You take up for your buddies, no matter what they do. When you’re a gang, you stick up for the members. If you don’t stick up for them, stick together, make like brothers, it isn’t a gang any more. It’s a pack. A snarling, distrustful, bickering pack like the Socs in their social clubs or the street gangs in New York or the wolves in the timber” (page 26). When his friend Johnny kills a Soc (rivals of the greasers) to save him, Pony runs away with him and stays with him until he decides to turn himself in. Pony’s loyalty to those he loves is a natural attribute for him in the harsh world they live in.

Though both Pony and Daniel are part of a gang and a band of outlaws, respectively, neither agreed wholeheartedly with all of the tactics and ways of their peers. Underneath their tough exterior, they are good-hearted people with a sense of right. Pony is a greaser, but not necessarily a hoodlum. Not all greasers rob gas stations, get into gang fights, and get in trouble with the police; some of his gang do, but not him. Pony is still sensitive to everything; he isn’t hardened by the hard life. When Pony waits by the car for Steve and “Two-Bit,” part of his gang, to buy some snacks, a car full of Socs drives up and threatens to beat him up. Pony is tired of everything, so he busts his pop bottle and threatens them back. After they leave, Pony bends down to pick up the



glass so no one will get a flat tire. Another time, Ponyboy and Johnny run into a flaming church to save a group of kids. They don't think; they just do it. He cares for people in general and tries to do what he can to help people, while keeping a semi-tough attitude. Pony tries to understand different people, especially the Socs, and finds that they really aren't all that different. They're still humans and have problems just like them. "I shook my head. It seemed funny to me that the sunset she [Cherry Valance, a Soc] saw from her patio and the one I saw from the back steps was the same one. Maybe the two different worlds we live in weren't so different. We saw the same sunset."

Like Pony, Daniel acts tough, but he knows where to draw the line and show a bit of his true self. When his grandmother falls ill and soon dies, Daniel moves back into town to care for her and his sister, Leah. Leah is thought to be possessed by demons, causing her to stay inside and be afraid of people. Daniel does his best to help her and eventually draws her out of her shell. He cares deeply for her and works hard at being a good brother. Daniel also helps Samson, a slave Rosh's band has captured from a passing caravan. He leads him back to the caves and cuts his bonds. Samson in turn treats him as his master and helps Daniel with anything and everything. Daniel realizes that Samson is more of a friend to him than anything else and wishes that he could bring Samson to town, but knows that isn't a smart idea. Through his friend Joel, Daniel hears Jesus Christ preach and talk about the coming of the kingdom. Daniel is drawn to him, and returns almost every morning before starting his workday to hear Jesus talk. He wants to learn about the different things Jesus talks about, and also hopes that Jesus will lead them in a revolution against the Romans. He learns that this isn't what Jesus intends, but still returns. Daniel's outlook on life and people changes throughout the story, and by the end, he is no longer a cynic. He learns compassion and how to love.

Another thing that Daniel and Pony

have in common is their desire to belong. Daniel searches for the place where he is accepted and loved for himself, where people agree with his views and values. He first thinks that Rosh's band of outlaws is where he belongs because Rosh shares his desire to overthrow the Romans. He eventually sees that their values differ, and though they both fight for the same thing, they will fight it in different ways. Daniel doesn't realize this until after he leaves the caves to live with Leah, but feels "at home" with Leah more and more with each passing day. He feels a completion to his life when he begins to care for Leah and starts to rebuild his relationship with her. Daniel also finds belonging with his new friends, Joel and Malthace (Thace or Thacia) bar Hezron. They treat him as an equal, even though he is considered a peasant to their wealth and social status. Thace eventually comes to get to know Leah and brings her a little farther out of her cocoon with each visit. Daniel finally finds the place where he belongs and the people he is meant to be with.

Ponyboy also searches for belonging. He finds it with his gang, who is like family to him. They grew up together and are like brothers to each other. Pony also finds belonging with his brothers, Darry and Sodapop, once he makes things right with Darry. At first, he feels as if Darry hates him, but soon realizes that he's just afraid to lose another person he loves ever since their parents died. Pony tries to fit in with society as well, with the greasers. His hair is the "tuffest" hair in town, along with Soda's, and is the mark of a greaser. Long, greased hair, jeans and a T-shirt, and souped-up cars are the sure signs that you're a greaser. He tries to keep his tough façade, when underneath, he is a sensitive soul who really cares about people, about life, about everything. Ponyboy finally finds his place of belonging in the harsh world.

Daniel bar Jamin and Ponyboy Curtis seem to be a lifetime apart, and in truth, they are. On the surface, they seem like polar opposites, but when looking deeper, you can

On the surface, they seem like polar opposites, but when looking deeper, you can find how very similar they really are.



find how very similar they really are. Their characters possess the same qualities and share the same desires. Their lifestyles and times are different, but their core characteristics, the inside, of both of them show the true people that they are: strong characters looking for the right things in life.

Two boys from opposite ends of the world and time are alike in more ways than a person would imagine.

IST: Dianna Costanzo
Mode: Response to Literature
Grade: 9

..... Barrington Mitchell

A Turning Point in My Life

Every year, all ninth graders, who are regarded as High-School Freshmen, are taken on a retreat to the Catalina Island. This year I became qualified for this trip, since I started the ninth grade in September. While I was on Catalina Island, I experienced a lot of new things, including a new environment filled with teenagers acting in ways that were strange and surprising to me. However, it was interesting to be in a teenage environment, especially since I was the only non-teenager. I was also pleased that I was able to fit in after I stood up for myself. At Catalina Island, I did a lot of fun activities, which I really enjoyed. In this paper, I will explain my personal experience with the other children, the turning point it caused in my life, and the things I enjoyed doing on the Island.

Once we got to the Island, the boys were separated from the girls and we were directed to our respective dorms. When we were all settled in, my dorm roommates and I each introduced ourselves. Shortly after that, I saw another side to all of them, in terms of their behavior, by the profanity that they were all using. I then realized that I could not try to change the actions of my dorm roommates except through prayer, so I prayed for them. I was very much surprised at the outrageous behavior my dorm roommates exhibited. They fought, cursed, and acted real bad. There was one boy with whom, before he and I boarded the ship, I struck up a friendship. However, when we actually got there and settled in with our other dorm roommates, I found out that he wasn't the person I thought

he was. Instead, he turned out to be just a follower who cursed as well. He also tried to get into arguments with others and myself, which I stopped as fast as he tried to, by ignoring his folly. Strangely, there was another young man who got into a small argument with me at the beginning of our trip; he was the one who turned out to be a friend. Most of these teenagers acted as if they were not under any kind of parental control; it was as if they pretty much did whatever they wanted. They were totally out of control. One of the young men who I saw at the dock had a mother who was acting very lovingly towards him by giving him more than enough attention. Her extraordinary lovingness towards her son was obvious to everyone. It so happened that the same young man was also in my dorm, and I overheard him saying that the only reason he came was to get away from his mother. I was extremely disappointed to hear him say that about his mother. He, like the other teens, acted as if they didn't have any home training. I felt as if I had to stay away from them in order to enjoy or even survive the trip.

The first night of the trip, I had to go into another room because I couldn't sleep due to the constant cursing the teens were casually doing. The counselor came in twice and told them each time to lower their voices, but as soon as he left they just continued. The third time he came in and asked, "Who wants to go to bed?" and I quickly answered, "I do!" along with another boy. So we went into the counselor's room to sleep. I thanked the counselor and he whispered to me that he



knew I didn't want to be in there. The counselor was kind and he told me that he recognized that I was a smart and well-mannered young man. My dorm roommates were the cause of the turning point of my life, which came about the following day. It was then that I decided to make the other guys see things from my perspective, so I called them all together and I had a little talk with them. I told them that it was distasteful to use profanity as young men, and that it was childish to argue over little silly things. At first, they began to act up again, but I was determined to show them that what they were doing was wrong, and eventually I did. I was pleased to see that not only did they start to listen, but they also agreed with what I was saying. The fact that I answered most of the questions to a quiz we had the night before against the girls, also helped, and from that time until the time we left, we all got along just fine. We played animal games, went swimming, and we also did snorkeling. During snorkeling, we were able to interact with different kinds of sea creatures by touching and petting them. This trip was most definitely a new experience that I enjoyed very much, which taught me a lot about teenagers. I am now aware of the fact that they can also be made to understand and respect the views of others if someone takes a stand towards them. I am also sure that when I become a teenager I will not be like

they were.

In doing this essay, I have learned more about explaining and describing an exciting experience or turning point in my life. This essay has also taught me the importance of being with the popular crowd without adapting to their attitude. I am now, more than ever, appreciative of my mother's usual words, "If you are not part of the solution, you are definitely part of the problem." So I chose to be part of the solution. I also learned that first impressions are the most important, but they can also be changed. This essay has reminded me of the wonderful trip I had and how it caused the turning point in my life. I am now aware of the fact that no one has to be pressured by his or her peers to accept or do anything he or she does not want to do. This turning point in my life has taught me how to deal with peer pressure by standing up for what I believe in. In addition, I think it has also prepared me for the future. I am sure that there is far worse behavior out there in this somewhat cruel world, and I can deal with it. Now I know that there are truly rude teenagers out there, but no one has to be influenced by them if he or she chooses not to.

IST: Julie Robinson

Mode: Reflective Narrative

Grade: 9



Lisa Barceló



Boots

The first day of February was a frigid combination of wind and snow. It was the kind of day that tempts one to burrow deep into his or her covers and shut out the nagging responsibilities of the day. Notwithstanding this temptation, however, life went on as usual for the inhabitants of affected towns, everything continuing in the common fashion.

On the evening of this blustery day, a lone traveler made her way briskly up a dimly

lit cobblestone street. She was about twelve years old, built slimly yet solidly. Her fair complexion—framed by short, wavy, auburn hair—exhibited a pair of deep blue eyes. A set of worn schoolbooks was clasped tightly in her hands, held together by a thin, faded blue sash. An empty lunch tin swung noiselessly at her side while her shoes—a brown pair of well-used boy's boots—squished softly through the various mud puddles in her path. Ah, her boots. How many times had she



pleaded with her mother to buy her some! But, always came the answer: “We don’t have money for such frivolities. Those boots of your cousin’s will do nicely.” Involuntarily, the girl sighed. It seemed that nothing in this world was to be given her. Even a decent pair of shoes—boots, no less—was explained away as a mere “frivolity.”

The hour was late. Though it was past the time schoolchildren are out, still the girl plodded on. All around her, lights flickered in windows, illuminating scenes of cheer. In one window, a father embraced his children; in another, a boy and his sister practiced piano; in still another, a rosy cook carried a gleaming tray of dinner.

The girl’s step quickened, taking her swiftly across the boulevard. There, the scenery changed. After going across the boulevard, the houses became smaller, darker, and more numerous. Now she had “crossed the boundary” separating the well-to-do from the struggling, and had arrived back into her neighborhood. The moonlight cast an eerie glow on the rows of bedraggled homes, illuminating their imperfections. Tall grasses swayed in the night breeze, signs of a careless owner. A somber-faced cat paced slowly down the street, the only other sign of life. Ragged sheets hung from the windows, and the cries of hungry infants echoed in the still night. In some windows, a solitary candle glimmered valiantly, as if trying to overcome the darkness. One light, however, outshined the rest—it came from the bakery.

Quickly, the young traveler stepped indoors. Inside, a tall, heavysset woman smiled from behind the counter. “Nellie, child, you’re later than usual! I was about to close shop!” Leaning down, the warm-hearted baker began bagging fresh loaves of bread.

“Thank you kindly,” the girl whispered softly, taking the bag.

The woman gave her a look of concern. “What happened today that you have come”—she glanced at the clock—“almost two hours late?”

Nellie looked down. “Oh, Aunt Myrtle...they almost found out today, so I had to take the long way home.”

The woman smiled knowingly. “You know, you really can’t keep it a secret much longer—not with the holidays coming, and all.”

Nellie shrugged and walked towards the door. “I know,” she said, “I know.”

Back out on the street, Nellie tore off some of the bread. As she ate, she thought about what Aunt Myrtle had said. How long *could* she keep it a secret? People were already starting to get suspicious as it was. Someone was sure to find out that the address Nellie had written down didn’t exist. Oh, but she couldn’t give the teacher the real address!

What would all the others think? Just the words “South Camby” gave a negative impression, and Nellie didn’t want the others to talk. So, that was why she walked one hour to school and back, each day, rain or shine. It was only the second week of school, but she was already tiring of it. It had seemed like such a good idea at first, but Nellie wasn’t sure how much longer she could hold up.

Contrary to many stories of suffering, however, Nellie was not an orphan, nor did she have a slew of siblings who depended on her daily earnings for food. An only child, she had two healthy parents who made their living with good, honest work. Her father operated a food booth in the village market, and her mother sold quilts to the peddler. Even so, although her parents didn’t have any other children, it was still hard to make ends meet. Their landlord expected much money from his tenants, and they strove to meet his demands. Even with these daunting odds, the little family made a comfortable home for themselves and tried to keep up each other’s spirits.

Nellie arrived home to an empty house, which was not unusual. Her parents usually arrived home late and in the morning left soon after she did, so she scarcely saw them. It was a trying experience, but she knew no other way and therefore did not complain.

The moonlight cast an eerie glow on the rows of bedraggled homes, illuminating their imperfections.



She took the partially eaten loaf out of the bag and left the rest on the table. Taking her meager supper out on the porch, she tried to review her lessons by moonlight. Only a few minutes elapsed, however, before her eyes started aching, and she was forced to close the book. Munching silently on the bread, her eyes wandered to the scenery across the boulevard, easily visible from her seat. *That must be Jane's house*, she thought bitterly, *the one with all the pretty windows. And there's Samantha's. I'll bet that's her bedroom, all cozy and warm.* She turned her head away. *I can't look anymore! It makes me upset to see those girls living in the lap of luxury while I—* tears spilled onto her bread crust—*while I live here, in this horrid little house. We'll never—* All at once she heard the garden gate creak open. Hushed voices whispered animatedly. *Mother! Father!* She tore around to the side of the house, running into her parents' arms. "Ah, Nellie, and what have you been up to today?" her father asked, as was his custom.

She looked up at him. "I got home later than usual, since some of the girls wanted to follow me home."

Nellie's mother looked at her with surprise. "What did you do?"

"I took the long way home, through the field by the factory."

"I don't like you going around so much by yourself, dear."

"I'm sorry, Mother, but—"

Her father stepped in. "Your mother is right. The next time they want to follow you, bring them right here to your home, however humble it may be."

"But—!"

Nellie's father raised his hand. "I'll have no more of that, now. Let's go inside for supper." The girl nodded obediently, following her parents up the rickety stairs to the front door. Before the door closed, she gave a last glance behind her, then disappeared inside.

The next day, a bright ray of sunshine awoke the sleeping Nellie, and she quickly sprang out of bed. All at once, she felt her head swim and she involuntarily fell back into the covers. Back on her bed, Nellie could feel the sunlight burning her leg through a crack

in the shutters and she weakly moved her tired limb to one side, but the burning continued. Quickly, she thought, *Could it be fever?* Then, as if startled into realization, she jolted into a sitting position. *Oh, no, I've overslept!* Again, a wave of nausea came over the girl and she sank into her pillow. *What happened to me? This must be a dream! I have to go to class today, yet here I am, lying on the bed like an invalid!* Nellie moaned and rolled over.

A voice from behind startled her.

"Nellie, you're awake!"

The girl weakly lifted her tired eyes in the direction of the voice. "I am awake," she croaked, "and my throat hurts."

The voice belonged to her mother, who soon brought Nellie a cup of cool water. "My dear, you had a fever late last night. I'm sorry you couldn't go to school today, but your father insisted I let you sleep in."

Nellie groaned loudly. "But Mother, I can't miss school..." The last words were muffled as she turned her head onto her pillow. Within moments, the young girl was asleep. Her mother gazed at the fever-reddened face and tenderly laid a cool cloth on the perspiring forehead. Then, with a last affectionate gaze, she quietly slipped out the door.

The rest of the week passed quickly for poor Nellie, who spent much of it unconscious. She would awake momentarily, just enough to see the kind face of her mother or a neighbor, then sink back into a troubled sleep. Finally, on the Monday of the next week, her fever broke and she was able to sit up in bed. By mid-morning, she was up on her feet and offered to help her mother by doing some minor chores. Her mother, seeing that her daughter was indeed stronger, decided to deliver her quilts to the peddler, and left her alone in the house.

Nellie kept herself busy. She washed a small bundle of clothes, and, while they were hanging on the clothesline, decided to mop the floor. She had just wet the mop, however, when she heard a familiar singsong voice penetrate the stillness of the noon hour. As she mopped, she could hear the voice get closer and closer. Her eyes were riveted to the front window. Soon, she could hear what the



voice said. “Hm, I know it’s around here somewhere. The baker said 213 Pinterson Road, South Camby, but I don’t see any numbers on these homes. Anyway, none of these can be Eleanor’s home! I suppose I’d better turn back. Maybe the woman meant ‘North Camby’. That’s probably what she meant. Eleanor said she—.” The voice trailed off into the distance. Suddenly, Nellie recognized it. *Samantha!* A feeling of dread came over her and she leaned against the mop for support. Eleanor. North Camby. All these lies she had told—and now her classmate was searching for her.

She opened the shutters and leaned out the window. Some yards away she could see Samantha’s frilly hat bobbing up and down as she talked to one of the neighbor women. The woman pointed right at Nellie’s house, and Nellie ducked quickly behind the shutter. When she got up the courage, she peered out again, this time to see Samantha’s dainty parasol pushing open the small picket fence in the front. Nellie froze, heart pounding. Then, she heard a soft knock on the door. Smoothing down her hair and rolling down her sleeves, she walked hesitantly to the door. She opened it, eyes down. A hesitant voice asked, “Eleanor? Is that you?”

Cheeks burning with shame, Nellie lifted her face to Samantha’s, whose face was equally flushed. The visitor stammered, “I—I’m sorry, Eleanor, I thought you lived in—I mean, you said—.”

Nellie sighed. “Don’t be sorry. You didn’t do anything.”

Samantha looked at her quizzically. “I don’t understand.” Nervously, she held out a pair of shiny girl’s leather boots and added, “These were left over the weekend at school, and” — she pointed to the tag — “since they’re from Grayson’s Storefront I thought they were yours since you said that you shopped there a lot. And this package, also from Grayson’s, was left, too, and so I assumed it was yours, too, but—” she gave a

quick glance around her, “I guess maybe they’re someone else’s.”

Nellie’s voice trembled as she spoke. “I’m sorry, I lied to you girls.” A lump rose in her throat. “I shouldn’t have, but I just couldn’t bring myself to tell you all where I lived and—how poor I was.”

Unexpectedly, Samantha’s countenance took on a look of maturity well beyond her years, and she said softly, “We already knew.”

This last confession cut Nellie right to the heart and tears rolled down her cheeks as she whispered quietly, “I’m so sorry!”

Samantha put the packages down on the ground and put her arm on Nellie’s shoulder. “It’s been forgiven.” Then, the usual impish expression returned to her face. “You can forget about it now.” She turned to look behind her. “Well, I’ve got to go now. I hope you come back to school soon, Nellie.” Samantha winked at this last word, and then, picking up her parcels, she quietly closed the door.

Nellie stayed a long time in front of the door, quietly pondering the events of the past few moments, days, and weeks. Finally, she walked back to the bucket. Picking up the mop, she wet it again, and continued mopping.

That night, she could hear her parents coming up the walkway, talking and laughing. They opened the door and their voices instantly softened. In the darkness, Nellie heard her father’s voice. “Ah, Nellie, and what have you been up to today?” She sat up in bed and began to relate the tale when a soft knock at the door interrupted her. The family froze in bewilderment. Who would be calling at this hour? Quickly, Nellie’s mother opened it. She bent down to retrieve an object on the floor and then closed the door.

“That’s odd,” she was saying to herself. Turning to her family she said, “No one was there. I just found these on the front step. Nellie? Do you know anything about these?” At that moment, the garden gate closed quietly and light steps could be heard running in the opposite direction of the

Nellie stayed a long time in front of the door, quietly pondering the events of the past few moments, days, and weeks.



house.

Nellie stood up and walked towards her mother. "Mother, let me see what you have there." Her mother held out her arms, and Nellie gasped. There, in the outstretched

hands, was the pair of shiny leather boots.

IST: Cynthia Hayes-Perez

Mode: Narrative

Grade: 10

..... Cici Marchione

Where Will You Be in 2009?

The date is January twelfth, the year 2009. It's the beginning of a new year. It is a foggy Saturday morning at 10:30 a.m. in southern California. This is my future: I am 20 years old.

Lounging on my bed, I am writing on my laptop about my newest article on how the weather and the environment affect a person's mood. I am on my newly made bed/couch, on the east wall. It is laden with a navy blue comforter covered in patches: Shell Gas Station, 7-11, The Ramones, NWA, Kittie, The Sex Pistols, Auto Zone, Three Days Grace, mostly bands, some stores. I divert my eyes from the screen to gather my thoughts and look across the room. Full of shelving, it holds all kinds of books: horror, picture books, foreign language, fantasy, art, interior design, fiction, true stories, vehicle maintenance, forensic science, reference books. This wall is my own personal library, which I use for references and my curiosity.

I go back to my laptop and type in a couple more paragraphs, look away, and admire the rest of my room. To the north, a hint of light comes through the stained and frosted glass window, almost covering the entire wall. On and around the entrance to my personal lounge space, there are signs of all kinds: "wrong way, do not enter," "beware of dog," all sorts of signs that I have picked up in the past. The walls are a splattered mish-mash of green, blue, orange, and red, most of which you could not see, due to the mass of posters that are plastered on all the free space I could find. The most prized possession of my room is my entertainment system. Centered in the room, it is complete with a TV with DVD and VHS, a PS2 game

console, and surround sound speakers. Around my entertainment system are my three guitars, each on its own elaborate stand. Stationed here are my Schecter, Gibson, and special Hummer edition Fender in bright yellow. Each is hooked up to one of my two amplifiers, each with foot pedals for distortion. As I look around, I begin to reflect on how this room came together and what all the pieces mean to me. This room is my sanctuary; it is where I go when I am happy, sad, artistic, and at peace. I do all of my writing in this room, where I find my zone, where I am where I can create joyously. This is where I spend all of my free time. I love this room.

The rest of the house's rooms each has a theme. When you walk in the front door, you come into a room full of sunshine, literally. There are windows on every wall and the walls are painted a sponge orange. The dining room is a delicate white and blue mix; the kitchen is the same but a shade lighter. Each hallway in the house has a different color; one is green with white cupboards, and one is purple. It is a color explosion in my house. My roommate, a good friend of mine, has a room of her own, although I could not begin to explain it, as it is always changing, sometimes twice in a week.

In five years' time, I see myself independent. I am a free-lance writer with monthly publications in local magazines. I love this because I can write about whatever strikes my fancy. I can write about politics, local activities, inspirational ideas, and I can even write a whole article on the art of making jokes if I feel like it. Most of my writing is just that, whatever I feel inspired to write about that week, but every so often, I



start writing a full-blown novel. Mostly action/adventure/fantasy, my stories derive from many of the great writers, all twisted together with my own ingenuity. While I spend a lot of my time writing, I do it as a hobby. In order to pay the bills, I operate my own business. I run an auto mechanic shop, along with two employees. We work in cohesion, taking in the cars, working on them, running tests, and doing test drives. We work as a team to make sure every vehicle gets all the attention it needs to run smoothly.

There are many reasons that I see my future in this fashion. I have not lived in a house for over seven years. It has all been apartments. I want a place of my own where I can change the colors to match my mood and feelings. I want to be independent of others and learn how to support myself, financially and mentally. I also love my family, which is why I choose to stay close to home. In addition, my reasoning for staying in this location, southern California, is that I love the weather. I cannot take living in the cold and I really enjoy the city. I have always lived in the city, so I cannot see myself living in a rural area. Conversely, I absolutely love cars

and I would be satisfied to live my life just tinkering with them. Like most juveniles of this country, I cannot live without music; I fell in love with the guitar when I was about 10 years old. I love writing songs that coincide with the music; I just let my feeling flow through my body and it comes out through my pencil. I have been writing stories since I was a child, and I really enjoy creating my own scenarios and acting out a story with words. When I read positive articles in newspapers or magazines, I feel inspired to get out a piece of paper and write my own. I choose this as my future because just the idea of living in this way makes me smile.

There is a great possibility that my future will not turn out as I foresee it. There are so many diverse careers that I could engage in. These goals stuck out so strongly in my mind that I would be doing myself a disservice by not voicing them just as strongly. This is how I see myself, five years into the future.

Where do you see yourself in 2009?

IST: Dina Moghtaderi

Mode: Reflective Narrative

Grade: 10

Decoda Mitchell

Violent Games Not for Kids

There are a lot of games that are appropriate for children—games they can learn from, games that can help with their coordination, their alertness, and so forth. However, we must not forget that there are also games that are too violent for children: for example, “Grand Theft Auto” and “Tanka,” just to name a few. I learned about these violent games from a few of my friends. Even though game systems like PlayStation 2, X-Box, Game Cube, and Gamecast are mostly advertised for and mainly directed to children, adults own and play them as well. So there are games that are made just for adults. Unlike when purchasing alcohol, children do not have to show any identifica-

tion before buying video games, so unless the games are being bought by parents, who are aware of the violence in certain games and can choose the appropriate game for their children, children are able to buy these violent games easily. In this paper, I will explain the possible short and long-term effects that violent games can have on children.

According to my friends, “Grand Theft Auto” is an action game that has characters who constantly go around town hijacking cars, beating up people, and being chased by police, and when the player reaches a certain level he or she is allowed to go to a place called the “red light district” to pick up



prostitutes. This game, and games like it, should not be easily accessible to children because it is definitely not suitable for a child to play. It teaches children too many things about the adult world, things that are too much for them to handle as children. It can also be a bad influence on children because of its violent contents and its negative portrayal of our world; some children may do what they actually see, get more violent ideas, and develop a longing to enter the adult world. Some children may entertain the thoughts and carry out the actions promoted by the game when they become adults, which is bad enough, while others may engage in these terrible acts while they are still children, which is even worse. Watching prostitutes being picked up may encourage some children to be sexually active, which can lead to pregnancy and/or transmission of diseases. Children who constantly play these games are tempted to become bullies and may become a threat to other children, and ultimately to society as a whole.

I was also told that the game “Tanka” entails a lot of shooting. In this game, players are required to shoot and kill their opponents in order to gain points. As they shoot their opponents, it becomes even more graphic with the splattering of blood. I understand that this is done by using special controllers shaped just like guns. Children should not play this game because they may think that they have mastered the techniques of using a real gun, which could become very dangerous if their parents own one. If a child should gain access to a real gun, then injury can be done to both the child and to others, like friends, neighbors, or even family members, and at worst it can become fatal due to the child’s unfamiliarity with that weapon. The constant playing of this game, like every other violent game, can also cause children to lack sympathy; therefore, they might become unsympathetic to someone who is injured.

The long-term effect on most

children who play violent games can be very serious. The things that they see in the games might seem so entertaining that they might find it difficult to differentiate between fantasy and real life. Games like “Grand Theft Auto” and “Tanka” may possibly lead to children becoming a menace to society. Children who are exposed to those games could remain addicted to that fantasy game world and, when asked or reminded to act like adults in the real world, they may resort to violent actions like robbery, carjacking, rape, prostitution, and/or murder. These actions may even be exercised without provocation.

This essay has caused me to enquire more about these violent games; hence, I have become more aware of a lot of violent games with frightening graphics, which are easily accessible to children and can result in them mimicking what they see. This is totally unacceptable to me, because I firmly believe that adults should not play these games constantly, let alone the games being easily accessible to children. It has also caused me to see the importance of parents making sure that those violent games do not get into their children’s possession by supervising the rating codes for the games that are appropriate for their children. I also feel that it is important for parents to educate their children on the possible negative short and long-term effects that these violent games may have on them. This will help their children to make the right choice of not playing these games in their parents’ absence, whether or not they are away from home.

IST: Colette Backus
Mode: Persuasive
Grade: 10

The constant playing of this game, like every other violent game, can also cause children to lack sympathy; therefore, they might become unsympathetic to someone who is injured.



Preparations for My Future

I have always been thinking about what my future will hold. Will it include a great exciting career? Tons of bills skyrocketing from overuse of credit cards? What college will I attend? The list of unanswered questions goes on and on. All I can do is to plan for my future and hope for the best. About a year ago, a new interest came whizzing by: librarianship. I didn't know it at first, but the many hours of volunteering at my local library had filled my unconscious with a career in mind.

Librarianship. I had to find out what it was all about. I knew librarians read to children, called you when you had a fine, and told you to be quiet, "this is a library," but what else? I talked to my Girl Scout leader, who happens to also be a school librarian. She told me about library science, the major required. I listened to librarians tell me about needing a Master's Degree when I visited the Sanford Library at PCC. My advisor at a teen volunteer program was, but of course, a teen librarian. I went on line to find out more about this fascinating field of librarianship. There I was given even more information -- from salary ranges and fun facts, to high school preparation. I read the high school preparation part: "With libraries becoming increasingly dependent upon technology, a strong background in computers is excellent preparation for the Library Science major. In addition, you can also volunteer or work at

About a year ago, a new interest came whizzing by: librarianship. I didn't know it at first, but the many hours of volunteering at my local library had filled my unconscious with a career in mind.

your local public library, reading to children, or providing assistance to the librarians. It's a great way to get first-hand experience before entering the classroom."

I have decided that my goal for five years from now will be finishing my Associate's Degree, having a job as an assistant librarian, and interning at the Library of Congress. To accomplish these goals, I have to graduate from high school and go to college, take courses in college to qualify as an assistant librarian, and make sure to have a strong background in computers. I have already done some things to prepare myself for these future goals. I am a volunteer at the Alhambra Public Library and the Pasadena Central Library, I'm a part of the Teen Advisory Group, I have read to children for a Dr. Seuss Day, and I have done research on the major, Library Science. I have also skimmed through a sample undergraduate curriculum. I plan to take an advanced computer class this summer, job-shadow a librarian at a college library, and

interview my teen librarian, if he is willing to, for a 'zine my friends and I have. I would like for other teens to be acquainted with this career, so that they may be as interested in this career as I am.

I want to become a librarian because I've always enjoyed reading. What can be better than to surround myself with books and other book lovers! I also like to research, and librarians do quite a lot of research. I would just love it for people to come up to the reference desk, asking a question, and there I am! Happy to help them with the answer right at my finger tips. I'm pretty sure I would like to work at a big library, with



sections for everyone. I think I would like to be either a teen librarian or children's librarian because I love to read to children, but I would love to get teens interested in the library. That's one of the things my teen librarian does. He organizes events, packed with activities, to get kids attracted to coming to the library. He does this by passing out surveys or just asking questions during the Teen Advisory meetings.

Another reason that I have decided to become a librarian is because I was inspired by many librarians in different libraries (public, college, and school libraries). Volunteering at the library and talking to experienced librarians has made me

realize that whatever the future holds for me, a big part of it will involve frequent stops to the library.

IST: Lisa Jobson

Mode: Expository

Grade: 11



Danielle Finlayson



The Best Teacher

Experience is the best teacher. That's why I believe that taking a part-time job that will help me with my future, permanent job is very important. In many cases, being employed part-time at the place one wishes to work gives a person practical knowledge of a career, and helps one to learn everything that isn't taught in school. The opportunities out there are endless! I would enjoy a number of different occupations, so trying different part-time jobs can help me to decide which ones to choose.

Law has always intrigued me and continues to do so. Knowing the rights and wrongs according to the laws of our nation and our Constitution absolutely amazes me. It's a good way to help people, and the pay doesn't hurt either! I'm not sure what kind of law I want to practice, but I'm keeping my options open. I don't think I want to be a court trial lawyer, but being a judge would be awesome. Family law, corporate law, or

something less intense would probably be better for me to do. Not only is being a lawyer a prestigious job which earns a great deal of respect, but it puts me in a position to help the less fortunate with help that they may desperately need.

If I choose to pursue a career in law, I'm sure there will be many opportunities to intern or get a part-time job. If the chance came, I would do almost anything at a law firm, from filing to answering phone calls or secretarial work. Through college, there's certain to be intern jobs offered from various firms that are associated with the school. Just being in a law environment will help me to learn how things work and learn whether or not law's the right choice for me.

Another career that I'm looking into is becoming a college professor at a private university. I've always wanted to teach. I love to learn new things, partly because understanding comes easily to me and partly



because of my curious nature. I feel that since I've been blessed, and since schoolwork isn't a daily struggle for me, then since I can, I should help others. I can use this ability to give students helpful tips for memorizing facts or understanding different concepts.

I truly admire my teachers, especially from elementary and junior high. They've been great role models. I hope to go into a college level of teaching not only because of the students' age group, but also because I love the challenge of working my way up to the position. At the college level, I'm hoping that the students will be mature enough to learn because of their personal curiosity, not "because their moms want them to." At a private college, I can get to know my students on a more personal level because of the smaller environment, and thus make a difference in their lives outside of the school as well as in class. I know I can help the future college students from my own experiences and understandings from my college days.

As for part-time jobs connected with teaching, the possibilities are endless. Right now, I tutor after school, which has helped me to understand and appreciate my teachers much more. There's a lot of preparation involved and a deep understanding is needed for every concept taught. At school, there are many opportunities to help the teachers and get experience, such as becoming a TA or helping out in the office. As I go through school, I know I will be eager to learn from my teachers about the little things that help with their classes or tidbits of information that only experienced teachers would know. I could also take a job at a local community college or at the YMCA, helping out with different classes or even taking some classes to learn more. Being a camp counselor would be fun and serve as a teaching experience at the same time. At my church, I know that they're always looking for volunteers to help with the preschool or Sunday school classes. Each of these various jobs brings a multitude of experiences, each with unique people at many levels. They can all help me to understand different people and to determine if teaching is the right career for me to pursue.

Although teaching and law are my top choices so far, I've explored just two of my many interests. I am excited about checking out other options: graphic design, photography, and maybe even medicine. For each occupation, there are an infinite number of options for part-time jobs. The opportunities to "try out" different occupations before making a life-changing decision are there if one pursues them. Although I've thought about what I want to be when I "grow up," I now realize how much thought must go into each decision. I've enjoyed this first step of looking into different jobs and occupations with a free mind, knowing I still have time to explore. This has given me a head start on looking into my future career. I'm excited about the possibilities and making some dreams come true!

IST: Dianna Costanzo

Mode: Expository

Grade: 11



A Special Boy

Sam sat in the corner of the classroom, half listening to his teacher talk. He let the other part of his mind under that shaggy, in-need-of-a-cut, brown hair wander. All he could think about was how badly he wanted to get out of the small, stuffy, one-windowed classroom. Like most nine-year-old boys, all Sam really wanted to do was just go play ball with his friends.

He hardly heard his teacher say, "Now class, please open your books and turn to page 178. There you will read about ancient Egypt and how many workers were used to build the colossal pyramids. I think you will find your reading quite illuminating."

He opened his book and read, skimming the pages, not really thinking about what he was reading. Little did Sam know that his life would soon become all too similar to that of the young slave boys he was reading about.

"Now Clayton, you listen to me for a change," snapped Abigail. "There's no way I'll let my boy work for only 45 cents a week. I know you need more boys in here, besides he is on the scrawny side, and you know that it's easier for the smaller boys to get in and out. Fifty-seven cents a week, that's my final offer."

"All right, all right, calm yourself down, woman. Fifty-seven cents a week it is. But if any of the other parents hear a word that he gets more than the rest, he gets cut down," replied Clayton. Abigail turned and walked out of the building. She dreaded returning home to be the bearer of bad news. If only there was an easy way to tell Sam.

Abby's depression only deepened when she reached home. She began making dinner. Once again it was watered-down bean and pork fat soup and day-old bread. She called out to her husband Caleb and her son Sam. "Dinner is ready. Better hurry up 'fore supper gets cold. I didn't have it on the stove very long, we've gotta save our wood." Both Caleb and Sam came downstairs. Sam set the

table as he did every night. Abby stood there watching him while a tear ran down her cheek. What she had to tell Sam saddened her to the depths of her soul. No child ever deserved a life of strictly work. She had hoped that the coming of the 20th century would improve their living conditions, but the family only seemed to sink deeper into poverty.

The three of them gathered around the table and all was silent for several minutes. Finally Abby spoke up and broke the bad news. Sam sat in shock, realizing that he would no longer see his friends at school, he would no longer get to play after school, for he would no longer be in school. Sam nodded his head and said he understood. He asked to be excused from the dinner table and headed up the ladder to his loft to go to sleep. He knew that the next few days would be like no other so he might as well get as much rest as he could. Little did he know just how difficult they would be.

The next morning Sam woke up to his mother's voice calling, "Sam, it's time to get up. I know it's only five-thirty in the mornin' but you have to be at work by seven."

Sam slowly rose from his bed wearily. He hadn't gotten much sleep the night before. His mind was in tumult the whole night, wondering just what it would be like to work in a textile mill. Sam put on his clothes and headed down his ladder to eat breakfast. After he ate, hardly tasting the grits his mother had prepared, he and his mother headed out for the long walk to the mill where he would soon meet Mr. Clayton Rompt. As Sam walked alongside his mother, not much was said between the two of them. He had his head down and his green eyes stared at the dusty North Carolina road under his feet. He was kicking a stone with each step to keep it in front of him. He was angry, though he didn't know with whom, but taking it out on the stone just felt good. After about 40 minutes of walking, Sam began to wonder just how long it was going to take to get to the mill, when his mother took a deep sigh and kneeled in front of him.

"Now Sam, I want you to be



respectful of Mr. Rompt. Do as he tells you, a'ight? Also, if any of the other children offer help, take it. They have been around long enough to know how to make things easier."

Sam nodded his head but still kept it down, staring at his scuffed up shoes and the too short hems of his worn-out pants. She gave him a kiss on the forehead, and with that, she knocked on Mr. Rompt's office door.

As Mr. Rompt opened his door, a bit of fear came over Sam. No one could really blame him. Most children would be afraid of a 6'3" heavy-set man with enough body hair he did not need clothes. To top it all off, he had that certain odor a cigar smoker has, and a very gruff voice to go with it.

"So I see you've brought me 'nother worker. Great, I guess. So young boy, you'll be workin' down row number 67. Lemme call some of the other boys you'll be working with." He called out some names in a harsh tone of voice. Not long after, the sound of small feet hurriedly scuffling across the cement workroom floor could be heard. As soon as the boys got to his office, they all lined up silently waiting for their next orders.

"You boys will be workin' with this young lad 'ere. His name is Sam. Now why don' you go take Sam down to where y'all be workin' and show 'im the ropes." The three boys nodded their heads and one waved his arm as a gesture for Sam to come with them. Sam looked at his mother as if to say goodbye and set off with the other boys.

As Sam walked with the other boys, they started jogging back. As they passed row number one he began wondering just how far away row 67 was. He looked around the place as he tried to keep up with the other boys. Down each row there must have been at least ten to fifteen boys on each side of every row. Not long after did one of the boys trailing behind him give him a shove, causing Sam to hit the cold, rough cement on his knees. The boy looked him over, gave him a weak smile, and said, "Eh, you sure are a pushover." Sam

bit his lip and kept going along with the rest of the boys.

When they finally reached row 67, another of the boys looked him up and down as if evaluating him. "Well, aren't you the special boy. You have shoes. Lookie here, guys, we got a 'special boy' on our hands now." Sam gradually began to realize that the first few days here working at the mill were definitely not going to be a stroll in the park.

Sam found himself a spot at the end of the row of spinners, next to a boy who looked no older than seven. He was a bit scruffy looking, and Sam could tell he had been picked on here also. The boy seemed somewhat relieved that the other boys had found a new target. Sam smiled weakly at him and nodded his head to say hello. The diminutive boy looked at him and smiled as if to keep back laughter.

"You are going to need help learning about all these machines and what to do. I can help you if you like. By the way, my name is Linus, but everyone calls me Little, not Little Linus, just Little."

Sam smiled, relieved that at least one boy didn't seem to want to beat him up. For the rest of the day Sam and Little worked on Little's share of the row (the biggest section always went to the weakest boy).

"It ain't too hard. Mainly we just watch and make sure none of the threads break. If one does you need to tie it back 'gether. Main thing is that you don't let your fingers get caught in the machines. There's a boy down row 46 I used to work 'long side, he lost his finger from not being careful enough."

For the rest of the day, Sam and Little worked alongside each other while Little pointed out ways to make the job easier. At noon the boys were allowed a 15-minute break so that they could eat their lunches. Sam hardly tasted the bread and cold bacon his mother had packed for him. Though Sam was outside, his ears still hummed with the noise of the machines. All too soon the bell rang, calling all the boys back inside to begin working once again. Sam thought back to just

Sam gradually began to realize that the first few days here working at the mill were definitely not going to be a stroll in the park.



yesterday when the bells called him back to the classroom. He began wondering what some of his friends were doing now.

Another loud bell rang at 7 PM that night, freeing everyone from their duties. Sam returned home on the dark streets with newly planted trees on the sidewalk. He was so tired and in such turmoil, he didn't even notice them. He began thinking about how to handle himself with the other boys who were trying to beat him up. He had to come up with a plan for the next day, and the next day, and the day after that. Who could know how long he would have to work in that mill, and he couldn't stand the torment he had taken today for long. He came to the conclusion it was better to die fighting back than to be beaten up. So tomorrow, when they started in on him again, he wasn't going to take it. If they pushed him, he was going to push back, and if they taunted him he was going to taunt back. If they laughed at him, he was going to laugh right back. Sam was unsure if this plan was going to work, but it was better than being bullied for the rest of his days at the mill. He was either going to gain their respect or gain their fear. He hoped it would be the former.

Sam returned home, trying to think of what he should and shouldn't tell his mother. As he walked into the house, she was cooking on the cast-iron wood stove. Sam tried to slowly sneak up the stairs to his room, but his mother caught him before he even got up five stairs.

"So Sam, how was your first day of being at the mill?" asked Abby.

"Oh, just fine, Ma. What's for

dinner?" responded Sam, trying to change the subject as quickly as he could. He knew he couldn't lie very well for very long to his mother.

"Same thing as last night. Bread and the usual bean and pork fat soup, we had a little left over. I found some more wood that was cheap, so the soup can be nice and hot tonight. So tell me all about your day. Were the other boys helpful at all?" asked Abby. With that question Sam had to think on his feet how to reply while not lying, but merely bending the truth some. He knew if he told the truth, his mother would want to step in and talk to Mr. Rompt about the situation, which would only make it worse.

"Yes Ma, I met one boy, his name is Linus, but everyone calls him Little. He was especially nice to me. He helped me out through the day, learnin' how to work the machines." With that Sam headed upstairs to change and get ready for supper. He tried to clean the lint from his eyes, ears, and nose, though he never seemed to get it all off. As he sat down on his straw-stuffed mattress, he pulled off his shoes that made him a "special boy," which he didn't understand. He was unaware of the fact that the majority of the boys there didn't have the money for a pair. An overwhelming wave of fatigue came over him. As he sank onto his mattress, his mind calmed for the first time in 24 hours as he fell into a deep sleep. He would need his rest for tomorrow.

IST: Erin Havrilesky

Mode: Narrative

Grade: 11

..... Natassia Mendez

The Trials

Twins are not always the same. My name is Hannah Goodman, and my sister's name is Sarah. We are not much alike. Yes, we look the same and do everything the same, but we do not always share the same thoughts or feelings. Yet, nonetheless, we are twins. Everyone knew us in our town of

Salem as the "Good Twins." We were equally good.

But one day, as I helped Goody Osborne with her washing, for she did not yet have a daughter of her own to help, I heard a cry from the square. So I ran outside to see if anyone needed help. I saw,



outside the Parris house, young Elizabeth crying and shaking, uttering horrible things. I had heard that Elizabeth Parris and her cousin Abigail Williams had been ill lately and had been acting strangely, but I had never thought that it had been so severe. I went over and approached Reverend Samuel Parris, Elizabeth's father.

"Excuse me, Sir, be you needing any help?"

The Reverend only looked down his nose at me and shooed me away while he and his servant dragged the girls back in. The servant woman, Tituba, closed the door behind them with a frown. I heard the next couple of days of some girls becoming "ill" as well and acting the same as Elizabeth. Soon, even a couple of my friends began to act out as well. One night, as I dressed for bed in my room, I asked Sarah what she thought of this.

"Witchcraft. They say that the girls are bewitched. And I think the witch could be one of the townsfolk!"

I shook my head. "Why, whatever would make them think that?" I had heard the people talking a bit, in hushed whispers as they did their daily activities. I would never have thought it true. No one in our town would do something evil as witchcraft. Not with the good Lord in all our hearts.

Still, Sarah continued. "Well, they think a witch is afflicting the girls. I spoke to Abigail, and she says she has even had spirits hurting her. I don't know, but I think if there is a witch here, that person should be found and punished." She said this with a sort of disgust in her voice, and I found it hard to believe that she actually believed the girls. I lay down to sleep that night, after prayers that the girls would be rid of their illness. Sarah lay down after praying that the witch would be captured and that Satan would leave our town.

We spent the rest of the late winter doing our chores and trying to live normally. But the town grew restless, and soon Reverend Parris asked the town to pray and fast for the girls, to relieve them from the "evil forces" that plagued them. I prayed, but felt bad in my heart for I did not truly believe that there were any evil forces in our town.

Sarah prayed with ferocity and even tried assisting the girls in identifying their afflictors. They all tried different things, and finally the girls came up with three names: Parris's servant-slave Tituba, Sarah Good, and Sarah Osborne. Because the latter is the same one I had been helping the day all this started, I knew then that all this could not be true, for I knew that she could never be a witch. Still, I watched them be imprisoned, the women dragged into the jail while the townsfolk yelled and cried, their torches lighting their angry faces and twisting them into sights more evil than anything that could be seen on the faces of the three suspected women. I stood in the cold air of the night and stared into the scared eyes of Goody Osborne, knowing that times ahead would be hard.

In the passing days, Sarah Good and Sarah Osborne claimed innocence; Tituba, on the other hand, confessed to having seen the devil and claimed that there were several other witches in the town. The trial for the three was then held, and I sat in the back crying for the women. My sister Sarah looked at me, whispered that she was scared too, and began to pray for us. When the women walked in, the accusing girls began to scream and scratch at themselves, while some began to fall into trance. The people murmured at this and the girls claimed that the accused women were responsible for doing this to them. During the trial, the two Sarahs pleaded innocent, while Tituba confessed to practicing witchcraft. Afterwards, I pulled my sister Sarah to the side to speak with her.

"Sarah, do you not see what is happening here? Our friends are accusing innocent women of monstrosities that could never be true. What has our town come to? The women could be hanged. Dead. Sarah, surely you cannot believe all this?"

Sarah looked sternly at me. "Of course I believe this is true. Surely you can see, Hannah, that these people were never our real friends to begin with. They merely wanted us to feel safe with them. Now, look what they have done to our friends—our *real* friends. Please do not tell me that they have bewitched you into believing that they are



innocent.”

“Of course I am not bewitched. I just simply cannot believe that all this is happening. I’m sorry.” Sarah nodded, putting her arm around me, and then we returned to our home, a chilly wind blowing harshly through the town. It seemed that the days were getting colder and colder.

As time passed, more people came forward with tales of seeing strange apparitions and having been harmed by witchcraft. Many people were accused and our town took to a “hunt” for witches. Many people, it seemed, were accused for insignificant reasons. Perhaps a woman had hair that was unusually kept and beautiful, or a man’s crop grew effortlessly; then he or she was accused of using witchcraft and afflicting anyone who might challenge or do something displeasing to the person. The town grew mad, and soon so many people were “afflicted” and accused that I could not remember which was which. Or shall I say, “witch.”

I tried to support my friends and family, but such falseness left me tired, and so I soon stopped attending the trials. The whole town looked tired, their anxious eyes looking suspiciously upon each other. Ever quiet and watchful until someone else was accused, the whole town would be sent into hysteria. I feared the day that perhaps someone in my family would be accused. My strong, proud father who had always been an upstanding man in Salem? My wise mother who always looked after others as if they were her own? Or worse, my sister or me?

I became more and more silent, afraid that what I had to say would not be liked by the others. My family, on the other hand, became more and more involved in the hunt. Even my calm and loving mother began to turn on her friends. Everyone was lost and consumed by some ugly thing, something that I could not see. Late into spring, Sarah Good died in prison. I watched in silence as someone was actually hanged. The months passed and more people were roped to their death, all for denying that they had committed any acts of witchcraft. One man was even crushed to death for refusing trial. I had finally become completely silent

and, not being able to eat much, thin.

Before long, the day that I had been fearing came. Mary Parker, a girl my age who I had not known too well, came to tell the town that I had sent my specter to harm her because I had been jealous of her. I stood in disbelief for quite some time, not even noticing when two men came and picked me up to drag me to the jail. The next day, during my trial, I stared into the eyes of the town, now filled with fear and anger. Even my family, who sat in the front, looked upon me with disgust. But nowhere did I see sadness, nor remorse. Even when I looked into the eyes of my sister, who simply looked away and began to say a silent prayer, as I let a tear fall from my eyes. Mary Parker and several other girls stood coughing and gasping for air, screaming and thrashing, until the judge finally ordered me to cease my tormenting them. I was questioned, and pleaded innocent before them. They questioned what contact I had with the devil, why I had sent my specter to harm the girls. The whole time I kept true to my innocence and to my self, my tears blurring my eyes, making everything look like a dream, but in my heart I knew this was real and I was scared. Then the time came when the people were asked if any of them had been harmed by me. One person said, “Why not also ask if the sister is not also a witch? Surely, because they are twins, they would have done the same.” All eyes were then on Sarah.

Sarah stood and spoke. “I plead to you I am not a witch nor have I ever done any witchcraft. In fact, I supported the hunt, while my sister tried to convince me that everything was false.” Here, she looked at me, and continued looking at me, though I do not know how she would have such nerve to do so. “And I, too, was afflicted by my sister,” Sarah claimed. “She cursed me to cough uncontrollably one night to try to force me to stop chasing her witch friends.” The town now began to gasp and talk, and my mother pulled Sarah to her chest, turning her away from me as if to protect her.

I stand here now looking upon her face, upon the faces of the people I had trusted, who now seem to have no memory of who I had been. Now no one sees me as



one of the “Good Twins.” Not even my sister. They only see a witch, rope ‘round my neck. I know that soon this will pass. I wish that I could have been saved—or, at least, not have been betrayed. I knew not how people could go so easily along with the crowd. But,

apparently, my sister did. Twins are not always the same.

IST: DannyHamman

Mode: Narrative

Grade: 11

.....
Cara Petrell
.....

Writing Self-Assessment

This essay is meant to make me examine my strengths and weaknesses as a writer, thus helping me to see where I can improve and how to go about it. My writing process is also being called into question, regrettably, with good reason. I *do* tend to skip a few steps when left to my own devices. Still and all, I am delighted for the excuse to abandon expository writing, which I find dull.

One of my primary strengths as a writer is the fact that I have read, and do read, so much. I have been exposed to many different styles of writing, which in turn have affected my own. Every writer, no matter what, must be well acquainted with the result of good writing – good reading. I forget who it was who said, “Either write something worth reading or do something worth writing,” but it was good advice. I frequently write stories for my own amusement. Since this is a more relaxed writing atmosphere than, say, a school assignment, I have grown comfortable with the idea of writing. Practice makes perfect, and when you enjoy practicing, that is even better. I am finally at ease with the written word.

Now on to a sore point with me – the chinks in my academic armor. One of my weaknesses is fear of committing to any one viewpoint, as I do not wish to set up camp on the incorrect outlook. While it is usually a good idea to discuss both sides of an argument, I find myself somewhat crippled when it comes to writing persuasive papers. I believe that once I become more secure in my own opinions this problem will disappear, presumably with the end of puberty.

I like to think that my writing is very original, and others tend to think it whether they consider it a virtue or not. Sometimes my approach is so singular that it can put people off, and I must be careful not to cross the proverbial line. Also, a unique facet of my writing is the strong desire to speak in the first person. This may or may not stem from an overdeveloped ego, but in any case it certainly does not help with expository writing. I can improve this by learning when enough is enough. It’s fine to be unique, but not always in public.

I use a variety of writing processes, depending on what I am writing and for whom I am writing. When I write to appease my muse, I plunge straight in with no outlines or graphic organizers, this because my muse is an impulsive creature and apt to disappear if I bore her with such things. When my writing is somewhat less inspired, let us say, a school assignment, I sketch a brief outline and then begin to write. I never truly have second drafts, but I go over the first draft and prod it about until I am satisfied. Several people then give it the once-over and offer suggestions for improvement, which I take into careful consideration. This is the closest thing to editing I do. It may be scattered, but my writing process is usually successful in the end. An instance when it was put to the test and found to be satisfactory was in preparing my Bill of Rights speech last semester. I outlined, wrote, self-edited, and sought help from others, the end product being an A+ grade speech.

In closing, I owe much of my writing skill to the hours I have spent reading. Writing for fun has helped me to polish up



my skills, as has allowing my muse free reign from time to time. If I can master confidence in my own hesitant outlooks and learn when enough is enough, my writing will become a force to be reckoned with.

IST: Julie Robinson
Mode: Writing Self-Assessment
Grade: 11

..... Allison Bloom

Rapunzel Revisited

Once upon a time near a quaint little village, there lived a little girl named Rapunzel. She lived with her parents in a cottage on their small farm. Theirs was a fair country, with lush grass and lots of trees. Rapunzel and her parents lived a simple life in this lovely land.

One year, some unusually bad weather came in. Storms raged and hail fell. Many crops were destroyed, and Rapunzel's family was left destitute. Although Rapunzel was small, she worked as much as she could to help her parents. They sold everything they didn't need in order to obtain money. This helped for only a short time, however, and soon they were deeply in debt.

One evening, Rapunzel's parents were sitting on the floor of their cottage (they had sold their chairs), going over their few options. There was a soft knock at the door, and Rapunzel ran to see who was there.

"We don't want any," Rapunzel's father said wearily.

"Papa!" Rapunzel remonstrated, and opened the door. There stood an old woman in a long black cloak and hood. It was hard to see any of her features, save for her long nose and some straggly gray hair that stuck out under the hood. Rapunzel stared at the woman, then shrank back, not knowing what to say. The woman stepped inside and looked at Rapunzel's father.

"I hear you are in some trouble," she said in a low voice.

"Well, yes – I suppose so," Rapunzel's father replied guardedly, "but who doesn't have a problem now and then?"

The old woman held out a small bag and said, "Take this."

He cautiously took the bag and looked inside. He was surprised to see several pieces of gold. "Who are you? What is this for?" he asked.

"I like to help people," the woman said in a tone that seemed to belie her statement. Rapunzel didn't think she sounded at all sincere, but her father was too amazed to notice.

He said, "Oh – how can we ever repay you?"

"We'll see," the woman said, and she quickly left.

"Wait!" cried Rapunzel's father as he went out after her. But he found no one outside. Confused, he went back into the safety of his cottage.

Rapunzel's family very carefully used the woman's gold. The weather took a turn for the better, and they planted new crops that slowly started to grow.

One night Rapunzel's parents were discussing their hopes for the future. "And in just a few more months," Rapunzel's father was saying, "we can start selling our produce and get all the way back on –" Tap, tap. Hearing the knock, Rapunzel went to the door and opened it. It was the same old woman whose gold had earlier saved the day!

This time Rapunzel didn't back away; she asked hesitantly, "Can we help you?"

The old woman smirked and said, "Don't you remember me?"

Rapunzel thought. "Umm..."

But her mother broke in and said, "Of course we remember you! We owe you

He cautiously took the bag and looked inside. He was surprised to see several pieces of gold.



so much. Please come in.” The woman’s expression darkened, and she stood firmly in the same spot. Rapunzel looked from the old woman to her mother, and saw that her mother’s face had a puzzled frown.

“Uh, well, what can we do for you?”

“I have merely come to collect my dues,” the old woman said.

Rapunzel and her parents were only just starting to get back on their feet. They had most of the things they needed, but they had nothing to spare. “Oh... yes... we mean to pay you back,” Rapunzel’s father stammered. “We just haven’t had time to get everything settled and –”

“You don’t have my gold?” the woman interrupted with a menacing voice.

With what he thought was reasonable assurance, Rapunzel’s father answered, “No, but if you’ll tell us where to find you, we’ll pay you back as soon as –”

“Nonsense!” the old woman roared, “you’ve had plenty of time to come up with the money!” She roughly grabbed Rapunzel by the arm and said, “I shall keep your little one as a pledge until you come up with a way to pay me.” Rapunzel fought and her parents pleaded and tried to stop the woman, but she demonstrated a strength seemingly far below her years. She dragged Rapunzel outside, and when the shaken parents followed, they found no traces of the woman or their daughter.

The old woman’s lightning-quick horse whisked her and Rapunzel to a large stone building with a high tower. Rapunzel thought she knew the village environs, yet this place was wholly unfamiliar to her. The woman put Rapunzel in the tower. Rapunzel thought of how quickly everything had fallen apart, and how strange her situation was. As the old woman turned to leave, Rapunzel asked, “Are you a witch?”

The old woman emitted a high-pitched laugh and replied, “Well, I much prefer the term ‘sorceress.’” Then she locked the door and left.

Rapunzel sat in her room with nothing to do but stare out the hole that was her window. In the fields far below her, she saw people working. They were all around her age. There were men armed with all sorts of weapons overseeing them. Rapunzel felt sorry for

the workers.

Time passed, and Rapunzel came to dearly miss her parents. She only saw the witch when her food was brought to her. One day she asked the witch, “Who are those workers down there?”

The witch replied, “They’re young fools like you who came from families like yours. The only reason you’re not staying in their quarters is because there’s no room.” Rapunzel felt as though she might explode in anger. But she kept it in and said nothing. After the witch left, Rapunzel began to make plans.

Rapunzel never had her hair cut, and it was already so long that when she left it loose, it piled about her feet. She had the idea to let it grow until its length was equal to the height of the tower. Then she could make it into a rope and use it to climb out of the tower.

Each day after finishing her food, Rapunzel worked with her fork to pry the metal off the back of her chair. When the witch came to take her utensils, Rapunzel used her fingers to wiggle the metal loose. At last she got the metal off. It was two thin bars. She rubbed their edges together to sharpen them. Finally she had two primitive knives. Then she just waited for her hair to grow.

One evening, as Rapunzel peered through the tower window, she saw no one outside. She wound her hair into a thick black braid and tied the end to the chair. She tucked her knives into her belt and climbed out the window. Then she carefully made her way down the side of the tower. It took a long time, at the end of which she ran out of braid. She used one of her knives to cut through the braid, then she let go of the end and fell the last few feet to the ground. Then she snuck into what she hoped was the workers’ building.

Once she was inside, Rapunzel found keys hanging by the door. She unlocked every door and let out every person. “Thank you!” they said joyfully. When she unlocked the last door, she found not people, but mounds of treasure: gold, silver, and jewels in many shapes and sizes!



It was the witch's hoard.

Rapunzel said, "Everyone take as much as you can hold, then run. But be quiet!" Everyone took some treasure (including Rapunzel), then left. They made their way to their homes, where they had been sorely missed. Rapunzel made her own long journey home. But she was pursued.

Rapunzel had barely had time for a tearful reunion with her parents when the door blew open. There stood the witch, with her fists clenched and her eyes flaming. "So! You cleverly escaped, eh?!"

Rapunzel calmly replied, "Well, my parents have gotten the money to pay you back, so it all works out." She held out the small sack that contained the treasure she had taken from the witch's hoard.

The witch snatched it and looked inside. "Uh, well, I'd say that's fair. I was

getting tired of feeding little Rapunzel anyway." The witch heard a commotion behind her. She turned and saw an angry mob from the village. They all carried torches and weapons. The witch knew the limits of her sorcery, that she couldn't deal with this many people.

"Arrgh!" she growled, then pushed through the mob, leapt onto her horse, and rode away at an amazing speed.

Later, the witch found her servants' quarters were empty as was her treasure room. She only had the small bag from Rapunzel. She decided never to bother anyone again. Rapunzel had lost her treasure, but she had saved her fellow prisoners and returned home. She and her parents were content to return to their simple lifestyle, and they lived happily ever after.

IST: Beverly Tyler

Mode: Narrative

Grade: 12



Jennifer Lampert



Media and Self-Image

A vast majority of today's mass media bombard us with images of extremely thin young women and very muscular, lean young men. Social and clinical psychologists have become concerned about the possible harmful effects of exposure to these images, especially on children and young adults. A danger is that young people come to see these images of so-called perfect individuals as the norm and try to emulate them for themselves (Are Men and Women). Research has shown that these images propagated by the media have had a detrimental influence on self-esteem through unrealistically digitally enhanced advertisements that lead to eating disorders amongst both women and men.

Self-esteem is the largest factor that affects a person's self-image. Unfortunately, efforts to convey the significance and critical nature of self-esteem have been hampered by misconceptions and confusion over what is meant by the term "self-esteem." Some have

referred to self-esteem as merely "feeling good" or having positive feelings about oneself. Others have gone so far as to equate self-esteem with egotism, arrogance, conceit, narcissism, a sense of superiority, and a trait leading to violence. Such characteristics cannot be attributed to authentic, healthy self-esteem, because they are actually defensive reactions to the lack of authentic self-esteem, which is sometimes referred to as "pseudo self-esteem" (The True Meaning). It is important that the significance of self-esteem not be lost in the confusion over what it means. Nathaniel Branden, Ph.D., a well known psychotherapist, defined self-esteem several years ago as "The disposition to experience oneself as being competent to cope with the basic challenges of life and of being worthy of happiness." This definition was altered slightly by the National Association for Self-Esteem (NASE) to say it is, "The experience of being capable of



meeting life's challenges and being worthy of happiness." (The True Meaning). According to Rhoda McFarland, a self-esteem specialist, "A person's self-esteem is a result of their evaluation of who they are inside and the extent to which they believe themselves to be a capable and worthy person" (9). It is a personal judgment and it can be based on truth or distortion, on reality or imagination. Since self-esteem has both psychological and sociological dimensions, this has made it difficult to come up with an overall comprehensive meaning (The True Meaning). A close relationship has been documented between low self-esteem and such problems as violence, alcoholism, drug abuse, and eating disorders. Unfortunately, our society makes the development of high self-esteem very difficult to maintain. Too many people let their body image affect their self-esteem, therefore linking the two very closely. One of the greatest impacts on a person's body image is advertising in the media.

According to John E. Kennedy, "Advertising is salesmanship in print" (The Best Definition). Although media now encompasses more than print with the advent of radio, cinema, and television, that definition still stands today. As another legendary adman, Raymond Rubicam, once noted, "The only purpose of advertising is to sell. It has no other justification worth mentioning" (The Best Definition). If we assume that "sell" means to persuade anyone to a particular course of action or to believe something, it's hard to better that early definition (The Best Definition). Many modern advertisements apply basic psychology of selling and human nature by appealing to people's insecurities and desires (Gofford 40).

Advertisers often emphasize sexuality and the importance of physical attractiveness in an attempt to sell products. A poll conducted in 1996 by the international ad agency Saatchi and Saatchi found that ads featuring pictures of beautiful young people produced fear in women of becoming unattractive or old (Body Image and Advertising). This becomes a problem, since the average woman sees four hundred to six hundred advertisements per day, and by the

time she is seventeen years old, she has received over two hundred and fifty thousand commercial messages through the media (Body Image and Advertising). Only nine percent of commercials have a direct statement about beauty, but many more implicitly emphasize the importance of beauty, particularly those that target women and girls. Other studies found fifty percent of advertisements in teen girl magazines and fifty-six percent of television commercials aimed at female viewers used beauty as a product appeal (Body Image and Advertising). This constant exposure to female-oriented advertisements seems to have influenced girls to become self-conscious about their bodies. "The media markets desire. And by reproducing ideals that are absurdly out of line with what real bodies really do look like...the media perpetuates a market for frustration and disappointment. Its customers will never disappear," writes Paul Hamburg, an assistant professor of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School (Body Image and Advertising). Nanita Unnikrishnan states, "advertising creates false needs... products that are really needed require no advertising and therefore advertising promotes products that are not needed" (Cooper 6). Beauty products abound for every possible physical shortcoming, from dull, lifeless hair to poor posture. If one feels less than perfect in any respect, there must be a pill, powder, lotion, cream, foam, or exercise that will fix it. The implication is that being less than perfect means that something is wrong with you, and advertisers capitalize on this (McFarland 30).

Companies such as Christian Dior, Ralph Lauren, Victoria's Secret, and Levis all peddle the idea of a perfect body being an integrated part of being desirable. Even the Pepsi Corporation, over the years, has altered their advertisements. Most recent ads have depicted drinking Pepsi as a glamorous and sexy experience (Gifford 42). In order to be glamorous and sexy, one must be thin. The diet pill industry is another advertiser that has sold the public on an easy way to be desirable. Thousands of ads on new diet pills and programs are produced constantly. This number is increasing rapidly as the need to be



slimmer is growing. Considering the diet industry alone generates thirty-three billion dollars in revenue, these advertisers have been successful with their marketing strategy (Body Image and Advertising). Diet agencies use beautiful young people with perfect bodies to sell their product. Companies like Dexatrim are known to show before-and-after pictures that blatantly look altered. Somehow these before-and-after pictures give the impression that even the average person can lose weight easily and attain the perfect body. On the other hand, other companies use celebrities to sell their diet products. Anna Nicole Smith has recently been featured in a Trim Spa television commercial. As the commercial ends, one is left wondering if the transformation was real or manufactured.

It would seem that it is no great revelation that movie and television stars hide their physical flaws from the public. The perfection that we see on film is a fantasy created through lighting, makeup, clever camera angles, and gauzy lenses. For example, software is used to make thighs look smaller, waists thinner, and skin free from the slightest flaws. In television and film, special camera lenses and other techniques are used to make actors and actresses appear thinner. In the popular American comedy-soap "Friends," the film-makers stretch the film to make actresses such as Courtney Cox and Jennifer Aniston appear even thinner than they already are (Are Men and Women). Model/actress Lauren Hutton has a gap between her front teeth and often wears a filler when she goes on modeling assignments so that her teeth will appear perfect (McFarland 30). These little beauty tricks and digitally manipulated pictures present unrealistic and unattainable role models.

In a revealing article in More magazine, actress Jamie Lee Curtis bared it all. She posed in her undergarments with no make-up on and her body being as it is naturally without all the digital enhancements. This article was crucial in reminding women that these images they see everyday are in fact altered. Susan Crandall, editor-in-chief of More magazine, said, "We knew this article was important, but we didn't know how huge it would be. Even a 23-year-old assistant at

the 'Today' show said that the article made her feel so much better about her body" (Jamie Lee Curtis). 'Today' interviewer Campbell Brown seemed aghast at Curtis' boldness, as if being photographed as she really looks is more shocking than being photographed topless (as Curtis was in "Trading Places"). "There is no way I would sit down for a magazine photo shoot with no makeup, no control tops, no wonder bra," Brown said to the actress. "Were you scared at all?" Curtis replied, "What I'm scared of is that that's what women have become accustomed to needing to feel good about themselves...show business and media and magazines don't help by promoting these images of women that are completely airbrushed, that are completely altered, to then give you, the unsuspecting buyer, this fake sense of that that's what people are supposed to look like" (Jamie Lee Curtis). The impossible ideal of the perfect body has been etched in our brains since our first Barbie. One photo won't change that. But it is a reminder of where the revolution fell short. As we were getting the world to accept us for who we are, we never figured out how to accept ourselves (Jamie Lee Curtis). Trying to look like the very thin women in magazines and on television can lead young girls to under-eating and in time cause them to fall prey to eating disorders.

It is estimated that eating disorders such as anorexia nervosa and bulimia affect thousands of people per year. Anorexia nervosa is defined as a psychological disorder characterized by an aversion to eating and fear of gaining weight (Anorexia Nervosa). Like anorexia, bulimia, the eating disorder that involves bingeing and purging, has nothing to do with weight, calories, or being thin. They are merely symptoms of underlying turmoil, distress, and low self-esteem (Anorexia Nervosa). Some experts have argued that eating disorders such as these are to a large extent a product of pressures for women in Western societies to achieve an ultra-thin body shape. Evidence from experimental studies with students suggests that media exposure to thin fashion models has negative effects on young women's body attitudes, at least in the short



term. In a recent survey by Teen People magazine, twenty-seven percent of the girls felt that the media pressures them to have a perfect body. Magazines emphasize thinness as a standard for female beauty, and the bodies idealized in the media are frequently atypical of normal, healthy women. In fact, today's fashion models weigh twenty-three percent less than the average female, and a young woman between the ages of eighteen to thirty-four has a seven-percent chance of being as slim as a catwalk model and a one-percent chance of being as thin as a supermodel. Sixty-nine percent of girls in one study said that magazine models influence their idea of the perfect body shape (Body Imaging and Advertising). They also said that the pervasive acceptance of this unrealistic body type creates an impractical standard for the majority of women and is beginning to influence men as well.

Although distorted body image has widely been known to affect women and girls, there is growing awareness regarding the pressure men and boys are under to appear muscular. Advertising images have also been recently accused of setting unrealistic ideals for males, and men and boys are beginning to risk their health to achieve the well-built media standard (Body Image and Advertising). Many males are becoming insecure about their physical appearance as advertising and other media images raise the standard and idealize well-built men. There has been an alarming increase in obsessive weight training and the use of anabolic steroids and dietary supplements that promise bigger muscles or more stamina for lifting (Body Image and Advertising). One study suggests that an alarming trend in toy action figures increasing muscularity is setting unrealistic ideals for boys in the same way Barbie dolls have been accused of giving an unrealistic ideal of thinness for girls. "Our society's worship of muscularity may cause increasing numbers of men to develop pathological shame about their bodies... Our observations of these little plastic toys have stimulated us to explore further links between cultural messages, body image disorders, and use of steroids and other drugs," says researcher Dr. Harrison Pope (Body Image

and Advertising).

Although the majority of teenagers with eating disorders are girls (ninety percent), experts believe the number of boys affected is increasing and that many cases may not be reported, since males are reluctant to acknowledge an illness primarily associated with females. Studies have also found that boys may turn to smoking to help them lose weight. Boys aged nine to fourteen who thought they were overweight were sixty-five percent more likely to think about or try smoking than their peers. Boys who worked out every day in order to lose weight were twice as likely to experiment with tobacco (Body Image and Advertising). While we are beginning to learn more about the negative effects of these media images on young women, little is known about the effects of seeing images of very muscular lean men on the male population. The question of how men are affected by these images, which are increasingly common in music videos and men's magazines such as GQ, has been increasingly asked. Nirva Bohdjalian and Marco Cinnirella conducted an experiment where a sample of young men and women were exposed to a selection of typical images from popular magazines. Bohdjalian and Cinnirella found that, compared to a control group of young men who are exposed to pictures of cars, the participants who looked at the pictures of muscular men reported feeling significantly less satisfaction with their own bodies following exposure. This study adds to the growing body of psychological research evidence showing that images of abnormally built men in the media are potentially harmful, and accusations of where to place the blame are debated today from classrooms to Congress (Are Men and Women).

The media's response to the growing number of allegations is that they are not responsible. Media company owners, as well as the very people who are having their pictures digitally enhanced, say that these images aren't harmful to young people. Annie Morton, a supermodel, said, "It's going a bit far to suggest someone's anorexic just by looking at a picture...I can say the business does not put pressure on me to keep my



weight down” (Cooper 8). In a harsher defense, the editor of the critically acclaimed Vogue magazine, Alexandra Shulman, said, “we have a way of reading and filtering this information...No one looks at these magazines and thinks, ‘I want to look like that’...No one is that stupid” (Cooper 9). Ignorant or not, the public is beginning to voice its discontent.

Many people, however, are not taking the media’s responses to these accusations very well. Lawsuits have been filed against various media companies. Christine Craft, a TV news woman, won a nationally publicized lawsuit against a TV station that fired her because they said she wasn’t attractive enough to be their anchorperson (McFarland 30). Others, however, have their own ways of fighting the media. Actress Jamie Lee Curtis has just written her fifth children’s book, “I’m Gonna Like Me: Letting Off a Little Self-Esteem,” which is what prompted the idea for the photo featured in More magazine. “I felt that if I’m going to try to promote something where I’m trying to explain self-esteem to children, I needed to live it,” she said on the “Today” show. “And for me to live it means I need to be the person I look at every morning when I wake up and stand in the mirror, you know, kind of as God intended me to look” (Jamie Lee Curtis).

Each day, men and women view themselves in the mirror using a filter that the media has put over their eyes. This filter, like a funhouse mirror, generates a distorted image that damages self-esteem and contributes to the epidemic of low self-worth that is afflicting men and women today. The unrealistic digitally enhanced advertisements that permeate mass media communications have brainwashed the public into believing that to be a worthwhile individual one must be thin, beautiful and lacking all flaws. In reality, every human being is unique and it is not only our achievements, but also our flaws that set us apart from one another. Mass communication, as an industry, has the power to shape and mold ideas, and therefore has an obligation to act responsibly and use its power to help develop self-confident, independent thinkers who are prepared to make the world a better place to live.

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IST: Dianna Costanzo

Mode: Research

Grade: 12



Deaf and Hearing -- Equal Access

In this community, I have seen enough suffering between Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing persons and hearing persons because of the barriers to equal access that we Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing persons have fought over for many years. The law states that Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing persons should have the same access to make phone calls on public phones, enjoy movies, and technology as hearing people. The reality is that the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing persons don't have the same access as hearing people do. They need to have equal access to make phone calls, see open-captioned movies, and use technology in public places.

Whenever I go to public places, I rarely see TTY (teletypewriter). I wonder to myself why some places do not have devices for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing persons to use. Why do people in wheelchairs have access to things and Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing persons do not have access to some things that are important? People understand disabilities that they can see. For example, people in wheelchairs have special parking spaces, automatic doors, and special tables, but don't have access to go to state beaches, to be on the trails in mountains, etc. However, the normal people don't really understand Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing needs. Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing persons have access to very few phones that have TTYs. How can Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing persons make phone calls if places do not have TTYs? If there were an emergency, how would they make a 9-1-1 phone call without TTYs? Some Deaf are able to speak, some are not able to speak. How can a hearing person understand what a Deaf person is saying? Plus, how can a Deaf person hear the questions if there isn't any text showing on the phone? We Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing people would love to have more access to TTYs in public places. There are some places that do not provide TTYs for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing persons. These are the places that don't have TTYs: some

hotels, restaurants, movie theaters, public schools, even those that have Deaf programs, and many others. As a Deaf person, I strongly believe that we, Deaf persons, should be able to have access to TTYs in public places like other hearing people have to the phone. On the other hand, going to theaters without open-captioned movies is not enjoyable when we have to read the actors' lips to know what is happening in the movie.

Imagine sitting in a silent movie, without text on the screen or sounds from the movie. Imagine trying to lip-read the actors' lips and understanding what is going on in the movie. This is how Deaf persons watch and "hear" movies in public theaters. Every time I go to a movie theater with my hearing friends, I don't fully understand what is happening in the movie because it is hard for my friends to explain what is happening in the movie. Sometimes I go to the movies with my mom because she interprets the movie so I can know what is happening. Without the captions, I am totally lost and I can't even enjoy the movie. If the movie theater has open-captioned movies, the show times are at off times, and the theater doesn't show the movie on "popular" days, which are Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays. That means Deaf persons cannot enjoy a movie date during these "popular" days without captions. Also, if there is an open-captioned movie, Deaf people have to go to a specific theater to watch the movie. It is totally inconvenient for Deaf persons. Plus, why force Deaf persons to go to a specific theater when the movie theaters could make profits if they had open-captioned movies on their more "popular" days? On the other hand, we do have some technology that we Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing use in everyday life.

Technology is the most effective method for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing persons. I have several technologies that I use in everyday life. They are: pager, TTY,



cochlear implant, television with closed-captions, and, of course, a computer. I use them to keep myself in the loop with my families and friends, and to understand what the actors are saying on the television. Another technology that Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing persons could have is a siren sensor device in their car. When the siren goes off, the device flashes the light to let a Deaf person know there is an emergency going on at that time or a police officer wants to pull the Deaf person over. When I'm driving a car, I would want to know if there is a siren around my car so I can pull over safely and keep other people safe at the same time. But there are still problems. Suppose I wanted to go to a fast food place and get a hamburger. It is raining and I don't want to get out of the car to get my food and be soaking wet. So, I decide to use the drive-thru, but I can't speak on the speaker and I can't hear what the cashier is saying on the speaker. It would be great if someone would invent a touch screen menu where we can order our food.

In conclusion, I would like to see

more TTYs, open-captioned movies, and more effective technologies so nobody would have any barriers with each other. Also, it is convenient for us to have the same access as hearing persons have. It is really important for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing persons to have access to TTYs in public because they are just like hearing people. For example, if our car breaks down, we need to call roadside assistance to help us with the car. How can we do that without a TTY? One solution to this problem is to set up more TTYs in public places. I also would love to go to open-captioned movies. One solution to this is to negotiate with movie theaters to set up more open-captioned movies. Last of all, technology can help Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing persons communicate with other hearing persons. I hope to see more TTYs, open-captioned movies, and technology in public places.

IST: Nina Garwood

Mode: Persuasive

Grade: 12



Kathleen Sayles



His Idea, Her Idea

What is a woman's role in marriage?

Picture this: a woman standing on a wooden floor, leaning against a sink, hands wrinkled and red, washing dishes. Her face, scrubbed till it shines ruddily, is thin and unhappy, and she speaks sharply to the little girl beside her, who, holding a dishcloth in her hand, is dressed, like her mother, in a worn, patched old dress.

It is the (stereotyped) housewife, busy at work. A few other stereotypes of women gradually emerged over the last hundred years, such as the teacher, then the secretary, and then the nurse. Then, slowly, over the years, women began to break free of these roles until finally in the present day, we meet policewomen, see firewomen battle fires alongside their male counterparts, and even watch them battle for our country. And yet

there is one area in which women still struggle, and indeed men too: what is a woman's role in marriage? It's a "gray" area, harder to answer than the one questioning how far to go in hiring women in various careers. In general, people will probably never agree on one interpretation, as many people have theories about it. But the idea that there may be more than one answer has come great lengths since 1900, when there was only one general consensus (at least among men), which went as follows: wives should always submit, and let men handle difficult problems. In 1906, this idea was depicted, attacked and bewailed by many people, and in particular by an author called Henry Ibsen, in his play "A Doll's House," which analyzed this theory in an interesting way. Read this selection:



Torvald: Before all else you are a wife and a mother:

Nora: That I no longer believe. I believe that before all else I am a human being, just as much as you are... or at least then I should try to become one. I know that most people agree with you, Torvald, and that they say so in books. But... I can't be satisfied with [that]...

Henrik Ibsen is making the point that women are important, more important than some realize, and that it behooves us to accept them as such by giving them the freedom to think for themselves. This is also the point that I wish to make; as I have already said, the opinion that “wives should always submit and let men handle the difficult problems” is—while not being exactly wrong—too extreme by far. There is a balance between both extremes, and that is what I shall attempt to define in this essay.

First, I'd like to set the scene... As the play opens, Nora and Torvald Helmer are speaking of Christmas, and the spending of money for it. Nora insists that they are able to “launch out a little.” Helmer laughingly tells her that, as always, his “little featherbrain” is wrong, and “my little lark mustn't droop her wings like that.” When one considers that, plus the fact that Helmer does not allow borrowing and debt, one can tell that in this marriage, Helmer is in supreme and unyielding control of the financial angle. It therefore does not surprise the reader when later on in the story comments surface that prove his control is not just financial, for Nora's husband has an opinion that is defined by the following: “Was I always to trouble you with the cares you could not help me to bear?” and “Why my dearest... what have you to do with serious things?” I'll take a moment to elaborate: Torvald Helmer is a man whose entire viewpoint on wifely behavior consists of “little helpless thing” and “my sweet little songbird” (he forbids his wife to eat macaroons or visit the “Confectioners” to eat jelly, as well). The last thing Helmer

wants for his wife is to work or acquire debt, as he won't, because she is not considered responsible enough, only to be his sweet little “spendthrift.” But, as the story goes on, it is revealed to the reader that unbeknownst to Helmer, his wife has already become involved in finances, by supporting a vacation through borrowed funds to take him and their entire small family to Italy, so he could recover from a life-threatening illness. We learn that Nora has scrimped and saved her pocket money to pay back the debt, sacrificing opportunities to own lovely dresses. She also has taken on several odd jobs, doing all in her power to get out of debt. It has been hard, yet “splendid... I almost felt as if I was a man.” (Could this be one concession of her secret heart's desire—for the freedom that she wants, and to feel a need for her services... appreciated?)

However, she has not yet been able to repay the entire debt, and so hasn't told her husband about it, afraid that the unhappy secret would “upset the relation between us; our beautiful happy home would never again be what it is.” Though she doesn't realize it at the time, she is conceding that her husband is fanatically set on being the leader, and if his decisions are disobeyed, the consequences could be dire.

The secret could have gone on forever if it hadn't been for Nora's friend Mrs. Linton, who turns up after not seeing Nora for ten years. Mrs. Linton needs financial help, and Nora persuades her husband, who is the manager of the firm, to take Mrs. Linton into it. Out of the goodness of his heart, and because a certain Mr. Krogstad's corrupt, fraudulent, and insolent ways have gotten on his nerves one time too many, Torvald decides, unfortunately for Nora, that Mrs. Linton shall replace Krogstad. An outraged Krogstad pays a visit soon after to Nora, threatening her that he shall tell her secret (of the debt she owes to him) to Torvald unless she gets his position back, since it was her fault that he lost it in the first place. She attempts to persuade her husband, but Torvald sees no reason to go back: so Krogstad, true to his blackmail heart, finally drops a letter

It therefore does not surprise the reader when later on in the story comments surface that prove his control is not just financial...



containing all the criminal facts into the Helmers' letterbox, knowing full well the impact his letter will bring.

Let us pause here for a moment... isn't it ironic that both men refuse to admit the value of Nora's impact on their lives, while one man depends on her for his job and the other man despises the very assistance that saved his life? Nora is making the great sacrifice of paying off the debt without telling her husband for the sake of his happiness, disobeying him carelessly with only concern for his life, and is proudly proceeding thus with her "little secret." Unfortunately, another fact that comes to light is that Nora had to sign in her father's stead since he also was near death and she did not want to hasten it by declaring she needed money from him. Krogstad, who does not hesitate to make notice of this forgery despite the fact that he himself has been incriminated by it, jumps on this. Before long, the joy and fun of it has gone for Nora, and she ends up feeling wicked, unwifely, guilty and afraid. Torvald himself contributes to this last emotion by his casual and unsuspecting talk of Krogstad: "Just think how a man with a thing of that sort on his conscience must be always lying and canting and shamming. Think of the mask he must wear even towards those who stand nearest him... towards his own wife and children." He mentions, by the by, that all cases of early corruption were traced to lying mothers.

Of course Nora becomes very on edge at this point. Her confidence suddenly deserts her. During a conversation with Mrs. Linton, she sighs, contradicting, "A man can manage these things much better than a woman." True, by this time I was thinking doubtfully as to her actual ability to handle the newfound responsibility that her hasty decision has plunged her into, as new facets of it seem to be revealed every minute. During this time, while in conversation with his wife, Torvald makes an important statement, important because he is later to directly contradict it when faced with its realities:

Torvald: When it comes to the pinch, I shall have strength and courage enough. You shall see, my

shoulders are broad enough to bear the whole burden...

Nora: That you shall never do!

Torvald: Then we'll share it, that's how it should be...

The night of the revealed secret begins with Torvald in a romantic mood after the two of them participate in a dance. His amorous words follow: "My darling wife! I feel as if I could never hold you close enough.... I often wish some danger might threaten you, that I might risk body and soul, and everything... for your dear sake." Nora keeps silent, waiting for the final test of his love that occurs when Torvald reads the letter minutes later. The following reaction is typical of Torvald's temperament: totally focusing on the possible financial outcome for himself, he selfishly begins to rail at his wife. Yet, here the author skips a vital detail: what did the letter say? Did it reveal the *purpose* of Nora's debt or did it merely throw the word "debt" in Torvald's face? Nevertheless, Torvald's reaction is the important thing: he is outraged that Nora has gotten him involved with a blackmailer, so outraged that his "trust" in her even to menial things such as associating with her own children disappears. "What will people think..." ... "I might be suspected of..."... "and all this disaster and ruin is brought upon **me** by an unprincipled woman!" Notice the word "me": it all becomes clear now. Torvald does not consider his marriage an equal-sided affair, no matter what he may have said earlier. Here is where Torvald's flaw is: he expects Nora to fit in to a stereotypical role of wife and mother (according to Helmer, her holiest duties are "your duties to your husband and your children") while he himself is running the whole marriage, overriding her wifely duties of support and governing as it is, as a king without a queen. He is the stereotype of the dominating head of the household.

The strange thing is that these two stereotypes cannot really fit together, as this story has demonstrated: Nora attempted to perform her wifely duties, but was prevailed against by her strong-willed, unyielding husband. But Nora didn't yield either: she



merely listened quietly to his rage, as her faith in her husband turned dead, for instead of upholding his wife's honesty and trustworthiness he immediately turned on her. She sees that he does not realize the depth of his wife nor the extent of her self-sacrifice, nor her very adulthood: he is not willing to see her as a wife, but a puppet, a beautiful one to play with, one that has acted out of turn and must be dealt with.

A moment later, a telegram arrives; upon reading it, Helmer rejoices: "I am saved! Nora, I am saved!" The blackmailer, due to a "happy turn in his life," has agreed not to threaten anything. Helmer's good mood is restored: he rejoices, yet, "what is this set look on your face? Oh, I understand... you cannot believe that I have forgiven you..."

He is right and wrong. She cannot believe her husband has forgiven her... merely because the threat of danger is past. He did not forgive her because he loved her, but only because his "skin" was saved. The next further comment, however, is the last straw: Torvald claims that when a man forgives his wife, "she becomes his property in a double sense." She has become... "at once, his wife and his child...my bewildered, helpless darling...I will be both will and conscience to you" from now on. Though the play does not mention Nora's outward reaction, this is important to the play because this shows that the experience has not changed Torvald to believe her sacrifice is important and necessary: the whole debt has been merely forgiven and forgotten, and Torvald is convinced things will go back to being exactly the same.

But something has changed. Nora has decided that hers is *not a marriage*, because it is not an equal union, but merely an amusement from start to finish—amusement for Torvald, to play with his wife and children like "dolls." Apparently, this is the point of the entire play: a marriage must overcome stereotypes and be an equal union, to

truthfully exist. The terrible consequences of what may happen to prove that theory are what ended the play: Nora left. Shocked, Helmer tried to hold her to her duties to her husband and children: she replied that there were other duties as sacred: those to herself. She is breaking out of the stereotype of the submitting wife word by word, but with a last, previously mentioned phrase, she puts herself right into the class of the modern woman, and the "modern marriage" conclusion many have come to. As Helmer states "before all else you are a wife and a mother," Nora counters with:

That I no longer believe. I believe that before all else I am a human being, just as much as you are... or at least then I should try to become one. I know that most people agree with you, Torvald, and that they say so in books. But... I can't be satisfied with [that].

To conclude this essay on this remarkable play, I must say that analyzing it has led me to believe that Henrik Ibsen was out of his time when he wrote this fascinating play. It describes vividly the struggle of woman to be equal with man in terms of marriage: how she first tries peaceably, and then is not content. What is a woman's role in marriage? It is to be equal with her husband, "through thick and thin," "in sickness and in health," and "till death do us part"... or it isn't a marriage.

IST: Nathleen Albright

Mode: Response to Literature

Grade: 12



My Field Trip to Medieval Times

Have you ever seen knights battle with maces, swords, and axes? I saw knights fighting at Medieval Times. Gorman Learning Center took us on a field trip to Medieval Times. I like Gorman Learning Center because I am homeschooled, and I can read about knights. Another reason that I like Gorman Learning Center is because they take us on the best field trips.

When I was at Medieval Times, knights were fighting each other. I liked the joust best of all. It was cool when the knights jousted. When the lances hit the shields, there was a loud crunch, and the Red Knight went tumbling off his horse. A squire went over to his defeated master. The people in the red section went, "Boo-hoo," and the people in the green section went, "Hurray!"

At Medieval Times I learned about the contests the knights had. I learned that

the squires were on the battlefield. I thought they were in a safe place like a tent. I got to see the weapons that they used. They looked deadly.

If it wasn't for Gorman Learning Center, I wouldn't have been able to go to Medieval Times or learn about knights. I was not interested in knights before I went to Medieval Times. Now I want to learn more about knights. I have checked out books from the library, and my mom has gotten me some books on knights. I learned that the king actually fought in battle with his knights.

I am glad I am part of Gorman Learning Center. Gorman Learning Center is my favorite school, and Medieval Times is one of my best places to go.

IST: Diane Sachs

Grade: 2

My Experience on Catalina

My family and I live on Santa Catalina Island, twenty-six miles west out of Long Beach, in a Christian camp. The camp is called Campus by the Sea. The camp can only be reached by boat or on foot. This is my home.

My family first moved here six years ago. I was five at the time. It is a lovely place and I am quite content. In fact, I don't even have to venture out of our pretty campus world to go to school. My mom homeschools my two sisters and I.

Homeschooling in a camp such as this is quite interesting. For physical education, we can hike the trails and see deer, birds, and wildflowers. We also like to swim and see the fish, bat-rays, and kelp that inhabit our cove. That is one great thing about this

place: all the unique wildlife we see. Why, just yesterday, when we were motoring to town in one of the camp skiffs, a bald eagle swooped down out of the sky and attempted to steal a fish from a sea lion, but missed, while another one soared ahead. I especially like studying about our island. It's fun testing soil, or learning about our island animals. Once we studied a mountain on the island called Mount Black Jack, and we got to backpack to the mountain and camp over night, and identify pine trees. Sometimes we volunteer at the Catalina Island Conservancy, which is an organization that help preserve our island's natural state. We have participated in projects such as gathering seeds, planting trees, and helping to control erosion. I like to help the lovely place I live



in, because I love the place I live in.

(This is a poem relating to something I saw once.)

Sea Eagle
by Amelia Ribbens

On a wind blown tree
sat an eagle by the sea.

Looking at the waves, looking for
the fish it craves.

Folded on its back its wings
king of all feathered things.

There it sat on a crooked limb,
watching for the fish that swim,
through the water murky and dim.

He sits there, his beak like iron

his talons like knives, when
suddenly he dives.

He hurtles out of the morning
sky, uttering not a cry, his eye
on a sea lion passing by.

The sea lion has in its jaws
a fish, one that the eagle wants
for his own dinner dish.

Yet at the last moment he slipped
beneath the sea.

So the eagle soared back to his tree
to wait in kingly dignity.

There he sits upon his crooked limb,
waiting for the fish that swim.

IST: Lisa Hopkins
Grade: 5



Michael Hodge



Pre Algebra

Pre Algebra is my favorite subject in school. It can be frustrating, but most of the time it is fun. There are several reasons why I like it.

One of the reasons I like Pre Algebra is because I made friends. I like that because it is fun to have someone to play with. Doing homework is not fun but I love turning it in. I always get a mature feeling when I do this.

The Pythagorean Theorem is my favorite formula that I have learned in Pre Algebra. I like it because it's very simple and it helps me a lot in tests. I also like pronouncing it. When I say it, it sounds like I know a lot.

In our class we play a game called "Yummy Baseball" which is fun. There is a pitcher, a batter and bases. The pitcher throws a question and the batter answers it. It's kind of like hitting the question out in the field. The cool part about "Yummy Baseball" is that each kind of hit has a different reward.

For a single you get a half handful of candy, for a double you get a handful of candy, for a triple you get two handfuls of candy, and for a homerun you get a homework pass and one and a half handfuls of candy. A homework pass is something that takes care of a part of your homework.

The first time I joined Pre Algebra I had poor grades, but after a while of studying I raised my grade to an "A." I went on line and did self-check quizzes from the book. I feel good because I can do my work by myself without having help from my mom. When I am in a test and I am stuck, I refer to the book instead of asking the teacher a question.

During all the months I have gone to Pre Algebra, it has been fun. I enjoyed learning and meeting friends. I feel like I have matured.

IST: Annette Hodge
Grade: 7



Winner for Best Use of the Gorman Learning Center Slogan in Writing

I have been a student of Gorman Learning Center for roughly three years. In that time period I have experienced some of the best education of my entire thirteen years. Gorman Learning Center has been “bringing academic excellence home” for me by allowing me to move at my own pace, choose curricula, have personalized attention, participate in field trips, and join classes. I have been able to develop certain skills (unattended to in generalized public school), and have enhanced my creativity.

Being home schooled has allowed me to delve further into subjects with more interesting curriculum of my choice, instead of barely scratching the surface with the technical, boring books of public school. This is mostly because Gorman Learning Center has offered a wide variety of curricula for me to choose from, and my IST’s have even lent me reference books and novels of their own. In addition, I’m able to move at a faster pace with the subjects I’m more talented in, but at a slower pace with the subjects I need more help in. In these cases, school now seems like more of a one-on-one tutoring session, only with the moral standards and understanding of my mom. This freedom, missed in public school, has been greatly supported by the Gorman Learning Center.

My greatest supporters in the Gorman Learning Center have been my two IST’s: one former, Mrs. Suzy Grissom, and one present, Mrs. Bobbi White. Because of their hard work, going above and beyond what is required of them, I have been able to excel at my studies. They’ve given me books out of their own libraries, gotten me programs they think I might be interested in, and recommended books and studies for my personalized needs. Because of their encouragement and enthusiasm, I have been motivated. They’ve listened to my problems and taken an interest in my life outside of school. And because of their kindness and

humor, I’ve had a fun time learning, also. Such personal counseling and academically-based advice is often missed in public schools, or even in some other charter schools. In public school, even the best of the teachers rarely lend out their own books, take much interest in your outside life, or have the time to seek out studies for you personally. Being in Gorman Learning Center, where the adults are able to do so, though, has given me a jump-start on my academics.

I have also been able, especially recently, to participate in Gorman classes and extracurricular activities – such as field trips, high school counseling with Ms. Lora Mosher, and a fabulous writing class taught by Ms. Mary Petersen. In the writing class, Ms. Petersen was able to meet to my specific needs, and help my passion and love for writing flourish. Ms. Mosher was able, with zeal and perception, to help answer questions concerning high school, college, and academics. The field trips were more fun and exciting than the ones people in public school often have to go to – and I was given more freedom to explore than when in public school. Among my favorites were viewing *The Nutcracker Ballet* at Thousand Oaks and the Floating Aquarium and Maritime Museum at Channel Island Harbor (Oxnard). I had a lot of fun at these, and learned a lot—about culture, science, different entertainment styles, literacy, artwork, and even history.

Along with these, Gorman Learning Center has allowed, and encouraged, other educational trips with other homeschooled families or my parents. I have gone to the Grand Canyon, Hoover Dam, Lake Mead, the J. Paul Getty Museum, and the Ronald Reagan Museum. I saw fabulous photography exhibits, amazing art masterpieces, breathtaking nature, and learned about cultures around the world. These excursions would not have been easily



possible – and not supported – in the confines of public school.

Because of this wonderful support, vivacious teaching/counseling, extraordinary activities, and hard work, Gorman Learning Center has definitely brought academic excellence to my home. I would recommend

Gorman Learning Center to any family who wants the fun and freedom of homeschooling, with the added security and structure of a charter school.

IST: Bobbi White

Grade: 8



Brittany Valdez



The Bridge

I grew up an eager-to-learn child in a public schooling system. I could not get enough of the classroom learning experience. I enjoyed extracurricular activities and even attended classes during the summer exclusively offered to gifted and talented students (GATE). Elementary school was a pleasant time of my life to grow and learn along with my peers. I enjoyed writing and art especially and excelled in both areas. I was used often to tutor those in lower grades and even a few in my own class. I was very happy with my school and the education I was receiving.

I moved to a different city before I began Junior High, and I struggled immensely with fitting in and being accepted. I quickly learned that it was easier for me to fit in if I goofed off with my friends rather than study. There were not enough kids actually doing the work to convince me that I would be in trouble if I didn't also. I figured I could not possibly be held accountable when I was not near as lax as most of my friends. It seemed the standards of education were lower than that of my previous public school.

I retained excellent grades in English, physical education, and art, but put forth no extra effort to the other subjects. I remember that one year in science I had a different substitute teacher every week because the assigned teacher in the class was always in ASB meetings. I learned absolutely nothing that whole year in science. I remember one substitute teacher got so mad at one of my peers who sat in front of me that he grabbed my friend's desk, with him in it, and shoved it

over. It seemed no one could handle teaching that class, so we just watched irrelevant movies and did ridiculous experiments such as making paper airplanes.

For the first time in my life I began getting progress reports in the mail concerning my failing grades in math, history, or languages. The odd thing is that my overall grade point average never dropped below a three point zero and I remained on honor roll. I assume that I can thank the teachers for grading on a curve. There were constantly fights and a few kids were caught with guns.

In the middle of eighth grade, my parents took me out of public school and enrolled me in a charter school. This seemed to be the answer to all of my problems. I would be doing the curriculum offered in public school, but I would be monitored closely by a facilitator by meeting with her once a month. I dove in and worked hard the first few months and everything was going fairly well.

I gradually became dissatisfied with the facilitator I was assigned. She never remembered who I was, what subjects I was taking, or anything that seemed important to me. I wanted to feel as if someone in charge of my education cared equally about it as I did. A few times, my work was lost and I received no credit for it. She didn't ask me if I did it, but just assumed I didn't do it and scribbled a grade down next to my name. This led to my transfer to another schooling system.

My parents enrolled me in a private



Christian academy beginning my freshman year. I knew many other kids enrolled in the same program and I caught on quickly to the new methods and curriculum. At the end of my ninth grade year I was a little ahead and very proud of myself for making straight A's throughout that school year. My independent study counselor was very nice and personable.

During the middle of my sophomore year, the school staff went through a complete turnover. The new staff members had been trained, but lacked the years of experience of their predecessors. During my weekly testing visits I had to "bear with them" while they figured out exactly what I was there for.

During my junior year of high school, I was only assigned four subjects. The other subjects had not come in yet. I became very frustrated and slacked off on my work a bit. Halfway through the school year, I finally received one of my electives but it had to be fully completed to receive even one credit. I completed about three quarters of it completely in vain.

Near the end of the school year, I only had two Algebra 1 packets left to test on, the very last one being merely review. To pass these tests one must score in the eightieth percentile. I took that Algebra test after hours of studying those mind-boggling word problems. I scored in the seventieth percentile and was sent home to redo the whole forty-something page packet of word problems before I could retake the test. That wouldn't have been so bad if that wouldn't have been the last week of school. I only received half a year's credit for Algebra 1.

I didn't know what I wanted to do with my education. I was not happy with any of the schools I had attended in the last few

years. This is when I met a wonderful teacher at the Gorman Learning Center. I explained to her my situation and she told me about all the wonderful programs and things offered at Gorman. I decided to enroll and made up my mind to stay focused no matter what difficulties I might have to face.

Those difficulties arrived before the school year began, and I found out that I was so far behind that I was to retake my junior year. I knew I was behind, but I was completely devastated to hear just how far. I was never assigned languages or physical education at the school I previously attended, and that set me back terribly. I came to accept my predicament and do my best through it all.

Now, as I look back on this school year, I feel a great sense of accomplishment. I feel as if I have been rebuilding my education step by step with the continual help and guidance of my independent study teacher.

If I could explain the significance of my journey from many schools to Gorman Learning Center using but one page, I would not write a single word. I would depict a scene with a rope bridge suspending across a raging river. Below in the river, entangled in the branches of a falling tree, is a small raft torn and deserted. Many feet above is a person, thoroughly drenched, grasping the bridge's ropes with both hands confidently making her way across with every careful step. The person has only one regret; that she did not find the way of the bridge sooner.

IST: Diane Sachs

Grade: 11

