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Mr. Coia
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To Live Thoreau-ly

To live thoroughly, one must turn their back on the temptations that superficial living has to offer. Henry David Thoreau expressed his opinions on society's inability to truly live in his book "Where I Lived and What I Lived for." Mankind is content with living synthetically. This is proven by many aspects of today's society. **We see it in the desire to sit inside and watch TV rather than enjoy the outdoors. We see it in the way we are drawn to electronics like moths to light. [Simile] We see it in all the ways we ignore our loved ones, and how we choose these little things over those who mean the most to us. We see it everywhere, but we are blind to it. [Anaphora, Antithesis]** We choose to ignore the warning signs and live unfulfilling lives. Spending time in the environments of both the active public scene and the solitude of nature depicts how different the complexity of civilization is from the simplicity of nature.

The public half of the experiment opened my eyes up to how corrupt today's society has become. Our society has fallen from Grace with a loud crash. **Compassion died with a scream and Chivalry fell on his sword. Innocence fled and left the door open and Temptation took that as an invitation and walked right in, Impulse sauntering behind. [Personification]** Outside of a crowded Starbucks I witnessed a couple fighting, the woman physically assaulting her companion. I could hear the rage in her voice as she yelled and violently hit her loved one. The realization that someone could hurt a loved one like that was a startling fact that I would have ignored had I not witnessed it. While inside the crowded Starbucks, I felt nervous and secluded. I was alone and the stares of others reinforced this feeling. People were absorbed in

their phones and food, painting a clear picture of gluttony and greed for me as I observed. The same feeling of loneliness remained while walking the crowded streets of American village. I noticed the lively scene and I noticed the people who were far from alive. They shuffled around with a dull look in their eyes; the sparkling light of life had long since been dimmed. Thoreau compared humans to ants and he couldn't have been more correct. As I walked around, the clusters of people greatly resembled swarms of ants: running around with their one-track minds, following others, and looking for the next task to busy themselves with.

The nature experience was by far more pleasant and calming. The two experiences juxtaposed each other to the point of irony. How could I be more comfortable alone at night than in the “safe” arms of civilization? The spot I chose was on a grassy hill that was surrounded by trees. I was alone but not secluded. There was something almost poetic about the experience, about how everything was so alive. **The trees stretched their splintered hands towards the heavens. The wind played with my hair, tossing it across my face. The stars hid behind the clouds, playing peek-a-boo with its audience. The tall grass danced each time the wind made an appearance.** [Personification] **My thoughts flowed like pristine waters** and held more depth than my usual shallow ones. [Simile] Intricate and important thoughts began to surface in my **ocean of a mind**, the ebb and flow uninterrupted with the distractions society throws at us. [Metaphor] “Reality is fabulous,” (297), nature allows us to observe the “realities” of life and not be deluded by the half-truths and delusions that society creates. Nature becomes our reality in a world dominated by “shams” and “delusions”. If we were to accept this and see the realities, we would be able to fully live life.

The experiment showed me how interaction with people has decreased while the use of electronics has increased. It showed me that we are a species driven by temptation and impulses,

and that although we are all human, it is easy to feel alienated while amongst others. Our society is anything but simple. The experiment also showed me that nature is by far more serene. Thoughts become more clear and meaningful, and everything becomes more noticeable and enjoyable. The simple living we need is found in nature. To live with regards to the simple things is to live thoroughly.

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The Reign of Technology

Existing: not living, but not dying. The median between the two, not pushing too far on either side of the scale. Observing, rather than speaking, another factor of existing. Tranquility, serenity, the things one reads about in books, or envisions when viewing an image collecting the calmness of the innocent, yet experienced woods. Silence and stillness engulfs every breath, every movement, every thought that isn't the analysis of oneself. Nature exposes the weak connection between the conscious and subconscious; what one thinks they know about themselves, and their true identity; uncovers what one hides from the public, revealing it to the only trusting person: himself, who sometimes, is resilient to the truth.

This disconnection creates a realm of insensitive robots, walking with no purpose, feeling with no purpose, speaking with no purpose. These inconsequential movements are creating a synthetic image of what life should be like, a routine for people to follow: go to school, get good grades, graduate, get a job, get a family, make money, grow old, die. Those who choose to steer off the path that has been laid for the generations are scolded, abused with the constant nagging

of their failure and disappointment. This direct connection to society through technology has created social bars for every category of life. Girls should be size zero, unless they're becoming a teen mom. Boys should be very built, unless they're drowning themselves in alcohol. Books have become stabilizers for chairs and tables, conversations have become means of gossip, maps have become space fillers, clothes have become optional; this unrated lifestyle has consumed youth, forcing their faces into a monotonous routine of app-clicking and shutter-initiating. This involvement with technology is ripping pages out of ones personal dictionaries, leaving one speechless in the forced involvement of a conversation.

People do not exist in today's time; people live in such a way, that they kill themselves every day they're living. Every day is another step closer to death, and another step away from the true meaning of life. Instead of chasing closure with one's inner being, one is chasing the dream that has been placed in front of him, as he's trampled by every other being that has been steered towards this planted dream. So why not? Why is the desire to take the path most traveled on so much more consuming, rather than create a path on ones own? Individualism is lost, it has been forgotten and replaced by the idea that money will create happiness; it has been forgotten behind the ads which broadcast the materialistic idea of how one should be; it has been forgotten behind the childish actions which become the idols of many minds still growing; it has been forgotten within the families more enveloped in their social matters, rather than the well-being of one another -- it is for all these reasons, one does not take the path of their own desires, but choose to follow the beaten trail of those walking in front, and behind them.

Welcome; welcome to a time where parents do not see their child cry. Welcome to a time where one has forgotten the color of the leaves, the smell of the grass, the wetness of the water. Welcome to a time where high schoolers do not know the difference between their, there, and

they're. Welcome to a time where no one thinks twice about morals. Welcome to a time where one grows to the unwanted being one thought they would never be. This is society, this is the status-quo; live it, breathe it, die it, or be subjected to the wrath of the norm.

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Aijia Peters
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My Walden Experiment
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Nature vs. Nurture

When you hear the word addiction your mind automatically thinks of being dependent on something as abominable as drugs and alcohol: heroin, cocaine, crystal meth, bourbon, vodka. What most people don't realize is that there are things today that people can be addicted to that we would have never before imagined. Who would've thought that someone could become so addicted, so attached to pieces of metal – an electrical appliance? The world's attachment to these items has pulled us away from our priorities, diverted us from what really matters, and separated us from one other.

Nowadays, children are brought up with electronics. What used to be the care and guidance of mothers and fathers is slowly being replaced with iPhones, iPads, tablets and the like. Children are constantly found with their faces buried into these glowing screens, their parents shoving them in front of the child to keep them occupied throughout the day. Is this now becoming the new style of parenting? Whatever happened to holding, rocking, lulling your child to comfort them? Is a moment of your time and attention too much for your child to ask?

I watch as adults and adolescents sit in the food court carrying out what is meant to be meaningful and engaging conversation, but how can that be when each has their attention on the

phone in front of them? “Simplicity, simplicity, simplicity,” says Thoreau; the simpler your life, the better. But it is those same devices that were intended to simplify our lives that complicate it. We are now more concerned with having the newest update, the newest version, the newest accessory for these items than we are for ourselves. It is madness. When did we let ourselves become so engulfed in the world of electronics that a boy cannot see his failing grades, a girl cannot see the growing distance between herself and the real world, a mother cannot see her true priorities, and a father cannot see his daughter growing before his eyes? The devices meant to bring people together, to connect one another, are actually what’s tearing us apart. Real conversations over a home-cooked meal at the dinner table are substituted for television shows and frozen dinners.

There is so much for us to learn from the world, from nature. When we set foot in the woods it is a much quieter scene. No sales pitches, no phones ringing, no girl scouts shouting. Quiet. Do you think the trees and insects notice our presence? I think not. However, if they did, it is not of any importance to them. They see us, and they continue with their lives. The ants do not stop foraging, wind stop blowing, trees stop growing because we have graced them with our presence. They see, and they move on. If only us humans could do the same. We acknowledge the presence of technology, but we do not move on. We let our curiosity get the best of us, and latch on to it, not letting go, like a child with an item in a toy store. If only we could give our necessities and well-beings the same attention. If we let ourselves succumb to the sweet sound of silence and give ourselves to nature we will find that everything we think matters is actually of no true importance. I promise you that as we lose ourselves in nature we will undoubtedly find our true selves and find what truly matters. No electronic device will ever be more important than our health, our family, and the air that we breathe.