

Student essays on Troy Wins!
written by Amie Keddy's
middle school English
class at The Bement School

David Cole
137 Cottage Street
New Haven, CT 06511
phone: 203-624-3982

April 18, 2009

Dear Allie, Charles, Adam, Marina, Hee,
Lauren, Zael, Megan, Sarah, Yeojin and Taylor,

Your teacher Amie Keddy has kindly
let me read the papers you wrote on my play,
Troy Wins.

Mostly, playwrights only get to see the
effect their plays are having on people in
theatres. It is a rare thing to hear
directly from readers, especially good readers.

As you can imagine, I am often told
how "difficult" and "intellectual" my plays are.
But you guys seem to have got it all
just fine! This is heartening.

Thank you for the hard thinking and
sensitive responses you gave to my work.

Best regards,
David Cole

Allie [redacted]
English
Ms. Keddy
Troy Wins! Writing

Hermes is a very important character in *Troy Wins!* He symbolizes the future and how changing the past means changing the future. He "puts himself before Troy," to show that without Troy, Rome would not happen. What would the world be without Rome? Democracy would not have happened because it started in Rome. George Bush may have been a dictator, which is an even scarier thought than that of him being president. *The Illiad* would have turned out completely different, and how would *The Odyssey* have been written if Odysseus had lost the war? Many great art works would not have been done without the Trojan War. Hermes is conceited, and he wants himself painted on all the great paintings, but those paintings would not happen without the Trojan War. He wants Troy saved for the future and his part in artwork. The Greek Gods had the power to see the future and they could not see the future shaping up as well if Troy had won. That is why Hermes symbolizes the future and how if one event is changed, a whole slew of future events will also change.

oh, yes!

P.

P.

He doesn't want Troy saved?

Great idea.

"Do you want me to paint you a picture?" That was what the Trojan Prayer asked.

I painted a picture for Zeus because in the character, I felt as if Zeus would relate better to a painting. He had not listened to anything I had said about saving Troy. Maybe, if I connected with him in a way that he understood, art, he would actually listen. In the play, if Zeus had started painting then, it would be awkward because Zeus's character would not have been listening. That is not something that he would do. The Trojan Prayer would have not been listened to.

Really interesting insight!

But he didn't do much listening before, did he?

Yes - it definitely can be.

3

Art is a way to communicate with other people. Many photographers like the ones we saw at the Williams College Museum, showed pictures of people ^{living} in other lifestyles. I ^{different} from ^{mine.} would never have learned about these people without the art that was about them. Many artists do their craft to let out what they need to let out. My friend, who is a singer, sings random improv songs when she needs to let something out.

Art is a part of most people's lives, whether they know it or not. There is no one point of art; it is something different to everyone. For Charles, it might be because of cows, my friend to rant, and to me to tell stories.

B+

Use more clear, precise language.
I'd like to see you explore this idea a little more thoroughly.

A-

I'm proud of you & your effort.

English Typed Response

4

Charles [redacted]
January 13th
Ms. Keddy
9th Grade

#1

Hermes represents a form of a man that has lost all thought, all judgment, all consideration for others, and replaced it with himself. In his mind throughout the play he is simply thinking, "I wonder how I'll look if I do this?" He is a perfect example of a conceded and self centered man. When the Trojan Prayer is convincing Zeus to strike down the Trojan Horse and save thousands of lives, then Hermes thinks, hey, if that happens then this guy won't make me look good. To put it simply, he is a complete jerk. On the top of page 62 he exclaims, "...I shall come between you and this newfound project of yours. Urge not the fate of Troy. Troy is nothing to me. Sink Troy or soar, I intend to be represented. I put myself before Troy." In this quote, once you get rid of all the fancy stuff, all he is saying is, "I don't care about what you want or what happens to all those poor screaming people, just paint me for god's sake already!" He also says *Troy is nothing to me*, and my response is, who asked you're opinion? It doesn't matter about what you think, no one is basing a decision off of you, and this is a decision that affects thousands of lives and the entire course of history, and you're saying "well I don't care, now you shouldn't either." David Cole was able to capture the heart and soul of an ass, in writing.

excellent support using quotes

SP.

😊 You are such a card!

#2

Art. A thing created throughout the history of mankind. Some believe it can epitomize the beauty and perfect representation of nature and happiness in all its forms. Others think it's just an excuse to get more money. The truth actually lies in the heart of American tradition, in the deep recess of our ancestry and ancient paramours of every persons mind. The hamburger. The source

P.
You have such an excellent sense of rhythm.

of this contraption of the soul can be described as the real roots of art and talent. And this... is the cow. The mother of beauty and passion. Gargantuan yet elegant. The creator of ambrosia, and the nectar of our essence of being. The cow perfectly represents art. It is subtle, yet everywhere, surrounding us in so many ways, mental and physical. We even ingest the products of the cow, just like we ingest the beauty and insight of art. In the bowls of our cereal to the meat that we consume for nourishment, the source of our life, of our interest and understanding. The cow has been around for longer than we know, longer than a human mind can comprehend. Not only did its ancestors preexist us, but the cow, the art, has been in the mind and soul of Mother Nature for eons. The people of this world cannot seem to understand and realize that we are the children of nature, children of the cow, and children of art. They do not know how important this sentient being around us truly is. The cow only disguises its omnipotence. It only tries to digress to us the importance to know and to understand art in its truest form. The current form of art in our world, which we have established is the cow, only exists this way, under this doppelganger to help nourish our souls and brains until we are capable to see the way it sees, to think the way it thinks, and to understand the importance of art at its roots, at the beginning of true beauty.

Wonders!
 analogy
 ☺

really?
 which
 ones?

What a stretch but you pulled it off & though some of your reasoning is a bit far-fetched.

I'm not sure this word works here.

C. Adam ██████████
 January 13, 2009
 English
 Ms. Keddy

What does Hermes symbolize and why?

In the final page of *Troy Wins!*, Hermes represents art, in all of its forms. It is on page sixty that Hermes points out that should Zeus let fly his bolt, so many great works would be lost forever. Homer would never tell his famous stories to thousands had Troy won. Virgil would not have taken up his pen and retold the story of Aneas because it would not have existed. A world without these great works would be a most bleak one indeed, and Hermes was sure to point out that fact.

well-said.

Later, in the play's ending, Hermes again defends the artwork of the ages. It seems at first that Hermes was defending *Greece*, but no, he was making a case for the survival of the work that ^{Zeus?} derived from Troy's downfall. "I shall come between you and this newfound project of yours. Urge not the fate of Troy. Troy is nothing to me. Sink Troy or soar, I intend to be represented." I intend to be represented... this line more than any other speaks true to Hermes as a symbolization of the great artwork of the ages. It is as if all the art is speaking through

Hermes's voice. And, it is from this position and emotion that Hermes finds the perfect pose for Zeus's portrait. The spirit of art itself took control over the mind of Hermes and created the perfect piece of art for the king of gods to paint. Thus, another piece of art was created, rather than hundreds ~~be~~ lost.

Wow!
 What
 amazing
 idea!

Hermes cast as an embodiment of artwork soon to be lost was a brilliant idea. The central theme of this play was finally given a representative to speak for it. For the first time, the most precious of our inanimate objects were given a decision in their fate.

noun/pronoun disagreement

Is this so absolutely true?

I believe art work to be a representation of life. Art, in all forms discusses the issues we face as human beings, and supposedly, in one way or another, tell the virtuous answers to these issues.

Art is a depiction of everything we cannot discuss or retell.

How so?

(B)

Adam -
You've posed some provocative ideas about art, but your explanation / exploration of them is missing. This response is too abbreviated to do the subject or your thinking justice.

(A-)

Very well explored.

8

Marina ~~Marina~~
Ms. Keddy
1-13-09
TROY WINS!

1. What does Hermes represent and why?

well-said

Hermes represents what could be; he represents the future, and all the stories that could happen, if Zeus interferes with the present. "I can forget about perhaps the grandest of all my descent-passages: Never now shall I present Aeneas with your edict that he quit Dido and turn prow for Rome." (60) This is what Hermes describes as he begs Zeus to reconsider lobbing his bolt toward Troy, and changing the future.

citation format!

He reminds him that all of his grand doings are yet to come, and if Zeus changes time, the will never be.

sp.

yes!

true

Hermes also represents the future of art. He strikes pose after pose, in quest of his true pose for which Zeus can paint. But, as he describes what could happen if Zeus changes the future, he comes upon the pose he truly belongs with, the pose in which he should be depicted. But even so, in his plea to Zeus, his desperate begging, he reminds Zeus that all the great events that could happen will never be represented and recreated by an artist. Rome, and the new Troy, (all will be full of Sunday Painters,) who will spend their time creating images of the Gods, Zeus and Hermes. How could that be lost? Hermes not only represents, but also saves the future, and art.

I'm not sure exactly what you mean.

2. What is the point of art?

Very honest & direct

Art, to me, is simply a way to ignore reality. Looking at it, making it, art is an escape. When I am having a problem, I listen to music, or photo-shop a picture, or scrapbook. All these things help me ignore my thoughts for a while, and make me more relaxed when I return to them. I especially like taking pictures, and

scrapbooking them. To me, all the pictures are memories, and remembering the past, and all the good times, simply makes me happy. I think this is what art is supposed to do. It is a way to remember. No matter what, art is influenced by a thought, or memory. Something has to influence what you are doing. People write songs about their past, or their thoughts and feelings. When people paint, they paint a sight they have seen, or want to go to, or an 'abstract painting' could be a blur of bright colors, depending on the mood of the painter. There are so many feelings, thoughts, and memories that influence art.

I like this idea

People making art are expressing all these things. I personally think that it is very important to remember the past, because all the events and people in your life help shape the person you will become. Creating and making art help me to reflect, and I'm sure that it does the same for others.

B-
CT for lateness

Hee [redacted]
Ms. Keddy

Trojan War

I believe art exists in every human in different forms. For me, art exists in the form of music. Singing soothes me, and it is the easiest way to elaborate ^{on} my feelings. Sometimes it's hard for me to express myself and look back upon my actions, however, music helps bringing inner side of me and comprehend myself easier. As Ms. Keddy mentioned, art is irritable because everything we see, hear, and touch is connected to art. Theatre is a big part of artistic movement ~~nowadays~~ and in this play, 'Troy Wins' characters amused me with their witty humors and sometimes sensitivity. Though out the play, I thought Greek gods and goddesses are connected to humans largely. Indeed, this play broke my stereotype of 'superior god image' to down to ^a earth god image. For example, Zeus was an artist who had a great urge to paint and submerge ^{an} himself in his artistic sides rather than getting involved with the disastrous Trojan War. He was just like ^a human, avoiding the harsh reality and relying on his artistic side. Hermes, on the other hand, was more of realist. He tried to convince the Trojan prayer and Zeus that altering history ^{would lead} will led to more disaster. For me, Hermes taught us a very important lesson. Things happen for a reason. How could the 'Iliad' or 'Odyssey' and all the arts be existence when the Trojan didn't take place? Therefore, I agree with Hermes that history shouldn't change. Although we might regret what might have happened in the past, it is the past and there is a future waiting for every one of us. Yes.

I said this?

Nice point

Good question

You didn't address the question: what does Hermes symbolize?
books should be italicized

Hee Kyeong,
Overall, a well-done piece of writing. Some of your sentences are a little confused in grammar or word choice.

LAUREN ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~

✓ X THE TROJAN PRAYER

DOES THE TROJAN PRAYER HAVE TO BE MADE BY A MALE OR FEMALE?

I THINK THAT THE TROJAN PRAYER IS AN INTERESTING CHARACTER. SOMETIMES HE/SHE SOUNDS VERY WISE AND THEN OTHER TIMES HE/SHE DOESN'T MAKE ANY SENSE. I GUESS THAT IS BECAUSE MORE THAN ONE PERSON IS PRAYING. I LIKE THE WAY THE TROJAN PRAYER REPRESENTS HUMAN'S AND HOW FLAWED THEY ARE. does she?

do too.

TYPED - WHAT DOES HERMES SYMBOLIZE IN THIS? PG. 60-63

TONIGHTS HOMEWORK ALSO LOOK AT PAGE 64

WHAT IS THE POINT FOR ART? WHAT IS ART?

THEATER CAN NEVER BE THE SAME TWICE. THEATER IS THE CLOSEST THING TO LIFE. ← MS. KEDDY

Lauren McCaw
Ms. Keddy

14th January, 2009
9th Grade English

What is Art? What is the Point?

Art is the truth. Art is a reflection of real life. It is what we see everyday, it is what we dream about, what we think about, and what we hear. It doesn't have one definition. If you look it up in the dictionary you will see that. Art is an individual's impression of things, it is based on opinion. It can be expressed through music, dance, theater, film, literature, or visual arts. Art has its emotions and physicality, much like people. You look at them and think one thing but once you get to know them it's like there a new person, same thing with art. Art. It is dramatic and over done yet simple and clean (being able to have that contrast is what makes art, ART!

I agree

run-on

of

sp.

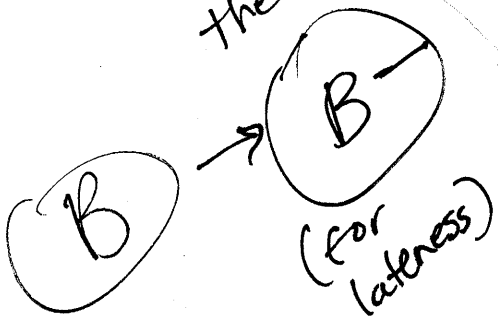
On page 60-63 Hermes symbolizes real selfishness. He thought solely of himself.

He wanted to get painted first in the beginning of the play and again in the end. He thought of himself first, not of the people dying in the Trojan war.

True-

Can you explore a little more?
What about interest

In his painting?
or did he just want to be the center of art?



Lauren -
You've begun some excellent ideas, but your writing feels rushed and doesn't look for support/quotes from the text or details to flesh out your argument. Go a bit further next time

Zael ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~
English
Ms. Keddy

Hermes: What Does He Symbolize?

I believe that Hermes symbolizes what would happen if what was meant to be was altered, and how sometimes, even if things may seem like they have gone the way that they shouldn't have, it would be right in the end. Destruction makes the world harder to live in, but it most certainly does create things that the world would be at a terrible loss without. It is hard to miss what you never knew you had, and if Troy had won, who knows? Maybe something even better would have happened that we can't imagine life without right now. However, I believe that everything happens for a reason, and Hermes symbolizes the thought that things should just go as planned, people should follow their dreams, and some things should not be altered, and simply left be.

irony?
disagreement

good point
sp

Interesting -
how do you support your idea - what from the text helps you?

What is the Point of Art?

The point of art is for the entertainment of others, as well as yourself. It is meant to be enjoyed, and therefore I do not believe that it has a right to be criticized, when all that it is really trying to do is bring out the best thoughts and memories of people. I do not believe that most art has a right to be criticized, not even horrible music, unless it is dishonest. To be dishonest while making art is one of the most disgraceful things. To do it only for money and fame and not believe any of what you paint, sing, or act, is

How do you determine dishonesty?

This is unclear to me -

something that feels simply despicable. Art is meant to be genuine, and to express things that cannot be written with words. Words can say a lot, obviously, as they have become

so popular in our culture, and people discuss things rather than paint them and then compare and think "Hmm...I never thought of it that way." However, the space of words

is very limited, while art goes much deeper. Even lyrics aren't really words, in my opinion, because they come from a much deeper and more personal space from inside of you, and you are putting them out there for a different reason than communication, and

that reason is expression. Expression is the key thing that art does much better than words, because with words it is very limited. For communication, there is nothing like speech, as

it is quick and easy, and we are able to pick it up very fast at a very young age. Therefore, the purpose of art is most certainly not communication, but expression, because not all thoughts and feelings can be expressed with words, which is why we sing, why we paint,

and why we look at life from a different angle when we are composing something that feels so personal, and yet...so many other people can feel it too. The point of art is to unite us.

A worthy idea
How?

What is?

but it needs support.

I like this idea!

You need to define each so you can show how they differ.

B-

Great ideas that need more detail and exploration.

B+

Well-done.

Megan ~~XXXX~~
Ms. Keddy
1/13/09
English

What does Hermes represent? Why do you think that?

Hermes symbolizes the future of Troy and the rest of the world. He represents all of the great things that happened after the war and everything that was created because of it. If Zeus had decided to change the outcome of the war he would have thrown all of the historic events off and nothing would have been the same. When Hermes reminds Zeus that if he decides to spare Troy there will be no second Troy. If Zeus had done this there would have never been a Rome. Hermes tries to remind him that even though sparing Troy might improve the lives of the people and the Trojan Prayer was begging him, it would alter the outcome of the rest of the years to follow. There would be no more art; no one would have come up with stories and books. People like Homer wouldn't have been able to come up with stories. By urging Zeus to continue doing what he loves and is passionate about in a way Hermes saved the future of art. The great events to come in the future wouldn't happen and they could never be described in the form of art. After striking pose after pose, Hermes finally comes upon the perfect one. While Hermes talks to Zeus about the terrible things that could go wrong if he decides to throw history off its course, he finds the pose that he has been desperately trying to strike.

“Spare Troy—and there shall want founding no second Troy. Which means: no Aeneid Which means: I can forget about perhaps the grandest of all my descent-passages” pg. 60
“If I’m fated to kiss all my best lyric and epic moments goodbye, I damn sure mean to persist as a subject for Western art.” Pg. 61

Good details

p. frag.

? grammar word choice

p.

p.

citation format!

Passages like these show that Hermes is strongly trying to prevent Zeus from saving Troy. At last when Hermes finds his final pose he has a breakthrough and finally Zeus insists that Hermes will be the first god he pains. Hermes is making history as they speak and starting a whole new phase of art.

well -
summarize

The real point of art can be viewed in so many different ways; it could be to imagine the way you wished the world could be or to make art that represents the harsh ways of life and reality. I think that art is a way to draw closer attention to the detail that not many people notice. It is a way to express one's feeling about the world and everything in it. It can also be a way to escape from the world and to literally paint the perfect place. You can imagine things to be perfect and exactly the way you want it to be. It distracts people from ~~the~~ reality. Some art draws attention ^{to} the harder aspects of life and things that are difficult to think about. Other pieces of work draw your attention focus on the more positive parts of life. It all depends on the artist and how he or she chooses to express their self. It can be a way to speak to other people through a piece of artwork. Some people may interpret a piece of artwork very differently than others. It is very difficult to sum up the whole point of art. There are so many possible reasons that we have art, why it is important, and what it means.

I
like this

Yes.

true /

Sarah ~~_____~~

Ms. Keddy

1-13-09

1) Hermes symbolizes procrastination, selfishness, and arrogance, which are some of the undesirable all humans have and need to deal with every day.

The Greeks used their gods to explain their day to day problems and peoples personalities; the gods were molded ^{sp. after} from the humans instead of the humans

modeled from the gods. So for Hermes to be an arrogant selfish procrastinator, it doesn't make those qualities good but instead, explainable.

And there needs to be more of a challenge for the Trojan prayer to get Zeus on her side or the play wouldn't been as poignant and the plot would have been stupid. Why?

interesting point

2) I feel art is an excellent pastime for some and a difficult profession for others. Art can release pressure from day to day life or add stress when it's required. Art is also able to explain and reveal more than everyday interaction can.

(B)

This is all true but you didn't really explore your opinion of art. I think your brevity of response may have been due to applications, yes?

A- Nicely done!

Yeojin
2009. 01. 13
Ms. Keddy

Does she ever convince him?

In the play *Troy Wins!*, the character Hermes symbolizes the human aspect of seeking amusement before achievements. When the character the Trojan Prayer makes a proposal and convinces Zeus that Troy shall win, Hermes stops Zeus for the sole reason of wanting to be painted by 'the supreme artist'. To the artist, Hermes is motivation and inspiration: 'Under the figure of Hermes "putting himself before" Troy, shall I not recognize my own "art before everything" posture, till now held deepest truth, but now presenting itself as, merely, a guide to further depths?... this is the First God I paint' (64). Whereas to the prayer, he is nothing but a futile being whose image as Psychopomp is clichéd: 'Ah, when all's said, you do but add to the pile one more Hermes as Psychopomp, that most worked, tiredest theme in all Greek art' (65). In the end of this play, Troy still falls and Hermes gets himself painted by Zeus.

Humans make art for many reasons, some including to seek enjoyment and satisfaction or to express personal feelings and opinions. Art from the past tells history, and unlike any written history, art gives one visual experiences of the unknown past and increase one's understandings. Also, since art provides a visual image of the artist's mind, it may tie cultures and traditions regardless the language barrier. The usage and application of art may change always, but it will always be an important part of civilization.

well-done!

I love this phrase.

- of ?

together

Hermes is the symbol of arrogance; everything is about him. He looks at himself as the top of the world. In the play, Hermes is only focused on himself and what he will get out of Zeus's painting habit. He strikes conceited poses ominously, waiting for the time when Zeus will paint him. Hermes turns every conversation back to himself. It is all about Hermes.

Why this adjective?

Art is an expression. It is a way to speak without forming the words that you could never say. Art is powerful and purposeful to the point where you can look at a piece of art work for hours and find several different means. Art is important because it gives lost souls a source of encouragement. It gives cowards nerve; it gives people with a little too much pride a place to show imperfection. Imperfection in art is beauty. Madness is genius. Art is fabulous in every which way possible.

Great ideas, but as of this writing,

still unsupported.

How? Why? Expand.

C-
D+
for lateness

Taylor,

This is a rushed piece of writing and it lacks the kind of examples, detail, and polish I expect from you (and from 9th grade students in general).

are able to be with me on my birthday —
no more snow!

I hope you're both enjoying
 what is now spring. I've been
 celebrating by reading poetry to
 my students every day — and
 having wonderful, insightful conversations
 with the 9th graders about
The Oedipus Cycle.

~~My favorite, light, beautiful number
 of students — through — through — through —
 through — through — through — through —
 through — through — through — through —
 through — through — through — through —
 through — through — through — through —~~

April 2, 2009

Dearest David & Susan,

I checked with my 9th
 grade students, and it is fine
 with them that you have these original
 copies, which I've decided to send
 as a complete batch, just in case you
 see something you want that you
 hadn't seen previously.

I miss you both so much and
 would really love it if we could
 find a convenient time that I
 could visit you in New Haven.

I am, however, very excited that you

are able to be with me on my birthday —
no more snow! 2)

I hope you're both enjoying
what is now spring. I've been
celebrating by reading poetry to
my students every day — and
having wonderful, insightful conversations
with the 9th graders about
The Oedipus Cycle.

~~Also please, if you have any
questions about the book, please
contact me at any time. I'm
available by phone, email, or
mail. I'm in New Haven, CT.~~

April 2, 2009

Dearest David & Susan,

I checked with my 9th
grade students, and it is fine
with them that you have these original
copies, which I've decided to send
as a complete batch, just in case you
see something you want that you
hadn't seen previously.

I miss you both so much and
would really love it if we could
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I am, however, very excited that you