

The Humanitarian

Current Events and Personal Experiences from the Humanities



Photo Received from Art. Hdez from 500px, and Edited by Aaron DePass in Photoshop Express

About The Humanitarian

The Project

I created this newspaper for my MYP Personal Project. This project is outside the curriculum of regular school, and gives students going into the IB Program the opportunity to create something personally interesting to them. This project is mandatory to all MYP students who are going into the IB Diploma Program.

"The personal project is the major interdisciplinary project you do to show that you are an effective learner with the range of necessary skills to be ready to progress to the next stage of your learning. You have to complete and submit a personal project during the final year of the MYP"

My Project

When starting this project I had much confusion in what direction to take, and really figuring out how I could optimize this opportunity of creating my own personal project. Because of this, I spent almost my whole 9th grade summer trying to create interesting, and creative ideas. Eventually, I came to a realization that all my ideas were too ambitious, so I ended up scrapping three well developed ideas before my I came to my final one. Near the end of the summer I decided to do something more realistic. When I was looking through examples of other successful projects I recognized that other students really knew what they were passionate about, and displayed it through their projects. My initial dilemma was not that I didn't have an idea for a project, but what passion I wanted to portray through my project. What I found out is that I didn't really know much about my interest at all. Through this newspaper I want to further explore my interest in life, in a completely independent and new way.

I know I've always been interested in news, journalism, the humanities, and education. I'm also fascinated by the act of seeking and learning information freely and independently. So I thought creating a newspaper was the best vehicle to achieve these two passions of mine. However, I thought that this idea of a newspaper wasn't necessarily living to the potential I wanted it to be. I wanted it to be more than just news or events about the humanities; I wanted it to engage other students with like goals and minds. One of my greatest disappointments in my generation (and I am cer-

tainly a victim of it) is that everyone is so caught up in a rat race in the academic arena. Everyone is trying to get the best standardized test score, the best grades, and the best GPA, which is of course important, but we never have the time to contribute to anything bigger than the classroom. I believe that when students are informed, inspired, and lead they can accomplish marvelous things. I also believe that when people are informed about the world around them they want to contribute to it and the main problem in this generation is that students aren't informed about other things than the curriculum in class. Through this newspaper I want to empower and inspire students to contribute and become more involved in society through being more informed about our world and the interesting and problematic things happening in it.

Some unique techniques I wanted to portray this goal you might realize integrated in the articles. Some examples include using components of the IB Learner Profile to show what certain characteristics are used to be a successful humanitarian in that subject matter, and to show how it overlaps with the IB philosophy. Another one is the "Questions to Consider" segment of the article in where readers are encouraged not only to read about someone's opinion, but to form their own. Another technique I used was the "Call to Action" segment in where i push readers to become doers, and to actually apply the information they've consumed and do something with it. All of these techniques were used in efforts of transforming students into inquirers, doers, and most importantly Humanitarians.

The Purpose

The Topic: Learning to completely explore my interest through seeking knowledge and delivering it through a newspaper. Learning to academically engage and inspire others students through the distribution of information and knowledge.

Primary Goals:

1. To empower and inspire students to contribute and become more involved in society through being more informed about our world and the interesting and problematic things happening in it.
2. To further explore my interest in life, in a completely independent and new

way.

Inquiry Question:

How can I engage young students to become more involved in society through being more involved and informed of humanitarian events and problems occurring in a developing world?

Area of Interaction:

Approaches to Learning:

I was really attracted to this area of interaction because I was originally fascinated by the act of learning independently and without restrictions. I loved the idea of going to summer programs, going to museums, or even just going to the library and simply learn anything that satisfied your curiosity. Over the time of the project, that evolved into really wanting to see how my thoughts, actions, and experiences in life and through learning influenced other people's learning. I also chose this area of interaction because it enabled me to demonstrate the global learning aspect of my goal, which is to allow students from all over the world to read this newspaper, learn independently, and apply that it to their community no matter where they live. With this area of interaction I was able to use the IB Learner Profile which gave my readers a premise on what type of qualities they could use to accomplish the things they want to in their learning pursuit. These profiles not only helped gave me and my readers a premise for learning more, but also some insight to what a humanitarian is. The Learner Profiles include inquirers, knowledgeable, thinkers, communicators, principled, open-minded, caring, risk-takers, balanced, and reflective which can all fit into someone who promotes human welfare in society. My overall dream for this project is for students to find the significance of being a knowledgeable person in a developing world. Hopefully students will see how easy it is from my Newspaper "The Humanitarian", or any newspaper, to simply read about a topic, find interest in it, and then grow on that. Whether it be starting a club at your local library about a poet that you found interesting in my newspaper, contacting your local government about a political issue or initiative you found in my newspaper, starting a protest or petition about a certain law or regulation you saw in my newspaper, or even forming your own opinion in something and growing that. I want students to become more involved and contribute to the world

around them, and the only way to do that is if they are informed.

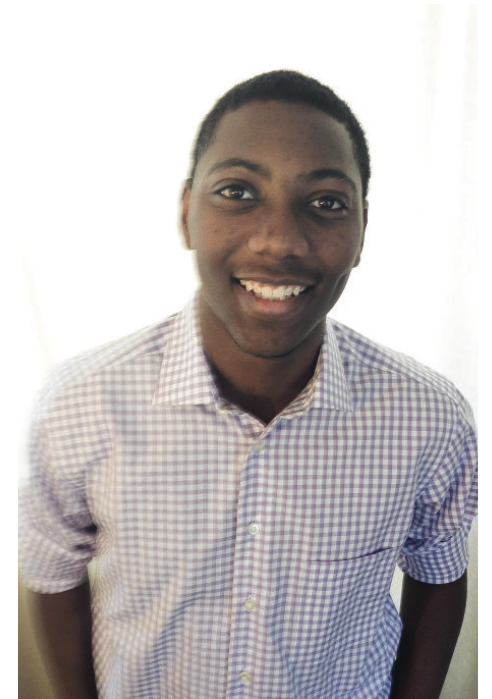


Photo taken by John DePass, and Edited by Aaron DePass in Photoshop Express

About the Author

I've always been extremely interested in learning and I've always have had an intellectual curiosity as a young student. As a student in middle school I fell in love with English and History. Because of my interest in these subjects I was pushed by my teachers to excel in the assignments, so often they would give me extra assignments and have very high expectations of me. Having to do more advanced work than your peers may seems dreadful, however that advanced work and the encouragement of my teachers forced me to delve deeper into the humanities which simply expanded my interest in the humanities. Because of all my support in middle school from all my teachers I was leaving middle school and going into high school being fascinated by ideas, philosophies, theories, ideas, laws, etc. Unfortunately, the work load difference from middle to high school is very different. With an increase in the amount of work I had in ninth grade compared to eight grade I didn't have much room to continue my exploration of the humanities. When I was presented this project I was stuck at a point in where I knew what interested me, but i didn't know much about it. I decide to take this opportunity of not only informing myself about what interest me, but to inform and empower others through writing about it.

Why The Humanities?



Photo Received from Federico Venuda from 500px, and Edited by Aaron DePass in Photoshop Express

Why should I read this newspaper?

If you're one of those people who believe the humanities are just an unsubstantial subject matter that provides no value, and are probably wondering "why am I even reading this newspaper?" I think this newspaper will be good for you. I hope that not only skeptics, but all readers have a spark of curiosity after reading these articles by Stanford University. Stanford University has one of the best schools of humanities and sciences. On their website "The Human Experience - Inside the Humanities at Stanford University" there are multiple articles on the humanities. Below are two articles that I believe exhibit the importance of the humanities and why we should all appreciate it as a legitimate subject matter of education. If you want to read these articles yourself or find out more about Stanford Humanities, or the humanities in general please visit <http://humanexperience.stanford.edu/>

Why are The Humanities Important?

Insights Into Everything

Through exploration of the humanities we learn how to think creatively and critically, to reason, and to ask questions. Because these skills allow us to gain new insights into everything from poetry and paintings to business models and politics, humanistic subjects have been at the heart of a liberal arts education since the ancient Greeks first used them to educate their citizens.

Understanding Our World

Research into the human experience adds to our knowledge about our world. Through the work of humanities scholars, we learn about the values of different cultures, about what goes into making a work of art, about how history is made. Their efforts preserve the great accomplishments of the past, help us understand the world we live in, and give us

tools to imagine the future.

Bringing Clarity to the Future

Today, humanistic knowledge continues to provide the ideal foundation for exploring and understanding the human experience. Investigating a branch of philosophy might get you thinking about ethical questions. Learning another language might help you gain an appreciation for the similarities in different cultures. Contemplating a sculpture might make you think about how an artist's life affected her creative decisions. Reading a book from another region of the world, might help you think about the meaning of democracy. Listening to a history course might help you better understand the past, while at the same time offer you a clearer picture of the future.

How is Humanities Research Reshaping Our Future?

Examining the Past to Understand the Future

Humanities research often involves an individual professor researching in a library in order to write a book. The books that result from this study are part of an ongoing dialogue about the meaning and possibilities of human existence that reaches back to ancient times and looks forward to our common future.

Scholar Collaboration

However, humanities research also draws from other sources and often requires alternative methods of investigation. A research project may involve several professors from different universities sharing information in an on-line forum. A professor may collaborate with a colleague in another area of study to gain alternative perspectives on a topic.

A scholar might publish research in-progress in an on-line journal to solicit feedback from others in her field. Some professors develop projects with the classroom in mind and engage their students in research projects. Other projects require the gathering of original information by doing fieldwork which could entail interviewing people, unearthing artifacts or documenting the history behind an archive of photographs.

An Interpretive Approach to Research

A hallmark of humanistic study is that research is approached differently than in the natural and social sciences, where data and hard evidence are required to draw conclusions. Because the human experience cannot be adequately captured by facts and figures alone, humanities research employs methods that are historical, interpretive and analytical in nature.

Professors who engage in humanities research are often posing questions about common assumptions, uncovering new meanings in artistic works, or finding new ways to understand cultural interactions. This type of inquiry can produce clearer pictures of the past, uncover the many insights that we can draw from our forbears, and in turn, help us better to prepare for the future.

Remember your humanity and forget the rest. - **Albert Einstein**, Nobel Prize winning physicist

While thought exists, words are alive and literature becomes an escape, not from, but into living. - **Cyril Connolly**, English literary critic and editor

1. "Why are the humanities important?" - <http://humanexperience.stanford.edu/why>

2. "How is humanities research reshaping our future?" - <http://humanexperience.stanford.edu/how>

Social Movement



Photo Taken by Aaron DePass

March on Washington; Then and Now

Last summer my 80 year old grandfather and I attended the 50th year anniversary of the March on Washington Speech by Martin Luther King Jr. I attended the march for many reasons. Some were that I really felt like it was important for me to have a greater appreciation of the event and the consequences it had on the African-American community. This event was an opportunity for me to get a new and different perspective of the black community and realize what the March on Washington truly meant for the black community then and now. I also saw this as an opportunity to honor MLK for his accomplishments and his altruistic pursuits to redefine American rights in the time of the Civil Rights Movement. Overall, I wanted to use this experience as a way to gain a perspective from my grandparents who were living during the original March on Washington and to recognize the progress the African-American community has made over 50 years. In efforts to accomplish these goals I decided to not only attend the march, but interview my grandparents on what life was like during the Civil Rights Movement, how they thought

the original march differed from the current one, and their general thoughts on the status of the African-American community. The below paragraphs are segments of the interview I had with both of my grandparents.

Grandfather - Rudolph DePass

1) Q: Were you at the original march?

A: Yes

2) Q: What were some of your thoughts about the original March on Washington?



Photo Received from Francisco Marty from 500px

ton?

A: It was very inspirational and exciting. At the time, it was unprecedented, re-

gardless of race, for a group of that many people to come together for one cause. However, because the event was put on by African Americans, it showed politicians what black people could accomplish, and consequently it put a lot of pressure on congress. This event was the defining moment that solidified black power; there was an increased unity within the black community that was never as strong as after the march.

3) Q: Why was important for you to come out today?

A: It was important to come out today because I feel grateful to be alive. I felt like the first march was so impacting and significant and I felt obligated to attend, to observe and experience the contrast. I really wanted to get a first-hand perspective and be part of the ambiance. It is evident that it was very important to experience the movement; to be a part, not just to be a spectator. I wanted to see the people and their friends and how they reacted to such a powerful movement. During the Civil Rights Movement, the progression of blacks was always a commutative act; a movement that was heavily focused on the country as a whole. Because of this, I thought it was important to interact with people, to see the current mood and attitude amongst the copious amounts of people.

4) Q: What was the main difference that shocked you?

A: The difference is the age of the attendees. The original crowd was much older than the younger crowd today.

5) Q: What was your biggest disappointment of the event?

A: I would have liked to see more people be more motivated. Also, I would like to see more emphasis on instruction of enforcement. To hear what exactly the citizens should be doing in our neighborhoods and how we can put action to the many words spoken at the march. Third, I want to see more citizen involvement in implementing these goals and reforming the issues being presented at the march. Lastly, we are missing the passing down of a legacy. I think it is very important for the younger generation to be present because they're the next leaders. The whole idea of generational transfer is for the older generation to teach their children to see the importance of involvement and development of our country. I not only feel blessed to be alive, but also feel an obligation to pass

down the knowledge that I have gained from these events and share them with my children and grandchildren. It's then the duty of the younger generation to be moldable and to seek information and go further to set the stage for the future. This is the only way to progress. Overall, I am glad you attended the march to gain a full sense of our history and how we can progress further.

6) Q: What were some significant differences between the first and second march?

A: The first hour being spent in prayer was quite significant for the second march, I feel that it set the mood for the whole event. The second march was also more organized which added to the whole experience and ambiance. Overall, the structure and had a sense of order did not replace the passion, which was missing during the current march. This was partially demonstrated by the de-



Photo Taken by Aaron DePass

crease in safety control and military intervention in the recent march. This decrease in safety control could have possibly been due to the increase in trust in the black community today compared to the original march.

Grandmother - Barbra DePass

The next segment is an interview from my Grandmother, Barbara DePass. She did not attend the original march nor the recent one; however, she provided good insight throughout the interview. She shared things such as what life was like as an African-American woman during the civil rights movement, her thoughts on what should happen in the future, and her feelings about the march in general.

1) Q: How do you feel about the March on Washington, then and now?

A: The speech is extremely significant

and is important for all races, not just blacks, to appreciate the work and energy put into the march. I feel like it is important to step back and see the differences between then and now, and to be grateful of the change and the effort to achieve that change. The march was an embodiment and a vision of a breakthrough of change and justice. It was an accumulation of all the trials and tribulations blacks had to endure within one speech.

2) Q: What can you remember about the march? What feelings did you have?

A: I can remember preparing for the march with great excitement. It made me feel proud to see the event happen and be so impactful for the whole country. For the black community to come together and do something great was magnificent and made me feel that all the years of struggle, and hatred, and abandonment were finally being addressed. I was also very appreciative of all the people who organized and attended the event. Because so many people came, it showed how much people really cared about this subject matter, and that it was extremely important. I remember people being completely shocked. The black community frequently had marches, but because of the scale of this one, and the fact that it was at the political cornerstone in the U.S., it was unprecedented, especially for a black person to be the keynote speaker. Nobody thought anything that grand and impactful would happen because, at the time, blacks were chained to Jim Crow, so the march gave them the reason and opportunity to come and make their voices heard. Overall, it empowered us, reinvigorated our thoughts, feelings, and actions about



Photo Received from Mustafa Thabet from 500px

our situation, and most importantly, gave us hope for the future.

3) Q: What was the biggest difference for you? What would you have wanted to see differently instead?

A: The biggest difference is the speakers. At the original March on Washington, Martin Luther King was very influential. In this recent march, I wanted to see more professionals take on what has happened for the last 50 years, and not so many interest groups.

4) Q: How did you feel today about watching the March on the news?

A: While it gave me a feeling of accomplishment, I also felt discontent and dissatisfaction. I felt grateful; however, I feel that the black community still needs much progress. With this said, I came away with a genuine understanding that everyone has to fight for initial progress and justice for African-Americans and all Americans to be where we are now. Now that I see what has occurred, I want to put action to my words. I have always had a heart for giving back, and especially developing the black community and the lower class. I feel that the middle class is not putting in the work, or contributing enough to the development of the lower class. It is part of our duty to take responsibility and use our resources and blessings to extend it to the African-American community who is not as fortunate. Additionally, we have to understand the struggles and were our heritage comes from; because even though it may not be affecting us now, it will eventually effect our heritage. Events like this may ignite motivation to progress the black community within all of us.

The next passage is my interpretation of the event. In this section, I will discuss my gratefulness for to African-American accomplishments, the transition to real life, the relationship between the citizens and speakers of the event, and the impact the march had on citizens then and now.

A lot of people in America did not have the opportunity to attend the March on Washington. Since I live only 30 minutes away, I feel very blessed for the opportunity to attend it. For me, the whole event, centered around a theme of gratefulness. I feel that most people, especially ones of African-American descent, have a general ignorance or forgetfulness about the effort exerted to achieve the privileges they have today. Being an African-American, I am sometimes a victim of this ungratefulness. However, by attending this event I came out with a true gratefulness and understanding of the adversaries African-Americans endured during the Civil Rights Movement. Throughout the event, I realized that all of the speakers are political reformers striving for the justice of a society. The main lesson I learned from this experience with my grandfather is one exemplified by Martin Luther King Jr., which is in some cases, you must devote and contribute to something greater than yourself to be truly impactful.

This march was also a real eye-opening experience for me that no class could teach me. I saw thousands of people marching for education, racial equality, and justice. In addition, I saw very influential speakers from civil rights activist,

pastors, and politicians demanding a better America. It was truly amazing to see and experience lessons I have learned in school to transfer into a real world experience. I was amazed by the power of education, and the benefits I can behold when exposed to very important political topics such as the Trayvon Martin case, or racial equality, or something as simple as analyzing difficult political topics from a speech. Because of this experience, I am particularly grateful for my education, and astonished that I now have another opportunity to apply these things to outside the classroom.

Although the event was very impactful for me, I felt somewhat disappointed with the actions of some of the people in the crowd. Throughout the first part of the march at the Lincoln Memorial, there were multiple speeches on political topics and memories of King. I felt that these speeches were important and attention worthy, however there was a sense of disconnection between the citizens and the speakers. During the speeches, many people next to me seemed that instead of listening, they were having conversations with people around them. Personally, I feel that the march attendees have a responsibility to fulfill the needs of the speaker, which, in my opinion, was not being fulfilled. In my opinion, the attitude of the speakers were not congruent with that of the citizens. Not only was I disappointed by this, but I think that it was the sole differentiator in terms of impact from the original march. The underlying understanding of the struggle in the black community between King and the citizens, and the unity in terms of values and ideas on the improvement of the black race in one place is what made the “I have a dream” speech so powerful; and the recent march was lacking that type of power.

Through this event, I not only learned about myself and my grandparents, but also about what the march meant to the actual activist in the midst of the movement. Seeing the speakers talk allowed me to humble myself and appreciate all the hard work that people like Jesse Jackson did in order for me accomplish my goals today. For me, the point was not just to hear the speakers, it was also for me to realize and appreciate MLK for contributing to a better American and world. A country and world where I am privileged to hear and participate in such an event.

In conclusion, I hope that all Americans will gain greater appreciation of the struggle that African-Americans had to go through. Just as importantly, I hope you had the opportunity to gain first-hand insight about some of the thoughts and feelings about the march and what life was like at that time. Although opin-

ions from politicians can sometimes be valuable (and often glorified), I hope you got something back from hearing an opinion from average people who were impacted from the event. I also hope this article gave you a new perspective on the march on Washington and its effects of the black community in a way which may differ from other newspapers.

“Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.” – MLK

“The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.” – MLK



Photo Received from Stanford University's Facebook Page

IB Learner Profile Used:

- Inquirer
- Open-minded
- Reflective
- Communicators

Questions to consider:

1. How can I connect or give back to my community?
2. What can the next generation do to help improve the black community?
3. I believe when a person is well-informed, it makes them a better person. What can you do in the next month to become more informed about something you have little to no knowledge of?

Call to Action:

I encourage you to do something within your community that will connect you to something bigger than yourself.

Youth Education



Photo Received from Chris Riesta from 500px, and Edited by Aaron DePass in Photoshop Express

Students Explore The Humanities in a Whole New Way

As many know Stanford University is a top-tier research university who has a very prestigious school of humanities and sciences. The University has created a way in which students can branch out and explore the humanities in a whole new way outside of the traditional classroom with the Stanford Summer Humanities Institute. The program describes itself as an institution "Led by Stanford professors, the Summer Humanities Institute lets rising high school juniors and seniors explore the big questions at the heart of the humanities: how and when can ideas transform society? When is the use of force legitimate? How

can we define the limits of individual rights? Students will spend three weeks on the beautiful Stanford campus, living in residence. They will spend the first two weeks intensively studying and researching a topic in history or philosophy, attending daily lectures by the faculty members, and participating in group discussions and activities in the afternoon. There will also be downtime for extra-curricular fun, as well as supervised off-campus excursions to places of cultural and natural interest around the Bay Area. During their third week, students will work closely with their professors, graduate students, and writing mentors to produce original research projects. These papers present an opportunity for students to use what they have learned at Stanford to develop their own answers to the central questions that are addressed by the humanities. Students will be introduced to research methods,

as well as to library and online resources. And they'll have something very impressive to show for it!"

About the Program and Why it's Important

100 high school students are able to experience the rigors of college life at the Institute. The program was designed by Debra Satz, associate dean for the humanities, with Stanford Pre-Collegiate Studies. She decided to have SSHI offer three undergraduate-level courses to high school students. The idea of this program is to reach people from all over the country so they can deepen their understanding of the humanities at a top research university. The Institute, Satz



Photo Received from Stanford University's Facebook Page

said, "introduces the students to the numerous resources and fantastic teachers Stanford has in the humanities." "The increased interest reflects the growing awareness of Stanford as a great school for studying the humanities and delving into important questions such as the legitimacy of government and the nature

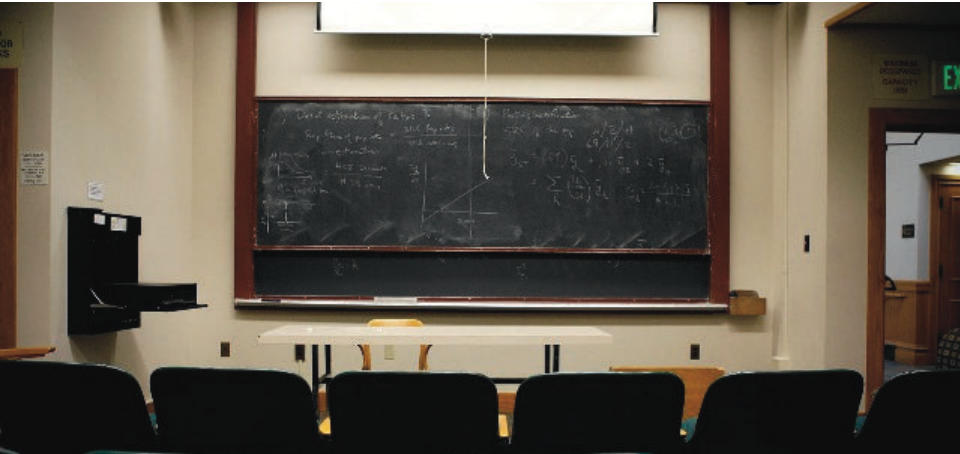


Photo Received from Stanford University's Facebook Page

of literature and art," Satz said. This institute similar to this newspaper allows students to branch out and learn new topics about the humanities outside of the classroom. Satz thoroughly concluded the program, what it offers, and the benefits of it in terms of gaining knowledge in the humanities. However, I would like to slightly changed our perspective to see what the students think of the program and compare it to Satz's views. This next section will be directly from the article "High school students take a philosophical approach to history and literature at the Stanford Summer Humanities Institute" because I felt like it best encompassed the feelings of the students that didn't require the aid of my writing.

The Student's Experiences

In researching his paper, a student last name of Duraiswamy studied Jefferson's personal letters. "I stumbled across something really interesting – Jefferson wanted to use the classics to create an American form of writing distinct from a European style. This desire was part of a larger struggle to shape an American identity," Duraiswamy said. "This was my first taste of research at the college level, and it has made me more excited for what lies ahead," Duraiswamy said.

Roskin said the professors encouraged

her to write about Rawls, even though the philosopher was not covered in class, and helped guide her research. "They spent a great amount of time helping each of us grow as students and people," she said.

Natalie Rodriguez-Nelson, a senior from Memphis, Tenn., said she "felt at home surrounded by people who share the same drive to learn all they can about the world."

The first reading assignment for Philosophy and Literature was excerpts from Proust's *Swann's Way* and *The Captive*. "In spite of how difficult Proust's work is, students fell in love with it," said Anderson, the chair of Stanford's philosophy department. Anderson is confident the mini-college experience will inspire the SSHI students to take humanities courses in college, regardless of what they major in. "They will know from their own experience how engaging and enriching humanistic inquiry can be," Anderson said.

Peter Litzow, a high school senior from Mercer Island, Wash., agrees. He used to doubt the practicality of studying the humanities in college, but his doubts have dissipated. "The Age of Jefferson class rekindled my passion for history and reassured my intentions to study it in college," he said.

Students learned that college-level re-



Photo Received from Stanford University's Facebook Page

search requires knowledge of the Stanford library archives and search tools, which they used during the program's third week, dedicated to writing their 10-page papers – a first for many of them, Winterer said.

My Reflection

This program in some ways conceptualizes my whole goal for this newspaper, and I think one of my favorite quotes is from Natalie Rodriguez-Nelson, a senior

ask about hidden meanings, we can make up morals that aren't there. Asking what literature does is a more substantive question than asking what it might or might not mean," she said. "I believe this knowledge whether you're a humanities major or not is what we should strive for.

"I felt at home surrounded by people who share the same drive to learn all they can about the world." - Natalie Rodriguez-Nelson



Photo Received from Stanford University's Facebook Page

from Memphis, Tenn., where she said she "felt at home surrounded by people who share the same drive to learn all they can about the world." This program is truly the fully developed goal of my newspaper; generations of intellectual youth that are comfortable learning to their fullest potential to then expand and distribute their knowledge to change the world. This program is part of fostering those people and fulfilling my dream.

However this program goes beyond just learning about philosophy and history, but immersing yourself into the college lifestyle and the curriculum as a whole. This means having discussions in and out of class, doing term papers about it, thinking about, living and loving the philosophical lessons in your daily life. This is the real essence of this project and my passion; to allow students to not only learn material in school or in an academic arena and let it be meaningless, but to take that material and extend in the others parts of life and allow it to empower you to further your pursuit to learn more. The reason why I was so impacted by this program is because my goal is encapsulated in it.

"Roskin said Landy's approach to considering what a work does, rather than what it may imply, as high school teachers often ask, spoke to her. "If we only

IB Learner Profile Used:

- Knowledgeable
- Risk-takers
- Open-minded
- Thinkers
- Communicators
- Reflective

Questions to Consider:

1. What can you do to extend to your academic horizons and pursuits beyond the four walls of the classroom?
2. How can you possibly stretch yourself academically to achieve something great?
3. How can you go beyond learning the things in school to enacting it in your daily life?

Call to Action:

I challenge you the next time you learn something to extend your curiosity or someone else's whether it's writing about it, researching it, or implementing it in your own life.

Poetry

An Analysis of “The Snow Man” by Poet Wallace Stevens and How it May Provide a Solution to the Increasing Gridlock in American Politics

Last summer I went to an amazing camp called Great Books Summer Program. Great Books is a reading program centered on reading and discussing classic books. The foundation of the program is about delving deep into literature, while pondering big philosophical ideas. The three locations the program was being held were Amherst College, Stanford University, and Oxford University. While I was at Amherst we read multiple pieces of magnificent work. Some of the major ones for me were “Moby Dick” by Herman Melville, “An American Childhood” by Annie Dillard, and “A Room of One’s Own : Shakespeare’s Sister” by Virginia Woolf. For me it was a real awe-inspiring, and true life-altering experience for many reasons I could deeply go into. In short terms, it was the first time in my life I experienced intellectual freedom, a time and place in which I could think, say, and express my thoughts without any hindrances. That week was one of the best weeks of my life. For the first time I could do something academically rigorous for absolute enjoyment, without worrying what other people thought about it or what my grade was on it. The biggest contributor to my experience at this program was by far my class on Wallace Stevens taught by the magnificent teacher Julia Fisher. In this class I dedicated hours of reading poetry late at night. Every night I would have the dictionary app open on my phone, and a reading lamp because it was after curfew. I would sometimes after lectures stay in the lecture hall until 11:00PM so I could get some quiet and air conditioning. I would look forward to color-coding my new piece of material I got for homework; yellow was for key passages, green for confusing passages, pink for repetition and symbolism, and orange for key words. Every day of that week I was at Amherst I couldn’t wait to sit in the green Adirondack chairs in the quad talking about Wallace Stevens with my

eight great friends. This class was genuinely my favorite academic experience in my decade being in school. This class really showed me how to think, create a developed argument, and then justify it. I remember my teacher would never allow you to just say an argument without her digesting it and presenting it back to you in a whole different light. This class was really a commencement of a life-long learner within me. I was so impacted by this class that my teacher and the group of students I was with decided to continue the riveting conversations throughout the rest of the summer. This article is mainly going to be a sample of what an average conversation would be like about this amazing poem called “The Snow Man” by Wallace Stevens. This particular analysis is a response via email to my good friend Serena.

The Snow Man

One must have a mind of winter
To regard the frost and the boughs
Of the pine-trees crusted with snow;

And have been cold a long time
To behold the junipers shagged with ice,
The spruces rough in the distant glitter

Of the January sun; and not to think
Of any misery in the sound of the wind,
In the sound of a few leaves,

Which is the sound of the land
Full of the same wind
That is blowing in the same bare place

For the listener, who listens in the snow,
And, nothing himself, beholds
Nothing that is not there and the nothing that is.

I think Serena made some really good points in her analysis of “The Snow Man”. However I think what Stevens is referring to in the poem is that the key to finding truth is to listen in peace without misery, or in other words without emotion. Essentially, what I thought he was saying is that, for one to find truth they must look at life objectively, peacefully, and free of emotion. That emotion, which human nature is so fond of is what deceives us and masks the reality and truth in our lives.

In the beginning of the poem Stevens uses great detail to describe winter, and what a “mind of winter” must regard. He says “To regard the frost and the boughs of the pine - trees crusted with snow; and have been cold a long time to behold the junipers shagged with ice, the

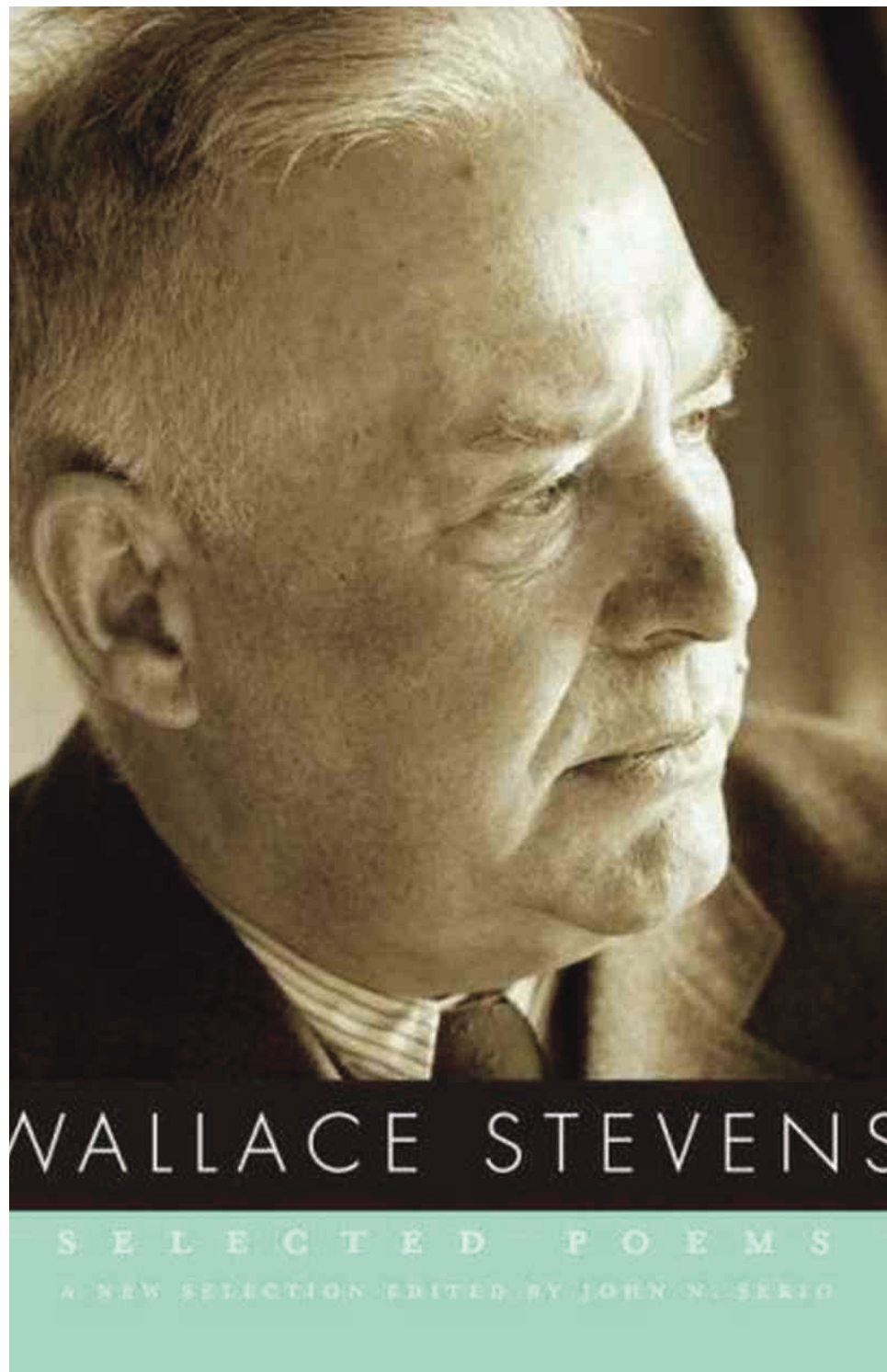


Photo Received from Stamberg, S., Serio, E. J., & Keyser, J. (n.d.). NPR.

spruces rough in the distant glitter of the January sun”. I think he is saying you must look at life objectively, just as things are, as things were created; to have “a mind of winter” or a mind of truth.

In the next stanza he says “And not to think of any misery in the sound of the wind, in the sound of a few leaves” which means, don’t have any emotional connection (misery) or preconception at all with what is natural, with what is truth. Basically what Stevens is saying is not to perceive something so natural, so truthful, something that just is with any emotional viewpoint; because if one doesn’t see that object or area in their life candidly, it’s then morphed into something greater than what it truly is. That object now has a component of your

imagination that you perceive, therefore stripping it of its true identity, and replacing it with what your mind thinks its identity should be. In some ways I feel like it’s an allusion to the man in the “Auroras of Autumn” by Wallace Stevens who couldn’t fathom or understand the majesty of the auroras, and its simple existence.

Finally the last stanza, which I think is most important, Steven says “For the listener who listens in the snow, and nothing himself, beholds nothing that is not there and the nothing that is”. I believe Stevens does very well in portraying the two main arguments in this poem (similar to the “High Toned Christian Women”) which is to look at life without emotion or imagination and to look at life with emotion and imagination. I

think Serena is right in the sense that Stevens is undecided if it's right or wrong to look at the world with imagination or not. I believe what he is trying to get at is that, the person who listens and observes life in peace and without any emotional mask over their eyes is going to see the explicit truth, nothing more and nothing less. He states this by saying "nothing that is not there". Interestingly enough, at the very end of the poem Stevens brings up the counter-argument saying "and the nothing that is". I believe what he is saying is that when you think with "a mind of winter", a mind without emotion, it's perfect because you will always be able to see what's in front of your eyes and not be deceived of the truth. But then again this one-sided perception of life is also flawed and imperfect, because one will never be able to understand the deeper meaning, the symbolism, and the mysterious or unknown aspects of life. In my opinion it all goes back to the relationship of color. When you think of winter, you think white right? Like Serena said it's just that "bland truth" that white represents. There is no frilly misconception in white or in winter, it's just reality. However, if one were to consider other seasons like spring, summer, and autumn along with the colors accompanying it like red or orange, or yellow or pink. These colors inadvertently give you a variety of perspectives, and are often muddled with the common themes of imagination, creativity, and flamboyancy.

Perhaps this poem also has some ties to religious beliefs. Many religions believe in the supernatural realm. Perhaps, in this situation the ones that possess a mind of winter are the people who don't have encounters with the supernatural realm and always will just see the world as it is. They will see it as a geographical point in the universe and will always have "a mind of winter", without the realization or even acknowledgement of a supernatural or spiritual meaning. I believe throughout this whole poem Stevens is trying to stab at the greater notion which is "Science vs. Faith". Bringing up the question do we, as humans, live off of logic, reasoning, and knowledge or faith, emotion, and imagination? Personally, I think it's important for us humans not to only to have "a mind of winter" or only to have a free, flamboyant, and weak mind without structure and reasoning, but to have them both inter-joined so we can see life more clearly while still having meaning.

If you think about it, and relate it back to your own life, and think about in any point in time you were deceived about something. Probably, when you found the truth, (if you ever did) whether you liked it or not, you felt liberated that you know what is right and pure. Quite frankly, like I said before it brings up the topic of religion. In the Holy Bible it ref-

erences to truth many times, and how God in everything he does is absolute truth, and free of sin. A verse from the chapter of John says "Jesus told him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me'" (John 14:6) NLT. It's almost as if Stevens is saying let your pride and emotions down so you can see more clearly. This also relates to Moby Dick, and how striking through the mask reveals absolute or inner truth. It just goes to show how Wallace Stevens' poetry can relate to so many people and ideas around the world.

Going back to the topic of peace we mentioned earlier. I thought it was particularly interesting how Stevens uses language and diction in this poem. In the first half of the poem he uses very distasteful language like winter, frost, boughs, crusted, cold, shagged, rough, and distant. Through the diction he is implying that being objective in life can sometimes be difficult because it's not always pretty, its reality. However in the

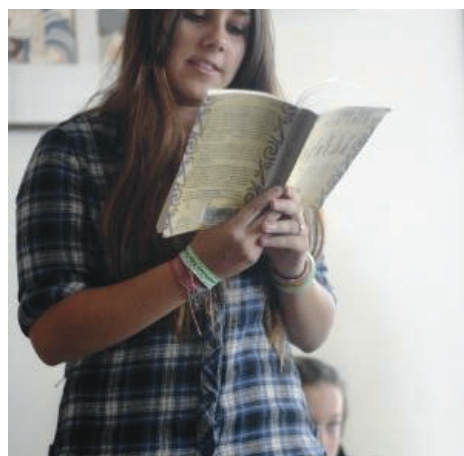


Photo Received from About Great Books. (n.d.). Summer Program. Retrieved from <http://www.greatbookssummer.com/about/>

second half of the poem he uses words like sound, wind, full, land, blowing, bare, and place. Here Stevens has a much softer use of words. Possibly he's trying to refer to how it's much more beneficial and beautiful to the human to see the things of nature without misery and emotion because you have the ability to see the "nothing that is not there".

This passage goes to show that the depth of Stevens writing, and how it always leaves you wondering, and always leaves you with multiple perspectives. One of the things I absolutely love about Stevens' poetry is that one is able to feel like they comprehend the overall truth to his message, yet still ponder the complexity of the idea itself. It's almost as if our brains can only understand the basic level or the one-side of the complex and layered truth of the idea itself. For example the plain ideas he talks about in his other poems like the "Auroras of Autumn", or a "High-Toned Christian Women" or "Ideas of Order at Key West" are things like moral law, the ramifica-

tions and meaning of order, unfathomable majesty, and the supernatural realm; these things that even if I understood the message of them, I wouldn't be able to fully comprehend the idea itself because it means so many different things to different people. In my personal opinion alone I feel when reading Wallace Stevens I am put into a whole another fictional atmosphere. It's almost as if you have to read his work multiple times to even understand the basic meaning in which could go 5 different ways than what you're thinking.

Lastly, this could relate to some of the problems in government pertaining to policy gridlock. Possibly, with politicians having a mind of winter, The United States could change our philosophy on the way we interact with other people and problems in the country. If politicians have a mind of winter and don't always think, and act along party lines we could possibly have less gridlock. This would give politicians the freedom to think logically, and make decisions less bias towards their party affiliation. However, this can only occur if politicians commit to this way of thinking and functioning in government. I believe adopting this way of thinking could not only decrease policy gridlock, but also relieve the tension between democrats and republicans in Washington.

"Metaphor creates a new reality from which the original appears to be unreal"
- Wallace Stevens, in Opus Posthumous
(This quote was provided and inspired by Melih Levi)

This story was inspired by my two good friends and mentors Julia Fisher and Melih Levi

IB Learner Profile Used:



Testimonials. (n.d.). Great Books Summer Program. Retrieved from <http://www.greatbookssummer.com/testimonials/>

- Thinkers
- Knowledgeable
- Open - minded
- Risk – takers

Questions to consider:

1. What kinds of academic things can you start to enjoy?
2. Do you like the humanities; do you

think it's intriguing and/or valuable? Or do you enjoy other subject matters like math and science more?

3. Did you like the poem?

Call to Action:

- I challenge you to find an academic subject matter that interest you and share it with others through a medium (ie. friend group, Facebook, Twitter, newspaper)

If you think you'll be interested in this program please visit <http://www.greatbookssummer.com/>. The program is for middle and high school students. However, if you want a spot you need to apply soon.



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Philosophy

The Notion of The Common Good – Another Perspective on How to Decrease the Polarization of Political Parties in Government

The Philosophy of The Humanitarian

The meaning of the common good is rather self-explanatory. The formal definition is “the advantage or benefit of all people in society, or in a group”. The people are at the center of this philosophical approach of living. The only way for this way of living to function is if the people within the society conform to promote the general welfare. For most societies, this is a difficult way of thinking to adopt considering that man is inherently self-interested. Perhaps, this is why the U.S. has a capitalist economy, and why U.S. citizen for the most part have the freedom to independently make choice in society to benefit them. Although, this way of thinking may have thrived for many years and provides

great value at times, it can also harmful to society as a whole. Especially for institutions that have significant control over a large group of people, for example the US Government, it is vital that they influence in efforts to promote the common good. For this to be realized we must build a society of humanitarians; for that’s what the founding fathers envisioned the United States to be. By definition, a humanitarian is a person promoting human welfare and social reform. The US Constitution states in the preamble “We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America”. The only way to fulfill this doctrine is for society to understand and enact the qualities of humanitarians. Perhaps why our government is having so many problems is because they are not functioning in the eyes of the framers of the country and government. Along with having a mind of winter, the consequences of this way of thinking may be extremely invaluable to the issues occurring in government.

The Common Good in Government

TIME magazine states “Our politics have become so polarized and increasingly volatile; and our political institutions have lost the public trust. Few Americans today would suggest their political leaders are serving the common good”. Right now in government, both the democratic and republican parties are separating in terms of ideologies and making it more difficult than ever to make decisions, forcing gridlock to be exponential on Capitol Hill. I believe similar to other industries that government has forgot their duty and lost their intentions as stated in the Constitution. By building up a government of humanitarians and committing to the common good of people and not to particular parties or ideologies we will be able to govern the people better than we are now. TIME magazine states “It is our fundamental political inclination: don’t go right, don’t go left; go deeper. But we’ve lost touch with that moral compass in Washington D.C., where it has been replaced by both ideology and money. A commitment to the common good could bring us together and solve the deepest problems this country and the world now face: How do we work together? How do we treat each other, especially the poorest and most vulnerable? How do we take care of not just ourselves but also one another? The common good is also the best way to find common ground with other people—even with those who don’t agree with us or share our politics. Both liberals and conservatives could affirm the moral standard of the common good. This way of thinking



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could change the way we think and interact with each other, not only in government, but also in society. Although it’s our innate proclivity to think in terms of ourselves only, but thinking in terms of the whole population will benefit the country as a whole. Possibly why Government officials are bonded to their political parties is explained by Pearson’s “Government in America” AP Textbook on page 146 where it states ““For most senators and representatives of the presidents party, being in the same political party as the president creates a psychological bomb. Personal loyalties or emotional commitment to their party and their party leader, a desire to avoid embarrassing “their” administration and thus hurting their chances for reelection”. TIME magazine states “Only by inspiring a spiritual and practical commitment to the common good can we help make our common life better”. Although, this may seem like a very biased democratic mindset it actually non-partisan base; this idea actually comes from Christianity. I had a conviction to write this article along with the Snow



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Man one to address the problems of our government in an objective and non-partisan way.

“An inability to compromise is dangerous for the country” - Maryland Delegate McMillan

IB Learner Profile Used:

- 1. Knowledgeable
- 2. Thinkers
- 3. Balanced
- 4. Open - Minded

Questions to Consider:

- 1. How can you demonstrate independent thinking and living in your day-to-day lifestyle?
- 2. What are some of your ideas on political problems? Do you have any solutions?
- 3. How do you feel about the common good?

Call to Action:

I challenge you to exemplify Humanitarian qualities and be able to think freely in situations regardless of what group you belong to, or what people similar to you may think



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To The Future Humanitarians and Contributors

Thanks to my generation for giving me a reason to write this. Thanks so much to my supervisor Mrs. Gerhold and my co-ordinator Mr. Kucker who were big supporters and advocates for this newspaper. A big thanks to my Mother for being the main editor for some of the articles. A huge thanks to my parents for funding this project. Thanks to all the photographers in this newspaper for taking some awesome photos.

This newspaper is close to a year project, and I just wanted to say thank you to anybody who was involved in this process if I didn't name you specifically. I couldn't have done this endeavor without all who were involved.

Notes

All of the "Questions to Consider" questions are on Survey Monkey so please check it out with the link below, it would really mean a lot to me to see my readers engaged and fulfilling my goal to becoming humanitarians. The survey is only 12 questions so go to the cite so we can all be inquirers.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/YJXMY2H>