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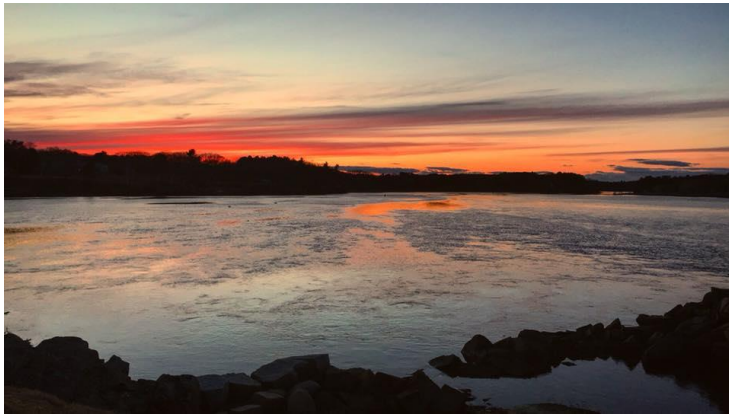
Professor Emerson

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English 110J

Beauty Creates Selfless Humans

Something as little as a twenty second hug releases oxytocin into your bloodstream, a hormone that instantly lowers your stress and increases your happiness; how beautiful is



that? Or what about watching a sunset disappear below the horizon of the ocean with the orange and red shades mixing together, such as the picture I took to the left. How does that make you feel? Yet, when was

the last time you took a moment out of your busy day to appreciate the beauty found in your own life? Our lives which are filled with constant stress, sadness, and restlessness have essentially brought us to a point where we have no hope for the future. Society is so focused on retaining knowledge and gaining money that they fail to replenish their souls with the benefits beauty has to offer. Beauty reestablishes a balance between ourselves, and the world around us, further benefiting our well-being and sense of happiness. Armstrong, a writer who passionately believes everyone see's beauty differently, enhances this idea that beauty betters us in his essay "La bella vita". In addition, The School of Life brings to light how art can be used in various ways to create better human beings. During difficult times, beauty, such as art, expresses an emotion in which humans who are suffering can relate to, giving them hope and reassurance that they are not alone. Despite the stresses in our lives, if people take the time to acknowledge beauty, they will expand their appreciation towards the small things in life and become selfless human beings.

By having a conscious appreciation of beauty, humans will begin to obtain hope while discovering the positives during difficult times. Life can be very hard to understand, and when life throws confusing obstacles at you, such as hearing the word 'cancer', you begin to wonder what went wrong. Beauty is something that generates hope as it allows people going through hard times to have something to relate to. Pediatric oncology patients experienced hope constructed from beauty at Dana Farber Cancer Institute. They did so from performing the "Fight Song" by Rachel Platten, found in the video below:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4QE-yTWSWgl&t=3s>. The nurses helped the patients create this music video not only for the kids that were fighting different diseases, but for the viewers as well. To put it succinctly, the beauty from this video promoted hope to many people around the world. This includes the mother watching her baby die yet not being able to do anything about it, or the teen overcoming an eating disorder who now has courage to keep fighting. Even a stranger putting themselves in these families' shoes, imagining how much pain not only these kids are going through, but also the family members watching a loved one suffer. It gives hope to those experiencing something similar to this, and to those individuals fighting their own battles. In the song, Rachel Platten used the beauty of the lyrics to help relate to a variety of people. The strong words throughout the song gives people a sense of relief and hope that they have the power to keep fighting whatever they may be going through. This song promotes hope to someone struggling by saying the following: "this is my **fight** song, take back my **life** song, prove I'm **alright** song... and I don't really care if **nobody** else **believes**, cause I've **still** got a lot of **fight** left in me"

(Platten). When hearing this song and watching young fighters dance while brightening up the room with their smiles, I personally gain a lot of hope. I gain hope that my friend who is fighting

cancer has the determination to continue fighting. In fact, I gain hope for myself to continue to stay strong during hard times. Ultimately, this video has created better human beings by influencing hope upon its viewers and allowing them to have a more positive outlook on life, especially during difficult times. By watching these kids who are going through inevitable pain stay strong, this beautiful video inspires humans around the world to keep fighting their fight, whatever that may be.

When hope is promoted through beauty, a connection between that piece of beauty and your life is made, resulting in a feeling of comfort. As a result, these people will start to realize that everyone goes through hard times and that they are not alone. The School of Life is a video pod cast which enhances different ways in which art is used, and why it is important around the world. They would agree with the concept that art helps to create less lonely people. They claim, “one thing art can do is reassure us of the normality of pain; it can be sad with us and for us” (1:27-2:26). Although they are specifically referring to people comparing their feelings to sad pieces of art, this same principle can be applied to patients in hospitals. Patients who compare their sadness to another patient’s sadness will begin to realize they are not alone.

They can relate to one another and recognize it’s okay to feel sad. One personal experience of this would be the arts and craft areas at the Jimmy Fund Clinic found at Boston Children’s Hospital. The picture to the right shows young cancer fighters Livi and Gia. While making art together, young Gia has a beautiful smile on her face and Livi is shown playing with her painted



train. Both connect to one another through a few aspects. They both have lost their hair, they are both fighting a similar disease, and they are both experiencing a sense of relief that they are able to enjoy play time together, distracting them from the poisons running through their veins.

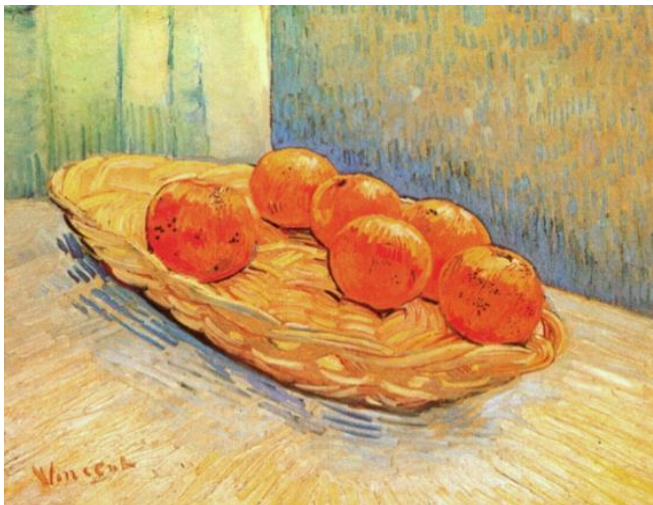
While making art together, they feel less lonely as they see someone who looks like them and expresses their emotions through art in a similar way. This one, small area allowed them to connect with one another in a playful way, promoting healing of the mind while using art, and allowed them to make a friend. This experience made them feel normal, opposed to feeling different when they see kids who do have hair. The beauty of art brings people together, promotes hope, and allows us to realize that we are never truly alone; we are all fighting together. Beauty found in art creates better human beings while giving us something to appreciate and smile about.

Beauty in art builds more appreciative people by allowing them to identify smaller forms



of beauty which add up to make a big impact on how you feel. This is another concept in which The School of Life video believes art can do. During the Mother's Day flood in 2006, I lost my whole house with everything in it. My old house is shown in the picture to the left when we were forced to evacuate. During this hard time, I

learned how to see beauty in every single day. For one, I found beauty in laying in a warm bed,



even though it wasn't my own, I was appreciative to have a home to temporarily live in. Now, years later I find beauty in being warm and having a roof to live under, and beauty has allowed me to appreciate more as I grew up. The School of Life presented the beauty of oranges painted by Van Gogh shown in the picture to the left,

as well as beauty of the sky painted by John Constable found in the picture below. Society insists that beauty is simply luxury, fame, and how someone appears. Both examples presented in the School of Life pull us away



from only focusing on the luxury and fame many people focus on and redirects us to the forgotten aspects of the world including oranges and the sky. Art enhances our perspective and allows us to become more appreciative to the smaller, more simpler things in life over the socially created 'perfect image' the society tries to follow. That being said, relating this concept back to those who are fighting life threatening illnesses, they obtain greater appreciation for the days that they feel healthy, or the days that they can hang out with their loved ones and not be in the hospital, all leading them to have a greater appreciation for life. When faced with the facts that they may live a much shorter life than most people, it's the little things in life they begin to enjoy with the time they are given. Another person who would agree with this is Armstrong. He enhances this thought by saying "we recognize beauty in a piece of music, or the graciousness of someone's conduct, we see things that we know we have neglected or betrayed, and we feel an astonishing combination of anguish and delight" (5). That being said, after acknowledging the small forgotten things in which we are grateful for, we will become more appreciative humans. Overall, humans need to alter their direction from focusing on fancy objects, and instead consider peoples small acts of kindness which are more beautiful than anything else. In the end it is the small things in life that add up to make a big difference.

Finding something beautiful redevelops a balance between ourselves and the world. If we realize the importance of this connection, "we might elevate ourselves with beauty today"

(Armstrong, 6). Someone who presents a good example of this would be my classmate Hannah Little who talks about her experience with beauty in the link to follow:

<http://hlittle1.unepportfolio.org/eng-110/lets-talk-about-art/> . She encountered a painting of the mountains at the Museum of Art in Portland, Maine which is shown below. She considered the



painting to be beautiful because it reminded her of the “unbelievable amount of joy” the mountains and the sunset bring her when she goes hiking (Little, 1). This connection she has with the earth allows her to become more grounded to nature, something that is truly beautiful. By evoking this feeling, it allows humans to slow down, look

around, and realize the natural beauty that surrounds us. Although this is one example of discovering a balance between the earth and ourselves, if humans can find what makes them happy then they will become more well-rounded. Art helps to rebalance us, if you just open your eyes and look around you can always find something beautiful and become more grateful for the life you live.

To see and understand the meaning behind what you find to be beautiful, you need to realize the essence behind this provoked emotion. Armstrong revisits Schiller ideas on the importance of the “sense-drive” and the “form-drive”. The sense drive “lives in the moment and seeks immediate gratification”, specifically relating to the first moment you see something, and find it to be beautiful (2). The form drive is then “the inner demand for coherence over time, for abstract understanding and rational order” (Armstrong, 2). That meaning, these two seek the reason why an individual person finds something beautiful and for what purpose. These two understandings together balance out your reaction to something beautiful and justify why it is beautiful to you personally. This is so important for “if we want to understand beauty, we can’t just talk about the things we find beautiful. We must talk about our lives” to relate why we find



something beautiful that may not be beautiful to someone else (Armstrong, 2). One example of this in my life would be seeing my family which is shown to the left. Simply having them in my life and having them breathing and smiling is so beautiful as life can change at any moment. Seeing my healthy loved ones around me is something I

have learned from past experiences to appreciate. Considering two people I love are fighting against cancer, health is something I find to be beautiful. I have developed into a more selfless human because I have learned to appreciate the time I spend with my loved ones. Overall, I'm able to recognize beauty and realize why it is beautiful to me, allowing it to further affect the rest of my life while searching for things in which I find to be beautiful.

Becoming mindful of the beauty around us will create more selfless human beings around the world. In our society today, people are too focused on the luxuries of the world and we fail to acknowledge the small, meaningful things that are beautiful. Beauty is something in which your life experiences have impacted your view on what you individually find beautiful. A love for nature can cause that individual to find a painting of the ocean to be beautiful. This appreciation of our Mother Earth then creates a balance between one's soul and the world we live in. Likewise, the beauty of art connects people with similar emotions together, creating a sense of security that they are not alone. I found the "Fight Song" video created by my friend shown to the right and patients at Boston Children's Hospital to be



beautiful because I have seen the pain that cancer causes. I can relate to families watching their loved one's struggle through this horrible disease. I personally have gone to the hospital at five in the morning with my friend and have seen her burns from the radiation that was and continues to save her life. This video inspired me to obtain hope, while watching these kids smile during their hard times which made me smile. This gave me more faith that things will eventually be okay in the end, even if it's not going well now. For myself, I find healthy people to be beautiful for there are many sick loved ones surrounding me, and by realizing this is something that is beautiful to me I have become more appreciative of them. To understand the reason why we might find something to be beautiful and why someone else doesn't would be the sense and form drive discussed by Armstrong. If we can recognize beauty, and comprehend WHY we find it to be beautiful, we can then develop a more appreciative world. Recognizing beauty develops more sincere, selfless, human beings by grounding them to their inner soul and realizing what is beautiful to them. If we recognize what is beautiful to us and learn to appreciate the smallest forms of beauty every day, we will be one step closer to overlooking hate and spreading love and peace around the world. This is something simple that we can start today.

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