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English 110

Language and Literary Narrative Final

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### Trilingual Journey

The concept of art is one so meaningful to some, as it is also seen differently by everyone. It plays through a myriad of different forms in one's everyday life, and ultimately it is up to the human eye's way of perceiving and admiring its surroundings. We encounter art in our daily lives, most often in visual forms. We drive or walk past art without even realizing it, or giving too much attention as we go about our days. We encounter these forms of art, mainly through the words we encounter daily. Whether it is written or spoken, the letters of an alphabet are puzzle pieces constructing something that communicates a message. Language, or really, the form in which words are communicated is a way of art far more complicated than it may seem. Diving into language, particularly a foreign language, is a puzzle of a journey, regardless of one's knowledge and fluency in the language.

Language, more specifically the concept of foreign language has always been involved with me from an early age. As a child of parents who immigrated from Latin America, Spanish had always been a part of me and was my first language. I first adapted to and grew up with it at home. It was spoken at home daily, and outside among friends and family members. I had attended a bilingual school as my parents emphasized and knew the importance of language, especially one that was essentially a part of us. When I am immersed in the Spanish language, I

feel a sense of empowerment and truth. Being true to myself as I connect with my culture, and learn about other cultures that share the same language.

My elementary school years remain unforgettable as memories enriched with the Latinamerican culture still have so much meaning. The classroom, brightened with music in Spanish, tune after tune, brings back joyful moments so dear. The classroom, filled with the scent of Coquito during the holidays. Children of all cultural backgrounds in unison, sharing these memories of singing together, dancing together, reading Spanish books, all remind me of how language brings people together, as all forms of art do.

The presence of a culturally diverse group of people brings a sense of togetherness. Unity through cultural connection brings joy. It brings joy in what can be a tense, nerve-wracking experience. Being present in such a welcoming environment made the journey of learning Spanish a smoother experience as everyone felt accepted regardless of their level, experience or knowledge of Spanish. For me however, being different was a challenge I had not seen coming to have a tremendous impact, both positive and negative during my experience with another language.

As mentioned, my parents insisted on the importance of language. They had always strived to do anything they could to ensure I received the best education. This meant my involvement in extracurricular activities. During my early elementary school years, I was introduced to a third language. It was German, a language I had not even heard of. I first glanced at the words, all seeming gibberish to me. Feelings of mystery swirled through my brain as I glanced at the most basic sentences. It was just the beginning. It was a rewarding, yet challenging experience I climbed through academically.

Every Monday, the clock ticked closer to 4PM. Two hours of sitting in a room, something I dreaded sitting in a room for two hours, especially after normal school hours. Two hours, 120 minutes, one confused student hoping the clock would tick faster than the instructor. The sound of chalk writing on the blackboard, tracing what was a jungle of words to me. This was not something I looked forward to doing on a Monday evening. I sat in the middle of the classroom, clueless of what the teacher spoke. Feelings of loss raced through my brain and heart, desperately wishing I could be elsewhere. How I wished so often it would be Spanish class.

As the only student of color, I certainly felt alone throughout the years. As I grew into my teenage years, social anxiety had grown to impact my ability and ways to express myself towards others. Every student in the room came from a German background. I envied them, as their pens glide so easily through the writing tasks, exams, and reports given to us. The puzzles I unscrambled were invisible to them.

The easiest of these puzzles escalated, as did my social anxiety. At the bottom of the escalator, were show and tells. A simple presentation of a meaningful object, in front of the class. Later, came the more difficult tasks, such as dictation exams, and book reports. Such activities and requirements took all of my courage and patience, which I somehow pulled through, although with embarrassment and fear. At the top of the escalator, was the dreaded trimester exam, which consisted of everything from writing, vocabulary, grammar, and a speaking exam. Three months led to another trimester exam.

Such challenges I faced throughout my years in German school made me question myself more and more often. Questioning my own ability to learn and grow as a student, as the language was far more of a maze of vocabulary, grammar, and everything in between, than it was for my peers who surfed so easily, like a lawnmower speeding through the maze I gazed and wandered

upon. As I grew older, however, I learned to appreciate the opportunity, and realize what a gift language really can be, despite the difficulties I faced and dreaded.

In high school, I had immersed myself in the arts, in both visual and the performing arts. I attended a school specialized in the arts, thus opening my eyes to a sea of opportunities and most importantly, grew me closer to art. Piece by piece, from paintings, to photographs, to monologues, to songs, diving into the ocean that is art opened my eyes and heart to language and culture on a new level. Being involved with learning foreign language undeniably enhanced the way I perceived art, as I sought to find deeper meaning behind any work of art.

I came to realize the true depths and meanings of language as it clearly spoke a message to an intended audience. The messages spoke to me, regardless of how short, or simplistic it appeared. Analyzing a work of art, in any shape or form took patience, much patience to find a deeper meaning or takeaway. German was a language that took loads of patience. Each letter in the alphabet, put together to speak a message that could be combined with however many, to create the sentences and paragraphs that speak louder and louder.