

Exhalation Piece

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Pull Quote: "In this case, everybody's perception of free will is openly accepted and will be passed down to the next generation, sprouting new ideas or keeping the same."

Exhalation Piece Reflection

When given this assignment, I decided to incorporate my major, sociology, and connect it to the idea of free will and how we make our decisions based on how we grew up. I am so used to creating simple writing pieces; I knew I had to do something with the information around me. I started off recording only a video but realized how hard it was to hold firm attention from an audience. I decided to add a presentation for a visual effect and to point out main ideas or important terms. Even though an essay might have been more straightforward, I wanted to challenge myself and try to write a script, record, and edit a 10-minute video. My goal when making this video was to look at the society I live in every day and use it to my advantage. I originally wanted to conduct many interviews, but I realized how much information that would bring in with the little time I had, considering my video needed to be short. I conducted two interviews instead, one male and one female student that go to school with me at the University of California, Santa Barbara. It was best to choose wisely and ask questions to see how they have based their past decisions and their social structure. These two peers come from Asian households, yet their perspectives on free will are completely different from one another. Not to mention, their perspectives are completely different than my own, coming from a Mexican background.

As a child grows into a young adult, they are faced with huge decisions, and there are so many different paths to take. However, we all come up with the ones we think are best, and many of us use close-knit factors like family or religion to shape our decisions. Every single

household is different, and this is why I wanted to incorporate interviews and use real people's responses. In this case, everybody's perception of free will is openly accepted and will be passed down to the next generation, sprouting new ideas or keeping the same. There are, of course, many instances where ideas do not get passed down, and I am really happy that one of my interviews mentioned this incident. Even though his mother is super religious and raised him following religion, he now doesn't believe in a higher power. There are so many options to employ free will, and I believe sociology-based research is the most interesting and important way to look into this.

Regarding Ted Chiang's stories in *Exhalation*, there is one story that stood out to me and explained free will and whether it is real or not. I thought it was interesting and could tie into sociology in a different view that you could take. I thought it was especially neat because one of my interviewees, Gabriel, sees free will as a logical aspect and thinks that those who believe that a higher power makes their decisions should be looking at it logically. The quote explains how there is always going to be a debate on the authenticity of free will.

Overall, the experience was extremely positive and allowed me to challenge myself and successfully incorporate my major into a writing assignment that excited me. I looked closer at my surroundings and gained knowledge from others. I not only learned more about the connection between free will and sociology, but I also got to understand my peers more, which I am super grateful for. I go to school with such smart and intelligent people, and this assignment has also made me realize that.