

/r/APStudents Essay Samples

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Please read this first:

1\ Works Cited pages where they should have been are not included ~~because I'm a bad person and I'm too lazy to add them in~~

2\ These are essays I submitted when I took the course. They have not been changed since for the sake of being accurate, even though looking back I think some are pretty horrible.

3\ Some essays were copy-pasted from another text editor, so some words that should be italicized are not.

4\ Plagiarism will always come to bite you back so don't do it. :)

5\ If you would like to contribute to this collection or report an issue, please contact me on the subreddit (/u/plsbork).

6\ If you also want college essay samples, PM me on the subreddit.

AP Lang Essay

Note: I believe this was a synthesis essay.

Self-identity has always been one of the core and founding qualities of being “human”. However, in today’s competitive society, people are becoming increasingly insecure about themselves - the question “Who am I?” suddenly seems inexplicable and redundant. Starting from a young age, students are shaped to be like others - ranging from required school uniforms to copying mainstream celebrity trends. People are taught to adhere to society’s accepted standards or suffer humiliation. This situation in civilization relates exactly to Ayn Rand’s cautionary dystopian novel *Anthem* - warning of a community in which the individual is nonexistent and the collective society is valued. The result is one that is bland yet horrifying, degraded and totalitarian. However, Rand’s novel offers an explanation for the destroyed society: the loss of nature. The rise of new cities and societies, made possible only with the destruction of nature, directly correlates with the loss of individuality and is evident in many aspects of life.

The past couple hundred years have seen sudden massive urban development. According to the Population Reference Bureau, “the world’s urban population has grown from 2 percent to nearly 50 percent of all people...in 1975 only four megacities existed; in 2000 there were 18.” Although this progression may come with benefits such as economic efficiency, the universal move to cities proves to be the biggest black hole for individual identity. If this trend continues, about 70% of the world’s population will be living in cities by 2050. It won’t be that long before the dystopian world depicted in *Anthem* becomes reality - a world in everyone is gathered in close proximity, a world in which small settlements are unknown and nonexistent, a world where everyone is attempting to blend in with everyone else, a world in which a handful authority can easily track and control people like puppets.

To make things worse, as the world continues to urbanize and cities keep growing, it is nature that is taking a heavy toll which directly affects human life. In *Anthem*, nature symbolizes freedom and the individual, “Our dearest one. Fear nothing of the forest. There is no danger in solitude. We have no need of our brothers. Let us forget their good and our evil, let us forget all things save that we are together and that there is joy as a bond between us. Give us your hand. Look ahead. It is our own world, Golden One, a strange, unknown world, but our own.” (Rand 62). Yet ever since human urbanization, the loss of the natural Earth has been exponentially increasing. It is estimated that 16 million hectares of natural forests are demolished each year, and only 22% of original forests remain today (Deforestation). These shocking numbers show how much urbanization has cost the earth, yet what most people do not realize is that the loss of nature is also harming the human race. Much of human imagination first originated from nature, and it is nature that provides the necessary nutrients for human life. Many well-known works of

literature, other than Anthem, such as Tarzan depict the magic that nature can bring to the individual self identity. The protagonists are often unique characters - courageous, loyal, original, and real. When Tarzan was sent back to live in civilization, he felt constricted and restrained - seeing right through the hypocrisy of a supposedly “free” society. Isolation from other humans and interactions with true nature opens an opportunity for an individual to develop his or her own distinct identity without bending to the rigid standards of society.

One can look back at history and see the uniqueness that existed while nature was still intact. Indigenous tribes from all over the world had their own irreplaceable language, culture, and tradition - the land that the United States occupies today alone had over 500 different tribes. And yet despite having seemingly different outward appearances, most tribes shared one thing in common: a respect for nature (Native American Culture). It was only after European invasions and settlement, effectively destroying and urbanizing the very same lands that the tribes had existed in harmony with, that tribes slowly lost their identity and conformed to acting “white”. Although the somber story of such indigenous tribes is still taught in history classes and the society is supposedly learning not to repeat the same tale again, the fact is that the very same thing is happening again today, only amplified: the “invasion” of modern cities on natural Earth and the urbanization movement is not only destroying the last chance for human freedom, but is also sucking more people into the cruel and never-ending cycle of social influence and identity loss. Except this time, it won’t only be the loss of the identity of a few hundred tribes - it will be the loss of all individualistic cultures that the human race has cultivated since the beginning of existence.

Environmental demolition is not a new problem, and it is a complication that cannot be fixed soon - environmental conservation may prove to be the last resort to saving the individual identity. However, although many efforts by groups such as Greenpeace have been made already, it may be too late to reverse the damage, “Energy consumption for electricity, transportation, cooking, and heating is much higher in urban areas than in rural villages. For example, urban populations have many more cars than rural populations per capita. Almost all of the cars in the world in the 1930s were in the United States. Today we have a car for every two people in the United States. If that became the norm, in 2050 there would be 5.3 billion cars in the world, all using energy.” (Population Reference Bureau). The demise of natural resources not only assists with the loss of human identity but it also threatens human existence itself. Urbanization is like an incurable disease that is spreading out towards all aspects of life. The real question is then “Is there anything that can be done?”.

Urbanization needs to come to a screeching halt. Instead of coming into the cities, people need to be moving out of the cities - back to the farmlands, the plains, anywhere away from the confinement of the metropolis and back together with nature. People need to start thinking for themselves instead of binding themselves to the restricted standards set

within a capital. City expansion needs to stop. Deforestation needs to stop. And although this may seem far-fetched now, it is the only solution to preserving individual identity. Nature is the key to finding oneself as evident in Anthem, "I stand here on the summit of the mountain. I lift my head and I spread my arms. This, my body and spirit, this is the end of the quest. I wished to know the meaning of things. I am the meaning. I wished to find a warrant for being. I need no warrant for being, and no word of sanction upon my being. I am the warrant and the sanction." (Rand 72). Nature needs to be preserved as much as possible. And this change needs to start today before there exists a world in the near future where a man looks at his reflection in a reservoir and does not recognize the face staring back as his own.

AP Lang Essay

Can people become successful based on their own hard work and abilities? In his revelatory book *Outliers*, journalist Malcolm Gladwell explores the different factors that lead to success by analyzing the stories and facts of those who became the “outliers”. In Section 3 of *The Matthew Effect*, Gladwell examines unorthodox factors that contribute to the success of Canadian hockey players. Gladwell’s purpose is to identify the differences between the ordinary and the outliers. He creates an informal and conversational tone in order to make his ideas more understandable and to connect with his audience.

Gladwell begins his psychosociological work by presenting data of the 2007 Medicine Hat Tigers and asking the reader to analyze and notice a trend in the table, “Take a close look and see if you can spot anything strange”. By doing this, he guides the audience into engaging with his ideas. He establishes and maintains a constant connection with his reader which not only keeps the reader interested in his book, but makes his ideas more understandable as he guides his audience through the thinking process, as opposed to just presenting the idea flat out. Gladwell also talks about Roger Barnsley, the Canadian psychologist who first discovered the birth-date trend. By doing this, he appeals to the reader’s ethos as there is clear evidence that the Matthew Effect is a legitimate pattern that has been studied before. The way that Barnsley discovered the trend is strikingly similar to the way Gladwell initially presented the problem to the audience, creating an appeal to emotion - pathos - as the reader can relate to Barnsley’s discovery.

In addition, Gladwell also employs literary techniques to create a bigger impact of his ideas on the reader. Colorful diction is employed as he substitutes the player names for their birthdates in a play-by-play, “March 11 starts around one side of the Tiger’s net, leaving the puck for his teammate January 4, who passes it to January 22...”. The similarity of the passage to an actual sports report helps paint clear imagery into his audience and allows them to fully grasp the underlying significance between birthdates and success in hockey. Gladwell also considers all of

his audience by including further description of the situation at hand, “It now sounds like a strange sporting ritual for teenage boys born under the astrological signs Capricorn, Aquarius, and Pisces.”. This not only adds humor to his concept but also allows all audiences, regardless of whether a hockey fanatic or a non-sporting person reading the novel to understand the implications of his ideas.

Outliers is such an entertaining novel not only because of the surprising and revelatory ideas presented but also because of the constant techniques Gladwell uses throughout the novel to keep his audience engaged and to create a lasting impression of his book. The profound effect and significance of Outliers lies in the way that Gladwell masterfully presents ideas and allows his audience to understand them by going through the thought process with him.

AP Lang Essay

One of the core and leading values of journalism has always been the need for truth. Pulitzer Prize winner and non-fiction journalist John McPhee made the key imperatives for journalism very clear, “The nonfiction writer is communicating with the reader about real people in real places. So if those people talk, you say what those people said... You don’t make up dialogue...you don’t get inside their heads and think for them. You can’t interview the dead...Where writers abridge that, they hitchhike on the credibility of writers who don’t.” Many other leading literary journalists support and share the same ideal for truth in journalism as McPhee, however the genre has been blurred and questioned over the years. One of the main concerns involve self-proclaimed “non-fiction” authors that include half-truths, unsubstantiated facts, elaborate lies, and the like, into their work. Many people feel that a definite line between fact and fiction is needed and that all work labeled as “non-fiction” should meet the standards of truthful journalism.

A prime example of a highly debated work in the journalism genre is *In Cold Blood* by Truman Capote, which describes the cruel murder of a family and its aftermath. A result of over five years of research, the novel boasts many accolades and is still well-studied today. However, over the years it has been challenged for its characterization - some claim that the book should be read as fiction because of its fabricated details and false accounts, while others praise Capote for his objective style and ability to convey the characters’ depths. What most people fail to see is that Capote was a novelist using a reporter's approach, and *In Cold Blood* suffered from the difference. Through analysis of the novel, *In Cold Blood* is best read as a work of fiction due to fabricated characterization, dialogue, scenes, and the negative impact it has had on the community as a true account.

An interesting point, and perhaps what drew many critics to the novel, is that Capote claimed that “every word” of his book is true. As Phillip Tompkins remarked, “By insisting that every word of his work is true he has made himself vulnerable to those readers who are prepared to examine seriously such a sweeping claim”. Just a few pages into the book and the reader can already see the extensive fill-in-the-blanks Capote has done, “At last, after September, another

weather arrives...As Mr. Clutter contemplated this superior specimen of the season, he was joined by a part-collie mongrel..." (Capote 11). The passage certainly paints clear imagery, but there are major flaws as well. First of all, by the time Capote began investigating the case and collecting his data, Mr. Clutter was dead. It is impossible for one to consult the dead. It is even more impossible for one to know the thoughts of the dead. Take for example another passage, "It was as though by keeping this room impersonal, by not importing her [Mrs. Clutter's] intimate belongings but leaving them mingled with those of her husband, she lessened the offense of not sharing his quarters" (Capote 29).

(cont paragraph) Although Capote announces his intrusion with a "it was as though", almost as if giving himself a right to speculate, no one knows if Mr. Clutter was even insulted that they did not share a room. Another problem with such detailed characterization is that the portrayal almost entirely depends on Capote's own impression of the character. For example, Capote was known for having an especially close relationship to Perry, one of the murderers, and thus the description of him is also shed in positive light, "His tiny feet, encased in short black boots with steel buckles, would have neatly fitted into a delicate lady's dancing slippers; when he stood up, he was no taller than a twelve-year old child..." (Capote 15). Capote employed diction when it came to anything about Perry and thus the reader is led to build up sympathy for him because of the way he is portrayed.

Much of the substances in *In Cold Blood* are dialogues that Capote had supposedly collected from his research. But in his autobiography *Truman Capote: Conversations*, Capote states that he had "the auditory version of photographic memory" and trained himself to become a "human tape-recorder", and that he never took notes down during interviews. In following with regular journalistic practices, Capote cites and mentions many real sources into his narrative, including victim Nancy Clutter's personal diary and writing from both killers and their friends and family. Although he claimed the dialogue featured in the book were accurate, it quickly becomes obvious, by just the sheer amount of detailed speech in the account that was supposedly memorized, that Capote had edited or fabricated them in order to recreate fictional conversations and events. For example, Capote somehow managed to portray a private conversation between the Clutters before their murder,

(cont paragraph) "It's so peculiar, but I keep smelling cigarette smoke."

"On your breath?" inquired Kenyon.

"No, funny one. Yours."

That quieted him, for Kenyon, as he knew she knew, did once in a while sneak a puff - but then, so did Nancy. (Capote 19)

One would wonder how Capote knew that the Clutter children had a habit of sneaking a smoke in, let alone how he recorded this particular conversation a day before their murder, if both sides of the party were deceased. Similar, near-impossible conversations for Capote to record - for example private conversations between the killers - are scattered throughout the account, making the reader doubt the credibility of the story as a whole.

In addition, many people who were interviewed by Capote or were connected to the case claim that they were misquoted or depicted incorrectly. Beverly English and Eveanna Mosier, the surviving Clutter daughters, were insulted that their mother was described as an ill recluse, among many other misrepresentations. "Mr. Capote did not honor his agreement, nor did he talk to any family members or friends who could have provided accurate and reliable information about the family," English said in an interview with Journal-World. "The result was his sensational novel, which profited him and grossly misrepresented our family." Another case of a misrepresented person is K.B.I agent Harold Nye, who was described quite antagonistically in the novel, "The youngest of the K.B.I group, Harold Nye, who was a peppy man of thirty-four with restless, distrustful eyes...none of the persons he questioned, and none of the questions he asked, produced useful information..." (Capote 85). Such a description seems quite biased Nye says of the account, "What I did in Las Vegas, the people I talked to out there, it just was not written truthfully... It was probably an insignificant thing, except I was under the impression that book was going to be factual, and it was not; it was a fiction book".

In *Cold Blood* is an account of a murder that ultimately suffered because of Capote's imagination and love for his own words. Whether Capote relied too much on his perhaps not entirely accurate memory to store quotes, or whether he felt the embellishment of certain events was necessary to his artistic project, many people felt he crossed the line between literary flexibility and downright lies. However, despite all of this, *In Cold Blood* would never have been

as chilling, and reached the fame as it has today, had he not added in his own imaginative details. Capote managed to show that a more personal, psychological perspective on a case results in a surprisingly interesting novel. But, as the commotion surrounding the book shows, it is best to stick to the facts when writing journalistic works.

AP Lit Essay

1984 vs. The Jungle

Society can be changed in many ways - it can be through a cultural shift, an influential figure, technological advances, cornerstone literary works, and more. Two such literary works that have instigated profound change for the better are *1984* by George Orwell and *The Jungle* by Upton Sinclair. Whereas Orwell creates a dystopian future to convey the dangers of a totalitarian government, Sinclair recounts the tale of an immigrant worker to reveal underlying corruption in the world. By analyzing both authors' use of metaphor and tone to convey the journey of the protagonists, it is apparent that Orwell is more successful in using these tools to create a lasting message in *1984*.

In *1984*, Orwell heavily relies on inanimate metaphors to convey the importance of the past. The glass paperweight is one such symbol of Winston's connection with the past. As the Party has wiped out crafts of such beauty, Winston senses a strong connection to the now-extinct paperweight - which to Winston, represents not only the room that he and Julia find temporary haven in but also the hope that remnants of the past may still survive. Orwell uses the glass paperweight as a foreshadowing of Winston's ultimate fate - as he is caught by the Thought Police, the glass paperweight smashes. Orwell implies that under a totalitarian regime, Winston's wish is futile and that it is not possible to preserve memories of the past.

On the other hand, Sinclair uses animalistic metaphors to relate the characteristics of Packingtown and its citizens to that of a jungle. One such metaphor is the rat, which, according to Sinclair, is so prevalent in the meat packing factories that they often get mixed in with sausage production, as well as in other practices. Towards the end of the novel rats make yet another appearance, "When they found [Stanislovas] the rats had killed him and eaten him nearly all up" (Sinclair 300). The appearance of rats in every street and even in the factory symbolize how Packingtown reeks of corruption. In addition, rats are scavengers, and Sinclair conveys that the system of corruption is similar - the structure feasts on the lowest class of society, often killing them, as shown by Stanislovas' death. This works into the novel as a whole by drawing parallels from nature to society as Sinclair questions the morality of so-called civilization, and encourages the reader to do the same.

However, the use of such metaphors often detracts from Sinclair's actual message. Instead of being concerned about the horrible labor working conditions, the reader is instead focused on the grossness of rats and filth of consumer meat, thus failing to see the connotation Sinclair is using throughout the novel. As Sinclair is reported to have said about the success of *The Jungle*, "I aimed at the public's heart, and by accident I hit it in the stomach". On the other hand, Orwell's glass paperweight is more neutralized unlike rats - which allows Orwell to craft the object to his desired meaning without any predetermined bias from the reader. Thus, he can effectively use it to symbolize the past and the reader can clearly see and understand the inherent danger the moment the paperweight breaks apart.

Orwell also writes in a gloomy and plain tone throughout *1984* not only to reflect on the dismal atmosphere but also to represent life in a restrictive society. Orwell immediately dives into this at the beginning of the novel, "The hallway smelt of boiled cabbage and old rag mats. At one end of it a coloured poster, too large for indoor display, had been tacked to the wall" (Orwell 1). However, the use of such tone coupled with the clear picture it paints in the reader's mind plays to Orwell's advantage, as it fully emerges the reader into the terrifying dystopian world that *1984* warns of. As the plot progresses, Orwell continues use of such tone and even references the reader when Winston says, "Nothing was your own except the few centimeters inside your own skull" (Orwell 26). The bluntness of Winston's statements throughout the book and the apparent directness to the audience helps Orwell engage the reader into the world of *1984* and the terrifying atmosphere it imposes on self-aware citizens like Winston.

Similarly, Sinclair also uses a gloomy tone with a touch of self-depreciation towards the end of *The Jungle*. As Jurgis reunites with his relative after facing many difficulties he laments, "...it seemed to him that the memory of old times ought to have ruled her. But then he laughed at himself for being a fool" (Sinclair 299). This is a sharp contrast from Jurgis' attitude at the start of the novel, where he would strongly believe in himself and proclaim "I will work harder" (Sinclair 24). The shift in Sinclair's tone represents the change in Jurgis' beliefs from expectation to reality, as he finally comes to see what Chicago and the American dream is really about - a false promise only obtainable through corruption. The reader sees this change in Jurgis' thoughts

and Sinclair uses this timeline to portray capitalism at its worst, later on offering socialism as a hopeful remedy to the problems depicted in *Packertown*.

The tone in both novels contribute to the idea that the protagonists are ultimately used like tools by higher powers and unable to control their own lives. Yet Orwell does a better job of conveying this through concise and memorable phrases, as he gives readers a chance to immerse themselves into the scene through second person references. Contrastingly, the use of a similar tone in *The Jungle* simply allows the reader to witness a tragedy in the making. It is hard for readers to place themselves within the harsh *Packertown* society due to Sinclair's specificity to Jurgis and his family without any address to the audience unlike *1984*.

Through the glass paperweight and use of gloomy tone, Orwell illustrates the dynamic character Winston is - from a man willing to risk his life to illegally write in a diary, to yet another citizen broken by the systematic Party regime. Winston's problems effectively stem from his memory of the past because without those memories he would not find fault with the current society he lives in. The story of Winston's ultimate defeat in claiming a free world is a warning from Orwell of the totalitarian governments arising at the time of writing the novel, such as the Nazis and the Soviets. Orwell writes about the powers such governments can have, "Who controls the past controls the future: who controls the present controls the past" (Orwell 247). In the end, Orwell conveys that the individual is not strong enough to overcome the forces of such repressive regimes and that it is important to preserve the past in order to protect the future.

On the other hand, through the use of animalistic metaphors and self-depreciative tone, Sinclair implies that society is parallel to that of a jungle, and that one must fight to survive. Through these tough conditions, Jurgis learns that the odds are fully stacked against him which ultimately causes him to give up his optimism. Jurgis' misfortune ultimately stems from his futile faith in the American dream. If he had stayed in his home country, he would not have been broken down into the man that he was by the end of the novel. Sinclair shares Jurgis' failure to not only remind people the dangers of a capitalistic society and the corruption that comes with it, but also to remind that the other side of the grass is not always greener and that hope should be well-placed.

Comparing the way both novels convey their unique messages, it is evident that *1984* is the more effective text because Orwell chooses clear metaphors and fully immerses the reader into the world of Oceania. The message in *1984* is timeless and will forever serve as a warning of a totalitarian regime to people of any race, age, or culture. *The Jungle*, although also a great text, is more like a horror movie - it's revelatory and terrifying, but whether the reader feels compelled to help change the conditions portrayed is subjective. Sinclair's muckraking novel is more impactful back when technology did not allow for such vast and quick communication to reveal the truth behind systems like those in Packingtown. In addition, the use of graphic imagery in *The Jungle* ends up being overkill - the core message of the unfair labor conditions is overlooked, and the spotlight is instead focused on the questionable quality of consumer meat. *1984* succeeds more in that Orwell takes into account the audience and their experience while reading the novel, thus he is able to create a stronger message by connecting to them.

AP Lit Essay

Throughout history, women have constantly been suppressed - used as slaves and regarded as a lower class. However, the original tale of the Chinese woman warrior Fa Mulan from *The Ballad of Hua Mulan* has persevered through time, serving as a shining role model for all girls who have been repressed by such societal systems. Two other retellings of the legend are the chapter *White Tigers* in Maxine Hong Kingston's novel *Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood Among Ghosts* and Disney's animated movie *Mulan*. All three versions convey the aptitudes of the female character, but do so by highlighting different portions of Mulan's journey, adapting the story in different contexts, and including varying degrees of fantastical elements which ultimately place emphasis on distinct subthemes.

In *The Ballad of Hua Mulan*, the narrator dedicates a large portion of the poem to describing Mulan's preparation before the battle in order to symbolize her departure from family. As Mulan joins the army, the author observes: "She doesn't hear the sound of Father and Mother calling / She only hears the Yellow River's flowing water cry tsein tsein" (Ballad 24). By failing to hear her parents' calls, Mulan is leaving her regrets behind and looking forward to her goal of serving the nation. Similarly, in Kingston's reimagination, much of the story recounts how Mulan underwent rigorous training on the mountain in order to prepare for the upcoming obstacles, "The two old people led me in exercises that began at dawn and ended at sunset...after five years my body became so strong that I could even the dilations of the pupils inside my irises" (Kingston 23). However, as Mulan trains, Kingston imagines her to be constantly worrying about her parents, in contrast to the original version which portrays how Mulan left her regrets behind in order to serve her country. Kingston's version indicates Mulan's steadfast responsibility to her

family is what drives her to succeed rather than other factors. On the other hand, in Disney's adaptation, more stress is placed on the trials Mulan faces during war. The movie shows in-depth Mulan's intelligence and courage in many scenes, including one where she outsmarts a horde of Hun soldiers. However, after the success of her brave plan everything quickly goes downhill when General Shang discovers Mulan's true identity and kicks her out of the Imperial Army, "She's a girl, she'll never be worth anything" (Mulan). By including such detail, the Disney adaptation shows how there will always be obstacles in achieving equal rights across gender lines, and that it is important to fight through such times in order to succeed.

In addition, Kingston writes about Mulan from her own point of view to clearly illustrate the larger role Mulan plays. She interprets Mulan to be fated as a woman warrior and a female avenger, as Mulan's back is carved with revenge to symbolize that her brave actions are eternal. Kingston concludes Mulan's story in line with traditional Chinese culture when Mulan turns back on the boundary she crossed to return to womanhood, "From the words on my back, and how they were fulfilled, the villagers would make a legend about my perfect filiality" (Kingston 45). Kingston implies that despite all the fame Mulan could have received for her victories in war, her responsibility still lies with her family. Likewise, *The Ballad of Hua Mulan* conveys the importance of family in Chinese culture but through a third person narrator. After the battle is won, the Khan asks Mulan what she most desires to which she replies, "Mu-lan has no use for a minister's post / I wish to ride a swift mount / To take me back to my home" (Ballad 42). However, Mulan is able to retain her role as a warrior woman in Disney's *Mulan*, with the Emperor even publicly praising her efforts. Furthermore, when she returns home, her Father breaks away from Chinese tradition by setting aside the gifts Mulan received from the Emperor

and saying, “The greatest gift and honor...is having you for a daughter” (Mulan). The Disney tale crafts the ending in an idealistic world - one where a woman can finally break through the “glass ceiling”. By allowing Mulan to fulfill her filial duties while continuing to serve the nation, the movie conveys that it is possible to live the best of both worlds by taking care of family while pursuing a dream.

All three versions also weave in a fantastical element to demonstrate the enormity of Mulan’s actions and emphasize her power not only as a female, but as a warrior. In the Disney adaptation, this element is toned down in comparison to the other two as the limit of Mulan’s power stays much within the realistic realm, but magic appears in the form of Mushu, Mulan’s dragon companion. He accompanies her throughout the journey and offers encouragement when she needs it most, “That’s what I’m talking about! There’s my tough-looking warrior girl! Now go out there and make me proud!” (Mulan). Although he often serves as a comical foil, his willingness to help Mulan through her trials shows that in order for Mulan to achieve success and acceptance, some form of assistance is required - whether it be peer support or sheer luck. In contrast, the other two adaptations extend the facet of magic even further by giving Mulan herself heightened powers. In *White Tigers*, Mulan almost becomes a deity, “...I could point at the sky and make a sword appear, a silver bolt in the sunlight...” (Kingston 33). Likewise, in the original ballad, the narrator describes Mulan as she goes into battle: “She goes ten thousand miles on the business of war / She crosses passes and mountains like flying” (Ballad 29-30). The exaggeration of her powers in both these versions suggest that Mulan’s triumph is a miracle and that perhaps her legend is only possible in a fantasy world, in contrast to the Disney version which implies the empowerment of women can be achieved with a supportive community.

Each adaptation of Mulan's legendary tale shows a unique perspective on the role of women in society, but all three stories have helped empower the female community and given hope to young girls who may feel oppressed by societal norms. *The Ballad of Hua Mulan* and Kingston's reimagination in *White Tigers* are more similar in that they both follow Chinese tradition closely by emphasizing the importance of family duty through Mulan's eventual return home, whereas Disney's *Mulan* breaks away from that norm to explore an idealistic world in which a woman can carve her own path. Thus, Disney is able to extrapolate the lessons from the other two versions of the legend to create a hypothetical scenario of a progressive society in which *all* women can break the glass ceiling and be heroes like Mulan.

✓ nice Lit Essay

✓ • Oftentimes the lessons learned from stories can be applied on a much larger scale. In Chinua Achebe's groundbreaking novel *Things Fall Apart*, the protagonist, Okonkwo, is an example of a man whose ~~man~~ story many can relate to. His journey from being a highly respected warrior to a man not even given a proper burial highlights the fatality of human flaws. However, Achebe also paints Okonkwo's merits as a loyal clansman and upholder of traditional values. Thus, Okonkwo is representative of not only tragedy resulting from flaws, but also a hero of a man misjudged ~~for~~ fighting for his original cultures and rejecting outside influence, and of the fate of many minor cultures. ✓✓

✓ At the beginning of the novel, Achebe describes Okonkwo as the ideal Umuofian villager: strong, war-like, masculine. However, later on the reader discovers that these traits are a result of intense hatred of his father, rather than a ~~personal~~ pure goal to be a role model in the village. Thus, this flaw - of striving to be the antithesis of his father over anything else - sets up Okonkwo's demise. A combination of mistakes and misfortune follow Okonkwo as his desire to be masculine overrides the love for his family ~~which~~ to the point where he willingly slashes his son to pieces in order to appear strong in front of his clansmen. His demise, from being exiled to feeling disconnected with the village he once knew upon his return, is the epitome of a tragic character in all works. ✓ ~~fiction~~ His stubbornness in unwilling to waver in his portrayal of masculinity results in both a social rejection and self-destruction as the villages slowly change due to white influence and Okonkwo, feeling helpless, kills himself to avoid succumbing to such humanly change. Thus, Achebe effectively illustrates ✓

great He-in

how a fatal flaw can truly destroy a man.

TS However, despite this fatal flaw, ~~and~~ and despite Okonkwo's eventual demise, Achebe portrays another side of the man: as a hero who died as a martyr rather than an outcast. Throughout the entire novel, Okonkwo was steadfast in upholding his village's customs and traditions despite ~~being~~ being exiled for an atrocious crime. This loyalty remains even upon arrival of white settlers, to whom many villagers have succumbed their beliefs to. Even when all hope is seemingly lost when the top clansmen are held captive by the colonists, Okonkwo doesn't lose faith and instead plans ahead to convince his fellow villagers to revert to their original cultures at the next village gathering. Okonkwo is able to suffer through social and physical rejection and physical abuse from the new settlers in the belief that he can bring about change to his brainwashed village. Thus, it is at this moment where Achebe demonstrates ~~that~~ Okonkwo's strengths and values despite his fatal flaw of hatred ruling his earlier actions.

upon his return

From this, Achebe conveys several messages with Okonkwo's story. First and foremost is the danger and destruction that comes with fatal flaws, and in this case it is Okonkwo's overarching hatred for his father. Achebe also shows that despite these flaws, people still have merit as shown by Okonkwo's steadfast loyalty to his village's original traditions and flaws. Okonkwo's suicide is a product of both his fatal flaw and loyalty as he feels responsible for letting the clan degrade into such a state where original culture and customs are diminishing by the minute. His death is also representative of minority cultures as a whole - the struggle to fight against European influence and to preserve identity, usually to no avail. Through Okonkwo's characterization as a tragic hero, Achebe is able to ~~point the states of~~ convey there ~~are~~ is always ~~to take more~~ than a positive role to a person and demonstrate the destruction of culture and tradition as witnessed by Okonkwo's failure to prevent his village to succumbing to white influence.

A clear, well-written, tightly organized essay.

Nice job,

AP 9 98

APUSH Essay

Note: Unfortunately, I don't have the documents, but I'm quite certain it's one of the common ones found online.

The position of the United States in the world has constantly changed since the birth of the nation. George Washington once made the famous Proclamation of Neutrality, in which he wished for America to not get entangled with other countries' affairs. This ideal, over time, became part of the American identity. However, throughout history, America has always struggled to keep this neutrality. World War I served to prove how factors such as international relations, nationalism, and propaganda propelled America to change its stance on neutrality and become involved in global affairs.

Before the war, the United States traded relatively equally with European countries (Document B). This showed how the United States aimed to stay out of wars and remain with neutral in the world, upholding Washington's Proclamation of Neutrality. It was also important for America to uphold commerce with different countries in order to regulate the economy. However, this was threatened when the Germans attacked British steamship Lusitania, killing over 100 Americans (Document C). This caused massive outrage and war fever had begun to spread across the nation, but speeches such as one by Senator Robert M. La Follette attempted to settle these matters peacefully in order to continue neutral commerce and observe the principle of freedom of the sea (Document G). At this point leading up to the war, many Americans still favored upholding neutrality, which led to isolationist America in world affairs.

Another important factor in America's stance on the war was the need to preserve the American identity. Neutrality had become part of the American spirit, and many people desired to uphold it. President Wilson, well-known for his desire to keep America out of war, expressed this in his speech to the Senate, in which he stated "Every man who really loves America will act and speak in the true spirit of neutrality" (Document A). Thus, Wilson fought hard to keep America out of the war. The struggle to keep neutrality and the American spirit continued on after the disputes with Germany, as evident in another speech by President Wilson, "Only a peace the very principle of which is equality and a common participation in a common benefit" (Document D). This important sense of American identity and pride continued on even during times of war, as evident in the song Over There which chants enthusiastically, "The Yanks are coming, the Yanks are coming" (Document H). Regardless of whether it was peacetime or wartime, the American spirit stayed strong and was one of the most important factors in making decisions for the country.

In addition, propaganda helped garner public support for the war, which ultimately pushed America into World War I. The intercepted Zimmerman note which speculated of a

Mexican alliance to later re-conquer lands caused waves of outrage across the country, fueling the war attitude even further (Document E). People were extremely angered that American lands were at risk and wanted to defeat Germany even more for suggesting such a horrendous plan. Posters such as “Destroy this mad brute” depicted Germany as an uncivilized gorilla, which encouraged people to join the army and help with the war (Document I). Support for the war was at an all time high, and people of all different races and gender were playing different roles in helping with the war. This strong sentiment across the country allowed President Wilson use the public support to persuade Congress to drop the stance on neutrality and support the war effort (Document F). The power of the media and propaganda show how paramount of a role the voice of the public is in the American democracy in deciding American affairs.

Ultimately, the combination of the need to keep up international relations, nationalism, and propaganda resulted in America’s changed role in the world. The once-isolationist country quickly became the “policeman of the world”. Public opinion and voice was truly the steering wheel of the new, emerging power that was the United States. World War I marked the end of true American neutrality, and that would become evident in later world affairs such as World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War in which America would play huge roles in.