The Mayan Cultural Effect

El Salvador’s unstable nation of modern times has many influences from the ancient Mayan era. The first influence that the Mayan culture had on modern day El Salvador is the structure of social classes. Pre-civil war, El Salvador’s class structure resembled the major imbalance of power that existed in ancient Mayan society. Mayan society was comprised of three main social classes which are nobles, commoners, and slaves. Mayan nobles owned orchards and land (Carmack, Gasco, & Gossen, 2007, p. 113). This type of division parallels social classes focused on in Argueta’s novel, *One Day of Life*. In the book, the three classes were the land owners, the “authorities”, and the laborers.

In ancient Mayan society “warfare was often performed for the purpose of raiding for captives, some of whom were sacrificed, whereas others became slaves” (Carmack, Gasco, & Gossen, 2007, p. 113). This also is similar to the manner in which the upper classes in *One Day of Life* treat the lower class, treating them as a pawn in their game of greed. They do not take into account the laborers’ living conditions, since accommodating them would lower profits. In the pre-civil war era, El Salvadorian laborers were paid a bare minimum wage that was barely enough to live on. Even though El Salvador was considered a democracy by its leaders, this great separation of power caused the laborers to live in slave-like conditions. An example of the landowners’ oppressing power over the lower class is described in Argueta’s novel “If one stops atop...
a wall or a cliff, everything the eye can see belongs to one owner. Even the horizon is theirs. And the sky, too” (p. 63).

Another main connection that can be made between ancient Mayan civilization and contemporary El Salvador is the dominant agricultural lifestyle.

A third resemblance of Mayan culture is the belief that many things are out of human control.

Comment [s11]: Ok. These aren’t bad. I understand that you’re somewhat behind the curve with this assignment, Quinn, because of your trip to Montana. Nonetheless, you’ve got the kernel of a good paper, which can be even better if you CARRY ON with it. So FINISH the darned thing, flesh out the areas attached to your potential thesis, and engage your sources consistently to demonstrate that there ARE, in fact, these parallels between the Salvadoran peasants and the ancient Mayans. And make sure that you’re interacting with the NOVEL consistently, with illuminating quotes to make the connections you need to build your case. And the intro—there’s quite a bit to do there, but, once the areas of the paper are developed, I think you can return to it and fully DEVELOP it consistent with what you actually DO in the paper. Good luck.