

Joy Van Evera

Professor Sullivan

English 100

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Part 1: Introduction:

My Blog Experience as a Guinea pig

When the blog project was first introduced in class, I was excited. I have always enjoyed creative writing and not been too bad at it. I saw the blog project as a better way to be creative in expressing my opinions on an open variety of subjects rather than a very outlined and structured formal paper.

By writing blogs and comments throughout the semester and having conferences helped me improve my writing. One of the things that I learned that was a big help in my writing was to go back and connect my blog, and how to connect my blog, to the broader theme which, in this case is California. But I feel that that concept will be one that will be useful in future academic and professional writings that I may do. Another useful grammar tool that is simple, but when known and used correctly, is fun and makes a big difference in the quality of writing, is the use of colons and semi-colons. I learned to pay attention to detail to make the whole better rather than only looking at the big picture to develop my analysis of my own, and others blogs.

In the end, I feel like the blog portfolio project was a major success in improving my, and many of my classmates, writing skills. I love to describe, get into detail and get creative with different posts, and I enjoyed seeing what other people had to say about my opinions and what they had to say in their own posts. The blogging was a fun way to substantially learn great

writing techniques (conferences are key for professional feedback). I definitely recommend this learning technique for future semesters and other professors to use. I loved it!

Part 2: Collected Blog Posts

Total Number of Posts Included: 3

Total Word Count of These Posts: 1,242

Post Title: **Industry of Fake**

Date Posted: 10/06/06

Word Count: 449

While vacationing in Washington D.C. recently, something about California became more apparent to me; California has become an industry of fake. The first thing actually didn't come to my acknowledgment until near the end of my trip. A girl was jogging on the side of the road and I noticed that she had fake breasts. Usually that would be an aspect of a woman that would go unnoticed, only because it is so common, but because she was the only one I had seen all week, she stood out. My recognition of the lack of plastic surgery on the east coast put into perspective the large quantity that is done here in California. Personally, I blame those mind-warping shows such as "The Hills" and "Laguna Beach." They convince people that they aren't up to par with the rest of California. Everywhere I go; fake breasts, fake lips, fake noses, and now I even hear of fake calves! What is so important about calves that you would need implants for them? I may just not fully understand those types of desires. I don't necessarily have a problem with certain alterations, if they're done for the right reasons, my point is that there is an unneeded over abundance here in California.

The other aspect of D.C. that I found to demonstrate the fakeness of California was the attitudes of the D.C. locals. They definitely do not go out of their way to be “friendly” and there is no such thing as small talk on the Metro. Between the crazies, homeless Vets, politicians, and just plain old D.C. inhabitants, fake attitudes for the sake of being friendly are not their strong point. However, Californians have no problem putting on the “happy mask” for whatever reason it may be: tips, commission, or to avoid conflict. But we have it down to an art where we can flip it on and off like a light switch and people really can’t determine your honest feelings. Don’t get me wrong, I enjoy pleasant people, and I too am guilty of the false attitude for I work in customer service and I am a true Californian, born and raised. I merely found the contrast amusing.

Why have we let California turn into an industry of fake? Why do we feel so compelled to maintain this plastic norm? Our California culture and our reputation of perfection as Californians has caused the high level of conformity to the fakeness in California. I feel like we have been turned into dolls, operating under Barbie control: plastic bodies and permanent smiles (accept for on the road, naturally). I think California needs to take a leap into reality and minimize the fake.

Post Title: **A Birds Eye View of the California Dream**

Date Posted: 9/14/06

Word Count: 378

7:45am all packed and ready to go, I arrive at Mira Costa College. I am one of ten students on the roster for the first trip of the year to the La Gloria Orphanage in Tijuana, Mexico.

I, myself, have been to Mexico and driven through Tijuana many times. However, this time the trip would be a bit different; I had no idea that on that day, we would see with our own eyes, the physical line of the California dream.

There is one specific hill I can recall, that we could view the border from a sort of birds' eye perspective. On one side of the fence was California: open fields, as well as some housing and business developments out in the distance. On the other side was Mexico: poverty, as far as the eye can see.

Considering every other time I've been down to Mexico was with my family who have also seen the sights of TJ, it was interesting to travel with some people from class that haven't seen the horrible devastation of poverty that consumes a large population of Mexicans in Tijuana. We had Jim Sullivan, our trusted driver first, and respected Professor second, commentating the scene. With more extensive knowledge about the city than I, he was able to point out things I had not noticed the tens of times I had been through. Things I have been able to either ignore or be oblivious to in the past became rather vivid on this trip. Out the front, rear, left and right windows, poverty stricken families used recycled waste for structure. Old tires that were trash to one became the foundation for a home for many others. Shacks, and ruminants of shacks were claimed to be, and used as homes.

We had our share of elephant jokes; games of 20 questions and in depth disputes about B-I-N-G-O, but when we hit the worst part of town, silence fell over the van. Not even the most devastated part of California is equivalent to that. It was shocking. And with a few simple questions of citizenship, a glance at each ID and a simple "Go ahead," we were home. We returned to the Dream, with some great memories and a deeper appreciation for our California.

Title of Post: **Del Mar Racetrack: Frivolous Spending?**

Date of Post: 9/6/06

Word Count: 432

"And they're off," is a familiar accented phrase that attracts hundreds of thousands of Californian's and otherwise to beautiful San Diego each summer. Mid July through the beginning of September is race season at the [Del Mar Racetrack](#).

After two consecutive seasons of being a religious race-goer and gambler, I have come to realize the frivolous way of life that an extreme race junkie must live. For example, opening day at the races; ladies dress in their finest dresses and most fabulous heels, while men wear their suit coats and "Seven" jeans. And everyone (who is anyone), wears their most extravagant hat on opening day. Even celebrities show up for such events as we saw a few years back on the hit MTV show "Newlyweds" when Jessica Simpson and Nick Leche graced Del Mar's opening day with their presence.

Each race, the smell of stale beer, wine and cigar smoke saturates the air. Levels upon levels of the Grand Stand swarm with people using ATM's, buying alcohol, and placing bets, not a good combination. I myself never make any bets larger than \$6, and I never bring more than \$20 with me in order to keep myself in check of how much I am actually winning or losing. My knowledge of the jockeys, odds, and how to pick a certain horse, through my various quinella's and trifecta boxes, has won (and lost, but I don't like to think about that) me a good deal of money. But that is me, and I get the feeling that there aren't too many people attending that act in the same way.

There is even a special line set up for "Large Transactions." While secretly I did want to know what kind of money is bet in those lines, I didn't. Until one day I found out. Some John Doe in that line placed \$20 on horse 4 to win and place for me. I was up \$74 from that bet, however he was up \$20,000 to \$30,000! Now, I can do the math.

The racetrack reeks of wealth. The fusion of the hats, the horses, the alcohol and expensive Cuban cigars, Victor Espinoza and Patrick Valenzuela (jockey favorites), and the loud commentary, gives people, including myself, a high that is unexplainable. It can be both literally and hypothetically addicting. Is there such thing as being too rich? And if so, is wasting or spending money frivolously OK? The Del Mar Racetrack is a place where those people can go to spend frivolously and not always have it be seen as a mere waste of money.

Part 3: Collected Comments

Total Number of Collected Comments Here: 2

Total Number of Words in Collected Comments: 443

This Comment Responds to This Post: **Smoking**

Date of Comment: 11/6/06

Number of Words in Comment: 221

Bravo! I am so excited you wrote this because I totally agree with you! I am one of those people who kicked the habit. I started at a really young age, I think I was 12. I smoked for 3 years, then quit. And you are right, it was extremely difficult to quit, but I did it and I could not be happier today. Back then I was young, vulnerable and stupid, where as now I actually use logic in my decisions and lung cancer is a pretty logical reason to not smoke ever again. I will now not even date someone if they smoke, it is that gross. And when everyone and their brother

lights up at school, it is impossible to escape. Yeah, I can hold my breath when I walk by, but then my hair smells like it, and I would be holding my breath for a really long time to get past ALL the smokers! And to Mark, I know how strong the addiction and the nicotine is. I know what it's like to fiend for a cigarette. I also know how much greater it is to be a non smoker. I've been through it all, and the arguments on this side of the spectrum are much stronger. Ex-smoker or not, smoking to non smokers is disgusting!!!

This Comment Responds to This Post: **Voting**

Date of Comment: 11/6/06

Number of Words in Comment: 224

I could not wait to be 18 to vote. I am very young for my grade level plus my birthday IS November 7th, which isn't always election day, it's usually before, so on my 18th birthday, I JUST missed election day. It baffled me that people didn't vote! I always thought of it as such a privilege, so you better believe when those primary elections rolled around I voted! The woman at the polls asked me "Would you like a sticker?" Heck yes I would like a sticker! I waited 18 long years to wear this sticker; I am going to wear this sticker. But now that elections have come up again, between school and work, being more extensive than it was during the Primaries, I plain just have not had time to look at any literature! I would love to, and I plan to, sometime before tomorrow, but I know what you mean by people don't vote, and I used to bash on them too, but now I can add another reason: no time! I have the time to vote. It takes what, like, 2 minutes, max? It's that I don't want

to vote on something I'm not educated on and make the wrong decision because I know that my vote DOES count. That may be another reason to add to the list.