Corevel Cova

Final Portfolio

Eng1101

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Literacy Narrative

For my revision of my Literacy Narrative I focused on fixing the format and layout of my piece in conjunction to honing in on one final thought for my conclusion. I took the positives of my professor’s feedback “in a sense, "read" your experience in Tennessee through the lens of \_Animal Farm\_–and also how you were able to read Orwell's text with more vitality and meaning because of your real-life experiences” and channeled this energy into my final conclusion. I was told to use these big thoughts and isolate the final takeaway which I changed in the last paragraph.

Make America Great Again

Also known as “four legs good, two legs bad.”

I am a recent immigrant of America and I came in the year of election of the current sitting president. The importance of this time exponentially increases due to my exact location. I was a university student in the heart of the south, Tennessee. It was home to country music, good barbecue and most importantly, the confederate flag flying high alongside every American flag outside of each suburban household surrounding the campus. I was in the middle of rural predominantly white America and Trump’s strongest base. I was a black foreign person living in a space that was not mine and I realized that I was living Animal Farm in my daily life.

Animal Farm, written by George Orwell, gives the view of the animals on a farm and in the beginning highlights the hard work and terrible living conditions they undergo while the farmer is “lazing around”. The animals bond together and execute an uprising, thereby removing the apparent user. The changes in the power dynamics and the idea of who is deserving of power comes to the forefront and the way the book illustrates the new oppression resounded deeply in my spirit. I was twelve and my worldview of my country’s class structures and communities that I existed in changed. I was twelve and I could see that words not only carry weight but creates emotion and every day one must actively choose to reject herd mentality that creates more oppression so when I continuously heard the mantra “ Make America Great Again” I instantly remembered Snowball’s intentional reduction of the Seven Commandments of Animalism.

“Four legs good, two legs bad.”

 A phrase repeated several times until it was the only thing the sheep remembered from Old Major’s speech on the need for animal unity in the face of human oppression and devolved into the simplicity of its very words. Orwell portrays this repeating example of how the elite class abuses language to control the lower classes. Although the slogan was at surface level helpful at first, enabling them to clarify the essential principles that they were fighting for, it soon becomes a meaningless sound bleated by the sheep (“two legs baa-d”), serving no purpose other than to drown out dissenting opinion. By the end of the novel, the pigs changed the mantra to “ four legs good, two legs better” in so doing, reverting to what the problem was once more. This was my issue with Make America great again. It was reductionist and incendiary and I could not do anything but exist in the farm.

I was boxer the horse, with my head down and since I was not personally affected by the issues African-Americans faced, I continued not noticing the issues with the community I lived in. this was until it directly affected me. The racism and unsheathed hatred that came with this mantra did not affect me within my micro ecosystem of my campus because I was foreign before I was black to those people but I was faced with this reality when I went hiking with my friends. We stopped at a gas station on our way to the hill and I didn’t get out the car along with my Muslim and Spanish friend because as we pulled in a couple of men on a truck stopped washing their cars and went to stand in front the store. My two white female friends went in and got our supplies but the tension for those few minutes was thick with aggression.

“All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others” perfectly describes what I experienced that day. There was a sense of entitlement and superiority laced with the aggression of these men’ actions. The word “equal” becomes a relative term rather than an absolute one, meaning that there can be different degrees of “equal”-ness. The small, almost imperceptible changes within the core ideals of Animal Farm allowed for gradual corruption. Living in America takes a daily mental toll on your holistic development because there may be more avenues for this disparity to be seen. This may seem very despairing in context but the largest difference is that we can choose to let this affect us. I choose strength. I chose to continue to see myself as equal even if others may not. I choose to live in my truth and that is equal to everyone else’s.

Annotated Bibliography

Annotated Bibliography of Reggae Music Lyrics

My professor’s comments rang true when I approached the final portfolio to edit. I recognized my ability to make “smart, interesting and nuanced claims.” I was also advised to take a step back and analyze the bigger picture. “For instance, when you write, "His chorus reinforces his main ideal and in its catchy nature attempts to normalize the concept," I am wondering what about a "catchy" song or beat does the work of normalizing?” (Jewell, 2019) highlighted a possibility that even with all my research I cannot tell my reader what exactly makes a reggae song popular but I can tell you that you are definitely on the right path with a strong uplifting message and a catchy chorus.

Burrell, Orville Richard aka Shaggy. “ Mr. Boombastic”, *Boombastic*.1995

 Shaggy made a feel-good song that inspires confidence in men and sets this ideal of what a man should be for his female audience. His lyrics are smooth, “well you ah d bun to mi cheese” and speaks to a natural synergy between him and the girl he speaks about. He is proclaiming that the girls call him Mr. Boombastic, which is a word he created himself about himself, alludes to his sexual prowess in bed. This entire song talks about how great he is as a “lover” and is what women now expect their men to possess. He speaks to the male population by working both ethos and pathos as the men can both look up to him as sexual goal and a road map of how to become “Mr. Lover Lovers” themselves.“ Boombastic ” is a song released by Jamaican-American musical artist Shaggy from his third studio album, Boombastic. Released in June 1995, the single achieved commercial success in many countries, including Ireland, UK, Sweden, New Zealand, and Australia, where it topped the singles charts. This is an important point of note because even though he uses Jamaican patois, the message of the lyrics is understood across all barriers because the song speaks to the very essence of human interaction. This human interaction is the need to find a significant other and shaggy talks about being the best lover, which in an era of heightened sexuality and awakening was well received.

Hammond, Hugh Beresford aka Beres Hammond. “She loves me now”,*Vinyl single*. 1986

Beres Hammond is relaying the story of the woman who he fell in love with but more importantly, he is asking his listeners to live fully and go with your gut instinct. One can take the story of how the woman called him out of the blue and told him how she left her relationship just on the feeling she felt from their one dance but this is a story from the lovers perspective. Hammond ascribes to the pathos of humanity that there exists love so strong that you just know it is the only thing that makes sense. It gives listeners a dream to look forward to if they haven’t found their “one” and it plays on the forgiveness of those already in love as they cannot see beyond their own feelings. Beres made a ballad that idolizes this perfect love story and created a song that had a fairytale ending while reinforcing woman empowerment because she made the call that made the entire relationship happen. This song was made in a time when women were still supposed to be seen and not heard in Caribbean culture and she was bold in her assertive decision to follow her heart. The singer wants his female audience to feel empowered to get the love they think they deserve and overall for people to be brave enough to live in their truth and thereby live their happiest lives.

Marley, Robert Nesta, aka Bob Marley. “One Love”, *Exodus*. Bob Marley and the Wailers. 1977.

 Bob Marley’s “one love” is rooted in faith, forgiveness and unity. He is imploring his audience to see beyond themselves as individuals and consider their role in society. He effectively uses the children in his chorus to appeal to the innate emotions most adults who bear children acquire. “Hear the children cryin'… Sayin': let's get together and feel all right” is the repeated twice within the chorus and the chorus resonates within the listener several times. By repetition of these phrases, he appeals to the pathos of the listener. Bob is trying to convey our individual need to unite and do better for our community before “Holy Armageddon” or the end of all times. He chose to elaborate on these concepts of faith within his verses but kept his reference only to “Lord” in the chorus. This allows for greater connection across religions because a lot more people believe in some version of a higher being rather than limiting his audience to those of Christianity.

Mcintosh, Winston Hubert, aka Peter Tosh. “Legalize It”, *Legalize It*. 1976.

 Peter Tosh seeks to rally the public to legalize marijuana. He makes his lyrics relatable and by discussing the different professions, he speaks to each of his audience on a personal level to have both tolerance for those who do and to His song uses logos by emphasizing the already rampant presence and use by people across different walks of life. In its second verse, it categorically speaks to the health benefits of using the substance abuse and subsequently in the third paragraph, he elaborates upon its natural origins and how animals use it as well. In this catchy song, Peter Tosh, who had just left his singing group “The Wailers” , he has identified every argument that the naysayers use to continue the ban on weed usage. The stigma that only homeless or purposeless people engage with this substance is counteracted and the idea of it being a natural substance and thereby more deserving of legal status than the manmade substances such as alcohol and cigarettes was reinforced. His chorus reinforces his main ideal and in its catchy nature attempts to normalize the concept. He also uses ethos because as a user himself, and creator of the music, he shows the world that one can be creative and successful while using it. It even begs to the thought of if this increases performance.

McNaughton, Jamal Roland aka Chronixx. “Skankin’ Sweet”, *Chronology*. 2017.

In Skankin Sweet, Chronixx seeks to inspire and motivate his audience through his feel-good music and motivational words. He understands that there are difficulties that we are all facing in this path of life but everything in the song is centered around not giving up but to rally on and find the “upful vibes in his music. He presents relatable situations and gives instructions of how to deal with them. “Under the pressures of life and it tough… Nuh stay down mama, time fi get up… When the bills dem, the rent and the mortgage due..When your best friends are gone and its only you” are all situations that everyone has gone through growing up. His audience’s pathos I severely affected because this music becomes their own life story. The chorus encourages you to put your struggles aside and in that moment, completely enjoy the “skankin’ sweet” music. His chorus are instructions to feel”irie” or good by forgetting one’s troubles and rocking with him for this song. He said to never give up and these pieces of evidence all support the position that Chronixx has taken. This song is intended for both a distraction and instruction of how to get past difficult times in your life and he is effective in appealing to his audience which is anyone going through a rough time in their life. His tone is welcoming and casual and he is offering a solution to the real stresses of life through music and religion.

Simpson, Mikayla, aka Koffee. “Toast”, *Rapture* EP. 2019

 Koffee makes an ode to “Jah” and is giving thanks for all that has happened to her life. This so ng was written after her instant fame and is a praise to who she believes to be the creator and only reasons for everything. In so doing, Koffee inspires the public and aims to make her audience not only remember all that Jah has already done for them but to remember with such a mighty person in your corner, anything is possible. “jah shower blessings pon mi…And say me fi tell you me story (Yeah)...Jah shower blessings upon me” illustrates how she not only believes that Jah wants to use her as a prophet and example but that her success is deeply rooted in her faith. This is another song about how faith can have a positive effect on your life if one lives within that moment how Jah preaches. She promotes gratitude and all successes in your life are blessings and should be treated as such. She feeds the ethos of her audience because not only does she motivate with her own blessings but she gives evidence to those who are already deeply rooted in their faith of the existence of a higher being. She transcends cultures, languages and color as her music speaks to success and things of a higher nature.

Research & Audience

This topic was not only relevant but I felt anger and sadness while researching the material. I was physically trembling when I read how the Booker report and the blasé acknowledgement that a problem exists but there is no desire on those with the power for change. I want people in positions of power to recognize their value and the inhumanity of taking years from someone’s life by over sentencing. This radical choice of audit with the real repercussion of their own possible imprisonment should motivate judges to not be swayed by preconceived notions of racial discrimination.

Research Topic: Judicial reform in New York

I would like to begin by raising the most important point that this is a global issue as what is being done to the black man in the American prison system is being done around the world and oppression must be fought at any and every opportunity. This open letter to the mothers of over-sentenced misrepresented black men and this official letter to the mayor of New York City seek to shed light on a rampant issue as well as provide a solution to the escalating justice system’s problem.

Dear Mr. De Blasio,

In 2010, the Commission published an analysis of federal sentencing data which examined whether the length of sentences imposed on federal offenders was correlated with demographic characteristics of those offenders.1 That analysis found that some demographic factors were associated with sentence length to a statistically significant extent during some of the time periods studied.2 Among other findings, the analysis showed that Black male offenders received longer sentences than White male offenders, and that the gap between the sentence lengths for Black and White male offenders was increasing. The system is flawed. Data has been compiled specifically for this disparity over the last ten years and several reports have been generated with no tangible results. Underprivileged communities of low socio-economic status are still feeling the effects of these harsher sentences and I am asking you to take a stand on this especially in the multicultural haven that you have sworn to provide service for.

New york is a leader to the rest of the United States on legal norms. In 1973, New York’s legislature became the first to pass mandatory minimums for simple drug possession. The [Rockefeller Drug Laws](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/gabriel-sayegh/40-years-rockefeller-drug-laws_b_3238759.html%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank), (named after NY Governor Nelson Rockefeller) mandated extremely harsh prison terms for possession and sale of relatively small amounts of drugs. These laws became the national policy model for the drug war in a period when crack was destroying families. It was necessary then and those who were destroying communities were brought to justice. So why have there been no redress for those who are currently destroying families by condemning more black men than any other race? These judges are without liability and are given too much leeway in this matter.

The "statutory maximum" is the greatest sentence the judge can impose based solely on the jury's fact finding. In a guidelines sentencing scheme that requires judges to impose a sentence within the guideline range, the jury-trial and reasonable-doubt requirements apply to the determination of any fact that exposes the defendant to punishment above the guideline range (conclusions of US v. Booker) however this guideline is in itself flawed as the guideline uses previous sentences for its basis. This allows judges to still do as they please. A guideline for a first time offender on drug charges ranges from probation up to 15 years. Imagine the same offense can have such a range in punishment and to a certain extent it is necessary to leave some things up to the discretion of the judge but they must not be allowed to believe they are Gods. They are simply a tool through which the law is upheld but to ensure servicing of this tool, I beg of you, Blasio, to seek a constant audit of judges to ensure that whether it be every sixth extreme “minimum” sentence or any other prejudice be grounds for investigation.

These investigations must not be without bite and substance as a slap on the wrist cannot overcome deep-seated predisposed racist convictions. There must be risk of these offenses being criminal and these judges who distribute extreme “minimum’ ‘sentences without restraint should in turn feel those years and know what it means to miss out on a child’s birthday or family thanksgiving. Mr. de Blasio, this is not a vengeance request out of personal anger but a possible solution to the huge disparities still present. Just as in 1973, we radicalized the war on crime, let us now be the pioneers on judicial rehabilitation.

Sincerely,

Corevel Cova

Open Letter to the mothers of those serving harsh sentences to be published on FB and essence magazine:

Dear Mama,

I write to you to both apologize for the injustices you have suffered by a system that seeks to break your sons but more importantly to beg of you to stand up and demand what is rightfully yours- justice. America has failed you time and time again and although slavery was technically abolished, the chains of it still exist in the rationale of most white men to this day. The rationale that allows for a white man to be described as a troubled teen and gently escorted away after engaging in mass murder via a school shooting but describes your son as an aggressor that refused to comply when simply attempting to sell his CD’s. This is the same rationale that will give a white man community service for minimum possession as a first time offender but a black boy 3-4years-jail time. The same rationale that will justify this sentencing by saying three years is not a lot but refuse to see how that little black boy could have gotten his degree, seen his child take their first steps and most importantly lived in freedom for those years. This rationale refuses to see how over-sentencing is essentially creating a modern day slavery as it sometimes forever removes their rights to vote if deemed a federal offence while providing free labor in those private prisons under the disguise as “something useful for them to do with their hands”.

I am sorry that this rationale has failed you and your children as this is the rationale that subconsciously allows for judges to create these disparities. These judges have a formal mandate whereby they must follow certain guidelines in sentencing but there is great leeway within the spectrum that allows for this clear disparity between your sons and offenders who share the same color as these judges. However we must not sit in despair and just as you would go up to any bully who threatened your son when they were mere babies, I ask of you to take a stand against the judicial system. We the people are behind you for these men are our fathers, our husbands and our sons and we must protect these positions. I believe only with your faces, your truths will there be change. Change in the judicial system whereby there are tangible punishments to those judges who allow prejudice to give harsher sentences to your sons. You can be the change. Right here. Right now. Let us sign a petition mandating internal review of judges and appropriate punishments. Let us force them to look at the issue and address not in another report but justice must be served and these judges must understand the impact their actions have on your sons.

Thank you for reading.

Corevel

1.<https://www.sentencingproject.org/publications/un-report-on-racial-disparities/>

[2.https://www.huffpost.com/entry/black-white-sentencing-criminal-justice-report\_n\_5a0f8295e4b0e97dffed66a0](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/black-white-sentencing-criminal-justice-report_n_5a0f8295e4b0e97dffed66a0)

3.<https://www.ussc.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/research-and-publications/research-publications/2017/20171114_Demographics.pdf>

4.<https://www.governor.ny.gov/programs/criminal-justice-reform>

5.<http://www.drugpolicy.org/new-york/criminal-justice-reform>

Outline for Final Presentation

I am including what I used to prepare for my class presentation of the Research and Audience assignment. I chose to include this because it was a brief collection of thoughts so that I was properly prepared with what to say. This was done in a time when I was suffering on the personal side of my life but I was able to itemize each point and do a full runthrough of the facts so that I would not have to use physical notes. This is a map of my thoughts and doubts in oral preparation.

Introduction of myself and the topic

Interactive session: eliminate bias and peer influence by having the audience close their eyes.

Tom: 26, accountant , tech firm, manhattan, white male, 0.8g cke and arrested, choose sentencing. Vs Elijah: 25, garbage collector, black man, no college degree, 0.8 g marijuana before it became decriminalized in NY.

Analysis of choices

Details of US v Booker

Rally audience to stand behind cause

Petition distribution.

Short analysis of Amy Tan “ Mother Tongue” reflection

This analysis was done pretty early in the semester while we were preparing for our own truths and expressions to be completed in the literacy narrative discussed earlier in the portfolio. Mother tongue connected with me on several levels and as such in my discussion, I highlighted the idea that English is very community specific. We code switch every day but I didn’t talk about the emotional toll this takes on us. People who grow up with different englishes face a duality of self that can lead to not recognizing one’s true voice. Over the course of the semester I have been recognizing my growth and finally embrace “all the englishes I grew up with” and have found my passion as a writer.

An Analysis of Amy Tan’s Mother Tongue

Completed in partial fulfillment of Unit 1: Writing Your Narrative

“Language is a tool: simple truth complex idea, visual image, evoke an emotion.” Par.1

Amy Tan chose to introduce her story with this line and in so doing foreshadows what she herself chooses to do throughout the story. She manipulates language to incorporate several stories that forces the reader to become engrossed in the material and connect to each situation. Amy Tan’s “all the englishes I grew up with” elaborates upon this idea of English being multifaceted and each facet being just as needed and present in our communities. This foreshadowing reinforces the final highlight at the end of the story.

Tan uses the literary method of comparison and contrast within her examples. Paragraph two illustrates the examples of standardized English taught in schools but not experienced at home with those she loves. This juxtaposes with par.3 whereby she gives the language of love and associates this nonstandard English employed with love and home. Her husband did not notice her code switching because their 20 years of union evoked the same language that is used strictly for family. This idea of language for family and loved ones being different to that of general public use implies the idea of rigidity and indifference being associated with the standard English tongue. There were also examples of comparison and contrast in the physical words used in the examples. The organization or example structure of a word for word “translation” of her broken English: pg. 2 “why he don’t send me check, already two weeks late. So mad he lie to me, losing me money’ and the author in her adolescent tongue said, “ yes, I’m getting rather concerned. You had agreed to send the check two weeks ago but it hasn’t arrived” also illustrates this idea of compare and contrast employed by the writer.

Amy Tan engages in internal reflection in paragraph four and it almost reads as though the author forgets she is talking to the readers but is fighting her internal battles with the contrasting “englishes”.

“I wince as it bothered me that I can think of no other way to describe it other than “broken” as if it were damaged and needed to be fixed, as if it lacked a certain wholeness. “

The author reflects on why she cant find another way to describe it. The realization that society has shaped her to regard her mother as limited or something to be ashamed of, shocks her and forces her to engage in self-analysis as to how her personal views were completely controlled by society. In paragraph five, she elaborates on the correlation that the type of English spoken directly corresponded to the person you were and the complexity of self. When she was growing up, the evidence that reflected this thought pattern was that of her mother’s interactions with even service people. These people who in their own livelihood is generally deemed of lower status were able to look down or judge her mother for her speech.

Ironic word choice: “impeccable broken English” her mother was shouting at the stockbroker in New York. The word choice of having impeccable and broken side by side carries the intended irony that it is perfect and broken. In its brokenness, it is without fault. Her mother was able to bring her point across in her own version of English thereby making it impeccable as communication was facilitated and this is the purpose of language. However by it being broken, it was not received by the opposite party. This was further illustrated when Tan brought up the hospital story. The example of a life and death situation being ignored due to the hospital staff not only inability but moreover lack of desire to accommodate someone who they deem as inconsequential. The barrier of language is not only displayed but also highlighted to ensure that those who cannot ascribe to societal norms are determined lesser beings and in so doing do not deserve equal treatment whether this be in the form of pay, medical care or basic human respect.

In the last paragraph, when she found her reader it was a parallel for her finding herself. She began using all the englishes she grew up with and recognized that no one was less than the other. Neither English nor Chinese structure but she was able to capture the passion and the message, which is what language is all about. Tan manipulated language so that her reader identified with the stories and became Tan. Ass an immigrant, one can personally connect with the stories being told and therefore could have been about any immigrant second-generation woman whose household language is not English. Tan was instrumental in her choice of withholding her heritage and origin language to make it impact a wider range in her audience.

People tend to dismiss what they don’t directly relate to and majority of people in other immigrant cultures would have removed their own emotions from the situation had her origins been highlighted in the introduction. Her organization of the entire prose allowed you to connect and have the examples resonate within. This in itself sparked a parallelism that most people may not have felt before. In so doing, Tan was able to unify all immigrant children as we can all relate to this concept. In contrast to Tan, I can speak on my personal experience of the quality of the English being irrelevant when speaking to certain personnel due to the existence of an accent. Some Americans still mentally block or judge you immediately once an accent is heard. This subtle indicator of difference in identity is seen as lesser than in several states. The mother tongue of an immigrant is not something to be feared or rejected but as illustrated in Tan’s Mother Tongue, it is to be embraced.

Final Reflection Letter

Dear Professor Jewell,

This semester brought its own unique growing pains but this class has provided that consistent avenue for growth and self expression. I have always been a strong writer, reader and thinker and this was due in part to my upbringing but also to my initial speech impediment. I was five years old and unable to communicate my name clearly so I learnt to write it out and spell it out. My vocabulary has always been expansive and my insecurities kept me from ever letting it diminish. Throughout the course of the semester, I feel that I changed my writing style. How I started in the beginning with my personal experience essay and literacy narrative. In my personal essay and literacy narrative I focused more on telling a story, which is something I tend not to do as I dislike talking about myself and the issues that I face.

“We stopped at a gas station on our way to the hill and I didn’t get out the car along with my Muslim and Spanish friend because as we pulled in a couple of men on a truck stopped washing their cars and went to stand in front the store. My two white female friends went in and got our supplies but the tension for those few minutes was thick with aggression” was a moment that rattled me and continued to shape me. I believe we are the summation of our experiences and one of the experiences shook me to my core. Speaking about it in my literacy narrative was cathartic and needed. For this, I thank you for providing this avenue for me to talk about real issues in safe spaces. This to me felt like the start of my growth because I knew what I liked and wanted my writing piece to be and how I wanted to go about achieving that.

By the time we go to the Annotated Bibliography assignment I felt very confident in the classroom because I have had experience with rhetorical analysis. I had an expectation prior to the annotated bibliography assignment. However, this assignment was not what I was expecting. I chose a genre that I felt comfortable doing but what I still wanted to learn about. From my personal reflection to my logic in planning an oral presentation, I have grown in elaboration of my thoughts and clarity of self. Reggae music is crowd inspiring and my largest takeaway as a writer and more so a creative, is that creating a story gives you the power to build new worlds. These worlds reflect or change the world we live in and it is our duty to protect our communities. Every day when choosing to create, we are responsible if that is art or hate.

In my analysis of my oral preparation of my final preparation, I showed several skills I believe I learnt during this semester. I have grown in my public speaking capabilities because I feel as though I have blossomed into my own thought and now have the confidence to not only say any thought but to have conviction in my words. My voice was valid. My voice is valid. Thank you for giving me the platform to share it with the world. Growth is not linear and I believe that this class has placed us into uncomfortable spaces forcing us to examine real issues plaguing our communities. I have honed my analytical and oral skills within the final research and presentation and was able to produce a piece that I was proud of.

This reflection letter specifies growth and literacy. I believe that my literacy has not changed on the purely strict grammar but my understanding and outlook on genres and themes has become more inclusive. In my reflection piece I chose as my final article to highlight, I illustrated growth in themes that I would not usually tackle. I have developed a closer relationship with myself through my creative writing and I started embracing my identity. Amy Tan wrote about the different versions of herself that she has to adopt and I saw myself in her. People who grow up with different englishes face a duality of self that can lead to not recognizing one’s true voice. Over the course of the semester I have been recognizing my growth and finally embrace “all the englishes I grew up with” and have found my passion as a writer.

Regards,

Corevel.