

Essay #1: Book the Complete Persepolis

Dreadful Times = Confusion

Marjane Satrapi's graphic memoir *The Complete Persepolis*, tells the story of Marji, a little girl that grows up during the Iran-Iraq War. The war causes food shortages and a constant threat to people's lives. When it becomes too dangerous, Marji's parents decide to move her to Austria. Famed comic theorist Scott McCloud discusses his Amplification through Simplification and Closure theories in his book, *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art*. McCloud's theories aid in recognizing the effects of war highlighted through the plight of the Iranian people in *The Complete Persepolis*. Ultimately, McCloud's theories of Simplification and Closure in *Persepolis* assist in a better understanding of how the effects of war lead to confusion.

In the book, *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art*, Scott McCloud explains the significance of comics and the understanding of art. McCloud talks about the different types of theories that are applied in comics. Some of the most used theories used in comics are Closure and Amplification through Simplification. McCloud illustrates the theory of Closure through an example: "I have never seen the Earth from space firsthand, yet I trust that the Earth is round" (61). Closure theory represents how the human brain observes an incomplete picture yet perceives it as a whole. The second theory that McCloud discusses is the theory of Amplification through Simplification, where he makes his drawings look simplistic, so that any person can relate to them. Thus giving the readers their own personal interpretation of the simplistic drawing however they want. In *The Complete Persepolis* Marjane Satrapi uses the theories to have the

audience to better understand the character's emotions and actions.

In the beginning, a panel displays a confused Marji when the war breaks out (Satrapi 71). The background of the panel is all black except for the stars, planets, and Marji, instead are all white. Marji floats in the dark void with her arms and legs fully stretched out, and she stares, eyes fully open, into the empty darkness. In the same panel, one of the stars says, "MARJI, RUN TO THE BASEMENT! WE'RE BEING BOMBED!" (Satrapi 71). Satrapi's use of Simplification in the illustration causes the audience to feel the same stress, fear, and anxiety that is exhibited by the character of Marji. The darkness and simple drawing of the stars helps the audience feel nostalgic about their own experience when they have been absent from reality. This results in the audience to relate to the situation of Marji in a way that they can connect to and understand how she is troubled. Also, through the use of closure theory, Marji is bewildered based on her facial expressions. Marji has her eyes fully open with her frowned eyebrows indicating that she is in deep thought, as if she is lost.

Subsequently, another panel displays confused individuals as a result of war frustration (Satrapi 93). During war times, there is often a shortage of food and money, resulting in tensions created amongst one another. For example, in *the Complete Persepolis*, see two women in a grocery store that are disheartened by the fact that they can't afford any food. Marji and her family overhear the gossip of the same two ladies who were accusing all Southern women of being 'whores.' The women are categorizing all Southern women as 'prostitutes' since Southern women are surviving through the harsh war times. Upon hearing their gossip, Marji's mom responds, "It is terrible, what you are saying!" Her words cause one of the women to become

confused and shocked by Marji's mom's answer (Satrapi 93). The simplistic illustration of the woman's facial expression shows how angry the lady is by Marji's mom's response. In the illustration, the other woman has a question flowing by her, which helps determine that she is lost. As a result of being confused and lost the woman want to latch onto anything that can distract themselves from the war. The women wish to blame others for their misfortune because of their shortcomings during the wartime. They would instead place blame and hurl ill-placed anger towards other people even if that does not improve their current situation. Through the illustration, we can see from this example how people are overshadowed by fear causing them to say things that they usually would not.

Often during war times, impoverished people are taken advantage of their war confusion, resulting in them being victim to war propaganda (Satrapi 101). The government gives false propaganda speeches of hope that hypnotizes the needy children. For example, Marji's cousin Shahab explains that the government "convinces them that the afterlife is even better than Disneyland" (Satrapi 101). Most of these impoverished children have seen death, starvation, and the hellish reality of war, so when the government tells the children that heavens waits for them in the afterlife, they are convinced automatically. Basically the government gives them a false sense of purpose in their lives, resulting in them being used as puppets. The children are confused about what to do with their lives, but if a dictator tells them that if they go fight in the war, they get a 'golden key.' The golden key gives them access to heaven with this; they are convinced that this is the only way to have a better life, is by fighting in the war. Also, through the use of Closure theory, the illustration shows the kids are motivated as they are throwing their hands up in the air.. In the first panel the person in the 'power' gives a speech to the teens and

then suddenly in the second panel they all look motivated. The teenage failed to recognize that the government would do anything to win the war even if it means sending untrained pre-teens to war zone.



Figure 3: Satrapi, Marjane. The complete Persepolis. New York: Pantheon Books, 2007.101-102/7-9

In conclusion, confusion can be the result of dreadful times. *The Complete Persepolis* demonstrates that people can be shocked when a war begins. War can affect everyone that is involved in differently. It wasn't just Marji that was lost; it was also everyone around her, not knowing what to do or even how to survive. In harsh times people want to find any means to escape from reality resulting in them acting in a way they wouldn't have. People want to find anything that will make themselves feel better, even if it is at the detriment of other people. The lies told by the government through propaganda also instill false hope in these desperate people. Readers from war torn countries can personally relate and empathize with the depiction of war in this novel. Similarly to *The Complete Persepolis*, there is a war that is happening in my home country, Kashmir. The Indian government has put up a 'curfew' that essentially blocks all Kashmiri citizens from going to the store to get groceries and cut off their water supplies. To make the situation worse, the Prime Minister is giving false speeches that everything will be fine, but it's been more than a hundred days since the curfew was set up. A lot of people are dying left

and right as a result of starvation or collateral damage from the war. In conclusion, people that are confused during harsh times are easily taken advantage of by those in power.

Tell me how it Ends: In Central America the gangs recruit kids from school by force, resulting in the kids and war refugees going to the U.S in the hopes of reuniting with family members.

A critical essay

There There Orange's use of point of view narration illustrates how the characters feel alienated and judged in public through their use of public transportation.

A literary analysis

Persepolis: McCloud's theories of Simplification and Closure in *Persepolis* assist in a better understanding of how the effects of war lead to confusion

A visual analysis Using Scott McCloud's theories as a lens to look at Marjane Satrapi's graphic memoir *The Complete Persepolis* to understand how war times results in people being confused.

In the prologue, Orange gives a brief history of what the Indigenous people have been through from their severed heads on spikes paraded as trophies to them being pushed off their land by the colonists. Colonists saw the Indigenous People as uncivilized and forced them toward reservations. The reservations were a way of the Americans colonizing the Indigenous People into the American culture. Indigenous People were stripped of their culture in the reservations and treated poorly. The Indigenous People moved out of the reservations and toward cities to urbanize themselves. Native Indians were still looked down upon by society. In the novel *There There* by Tommy orange, twelve characters struggle to assimilate into the urban community in their different ways. The book setting mostly takes place in Oakland, where the Big Oakland Powwow happens. Dene Oxendine, a filmmaker, pursues his late uncle's project to collect and tell the stories of American Indians in Oakland. Opal Viola Victoria Bear Shields, a woman in her fifties, raising grandchildren of her sisters. Edwin Black, with a master's in Native American Literature, loses hope in further pursuing his writing career as he becomes aware of himself. Thomas Frank, a custodian, working at the Indian Center, in his spare time, plays the drums. Despite their different lifestyles, the characters share unique experiences on public transit that have shaped their identity in society. Orange's use of point of view narration illustrates how the characters feel alienated and judged in public through their use of public transportation.

The character Dene Oxendene assimilates into the urban life of Oakland but still feels judged for being a Native person. Dene takes bart to get home from school. On the train, Dene observes that the people are occupied by their phones-minding their own business. Even though its public transportation, Dene is self-conscious of his cultural background. He tries to fit in with

everyone by following the norms of the American culture to prevent any unwanted attention. The narrator explains through third-person narration, “one of the first things that Dene learned when he first started taking the bus in Oakland was that you don’t stare” (Orange 28). He is careful of not staring at others. He observes with glances to acknowledge them, afraid that someone might ask him: “Whatchulookinat?” (Orange 29). In conclusion, Dene is worried about being in an awkward situation as he knows there is no right answer he can give to the question. Dene feels alienated from being a Native person on public transportation when “He smells piss,” on the bart, and he immediately thinks it’s him (Orange 29). He thinks it’s him because of the stereotype that all Native people smell bad. Also, he believes it was him because of the story of a Native Indian kid who committed suicide after finding out that he smelled bad. He secretly fears that he smells bad and no one is informing him. Native people are hypersensitive to their surroundings because of stereotypes toward them. These stereotypes of society have shaped the identity of Indigenous People in the book and led to them feeling alienated.

Similarly, Opal and her family’s efforts to blend in on public transportation put a strain on their closeness as a family so much that it led to them growing apart simply to fit into society. Opal’s mother struggles to pay rent so the family gets evicted, forcing themselves to relocate. When Opal, her sister, Jacquie, and her mom, Victoria, decide to move to Alcatraz—they take a bus. Despite the bus not being full, the family doesn’t sit together. Opal describes how her sister, Jacquie, sat a few seats back and acted like “She was riding alone” (Orange 47). Jacquie preferring to sit alone can be interpreted as her wanting to create distance between herself and her family’s socioeconomic status. The family is poor and Jacqui doesn’t want to be associated with the less than ideal image they present in public. She didn’t want to be looked at or judged. It

was as if the family didn't know each other. The reason they acted this way was to not attract attention to themselves as a family but rather as individuals. They did this so as not to further perpetuate the stereotype that most indigenous families financially struggled. Their behavior was indicative of their disappointment in who they were as a unit.

Despite its convenience, past traumatic experiences on the bus lead one of the characters to avoid public transportation altogether as he feels alienated. Edwin refuses to take the bus to go to his work at the Indian Center and wants his stepdad, Bill Davis, to pick him up and drop him off every time. Edwin had a bad experience where he got into an argument with a vet on a bus, resulting in him getting kicked off the bus. The vet chased Edwin to his work in a wheelchair. Orange uses the third-person narration, "Luckily he chased him in the right direction and Edwin made it to work" (Orange 84). He may have made it to work on time but he was sweating when he got to work. Edwin's digestive problem that causes him to be obese results in him having low self-esteem. Being fat and being 'Native' makes it even harder for someone like him to blend in on public transportation.

Public transportation helps one of the characters with finding his own identity through his reminiscence as he uses public transportation. When Thomas climbs onto the train, it immediately brings up memories of his family and past. As the train starts to move, he thinks of the very first Powwow that he attended with his dad after his parents had divorced. Orange's use of second- person narration, "you feel a rush of sadness for your mom and her failed Christianity, for your failed family," leads to him making connections about his life and how his mom fell in love with his Indian father (222). Even when he is leaving the station, it reminds him of where his family lived. The connection that this character has with Bart helps him find his identity and

a sense of how he's come to this point in his life through his experiences. Also, Thomas Frank is the only character to be entirely done in a second-person narrative. Through the second-person narration, we have more insight into how Thomas feels, which helps the readers determine his identity. The narrator states: "You wonder," "You feel a rush of sadness," "You gave it up" (221). The word usage in these phrases help convey why he chose to follow his dad's footsteps rather than his Christian mom. Through the use of public transportation, some Native Americans are able to connect themselves and deepen their own identity.

Tommy Orange shows the significance of public transportation and how it helps the characters identify their own cultural and personal issues. Buses and Bart are frequently used by these characters throughout their day to day life. Dene was trying to fit into urban life and being aware of the stereotypes toward him. Stereotypes that stem from the colonists claiming Indigenous People are savages and uncivilized. Dene was afraid that the people on the bus still saw him as a savage. Opal's experience of public transportation shows that even entire families can be affected by stereotypes seen by the family acting like they didn't know each other. Edwin wants his stepdad to give him a ride to work instead of taking the bus as he is traumatized from taking public transportation. Thomas, whose whole life is flashing in front of him as he is on the moving Bart, shows that public transportation can be a positive influence on their identity. Characters have faced ageless issues of discrimination and the struggles of trying to assimilate into their surroundings while looking for a sense of belonging.

Public transportation is a big problem in our society nowadays as there are so many stereotypes toward it. There is an assumption that public transit is for the poor as they can't afford any alternatives, but that isn't true at all. Some of the wealthiest people still use public

transit. Another stereotype is that public transportation can be dangerous as there is always a constant threat of being mugged or harassed. It is also true that sometimes homeless people use public transport to stay warm or travel further so that it can be smelly at times. These same issues are brought to light by the shared experiences of these Native Indians. Even though the stereotypes might not seem that bad, stereotypes can damage different people in different ways. All of the Native American mentioned were different and had various interactions with public transportation. These supposed outcasts feel a further strain of public transit as it builds upon the cultural and societal problems of alienation that they battle daily.

Essay in English class on film: Reality is Deceiving

The films, *Zoot Suit* and *Blade Runner*, are more than movies about identity and deception; they are also about how people in power can manipulate reality to make it appear as they want. How those in a disadvantaged position like the protagonists, Henry in *Zoot Suit* and the replicants in *Blade Runner* are often left to the mercy of those in charge. In the case of Henry, the people in power used their positions to frame him and his Latino friends as responsible for 'Sleepy Lagoon,' the murder. In *Blade Runner*, it did not matter what the replicants held under interrogation said or did, they were seen as illegal and less than the 'humans'.

Zoot Suit film is based off of the Zoot Suit riots that took place in Los Angeles in 1943. The riots were a result of young Mexican-Americans that were wearing a Zoot Suit. A zoot suit is a suit that has more fabric on it and designed mostly for men with a high waist, wide-legged, tight cuffed, and broad padded shoulders. The problem with zoot suits was that young Latino kids started to wear them during wartime (WWII), which offended some of the army people.

Army suits at this time had less fabric and were cheaper. The sailors that were offended by the youths wearing the suits saw Latinos betraying the country resulting in the Zoot Suit riots. The outcome of the Zoot Suit riot was to make the Mexican-American appear as gangsters and delinquents to society. In the film *Zoot Suit*, our protagonist Henry Reyna is confused about what is going on around him. It's done in such a way where you can tell what is real and what is not, who to trust, who not to trust.

The second film is *Blade Runner*, a film that takes part in Los Angeles in 2019. The film is based on a 1974 science fiction novel. The name of the film *Blade Runner* is a job name-where a human hunts down illegal replicants. Replicants are bioengineer androids that are formed by the Tyrell corporation and are sent off-planet to do hard labor work. The replicants have four years' worth of life and false memories that prevent them from getting too emotional about life. A problem occurs when a group of replicants returns to Earth in hopes of finding longer life spans. Earth has its policemen hunt down the replicants as they are illegal. One of the policemen is Rick Deckard, who's job is to retire replicants. The film *Blade Runner* makes it hard to tell who is human and who isn't human, making it hard to gauge the true motives of people

The *Zoot Suit* film starts with dancing at a nightclub. Then in the shot we see Henry in a dark place where he is just turning around but in the background we can hear the police sirens. We don't know where he is, and neither does he as he keeps saying "Ese," and as soon as Henry turns toward the camera, we see El Pachuco teleport right behind him. El Pachuco tries to explain to Henry what is going on, giving him a reality check of what will happen. He tells him about the Sleep Lagoon. Henry being positive that he is innocent as he turns away from El

Pachuco and says, “The cops ain’t going nothing on me, and you know it.” El Pachuco proceeds to tell him even if he thinks he is innocent and probably is harmless, but is guilty as he is “Henry Reyna the Zoot Suiter.” Henry Reyna’s own identity is that he is innocent, but the reality is that he isn’t. The reason behind him not innocent is that he is wearing a Zoot Suit and is a young Latino. Police officers and the U.S. government see Henry as a gang leader of 38th street, and that’s all the politicians need to make him look like a bad man. His identity is that he is a good person with a great future ahead of him as he was supposed to join the navy where he can gain respect. Henry knows the reality, but he lives in denial as E.L. Pachuco tries to explain to him about his family and community. Henry responds out of rage, “I don’t wanna hear that,” showing that he doesn’t want to confront reality as it would affect his identity of who he is.

In the next scene, Henry and El Pachuco are in the dark; Henry is in an interrogation room with a bunch of police officers. The clip starts with one of the officers saying, “I don’t believe you want to be in the navy, Hank(nickname for Henry).” The reason the officer said that was because Henry was wearing a zoot suit, that he was “dressed up as a target,” implying that Henry doesn’t care for the navy. In the same shot, Henry answers the cop with his frustration “I was born as a target,” showing that he knows about the reality and the discrimination toward him and his culture for being Hispanic. The same frustration bottles out of him to where he spits onto one of the officers. El Pachuco’s line is that he knows that “You don’t deserve it, but you’re gonna get it anyway.” The shot is focused on El pachuco but we can hear punching noises in the back and Henry making grunting noises. Hank in this show showed that he knew the reality of what it meant to be aware of racism and discrimination toward him, but yet doesn’t want to acknowledge it. When the officers first asked him about the Sleepy Lagoon, he denies knowing

anything, but he knows that police officers will still blame him for the murder because he's Hispanic. Henry showed frustration toward the cops that they would mistreat him and that he probably shouldn't spit at them as it would get him in more trouble, but he still proceeded to do it as he felt he was already in a pit and it wouldn't help him out. Henry doesn't consider dressing up in a Zoot suit as being disrespectful toward the navy; it's just a fashion choice that he likes.

In the scene after his interrogation, the movie takes us to El Pachuco talking to the beat down Henry and telling him to "leave reality behind." This sequence uses the cinematography to depict his house as a prison. It has Henry and El Pachuco walking toward Henry's house, but the fence that they walk by is almost that of a prison cell bars. The scene is Henry realizing his past and how his life was always false. He thought that he was a free man living in L.A. and enjoying his life but failed to realize he is just another victim of prosecution. The shot shows Henry in between bars and him looking inside his house the night before the Sleepy Lagoon incident. In the same scene, after Henry left for the party with his brother and sister, we have El Pachuco showing him on the other side of the house is a prison wall where the zoot suitors are dancing. The transition of the shots into Hank and his gang in a cell that was right next to his house shows how cruel and unjust reality is.

The scene with Hank and his gang members in court displays the mise en scene of their clothing to dialogue, showing them how media portrays them as gangsters. After the Bella giving her story of what had happened during the Sleepy Lagoon incident to prove Henry's innocence, the judge starts off the next sentence by saying, "That the jury is having trouble telling one boy from another." The court does this to agitate the gang and Henry more to have them act differently from how they normally would appear and act. For example, the judge wants Henry

and his gang to stand up as their name is called so they could differentiate them. The reason the jury is doing this is because they want to have Henry and his gang look like murderers as they made sure they couldn't even wear nice clothes or cut their hair, so they would look more unappealing. The scene shows all of the gang members to be wearing a Zoot Suit and made them sit in uncomfortable seats so they wouldn't sit up straight.

Toward the end of the film, *Zoot Suit*, Henry is freed, but he is given his future destiny that defines his identity of who he will be and the outcomes of that reality. The scene starts with a shot of El Pachuco wearing a full white suit versus throughout the entire film he wore a black and red outfit. This El Pachuco looks like an angel with him standing high above everyone, and he tells Henry what his future and outcomes will be. The first reality is that Henry Reyna will return to prison again and get involved with drugs resulting in a trauma that will later kill him. The other reality is that Henry will go to the war in Korea and die as a heroic soldier. The third reality is that Henry will marry Della and have five children. His reality, identity, and truth are already destined for him.

The film *Blade Runner* starts with an interview with one of the replicants to testify if he is a replicant or a human through a test. This test is known as the Voight-Kampff test that looks at the eyes and responses to the questions to determine whether it is a human or a replicant. In this scene, the interviewed person asking Leon questions such as you are walking in a desert, but Leon keeps interrupting the interviewer from completing his sentence. In this scene, Leon asks the interviewer which desert? An average human would never ask which desert. Leon shows the curiosity of a human yet in a caring way. When the interviewer asked Leon about his mother it

triggered something in him which made him shoot the interviewer. Leon's identity is that he knows that he is a replicant but has the same emotions and feelings as a human does.

Similar to the first scene, the next stage is also another interview between a human and a replicant to determine whether the person is a human. The difference between the first and second interviews is that the replicant(Rachel) doesn't know that she is a replicant versus Leon that knew he was a replicant. The test usually lasts about 30 questions before the tester can tell if the person is a replicant or a human; however, in Rachel's case, it took more than 100 questions to determine that she is a replicant. Deckard pointed out that she doesn't know that she is a replicant, and "how come it doesn't know what it is." The problem is that everyone knows who they are and judge themselves for what they are. For example, Deckard might be a replicant himself, and he doesn't even know that. If he knew that he himself was replicant even the audience would look at him in a condescending way to feel sympathy for him. His reality is that he thinks he is a human, but he might not be that different from what Rachel is.

The next scene is Rachel going to Deckard's apartment to confront him of why he thought she was a replicant and that she can prove herself as a human. The first shot is Rachel holding a picture of her and her mother to show that she had a mom and that she is a human. Rachel's reality was that her having an image of her and her mom was that she really existed and that she doesn't have false memories. The truth is that Tyrell gave his niece's memory to Rachel, even though Rachel thinks she is living her life, the reality is that she is living the life of another person. Most people's identities are based on their past experiences and understanding of the world, but what happens if someone else knows your memories just as you do. Instead of Rachel

trying to tell her story that she is a human and she has memories, Deckard cuts her off and starts to tell her her story. Rachel's reality was that since she has past memories of when she was young makes her human, but the truth is that Tyrell Corporation implements memories into the brain to make them feel like they have memories. The truth was that she trusted Tyrell and the pictures. She had to think she was human.

The scene of Roy Batty meeting Tyrell in his big palace to ask for more life or any means of achieving a long life span. The shot starts with J.F Sebastian and Roy walking into Tyrell's private room. The dialogue of the scene makes Tyrell appear as a God versus Tyrell a human. Roy starts off by saying its hard to meet your maker and proceeds to ask him to give him a longer life. Tyrell tells that he can't give him extra life even though he is the creator. The sequence with a shot of Roy standing above Tyrell and Tyrell's eye having blood pouring out of it. If you observe this scene from mythology point, it shows Roy as the human and Tyrell as the devil. That Roy killed off the devil and has saved all other replicants from suffering again.

The ending scene of *Blade Runner* when Roy Batty takes over his actions and controls his destiny from a killer replicant to saving Deckard's live. This sequence is unique because of the speech Roy gives to Decard, "I have seen things you people wouldn't believe. Attack ships on fire of the shoulder of Orion. All those moments will be lost in time like tears in rain. Time to die". Deckard's reality and other people's reality of the replicants is that they don't have feelings and don't understand what it means to be human. Yet the replicants have showed that they are more human than human. The shot of this sequence is done in the rain, him saying the line "All those moments will be lost in time like tears in rain" creates stronger feelings of what he was

saying. Roy's reality is that even if he were to kill Deckard, it wouldn't matter, and even if he let him live, it wouldn't matter because, in time, he would be forgotten. The truth is Deckard should have died as Roy by design is a replicant that specializes in killing.

Both films, the *Zoot Suit* and *Blade Runner* have their characters show that they have an understanding of what reality is, what the truth is, and who they are. In *Zoot Suit*, Henry knew that discrimination existed toward the Latino's yet he still wore that Zoot Suit that got him in trouble. In *Blade Runner*, the characters couldn't figure out who or what they were, but they knew that they were pawns for the big people. The film demonstrates that we think we are in control of who we are as humans and what our powers are, but in reality, we are just victims to the people in power. *Zoot Suit* showed that living in denial of reality is a choice that we make as it is harsh for us to come face to face with the truth of our society. *Blade Runner* demonstrates more than just replicants and humans; it's more about race how humans see themselves

Your Land, My land Now

Indigenous people all over the world and throughout time have lost their land slowly to the federal government's (Referring to the government of the country that Indigenous people live in) actions or policies. The common trend is that the government starts by making policies that are supposed to "help" the indigenous people and that they are in the best interest of helping indigenous people assimilate into the modern world. The policies that the governments make are perfect on paper, but in reality they do the opposite of what their purpose is and therefore, the

indigenous people end up even worse off than before. In most cases, the government has the Indigenous people relocated to another spot so that they may have more natural resources, jobs, and can live a peaceful life. The governments usually make it sound like they are giving indigenous people freedom of choice in whether they want to move or not. However, in recent years, the indigenous people have come forward and used the media as a tool to show that the governments don't give them any freedom but, in fact, use brute force and instill fear to have them relocated to new areas. In the past indigenous people would lose their land, and their stories would never be told but in recent times, the stories of their corrupt government have never been told. As a result of using the media, indigenous people can get their land back as their stories are heard and are helped by the UN or other human rights organizations. Ultimately, through the use of media and through political means indigenous people have been able to regain their land rights and bring awareness of the corrupt governments.

One case in which the government has taken land by force is the case of San people, aka the bushmen. The San people have been recognized as one the oldest living civilizations that have existed for more than 150,000 years in southern South Africa, what today is known as Botswana, South Africa. The San people are hunter-gatherers as they mostly depend on males hunting and females gathering natural resources in nearby areas. For more than thousands of years, the San people survived while other civilizations came and failed. San people survived through their better understanding of the environment, knowing more than 100 species of plants that they can use for different things and hunting methods for maximum benefit and least effort. In 1961, the British colony came in contact with the San people and let them stay on The Central Kalahari Game Reserve(CKGR) which was the 2nd biggest reserve for indigenous people. The

plan was that the San people would remain within this reserve that was drawn by the British colony and that the land belonged to the San. Eventually, the British colony withdrew from Botswana(Botswana was a British Colony), and now it was the government of Botswana, which would rule over San people. In 1968, the Botswana government passed a law called the Tribal Land Act, which was to allow the government to bring the standard of living for the Sans people to match modern world life. The Tribal Land Act moved the San people out of the CKGR and relocated them toward Nex Xade, Ghazni, and Gaborone. As I mentioned, the governments said that they were “helping” or helping indigenous people assimilate or even protecting them, but in reality they had their own agenda. At that time, it wasn’t clear why the government was trying to move the San, but everyone(other people around the world) assumed it was because they were trying to help the San and trying to bring their countries GDP up as a whole.

When the Botswana government started their Tribal Land Act, they claimed it was to help the San people for the best and that they were to move at their own “free will.” The Botswana government forced the San people of CKGR as they cut their water supply, threatened to harm them with an army, flipped over their water tanks, and would kill them to instill fear. Even when the government used their dreadful methods, the San people resisted as they didn’t want to leave their ancestral land that rightfully belongs to them. The government's so-called plan to ‘civilize’ and assimilate the San people into modern society was not true as they were left to fend for themselves in the poverty stricken, barren new place that lacked natural resources for their survival. With less water and no more health care, the government had essentially taken from them rather than providing better as they had promised. The situation for the San people became so horrible that=- they had to resort to cannibalism. They sometimes wouldn’t have any water as

they were in the middle of the deserts, and most of their water supplies had been cut from them. The Botswana government also put restrictions on them such as no returning to the CKGR or even hunting or gathering within that land. The San people mostly depended on the natural resources that were present in CKGR to survive, but now in their new land, they had very few natural resources.

Since the relocation and the assimilation of the San people, they put up resistance through politics tactics and media to regain their rights to their land and to hunt-gather without any restriction in place. In the 1980s, the San people ran with seven candidates for district council group to have some power with lobbying their personal rights; they ended up with 2 of their own people elected in their favor. Even though they had people in the government, they didn't gain much from it. They also used the media to expose the Botswana government for what they had done, for violating their basic human rights. With the violation of basic human rights, the UN got involved, which would have never happened before because no one would have known that indigenous people's rights were being abused. With the power of the media and the UN, the Botswana government came under fire with accusations of their actions and treatment toward the San people. However, the Botswana government refused claims of them violating San's human rights and that they only did what was necessary with the best interest of helping the San. Till 2008 the San people kept fighting in court and with the help of the UN, and eventually, they won. In 2008 the UN told Botswana to give the right to return to CKGR that had been relocated. The real truth was that the Botswana government forced the San people off their land so they could take their natural resources, which were diamonds. Through the usage of media the

awareness came of the terrible situation San people were put through resulting in San people getting donations and resources from all around the world.

Another case is that of the Gaddie people from Chamba district of India. The Gaddie people had been living in Himachal Pradesh long before the British colony came. The British colony didn't recognize the indigenous people as having ownership of the land, nor did they force them to move. The British colony instead wanted to assimilate or colonize them, but the British let the Gaddie people stay on the land and let them continue with their way of life however this didn't mean that the Gaddie people had legal ownership to the land. After 1947, when India became independent, it implemented the British policy into their constitution. Then fast forward to 2006, when the Indian congress passed the Forest Right Act(FRA), which would reverse the British policy and let the Gaddie people have legal claims to their land through documentation. The FRA was supposed to help the Gaddie people have ownership of the land; they could use the natural resources that were present in their land. Once again, on paper, everything looks good; the Indian government is protecting the Gaddie people, giving them the ability to claim their land as legal property.

The Forest Right Act isn't as effective as it seems. Because of the FRA, the Gaddie people ended up losing their land and their natural resources. The problem started with the process of the gaddie people trying to claim their land, which was to fill out documents. The indian government didn't consider that the Gaddie people are uneducated or don't speak Hindi, which is the language that they had to use to fill out the forms. Hence, they weren't able to fill out the form. At the same time, the Ministry of Environment and Forests(Indian Parliament) was filing paperwork for a hydroelectric dam construction that would be built on the Ravi river. The

Ravi river is the biggest and the only source of water for the Gaddie people; they use the water for drinking, cleaning cloths, and their mini farms occasionally. The Hydroelectric dam was constructed, and it made life hard for the Gaddie people. The women were affected the most by the dam because they were in charge of collecting natural resources such as water and wood, but with the construction of the dam, the women would have to go the further distance to gather these resources. Males aren't affected that much because they travel around the country looking for wage work and also they aren't living in the Chamba district. The Gaddie women had their resistance against the corrupt government for more than two year of protest for land rights. The Gaddie women protest is a reflection of how the state of India used their neoliberal ideologies to take the Gaddie's resources and give it to the private corporations with no compensation for them. After two year of protesting and getting arrested, eventually, the media highlighted the struggle of the Gaddie women. The media coverage helped start another protest demanding the Indians help the Gaddie people.

The Indian government has a parliament called the Ministry of Environment and Forests that is incharge of environmental projects and prevention of pollution and land degradation. So if you want to start a project for building something, you first have to get their approval. The Ministry of Environment allowed the government of Punjab department to build the hydroelectric project. The government wanted to build the Hydroelectric dam as it was in their best interest of raising the living standards of everyone that lives there. The Hydroelectric dam didn't benefit the Gaddie people at all because they had no water and the electricity that was being produced wasn't even given to them. The Gaddie people kept protesting and were able to get another parliament of the Indian government to help which is the Ministry of Tribal

Affairs(MFTA):in charge of helping with human rights and community affairs. The MFTA did make a court case for the Gaddie people in the hope of them getting their land back. However, the court case failed because the case wasn't made with strong argumentations of land rights; instead, it was based on racism, gender discrimination, and indigenous people, which the Indian supreme court doesn't care too much about. Also, the private companies made deals with some Gaddie people or nearby groups of people for work that they can do so that they can stop protesting. It can be seen that the Indian government did not have the best interests of the indigenous people in mind when they passed the FRA despite claiming to help them assimilate into the modern world.

Both the San and Gaddie people's land was taken away from them because of the federal government. These aren't the only cases where the land has been taken away from Indigenous people, but these cases are unique as they have their people use media and political tactics that have helped them with regaining the land. The use of the new technology, such as the Internet, has helped with broadcasting stories of Indigenous that were never told before. The Internet in today's world is the most potent weapon as you get aid and help from people all over the world and bring awareness to issues that would have never been brought to the spotlight. Media has interviews where they ask the office of the Botswana government of their decision and show what cruelty that they had done. The Gaddie people aren't the only indigenous people that have lost their land, but because of their women protesting for land rights for more than two years eventually, the mainstream media started to broadcast their story which made a case and it went all the way to the supreme court of India. If these same two groups existed in the past and lost

their land, they would have never regained any rights or any of their property back, but because of the media, they were able to gain a portion that they had lost. In the present day, it would be harder for big federal governments to exploit land rights as everyone is now educated and are easily able to get in touch with the media. There are hundreds if not thousands of blogs of people from indigenous societies that have written about their story on the internet and to bring awareness. I personally wrote a tumblr blog to bring awareness of what is happening to citizens of Kashmir in the present day and how their land rights have been exploited.

Every Action has a Reaction

The daunting reality is that most Americans don't know about the history of the Central American crisis. In the Nonfiction Essay, *Tell Me How It Ends: An Essay In Forty Questions*, Valeria Luiselli shows the history of gangs that have catalyzed in Central America, resulting in the U.S Mexico border immigration crisis. In Central America, the gangs recruit kids from school by force, resulting in the kids and war refugees going to the U.S. in the hopes of reuniting with family members or a better and safer life. Most of them go to the U.S.-Mexico border to cross over to the U.S., but the border patrol officers won't let anyone through unless they have been through the asylum process. The U.S rejects the immigrants from seeking asylum, and even if they do access asylum they face a high risk of being deported. Therefore, the United States

should be held fully responsible for the growing immigration epidemic since it is a direct result of the United States political intervention in Central America.

The United States' intervention stems as far back as 1979 when the U.S. funded and provided military support during the Salvadoran Civil War. The aid from the U.S helped the Salvadoran government wipe out the opposing groups resulting in an imbalance of power. The imbalance of power resulted in "one-fifth of the population of El Salvador" to flee toward the U.S Mexico border (Luiselli 46). Most of the war refugees went to Los Angeles and other big cities. The U.S. may have had good intentions of helping in the Civil War, but it was not their place to intervene. A civil war is usually meant for the directly involved countries to figure out a solution to their personal conflicts. However, this begs the question that if the U.S. was able to give Central America money and military support before, why hasn't the U.S. done it again to help with the gang problem? Simple answer: the U.S. benefits from the gangs. The U.S. government's military budget exceeds that of any other country. In the past, the U.S. intervened to help: they must repeat the history of offering humanitarian aid. The U.S. catalyzed a civil war and needs to rectify the current catastrophe, but they claim that it isn't their problem and should let Central America figure out solutions for themselves. The U.S government claiming that it isn't their job to help another country with their political affair is just another way for them to cover themselves up from the fact they caused the Immigration crisis.

In addition, the U.S. government and citizens should acknowledge that they are the most significant drug consumers, drug dealers and how their greed has lead to dire consequences. The U.S. government are like puppet masters, pulling strings from the shadows: this way, they profit and protect their reputation as a country. The U.S. portrays Central Americans as the cause of the

immigration crisis and drug problems. But, most of the gangs already existed in the U.S. long before the gangs existed in Central America. Despite the rising problem of gang and immigration crisis, the U.S. decided to deport more than “seventy thousand drug dealers and make them spread throughout Central America” (Luiselli 46). So, the myth that gangs originated from Central America is misleading information: the U.S. does this to shift the blame from themselves onto Central America. The lack of regulation and effort to disband gangs in Central America led to the gangs forming a transcontinental army. These gangs will do anything that will benefit themselves, just like the U.S. does, and have involved children who are exploited into joining their criminal activity. To save their children from being gang targeted, countless families flee to the border only to be detained. This sums up the immigration crisis and how the United States’ involvement in drugs is causing a chain reaction to said epidemic.

Despite the asylum being a basic human right, the U.S. has orchestrated the asylum system, that prevent families from seeking their right as war refugees and are instead deported back. Kids go to the U.S Mexican border, where they try to “turn themselves as asylum seekers,” hoping to seek special immigrant juvenile(SIJ)(Luiselli 20). It’s basically a special way for minors to attain a green card, but most of them are denied from accessing it. The refugees hope to reunite with their family members in the U.S., but the U.S. just “deported them without any formal process” because the detention centers lack the resources to house that many people (Luiselli 15). Even those war refugees that do access the asylum’s resources , do not get far, as the process and the policies make it impossible for them to attain SJI status. The policy of them having a lawyer to defend themselves is expensive for families, and the free lawyers are outnumbered by all the seekers. The process itself is a big loophole: the U.S. is essentially trying

to get rid of them. Most of these refugees are uneducated or don't know English, and the forms are only in English, so the immigrants can't even fill the forms out . If families are not granted SIJ status, the number of people at the border will increase and create an even bigger problem. Either the U.S. government deals with the immigrants at the border or go to the root of the gang crisis and eliminate the crisis.

This isn't the first time that the U.S. has meddled with another country's political system; they have been doing it for years in the middle east, where they have driven nations to their doom. Now they are doing the same in the Northern hemisphere. Immigration and gang violence have existed in Central America for some time, but the situation has gotten worse over the years. Now kids turn themselves in to border patrol, hoping to be able to meet their parents or lost family members. Most of them are fleeing from gang violence. The U.S. isn't doing anything to help but making it worse by deporting the kids back from the border. The asylums at the border do have non-profit organizations, but they can't keep up with the numbers. The Asylum workers need funding from the government, but they have lost their existing funds because of Donald Trump's administration. The future of Central America might be doomed if nothing is done about it. People need to be aware of what has happened and what is happening and give as much help as possible to make a difference. If the U.S. takes responsibility for their actions, there might be some hope for peace in Central America.

