

My Tran

Ms. Sutton

Contemporary Theme

12 January 2014

### Introspection and Human Connection

In today's society, humans have become isolated from each other more than ever before, especially with the advanced technology, a source of many solutions and problems. People care more about earning money than about creating connections between one another and exploring the hidden beauty the world has to offer. As they are drowning themselves in piles of works, and the urgency and determination to be promoted in their workplace, they often lose themselves in the process and soon realize that they are not happy at all. In *The Human Experience*, *I Am*, and *Happy* directed respectively by Charles Kinanne, Tom Shadyac, and Roko Belic, the directors attempt to promote the idea that happiness is not necessarily derived from materialism, rather it is acquired by the connection between human beings and the introspection of oneself.

In *The Human Experience*, two brothers Jeffrey and Clifford undergo a journey of exploration of learning and living through other people's perspective and apply the knowledge and experience as they introspect their own lives. They travel to different places to meet different people and learn about their lives. They even live in the cold winter streets of New York to experience the homeless people's lives. On one trip, the brothers, along with the group Surf For The Cause, traveled to Peru to visit a hospital of abandoned children. Some of the children are mutilated by their parents so they can look "more miserable" to beg for. Others are abandoned due to various reasons. The brothers unexpectedly discover that the children and their caretakers are very happy and cheerful in spite of the adverse

medical condition that the children have. The children teach the brothers that no matter how undesirable and terrible the circumstances one find himself or herself in, as long he or she has hope, courage, optimism, and preservation, he or she can overcome those obstacles and live through another day. Sometimes, it is difficult to find happiness and the will to overcome the hardship. However, believing that things will pass and can get better, human beings can overcome many obstacles in life and find happiness.

Another example that shows happiness can be achieved through learning about one another and connecting with each other is in Denmark. In the documentary *Happy*, the director shows a family moving into a cohousing community in Denmark. A family, among many other families, share this one huge house that has other many small houses in them. They help each other out when one is in need of help. For instance, when one of kids' parent cannot pick him or her up from school, the other kids' parents would help pick that kid up. They families create a community where kids and parents can enjoy talking with each other, learning about each other's lives, and supporting one another. The people are very joyful and happy living in the cohousing community. It shows that as long as there is a community where people can connect with each other and feel like they belong to somewhere, they can experience a feeling of happiness and bliss. Having someone who is there for his or her friends in time of difficulties is important in life.

Happiness does not start out from the outside. One has to find peace and happiness within oneself first before he or she would be able to spread it around the world. To do this, one has to look into his or her own life introspectively, and be fully honest with himself or herself of the flaws and strengths that he or she has in order to see the obstacles that are blocking him or her from achieving happiness. The film *I Am* follows the live of director Tom Shadyac after he experiences post-concussion

syndrome due to a biking accident. He experiences acute headaches and pains that accumulated from mild injuries from playing other sports. As he reflects on his own life, he discovers that even though he is a famous director who have a lot of money, he is still not very happy. Thus, after several weeks of self-reflection, he decides to sell his houses and live in a trailer, and finds people to learn about the meaning of happiness and how one can achieve it. After many months of enlightenment and revelations from meeting other happy people and professionals who are widely respected in their fields, Shadyac discovers the humans are the source of problems, but also the solutions to them. Through human connection, happiness, and the human spirit, people can find joy within themselves and around the world.

In the midst of the world busying itself in materialism, happiness is forgotten by many people. Through these documentaries, These directors, Kinnane, Shadyac, and Belic want to reminds people of the essence of life: to be happy. To achieve this, one has to reach out to other people's world, to learn from them, and to use those information and reflect on one's life. Only through connecting with other people and introspection of oneself will one be to achieve true happiness.

Works Cited

*Happy*. Dir. Roko Belic. Wadi Rum Productions, 2011. DVD.

*The Human Experience*. Dir. Charles Kinnane. Perf. Jeffrey Azize and Clifford Azize. Grassroots Films, 2010. DVD.

*I Am*. Dir. Tom Shadyac. Flying Eye Productions, n.d. DVD.