Dessa Shapiro

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Period 6

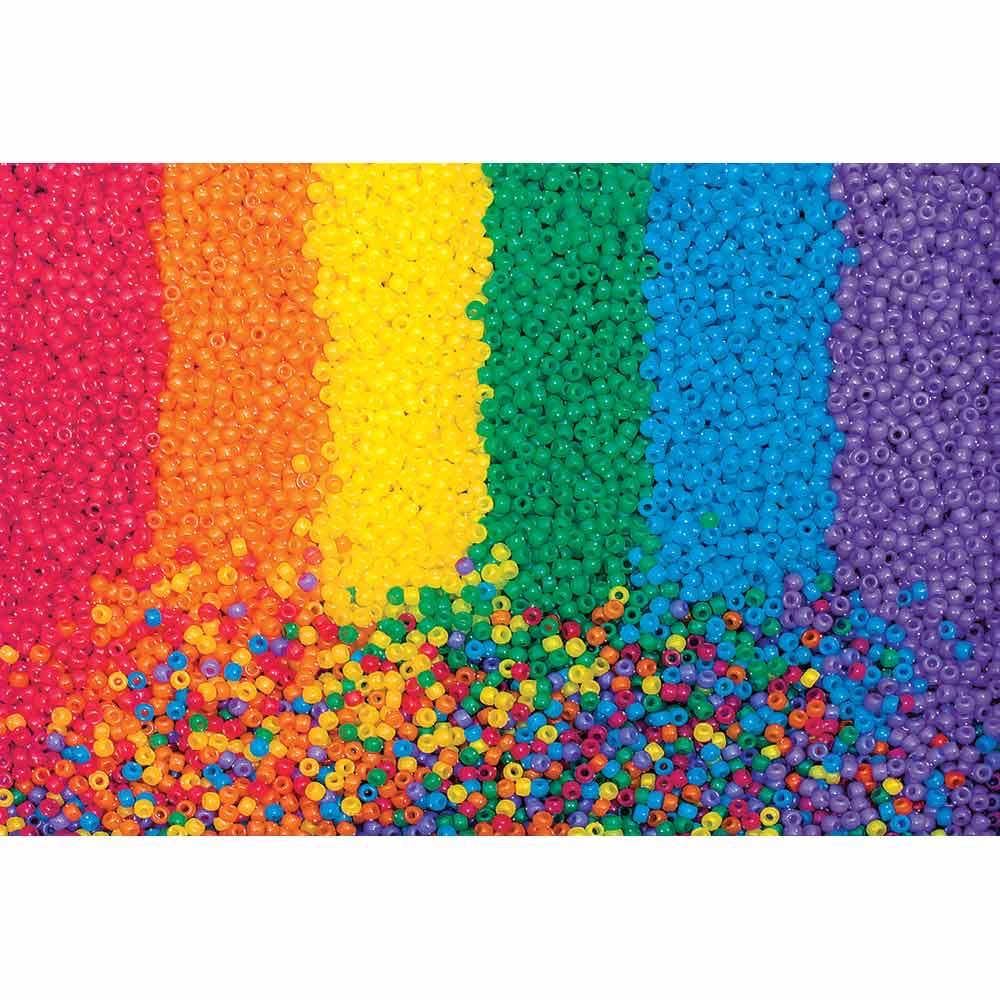
Changed

We've been reading the book *A Long Way Gone* by Ishmael Beach and *Sold* by Patricia McCormick. I think that both of these authors are expressing childhood as a form of change and that the environment I child grows up in can affect how they develop. In *A Long Way Gone*, Ishmael has just been reunited with his uncle and he has gone to live with his and his other relatives. He had just gone to New York to speak at a youth conference about the problems for children in their countries. He had just returned from New York and found his place in the household when the rebels invaded.

“The gunshots increased throughout the day, spreading across the city. The city folks stood outside on their verandahs, tensed up, shaking with fear, Mohamad and I looked at each other.” Not again.” (pg. 202) In this passage, you can see that as soon as Ishmael was regaining his childhood, and was starting to reflect on his experiences from the war, the city was attacked. He is forced to be surrounded by a warzone again, and he loses his uncle who was a big part of his new identity. When all of this change happens he is forced to make difficult decisions and quickly grow up. And this shows how the big change from a peaceful safe environment to a warzone affected whom he had to be.

In the book Sold the main character, Lakshmi, a 13-year-old girl who lived in a small mountain town was told by her stepfather that she was going to the city to work as a maid of a rich family. But her stepfather had sold her to be a sex slave and she is just finding out. “You will take men to your room,” she says And does whatever they ask of you…. My head is spinning now but I see only one thing: the number in her book. It wraps and blurs, then fractures into bits that swim before my eyes. I fight back tears and find my voice.” (pg. 106) In this passage, Lakshmi is facing a big change in her life because she is being forced to work as a prostitute to repay her debt. In this section of the book, she is still very much a child and as she moves from the mountain into a brothel in the city she loses most of her childhood. This affects her mental state, and probably how she'll develop in the future. Much like Ishmael, Lakshmi is forced to grow up faster and leave everyone she cares about because of the environment and people surrounding her. Even though these books are different and these children have different experiences. Both of these passages show how the change in the environment has big impacts on Ishmael and Lakshmi.

Overall this concept of change can relate to children all over the world and the concept of childhood. Childhood is a time in a person's life where they are affected by adults and their environment. Children learn and copy the people and things around them, so when children are put into a dangerous or negative environment they can feed off this negativity. This can affect how they act, like when Ishmael was in the war, being around all the death and pain made him into a killer. These environments can also take a great mental and physical toll on children like in sold she was forced to work as a prostitute and eventually she started to shut out all emotions just so she didn't have to feel the pain. And it can be hard to find your emotions and empathy if you have shut them off. Some children are very privileged and have been cared for and safe through their childhood but many children are suffering and have been abused by the others around them. And have grown up in geographically lucky and rich countries but others don't have those luxuries. And the best way to sympathize or empathize is to listen to their stories and show understanding and patience.

I think this photo represents how children can start with a good childhood but everything can become unorganized.