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Essay 4: Analysis

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Understanding the Dream

For Mara, the world has slowly changed until people isolate themselves from everyone else. She lives in a time where the government synthetically manufactures everything its inhabitants are allowed to have. And while the human race continues to live upon Earth, it lives with such drastic changes that the people move through every day as mechanically as machines. They live in a place without the ability to walk along the street without a mask or eat more than nutrient-heavy breakfast bars. Desolate, dark and dreary, the entirety of the Earth is now a desert, and the inhabitants have learned to compensate for their loss of resources.

The reflections from her past throughout the piece help to contrast the world with what is today, and how the environment will eventually be destroyed if people continue at their current rate of pollution. While it is somewhat unrealistic for the decline to occur completely within one lifetime, in this story the main point is that there will eventually be a decline and there will come a time where people are left to discover and create strategies to sustain life on Earth.

With a mother that tries to preserve the environment, another contrast draws attention to environmentalists, Mara's mother, and those who either do not understand the consequences or who just do not care, Mara. Although she is a child and teenager, it is not

until she sees the government tightening its control over people out of necessity that she realizes the importance of conserving natural resources. While she disapproves of her loss of rights, she does not fight as she understands the inevitability of the government taking over all minimum details.

Extending beyond the loss of natural resources, the culture drastically changed. Because there was no excess power, no plays, movies or shows could be produced. People lost the ability to socialize. Along with the loss of social activities and strict government regulation, people lost their interest in socializing with one another. For Mara, it means sitting at home alone watching the latest on television with the little power she has managed to capture from the sun during the cloudy days. For the human race, it means the death of their culture and the ruin of individualism.

When given warnings directly, people tend to ignore the implications behind the arguments. However, through fiction a more personal warning can be seen as one is left to imagine the changes from the protagonist's life and compare it to their own to better understand the effort of the narrative. The reflections allow the story to be more personal, the losses more sincere. The first person narrative throughout allows me the chance to place the burden of the environment more on the individual than making it a problem the whole of society needs to fix. While ultimately the burden rests on all of society, it is within the grass roots, the individual, where the differences will be made.

In comparison to other works of futuristic fiction, "A Nightmare Realized" urges the reader to reflect upon their own contribution to pollution. As in Ursula LeGuin's *A Word for World is Forest*, the people on Earth have consumed all available resources and must find ways to preserve the human race. However, in LeGuin's novel, the people have discovered another planet where they harvest food, wood and other plant based necessities. When the

humans continue to pillage the land, it becomes evident the usury will continue. And in Albert Goldbarth's essay "The Future," he explores the possibility that one day humans must fight for rodents living on the street due to food shortages. While the government has prepared its people for nothing quite as drastic in my short story, the notion is similar. There will come a time if humans continue to abuse the environment as we are where we will be left without the ability to use anything natural. For Earth to last for coming generations, we as people must take a stance against excessive pollution and abuse of the environment so that future generations can comfortably live.