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## Wavelength Of Words

We are fighting over red crayons and tie-dye t-shirts. We needed practice in debating bills. Why? It's what we do in the Youth and Government program.

The debate begins: "Red crayons should be prohibited because they are detrimental to the morals instilled in our children," Kevin stands up and declares, a look of determination in his eyes, "They represent the color of aggression and violence, blood and...alcohol." He finishes with a questioning tone that turns to strong belief and sits down, truly believing that alcohol has something to do with the color red.

The rest of us aren't as sure as he is. "Alcohol?" we all begin to question and giggle as the next speaker takes her place at the front of the room. The room quiets in anticipation over what she has to say.

"The red crayon," Amy stands up and continues the argument, "is a force to be reckoned with. America is based on institutions. The institution of marriage. The institution of values and morals. In recent years, attacks have been made on our traditional institutions, undermining the values that our founding fathers put into place. Now, these institutions are being replaced. Along with 21<sup>st</sup> century violence in TV and video games, the red crayon is creating a new institution of violence to be implanted into the brains of our future. How can we stop this? The answer is to cease production of the red crayon. If production of the red crayon does not stop, what future do we have to look forward to?"

The giggle grows to louder snickers as she finishes and walks back to her seat. Are we seriously having a debate about red crayons? The previous speakers look at the rest of the delegation with seriousness on their faces and looks that dare anyone to speak against them. For a second the look fades, and you can see the laughter sparkling in their eyes. The topic is now changed to one on a more serious ground.

"Tie-dye t-shirts are a disgrace to fashion," Anabel proclaims in the most earnest and passionate tone she can muster, "And they force us to look back on the past. America is the land of opportunity and progress. How can we be proactive and progressive in our choices if all we can do is regress? People express themselves through fashion, thus the production of tie-dye t-shirts expresses our primordial desire for regression and aggression. Like the red crayon, it *must* be stopped."

She goes to sit with the other speakers. Laughter echoes through the mirrored room. Laughing faces appear reflected infinitesimally around us, making the laughter seem even louder. It feels as if millions of people are sharing this experience with us.

The laughter is quieted with a call of "decorum", and I take my cue and walk to the front of the room to begin my speech. "Red crayons and tie-dye t-shirts are deleterious to the sanity of America. As the previous speakers mentioned earlier, red is the color of aggression and anger. Tie-dye shirts have red splashed all over them. And what color is running down the cloth next to

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it? Blue. The color of sadness and depression. Then yellow appears in this parade of colors and emotions, bringing unwonted happiness to the aggressive, depressed child wearing such a shirt. The child is accosted by a mixture of emotions simultaneously affecting him or her and creating a child that is psychologically broken. The parents become worried for the health of their child and seek psychological help to try to reverse the inauspicious effects the tie-dye t-shirt has had on their child. But in such a difficult economic crisis, it will grow fiscally impossible for the parents to pay for such professional aid. Across the nation, children will be affected by this disease and will be unable to find help. Eventually, America will grow into a nation with a weak foundation, based on psychological problems. Problems resulting from the continued production of red crayons and tie-dye t-shirts epitomize America's future problems and must be dealt with. A proper structure cannot be built on a shaky foundation."

I finish by yielding my time to the chair and sitting down.

Almost instantly, the room explodes with laughter. Like a puzzle, each person had built on the previous speaker's points, until we were left with this complete and magnificent picture. The smiles are painted on our faces as we laugh together. Like an electric current pulsing between all of us, we are connected over this unusual experience. I can feel this connection running through my veins as if it has always existed. The electricity heightens. We are all on the same wavelength of thought, expressed through our unanimous laughter. We are thinking as one delegation; laughing as one delegation. We are united in our campaign against the evils of red crayons and tie-dye t-shirts. We. Are. One.

And all I can think is "wow", and I can feel that that is what they are thinking too.

Wow.