

SHIV MEHTA A17731385

Part 1: Consider your experiences with reading, writing, discussing, and listening over the course of the quarter. In what ways have your communication strategies--especially writing--changed? What were you worried about at the beginning of the term? How do you feel now? How have you improved? You can use examples from your two papers here. What have you learned about your own processes for writing/reading/listening/speaking in CAT 2? What goals do you have for yourself in CAT 3 regarding your development as a thinker? You do not need to answer all of the above questions, but rather they are here to help you think through your work in the course.

When I started this quarter, I came out of CAT 1 thinking my writing was quite argumentative but needed to be more explicit. Over the course of the quarter, I have learned to break down and analyze complex arguments in order to comprehensively understand them and return an à propos response. As we progressed through the quarter, we were assigned our first paper which I thought I did really well on, but it turned out to be a lot worse than expected. I learned from my mistakes and realized I needed to make my essays even more explicit, especially when stating and explaining my arguments. On the second paper, I kept this in mind but it became a lot harder as we only had 200 more words but we had to analyze 2 more texts than paper 1, making it very difficult to explicitly explain my arguments while keeping the essay concise. For CAT 3 I would like to improve my structuring. Many times, the way I structure my essays (not the paragraphs but specifically the entire essay) can be very confusing for readers as I tend to structure my papers with the same flow as my train of thought. This is great for a rough draft, but I need to work on this for final revisions.

Part 2: What is ONE concept, idea, word, historical event (or something else) that you learned this term that most impacted you and/or your understanding of concepts of the climate crisis? And, why? (200-300 words)

Learning about how consumerism and capitalism have been the impetus of climate change was quite eye opening as I never realized to what extent our world revolves around money until I read the quote "It is easier to see the end of the world than to see the end of capitalism". Moreover, to see this reflected in movies from my childhood such as WALL-E and never having realized this for myself, petrified me! I would argue that our materially driven society has not only been the cause of climate change but almost all humanitarian issues in the world. Health, war, food, and more are all industries which generate billions if not trillions of dollars, when you live in a system where corporations profit from the plight of the general populous, you have effectively created a system which can only fuck humanity over time! My question to this is, what is the alternative? Something none of us can refute is the innate human quality of greed which is why a marxist system would never work, so what is the alternative? We need a new system which is not communist or capitalist but I fail to see what this new system could be.

Part 3: What is ONE idea/concept/etc. that you struggled with most with this term and why? What made it difficult for you? Keep in mind that intellectual struggle can be a good thing! (200-300 words)

I really struggled with understanding why traditional masculinity was looked down upon to the extent it was in this course. I found that oftentimes, in class we were stretching the connections of how various representations in media and films correlate to toxic masculinity and other such

attributes. Furthermore, we spent a lot of time analyzing masculinity from films from the 90s or even earlier which do not accurately represent masculinity in our modern world. We have come a long way from what we once were as a society and I fail to comprehend how thinking of astronauts as cowboys, for example, could possibly add to anyone's perception of masculinity. Looking at cowboys we can see many qualities which are both admirable and detestable but when we look at astronauts we only see these admirable qualities. Astronauts come in all genders, sexes, races, and more. Astronauts go through years if not decades of training and education just to risk their lives going where no humans have gone before just so that the rest of us can understand our observable universe better. I cannot and don't think ever will understand how this is looked down upon. If the argument is that moves like Armageddon showcase astronauts who are toxically masculine, my response is that Armageddon is a fictional movie from the 90s about blowing an asteroid up, if we are going to assume that as a reflection of real life, I would like to submit my own set of fictional movies which display ridiculous ideas as well and would like to claim that they are accurate representations of real life. I think you can see how dumb this seems.

Part 4: Given the context of the course, what is ONE reading or screening that you would replace? Why and with what? (I.e. is there something you can think of that would be a better fit for future classes) If not, explain your reasoning on that front too! (200-300 words)

I would remove White Flight and add Interstellar to the course. Given the context of the climate crisis and exploring the future of humanity, I found White Flight dismissive of recent contributions and improvements by humanity as a whole. Lynn Spigel -author of White Flight- talks about how the space race was a scam and a hoax to only fuel the disparity between the races (mainly white and black) while also domesticating women. He goes on to mention inane theories like how the space race was a ploy to send all black people to the moon or to create a white only colony in space once again. When students who are not educated on the background of space race's history read an article like this, they would be quick to believe this, when any level of basic research would tell you otherwise. Lynn's statements are not only derogatory but straight up wrong as in each sentence he denigrates the many contributions women and men of all races have made to put humanity on the moon. When we tell our younger generations that they cannot see Neil Armstrong as a strong role model because they aren't white, straight, or male what message are we sending them? As an Indian male, I still see the contributions of Margaret Hamilton and Guy Bluford as an inspiration for myself and I see no reason as to why others can't as well. Interstellar is a movie about a man leaving dystopian earth to find another planet so that future generations can have a chance to survive. Not only is this film inclusive of all races and sexes but it is also scientifically sound, which begs the question "Why wasn't this movie included in this course" when it covers themes such as climate change, space and the future, popular media and the government, over consumerism and others which were all heavily discussed in this class. One might argue (not me), that this movie does not fit this classes' clearly biased agenda which only has 1 goal: to propagate an ideology based on victimhood.

Shiv Mehta B08

A17731385

Paper #1 Prompt #1

An Analysis of *Our Planet | Forests* as an Effective & Complete Representation of Earth

The Representation of William Cronon's sublime and frontier in *Our Planet | Forests*

Our Planet | Forests by Netflix is a short documentary which showcases our home, Earth's, natural flora and its atrocious plight. The sequence I have chosen from this film effectively encompasses the film's message and represents the core tenants of planet Earth. Through the use of various narrative, cinematic, and stylistic devices, *Forests* persuasively conveys a thematic message of Earth's perseverance and resilient nature along with the ideas of recovery and mortality.

The sequence begins by narrating Earth's downfall and how large portions of flora have been desecrated, synced with an eagle's eye view of Madagascar, spanning out to view the earth from space, forming an ominous atmosphere of despair. The narrator's diction further emphasizes the gloomy and lifeless nature of the film as he uses words such as "destroyed", "flourished", "lived", pointing towards a theme of mortality thus personifying our planet as a one large lifeform, invoking empathy in the viewer. Abruptly, there is a sudden cut to a frame of lush greenery along with the narration continuing with its melancholic message of misfortune as the narrator informs the audience of the Chernobyl accident. The juxtaposition of the despondent narration with a wide drone shot of lush flora unlike any other grabs the viewers attention, exaggerating the amount of trees, and starts to raise a sense of hope in the audience.

"100,000+ people evacuated from Chernobyl" says the narrator as a slow shot of some religious glass art in an abandoned building is shown, contrasting the symbol of hope (religion) to an abandoned building, a place without hope, further building to the thematic message. "A fallout zone declared inhabitable for the next 20000 years" plays in the background as more low angle shots of abandoned buildings covered in scratches of graffiti with plants growing out of every crack and crevice are shown. This vibrant contrast of colors between the green in the flora and the gray of the buildings elucidates the thematic message of resilience; the plants in cracks, a symbol of our planet's ability to thrive in the most dire circumstances. As the climax approaches, the music shifts from ominous to uprising. The scene cuts to a drone shot slowly panning from the top of an old abandoned building to the side with a little more greenery coming into the frame until an abrupt cut; a low angle shot of the building devoured by greenery, a testament of nature's unwavering



will to thrive. Vines from the ground up entering through cracks and windows, entrapping the facility in its entirety, symbolizing how Earth can overturn our mistakes and recover. The clear vibrance in the plants juxtaposed with the dark enhanced shadows of the building reinforce this message and effectively expound upon the theme of perseverance and recovery.



The themes of perseverance and resilience, especially in the context of nature, are not unique to *Our Planet | Forests*. As we look at William Cronon's

The Trouble with Wilderness we can see a clear emblematic link between the two texts. In the chosen sequence, the depiction of a cycle of dismantling, recovery, and restoration between what Cronon refers to as the 'sublime' -the dull city- and the 'frontier' -the free frenzy of the wilderness-; forming an ouroboros, allegorical to a endless cycle of destruction and rebirth. Each frame of Chernobyl is an image of Cronon's dream, a perfect combination of the wilderness and humanity, as he stated "not just in the garden, not just in the wilderness, but in the home that encompasses them both."

Themes and ideas such as hope, resilience, and life tend to go together because they evoke similar emotions in each person. As we look at these two texts, these themes become ever so clear from the fall of humanity and rise of nature in Chernobyl and the contrast between the sublime and frontier. Through the cinematic and literary techniques used in *Our Planet | Forests* and *The Trouble with Wilderness* these core ideas are interconnected and made real, invoking empathy from the audience by not only analyzing our relationship with nature but clearly depicting it; a true symbol of our planet.

Word Count: 603

Work Cited

Cronon, William. *Uncommon Ground : Rethinking the Human Place in Nature*. New York, W.W. Norton & Co, 1996.

Fothergill, Alastair. *Our Planet | Forests*. Netflix, 5 Apr. 2019, www.youtube.com/watch?v=JkaxUblCGz0, disc 8. Accessed 19 Jan. 2024.

Shiv Mehta B08

A17731385

Paper #1 Prompt #1

An Analysis of *Our Planet | Forests* as an Effective & Complete Representation of Earth

The Representation of William Cronon's sublime and frontier in *Our Planet | Forests*

Our Planet | Forests is a short documentary which showcases our home, Earth's, natural flora and its atrocious plight. Specifically, the Chernobyl sequence encompasses the film's message and represents the ideal unity of nature and man as described by William Cronon in *Uncommon Ground*. Through the use of various narrative, cinematic, and stylistic devices, *Forests* persuasively argues a thematic message of Earth's perseverance and resilient nature along with the ideas of recovery and mortality while creating an atmosphere of unity between humanity and earth, effectively acting as a complete representation of earth.

The sequence begins by narrating Earth's downfall and how large portions of flora have been desecrated, synced with an eagle's eye view of Madagascar, spanning out to view the earth from space, forming an ominous atmosphere of despair. The narrator's diction further emphasizes the gloomy and lifeless nature of the film as he uses words such as "destroyed", "flourished", "lived" (*Forests*, 40:31), pointing towards a theme of mortality thus personifying our planet as a one large lifeform, invoking empathy in the viewer.

Abruptly, there's a cut to a frame of lush greenery as the narrator informs the audience of the Chernobyl accident. The juxtaposition of the despondent narration with a wide drone shot of lush flora starts to raise a sense of hope in the audience. "100,000+ people evacuated from Chernobyl" (*Forests*, 41:55) says the narrator as a slow shot of religious glass art in an abandoned building is shown, contrasting the symbol of hope (religion) to the abandoned building, a place without hope, further building to the thematic message. More and more low angle shots of abandoned buildings covered in scratches of graffiti with plants growing out of every crack and crevice are shown. This vibrant contrast of colors between the green in the flora and the gray of the buildings elucidates the thematic message of resilience; the plants in cracks, a symbol of our planet's ability to thrive in the most dire circumstances.





Suddenly, the music shifts from ominous to uprising. The scene cuts to a drone shot slowly panning from the top of an old abandoned building to the side with a little more greenery coming into the frame until an abrupt cut; a low angle shot of the building devoured by greenery, a testament of nature's unwavering will to thrive. Vines from the ground up entering through cracks and windows, entrapping the facility in its entirety, symbolizing how Earth can

overtake our mistakes and recover, reinforcing this message of perseverance and recovery.

These themes, especially in the context of nature, are not unique to *Our Planet | Forests*. As we look at William Cronon's *The Trouble with Wilderness* we can see a clear emblematic link between the two texts. In *Forests*, the depiction of a cycle of dismantling, recovery, and restoration between what Cronon refers to as the 'sublime' and the 'frontier' illustrates a vision of unity between our creations and nature. Cronon argues that our wilderness should not be a protected and separate space but rather a perfect harmony between the man-made and the natural, an idea made real and shown in *Forests*. Each frame of Chernobyl is an image of Cronon's dream, a perfect combination of the wilderness and humanity, as he stated "not just in the garden, not just in the wilderness, but in the home that encompasses them both." (Cronon, pg 20)

Themes and ideas such as hope, resilience, and life tend to go together because they evoke similar emotions in each person. As we look at these two texts, these themes become ever so clear from the fall of humanity and rise of nature in Chernobyl and the contrast between the sublime and frontier. Through the techniques used in *Our Planet | Forests* and *The Trouble with Wilderness* these core ideas are interconnected and made real, invoking empathy from the audience by not only analyzing our relationship with nature but clearly depicting it; a true representation of our planet.

Word Count: 603

Work Cited

Cronon, William. *Uncommon Ground : Rethinking the Human Place in Nature*. New York, W.W. Norton & Co, 1996.

Fothergill, Alastair. *Our Planet | Forests*. Netflix, 5 Apr. 2019, www.youtube.com/watch?v=JkaxUblCGz0, disc 8. Accessed 19 Jan. 2024.

Name: Shiv Mehta

PID: A17731385

Section: B08

Films: The Martian & WALL-E

Texts: White Flight & America Is Getting Lonelier and More Indoorsy

Prompt Selected: How effectively do futuristic depictions of our society in films represent masculinity to our youth and generations to come?

Word Count: 750

Representations of Masculinity in Futuristic Depictions of Society

An Thematic Analysis Of The Portrayal of Masculinity In The Martian & WALL-E And The Interpretation Of Related Themes

Masculinity, a word whose definition changes every decade yet stays key to how society functions. In the past few years itself we've seen a large shift in how we define masculinity which poses the question what will we define masculinity as in the future and moreover, how do we want to define it. Articles such as *White Flight by Lynn Spigel* and *America Is Getting Lonelier and More Indoorsy. That's Not a Coincidence by Hanna Seo* claims that since the space race there has only been a rise of toxic masculinity and a phobia of human interaction rather than healthy personalities which foster healthy relations and civilizations. Through the use of various narrative, cinematic, and stylistic devices and elements, *The Martian* and *WALL-E* effectively portray the key ideas of masculinity such as protectiveness and perseverance while conveying

another central thematic message of compassion, love, and empathy, creating holistic and diverse role models for young men; contrasting the plight the aforementioned articles elucidate.

Although both films follow different plots; *The Martian* and *WALL-E* both revolve around two strong and resilient main characters, using nothing but their sheer wits and tenacity to solve their problems and survive in a desolate world. Both Mark Watney (the main character, astronaut, of *The Martian*) and *WALL-E* (the main character, robot, of *WALL-E*) display conventional characteristics of masculinity through each of their actions, persevering through their isolation and remaining stoic which are admirable traits but these characters go further than that.

As the stories progress we see how each of these characters develop healthy, emotional relationships and treat these relationships not as a burden but as a source of satisfaction and inspiration to push through tribulations.

When Mark talks to his squadron at last, we see an outburst of emotion from each end. Astronauts, idolized by young boys, expressing pure joy just from human interaction humanizes our heroes. Through the use of close shots of their faces, these unadulterated emotions are displayed; invoking empathy in the viewers and instilling values of friendship and comradery, teaching a generation of young men the importance of maintaining healthy relationships which support you. Moreover- we can see these same morals in *WALL-E*. When *WALL-E* sacrifices himself for EVE



because of his love for EVE, the use of wide shots paired with dramatic audio cues takes advantage of the viewer's pathos; conveying a thematic message of care and sacrifice; the most important and most forgotten tenants of masculinity.

In *White Flight*, Spigel argues that the message of the space race being 'one giant leap for mankind' is a hoax; rather that it was a scheme to segregate the colored population and domesticate/subordinate women. I would argue that the moon landing was just as large of a step for women as for any other demographic. Hundreds of women worked on the moon landing mission without whom it would not have been possible. Women like Margaret Hamilton pioneered STEM for women and it is insulting to say that their work's true intention was only to denigrate women's rights once more. Furthermore, the proof lies in these works themselves. *The Martian* showcases multiple accomplished women working to bring Mark Watney home; in fact his team captain is a woman.

In contrast, *America Is Getting Lonelier and More Indoorsy. That's Not a Coincidence* argues that urbanization is the cause of our dysfunctional relationships between one another. There is a clear correlation between how urbanization has led our youth to grow up isolated; not knowing how to be functional young adults essentially raising a futile generation that refuses to go outside. *WALL-E* shows us what happens if we don't do anything about this; a dystopia of incompetent, aloof, and incapable humans. Both films, by providing strong depictions of complete masculine role models, subliminally convey a thematic message of perspicacity, love, and sacrifice, helping fix our dysfunctional youth.

To conclude, both films show holistically developed, strong masculine role models which are not incapable of emotion or care but juxtaposed in different time periods. Ultimately, our orientation in space and time determines what we deem as a morally just definition of masculinity which sustains a healthy society built on thriving relations. Spigel looked at the 1960s, The Martian looked at 2010s, Seo looked at the 2020s, and WALL-E looked at the distant future. The articles reveal problems in our society, and masculinity in their given time periods whereas through their use of various techniques, both films provide examples of ideal men in society at any given time.

Works Cited

Pixar. “Wall-E.” *YouTube*, 9 Dec. 2011, www.youtube.com/watch?v=5RcNwlq7JSw.

Seo, Hannah. “America Is Getting Lonelier and More Indoorsy. That’s Not a Coincidence.” *The Atlantic*, 13 Nov. 2023,

[www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2023/11/nature-avoidance-social-isolation-loneliness
/675984/](https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2023/11/nature-avoidance-social-isolation-loneliness/675984/).

Spigel, Lynn. “White Flight.” *MedienJournal*, vol. 18, no. 1, 5 May 2017, pp. 10–18,
<https://doi.org/10.24989/medienjournal.v18i1.691>.

YouTube Movies. “The Martian.” *YouTube*, 2 Oct. 2015,
www.youtube.com/watch?v=TeZDLAAaDYos.

Name: Shiv Mehta

PID: A17731385

Section: B08

Films: The Martian & WALL-E

Texts: White Flight & The Trouble with Wilderness

Prompt Selected: How does the definition of masculinity change over time and how is this definition represented to our youth and generations to come?

Word Count: 795

Representations of Masculinity in Futuristic Depictions of Society

An Thematic Analysis Of The Portrayal of Masculinity In The Martian & WALL-E And The Interpretation Of Related Themes

Masculinity, a word whose definition changes every decade yet stays key to how society functions. In the past few years itself we've seen a large shift in how we define masculinity which poses the question what will we define masculinity as in the future and moreover, how does our orientation in space and time change this definition. Articles such as *White Flight* by Lynn Spigel and *The Trouble with Wilderness* by William Cronon claim that since the space race there has only been a rise of toxic masculinity rather than healthy personalities which foster healthy relations and civilizations, challenging and posing a new definition of masculinity. Through the use of various narrative, cinematic, and stylistic devices, *The Martian* and *WALL-E* effectively portray the key ideas of masculinity such as protectiveness and perseverance while conveying another central thematic message of compassion, love, and empathy, creating holistic

and diverse role models for young men; contrasting the plight the aforementioned articles elucidate.

Although both films follow different plots; *The Martian* and *WALL-E* both revolve around two resilient main characters, using nothing but their sheer wits and tenacity to solve their problems and survive in a desolate world. Both Mark Watney (the main character, astronaut, of *The Martian*) and *WALL-E* (the main character, robot, of *WALL-E*) display conventional characteristics of masculinity through each of their actions, persevering through their isolation and remaining stoic which are admirable traits but these characters go further than that.

As the stories progress we see how each of these characters develop healthy, emotional relationships and treat these relationships not as a burden but as a source of satisfaction and inspiration to push through tribulations.

Abandoned on Mars for months, when Mark talks to his squadron at last, we see an outburst of emotion from both ends. Astronauts, idolized by young boys, expressing pure joy just from human interaction humanizes our heroes.

Through the use of close shots of their faces, these unadulterated emotions are displayed; invoking empathy in the viewers and instilling values of friendship and comradery, teaching a generation of young men the importance of



maintaining healthy relationships which you can rely on for support and open up to. Moreover- we can see these same morals in WALL-E. When WALL-E sacrifices himself for EVE because of his love for EVE, the use of wide shots paired with dramatic audio cues takes advantage of the viewer's pathos; conveying a thematic message of care and sacrifice; the most important and most forgotten tenants of masculinity.

In *White Flight*, Spigel argues that the message of the space race being 'one giant leap for mankind' is a hoax; rather that it was a scheme to segregate the colored population and domesticate/subordinate women. I would argue that instead it is simply a matter of time; as time goes and we change our definitions of masculinity we create generations of men and women who are not only capable but also inclusive and kind. The proof lies in these works themselves. *The Martian* showcases multiple accomplished women and men of various races working to bring Mark Watney home both from Earth and in his own team, including his captain. Although the protagonist is white, he still serves as an excellent example of a masculine role model for young men across the globe as he showcases his humor, intelligence (in a so-called 'feminine' field-botany), and displaying emotions when he fails or succeeds.

In contrast, *The Trouble with Wilderness* argues that the wilderness was the last place a man could be a 'real' man. Cronon states "The mythic frontier individualist was almost always masculine in gender: here, in the wilderness, a man could be a real man, the rugged individual he was meant to be before civilization sapped his energy and threatened his masculinity." The films depict space as the same as the wilderness, a chance for men to be untamed by urban civilization, perpetuating ideas of traditional toxic masculinity such as individualism, apathy, and

emotionlessness. Nevertheless, both films also provide strong depictions of complete masculine role models, subliminally conveying a thematic message of tenacity, love, and sacrifice, helping fix our dysfunctional youth.

To conclude, both films show holistically developed, strong masculine role models which are not incapable of emotion or care but juxtaposed in different time periods. Ultimately, our orientation in space and time determines what we deem as a morally just definition of masculinity which sustains a healthy society built on thriving relations. Spigel looked at the 1960s, The Martian looked at 2010s, Seo looked at the 2020s, and WALL-E looked at the distant future. The articles reveal problems in our society, and masculinity in their given time periods whereas through their use of various techniques, both films provide examples of ideal men in society at any given time.

Works Cited

Cronon, William. *Uncommon Ground : Rethinking the Human Place in Nature*. New York, W.W. Norton & Co, 1996.

Pixar. “Wall-E.” *YouTube*, 9 Dec. 2011, www.youtube.com/watch?v=5RcNwlq7JSw.

Spigel, Lynn. “White Flight.” *MedienJournal*, vol. 18, no. 1, 5 May 2017, pp. 10–18,

<https://doi.org/10.24989/medienjournal.v18i1.691>.

YouTube Movies. “The Martian.” *YouTube*, 2 Oct. 2015,

www.youtube.com/watch?v=TeZDLAAaDYos.

1. What is ONE takeaway you have from the Benjamin reading?

One of Benjamin's most important and repeated arguments throughout the reading was how the historical orientation of something or rather the juxtaposition of something in time and space is what makes that thing unique and gives its value. As Benjamin himself wrote, "In even the most perfect reproduction, one thing is lacking: the here and now of the work of art". This begs the question, what makes something authentic? Authenticity is derived from originality and originality encompasses everything from the socio-political climate at which the piece was created to the creator's personal details. This is essentially the plight of our society due to machine reproductions; although more accessible and no longer bound by the shackles of society, when we reproduce works of art we lose something much greater, which Benjamin refers to as "aura". By exploring this link between authenticity and reproduction, Benjamin alludes to the statement that the value of art is given not by its contents but rather the context surrounding it.

2. What is popular culture and why is it, in your opinion, worth studying? (or, if you think it is not worth studying, make that argument here!)

Popular culture is the amalgamation of centuries of our existence as a civilization, using our modern developments such as the internet and cultural exchange to create a new form of culture which represents and reflects the majority population trends and behavior. In my opinion, popular culture deserves thought but is not worth studying. The way I view pop-culture is as a metric of morality and intellectuality of the general public. If I woke up tomorrow and the most trending search on twitter was "Linear Algebra" in comparison to the recent "Taylor Swift", I'd argue that (using pop culture as a metric) the average person is leaning towards more productive and intellectual pursuits. The issue that arises when studying popular culture is that popular culture is not a reflection of the most smart, creative, talented, and successful members of society but rather the average person. Spending our collective resources on studying the average person seems rather futile when those resources could be allocated for furthering our civilization.

3. What is ONE thing you are concerned about in terms of CAT 2? Be sure to explain your response.

One thing I am concerned about in terms of CAT 2 is writing style. Some consistent feedback over the past few years that I've received is that I have interesting things to say but I either write too explicitly or too vaguely to perfectly capture the thematic message I am trying to convey. When it comes to writing responses to a prompt based on a text, I find it difficult to connect the smaller arguments found in evidence to the bigger point I'm trying to make due to incoherent and unstructured writing. Hence, when I write with more freedom in the form of creative writing or an essay based on just a

prompt without specific references, I tend to do much better. This is a problem I tried working on through my assignments in CAT 1 but I fear that I have not improved enough in my time since then to stay the course in CAT 2.

4. What is your ONE favorite place on earth? Please describe the place and its significance to you.

My favorite place on earth is Dubai, in the United Arab Emirates. Although Dubai is known for its marvelous architecture, shopping, food, and nightlife (and as much as I enjoy them), I love Dubai for a very different reason. I am originally from Mumbai, India, a large metropolis filled with a vibrant culture which I grew up with. Most people do not know this, but Indians are a large minority group in Dubai. Most of us go there in search of a better life for ourselves and our families similar to immigrants flooding the west. Although it is tragic that my fellow Indians have to flee our homeland, the mix of cultural exchange between Arabs and Indians is a sight to behold, reminding me of when the Ottomans ruled over India. Imagine you went on vacation to a distant land, only everyone still spoke the same language as you, the locals and you shared the same morals, values, traditions, almost everything. That is what Dubai is for me, a home away from home.

Works Cited

Benjamin, Walter, and Michael W. Jennings. "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility." *Grey Room*, vol. 39, Apr. 2010, pp. 11–37,
<https://doi.org/10.1162/grey.2010.1.39.11>.