

H1 Sample Essay | Speech

‘The views people hold today are often influenced by the news and information they receive from the online world of the internet and social media’

‘It’s better to live a day as a lion than a lifetime as a sheep’. This statement has never been more fitting for a society than in today’s world. People are not just influenced by what they read and hear, they are enslaved by it. We are a generation of sheep who follow the volatile and ever-vacillating opinion of the flock. Instagram posts are valued more than sermons and tweets are taken as gospel.

We have a worrying incapacity for original thought. What we read on social media becomes our temporary mantra until it is challenged by something more affable and crowd-pleasing. This insatiable desire for validation is corrupting our world. Instead of striving for political greatness we are too busy asking about political correctness. We fear scrutiny from unknown keyboard warriors across the globe more than the stark reality of irrelevance. Since the introduction of social media in the late 90s, the world has become more connected and more in-touch, or so it would seem. As W.B. Yeats once wrote, ‘a terrible beauty is born’, and ‘all’s changed, changed utterly’. Knowledge is no longer power. Instead, those who can refine their knowledge and apply it seem to succeed most. Those who cannot are drowned by the floods of information and are carried downstream with the rest of the mindlessly mimicking population.

The harsh and quite frankly disarming reality of social media is that it is modern day propaganda. The image we share of the Middle East is one crafted by journalists to fit a particular narrative. The altruistic nations harbouring the exodus of refugees do so with hidden agendas. But if this is all so true, why hasn’t there been a revolution or at least a riot? Quite simply because that requires a level of decisiveness we haven’t seen

since World War II. In order to highlight such wrong-doings, fingers will need to be stepped on and pandemonium will consequently erupt, and that, I am afraid is too much for our Instagram Samaritans. That would run the risk of perturbing the majority, and that's not the influence we want to have, we like our followers and they like us, regardless of how little leading we do. We as a society are enslaved by what we read and hear. We love a feel-good story about kittens and puppies because they do just that, they make us feel good. This desire for ephemeral satisfaction is innate and natural. However, somewhere in the quagmire we call the internet, that 'want' became a 'need' and real issues like gay rights in Iran or fracking in Canada have been put in the 'too-hard' basket.

We must break free from the chains of the unrealistic ideals and objectives presented in mainstream media and perceive the world as it truly is: in dire need of attention. As Theodore Roosevelt once said, 'in any moment of decision, the best thing you can do is the right thing. The worst thing you can do is nothing'.