***Passages and Changes***

Throughout life, people undergo many changes--changes as inconsequential as their fashion to more meaningful changes in their friends or their activities. As a person gets older, they tend to loose interest in many things they were once into because growing out of things is a must in life.

Shakespeare illustrated this truth when he wrote his famous poem “The Seven Ages of Man.” He begins with the famous quote “All the world’s a stage” and summarizes the stages that everyone will go through as they get older. He explains the stages as first being an infant just coming into the world who grows into toddler and eventually into a schoolboy. Then one is a lover, the teen who is going this way and that with hormones. Next, he says the young soldier who is vain about his accomplishments and rebellious toward authority. Then he explains that middle age is like the justice who thinks he is wise to the ways of the world. Next is the pantaloon, explained in the poem as a thin foolish old man. Shakespeare sums it up in the last stage as “the second childishness.” I feel that the lover, the soldier and the justice are the most important steps of man because that is where a person makes the most important decisions in life and enjoys the most fun. However, it is clear that Shakepeare feels that we never truly learn everything we are supposed to learn while here on earth.

In life, people go through many difficulties. Many people change and grow and develop because of problems and difficulties they endure. In the short story “The Scarlet Ibis” one of the main characters deals with many circumstance that change him. His brother, Doodle, is crippled and can not walk, and at first the narrator does not like him. However, throughout the story, he connects with his brother and even teaches him how to walk and get around. By the end of the story, the boys have gotten close, and the older brother learns to love the younger regardless of his disability. But the story ends sadly with Doodle's death. The narrator’s loss of his brother is an example to us, the readers, that we are molded by those in our lives. Doodle taught the narrator that love should have no qualifications and pride has a high cost in life.

The final stage in any person’s life is always death. We cannot run from it, even though in this day and age many try but to no avail. Some take pills and other man-made medicines to try a put off that date, but it won’t work. They have to learn to deal with it and just prepare for the time. Many stories have captured this final struggle but none as well as “Before the End of Summer.” It is a short story about a boy and his grandmother who is expected to die before the end of summer and illustrates how difficult it is for anyone, especially young people, to accept death. Bennie, the protagonist, is frightened by the impending loss of his grandmother but eventually learns how to cope with this fear and accept death as a part of life. Another work of literature with a similar theme is “The Ballad of William Sycamore”. This poem tells of a man who loses his two sons to war and loses his way of life to changes in civilization. The lesson to be learned is we all have to learn to be flexible and adjust to life.

Change happens everyday and is an essential part of life. Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 shows that everything has a time and has a place. It states that it’s “a time to be born, and a time to die.” Therefore, in life there is a time for death and a time for living. Those are all changes people have to go through in life and changes are what make up our lives; after all, without change there is no life.

Cars are a fantastic invention. They make our first-world lives even more carefree by getting us from place to place quickly while eradicating the need for legs altogether. Instead of walking that two blocks to spend seventeen dollars at KFC, why not drive there? You get there faster and can start eating sooner; it is a lot easier to shove those Double Down sandwiches down your throat behind the wheel of your Suburban than while hobbling down the sidewalk. There is no doubt that the benefits of driving from place to place are exponentially great. However, all that driving takes an awful lot of fuel, and everyone knows that fuel for cars isn’t the most plentiful (or cheapest!) of resources.

        The gasoline that keeps your vehicle running smoothly is supplied from petroleum, also known as crude oil that is pumped out of the ground. This crude oil, in turn, is created by the transformation of long-dead plant and marine animal fossils. These fossils are under immense pressure and heat for hundreds of thousands of years, and the result is a dark and waxy substance known as kerogen. These kerogen molecules then eventually break down into petroleum or natural gas and are pumped into your gas tank. That’s right: you are cruising around town with no aim or purpose, and your car is running off of a limited supply of dead fish souls. An expensive limited supply of dead fish souls.

        Flip the script. Remember that guy you stepped over on your way into the office this morning? Remember the faint smell of urine that lightly brushed over your nostrils as you carefully avoided disturbing his peaceful slumber, as to avoid his aimless requests for spare change? That man is part of an incredibly high population of homeless citizens in America; the amount of homeless is roughly estimated to be between 2.3 million and 3.5 million people. That’s approximately 1 in 10 people living without a home. That’s approximately 1 in 10 people living on the streets every night with no job, no car, and no responsibilities. If only there was a way to supply the population with a cheaper, more plentiful alternative to gasoline that is so desperately needed. If only there was a way to give those millions of homeless Americans a job and a place to stay. If only we had camps that housed the homeless in return for nothing but physical labor. Wait, what?

        Homeless people are rich in natural oils. The absence of showers ensures that the street dwellers will not be ridding themselves of their daily, natural human secretions that the rest of us rinse off every night and day. What plagues teenagers with acne can power the cars and trucks of tomorrow if we could just harvest these oils the homeless are practically bathing in. How do we reach these oils? When we shower the precious secretions are mixed into a useless batch containing water and soap, and that is no good for cars. It looks like this idea for the future is unrealistic after all….

Zero-Tolerance for Sober Driving

If you are depressed, and no medicines are working for you, alcohol just might be the way out. If you need something to do, getting drunk just might be the solution. Bored? I heard being drunk makes everything just a little more flashy. How about a challenge? The way alcohol really blurs your vision when driving can really spice up your driving life. If at first you don’t succeed –try, try, and try again. After all, practice makes perfect! Recently, more and more drivers have discovered the joys of drunk driving. However, research indicates that consumption of alcohol while driving can lead to the victimization of these innocent drivers. Sober drivers who can think clearly and make logical decisions are the leading cause of death for America’s drunk drivers. Thus, sober driving should be made illegal and drunk driving mandatory.

One of the leading causes of concern for moms today is teen car crashes. Everyday, the news is filled with drunken teens that are killed in vicious encounters with sober drivers, light posts and even trees! However, there are groups of people who are apparently trying to convince people that it was the drunk drivers who were at fault! But let’s take a look at the facts: approximately 40% of all motor-vehicle fatalities are alcohol-related. This means 60% of motor-vehicle fatalities are sober-related! As if this is not enough, about 1/3 of the drunkards hospitalized are repeat victims (the feds call them offenders). Clearly, if more of those sober idiots were under the influence, maybe so many innocent drunk drivers would not be killed.

Sober driving is not only a critical blow to families of the innocent; it also costs the public $114.3 billion a year in damages. That means the taxpayers have to provide the very money that is used to build poles and plant trees in various traps to ensnare drunk drivers! Obviously, we need to raise public awareness about the dangers of the sober driver. Almost nothing is being currently done to inform teens of the bonuses of drinking and driving. The dangers of sober driving will deter any of them from taking unnecessary risks that could compromise not only their own lives, but also of the drunk drivers they might hit. After all, today’s teenagers are very mature and responsible. I don’t know about the rest of you, but I value my life so I’m making sure I don’t leave home without a six-pack –just in case

How many people have your lipstick and mascara killed? Luckily, most makeup is tested on bunnies, cats, dogs, guinea pigs, and monkeys so there is no need to worry about that. Eminent cosmetic companies such as Maybelline, Sally Hansen, Neutrogena, and Cover Girl test their makeup products on animals. Companies use cosmetic testing as a defense to avoid law suits in case anything happens. Even Dove tests on animals which led to the death of its trademark. It’s unfortunate, but it’s so that we know your lipstick will not suddenly murder you. The few foolish companies that donot test on animals, such as Bath and Body Works, Burt’s Bees, Urban Decay, the Body Shop, M.A.C, Clinique, Kate Spade, E.L.F, Chanel, and Revlon, obviously don’t know what they’re doing.

Cosmetic testing on innocent, living organisms is justified since they do not have any feelings and emotions at all. The European Commission’s Scientific Expert Committee has been spreading rumors by saying, “The safety of a product can be determined by knowing the ingredients.” Anyone who has common sense can tell that this is a lie. How can one possibly tell if an ingredient is safe is it is not first tested on a mouse or rabbit? The tests that are done on animals allow them to gladly take death when it comes. For example, monkeys have been seen trying to commit suicide in their cages after surviving a series of cosmetic tests. Also, rabbits are kept in cases that secure their necks so when they squirm away from the scientists trying to put substances in their eyes, they twist so hard that they wring their own necks. Cosmetic testing allows the insignificant animals to actually be of use so that you can safely put on your concealer.

Beauty shops, like Bath and Body Works, sell lip gloss, hand sanitizer, lotions, shampoo, perfume, etc. and they do not rely on animal testing. Most animal tests are conducted on rats and mice. Although, most of the data that scientists gather from them is useless, since their bodies are different from human bodies, it is still necessary because their tests are able to help the cosmetic companies boost their confidence. Rodents take up about 90% of the animals that get tested on because they are cheaper than other animals and testing companies don’t want to invest money in better solutions. Diana Shuster, a student at the University of Washington said, “I test on about 20 mice a month.” This only adds up to about 240 mice a year for one person. Everyone despises rodents anyways so cosmetic animal testing is a good way to put them down.

Animal protection groups like American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) and People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) are wasting their time protesting about an issue that does not exist. They have infamous reputations for being radical in their views. The biggest change they have managed to get was to stop cosmetic companies like Avon and Estee Lauder from animal testing for two decades. Fortunately, for customers, they went back to animal testing because they were using chemicals that were too expensive.

Overpopulation in animals has been a major issue. Animal breeders often send their animals to shelters that are already overflowing with pets. These unwanted animals are given to testing centers to be used as guinea pigs in experiments. (Sometimes literally). The solution to overpopulation is clearly to kill and abuse animals through cosmetic testing. I can glean that companies still go on with cosmetic testing even though there is no need for it.

Today’s society is faced with the continually growing problem of electronics and social media. What used to be considered a precious treasure is now the cause of teenage obesity, lack of concentration, inadequate communication, and above all a far less intellectual society. Cell phones, internet, video games, television all have taken over the youth in society and corrupted them into unimaginative, unqualified, dull robots. Facebook is merely a tool to drain the intelligence from teenagers until they are forced to speak in instant messaging jargon- LOL, OMG, TTYL. Twitter is a mechanism for teenagers to become hermits, living in their rooms updating their statuses every two minutes. Video games and television suck imagination from children’s minds, their eyes becoming plastered to a small pixel screen, their stationary bodies molded into the couch cushions. To stop a calamity like this from happening, there is only one option- abolish electronics and social media completely. If humanity can wipe away everything with batteries, plugs, and wires, people will become a more intellectual, responsive, exciting species on earth.  
  
  
With government involvement, electronics and social media can easily be wiped away from the planet. Laws can be created making any form of electronics or social media illegal. This would include phones, game systems, and the computer. Batteries can be melted down and broken down parts dumped into land fills. Those found carrying any form of electronics or social media will be given the benefit of the doubt- this is a justice based society- and be given a warning, but the next encounter with technology could lead to life in prison or death. The banning of electronics and social media will create a safer society- less accidents and less health problems. 20/20 Eye sight will quickly increase since children are not staring at screens for hours on end, and driving will become a leisure experience when drivers aren’t dodging busy people on cell phones swerving into the adjacent lanes. The obesity rate for children will be brought down to acceptable levels because there will be no more televisions to watch while a child stuffs his or her face with potato chips. People will be able to laugh out loud not LOL and ROFLing will be no more; if people want to roll on the floor and laugh, they can do so without being constrained to a tedious text message, IM, tweet, or wall post. Teenagers will have to look at a person when talking to them not text or chat, allowing society’s youth to become far better communicators. There will be no more sneaking into the girl’s bathroom to text your BFF about the cute boy that you &lt;3 so much, no more hiding cell phones beneath laps when your teacher thinks you are doing algebra homework. Students will not have to take out a calculator to know five times two equals ten or look on spark notes to understand that Romeo is a Montague and Juliet is a Capulet, all in all, a far more intellectual exuberant society.   
  
  
Society has overlooked the many other options to solve this growing problem. Having students become educated to perform tasks without calculators, cell phones, or the Internet, raise the price of the most popular, yet least useful electronics, or have schools limit a student’s use of electronics or enforce better rules pertaining to electronics and social media could all be successful solutions but are not acceptable in this busy society. Because of this, abolishing electronics and social media would be the best and only solution to create a thriving society, to save the vivacity and intellect of the next generation of adults- the youth that can be seen at the present moment on cell phones, iPods, Facebook, and Twitter- from mass destruction by the monstrous electronics and social media. Make the right choice and give up your iPods, televisions, computers, and delete your Facebook, Myspace, and Twitter accounts. G2G, TTYL!