Richard Lopez Lens 6 4/17/12

The novel The Orange Houses by Paul Griffin is certainly a different type of novel. Using very poetic structure to tell a story of a war survivor and hearing impaired girl from Brooklyn. The story made me think of two very powerful themes. The first theme is the results of war. The effect of war on the men who serve, and the families they come back to. The second theme is the struggle of those who are physically, mentally or emotionally impaired or disabled. The value of life is definitely assessed in The Orange Houses. A question kept creeping into my head that made me cringe when I thought about it. Should we feel bad or sorry for Mik? I always think when I see a blind person or deaf person. How do they feel about themselves? How drastically has their life been changed from what it would have been if they did not have these impairments? Or, am I being ignorant by feeling that way? Like we discussed in class about the cochlear implants being something that is a huge issue for the deaf community, and how by suggesting the use of them is very offensive. I just feel like I would never wish those impairments on anyone. We only have five senses as it is to live in this world. The thought of being one less saddens me.

The idea about the soldier coming back from war touches close to home. I know how people feel when they are sent home from war without an honor or by force. My cousin was a tank mechanic about six months ago. An I.E.D or Improvised Explosive Device blew up the tank in front of my cousin. And what was once my younger life loving cousin is now a kid who moved to Colorado who hates his family and can’t seem to be happy with any girl because he is so angry. I use to talk to him about it but now our conversations have diminished to a Facebook chat now and then. I hate the feeling but I can no longer relate to him. He is not the same kid who went away. I can see similar emotions and actions being acted out by Jimmi. It makes me think about why we are still in all these wars. I wish I could just talk to the men who run this country and ask them what they are thinking. It really caused me some grief when thinking about who I would support for the next presidential election. Should I vote for Ron Paul who promises to pull out of every war? Or do I stick with my heart and go with Obama who I agree with a lot of things in his beliefs.

I think the reader should be discussing things like this. If George Bush or other Presidents ever talked about the horribleness of Vietnam or the World Wars would he still go into Iraq and Afghanistan? If the deaf community was giving cochlear implants at a young age would they still feel the same way about them now at an older age? I think these questions and more are ones that the teacher should bring up when discussing this novel. If they don’t I think the students will miss the point.