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Literacy Narrative

From kindergarten to grade 10 I never really received a challenge due to the under-budget education the public schools were providing within the local area. Resources were given to those who had funding and were already better off than the area where I was from. Having received the news of being able to receive a better education, I leapt on it and it forever changed my approach on the way I saw writing. From where I came from, I thought I was prepared. However, within my previous years little did I know about the power of the media or how the human mind can be influenced. Anything beyond what was taught within the classroom was never brought to my attention. There was someone who tried to shape my cognitive ability in that manner. Thankfully due to the teacher that I met in the 11th grade named Casey Rummel I learned much more of the outside world on a micro and macro scale.

#1) Casey Rummel was a spearhead in my development of cognitive analysis of literature, cinematic analysis, and the raw feeling of what it is to see things in the most plausible unbiased lense. Before I reached the 11th grade, my writing was always unscaved and seen as an A+. Hell, I was wrong once I reached his class. I suppose there was a point to why it was considered terrible. Knowing my history? It seemed clear that I was not being prepared as a writer. I came from a low-income neighborhood, in one of the most “looked-down-upon,” high-schools named Kennedy High School in Richmond, California. It came as no surprise as my

English courses were mostly just full of teachers who wanted to pass us; there wasn't really much of an individualistic relationship between teachers and their students. It seems like they only cared about getting paid and looking good when administration came knocking at their classroom door. There was not much feedback given to our writing that the administration did not know about so the students and I didn't know what our strengths or weaknesses were; feedback could have guided us at a young age. With no feedback given in return it led to the conditioning of a lot bad habits within my writing. Having a restricted school budget played a role. As a result, it felt like a robotic conditioning session to look at a prompt and answer it. Nothing else, follow the instructions and you will be fine.

#2) Once I reached the end of 10th grade, my mother brought up a decision for me to make to further my education at a respectable charter school in the local area. I finally got off the waitlist and could pursue a more advanced education at Leadership Public Schools for the remainder of my high school academic career. Before the start of classes, I was assigned a guidance advisor and turns out Casey Rummel was both my guidance advisor and my AP English Language and Composition instructor. Once the class started, we were given controversial prompts to choose from and to clearly pick a side to defend and give your reasoning why it is relevant to human nature. These prompts were more like college based prompts than what is to be expected in high school and he did confirm this himself. Throughout the new challenges I tried my best, and sure enough everyone did poorly. I guess it was to be considered a diagnostic to see where the class is currently at. Mr. Rummel kept us on a loop to expect challenging assignments in the near future.

Within this new experience of education the environment was more friendly, due to this it felt superficial, but never have I ever had the teacher stand at the door to greet everyone as if

they truly cared back at Kennedy. It was truly a different experience as I wasn't used to this "friendly" environment created by the new school I transferred to.

#3) A few weeks in we finally had our first graded assignment. The topic was about human nature and society. Mr. Rummel discussed the complexity of how society shapes us as individuals and how it can disconnect us from our roots as human beings. He elaborated on how society conditions obedience and those who challenge it would be silenced. Through texts of Karl Marx's *Superstructure* there are terms: "foundation of the vessel," or "superstructure," was how Karl Marx called it, and it is shaped by the "base," All this was rather overwhelming for a novice such as myself. However, he did it to challenge every student by exposing us to these pieces of literature. We were assigned an assignment about Karl Marx and how this "superstructure," "foundation of the vessel," and "base," is present in everyday life. This "superstructure," is to be defined as an ideology which can be considered to be the "foundation of the vessel." The "base" is the means of production or industry in that matter and how it relates to due to the working force being the "proletariat," being conformed by this ideology being enforced by the "Bourgeoisie" that is created by the base to control their affairs by means of production through ideological enforcement. I struggled with many of the literature demands of these texts that I had to look up many words and Mr. Rummel emphasized this multiple times as he did not expect any of us to know most of these words on the top of our heads. Casey did care a lot for our intellectual future. He stressed a quote from one of his favorite readings, "Think freely, your intellectual freedom is at stake." I recall that he brought about the importance of how most youth are brainwashed or manipulated by the media and are not allowed to think critically on why this would be presented to them. The one thing that stood out about Mr. Rummel was his

demeanor as he was the teacher who expected nothing but the best performance from each and every one of us. He did not hesitate to fail you if he didn't see you try.

#4) I tried my best within the class as I continuously was shot down by Casey and peers. My bad habits that I have obtained from my past high-school have played a role in my stunted growth as a writer, as I struggled to catch up within the class. I've never had the habit to check for the definitions of words, annotate information properly as everything seemed to be rather important. I always scrambled near the end of the time just before the due date just to make sure everything seemed to be in order; this led to further confusion as I did not know what I was doing wrong as I tried my best and I didn't know what to fix without deleting massive chunks from my essays and starting from scratch. This was when I myself believed I did a "good" job. I was definitely wrong about that. However, after some reconditioning, syntax, grammatical errors, flaws in structure and clarity were fixed soon after throughout the year that I was within his class.