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ENG1101

Unit 1: Education Narrative Essay

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Discovering Reality

As a kid, I enjoyed playing video games and loved the story and world that people made because I liked to believe that I was a part of that world, especially in games like Super Mario and Pokemon. To me, the outside world wasn't as perfect as the games I played. The community I grew up in wasn't the perfect place for a kid. I would see people sleeping in the corner of the deli or in the park, asking for money, and a lot of violence. I would ask myself why I was raised in this type of community and how are people allowing this. As I grew up, I realized that certain people have things that others don't have, even basic things such as a roof over their heads, food, clothes, and money.

I remember my first time leaving Hunts Point. I was around the age of 10 and my sister took me out to eat in downtown Manhattan. We walked toward the closest train station and to this day nothing has changed. It is filled with graffiti, dirty walls and floors, and homeless people sleeping in the station. We enter the train and it's the same as the station, unsanitized and the announcer sounds muffled. But the moment we reached Manhattan, mainly 42nd street, it was

like a whole different world. The Station was filled with ads that weren't broken or painted on and the station itself was super clean. We only live half an hour away, yet it felt like I entered a new country.

During my first day in middle school, our Dean made us do a class exercise where each student was side to side and the Dean would read a statement, if the statement applied to you, you would have to step forward, and at the end of the exercise, the whole class was scattered around the gym. The Dean would explain the exercise and how people are born with different privileges and that we all come from different backgrounds but that doesn't mean we can't reach the finish line. This was the moment that I saw the world for what it was. And after that point, I realized that my parents didn't start the same as me and my siblings.

As I learned more about our government and society, there are people who started the race very behind but were able to achieve things that some would say were impossible for them. One of those people is Oprah Winfrey, she was born to a poor family in rural Mississippi. She suffered a lot of tragedies in her life but was still able to overcome the obstacles in her life. She was the first African American in her state to have a TV show. Now she is a very successful person who I and others look up to because just like her, many people including me in my community are from immigrant families who had nothing when coming to America and are trying to achieve the same level or at least a stable life for ourselves and family.

During quarantine, I would have all this free time and would just watch the news to kill some time. Every day the news would talk about Covid-19 and how they are trying to make a vaccine. But one day while watching the news the reporter talked about how the vaccine could affect lower-income communities and I thought to myself "How can a vaccine affect people just because they are from different communities?". And the reporter went into detail about how

would the government distribute the vaccine and whether people would have to pay for it. I thought to myself again “Wouldn’t everyone just get at the same time and it’ll be free”.

As the month went by and I kept watching and reading the news on the internet, I started to realize why this was a big issue, People who don’t have insurance would have to pay hundreds of dollars just to get the vaccine. People who have Diabetes have to pay 10 to 100 dollars every month with insurance for medication, according to CostHelper. I realized that people in the world can’t afford medication that can save their lives while others can. This open my eyes to what the world was really like little by little.

In my Senior year in Highschool, my English teacher made us write a speech about our life and connect it to a philosopher's philosophy. I wrote my speech about my curious nature and how I like to seek more about the world and how we should live our life. In the speech, I connect my idea to Socrates, who also asks questions about life and the world we live in. One of the quotes that I’ll always remember is “ There is only one good, knowledge, and one evil, ignorance” (Socrates). Since the moment I saw this quote it never left my head. I started to question everything I knew especially how the way the world works and how the government operates.

I look back at my life and the life that my parents lived. I see that my parents had it worse than I did. Both parents grew up in Mexico in a small town. Both of their families were poor and lost their parents at a young age. At a very young age, they had to work and take care of their family, they didn’t have time to be kids. Unlike in America where kids have to decide whether to go to college or work, they weren’t given a choice. My parents decided to leave their families behind and go to America to seek a better life. Both of them worked non-stop in order to even have a roof over their head, they had to share a small apartment with cousins who were already

here. They would end up having four children including me but as I talked to my siblings who are years older than me about the life they lived while being kids, it was a completely different experience than mine.

My parents weren't able to give everything my siblings wanted and even when they moved out, they weren't able to afford a room for each person so my 3 siblings had to share a room. My siblings had to share everything because it was impossible for my parent who worked full time, 6 days a week, to afford each one's individual needs. My upbringing was different and similar in certain aspects. My father would buy anything I wanted compared to my siblings but just like them, I had to share a room with my parents until I was 12.

I realize now that even within my family weren't born the same and given the same thing but in the end, we were able to come out of that small apartment and lived in a house where each person had their own room and was able to get the things we wanted. We no longer worry about bills anymore as we use to. There are still people out there who think it is impossible to get out of their situation but that is not true. People like Oprah or even my family show that it is possible to live a better life and not believe that just because you are born with fewer things doesn't make you lesser than anybody but you'll have to harder than most individuals.