

Sample papers from Sp 09 ENG 20803  
Instructor, Lynda Davis

### SAMPLE "A" PAPER

A Victory that Leads Toward Peace:

The Journey of Patongo Primary School

*War Dance*, released in January 2007, begins with a truck full of children traveling down a long, dirt road, leaving a trail of dust behind them as a small child's voice innocently says, "it's hard for people to believe our story, but if we don't tell you, you won't know" (War Dance). The audience is immediately hooked as the directors of the documentary begin to tell the stories of Acholi children torn apart by the ongoing war in northern Uganda. The film is a compilation of three stories of students who attend the Patongo Primary School in northern Uganda who overcome a lifetime of traumatic events to compete at the National Music Competition in Kampala. *War Dance* follows the children's courageous efforts as they overcome individual trials to become one team as they pour their heart into winning the national competition. Through struggle and triumph, the directors show that even through the direst situations, if people believe in themselves, greatness can be achieved. Although the documentary is a heartwarming story, it is also much more; it persuades the viewers to become part of the story by striving to direct their lives. By using rhetorical arguments along with filming and editing techniques, the directors promote awareness and encourage financial aid to save the children of northern Uganda.

The war in northern Uganda broke out in 1986 with the creation of the rebel army, called the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). For twenty-three years and counting, the war has continued between the Uganda government and the LRA. This conflict has led to the gross violation of human rights, mainly toward women and children, destruction of economic activity, and cultural and social breakdown. These disturbances result from historical ethnic violence and the political and economic instability that occurred during the post independence era' (Nannyonjo).

In hopes of building a theocratic state, the LRA daily commits acts of murder, rape, the abduction of children, and slavery, forcing them to become part of the new generation of the rebel army. This conflict has left many children homeless and orphaned with no choice but to move into government-owned displacement camps. The camps, guarded twenty-four hour by Ugandan soldiers, seem to be the only places where abandoned children can flee from the rebels, but even at that, the camps are not free from attacks.

The region most war-torn by rebel activity is the Acholi region of northern Uganda, where the Patongo school is established. It is estimated that '90% of the Acholi tribe in this region have been forced to abandon their ancestral homes and move into government protected housing' (*War Dance*). Considered to be the lucky ones are the children who live in the displacement camps. Even though they have fled their homes and been stripped of everything they know, it is far better than being abducted by the LRA. The 'census of Uganda estimates that the LRA has abducted 30,000 Acholi children and forced them to become child soldiers' (*War Dance*). The LRA force these adducted children to become killers of their own tribe.

The directors use statistics such as these to make the seemingly distant situation a reality for the viewer. This background knowledge aids the viewer to become engaged in each child's personal story because it gives deeper insight to what they have been through and causes the spectator to become an advocate for the children's triumph. The directors also focus on three main characters so the stories become intimate and personal to the audience. The children become friends with the audience, rather than distant orphans who live across the globe who have no affect on a viewer's daily life. It is hard for people in our society to open up to each other. Our society teaches Americans from a very early age to be brave and tackle every problem that confronts us. Sometimes this allows Americans to become too independent and withdraw from others. It is common not to know the depths of the people who surround us outside of our immediate circles. On the other hand, the viewers feel a connection and

friendship with these children because the characters allow viewers to the deepest parts of them.

Throughout the movie, the directors utilize the technique of interviewing to portray ethos and to serve as a confessional experience for the children. The interviews are all very personal stories or confessions. Their stories are heartbreaking. The interviews allow the children to become vulnerable and open. During their time of confession, the spectators get to see the children's hardness melt away and see them change and grow stronger before their very eyes. It is a glimpse of hope and shows the audience that there can be change within their lives. For example, one of the main characters of *War Dance*, Dominic, is a former child rebel soldier, but was luckily among few to escape the terror of the rebels. He fled to the Patongo camp, where he became the band's prized xylophone player. The directors interview Dominic about his experience as an abducted child soldier where he admits for the first time the terrors that the rebels made him become a part of. He confesses to being a murderer, and can barely continue his story due to his embarrassment and brokenness. His time as a child soldier haunts his dreams, but the children at Patongo and music help him carry on to a better life.


Many emotions can be associated with a prolonged brutal war. Dominic's generation will forever remain haunted by the brutal war. Due to the longevity of the clash, the generation that composes the youth today has not been without war. One small boy claims, "since the day we were born, we've heard gunshots" (*War Dance*). Throughout the entire movie, the directors effectively use pathos. This idea of endless gunshots is such a foreign concept for American children. It produces fear for the horrifying conditions that these children live in and a desire to help the war end. It also causes the audience to reflect on how blessed they are for not having to experience war like this and produces empathy for the people of northern Uganda. Stories such as these place a desire in the audience for justice and peace. Empathy is the first step toward achieving change within people that produces action to save the children of northern Uganda.

Throughout the movie's major scene changes, the directors of *War Dance* insert statistics to provide the viewer with background knowledge that is credible and support the action that is taking place in the film. There is no voiceover reading the statistics; they simply appear on the background while the cinematographers pan across the beautiful landscape of Uganda. The facts speak for themselves. The words are not embellished or gaudy; instead, simply stated facts printed in white. Their simplicity speaks volumes. The director effectively inserts the statistics in this manner to force the viewer to read the horrifying facts that these people must confront every day. As the statistics remain on the screen, the viewer is given time to process and reflect on the gravity of the situation. The viewer cannot ignore what is staring them in the face; the facts are irrefutable. If read, the hearts of all those watching will break.

On that same note, subtitles translate the native tongue of the Acholi tribe throughout the entire movie which causes the viewer to become uniquely engaged in the narrative. The use of their native language places an emphasis on their strong cultural ties. This is important because it requires everyone to take note of their unique and vibrant culture. From their traditional dress to native dance, their culture is absolutely breathtaking and moving. They are creative, pulsating people who, just as we do in America, deserve to have their place, peace, and culture without the threat of persecution and war. It also is interesting because it forces the viewer to become uniquely involved in the film. The viewer must watch the screen the whole time for fear that they may miss something important or profound. The subtitles engage the audience to become an active participant the entire time the documentary is playing. It is interesting to note that the directors' purpose is that the audience's participation does not stop when the credits roll, but instead continues in hope of each individual's support for the reformation of northern Uganda.

Since the Acholi people must speak their native language, meaning could be lost in translation, but the directors place a heavy emphasis on facial expressions to convey their meaning. Although the languages are not the same, facial expressions are universal and

understood by any audience. Both smiles and saddened faces play an important role in displaying the message the directors want to get across to the viewers. For example, after the telling of a heart-breaking story, there are moments of silence where the child simply sits alone with devastated expressions, even sometimes accompanied by tears. Many times, you cannot tell the emotion of a story by just the Acholi language, but the facial expressions make their emotions unmistakable. The tears and pain cause the viewer to get emotionally involved in the film. Your heart breaks along with the young children.

These sad emotions, however, set the premise for the happiness that the children have at the end of the movie. After all the terror these children have gone through, their smiles of happiness light up any scene in the movie. When they smile, there is a sense of true joy and delight. Their smiles juxtapose much of the emotions of desperation in the majority of the film. Through the sadness, dark backgrounds, and dark skin, their smiles are radiant and pure. For instance, whenever the children dance, huge smiles adorn their small faces. Their joy is overwhelming. Music and dancing serve as an outlet from the frustrations and pain of their reality. Nancy, a student at Patongo, claims that “if there’s music life becomes so good” and it “helps [her] forget the bad things” (*War Dance*). Music numbs the pain of her brutal past and helps her carry on. Their joy and smiles give hope to a brighter future. With music, Nancy’s life has the potential of goodness. The viewer’s desire becomes to keep that smile on the children’s faces. It leaves the audience wondering what it will take for the smiles to remain forever 

Unknown to the viewer, the director starts the movie with a glimpse of the ending. The flash forward is of the children traveling back from the competition to the camp in the back of a pickup truck, but the audience has no idea where they have been. The rest of the film is composed of flashbacks that tell how the children got to where they are now. By using this technique, the directors symbolize a long journey the children must go through. Seeing a portion of the ending gives the viewer hope throughout all the tribulation. Despite all the odds against them, the viewer can rest in the fact that good things lie ahead.

The relationship with the camera and the children is uninvolved. The film crew does not voice their opinions or guide the kids in any way within the documentary, nor do they appear in their own documentary, but instead let the kids speak for themselves. It is the children's story to tell and the camera crew allows them to do so without external interruption. The crewmembers are simply observers of everyday life, allowing the story to be fluid and genuine to the viewer. This technique allows the sadness and happiness seen from the children to be genuine. The directors did not stage or provoke events to happen, nor did they use editing techniques to produce the effect of happiness, it simply is true cheerfulness. The filming has a refreshing quality of being true. The only formal camera work done is when the directors interview. On a similar note, the camera angle remains at eye level. This effect allows no party to feel superior or inferior, but equal. This fact alone speaks volumes. This statement says that even though these children are poor and war-torn, we are no better off. The camera angle allows the film to be intimate and personal, creating a relationship between the children and the viewer. The directors desire for the viewers to have a certain attachment to the children of Uganda in hopes that it will inspire the world to help our brothers and sisters.

The beautiful cinematography of the film juxtaposes the heartache and brokenness of children within the movie. Among *War Dance*'s fifteen awards, three are for cinematography alone. The film captures some of Uganda's most beautiful landscapes. The countryside and wildlife capture in the film are absolutely breathtaking. A place that appears to be so serene and peaceful is actually war-torn and in turmoil. Uganda is a beautiful place and the children cry to end the war and restore it to its true beauty. Older men and women recall Uganda as a different place in their youth. This juxtaposition allows the viewer to see the disconnect of the beautiful landscape and the brutality of the conflict in Uganda. This fact alone instills in the viewer the responsibility to restore Uganda's beauty.

Although the film contains many trials, the children believe that "even though [they] are from the war zone [they] can still do good things" (*War Dance*). Everyone is prone to look down

on these seemingly hopeless children simply because they are from northern Uganda, but they would like to argue otherwise. The war has ripped their times apart, but they are determined to rise above. Through the aid of others, people who believe in them, and them believing in themselves, they are able to take one-step closer to peace by making it to the National Music Competition. Although some would like to argue that this is only a “silly music competition” (“Saw It...”) that accomplishes nothing for their future, I would disagree and say that it is accomplishments like this that can bring a country out of a desperate situation. This completion brings hope for brighter things to come beginning with the youth of the nation. Dominic courageously says, “in my heart, I am more than a child of war. I am a talented musician. I am an Acholi. I am the future of our tribe” (*War Dance*). Dominic delights in the fact that he can rise above the turmoil. His life is more precious to him than to let war destroy it. If these children are the future, we should be striving to push them toward change and aiding them financially to end the conflict. The official *War Dance* movie website gives everyone the opportunity to give financially though the web design team created to donate money to the school in Patongo. The directors hope that these contributions will be an outpouring of love and belief that continues after seeing the movie.

The directors believe that people just need to believe in the children of northern Uganda and to help the Acholi children develop their own passions. The choreographers that came to Patongo to help them with their dances and music were a symbol of this role. Not only did they come and externally help with their dances, but they also encouraged them to believe in themselves. One of the most moving scenes in the film is when the choreographers teach the children to say “champions” in English. It is a powerful chorus when all of the children say “champion” together. It is joyous and encouraging to themselves and to one another. It captures their spirit as a whole and shows that they believe in themselves. They are a voice that when all together cannot be denied. The word champion captures their faith, innocence,

and power. All accomplishments begin first and foremost with belief. The directors' wish is for this belief to carry over to the rest of the world.

The directors make the claim that music and dance can change the course of the future. In 2005, the Patongo Primary School was the first school from northern Uganda to compete in the National Music Competition. They have already begun to surprise the world and are making strides to continue toward peace. One of the judges at the competition claimed that 'Every time Patongo was on stage, everyone wanted to see them because they are different' (*War Dance*). Patongo is different because their passion and determination cannot be quenched. They have overcome individual trials to compete as a unified body with one undeniable spirit. The scenes of Patongo dancing at the actual competition are emotional. Music and dance bring these children a true joy that is inspiring to watch. Performed with the upmost poise, grace, and delight, the children display their musical talent and dance to the crowd and judges. Their happiness overflows to the audience as they watch. Color and movement capture a viewer visually, but the love that pours out captures a viewer's emotions. They have nothing to lose and have extreme pride for their tribe, thus they perform with perfection. The same judge commented that 'all people know about northern Uganda is the war, but they have triumphed' (*War Dance*). Their victory is a statement to the world and to themselves that northern Uganda can do and be known for great things.


The climax of the movie centers on the award ceremony, where the children do not win the overall competition, but best musician and best traditional dance. Whenever announced, the children's faces light up and excitement radiates to the viewers from their joy. The audience celebrates alongside them. Of course, it is not exactly what they had wanted to win, but it is victory nonetheless and encouragement to the rest of northern Uganda. The true prize that the Patongo children are taking steps toward is peace. The directors send a message to the prospective supporters who may be viewing that northern Uganda may not have always been on



the road for peace, but the nation will be victorious in the end however rough or long the path may be.

To conclude, a 2006 report states that the “death rate in northern Uganda is three times that of Iraq” (“Rate of death”). The war in Iraq consumes our news, but on the other hand, many people do not even know about the long-suffering war in northern Uganda. The article claims that our world cannot overlook their war, and argues that we must be proactive in joining them in their fight for peace. The directors of *War Dance* echo this cry with the production of this documentary. They take a close, personal look at the problem and share the stories of those children affect. The audience gets to see their journey, and at the end of the film the directors offer the chance for the audience to continue on the journey with them toward peace by raising awareness and support. The directors’ use of such things as cinematography, interviewing, music, editing, and facial expressions all help speak volumes about the crisis that is continuing in northern Uganda. Every element of the movie from beginning to end is begging the world to be involved and to have faith that good can come from northern Uganda if we believe along with them.

### Works Cited

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### Author's Note

This assignment was very interesting. It taught me to look at films in a completely new way. I enjoyed my topic and getting to further learn about the ongoing conflict in northern Uganda. The tragedy that these children have experienced is something that I cannot imagine, but it is neat to see them succeed and the joy that comes from that. It gives me hope that peace will one day be reached in northern Uganda. One thing that was difficult was consolidating all of the information. I wrote about many subjects, but I feel as if they all work together to support my thesis. I could have gone on forever and ever because I loved the film so much. It was hard to select what I wanted to write about. It is also hard because I felt the need to give a lot of background information so the reader would understand. I also wanted to tell the story because it is so inspiring. I probably told more of the story than I would have on another subject, but I think I effectively interweaved the story to support my arguments. My scholarly source is the article by Justine Nannyonjo.

[STUDENT NAME] If you ever want a job in the writing center, I will write you a recommendation. I suggest that next year you enter this paper in the writing scholarship

competition that TCU English department offers each spring—keep a watch out. Your paper is tight, concise, focused, and clear. Your writing demonstrates academic maturity. I loved how you kept your paper focused on the audience's reception—I could see your evaluation your own reaction in the piece.

I have no idea why you were worried in that e-mail you sent me.


Grade: 97



### SAMPLE B PAPER

It's a Wonderful Agenda:


An in Depth Look into Communist Ideals in *It's a Wonderful Life* 


The event of watching a great movie can be correlated with an out of body experience. Characters are developed with such efficiency that an audience member develops empathy toward a character or multiple characters, and sometimes even begins to identify with the traits and qualities these characters consist of. With the combination of audiences identifying to movie characters and the vast popularity of the motion picture industry, movie creators and contributors hold a great amount of power over the emotions and beliefs of an audience. Propaganda and slanted biases consume the film industry though all types of genres. Writers develop screenplays that serve as both entertainment and ideology, which directly influence the millions of audience members. After World War II, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) conducted an official investigation of Communist propaganda in the motion picture industry (Noakes, 312). Among the movies investigated, the FBI found communist tactics within the classic American Christmas favorite, *It's a Wonderful Life*. This inspiring American story of an average man obtaining victory has been cherished by many Americans for centuries, but this heartwarming film might not be what it appears. The creator of *It's a Wonderful Life* brilliantly underlined this revered tale of triumph of the American dream with anti-American ideology, communism, through the use of


strategic characterization and symbolism. Federal findings and symbolic analysis reveal that this classic American movie might  be the work of an idealistic communist.

*It's a Wonderful Life* is a heartwarming film about the victory a martyred  rage American who achieves success in a society of competition and the evils of business. The storyline is structured in a conflict between two business owners in a quaint town named Bedford Falls. George Bailey, the focal character of the story, owns a modestly sized family loaning business that was founded by his father. His business is in competition with another business in town, a large bank owned by Mr. Potter, an evil character that desires one thing only, profit. He will take anyone's money, as long as it benefits him and his bank. Mr. Potter is on the verge of taking over Bedford Falls, but George Bailey is the one factor holding him back from doing so. In the beginning of the movie, George Bailey's uncle misplaces \$8,000 from the business, which is found and kept by Mr. Potter. This event traumatizes Bailey to the point that he attempts to take his own life by jumping off of a cliff. At this point, an angel named Clarence appears in which turns Bailey's life upside down by showing George what Bedford Falls would look like if he were to have never been born. George sees the town that is completely powered by Mr. Potter completely saturated with sin and destruction. He then realizes that he had actually led a life of triumph with great impact on Bedford Falls. In the end, George Bailey achieves victory with his business over Mr. Potter's, resulting in a happy ending for the common man of Bedford Falls .



In the early twentieth century, attending Hollywood movies became an increasingly popular activity among Americans. Jonathan Noakes wrote an in-depth

article that analyzed the complexity of the society of America in correlation with the motion picture industry for *Film History* journal. He stated that by the early 1940's, attending Hollywood movies had become a popular activity among Americans. An estimated 85,000,000 people were attending movies each week in the United States, from the perspective of the FBI.  1942, the Federal Bureau of Investigation began a formal examination of the motion picture industry in belief that the industry was leading a world-wide conspiracy to use movies as a mechanism to infiltrate Communist ideals to the American people. In their investigation, the FBI reports indicated that 20,000 workers, nearly half of the studio unions, were either controlled by Communists or following the Communist Party line. Simultaneously, liberal and radical ideals among Hollywood writers, actors, and directors were prevalent in that time. As far back as 1936, reports have even indicated that Hollywood intellectuals had attended meetings to promote the possibility of using the film industry as a field for Communism. In the investigation which lasted 16 years, the Las Angeles office of the FBI investigated over 200 motion pictures in attempt to analyze possible Communist propaganda (312). The agency had developed three criteria of measurement that would declare a movie as subversive and a carrier of political propaganda. Among the hundreds of movies under examination, they found that *It's a Wonderful Life* contained two of these three criteria. One criterion found was the presentation free enterprise and industrialist' wealth as evil. The other was the glorification of the common man along with success achieved though a collective group (314). At the time of its release in 1946-1947, *It's a Wonderful Life* was the 27<sup>th</sup> most popular film among the millions of weekly movie-goers (311). With

the vast popularity of the movie, these Communist ideals had been infiltrated into the existing American culture 




The post-war time period in which this movie was released was one in which citizens nationwide vulnerable  ideological slants portrayed through media outlets such as motion pictures. When *It's a Wonderful Life* was introduced to the public, the societal setting was post-World War II, which was a time that emphasized recapturing conceptual American values. The war had tested the values and ideals of the American civilization, making citizens nationwide vulnerable to ideological slants portrayed through media outlets such as motion pictures. During this time it was essential to bring back previous values of capitalism and democracy versus the rising of ideologies of a more centralized government. With the vitality of conceptualizing previous capitalist American values within this time period, *It's a Wonderful Life* was a film that served as a contradiction to this necessary achievement. This subversive content being seen by the mass amount of Americans created a tone of uneasiness in those people opposed to a new social order, particularly within the government. The political infiltration saturated into this light hearted and uplifting family favorite movie is that of communist propaganda.

Mr. Potter is the most hated character in *It's a Wonderful Life*, and rightfully so. He embodies a complete personality makeup of a truly evil person. In the movie, the audience sees him as a man who utilizes money for his own good and for the sake of wealth. He is perceived as having no concern of the well being of the citizens of Bedford Falls, his only focus is on money and the manipulation he can do with it. The persona he derives is developed through his actions he takes in the conflict between


him and George Bailey. The selective representation of Mr. Potter's character exemplifies the evil qualities of big business capitalists. The story emphasizes the life of Bailey, providing the audience an outsider view of Mr. Potter. Greed and wickedness then become the primary qualities of the bank owner, depriving the audience of ever observing the story from his perspective. The FBI reported that the profit motive embodied in Mr. Potter's character was a common technique used by communists within the film industry as a form of propaganda (Noakes 314). The brutal drive for revenue is a direct approach taken by the director for a desired outcome of Americans being exposed to a negative view of the rich members of society.  the vulnerable state Americans were in at this point in time, this approach provided *It's a Wonderful Life* with a great emotional appeal or pathos. In that period of history, for a movie to represent the rich as being atrocious owners of large capital, such as in Mr. Potter, challenged American values and promoted ideologies of communism and a more centralized government. 


Through the use of pathos within the storyline, the audience becomes favorable to the proletariat character in the film, George Bailey, who serves a purpose in the movie to directly contrast Mr. Potter. His character is representative of the common American man who is fighting the powerful forces of big business. He has a wife and children, a modest house, owns his own small business, and lives a comfortable life. He is essentially the face of the American dream, the life that the majority of Americans aspire for. Bailey is revered by the audience for a variety of reasons, the foremost of these being the qualities he contains which are closely related to the qualities that make up the persona of an average American. George Bailey's character is aimed to provide

an emotional appeal to the audience through the use of these relatable characteristics. His struggle of being a small business man who is under the manipulation of and being defeated by the forces of big business was the not so different from the struggle of many Americans in 1945. George Bailey is introduced to the audience in the first scene as a vibrant young boy working in an ice cream shop. As the audience travels through his life course in the film, a natural fondness towards Bailey is developed that includes a desire for him to succeed. With his kind hearted nature of his early years being contrasted with his later life filled with persecution from Mr. Potter, the director intended for powerful sense of empathy to be developed in those who relate to his character. At the point where George Bailey's business is on the brink of failure and he contemplates suicide, the audience is set up to loath Mr. Potter and his big business for causing this series of events experienced by a man who is so unidentifiable.

George Bailey is not only appreciated by the audience because of his relatable qualities, but also ause of his role as a defender of the rights of the common man by means of his loaning company. George had taken on the commitment to maintain his father's life work when he took over the loan association that was formerly owned by his father. He did so with success; ability to continue the service his father provided to the working men of Bedford Falls in distributing loaned mortgages in order for them to own a decent home (Noakes, 315). Because of his life work being a life of generosity to the working men of his town, pathos is developed in the audience pecially in those people who are working class citizens themselves. Bailey's gentle hearted demeanor shown within his occupation along with his vulnerability shown within his business in a



constant unbalanced battle with Mr. Potter's big business gives him a very real presence that is a person can identify with effortlessly 

*It's a Wonderful Life* produces a sense of reality simultaneously with a sense of an alter-reality. The average Americans who watched this film at the time of its release most likely found it very easy to relate to most if not all elements in the life of George Bailey. His character itself, his family, his struggle and competition with the power of big business, and town in which he lives in, Bedford Falls. The charm of Bedford Falls is appealing to the audience at the time the film was released because it represented the standard American town that could be relatable to many people within the American society. This sense of reality produced by this film served as a tool of manipulation because it created a hope for the average American to overcome the forces of big business, which is essentially a communist ideal. Along with this sense of reality, *It's a Wonderful Life* encompasses a hidden element of fantasy as well  George Bailey and his small family business defeated the power and strength of the big business owned by Mr. Potter. Although it serves as an enriching story that shines an optimistic light on life's elements of family, community, and business, a story is all that it is. *It's a Wonderful Life* is not a true story or even one that is based on true life events, but merely a story that has been brilliantly executed cinematography that lacks empirical truth. The pathos in the film that creates a feeling of empathy for George Bailey is responsible for creating this false reality felt by the audience. Audience members develop a sense of identify with his character so when George feels triumphant because of his success over big business, the audience member feels just as triumphant. This sense of reality produced by this film served as a tool of manipulation because it

created a hope for the average American to overcome the forces of big business, which is essentially a communist ideal.

Money serves as an underlying element throughout the film that symbolizes capitalism and communism through the two different ways it is managed. Throughout the movie, the audience sees that George Bailey always uses money for the good of others through various noble acts. He uses it to keep his family business open and also to send his younger brother Harry to college instead of taking it for himself. Bailey's selfless use of money through his life of distributing loans to the working class depicts him as a truly altruistic man. In contrast with George Bailey's use of money, Mr. Potter only uses money for his own benefit with no regard to others. He uses money as a harassment tool against George Bailey in attempt to destroy his loaning business. He uses greedy tactics in his bank practice in order to gain as much profit as possible. Mr. Potter's character lacks dynamics with gluttony being his only distinguishable trait. The way Mr. Potter manages money in the film symbolizes how the film portrayed how capitalist elite manage money, greedily, whereas, the film portrays George Bailey's selfless and generous use of money as how a communist would manage it. Because of the unsound monetary system within America after World War II, the film uses money to idealize a new social system through the use of pathos.

Communist infiltration in movies was studied at this time by the FBI to a feeling of threat to the American social system during a time of idealistic susceptibility in people. **It's a Wonderful Life** has a storyline that has been admired by every generation since the time of its release. Unfortunately, what was once seen as an optimistic story of success was initially intended to be a story of communist ideals. The creator of **It's a**

**Wonderful Life** brilliantly underlined this revered tale of triumph of the American dream with anti-American ideology, communism, through the use of strategic characterization and symbolism. Though this research might have revealed some unpleasant findings, *It's a Wonderful Life* is still watched by a vast amount of Americans with its popularity continuing to spread and America remaining a capitalist social system.

#### Works Cited



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[student name]: I really enjoyed reading this paper; I had never heard this about this about the movie. Very interesting. Some areas of concern are: 3 sources in addition to the movie were needed (and the movie should have been included on the Works Cited). Also, while your paper was nicely organized and flowed well, some sentence structure came across as confusing. In addition to working on sentence structure, I would also suggest working out the excessive passive voice and just avoid using the verb "being." Overall, good job. Grade: 84


#### **SAMPLE "C" PAPER**

California: The Golden State 

This past November during the election in California, Proposition 8 passed, which banned gay marriage in the state. Prior to the election, gay marriage was legal in California. Due to the fact that Proposition 8 only passed with 52% of the votes, the issue of banning gay marriage unions has turned into a huge and messy debate

throughout the state. Now with the new information coming out about the Mormon Church's contributions  the California Supreme Court's recent decision to have hearings regarding the 18,000 same-sex marriages that have already occurred, it seems as though we have not heard the last about Proposition 8. Both groups, anti-gay marriage and pro gay marriage, have worked extremely hard to fight for either side of the issue to get their messages out to the public using different persuasive strategies. This paper seeks to argue the points of rhetoric that various genres, whether it is a blog, cartoon or commercial, use to appeal to specific emotions of the residents of California .

In the months prior to the election in California, many commercials and ads aired around the state with both the view points  same-sex marriage. California was one of the only states that accepted gay marriage as an actual union  there was a huge rush to the courthouses before the election began for gay couples to solidify their marriages in the state. The issue was very public to the nation when Ellen DeGeneres and her girlfriend Portia de Rossi got married last year. After Proposition 8 passed in California, Ellen DeGeneres blogged on her website the next day stating that:

This morning, when it was clear that Proposition 8 had passed in California; I can't explain the feeling I had. I was saddened beyond belief. Here we just had a giant step towards equality and then on the very next day, we took a giant step away. I believe one day a 'ban on gay marriage' will sound totally ridiculous. In the meantime, I will continue to speak out for equality for all of us (DeGeneres). .

She continues on her official website explaining to the public how Proposition 8 works and asked her viewers to please vote "No" on the measure, ". . . please VOTE NO on Proposition 8. And now that you're informed, spread the word. I'm begging you. I can't

return the wedding gifts -- I love my new toaster" (DeGeneres). The words she chose in her reaction to the passing of Proposition 8 appeals to the viewer's pathos. One can tell that Ellen DeGeneres' statement is emotionally driven. She used her emotions to convey the tone in which her blog was written in. For example when she said that she was "saddened beyond belief" (DeGeneres) one could only imagine how sad she and her partner must have felt. Due to the fact that passing Proposition directly affects her and her wife, the sad emotions are clear, thus using pathos rhetoric. Ellen DeGeneres also used comedy to make light of the situation. Since she is a comedian, this touched on the ethos she used, her actual character. It was not just Ellen DeGeneres using her celebrity attributes to inform the public of her opinion and trying to get them to vote No. Late night talk show host Chelsea Lately did a public service announcement on the E! Entertainment channel to vote No. Comedian Kathy Griffen searched out a large group of actors, comedians and musicians together and created her own PSA. Actress Drew Barrymore went out and marched with hundreds of protestors of Prop. 8 in downtown Los Angeles and addressed them on a PSA system urging them to vote No on the measure. The celebrities that used such public announcements really used ethos based rhetoric in getting their messages across to the public. Seeing as though they are such celebrities and in the limelight of the media, they were able to use their celebrity/character to their advantage in this particular situation.

However, it was just not celebrities late night talk show hosts who were campaigning against Proposition 8. Another genre that was used during this time period was videos off of the internet. One commercial in particular attracted people's attention of off Youtube. The clip called "'Home Invasion': Vote NO on Prop 8" depicts a


lesbian married couple who lives together being interrogated by two male members of the Mormon Church. The clip was a part of the Courage Campaign that was backed by President Barack Obama and California Senator Diane Feinstein. The clip has gotten more than 500,000 hits since it was first downloaded on October 31 of last year. The video clip goes to extremes showing the two Mormon men barging into the house and demanding the women take off their wedding rings claiming that they were there to take away their rights. The actions shown in the video hit on the pathos and logos of the audience. In the clip, the men are very rude to the women who seem helpless, giving off the emotional aspect (pathos). The clip then pauses and gives statistics about proposition 8 that are clearly slanted towards the equality for all marriages in California. These statistics bring in the persuasiveness of the logos reasoning since the clip gives specifics about how much money the Mormon Church contributed. One of the statistics that the video gives is that “members of the Mormon Church have given over \$20 million to pass Proposition 8.” The two men then ransack the house looking for their marriage certificate, only to rip it into pieces. After the men do so, they leave and say to one another “That was too easy... what should we ban next?” This is an example of ethos based messages being sent. The character of the men (Mormon) and the way in which they are portrayed in the video hits on the reputations regarding the Mormon thoughts on gay marriage, hence the ethos appeal. The video clip is clearly an over exaggeration of the Proposition in reference to the stand points of Mormons, but it did hit on all three forms of rhetoric during the commercials quick time span.


Another huge issue about the passing of the proposition recently has been the amount of money that the Mormon Church contributed. This video clip/web commercial





makes the viewer aware of how much money (over \$20 million) they gave. According to Michelle Garcia of the website Advocate, “The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints has mobilized followers to give an estimated 77% of donations to support California's proposed marriage ban” (Garcia). There was much debate over exactly how much money the Mormon Church gave. At certain points prior to the election, many members of the church were avoiding pinpointing exact amounts out of fear of severe backlash against the church. In fact, any organization that contributed to the measure had to publicly file the donations they gave by January 31 of this year.

However, some believe that the Mormon Church has not been keeping proper track of the donations they gave. According to an article from the Los Angeles Times, “State election officials are looking into allegations by Prop. 8 ...that the church has under-reported its financial contributions to the gay-marriage fight. The latest campaign-donation disclosures, released this week, were normal filings and not related to the investigation, the church said” (Grad). There has been no exact word from the Mormon Church on how much money has been given to pass the proposition. Pro-gay marriage advocates do not understand not why the Mormon Church spent so much money, but why they have been trying to keep their exact donations under wraps. According to Fred Karger of Californians Against Hate


It is a staggering amount of money and an even more staggering percentage of the overall campaign receipts. The Mormon Church, based in Salt Lake City, Utah, has hijacked the campaigns in both California and Arizona, where voters face constitutional amendments to end same-sex marriage...They've always been looked down upon by the Christians, the Catholics, and evangelicals (Garcia).


The words that Karger chose to use in his on-line article are pathos based. To be more specific, his use of the word “hijacked” was  to targeting the reader’s emotions.

There is a negative association with the word, one that usually stirs up some form of emotion considering the literal meaning is an unpleasant one. Karger then repeats the word “gging” two times in one sentence. This also gives the reader a sense of the seriousness surrounding the issue and has both a logos and pathos appeal with the selection of his words/sentence structure.

In reference back to Ellen DeGeneres’ blog stating that, “Watching the returns on election night was an amazing experience. Barack Obama is our new president. Change is here. I, like millions of Americans, felt like we had taken a giant step towards equality. We were watching history” (DeGeneres  she believes that our country has moved in such a great direction  lecting Barack Obama as President but is now moving back in the opposite direction with passing Proposition 8. On the website, Politicalcartoons.com there is a political cartoon representing this exactly. Rob Tornoe illustrated two lesbian women sitting together on a couch. There is a newspaper at their feet reading “Gay Marriage Ban” and neither one of them looks particularly happy. Just in the title of the paper alone, the word “ban” has a negative association and so right away there is pathos  ed rhetoric without being blatantly obvious. The women are watching the election on the TV with a picture of Barack Obama being displayed saying “Yes We Can!” The two women are looking at his expressions of happiness and glee and saying . We Can’t” (in reference to them being legally allowed to marry now) with the look up disappointment written all over both their faces. This cartoon is sums up the idea that even though there is great change now, some things may have



changed for the worse in different areas of the United States. This cartoon is also slanted pro-gay marriage. It is apparent by the look of dismay on the faces of the women that they are unhappy with the decision to pass the proposition. The rhetorical appeal this cartoon gives off is from all three standpoints of ethos, pathos and logos. The ethos appeal is given through the representation of President Barack Obama being illustrated on the television set and the fact that the two main characters on the couch are lesbians. Their characters are really defined in this cartoon which brings about their own reputations. The logos appeal is conveyed through the newspaper article title and the reaction to President Obama's saying. The two women are now not allowed to marry in the state of California. The main use of rhetoric however comes through as that of pathos. The banning of gay marriage is emotional for many people in the state. Due to the fact that the two women look so sad and upset, the reader can get a sense of sentiment from the illustration.  Job Tornoe did a great job of making the women look so mad, sad and upset in the cartoon that the emotion really comes off the page. He achieved this by using the three different forms of rhetoric in his illustrations in order for the viewer to get the messages he was sending.

Through many hot topic issues, the author/illustrator conveys different meanings in their work.  Some meanings may be subliminal, while others are very apparent at what they are hinting at. However it does not matter how obvious the messages are, most are used by combining rhetorical appeals to the audience. The recent issues in California surrounding Proposition 8 are great examples of how rhetoric can persuade an audience to agree with one side or another in this case. Whether by (gay)

celebrities, cartoons or commercials off of the internet, rhetoric is being used in order to influence the viewers of this current event taking place in California.

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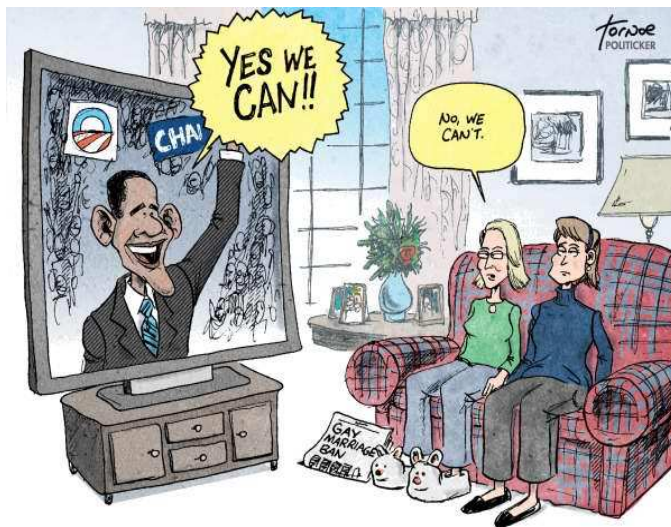
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[Student Name:] I think you picked an interesting topic, and I enjoyed reading your paper. There are a few points I'd like to make about the paper. As you can see, I changed the margins to the required 1" margins (as stated on handout, syllabus, and in class) and the paper went from 7 pages to 6 and a half. Also, the long paragraphs need to be broken up into smaller paragraphs with one controlling idea each. Doing this alone will stretch the paper some. Using an opinionated topic sentence that you then prove throughout the paragraph will help keep the paragraph focused and cohesive. Furthermore, there were times when the language was a bit confusing and awkward. Try reading the paper out-loud to see if you can catch those instances. And at times the attempts to point out the appeals seemed forced, when it should feel effortless. If you

should desire to re-submit this paper, you might visit the writing center for some assistance, especially in places where the argument seemed to be more informative rather than analytical. Having said all this, I think the paper has great potential and encourage you to continue to work on it with a goal of re-submission.

Grade: 72

### Grading Criteria

#### A-Range Essay

An A paper is excellent on all or almost all counts for the requirements of Essay I.

An “A” paper polished essay is consistently excellent on these counts:

- the writing has a clear controlling idea (even if it emerges later or at the end of the text) that is complex and takes risks and has a particularly fresh idea to explore that surprises the reader; the essay has a narrative where ideas build in engaging or unexpected ways to help readers understand the controlling idea (i.e.: it “flows” for readers)
- the essay achieves the purposes of the assignment by writing a rhetorical case study that displays genuine inquiry about a topic and takes it to the next level by genuinely grappling with a topic (not necessarily having all the answers and ending the essay too neatly).
- the essay’s controlling idea supported through specific moments or scenes, and there is sophisticated meaning-making about the significance of the specific moments in the essay (i.e.: “so what” question is satisfied for readers) in ways that aren’t too obvious or clichéd.
- The writing displays sophistication on the sentence level with sentence variety and a sense of the writer’s “voice” (meaning the paper doesn’t read in a generic way like anyone could have written it), the paper is basically error-free

#### B-range Essay:

- the writing has a clear controlling idea (even if it emerges later or at the end of the text) that is complex and sometimes takes risks; the essay has a narrative that builds (i.e., the piece “flows”)
- the essay achieves the purpose of the assignment by writing a rhetorical case study essay that displays genuine inquiry about a topic
- the essay’s controlling idea is supported through specific moments or scenes, and there is meaning-making about the significance of the specific moments in the essay (i.e.: the “so what” question is satisfied for readers) in ways that aren’t too obvious or clichéd.
- The writing displays sophistication on the sentence level with sentence variety and a sense of the writer’s “voice” (meaning the paper doesn’t read in a generic way like anyone could have written it), the paper shows little by way of errors.

#### C-range Essay:

This assessment means the student did the minimum of amount of work required with average or adequate achievement.

A “C” Polished Essay is average:

- the writing has a controlling idea (even if it emerges later or at the end of the text) that isn’t fully minded throughout the text, and the paper doesn’t have a cohesive quality throughout.
- The essay technically achieves the purposes of the assignment by writing a rhetorical case study essay that displays a genuine inquiry about a topic, but the inquiry is obvious or expected.
- the essay’s controlling idea is supported through moments that are more vague or generalized and don’t render the experience fully for readers through details, and the meaning-making about the significance of the specific moments in the essay isn’t fully explored or developed (i.e.: the “so what” question may not be completely satisfied for readers)
- The writing is adequate on the sentence level with sentence variety and a sense of the writer’s “voice” (meaning the paper doesn’t read in a generic way like anyone could have written it), and there may be error problems that were pointed out and not addressed.