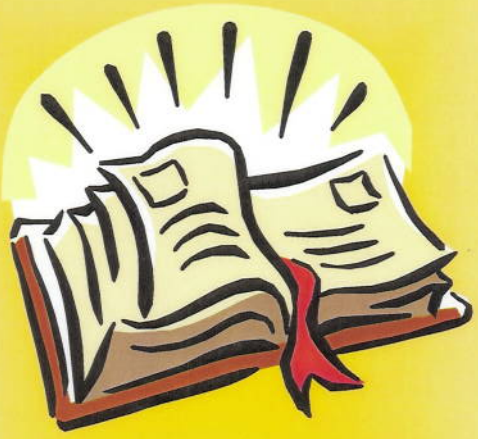
UW Upward Bound Expository Class Readings



Critical Skills Building in:

- **Reading & Writing**
- **Discussion/Communication**
- **College Survival**
- **Technology**

Instructor: Donna Bolima

Juniors 2008

Welcome!

This is your class. You will bring your own experiences, skills and development here to create a unique class content. Here you will have the opportunity to take charge of your learning and expand and explore your skills through the projects and exercises.

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UB Magazine http://depts.washington.edu/uboma

Welcome!

Reading Table of Contents

Reading Group Presentations Every Week

Resources: D. George, J. Trimbur (1995) "Reading Culture"
G. Colombo, R. Cullen, B. Lisle (1998) "Rereading America"
World Wide Web

Bolima Expository Reading
Presentation Sign Up List & Order
JUNIORS Class of 2008

WEEK 1: Intros & Senior Project Research

WEEK 2: Begin Bio & Sr. Project Research

WEEK 3: Sexism in the Classroom
CLEVELND: Yen, Nicole, Ian, Aileen
FRANKLIN: Wyman, Issa

WEEK 4: Malcom X & Spike Lee
CLEVELAND: Breana, Trawanda, Hannah
FRANKLIN: Roxanne, Mizan

WEEK 5: Battle for Your Brain
CLEVELAND: Ben, Raymond, Malcom, Dominique
FRANKLIN: Ricky, Alex

WEEK 6: Myth of the Model Minority
CLEVELAND: Sheena, Kathy, Jenifer, Valerie
FRANKLIN: Donna

WEEK 7: Power Point Presentations for Quarter Grades
CLEVELAND: March 26th&27th
FRANKLIN: March 28th & 30th

***Please use MLA format for all in text and reference citations**

Introduction:
Assignment Guides

The following pages give guides for the two major Projects and other assignments that will be due in this class the next Six Weeks. They include:

In-Class Assignments: Any assignments handed out in class and in the Labs should be returned for credit including your group's presentation materials.

Participation: All students should participate by contributing to discussion and involving themselves in the vocabulary reviews and exercises.

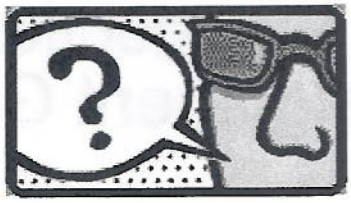
Research Sharing: All students should bring a paragraph summary every Friday to share from something they looked up for their Senior Research. Your senior research projects will involve research of a topic of your choice. This is a credited assignment, so be sure to bring a summary from an article, magazine article, experience, event, news article or journal article. Also cite your source at the end of the summary.

Quizzes: Given every end of the week on reading vocabulary

*Please see the following pages for guides on:

Reading Facilitation

DISCUSSION FACILITATION



Begin each Discussion with reminding students of the following rules:

A> Respect each other
B> Do not speak until another is done
C> No derogatory language
D> Support one another's ideas, do not downgrade them & use polite disagreement
E> Please participate

PREPARE DISCUSSION AS FOLLOWS:
*Lead off with an outside reference, game or video to supplement your presentation.
*After we read article, summarize what you see to be the main points and relate it to your game or ask the class if they can relate it.
*Give students a question to discuss.

In general:

1. Designate people to talk at appropriate intervals so that everyone gets a chance to speak.

2. If the discussion lags, move on to the next question.

3. Add ideas if it comes up.

4. Politely restate the rules of discussion if necessary.

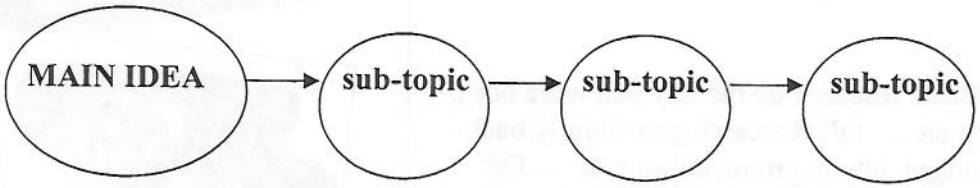
HAVE A GOOD FACILITATION!

GROUP PRESENTATION GUIDE/ASSIGNMENT

Names:

WEEK:

A>Immediately read your article and create a Concept Map for your reading so you have an idea of what to focus on.



B>Prepare to lead the day's discussion with questions that you think will help fellow students think and talk about the reading for that day. You may turn them in to me to make copies or write them on the overhead, or make your own copies. This is due the week of your presentation. You can use the questions in the back of the reading for ideas.

Questions

1.

2.

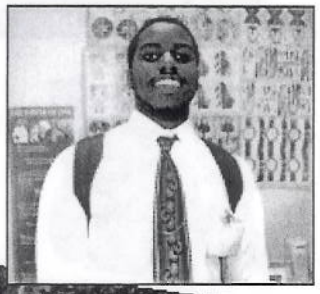
3.

C>Bring in at least one extra material or idea or resource that may help stimulate discussion of the reading. (outside related Resource)

D> Have a fun interactive exercise like a game or other interactive that connects well with your reading concepts

E> Most of all make it engaging, fun, interesting and organized! Consider using Power point, handouts or other visuals. Good luck!

Power Point Project



Basically, the purpose of this project is to give you hands on experience using Power Point and the opportunity to embellish your presentation skills if you already know how to use Power Point.

This Presentation is about you and your interests in terms of your Senior Project Research. You will also include a links page that gives web addresses of your research resources.

A basic Power Point Presentation will include at least 8 of the following basic pages (you can add if you wish). * Pages are required:

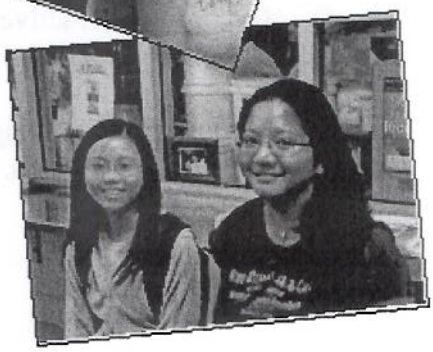
1. (1-3 slides) *Intro: Basic research on the day you were born, where you were born etc… OR Research your family background; country of origin, ethnic group, culture etc…. OR Hobbies and Interests (and/or Religion) OR Writings or Poetry or excerpt from a favorite book or poem OR Significant Family Member or Members OR Ethnic/Cultural Heritage or research on your Ethnicity (Sample Engines to use: dogpile.com, ask.com, google.com)

2. Favorites (music, hobbies, friends etc…)
3. Family traditions, foods or favorite relatives
4. Educational goals
5. *Intro to your research topic
6. *Summary # 1 of research your found
7. *Summary # 2 of research your found
8. *Summary # 3 of research your found
9. Conclusion on your research & project (what you will do next)
10. *Links Reference Page and Links of interest

SHOULD INCLUDE:

PREPARED GRAPHICS/PHOTOS
ANY RESEARCH LINKS YOU USE
NICE DESIGN
TRANSITIONS BETWEEN SLIDES
TEXT TRANSITIONS
INTERACTIVE GRAPHICS (optional)

You will Present on the 4th or 5th Week of our Reading Course
*You will be graded by your peers and the instructor



COMP LAB #1 USING POWER POINT

To Begin
1.Open Power Point
2.Click on OK
3.Click on NEXT, NEXT, NEXT, NEXT
4.In blank one, type in a Title (such as California Guy) or leave blank for now
5.In blank 2, type in your name
6.In blank 3, leave blank or type in a date
7.Click NEXT
8.Click FINISH

Choose a Design
1.On the top menu, choose FORMAT and then choose a design you like
2.Click APPLY when you are done
3.Go to the little four squares at the bottom left and click on it
4.This allows you to see each slide
5.Click on the first slide and type in a title or your name (I put California girl on mine)

Adding a Graphic
1.Go up to the top menu and click on INSERT
2.Go down to picture from clip art
3.Choose a picture and it will insert.
4.Arrage it by grabbing it with the cross bar and dragging

Adding a Graphic from the WEB
1.Find a picture or photo of yourself on the online magazine (you can bring in a better one later for me to scan) You can also go to our class online site to find shortcuts to these sites at: **staff.washington.edu/saki/eng/e.htm**

2.To save an image from the WEB, use the right click button on your mouse and choose SAVE AS IMAGE

3.Save the image on your disk or on your computer hard drive and then it is ready for use.

SLIDE ONE TOPIC: Choose one of the following or come up with your own
1.Find 2 or 3 significant events on the year of your birth to list on your slide
2. List favorite zodiac traits
3. List significant events on your birth Month or day

*Please see Donna's example on the WEB site in the Syllabus (highlighted POWER POINT).

COMP LAB #3

POWER POINT SLIDES

1. Next work on your next power point slides. Finish up the first one and move on to Hobbies and Interests and/or Family or Significant Family.

2. Find graphics to compliment each slide. If you would like me to include a family member picture or other pictures, please bring it soon so I can scan it in and have it available for you on disk or the web.

COMP LAB #4

Please work on the following as we have only a few more days in here before we launch into full time SAT prep and test taking.

1. Finish up Power Point Presentations

2. Find five sites that you find useful for school or information. Include one site on something or someone you find interesting from history or that you use as a role model.

COMP LAB #5

1. Scan images for your Web and insert them into your Power Point.

2. Continue to research helpful Links and other needed info for slides.

Readings

Words are powerful; once you set them into writing, they become reality...

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World Wide Web

"Sexism in the Schoolroom" by Myra & David Sadler"

INTELLECTUAL
LITERALLY
DEPENDENT
CHIVALRY
DISFFUSE
REMEDIATION
STEREOTYPICALLY
TENTATIVE
ASSERTIVE
SEGREGATION
SOCIOLOGIST
DETRIMENTAL
BLAND
EQUITABLE
ATTRIBUTE
PASSIVE

GENERAL CONCEPT: SEXISM, GENDER BIAS

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1.Do you guys see gender bias in your classrooms?

2.Do females worry about being too smart in front of guys?

3.Do females and males have different academic styles?

***RESPONSE WRITE (10 points): Do a 2 paragraph to 1 page response on issues brought up in the article and/or our discussion today.**

Myra and David Sadker

SEXISM IN THE SCHOOLROOM

Myra and David Sadker are professors of education at American University. "Sexism in the Schoolroom" was published in *Psychology Today* (March 1985). In this article as well as in their recent book-length study, *Failing at Fairness: How America's Schools Cheat Girls* (1993), the Sadkers report their own and others' research on how patterns of classroom communication work to the disadvantage of female students. As the Sadkers note, despite the assumption that classroom sexism disappeared in the 1970s, teachers still continue to treat and respond to male students differently from the way they treat and respond to female students, largely in subtle and unconscious ways. As you will see, the Sadkers raise important questions about how classroom life determines success and failure in school.

Suggestion for Reading

- As you read, notice how the Sadkers have integrated research findings into their article. To help you see how the Sadkers develop their overall argument, use underlining and annotating to distinguish passages that report research findings from passages that present the conclusions the Sadkers draw from this research.

If a boy calls out in class, he gets teacher attention, especially intellectual attention. If a girl calls out in class, she is told to raise her hand before speaking. Teachers praise boys more than girls, give boys more academic help and are more likely to accept boys' comments during classroom discussions. These are only a few examples of how teachers favor boys. Through this advantage boys increase their chances for better education and possibly higher pay and quicker promotions. Although many believe that classroom sexism disappeared in the early '70s, it hasn't.

Education is not a spectator sport. Numerous researchers, most recently John Goodlad, former dean of education at the University of California at Los Angeles and author of *A Place Called School*, have shown that when students participate in classroom discussion they hold more positive attitudes toward school, and that positive attitudes enhance learning. It is no coincidence that girls are more passive in the classroom and score lower than boys on SAT's.

Most teachers claim that girls participate and are called on in class as often as boys. But a three-year study we recently completed found that this is not true; vocally, boys clearly dominate the classroom. When we showed teachers and administrators a film of a classroom discussion and asked who was talking more, the teachers overwhelmingly said the girls were. But in reality, the boys in the film were outtalking the girls at a ratio of three to one. Even educators who are active in feminist issues were unable to spot the sex bias until they counted and coded who was talking and who was just watching. Stereotypes of garrulous and gossipy women are so strong that teachers fail to see this communications gender gap even when it is right before their eyes.

Field researchers in our study observed students in more than a hundred fourth-, sixth- and eighth-grade classes in four states and the District of Columbia. The teachers and students were male and female, black and white, from urban, suburban and rural communities. Half of the classrooms covered language arts and English—subjects in which girls traditionally have excelled; the other half covered math and science—traditionally male domains.

We found that at all grade levels, in all communities and in all subject areas, boys dominated classroom communication. They participated in more interactions than girls did and their participation became greater as the year went on.

Our research contradicted the traditional assumption that girls dominate classroom discussion in reading while boys are dominant in math. We found that whether the subject was language arts and English or math and science, boys got more than their fair share of teacher attention.

Some critics claim that if teachers talk more to male students, it is simply because boys are more assertive in grabbing their attention—a classic case of the squeaky wheel getting the educational oil. In fact, our research shows that boys are more assertive in the classroom. While girls sit patiently with their hands raised, boys literally grab teacher attention. They are eight times more likely than girls to call out answers. However, male assertiveness is not the whole answer.

Teachers behave differently, depending on whether boys or girls call out answers during discussions. When boys call out comments without raising their hands, teachers accept their answers. However, when girls call out, teachers reprimand this "inappropriate" behavior with messages such as, "In this class we don't shout out answers, we raise our hands." The message is subtle but powerful: Boys should be academically assertive and grab teacher attention; girls should act like ladies and keep quiet.

Teachers in our study revealed an interaction pattern that we called a "mind sex." After calling on a student, they tended to keep calling on students of the same sex. While this pattern applied to both sexes, it was far more pronounced among boys and allowed them more than their fair share of airtime.

It may be that when teachers call on someone, they continue thinking of that sex. Another explanation may be found in the seating patterns of elementary, secondary and even postsecondary classrooms. In approximately half of the classrooms in our study, male and female students sat in separate parts of the room. Sometimes the teacher created this segregation, but more often, the students segregated themselves. A teacher's tendency to interact with same-sex students may be a simple matter of where each sex sits. For example, a teacher calls on a female student, looks around the same area and then continues questioning the students around this girl, all of whom are female. When the teacher refocuses to a section of the classroom where boys are seated, boys receive the series of questions. And because boys are more assertive, the teacher may interact with their section longer.

Girls are often shortchanged in quality as well as in quantity of teacher attention. In 1975 psychologists Lisa Serbin and K. Daniel O'Leary, then at the State University of New York at Stony Brook, studied classroom interaction at the preschool level and found that teachers gave boys more attention, praised them more often and were at least twice as likely to have extended conversations with them. Serbin and O'Leary also found that teachers were twice as likely to give male students detailed instructions on how to do things for themselves. With female students, teachers were more likely to do it for them instead. The result was that boys learned to become independent, girls learned to become dependent.

Instructors at the other end of the educational spectrum also exhibit this same "let me do it for you" behavior toward female students. Constantina Safilios-Rothschild, a sociologist with the Population Council in New York, studied sex desegregation at the Coast Guard Academy and found that the instructors were giving detailed instructions on how to accomplish tasks to male students, but were doing the jobs and operating the equipment for the female students.

Years of experience have shown that the best way to learn something is to do it yourself; classroom chivalry is not only misplaced, it is detrimental. It is also important to give students specific and direct feedback about the quality of their work and answers. During classroom discussion, teachers in our study reacted to boys' answers with dynamic, precise and effective responses, while they often gave girls bland and diffuse reactions.

Teachers' reactions were classified in four categories: praise ("Good answer"); criticism ("That answer is wrong"); help and remediation ("Try again—but check your long division"); or acceptance without any evaluation or assistance ("OK" "Uh-huh").

Despite caricatures of school as a harsh and punitive place, fewer than 5 percent of the teachers' reactions were criticisms, even of the mildest sort. But praise didn't happen often either, it made up slightly more than 10 percent of teachers' reactions. More than 50 percent of teachers' responses fell into the "OK" category.

Teachers distributed these four reactions differently among boys than among girls. Here are some of the typical patterns.

Teacher: "What's the capital of Maryland? Joel?"
Joel: "Baltimore."
Teacher: "What's the largest city in Maryland, Joel?"
Joel: "Baltimore."
Teacher: "That's good. But Baltimore isn't the capital. The capital is also the location of the U.S. Naval Academy. Joel, do you want to try again?"
Joel: "Annapolis."
Teacher: "Excellent. Anne, what's the capital of Maine?"
Anne: "Portland."
Teacher: "Judy, do you want to try?"
Judy: "Augusta."
Teacher: "OK."

In this snapshot of a classroom discussion, Joel was told when his answer was wrong (criticism); was helped to discover the correct answer (remediation); and was praised when he offered the correct response. When Anne was wrong, the teacher, rather than staying with her, moved to Judy, who received only simple acceptance for her correct answer. Joel received the more specific teacher reaction and benefited from a longer, more precise and intense educational interaction.

Too often, girls remain in the dark about the quality of their answers. Teachers rarely tell them if their answers are excellent, need to be improved or are just plain wrong. Unfortunately, acceptance, the imprecise response packing the least educational punch, gets the most equitable sex distribution in classrooms. Active students receiving precise feedback are more likely to achieve academically. And they are more likely to be boys. Consider the following:

- Although girls start school ahead of boys in reading and basic computation, by the time they graduate from high school, boys have higher SAT scores in both areas.

- By high school, some girls become less committed to careers, although their grades and achievement-test scores may be as good as boys'. Many girls' interests turn to marriage or stereotypically female jobs. Part of the reason may be that some women feel that men disapprove of their using their intelligence.
- Girls are less likely to take math and science courses and to participate in special or gifted programs in these subjects, even if they have a talent for them. They are also more likely to believe that they are incapable of pursuing math and science in college and to avoid the subjects.
- Girls are more likely to attribute failure to internal factors, such as ability, rather than to external factors, such as luck.

The sexist communication game is played at work, as well as at school. As reported in numerous studies it goes like this:

- Men speak more often and frequently interrupt women.
- Listeners recall more from male speakers than from female speakers, even when both use a similar speaking style and cover identical content.
- Women participate less actively in conversation. They do more smiling and gazing; they are more often the passive bystanders in professional and social conversations among peers.
- Women often transform declarative statements into tentative comments. This is accomplished by using qualifiers ("kind of" or "I guess") and by adding tag questions ("This is a good movie, isn't it?"). These tentative patterns weaken impact and signal a lack of power and influence.

Sexist treatment in the classroom encourages formation of patterns such as these, which give men more dominance and power than women in the working world. But there is a light at the end of the educational tunnel. Classroom biases are not etched in stone, and training can eliminate these patterns. Sixty teachers in our study received four days of training to establish equity in classroom interactions. These trained teachers succeeded in eliminating classroom bias. Although our training focused on equality, it improved overall teaching effectiveness as well. Classes taught by these trained teachers had a higher level of intellectual discussion and contained more effective and precise teacher responses for all students.

There is an urgent need to remove sexism from the classroom and give women the same educational encouragement and support that men receive. When women are treated equally in the classroom, they will be more likely to achieve equality in the workplace.

SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. The Sadkers cite a number of studies that conclude teachers treat and respond to male and female students in different ways. Do these findings correspond to your own experience in the classroom? Compare your answer to those of classmates. Do men and women answer this question in the same way? If there are differences in response, how would you account for them?
2. The Sadkers suggest that female students sometimes worry that men will disapprove of women using their intelligence in school. Is there a kind of subtle pressure in student culture, where women trade off academic success for popularity with males? What stereotypes about femininity might encourage both men and women to think that intellectual work is not women's work?
3. Toward the end of the article, the Sadkers cite studies that suggest men and women have different conversational styles. Men not only talk more in mixed groups, they also interrupt more often and exert more control over the direction of the conversation. Women, on the other hand, listen more, are more supportive, and have greater skills in sustaining conversation. Do these findings correspond to your experience in mixed-company conversations? Do men and women in your class answer this question in the same way? If they differ, how would you account for the differences?

SUGGESTIONS FOR WRITING

1. The Sadkers suggest that female students sometimes experience a conflict between academic success and their image of femininity. Write an essay that begins with the Sadkers' view and goes on to explain how—or whether—in your view, the conflict between success and images of femininity plays itself out in female students' lives. Draw on your own experience and what you have observed in school to develop your position. But don't be content just to offer anecdotes. You will need to consider how the reward system in schooling defines success and whether it favors boys over girls and in what ways.
2. Pay attention to how conversations take place in mixed company over a period of time. Notice whether men or women talk more, whether men interrupt and direct the conversation, and whether women participate less actively and in more tentative ways, as the Sadkers suggest. Then write an essay that summarizes your findings and draws out the implications you see in the patterns of communication in conversations among men and women. How do these patterns of communication define gender roles?
3. One suggested method to deal with sexism in the classroom is all-women colleges. In fact, there is currently renewed interest and rising applications to historically women's colleges, such as Smith, Bryn Mawr, Wellesley, Mount Holyoke, and Mills. Write an essay that develops your own position on the advantages and disadvantages of single-sex education for women. Use the knowledge you have acquired about how college fosters or inhibits women's development as students, learners, and persons. What criteria should women use to decide whether a co-ed or a single-sex college is best for them?

"Malcom X: Consumed by Images" by bell hooks

Vocabulary to Know:

OBJECTIFICATION
COMMODITY
MILITANT
NATIONALIST
ABSTRACT
ICON
PROGRESSIVE
ADMONITION
ENMITY
HEGEMONY
CONSEQUENTIAL
UNEQUIVICAL
CRITIQUE
REIFY
MINSTRELS
PROPHETIC
COLONIALISM
FACILE
COMMODIFICATION

bell hooks

MALCOLM X: CONSUMED BY IMAGES

bell hooks, professor of English at Oberlin College, is a poet, teacher, and activist who writes a regular column, "Sisters of the Yam," for *Z Magazine*. Throughout her career, she has written extensively on the politics of race, class, and gender, including the books *Talking Back: Thinking Feminist, Thinking Black*, *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*, and *Black Looks: Race and Representation*. In the following article, first printed in *Z Magazine*, hooks reviews Spike Lee's film biography of Malcolm X. In her review, she argues that African Americans must look critically at the images they create themselves of their history and their legends, especially when those images are created in Hollywood, the center of white mainstream American film making. The Malcolm X who emerges from Spike Lee's film, hooks argues, is a benign figure resembling only faintly the radical she remembers.

Suggestion for Reading

- Because hooks is writing both about Spike Lee's film biography and about an African American film maker working in Hollywood, her argument can seem difficult to follow. As you read, underline and annotate those passages that seem to be about mainstream film making and separate them from hooks's discussion of the film biography itself.

Shortly after the brutal assassination of Malcolm X, Bayard Rustin predicted, "White America, not the Negro people, will determine Malcolm X's role in history." At the time this statement seemed ludicrous. White Americans appeared to have no use for Malcolm X, not even a changed Malcolm, no longer fiercely advocating racial separation. Today market forces in white supremacist capitalist patriarchy have found a way to use Malcolm X. The field of representation—where black images are concerned—has always been a plantation culture. Malcolm X is turned into a "hot" commodity, his militant black nationalist, anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist politics diffused and undermined by a process of objectification. In his essay, "On Malcolm X, His Message and Meaning," Manning Marable warns: "There is a tendency to

drain the radical message of a dynamic, living activist into an abstract icon, to replace radical content with pure image." Politically progressive black folks and our allies in struggle recognize that the power of Malcolm X's political thought is threatened when his image and ideas are commodified and sold by conservative market forces that strip the work of all radical and/or revolutionary content.

Understanding the power of mass media images to determine how we see ourselves and how we choose to act, Malcolm X admonished black folks: "Never accept images that have been created for you by someone else. It is always better to form the habit of learning how to see things for yourself: then you are in a better position to judge for yourself."

Interpreted narrowly, this admonition refers only to images of black folks created in the white imagination. Broadly speaking, it urges us to look with a critical eye at all images. Malcolm X promoted and encouraged the development of a critical black gaze, one that would be able to move beyond passive consumption and be fiercely confronting, challenging, interrogating.

This critical militancy must be re-invoked in all serious discussions of Spike Lee's latest film *Malcolm X.* Celebrated and praised in mainstream media, this joint project by white producers and black filmmaker risks receiving no meaningful cultural critique. More often than not black admirers of Lee and his work, both from the academic front and the street, seek to censor, discrediting any view of the film that is not unequivocally celebratory. Black folks who subject the film to rigorous critique risk being seen as traitors to the race, as petty competitors who do not want to see another black person succeed, or as having personal enmity towards Spike Lee. Filmmaker Marlon Riggs emphasizes the dangers of such silencing in a recent interview in *Black Film Review.* Riggs stresses that we cannot develop a body of black cultural criticism as long as all rigorous critique is censored: "There's also a crying desire for representation. That's what you see when audiences refuse to allow any critique of artists. I've witnessed this personally. At one forum, Spike Lee was asked several questions by a number of people, myself included, about his representations in his movies. The audience went wild with hysterical outbursts to 'shut up,' 'sit down,' 'make your own goddamn movies,' 'who are you, this man is doing the best he can, and he is giving us dignified images, he is doing positive work, why should you be criticizing him?' I admit that there is often trashing just for the sake of trashing. But even when it is clear that the critique is trying to empower and trying to heal certain wounds within our communities, there is not any space within our communities, there is not any space within our culture to constructively critique. There is an effort simply to shut people up in order to reify these gods, if you will, who have delivered some image of us which seems to affirm our existence in this world. As if they make up for the lack, but, in fact, they don't. They can become part of the hegemony."

This is certainly true of Spike Lee. Despite the hype that continues to depict him as an outsider in the white movie industry, constantly struggling to produce work against the wishes and desires of a white establishment, Lee is an insider. He was able to use his power to compel Warner to choose him instead of white director Norman Jewison to make the film. In the business to make money, Warner was probably not moved by Spike's narrow identity politics (he insisted that having a white man directing Malcolm would be "wrong with a capital W"), but rather by the recognition that his presence as a director would likely draw the biggest crossover audience and thus ensure financial success.

Committed to making a mega-hit, Spike Lee had to create a work that would address the needs and desires of a consuming audience that is predominantly white. Ironically, to achieve this end his film had to be similar to other Hollywood epic dramas, especially fictional biographies, hence there is nothing in *Malcolm X* that would indicate that a white director could not have made this film. This seems especially tragic since Spike Lee's brilliance as a filmmaker surfaces most when he provides us with insightful representations of blackness and black life that emerge from the privileged standpoint of familiarity. No such familiarity surfaces in *Malcolm X.* His representation of Malcolm has more in common with Stephen Spielberg's representation of Mister in the film version of *The Color Purple* than with real life portraits of Malcolm X.

In her essay on *The Color Purple,* "Blues For Mr. Spielberg," Michele Wallace asserts: "The fact is there's a gap between what blacks would like to see in movies about themselves and what whites in Hollywood are willing to produce. Instead of serious men and women encountering consequential dilemmas, we're almost always minstrels, more than a little ridiculous; we dance and sing without continuity, as if on the end of a string." Sadly, these comments could be describing the first half of *Malcolm X.* With prophetic vision Wallace continues: "I suspect that backs who wish to make their presence known in American movies will have to seek some middle ground between the stern seriousness of black liberation and the tap dances of Mr. Bojangles and Aunt Jemima." Clearly, Spike Lee attempts to negotiate this middle ground in *Malcolm X,* but unsuccessfully.

The first half of the film moves back and forth from neo-minstrel spectacle to tragic scenes. Yet the predominance of spectacle, of the coon show, whether an accurate portrayal of this phase of Malcolm's life or not, undermines the pathos the tragic scenes (flash backs of childhood incidents of racial oppression and discrimination) should, but do not, evoke. By emphasizing Malcolm as street hustler (critics of Lee's project, like Baraka, predicted that this would be the central focus so as to entertain white audiences), Spike Lee can highlight Malcolm's romantic and sexual involvement with the white woman Sophia, thereby exploiting the voyeuristic obsession this culture has with inter-racial sex. While his relationship with Sophia was clearly important to Malcolm for many years, it is portrayed with the same shallowness of vision that characterizes Lee's vision of inter-racial romance between black men and white women in *Jungle Fever.* Unwilling and possibly unable to imagine that any bond between a white woman and a black man could be based on ties other than pathological ones, Lee portrays Malcolm's desire for Sophia as rooted solely in racial competition between white and black men. Yet Malcolm continued to feel affection for her even as he acquired a radical critique of race, racism, and sexuality.

Without the stellar performance of actor Delroy Lindo playing West Indian Archie, the first half of *Malcolm X* would have been utterly facile. The first character that appears is not Malcolm, as audiences anticipate, but a comic Spike Lee in the role of Shorty. Lee's presence in the film intensifies the sense of spectacle and his comic antics easily upstage the Little character who appears awkward and stupid. Denzel Washington, a box office draw, never stops being Denzel Washington giving us his version of Malcolm X. No degree of powerful acting by Washington can convey the issues around skin color that were so crucial to Malcolm's development of racial consciousness and identity. Lacking his stature and his light hue, Denzel never comes across as a "threatening" physical presence. Washington's real life persona as everybody's "nice guy" makes it particularly difficult for him to convey the seriousness and intensity of a black man con-

sumed with rage. By choosing him, white producers were already deciding that Malcolm should appear less militant if white audiences were to identify with him.

Since so much of the movie depicts Malcolm's days as Detroit Red, the remainder is a skeletal, imagistic outline of his later political changes solely in regard to issues of racial separatism. None of his powerful critiques of capitalism and colonialism are dramatized in this film. Early in the second part, the prison scenes raise crucial questions about Lee's representation of Malcolm. No explanations have been given to clarify why Lee chose not to portray Malcolm's brother and sister leading him to Islam, but instead created a fictional older black male prisoner, Blaines (played by Albert Hall), as tutor and mentor to Malcolm Little, educating him for critical consciousness and leading him to Islam. This is the kind of distortion and misrepresentation that can occur in fictional biographies and which ultimately violates the integrity of the life portrayed. Indeed, throughout the film Malcolm X's character is constructed as being without family, even though some member of his family was always present in his life. By presenting him symbolically as an "orphan," Lee erases the complex relations Malcolm had to black women in his life—his mother and his older sister—making it appear that the only important women are sexual partners. He also makes Malcolm a lone "heroic" figure and, by so doing, is able to re-inscribe him within a Hollywood tradition of heroism that effaces his deep emotional engagement with family and community.

Lee insists, along with the white producer Worth, that there is no revisionism in this film, that as Worth puts it, "We're not playing games with making up our opinion of the truth. We're doing *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*." Yet the absence of family members and the insertion of fictional characters does indeed revise and distort the representation of Malcolm. That mis-representation is not redeemed by Lee's use of actual speeches or the placing of them in chronological order. Lee has boasted that this film will "teach" folks about Malcolm. In *By Any Means Necessary*, the book that describes the behind the scenes production of the film, he asserts: "I want our people to be all fired up for this. To get inspired by it. This is life and death we're dealing with. This is a mindset, this is what Black people in America have come through." To ensure that *Malcolm X* would not be a "regular bullshit Hollywood movie," Lee could have insisted on accuracy. But to do so, he would have had to make sacrifices, relinquishing complete control, allowing more folks to benefit from the project if need be. He would have to face the reality that masses of people, including black folks, will see this film who will never know the "true story" because they do not read or write, and that mis-representations of Malcolm's life and work could permanently distort their understanding.

Knowing that he had to answer to a militant Nation of Islam, Spike Lee was much more careful in the construction of the character of Elijah Mohammed (portrayed by Al Freeman, Jr.), preserving the integrity of his spirit and work. It is sad that the same intensity of care was not given to either the Malcolm character or the fictional portrait of his widow Betty Shabazz. Although the real life Shabazz shared with Spike Lee that she and Malcolm did not argue, no doubt because what was most desirable in a Nation of Islam wife was obedience, the film shows her "reading" him in the same bitchified way that all black female characters in previous films by Lee talk to mates. Nor was Shabazz as assertive in romantic pursuit of Malcolm as the film depicts. As with the white woman character Sophia, certain stereotypical sexist-defined images of black women emerge in this film. Women are either virgins or whores, Madonnas or prostitutes—and that's Hollywood.

If Lee's version of Malcolm's life becomes the example all other such films must follow, then it will remain equally true that there is no place for black male militant political rage in Hollywood. For it is, finally, Malcolm's political militancy that this film erases, largely because it is not the politically revolutionary Malcolm X that Lee identifies with. Lee is primarily fascinated by Malcolm's fierce critique of white racism and his early obsession with viewing racism as being solely about masculinist phallocentric struggle for power between white men and black men. It is this aspect of Malcolm's politics that most resembles Lee's, not the critique of racism in conjunction with imperialism and colonialism, and certainly not the critique of capitalism. It is not surprising, then, that the film's most powerful portrayal of political resistance shows Malcolm galvanizing men in the Nation of Islam to face off with white men around the issue of police brutality. Malcolm is portrayed in these scenes as a Hitler type leader who rules with an iron fist. Deflecting away from the righteous resistance to police brutality that was the catalyst for this confrontation, the film makes it "a dick thing"—yet another "shoot out at the OK corral"—and that's Hollywood.

The closing scenes of *Malcolm X* highlight Lee's cinematic conflict: his desire to make a black epic drama that would compete with and yet mirror white Hollywood epics made by white male directors he perceives as great, and his longing to preserve and convey the spirit and integrity of Malcolm's life and work. In the finale viewers are bombarded with images—stirring documentary footage, compelling testimony, and the use of schoolchildren and Nelson Mandela to show that Malcolm's legacy is still important and has global impact. Tragically, all knowledge of Malcolm as militant black revolutionary has been erased, consumed by images. Gone is the icon who represents our struggle for black liberation, for militant resistance, and in its place we are presented with a de-politicized image with little substance or power. The Malcolm we see at the end of Spike Lee's film is tragically alone, with only a few followers, suicidal, maybe even losing his mind. The didacticism of this image suggests only that it is foolhardy and naive to think that there can be meaningful political revolution—that truth and justice will prevail. In no way subversive, Malcolm X re-inscribes the black image within a colonizing framework.

The underlying political conservatism of Lee's film will be ignored by those seduced by the glitter, glamor, and the spectacle. Like many other bad Hollywood movies with powerful subject matter, *Malcolm X* touches the hearts and minds of folks who bring their own meaning to the film and connect it with their own social experience. That is why young black folks can brag about the way the fictional Malcolm courageously confronts white folks, even as young white folks leave the theater pleased and relieved that the Malcolm they see is such a good guy, and not the threatening presence they have heard about. Spike Lee's focus on Malcolm follows in the wake of a sustained and/or renewed interest in his life and work generated by hip-hop, by progressive contemporary cultural criticism, political writings, and various forms of militant activism. These counter hegemonic voices are needed resistance opposing conservative commodifications of Malcolm's life and work.

Just as these forms of commodification freeze and exploit the image of Malcolm X while simultaneously undermining the power of his work to radicalize and educate for

critical consciousness, they strip him of icon status. This gives rise to an increase in cultural attacks, especially in the mainstream mass media. One of the most powerful attacks has been that by white writer Bruce Perry. Though Malcolm lets any reader know in his autobiography that during his hustling days he did "unspeakable" acts (the nature of which should be obvious to anyone familiar with the street culture of cons, drugs, sexual hedonism, etc.), yet Perry assumes that his naming of these acts exposes Malcolm as a fraud. This is the height of white supremacist patriarchal arrogance. No doubt his work shocks and surprises many folks who need to believe their icons are saints but no information Perry reveals (much of it gleaned from interviews with Malcolm's enemies and detractors) diminishes the power of Malcolm's role in the struggle to end white supremacy.

Perry's work has received a boost in media attention since the opening of Spike Lee's movie and is rapidly acquiring authoritative status. Writing in *The Washington Post* Perry claims to be moved by the film even as he insists that Lee's version of Malcolm "is largely a myth," the assumption being that Perry's version is "truth." Magazines like *The New Yorker,* which rarely focus on black life, have highlighted their anti-Malcolm pieces. The December issue of *Harpers* has a piece by black scholar Gerald Early "Their Malcolm, My Problem" that also aims to diminish the power of his life and work. Usually when black folks are attempting to denounce Malcolm, they gain in the white press. Unless there is serious critical intervention, Rustin's dire prediction that non-progressive white folks will determine how Malcolm is viewed historically may very well come to pass. Those of us who respect and revere Malcolm as teacher, political mentor, and comrade must focus on his political contribution to black liberation struggle and the global fight for freedom and justice for all.

Spike Lee's film biography shows no abiding connection between Malcolm's personal rage at racism and his compassionate devotion to alleviating the sufferings of all black people. Significantly, Spike Lee's *Malcolm X* does not compel audiences to experience the pain, sorrow, and suffering of black life in white supremacist patriarchal culture. Nothing in the film conveys an anguish and grief so intense as to overwhelm emotionally. Nothing that would help folks understand the necessity of rage and resistance. Nothing that would let them see why, after working all day long, Malcolm would walk the streets for hours thinking "about what terrible things have been done to our people here in the United States." While the early footage of the brutal beating of Rodney King is a graphic reminder of "the terrible things," the pathos that this image evokes is quickly displaced by the neo-minstrel show that entertains and titillates.

As sentimental, romanticized drama *Malcolm X* seduces by encouraging us to forget the brutal reality that created black rage and militancy. The film does not compel viewers to confront, challenge, and change. It embraces and rewards passive response—inaction. It encourages us to weep but not to fight. In James Baldwin's powerful essay "Everybody's Protest Novel" he reminds readers that "Sentimentality, the ostentatious parading of excessive and spurious emotion, is the mark of dishonesty, the inability to feel: the wet eyes of the sentimentalist betray his aversion to experience, his fear of life, his arid heart; and it is always, therefore, the signal of secret and violent inhumanity, the mask of cruelty." As Wallace warned, there is no place in Hollywood movies for the "seriousness of black liberation." Spike Lee's film is no exception. To take liberation seriously we must take seriously the reality of black suffering. Ultimately, it is this reality the film denies.

SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What did Bayard Rustin mean when he said, "White America, not the Negro people, will determine Malcolm X's role in history"? How has that been true or not true?
2. Hooks writes, "There is nothing in *Malcolm X* that would indicate that a white director could not have made this film." What does she mean by that? How would you expect a white director's representation to differ from an African American director's representation of Malcolm?
3. Do you believe, as Michele Wallace states, there is no place in Hollywood movies for "the seriousness of black liberation"? If that is true, why is it true? If you disagree, explain your position.

SUGGESTIONS FOR WRITING

1. Summarize bell hooks's argument, making sure to separate out what she says about the film from what she says about Hollywood and from what she says about our culture's willingness to represent political difference.
2. Early in her article, hooks quotes Malcolm X as saying, "Never accept images that have been created for you by someone else. It is always better to form the habit of learning how to see things for yourself: then you are in a better position to judge for yourself." For African Americans, American Indians, Asian Americans, Latinos, gay rights activists, and many others, this warning must ring true. Write an exploratory response to this passage in which you examine what it might mean for a group not in the mainstream of American media to begin creating its own images. Think about how advertising, television, film, and other visual representations might change if they were not all emanating from a common source.
3. Film biographies have become extremely popular in the United States today. In the same year that *Malcolm X* was produced, for example, Hollywood also offered biographies of John F. Kennedy and former Teamster leader Jimmy Hoffa. Take time to look at one or more of these film biographies and write your own critique of its representation of the title figure. Keep in mind the way bell hooks links her discussion to events of the past, other possible ways of understanding Malcolm, and concerns of contemporary representation of history.

FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION

Many of the issues raised in this chapter were first raised by John Berger in his book *Ways of Seeing*. You may wish to read that book and compare his discussion of images with the more traditional approach taken by someone like art historian Kenneth Clark in his classic book-length study, *The Nude: A Study in Ideal Form*. If you are interested in popular culture images, you might begin with Susan Willis's *A Primer for Everyday Life,* and Ward Churchill's *Fantasies of the Master Race* is a good introduction to images of American Indians in popular culture. If you are interested in doing any further work in advertising images, you might look at the magazine *Media & Values*, a magazine devoted to images in television, film, and advertising.

Other topics raised by the writers in this chapter include:

- The life and work of Malcolm X
- The role of advertising and the "green" market
- Images of class, race, and gender in film
- Film as history (especially in the lives of past leaders or cultural heroes)

"Battle for Your Brain" by John Leland

Vocabulary to Know:

REDEEM THEMSELVES:
IDLE:
MISCREANTS:
NADIR:
PROPRIETY:
CRUDE:
LUMPEN:
IMMERSED:
SATIRE:
CAMP, CAMPY:
PRECOCIOUS:
PECULIAR:
LUNATIC FRINGE:
MIMIC:
ELOQUENCE:

John Leland

BATTLE FOR YOUR BRAIN

John Leland is a reporter and feature writer for such news magazines as *Newsweek*, where the following article first appeared in 1993. As of this writing, the MTV cartoon characters Beavis and Butt-head are, for teenagers and college students, two of the most popular commentators on contemporary taste on television today. Their popularity has taken the place of the attention paid to such Fox cable shows as *The Simpsons* and *Married . . . with Children*, programs that often sneer at middle-class American values and at television taboos. Beavis and Butt-head seem to recognize no taboos. In his examination of the show's popularity, Leland attempts to explain how *Beavis and Butt-head* and characters like them reflect the temperament of what has come to be called Generation X.

Butt-head." A doctoral candidate at Stanford, Moore is the daughter we all crave and perhaps fear. "Dumb people I know," she says, "aren't self-referential."

Of course, this is only one way to watch the shows. Lars Ulrich, drummer in the band Metallica, was delighted one day to spot Beavis wearing a Metallica T shirt. Yet he was also alarmed. "I would have to say—as little as I want to say it—that I think there are people like that. I'm not sure dumb is the right word. I would go more in the direction of the word ignorant." Either way, as the channels open up, the ship of fools is now sailing at full capacity.

At MTV's offices in New York last week, the ship was running through some rough waters. MTV from the inside is a Marshall McLuhan rec room, a place where precociously creative young people invent cool ways to frame ugly heavy-metal videos. In the production area of "Beavis and Butt-head," these young people had a problem. "I don't know," said the show's creator, Mike Judge, in a voice hauntingly close to Butt-head's (Judge does the voices for most of the characters). The staff was watching an unfinished episode in which Bill Clinton visits Beavis and Butt-head's high school, and something just didn't feel real. As MTV political reporter Tabitha Soren introduced the president to the assembly on screen, Judge's face just lost its air. "Do you really think she could hear [Butt-head] fart from across the gym?" he asked. It was a pressing question; the show was set to air in less than a week. The staff was hushed. Finally someone offered, "If it was a big one she could." Judge considered. "No way."

The fast success of the show, along with the rapid production pace, has been a shock to Judge. Since he moved to New York from Dallas in February, he says, he hasn't met anyone except the people he works with. His office at MTV is spare, the walls empty except for a few pictures of Beavis and Butt-head and a snapshot of his daughter, Julia, almost 2. In his locker is a stuffed Barney dinosaur, a bottle of Jack Daniel's and a Gap jacket. "You know what's weird?" he says, with a gentle Southwestern accent. "Every now and then I'll say, 'Well, that's pretty cool,' and I can't tell if that's something I would have said before or if I'm doing Butt-head." In a file on his desk, he keeps a drawing of a black Beavis and Butt-head, renamed Rufus and Tyrone. At the moment he has no plans for them. For all their anti-P.C. offensiveness, Beavis and Butt-head have yet to cross the line into race humor. "Actually," says Kimson Albert, 22, one of four African-American artists on the show's staff, "the creator and producer are the most P.C. people."

Judge grew up in Albuquerque, N.M., by his own description "just the most awkward, miserable kid around." He played trumpet in the area youth symphony and competed on the swim team and made honor roll at St. Pius X High School. For kicks, he and his friends used to set fires, just to see how many they could keep going at once and still be able to stomp them out. Three years ago, after working at a couple of unhappy engineering jobs, Judge bought himself a $200 animation kit. His first short, "Office Space," aired on last month's season première of "Saturday Night Live." His third, completed in January 1992, introduced the characters Beavis and Butt-head. It was about torturing animals. He called it "Frog Baseball."

"I was a total animal lover," he says. "When I did the storyboard, I didn't want people to see what I was working on. I thought, 'I don't want to show this to anybody; why am I doing this?'" Even now Judge looks back on "Frog Baseball" with mixed feelings: "I never thought that's what I'd be known for."

Gwen Lipsky, 34, is MTV's vice president of research and planning. When she tested "Beavis and Butt-head" before a target audience last October, she noticed something peculiar. "The focus group was both riveted and hysterical from the moment they saw it. After the tape was over, they kept asking to see it again. Then, after they had seen it again, several people offered to buy it from me." Almost without exception, she says, the group members said Beavis and Butt-head reminded them of people they knew. "Interestingly, the people in the focus group who seem the most like Beavis and Butt-head themselves never acknowledge that the characters are them."

Susan Smith-Pinelo, 24, knows them well. A graduate of Oberlin, she is an artist working at what "Generation X" writer Douglas Coupland calls a McJob, as a receptionist at the Sierra Legal Defense Fund. "People laugh at Beavis and Butt-head, Wayne and Garth," she says. "Our generation can relate to this lunatic fringe of teenagers who have fallen out of society, live in a world of TV . . . It's kind of sick, but we like to laugh at them and say, 'I'm not a loser'."

Dick Zimmermann is not a twentysomething and is not amused. A retired broadcasting executive from Larkspur, Calif., Zimmermann, 44, won a state lottery worth nearly $10 million in 1988. Early last summer, while channel surfing, he caught Beavis and Butt-head in the infamous cat episode—touchy ground for anyone involved with the show. Even today it makes Judge uneasy. "They never did this thing with the cat," he says, defensively. "They just made a joke about it: what if you put a firecracker in Stuart's cat's butt." Five days after the show ran, when a cat was found killed by a firecracker in nearby Santa Cruz, Zimmermann put up a $5,000 reward and went to the press. The cause of death, he told Larkspur's Independent Journal in a front-page story, was "Beavis and Butt-head." Opening a hot line, he mounted a one-man campaign against the program. "I admit that shows like 'Cops' are obviously very violent," he told NEWSWEEK, "but at least there is the element of good triumphing over evil. The thing about 'Beavis and Butt-head' that caught my eye was the total lack of redeemability. [They] engage in arson, petty theft, shoplifting, auto theft, credit-card fraud, cruelty to animals and insects—not to mention their attitude toward women."

The infamous cat episode will never air again. Three other episodes are also out of circulation, and the show has softened considerably this season. All involved are particularly sensitive because the show runs in family hours: at 7 and 11 p.m. weekdays, and in the afternoon on Saturdays. "The sniffing-paint-thinner we probably shouldn't have done," Judge concedes. "But I'm new to this. I thought of this show as going on at 11, no one's ever going to see it. I think it should run once at 11. We have toned it down."

Gwen Lipsky contends that young kids don't watch the show, that 90 percent of the audience is over 12. But part of the show's appeal is that, yes, these are dangerous, irresponsible messages. "They'll do stuff that we want to do but don't have the guts to do," says Alex Chriss, 14, who dropped his karate classes to watch "Beavis and Butt-head." "On one episode they stole a monster truck and ran over a hippie guy singing save-the-earth songs. We go around mimicking them—not what they say, but how they say it."

Of course, such mimicry is not always harmless, and it is here that we probably need some parental caution. Beavis and Butt-head don't have it; confronted with an image of a nuclear family at the table, Butt-head asks, "Why's that guy eating dinner with those old people?" But other children do. Bill Clinton likes to watch "American

Suggestion for Reading

If you haven't seen an episode of *Beavis and Butt-head,* try watching one before you read this article, or talk to a friend or classmate who has seen the show.

Stupidity, served with knowing intelligence, is now TV's answer to real smarts. And no one serves it like the crude and rude Beavis and Butt-head.

It is television at its most redeeming. A whale swims gracefully across the screen as the narrator mourns its imminent destruction. Watching in their living room, two boys, about 14, are visibly moved. Their eyes widen, their nostrils twitch uncomfortably. One boy's lips stiffen around his wire braces. The only hope, the narrator says, "is that perhaps the young people of today will grow up more caring, more understanding, more sensitive to the very special needs of the creatures of the earth." It is a rich moment, ripe with television's power to make remote events movingly immediate. The boys can watch idly no longer. Finally one turns to the other and asks, "Uh, did you fart?"

The boys are Beavis and Butt-head, two animated miscreants whose adventures at the low end of the food chain are currently the most popular program on MTV. Caught in the ungainly nadir of adolescence, they are not nice boys. They torture animals, they harass girls and sniff paint thinner. They like to burn things. They have a really insidious laugh: *huh-huh huh-huh.* They are the spiritual descendants of the semisentient teens from "Wayne's World" and "Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure," only dumber and meaner. The downward spiral of the living white male surely ends here: in a little pimple named Butt-head whose idea of an idea is, "Hey, Beavis, let's go over to Stuart's house and light one in his cat's butt."

For a generation reminded hourly of its diminished prospects, these losers have proven remarkably embraceable. "Why do I like 'Beavis and Butt-head'?" asks Warren Lutz, 26, a journalism major at San Francisco State. "You're asking me to think, dude." Created by beginner animator Mike Judge, 30, for a festival of "sick and twisted" cartoons last year, Beavis and Butt-head have become a trash phenomenon. T shirts, hats, key rings, masks, buttons, calendars, dolls are all working their way to malls: a book, a comic book, a movie, a CD and a Christmas special are in the works. David Letterman drops a Beavis and Butt-head joke almost nightly; later this fall the pair will become a semiregular feature on his program. As their notoriety reached Fort Lewis College in Durango, Colo., archeology students have started calling Jim Judge, Mike's father, Dr. Butt-head. "Whenever any . . . 8- to 12-year-olds find out I'm related to Beavis and Butt-head," he says, "I become a god to them." Beavis and Butt-head, whose world divides into "things that suck" and "things that are cool," are clearly the new morons in town.

They are also part of a much wider TV phenomenon, one that drives not just stupid laughs but the front-page battle now being waged for control of Paramount Pictures. It is the battle to play road hog on the Information Highway. As cable technology continues to expand our range of viewing options, the old boundaries of propriety and decency no longer apply. Beavis and Butt-head join a growing crowd of characters who have found a magic formula: nothing cuts through the clutter like a slap of bracing crudity. Nothing stops a channel surfer like the word "sucks."

Stupidity, served with a knowing intelligence, has become the next best thing to smarts. Letterman's signature "Stupid Pet Tricks" bit, now 11 years running, introduced a new voice to television: ironic, self-aware, profoundly interested in the ingrained dumbness of the tube. Instead of dumbing down, it made smart comedy out of the process of dumbing down—and it clicked. Barry Diller successfully built Fox into the fourth network on a shockingly *lumpen* cartoon family, the Simpsons, and an even more *lumpen* real one, the Bundys of "Married . . . With Children." Nickelodeon's cartoon "The Ren & Stimpy Show," the highest rated original series on cable, follows the scatological adventures of a Chihuahua and a cat, sometimes not getting much farther than the litter box. The network's new contender, "Rocko's Modern World," wallows down a similarly inspired low road. Its first episode, in which a home-shopping channel called "Lobot-o-shop" pitched items like tapeworm farms for kids, beat "Ren & Stimpy" in the ratings. And the widely loved and hated radio host Howard Stern has taken his act to E! Entertainment Television. "There's a purity to [this] kind of ignorance," says "Beavis and Butt-head" writer David Felton, at 53 MTV's oldest staff member. "Going back to the basic point where thinking begins. And staying there."

But they are not just any losers, this lineage of losers. They are specifically *our* losers, totems of an age of decline and nonachievement. One in five people who graduated from college between 1984 and 1990 holds a job that doesn't require a college education. If this is not hard economic reality for a whole generation, it is psychological reality. Loser television has the sense to play along; it taps the anxiety in the culture and plays it back for laughs. Homer Simpson works in a nuclear power plant. Al Bundy sells shoes. Beavis and Butt-head work at Burger World and can't even visualize the good life. In one episode, as an act of community service, they get jobs in a hospital. Sucking on IV bags, planning to steal a cardiac patient's motorized cart, they agree: "It doesn't get any better than this, dude."

The shows also all share a common language. When "Beavis and Butt-head" producer John Andrews, 39, needed to put together a writing staff, he first called Letterman head writer Rob Burnett for suggestions. "Most of this stuff is done by overeducated guys who grew up reading Mad magazine, National Lampoon, and watching 'Animal House' and 'Saturday Night Live'," says Matt Groening, creator of the Simpsons. "Scripts are based on what comes out of the collective memory of the writers, which is mostly memories of sitting in front of a TV set growing up." More than just throwbacks to the intelligently dumb television of the Three Stooges and Ernie Kovacs, the current shows are broad immersions in pop culture, satirical and multitiered. They address an audience that can view reruns of "Gilligan's Island" and "I Dream of Jeannie" half as camp, half as the fabric of shared experience. "The smarter you are, the more you see single events on different levels simultaneously," says Fernanda Moore, 25, who likes "The Simpsons," "Ren & Stimpy" and "Beavis and

Gladiators" with Chelsea; they enjoy the camp value together. And there are lessons to be learned, even from television that prides itself on not doling out lessons. "The whole point of [Beavis and Butt-head] is that they don't grow up," says Lisa Bourgeault, an eighth grader at Marblehead Middle School in Marblehead, Mass. "That's what's hip and cool. But *we* will."

Let's hope so. As our former vice president once put it, with an eloquence few scripted TV characters could match, "What a waste it is to lose one's mind, or not to have a mind." To which, like Beavis and Butt-head, we can only reply, "Huh-huh. Huh-huh. Cool."

With Carey Monserrate and Danzy Senna in New York, Carl Holcombe in San Francisco, Tim Pryor and Mark Miller in Los Angeles and bureau reports

SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. From what you have read and what you have seen or heard of the show, how would you describe the characters Beavis and Butt-head?
2. Why do you suppose this program has become so popular with young viewers? Is there a real subculture message here? If so, what is it?
3. Toward the end of his article, Leland mentions Dick Zimmermann's attempt to get *Beavis and Butt-head* off the air. Besides the obvious concern that some of what passes for humor on this show might give very young viewers new ideas for destructive behavior, what might be other reasons that some viewers would want the show off the air? Do you agree with MTV's decision to tone down the show rather than cancel? What might toning down the show do for its original appeal?

SUGGESTIONS FOR WRITING

1. After reading this article, write a letter to an adult in your life who you know would not approve of this show or one like it. In your letter explain what you think the appeal is of such a show. If you don't like the show or the idea of the show yourself, you can still (as does Leland) attempt to understand what it is that seems to appeal to young people about it.
2. When it first appeared on the air, *The Simpsons* was heralded as the great counterculture cartoon, a "family" show with the not-so-perfect family. According to some television critics, however, *The Simpsons* is just as much a family show as *Leave it to Beaver* was in its time. That would suggest that even shows that attempt to offer something contrary to the norm end up telling the same stories and passing on the same values as mainstream offerings. Write an essay in which you explain why this seems to happen on television. You might consider thinking about programming that breaks patterns, such as Beavis and Butt-head, as well as programs that easily conform to those patterns.
3. In a July 30, 1990, article for *Newsweek*, columnist George Will wrote that America was sliding into the sewer with its taste in violent rap lyrics and the general degradation of popular taste. If we can judge by that column, we might guess that *Beavis and Butt-head* might not appeal to someone like George Will, who would like us to upgrade our standards. In his column, Will said, "Certainty: the coarsening of a community, the desensitizing of a society will have behavioral consequences." Considering what you have read or watched of this program and the programming that is currently popular with young people today, write a response to Will's charge that the coarsening of standards has behavioral consequences.

"Streets of Gold: The Myth of the Model Minority" by Curtis Chang

Vocabulary to Know:

IDEOLOGY:
MYTHOLOGY:
AFFLUENCE:
MEDIAN:
DISPORTIONATELY:
MONOLITHIC:
HOMOGENEOUS:
VENERABLE:
DISCRIMINATORY:
OBSCURE:
PROSPERITY:
ELITE:
FALLACIOUS:
SYNDROME:
EQUIVALENT:
DISPARITY:
REPARATIONS:
FUNDAMENTAL:
EMPIRICAL:
ECHELON:

Streets of Gold: The Myth of the Model Minority

CURTIS CHANG

According to conventional wisdom, Asian Americans offer the best evidence that the American Dream is alive and well. Publications like Time *and* Newsweek *have celebrated Asian Americans as a "super minority" that has adopted the Puritan work ethic and outshone even the Anglo majority in terms of education and financial success. In this essay, Curtis Chang probes the data used in such media reports and questions this new embodiment of the success myth. Since the educational achievement of Asians is an important component of the myth, the essay may prompt you to take a fresh look at the status of Asian American students on your campus. Chang was born in Taiwan and immigrated to the United States in 1971. This essay was written in 1987, when he was a freshman at Harvard; since graduating in 1990 Chang has taught in Harvard's government department and traveled to Soweto, South Africa, on a Michael C. Rockefeller Fellowship for Travel Abroad.*

Over 100 years ago, an American myth misled many of my ancestors. Seeking cheap labor, railroad companies convinced numerous Chinese that American streets were paved with gold. Today, the media portrays Asian-Americans as finally mining those golden streets. Major publications like *Time, Newsweek, U.S. News and World Report, Fortune, The New Republic,* the *Wall Street Journal,* and the *New York Times* have all recently published congratulatory "Model Minority" headline stories with such titles:

> America's Super Minority
> An American Success Story
> A Model Minority
> Why They Succeed
> The Ultimate Assimilation
> The Triumph of the Asian Americans

But the Model Minority is another "Streets of Gold" tale. It distorts Asian-Americans' true status and ignores our racial handicaps. And the Model Minority's ideology is even worse than its mythology. It attempts to justify the existing system of racial inequality by blaming the victims rather

The Model Minority myth introduces us as an ethnic minority that is finally "making it in America" (*Time,* July 8, 1985). The media consistently defines "making it" as achieving material wealth, wealth that flows from our successes in the workplace and the schoolroom. This economic achievement allegedly proves a minority can "lay claim to the American dream" (*Fortune,* Nov. 24, 1986).

Trying to show how "Asian-Americans present a picture of affluence and economic success" (*N.Y. Times Magazine,* Nov. 30, 1986), 9 out of 10 of the major Model Minority stories of the last four years relied heavily on one statistic: the family median income. The median Asian-American family income, according to the U.S. Census Survey of Income and Education data, is $22,713 compared to $20,800 for white Americans. Armed with that figure, national magazines have trumpeted our "remarkable, ever-mounting achievements" (*Newsweek,* Dec. 6, 1982).

Such assertions demonstrate the truth of the aphorism "Statistics are like a bikini. What they reveal is suggestive, but what they conceal is vital." The family median income statistic conceals the fact that Asian-American families generally (1) have more children and live-in relatives and thus have more mouths to feed; (2) are often forced by necessity to have everyone in the family work, averaging more than two family income earners (whites only have 1.6) (Cabezas, 1979, p. 402); and (3) live disproportionately in high cost of living areas (i.e., New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, and Honolulu) which artificially inflate income figures. Dr. Robert S. Mariano, professor of economics at the University of Pennsylvania, has calculated that

> when such appropriate adjustments and comparisons are made, a different and rather disturbing picture emerges, showing indeed a clearly disadvantaged group. . . . Filipino and Chinese men *are no better off than black men with regard to median incomes.* (Mariano, 1979, p. 55)[1]

Along with other racial minorities, Asian-Americans are still scraping for the crumbs of the economic pie.

Throughout its distortion of our status, the media propagates two crucial assumptions. First, it lumps all Asian-Americans into one monolithic, homogeneous, yellow skinned mass. Such a view ignores the existence of an incredibly disadvantaged Asian-American underclass. Asians work in low income and low status jobs 2 to 3 times more than whites (Cabezas, 1979, p. 438). Recent Vietnamese refugees in California are living like the Appalachian poor. While going to his Manhattan office, multimillionaire architect I. M. Pei's car passes Chinese restaurants and laundries where

[1]The picture becomes even more disturbing when one realizes that higher income figures do not necessarily equal higher quality of life. For instance, in New York Chinatown, more than 1 out of 5 residents work more than 57 hours per week, almost 1 out of 10 elderly must

72 percent of all New York Chinese men still work (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1977, Table 7).

But the media makes an even more dangerous assumption. It suggests that (alleged) material success is the same thing as basic racial equality. Citing that venerable family median income figure, magazines claim Asian-Americans are "obviously nondisadvantaged folks" (*Fortune*, May 17, 1982). Yet a 1979 United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission study on Asian-Americans discovered widespread anti-Asian hiring and promotion practices. Asian-Americans "in the professional, technical, and managerial occupations" often face "modern racism — the subtle, sophisticated, systemic patterns and practices which function to effect and to obscure the discriminatory outcomes" (Nishi, 1979, p. 398). One myth simply does not prove another: neither our "astonishing economic prosperity" (*Fortune*, Nov. 24, 1986) nor a racially equal America exist.

An emphasis on material success also pervades the media's stress on Asian-Americans' educational status at "the top of the class" (*Newsweek on Campus*, April 2, 1984). Our "march into the ranks of the educational elite" (*U.S. News*, April 2, 1984) is significant because "all that education is paying off spectacularly" (*Fortune*, Nov. 24, 1986). Once again, the same fallacious assumptions plague this "whiz kids" image of Asian-Americans.

The media again ignores the fact that class division accounts for much of the publicized success. Until 1976, the U.S. Immigration Department only admitted Asian immigrants that were termed "skilled" workers. "Skilled" generally meant college educated, usually in the sciences since poor English would not be a handicap. The result was that the vast majority of pre-1976 Asian immigrants came from already well-educated, upper-class backgrounds — the classic "brain drain" syndrome (Hirschman and Wong, 1981, pp. 507–510).

The post-1976 immigrants, however, come generally from the lower, less educated classes (Kim, 1986, p. 24). A study by Professor Elizabeth Ahn Toupin of Tufts University matched similar Asian and non-Asian students *along class lines* and found that Asian-Americans "did not perform at a superior academic level to non-Asian students. Asian-Americans were more likely to be placed on academic probation than their white counterparts . . . twice as many Asian American students withdrew from the university" (Toupin, 1986, p. 12).

Thus, it is doubtful whether the perceived widespread educational success will continue as the Asian-American population eventually balances out along class lines. When 16.2 percent of all Chinese have less than 4 years of schooling (*four times* that of whites) (Azores, 1979, p. 73), it seems many future Asian-Americans will worry more about being able to read a newspaper rather than a Harvard acceptance letter.

Most important, the media assumes once again that achieving a certain level of material or educational success means achieving real equality.

People easily forget that to begin with, Asians invest heavily in edu.

since other means of upward mobility are barred to them by race. Until recently, for instance, Asian-Americans were barred from unions and traditional lines of credit (Yun, 1986, pp. 23–24).[2] Other "white" avenues to success, such as the "old boy network," are still closed to Asian-Americans.

When *Time* (July 8, 1985) claims "as a result of their academic achievement Asians are climbing the economic ladder with remarkable speed," it glosses over an inescapable fact: there is a white ladder and then there is a yellow one. Almost all of the academic studies on the *actual returns Asians receive* from their education point to prevalent discrimination. A striking example of this was found in a City University of New York research project which constructed resumes with equivalent educational backgrounds. Applications were then sent to employers, one group under an Asian name and a similar group under a Caucasian name. Whites received interviews 5 times more than Asians (Nishi, 1979, p. 399). The media never headlines even more shocking data that can be easily found in the U.S. Census. For instance, Chinese and Filipino males only earned respectively 74 and 52 percent as much as their *equally educated* white counterparts. Asian females fared even worse. Their salaries were only 44 to 54 percent as large as equivalent white males' paychecks (Cabezas, 1979, p. 391). Blacks suffer from this same statistical disparity. We Asian-Americans are indeed a Model Minority — a perfect model of racial discrimination in America.

Yet this media myth encourages neglect of our pressing needs. "Clearly, many Asian-Americans and Pacific peoples are invisible to the governmental agencies," one state agency reported. "Discrimination against Asian-Americans and Pacific peoples is as much the result of omission as commission" (California State Advisory Committee, 1975, p. 75). In 1979, while the president praised Asian-Americans' "successful integration into American society," his administration revoked Asian-Americans' eligibility for minority small business loans, devastating thousands of struggling, newly arrived small businessmen. Hosts of other minority issues, ranging from reparations for the Japanese-American internment[3] to the ominous rise of anti-Asian violence, are widely ignored by the general public.

The media, in fact, insist to the general populace that we are not a true racial minority. In its attack on affirmative action, the *Boston Globe* (Jan. 14, 1985) pointed out that universities, like many people, "obviously feel that Asian-Americans, especially those of Chinese and Japanese descent, are brilliant, privileged, and wrongly classified as minorities." Harvard Dean Henry Rosovsky remarked in the same article that "it does not seem to me

[2]For further analysis on the role racism plays in Asian-Americans' stress on education and certain technical and scientific fields, see Suzuki, 1977, p. 44. [Author's note]

[3]*reparations . . . internment:* During World War II, over one hundred twenty thousand Japanese Americans on the West Coast were sent to prison camps by order of the U.S. government; many lost their homes, businesses, and possessions because of this forced relocation. After decades of work by Asian American activists, Congress in 1988 ordered the government

that as a group, they are disadvantaged. . . . Asian-Americans appear to be in an odd category among other protected minorities."

The image that we Asians aren't like "other minorities" is fundamental to the Model Minority ideology. Any elementary school student knows that the teacher designates one student the model, the "teacher's pet," in order to set an example for others to follow. One only sets up a "model minority" in order to communicate to the other "students," the blacks and Hispanics, "Why can't you be like that?" The media, in fact, almost admit to "grading" minorities as they headline Model Minority stories, "Asian-Americans: Are They Making the Grade?" (*U.S. News*, April 2, 1984). And Asians have earned the highest grade by fulfilling one important assignment: identifying with the white majority, with its values and wishes.

Unlike blacks, for instance, we Asian-Americans have not vigorously asserted our ethnic identity (a.k.a. Black Power). And the American public has historically demanded assimilation over racial pluralism.[4] Over the years, *Newsweek* has published titles from "Success Story: Outwhiting the Whites" (*Newsweek*, June 21, 1971) to "Ultimate Assimilation" (*Newsweek*, Nov. 24, 1986), which lauded the increasing number of Asian-White marriages as evidence of Asian-Americans' "acceptance into American society."

Even more significant is the public's approval of how we have succeeded in the "American tradition" (*Fortune*, Nov. 24, 1986). Unlike the Blacks and Hispanics, we "Puritan-like" Asians (*N.Y. Times Magazine*, Nov. 30, 1986) disdain governmental assistance. A *New Republic* piece, "America's Greatest Success Story" (July 15, 1985), similarly applauded how "Asian-Americans pose no problems at all." The media consistently compares the crime-ridden image of other minorities with the picture of law abiding Asian parents whose "well-behaved kids" (*Newsweek on Campus*, April 1984) hit books and not the streets.

Some insist there is nothing terrible about whites conjuring up our "tremendous" success, divining from it model American traits, then preaching, "Why can't you blacks and Hispanics be like that?" After all, one might argue, aren't those traits desirable?

Such a view, as mentioned, neglects Asian-Americans' true and pressing needs. Moreover, this view completely misses the Model Minority image's fundamental ideology, an ideology meant to falsely grant America absolution from its racial barriers. 20

David O. Sears and Donald R. Kinder, two social scientists, have recently published significant empirical studies on the underpinnings of American racial attitudes. They consistently discovered that Americans'

[4]A full discussion of racial pluralism vs. assimilation is impossible here. But suffice it to say that pluralism accepts ethnic cultures as equally different; assimilation asks for a "melting" into the majority. An example of the assimilation philosophy is the massive "Americanization" programs of the late 1800s which successfully erased Eastern European immigrants' customs

stress on "values, such as 'individualism and self-reliance, the work ethic, obedience, and discipline' . . . can be invoked, however perversely, to feed racist appetites" (Kennedy, 1987, p. 88). In other words, the Model Minority image lets Americans' consciences rest easy. They can think: "It's not our fault those blacks and Hispanics can't make it. They're just too lazy. After all, look at the Asians."[5] Consequently, American society never confronts the systemic racial and economic factors underlying such inequality. The victims instead bear the blame.

This ideology behind the Model Minority image is best seen when we examine one of the first Model Minority stories, which suddenly appeared in the mid-1960s. It is important to note that the period was marked by newfound, strident black demands for equality and power.

> At a time when it is being proposed that hundreds of billions be spent to uplift Negroes and other minorities, the nation's 300,000 Chinese Americans are moving ahead on their own — with no help from anyone else . . . few Chinese-Americans are getting welfare handouts — or even want them . . . they don't sit around moaning. (*U.S. News*, Dec. 26, 1966)

The same article then concludes that the Chinese-American history and accomplishment "would shock those now complaining about the hardships endured by today's Negroes" (*U.S. News*, Dec. 26, 1966).

Not surprisingly, the dunce-capped blacks and Hispanics resent us apple polishing, "well-behaved" teacher's pets. Black comedian Richard Pryor performs a revealing routine in which new Asian immigrants learn from whites their first English word: "Nigger." And Asian-Americans themselves succumb to the Model Minority's deceptive mythology and racist ideology.[6] "I made it without help," one often hears among Asian circles, "why can't they?" In a 1986 nationwide poll, only 27 percent of Asian-American students rated "racial understanding" as "essential." The figure plunged 9 percent in the last year alone (a year marked by a torrent of Model Minority stories) (Hune, 1987). We "white-washed" Asians have simply lost our identity as a fellow, disadvantaged minority.

[5]This phenomenon of blaming the victim for racial inequality is as old as America itself. For instance, Southerners once eased their consciences over slavery by labeling blacks as animals lacking humanity. Today, America does it by labeling them as inferior people lacking "desirable" traits. For an excellent further analysis of this ideology, actually widespread among American intellectuals, see *Iron Cages: Race and Culture in 19th-Century America* by Ronald T. Takaki. [Author's note]

[6]America has a long history of playing off one minority against the other. During the early 1900s, for instance, mining companies in the west often hired Asians solely as scabs against striking black miners. Black versus Asian hostility and violence usually followed. This pattern was repeated in numerous industries. In a larger historical sense, almost every immigrant

But we don't even need to look beyond the Model Minority stories themselves to realize that whites see us as "whiter" than blacks — but not quite white enough. For instance, citing that familiar median family income figure, *Fortune* magazine of May 17, 1982, complained that Asian-Americans are in fact "getting *more* than [their] share of the pie." For decades, when white Americans were leading the nation in every single economic measure, editorials arguing that whites were getting more than *their* share of the pie were rather rare.

No matter how "well behaved" we are, Asian-Americans are still excluded from the real pie, the "positions of institutional power and political power" (Kuo, 1979, p. 289). Professor Harry Kitano of UCLA has written extensively on the plight of Asian-Americans as the "middle-man minority," a minority supposedly satisfied materially but forever racially barred from a true, *significant* role in society. Empirical studies indicate that Asian-Americans "have been channeled into lower-echelon white-collar jobs having little or no decision making authority" (Suzuki, 1977, p. 38). For example, in *Fortune*'s 1,000 largest companies, Asian-American nameplates rest on a mere half of one percent of all officers' and directors' desks (a statistical disparity worsened by the fact that most of the Asians founded their companies) (*Fortune*, Nov. 24, 1986). While the education of the upper-class Asians may save them from the bread lines, their race still keeps them from the boardroom.

25

Our docile acceptance of such exclusion is actually one of our "model" traits. When Asian-Americans in San Francisco showed their first hint of political activism and protested Asian exclusion from city boards, *The Washington Monthly* (May 1986) warned in a long Asian-American article, "Watch out, here comes another group to pander to." *The New Republic* (July 15, 1985) praised Asian-American political movements because

> unlike blacks or Hispanics, Asian-American politicians have the luxury of not having to devote the bulk of their time to an "Asian-American agenda," and thus escape becoming prisoners of such an agenda. . . . The most important thing for Asian-Americans . . . is simply being part of the process.

This is strikingly reminiscent of another of the first Model Minority stories:

> As the Black and Brown communities push for changes in the present system, the Oriental is set forth as an example to be followed — a minority group that has achieved success through adaptation rather than confrontation. (*Gidra*, 1969)

But it is precisely this "present system," this system of subtle, persistent racism that we all must confront, not adapt to. For example, we Asians gained our right to vote from the 1964 Civil Rights Act that blacks marched, bled, died, and in the words of that original Model Minority story, "sat around moaning for." Unless we assert our true identity as a minority and challenge racial misconceptions and inequalities, we will be nothing more than techno-coolies[7] — collecting our wages but silently enduring basic political and economic inequality.

This country perpetuated a myth once. Today, no one can afford to dreamily chase after that gold in the streets, oblivious to the genuine treasure of racial equality. When racism persists, can one really call any minority a "model"?

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[7] *techno-coolies:* The original coolies were unskilled laborers from the Far East who were often paid subsistence wages in the United States.

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ENGAGING THE TEXT

1. In Chang's view, what are the key elements of the stereotype of Asian Americans as a model minority? Have you encountered these yourself? How pervasive do you believe they are in your school or community?
2. What is wrong with this positive image of Asian Americans, according to Chang? What assumptions does it make, and how do they mislead us about

3. Why has the myth of the model minority been so widely embraced, according to Chang? What does it do for the United States as a country? What is the effect of the model minority myth on other ethnic minorities?
4. Many scholars who question the image of the model minority are themselves Asian Americans. Does this fact make their claims more or less persuasive? Explain.
5. Chang's essay analyzes news stories, interprets census data, and reports on work by other scholars, but it does not present any original research. What purpose do essays like this serve when all of the data they contain is already available elsewhere?

EXPLORING CONNECTIONS

6. When Stephen Cruz (p. 326) became successful, he was seen not as a member of a model minority group but rather as a model member of a minority group. To what extent was his situation as a successful young Chicano engineer comparable to that of Asian Americans today?
7. Compare and contrast the idea of the "model minority" with the idea of the "scholarship boy" as defined by Richard Rodriguez (p. 202). On what assumptions does each concept rest? What expectations does each create? Why is each of these labels dangerous?

EXTENDING THE CRITICAL CONTEXT

8. Discuss in small groups how you learned of the myth of the model minority. Was it through TV, family, reading? Be as specific as possible. Then try to draw some conclusions about how this type of cultural "knowledge" is taught.
9. Although the news media have been quick to extol the virtues of Asian Americans as models of achievement, representations of Asians and Asian Americans are scarce in most forms of mass entertainment. Survey movies, TV shows, music videos, song lyrics, and other forms of popular culture. How are Asian Americans represented, and how do these images compare with those implied by the myth of the model minority?
10. Chang's essay is now more than a decade old. Do you see any evidence that stereotypes of the "model minority" have changed significantly since 1987?

"Goodbye to the Work Ethic" by Barbara Ehrenreich

PATHETHIC:
YUPPIE:
ETHIC:
CONSTELLATION:
PRODUCTIVITY:
BRASH:
MILLENNIA:
PURITINISM:
EMANCIPATION:
PROPAGANDISTS:
INDIGNITY:
PERENNIALLY:
FEMINIST:
SPECULATION:

Barbara Ehrenreich

GOOD-BYE TO THE WORK ETHIC

Essayist Barbara Ehrenreich's articles have become popular social criticisms, appearing in such newspapers and magazines as *The New York Times, The Nation, Atlantic, New Republic, Mother Jones,* and Ms. Possibly her most talked about book-length work is *Fear of Falling,* a study of the life-styles and insecurities of middle-class Americans. Her 1990 collection of essays, *The Worst Years of Our Lives: Irreverent Notes from a Decade of Greed,* from which the following selection has been taken, is a satiric look at life in the 1980s. In this essay, written originally in 1988 for *Mother Jones,* Ehrenreich calls for a ban on the work ethic, which, she tells us, yuppies took too far.

Suggestion for Reading

- In order to understand the satiric tone and the target audience for this article, you might wish to look at an issue of *Mother Jones,* the publication in which "Good-bye to the Work Ethic" originally appeared.

The media have just buried the last yuppie, a pathetic creature who had not heard the news that the great pendulum of public consciousness has just swung from Greed to Compassion and from Tex-Mex to meatballs. Folks are already lining up outside the mausoleum bearing the many items he had hoped to take with him, including a quart bottle of raspberry vinegar and the Cliff Notes for *The Wealth of Nations.* I, too, have brought something to throw onto the funeral pyre—the very essence of yupdom, its creed and its meaning. Not the passion for money, not even the lust for tiny vegetables, but the *work ethic.*

Yes, I realize how important the work ethic is. I understand that it occupies the position, in the American constellation of values, once held by motherhood and Girl Scout cookies. But yuppies took it too far; they *abused* it.

In fact, one of the reasons they only lived for three years (1984–87) was that they *never* rested, never took the time to chew between bites or gaze soulfully past their computer screens. What's worse, the mere rumor that someone—anyone—was not holding up his or her end of the work ethic was enough to send them into tantrums. They blamed lazy workers for the Decline of Productivity. They blamed lazy welfare mothers for the Budget Deficit. Their idea of utopia (as once laid out in that journal of higher yup thought, the *New Republic*) was the "Work Ethic State": no free lunches, no handouts, and too bad for all the miscreants and losers who refuse to fight their way up to the poverty level by working eighty hours a week at Wendy's.

Personally, I have nothing against work, particularly when performed, quietly and unobtrusively, by someone else. I just don't happen to think it's an appropriate subject for an "ethic." As a general rule, when something gets elevated to apple-pie status in the hierarchy of American values, you have to suspect that its actual *monetary* value is skidding toward zero.

Take motherhood: nobody ever thought of putting it on a moral pedestal until some brash feminists pointed out, about a century ago, that the pay is lousy and the career ladder nonexistent. Same thing with work: would we be so reverent about the "work ethic" if it wasn't for the fact that the average working stiff's hourly pay is shrinking, year by year, toward the price of a local phone call?

In fact, let us set the record straight: the work ethic is not a "traditional value." It is a johnny-come-lately value, along with thin thighs and nonsmoking hotel rooms. In ancient times, work was considered a disgrace inflicted on those who had failed to amass a nest egg through imperial conquest or other forms of organized looting. Only serfs, slaves, and women worked. The yuppies of ancient Athens—which we all know was a perfect cornucopia of "traditional values"—passed their time rubbing their bodies with olive oil and discussing the Good, the True, and the Beautiful.

The work ethic came along a couple of millennia later, in the form of Puritanism—the idea that the amount of self-denial you endured in this life was a good measure of the amount of fun awaiting you in the next. But the work ethic only got off the ground with the Industrial Revolution and the arrival of the factory system. This was—let us be honest about it—simply a scheme for extending the benefits of the slave system into the age of emancipation.

Under the new system (aka capitalism in this part of the world), huge numbers of people had to be convinced to work extra hard, at pitifully low wages, so that the employing class would not have to work at all. Overnight, with the help of a great number of preachers and other well-rested propagandists, work was upgraded from an indignity to an "ethic."

But there was a catch: the aptly named *working class* came to resent the resting class. There followed riots, revolutions, graffiti. Quickly, the word went out from the robber barons to the swelling middle class of lawyers, financial consultants, plant managers, and other forerunners of the yuppie: Look busy! Don't go home until the proles have punched out! Make 'em think *we're* doing the work and that they're lucky to be able to hang around and help out!

The lawyers, managers, etc., were only too happy to comply, for as the perennially clever John Kenneth Galbraith once pointed out, they themselves comprised a "new leisure class" within industrial society. Of course, they "work," but only under the most pleasant air-conditioned, centrally heated, and fully carpeted conditions, and then only in a sitting position. It was in their own interest to convince the working class that what looks like lounging requires intense but invisible effort.

The yuppies, when they came along, had to look more righteously busy than anyone, for the simple reason that they did nothing at all. Workwise, that is. They did not sow, neither did they reap, but rather sat around pushing money through their modems in games known as "corporate takeover" and "international currency speculation." Hence their rage at anyone who actually works—the "unproductive" American worker, or the woman attempting to raise a family on welfare benefits set below the average yuppie's monthly health spa fee.

So let us replace their cruel and empty slogan—"Go for it!"—with the cry that lies deep in every true worker's heart: "Gimme a break!" What this nation needs is not the work ethic, but a *job* ethic: If it needs doing—highways repaired, babies changed, fields plowed—let's get it done. Otherwise, take five. Listen to some New Wave music, have a serious conversation with a three-year-old, write a poem, look at the sky. Let the yuppies Rest in Peace; the rest of us deserve a break.

SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. How would you describe Ehrenreich's tone in this essay? Identify places in the essay where the tone seems informal and funny and places where the tone seems slightly more serious.
2. Explain what Ehrenreich means when she says, "I understand that [the work ethic] occupies the position, in the American constellation of values, once held by motherhood and Girl Scout cookies." After reading the selections in this chapter, do you agree?
3. What do you suppose Alfred Benke would say to Barbara Erhenreich about her attitudes toward the work ethic?

SUGGESTIONS FOR WRITING

1. Write a summary of Ehrenreich's history of the work ethic.
2. Review the writers you have read thus far in this chapter and write a response to Ehrenreich's essay that draws on your own feelings about work and the work ethic but also takes into account the experiences with work you have been reading about.
3. After reviewing the writers in this chapter, write a work ethic for the 1990s. In your discussion, explain how your updated work ethic emerges from but is different than that handed down to us by our ancestors and, more recently, the Boomers Ehrenreich writes of.

"More than Just a Shrine: Paying Homage to the Ghosts of Ellis Island"
By Mary Gordon

Vocabulary to Know:

Compulsively
Obedience
Dehumanization
Deference
Homage
Disembarked
Derelict
Scandalously
Vocation
Dispossessed
Probity
Eugenics
Xenophobia
Obsolete
Ignominy
Emblematic
Cursory
Stoicism

Mary Gordon

MORE THAN JUST A SHRINE: PAYING HOMAGE TO THE GHOSTS OF ELLIS ISLAND

Mary Gordon is an acclaimed novelist and short-story writer who teaches at Barnard College. Her novels *Final Payments*, *The Company of Women*, and *The Other Side* explore the history and culture of Irish Catholics in America. In the following selection, an essay originally published in the *New York Times* (1987), Gordon offers her personal reflections on the history of immigration that brought her ancestors—Irish, Italian, and Lithuanian Jews—to the United States by way of Ellis Island, the point of entry in New York Harbor for over 16 million immigrants between 1892 and 1924. In her essay, Gordon suggests that history is a living relationship to the past, in this case to the "ghosts of Ellis Island" she wants to honor.

Suggestion for Reading

- As you read, notice that Mary Gordon provides a good deal of historical information about Ellis Island and yet her main point is to establish her own personal connection to this American landmark. Mark passages where Gordon locates herself in relation to what took place in the past.

I once sat in a hotel in Bloomsbury trying to have breakfast alone. A Russian with a habit of compulsively licking his lips asked if he could join me. I was afraid to say no; I thought it might be bad for détente. He explained to me that he was a linguist and that he always liked to talk to Americans to see if he could make any connection between their speech and their ethnic background. When I told him about my mixed ancestry—my mother is Irish and Italian, my father was a Lithuanian Jew—he began jumping up and down in his seat, rubbing his hands together and licking his lips even more frantically.

"Ah," he said, "so you are really somebody who comes from what is called the boiling pot of America." Yes, I told him; yes, I was; but I quickly rose to leave. I thought it would be too hard to explain to him the relation of the boiling potters to the main course, and I wanted to get to the British Museum. I told him that the only thing I could think of that united people whose backgrounds, histories, and points of view were utterly diverse was that their people had landed at a place called Ellis Island.

I didn't tell him that Ellis Island was the only American landmark I'd ever visited. How could I describe to him the estrangement I'd always felt from the kind of traveler who visits shrines to America's past greatness, those rebuilt forts with muskets behind glass and sabers mounted on the walls and gift shops selling maple sugar candy in the shape of Indian headdresses, those reconstructed villages with tables set for fifty and the Paul Revere silver gleaming? All that Americana—Plymouth Rock, Gettysburg, Mount Vernon, Valley Forge—it all inhabits for me a zone of blurred abstraction with far less hold on my imagination than the Bastille or Hampton Court. I suppose I've always known that my uninterest in it contains a large component of the willed: I am American, and those places purport to be my history. But they are not mine.

Ellis Island is, though; it's the one place I can be sure my people are connected to. And so I made a journey there to find my history, like any Rotarian traveling in his Winnebago to Antietam to find his. I had become part of that humbling democracy of people looking in some site for a past that has grown unreal. The monument I traveled to was not, however, a tribute to some old glory. The minute I set foot upon the island I could feel all that it stood for: insecurity, obedience, anxiety, dehumanization, the terrified and careful deference of the displaced. I hadn't traveled to the Battery and boarded a ferry across from the Statue of Liberty to raise flags or breathe a richer, more triumphant air. I wanted to do homage to the ghosts.

I felt them everywhere, from the moment I disembarked and saw the building with its high-minded brick, its hopeful little lawn, its ornamental cornices. The place was derelict when I arrived; it had not functioned for more than thirty years—almost as long as the time it had operated at full capacity as a major immigration center. I was surprised to learn what a small part of history Ellis Island had occupied. The main building was constructed in 1892, then rebuilt between 1898 and 1900 after a fire. Most of the immigrants who arrived during the latter half of the nineteenth century, mainly northern and western Europeans, landed not at Ellis Island but on the western tip of the Battery, at Castle Garden, which had opened as a receiving center for immigrants in 1855.

By the 1880s, the facilities at Castle Garden had grown scandalously inadequate. Officials looked for an island on which to build a new immigration center, because they thought that on an island immigrants could be more easily protected from swindlers and quickly transported to railroad terminals in New Jersey. Bedloe's Island was considered, but New Yorkers were aghast at the idea of a "Babel" ruining their beautiful new treasure, "Liberty Enlightening the World." The statue's sculptor, Frédéric-Auguste Bartholdi, reacted to the prospect of immigrants landing near his masterpiece in horror; he called it a "monstrous plan." So much for Emma Lazarus.

Ellis Island was finally chosen because the citizens of New Jersey petitioned the federal government to remove from the island an old naval powder magazine that they thought dangerously close to the Jersey shore. The explosives were removed; no one wanted the island for anything. It was the perfect place to build an immigration center.

I thought about the island's history as I walked into the building and made my way to the room that was the center in my imagination of the Ellis Island experience: the Great Hall. It had been made real for me in the stark, accusing photographs of Louis Hine and others, who took those pictures to make a point. It was in the Great Hall that everyone had waited—waiting, always, the great vocation of the dispossessed. The room was empty, except for me and a handful of other visitors and the park ranger who showed us around. I felt myself grow insignificant in that room, with its huge semicircular windows, its air, even in dereliction, of solid and official probity.

I walked in the deathlike expansiveness of the room's disuse and tried to think of what it might have been like, filled and swarming. More than sixteen million immigrants came through that room; approximately 250,000 were rejected. Not really a large proportion, but the implications for the rejected were dreadful. For some, there was nothing to go back to, or there was certain death; for others, who left as adventurers, to return would be to adopt in local memory the fool's role, and the failure's. No wonder that the island's history includes reports of three thousand suicides.

Sometimes immigrants could pass through Ellis Island in mere hours, though for some the process took days. The particulars of the experience in the Great Hall were often influenced by the political events and attitudes on the mainland. In the 1890s and the first years of the new century, when cheap labor was needed, the newly built receiving center took in its immigrants with comparatively little question. But as the century progressed, the economy worsened, eugenics became both scientifically respectable and popular, and World War I made American xenophobia seem rooted in fact.

Immigration acts were passed; newcomers had to prove, besides moral correctness and financial solvency, their ability to read. Quota laws came into effect, limiting the number of immigrants from southern and eastern Europe to less than 14 percent of the total quota. Intelligence tests were biased against all non-English-speaking persons, and medical examinations became increasingly strict, until the machinery of immigration nearly collapsed under its own weight. The Second Quota Law of 1924 provided that all immigrants be inspected and issued visas at American consular offices in Europe, rendering the center almost obsolete.

On the day of my visit, my mind fastened upon the medical inspections, which had always seemed to me most emblematic of the ignominy and terror the immigrants ensured. The medical inspectors, sometimes dressed in uniforms like soldiers, were particularly obsessed with a disease of the eyes called trachoma, which they checked for by flipping back the immigrants' top eyelids with a hook used for buttoning gloves—a method that sometimes resulted in the transmission of the disease to healthy people.

mothers feared that if their children cried too much, their red eyes would be mistaken for a symptom of the disease and the whole family would be sent home. Those immigrants suspected of some physical disability had initials chalked on their coats. I remembered the photographs I'd seen of people standing, dumbstruck and innocent as cattle, with their manifest numbers hung around their necks and initials marked in chalk upon their coats: "E" for eye trouble, "K" for hernia, "L" for lameness, "X" for mental defects, "H" for heart disease.

I thought of my grandparents as I stood in the room: my seventeen-year-old grandmother, coming alone from Ireland in 1896, vouched for by a stranger who had found her a place as a domestic servant to some Irish who had done well. I tried to imagine the assault it all must have been for her; I've been to her hometown, a collection of farms with a main street—smaller than the athletic field of my local public school. She must have watched the New York skyline as the first- and second-class passengers were whisked off the gangplank with the most cursory of inspections while she was made to board a ferry to the new immigration center.

What could she have made of it—this buff-painted wooden structure with its towers and its blue slate roof, a place *Harper's Weekly* described as "a latter-day watering place hotel"? It would have been the first time she had heard people speaking something other than English. She would have mingled with people carrying baskets on their heads and eating foods unlike any she had ever seen—dark-eyed people, like the Sicilian she would marry ten years later, who came over with his family at thirteen, the man of the family, responsible even then for his mother and sister. I don't know what they thought, my grandparents, for they were not expansive people, nor romantic; they didn't like to think of what they called "the hard times," and their trip across the ocean was the single adventurous act of lives devoted after landing to security, respectability, and fitting in.

What is the potency of Ellis Island for someone like me—an American, obviously, but one who has always felt that the country really belonged to the early settlers, that, as J. F. Powers wrote in *Morte D'Urban,* it had been "handed down to them by the Pilgrims, George Washington and others, and that they were taking a risk in letting you live in it." I have never been the victim of overt discrimination; nothing I have wanted has been denied me because of the accidents of blood. But I suppose it is part of being an American to be engaged in a somewhat tiresome but always self-absorbing process of national definition. And in this process, I have found in traveling to Ellis Island an important piece of evidence that could remind me I was right to feel my differentness. Something had happened to my people on that island, a result of the eternal wrongheadedness of American protectionism and the predictabilities of simple greed. I came to the island, too, so I could tell the ghosts that I was one of them, and that I honored them—their stoicism, and their innocence, the fear that turned them inward, and their pride. I wanted to tell them that I liked them better than I did the Americans who made them pass through the Great Hall and stole their names and chalked their weaknesses in public on their clothing. And to tell the ghosts what I have always thought: that American history was a very classy party that was not much fun until they arrived, brought the good food, turned up the music, and taught everyone to dance.

SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Mary Gordon describes the "estrangement I'd always felt from the kind of traveler who visits shrines to America's past greatness" and goes on to say that "those places purport to be my history. But they are not mine." Why does Gordon feel this way? What is she suggesting about the way we experience the history of America? Do some parts belong to you but not others?
2. What historical landmarks have you visited, with your family or on class trips in elementary or high school? What were your feelings about these trips? Compare your experience to Gordon's. Did you experience these historical sites as part of your history? Explain.
3. Gordon says that Ellis Island is "the one place I can be sure my people are connected to." Name a place your people are connected to, where you could, as Gordon puts it, "do homage to the ghosts." To what extent is the place you've named alike or different from the places your classmates have named?

SUGGESTIONS FOR WRITING

1. Mary Gordon says the one thing that unifies her ancestors—Irish, Italian, and Lithuanian Jews "whose backgrounds, histories, and points of view were utterly diverse"—is that they all landed at Ellis Island. Write an essay that explores the diversity among your ancestors and considers whether there is something—a place such as Ellis Island or a historical event such as immigration—that unites them.
2. Use Gordon's account of her visit to Ellis Island as a model to write an essay that explains your response to visiting a historical site. Make sure you explain the historical importance of the place you visited, but also follow Gordon's example to explain your own personal relation to that history. Did you experience the place as part of a history you felt connected to or did you, for some reason, feel estranged?
3. Gordon's essay suggests that history is as much a matter of paying "homage to the ghosts" as it is learning a chronology of events. Pick a historical figure, place, or event in American history with which you feel an especially strong personal identification. Describe the person, place, or event and then explain the reasons for your identification. Use the essay as an occasion to pay homage, to explain your personal allegiances and why the person, place, or event seems important to you.

Ishmael Reed

AMERICA: THE MULTINATIONAL SOCIETY

Ishmael Reed is one of the foremost novelists in America today. In *Flight to Canada, Mumbo Jumbo, The Last Days of Louisiana Red,* and other novels, Reed uses the experimentalism of postmodernist fiction to create a body of African American fictions. Reed is also a critic and essayist, as you will see in the following selection. The essay "America: The Multinational Society" appeared in Reed's collection of essays and reviews, *Writin' Is Fightin'* (1988). Here Reed raises the perspective that despite textbook accounts of American history, America has always been a multinational culture—not exactly a melting pot so much as a stew of disparate peoples.

Suggestion For Reading

- As you read, you will notice that Ishmael Reed opens the essay with a series of examples, including the lead quote from the *New York Times*. Notice how this sets Reed up to step back and generalize. Underline and annotate the passage where Reed first announces the theme of the essay.

At the annual Lower East Side Jewish Festival yesterday, a Chinese woman ate a pizza slice in front of Ty Thuan Duc's Vietnamese grocery store. Beside her a Spanish-speaking family patronized a cart with two signs: "Italian Ices" and "Kosher by Rabbi Alper." And after the pastrami ran out, everybody ate knishes.

—*New York Times,* 23 June 1983

On the day before Memorial Day, 1983, a poet called me to describe a city he had just visited. He said that one section included mosques, built by the Islamic people who dwelled there. Attending his reading, he said, were large numbers of Hispanic people, forty thousand of whom lived in the same city. He was not talking about a fabled city located in some mysterious region of the world. The city he'd visited was Detroit.

A few months before, as I was leaving Houston, Texas, I heard it announced on the radio that Texas's largest minority was Mexican-American, and though a foundation recently issued a report critical of bilingual education, the taped voice used to guide the passengers on the air trams connecting terminals in Dallas Airport is in both Spanish and English. If the trend continues, a day will come when it will be difficult to travel through some sections of the country without hearing commands in both English and Spanish; after all, for some western states, Spanish was the first written language and the Spanish style lives on in the western way of life.

Shortly after my Texas trip, I sat in an auditorium located on the campus of the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee as a Yale professor—whose original work on the influence of African cultures upon those of the Americas has led to his ostracism from some monocultural intellectual circles—walked up and down the aisle, like an old-time southern evangelist, dancing and drumming the top of the lectern, illustrating his points before some serious Afro-American intellectuals and artists who cheered and applauded his performance and his mastery of information. The professor was "white." After his lecture, he joined a group of Milwaukeeans in a conversation. All of the participants spoke Yoruban, though only the professor had ever traveled to Africa.

One of the artists told me that his paintings, which included African and Afro-American mythological symbols and imagery, were hanging in the local McDonald's restaurant. The next day I went to McDonald's and snapped pictures of smiling youngsters eating hamburgers below paintings that could grace the walls of any of the country's leading museums. The manager of the local McDonald's said, "I don't know what you boys are doing, but I like it," as he commissioned the local painters to exhibit in his restaurant.

Such blurring of cultural styles occurs in everyday life in the United States to a greater extent than anyone can imagine and is probably more prevalent than the sensational conflict between people of different backgrounds that is played up and often encouraged by the media. The result is what the Yale professor, Robert Thompson, referred to as a cultural bouillabaisse, yet members of the nation's present educational and cultural Elect still cling to the notion that the United States belongs to some vaguely defined entity they refer to as "Western civilization," by which they mean, presumably, a civilization created by the people of Europe, as if Europe can be viewed in monolithic

What Does it Mean to be an American?

terms. Is Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, which includes Turkish marches, a part of Western civilization, or the late nineteenth- and twentieth-century French paintings, whose creators were influenced by Japanese art? And what of the cubists, through whom the influence of African art changed modern painting, or the surrealists, who were so impressed with the art of the Pacific Northwest Indians that, in their map of North America, Alaska dwarfs the lower forty-eight in size?

Are the Russians, who are often criticized for their adoption of "Western" ways by Tsarist dissidents in exile, members of Western civilization? And what of the millions of Europeans who have black African and Asian ancestry, black Africans having occupied several countries for hundreds of years? Are these "Europeans" members of Western civilization, or the Hungarians, who originated across the Urals in a place called Greater Hungary, or the Irish, who came from the Iberian Peninsula?

Even the notion that North America is part of Western civilization because our "system of government" is derived from Europe is being challenged by Native American historians who say that the founding fathers, Benjamin Franklin especially, were actually influenced by the system of government that had been adopted by the Iroquois hundreds of years prior to the arrival of large numbers of Europeans.

Western civilization, then, becomes another confusing category like Third World, or Judeo-Christian culture, as man attempts to impose his small-screen view of political and cultural reality upon a complex world. Our most publicized novelist recently said that Western civilization was the greatest achievement of mankind, an attitude that flourishes on the street level as scribbles in public restrooms: "White Power," "Niggers and Spics Suck," or "Hitler was a prophet," the latter being the most telling, for wasn't Adolph Hitler the archetypal monoculturalist who, in his pigheaded arrogance, believed that one way and one blood was so pure that it had to be protected from alien strains at all costs? Where did such an attitude, which has caused so much misery and depression in our national life, which has tainted even our noblest achievements, begin? An attitude that caused the incarceration of Japanese-American citizens during World War II, the persecution of Chicanos and Chinese-Americans, the near-extermination of the Indians, and the murder and lynchings of thousands of Afro-Americans.

Virtuous, hardworking, pious, even though they occasionally would wander off after some fancy clothes, or rendezvous in the woods with the town prostitute, the Puritans are idealized in our schoolbooks as "a hardy band" of no-nonsense patriarchs whose discipline razed the forest and brought order to the New World (a term that annoys Native American historians). Industrious, responsible, it was their "Yankee ingenuity" and practicality that created the work ethic. They were simple folk who produced a number of good poets, and they set the tone for the American writing style, of lean and spare lines, long before Hemingway. They worshiped in churches whose colors blended in with the New England snow, churches with simple structures and ornate lecterns.

The Puritans were a daring lot, but they had a mean streak. They hated the theater and banned Christmas. They punished people in a cruel and inhuman manner. They killed children who disobeyed their parents. When they came in contact with those whom they considered heathens or aliens, they behaved in such a bizarre and irrational manner that this chapter in the American history comes down to us as a late-movie horror film. They exterminated the Indians, who taught them how to survive in a world unknown to them, and their encounter with the calypso culture of Barbados resulted in what the tourist guide in Salem's Witches' House refers to as the Witchcraft Hysteria.

The Puritan legacy of hard work and meticulous accounting led to the establishment of a great industrial society; it is no wonder that the American industrial revolution began in Lowell, Massachusetts, but there was the other side, the strange and paranoid attitudes toward those different from the Elect.

The cultural attitudes of that early Elect continue to be voiced in everyday life in the United States: the president of a distinguished university, writing a letter to the *Times,* belittling the study of African civilizations; the television network that promoted its show on the Vatican art with the boast that this art represented "the finest achievements of the human spirit." A modern up-tempo state of complex rhythms that depends upon contacts with an international community can no longer behave as if it dwelled in a "Zion Wilderness" surrounded by beasts and pagans.

When I heard a schoolteacher warn the other night about the invasion of the American educational system by foreign curriculums, I wanted to yell at the television set, "Lady, they're already here." It has already begun because the world is here. The world has been arriving at these shores for at least ten thousand years from Europe, Africa, and Asia. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, large numbers of Europeans arrived, adding their cultures to those of the European, African, and Asian settlers who were already here, and recently millions have been entering the country from South America and the Caribbean, making Yale Professor Bob Thompson's bouillabaisse richer and thicker.

One of our most visionary politicians said that he envisioned a time when the United States could become the brain of the world, by which he meant the repository of all of the latest advanced information systems. I thought of that remark when an enterprising poet friend of mine called to say that he had just sold a poem to a computer magazine and that the editors were delighted to get it because they didn't carry fiction or poetry. Is that the kind of world we desire? A humdrum homogeneous world of all brains and no heart, no fiction, no poetry; a world of robots with human attendants bereft of imagination, of culture? Or does North America deserve a more exciting destiny? To become a place where the cultures of the world crisscross. This is possible because the United States is unique in the world: The world is here.

SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Western civilization, in Reed's view, has become a "confusing category." What do you understand the term "Western civilization" to mean? Where did you learn the meaning of the term? Compare your sense of the term to those of classmates. How would you account for differences and similarities? Do you agree with Reed that it is a "confusing category"? If so, what exactly makes it "confusing"?
2. Describe Reed's perspective on the Puritans. What about the Puritans is he trying to bring into view? How does his portrait differ from ones you have read in history textbooks? What does Reed see as the result of the "Puritan legacy"? Do you find his characterization of the Puritans and their legacy to be a useful one? What would you add or leave out?
3. The metaphor of the melting pot has been used widely by American historians and other writers to describe the intermingling of immigrants to form one people. Reed,

on the other hand, draws on a different metaphor—that of a "cultural bouillabaisse." What do you see as the main differences between the two metaphors? What does each reveal and conceal? What, in your view, are the advantages and disadvantages of each?

SUGGESTIONS FOR WRITING

1. Use the opening section of Ishmael Reed's essay as a model to create your own scenes and examples of America as a "cultural bouillabaisse." Write three or four sketches of things you have seen and experienced. Then, following Reed's example, step back and generalize about the significance of your sketches.
2. One of Reed's central points is that American culture has always been a "blurring of cultural styles." Pick an example of cultural expression you are familiar with—whether in music, art, literature, everyday speech, fashion, or whatever--and write an essay that explains and analyzes the components from different cultures that are combined and "blurred" together.
3. Reed points to the "cultural attitudes of the early Elect," the Puritans, in explaining the sources of resistance to recognizing America as a "multinational" instead of a "monocultural" society. Write an essay that extends Reed's analysis of the sources of resistance to portraying America as a multicultural society.

"America: The Multinational Society" by Ishmael Reed"

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

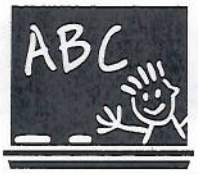
1.How does Grossberg define American Identity?

2.How did youth become a problematic solution according to Grossberg?

3.Do you think you are living someone else's dream? What defines rebellion now?

***RESPONSE WRITE: Do a 2 paragraph to 1 page response on issues brought up in the article and/or our discussion today.**

Vocabulary List REVIEW

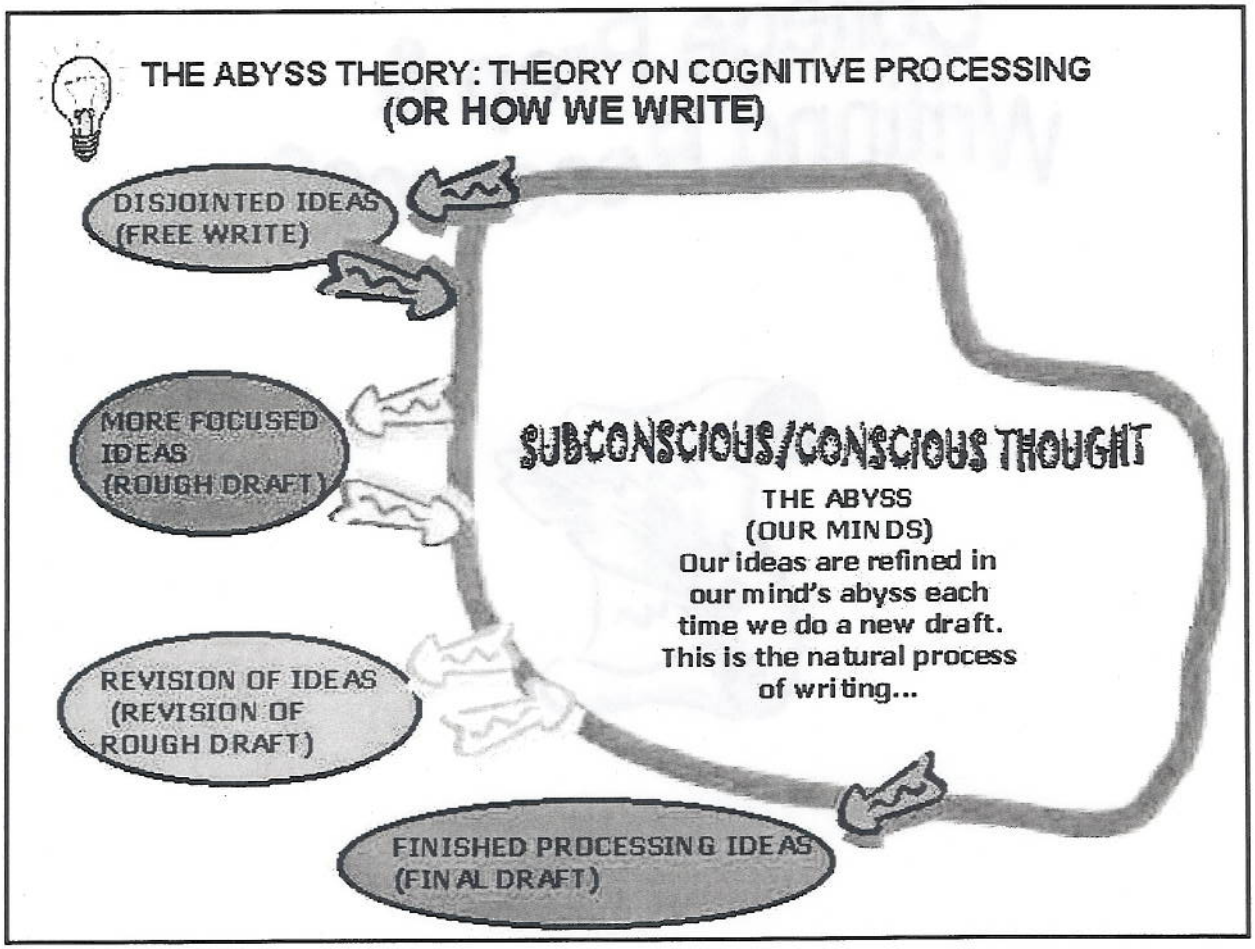


1. **"THE OTHER":** when someone is objectified
2. **ABSTRACT:** vague, general
3. **ADMONITION:** to warn
4. **AFFLUENCE:** abundance of wealth
5. **ARTICULATED:** said
6. **ASSERTIVE:** affirm
7. **ATTRIBUTE:** quality
8. **BLAND:** tasteless
9. **BRASH:** without regard for consequences
10. **CAMP, CAMPY:** pretentious
11. **CHIVALRY:** bravery
12. **CLASS:** One's financial level or privilege
13. **COLONIALISM:** policy of a nation to seek
14. **COMMODITY:** marketable or valued item
15. **CONSEQUENTIAL:** an effect
16. **CONSTELLATION:** configuration of stars in an
17. **CONSTRUCTIVIST:** person who likes to examine how leaning is constructed
18. **CRITIQUE:** criticize
19. **CRUDE:** unprocessed
20. **CULTURE:** a given groups values& traditions
21. **DECONSTRUCT:** to take meaning a part
22. **DEPENDENT:** to rely on
23. **DETRIMENTAL:** harmful
24. **DISCRIMINATORY:** to act on preference
25. **DISFFUSE:** to lessen the effects
26. **DISPARITY:** distinct in kind
27. **DISPORTIONATELY:** not even
28. **ECHELON:** level of command
29. **ELITE:** the best or most powerful
30. **ELOQUENCE:** fluent, forceful speech
31. **EMANCIPATION:** act of freeing from control
32. **EMPIRICAL:** based on experience
33. **ENMITY:** hatred
34. **EQUITABLE:** equal
35. **EQUIVALENT:** equal to
36. **ETHIC:** deals with moral duty and obligation
37. **FACILE:** Easily done
38. **FALLACIOUS:** false
39. **FUNDAMENTAL:** basic
40. **HEGEMONY:** dominance of one value/culture over another
41. **HOMOGENEOUS:** all the same
42. **ICON:** spiritual or religious symbol
43. **IDEOLOGICAL:** beliefs, philosophy
44. **IDLE:** not moving
45. **IMMERSED:** put fully in
46. **INDIGNITY:** against someone's honor, loss of honor or restraint
47. **INTELLECTUAL:** of the mind
48. **LITERALLY:** in reality, 1st definition
49. **LUMPEN:** no form, lumpy
50. **LUNATIC FRINGE:** crazy outsiders
51. **MEDIAN:** average
52. **MILITANT:** military-like
53. **MILLENNIA:** a thousand years
54. **MIMIC:** to copy
55. **MINSTRELS:** musicians
56. **MISCREANTS:** behaving villainously
57. **MONOLITHIC:** large heavy stone
58. **MYTHOLOGY:** folklore and story with myth
59. **NADIR:** lowest point
60. **NARRATIVE:** first person point of view
61. **NATIONALIST:** one who loves his nation
62. **OBJECTIFICATION:** to make an object
63. **OBSCURE:** not clear
64. **PARADOXICAL:** opposites alongside one another
65. **PASSIVE:** submissive
66. **PATHETHIC:** evoking pity or sorrow
67. **PECULIAR:** strange, odd
68. **PERENNIALLY:** present all seasons of the year
69. **POLITICS:** involving politics or government
70. **PRECOCIOUS:** forward in development
71. **PRODUCTIVITY:** state of being productive
    PROGRESSIVE: to advance
72. **PROPAGANDISTS:** spreading of ideas, rumors, the purpose of harming an institution, a cause or a person.
73. **PROPHETIC:** future prediction
74. **PROPRIETY:** conformity to standards
75. **PROSPERITY:** richness
76. **PURITINISM:** practices a purer moral code, virtuous
77. **REDEEM THEMSELVES:** to make themselves look better
78. **REIFY:** to make right
79. **REMEDIATION:** sharpen skills
80. **REPARATIONS:** compensation
81. **SATIRE:** use of irony to expose human folly
82. **SCATOLOGICAL:** preoccupied with obscenity
83. **SEGREGATION:** separate
84. **SIGNIFIER:** Symbol that represents
85. **SOCIOLOGIST:** one who studies social groups & dynamics
86. **STEREOTYPICALLY:** view using stereotypes
87. **SYNDROME:** a disease
88. **TENTATIVE:** hesitant
89. **UNEQUIVICAL:** plain, clear
90. **UTOPIAN:** the ideal situation
91. **VENERABLE:** honorable
92. **YUPPIE:** young urban professional, college educated adult

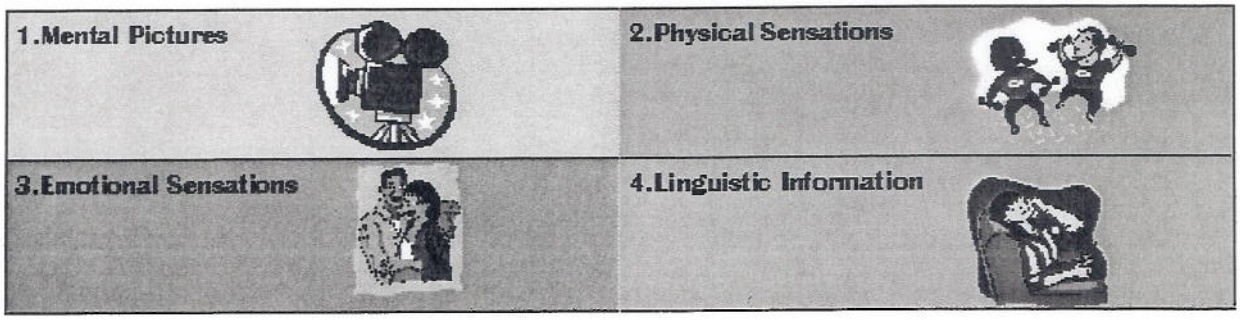
College Prep & Writinng Resources

SEMIOTICS & LINGUISITCS
(Study of language, meanings and symbols)

Language is symbolic and full of meanings that have been handed down for generations. Meanings have been assigned and reassigned since people began creating words and symbols in order to communicate. How do we come to know what we know? Many meanings have come through more than one "diacritical" process.



DIFFERENT LEVELS INVOLVED IN THINKING AND WRITING



TOP

Conducting a Productive Web Search

Brought to you by the Purdue University Online Writing Lab at
http://owl.english.purdue.edu
Check out our search engine tutorial for an interactive experience that will show you all about searching the Web at
http://owl.english.purdue.edu/internet/index.html!

The two most essential elements of World Wide Web research are Indexes and Search Engines. Both are useful tools, depending on the scope and goals of your search.

Searching With an Index

There are two main types of indexes: those that are hierarchical (i.e. that lead one from a general topic to a more specific one) and those that list sources in some sort of order (most commonly alphabetical). The first type of index often contains a broad range of topics while the second usually contains sources designed to address a particular topic or concern.

Most search engines have some sort of index attached to them. More prominent and well-developed ones include Yahoo!, InfoSeek, Google, and Excite.

Indexes are valuable for web researchers who have an area on which they want to focus, but do not yet have a specific topic. An index can help a writer get general information or a "feel" for the topic.

An Example:

- Go to Yahoo! (an index) at http://www.yahoo.com
- Find a topic that interests you ("education")
- Follow it through specifics ("rural education", "Rural Education Institute")
- "Rural Education Institute" is a specific topic that can be feasibly

researched, either by following the listed links or by using that phrase in a keyword search.

Searching with a Search Engine

A search engine is a device that sends out inquiries to sites on the web and catalogs any web site it encounters, without evaluating it. Methods of inquiry differ from search engine to search engine, so the results reported by each one will also differ.

Search engines maintain an incredibly large number of sites in their archives, so you must limit your search terms in order to avoid becoming overwhelmed by an unmanageable number of responses.

Search engines are good for finding sources for well-defined topics. Typing in a general term such as "education" or "Shakespeare" will bring back far too many results, but by narrowing your topic, you can get the kind (and amount) of information that you need.

Example:

- Go to Google (a search engine) at http://www.google.com
- Type in a general term ("education")
- Add modifiers to further define and narrow your topic ("rural education Indiana")
- Be as specific as you can ("rural education Indiana elementary school")
- Submit your search.
- Adjust your search based upon the number of responses you receive (if you get too few responses, submit a more general search; if you get too many, add more modifiers).

UPWARD BOUND
UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON
HIGH SCHOOL SUBJECT REQUIREMENTS

YEARS OF STUDY REQUIRED TO GRADUATE FROM HIGH SCHOOL		YEARS OF STUDY REQUIRED TO ENTER THE U OF W
4	**ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS** At least 3 years must be in composition or literature; the fourth year may be satisfied by courses in drama as literature, public speaking, debate, journalism, business English, or one course in ESL. Generally not acceptable are courses labeled remedial/developmental or basic/review English, annual, newspaper staff.	4
2	**MATHEMATICS** At least 3 years of algebra, geometry, advanced algebra, or integrated courses that include introductory trigonometry, mathematical analysis, elementary functions, and calculus. An algebra course taken in the 8th grade counts if the second year is completed in high school. Not acceptable are courses in arithmetic, pre-algebra, and business math.	3
0	**FOREIGN LANGUAGE** Two years of study in a single foreign language; courses must be in sequence, with no repetition. AMESLAN or American Sign Language, the language of the deaf community, is the only sign language acceptable. Computer languages are not acceptable. A language taken in the 8th grade counts if the second year is completed in high school. This requirement is considered satisfied for students from Non-English-speaking countries who entered the U.S. educational system at the 8th grade or later.	2
3	**SOCIAL STUDIES** Courses that count are: anthropology, civics, and contemporary world problems, economics, geography, government, history, philosophy, political science, psychology, and sociology. Not acceptable are credits awarded for student government, leadership, and community service.	3
2	**SCIENCE** One year must be biology, chemistry, or physics, with laboratory. Courses must be in sequence, not repetition. Two years of agricultural science equal one-year science requirement.	2
.5*	**FINE, VISUAL, or PERFORMING ARTS** Includes art appreciation, band, ceramics, choir, dance, dramatic performance and production, drawing, fiber arts, graphic arts, metal design, music appreciation, music theory, orchestra, painting, photography, pottery, printmaking, and sculpture.	.5

5.5	**ELECTIVES** Academic electives are courses in the six subject areas described above in which you have completed more than the minimum number of years. Colleges will also accept arts credits above minimum requirement.		.5
.5	**HEALTH**		0
2	**PHYSICAL EDUCATION**		0
1.5	**OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION**	0	
21	**TOTAL**		15

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS - Add the following to the basic 21 credits.

1. A cumulative GPA of 2.0 or above **AND** a 2.0+ cumulative GPA in required courses in English Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Studies an Natural Science;
2. Community service learning - **60** hours;
3. Read, understand, and evaluate a minimum of **20** books over four years;
4. Write a comprehensive, well-researched paper to be orally presented and defended during the senior year **(Senior Project)**;
5. Write effective directions, procedures, letters, and summaries over four years;
6. Demonstrate proficiency in all 5 math strands equivalent to Integrated Math 2 by senior year.

THIS STUDENT'S SCHEDULE FOR SENIOR YEAR AT:

1ST SEMESTER	2ND SEMESTER
1. _____	1. _____
2. _____	2. _____
3. _____	3. _____
4. _____	4. _____
5. _____	5. _____
6. _____	6. _____

RUNNING START SCHEDULE:

FALL QUARTER	WINTER QUARTER	SPRING QUARTER
1. _____	1. _____	1. _____
2. _____	2. _____	2. _____
3. _____	3. _____	3. _____

ESSAYS & TERM PAPERS

KINDS OF ESSAYS

PERSUASIVE ESSAY

- Goal: to present the reader with a new, original way of looking at a concept, whether it is a book, a historical event, or a scientific theory.
- Focuses mostly on a **primary source**. Primary sources include works of literature, historical documents, psychological studies, and sociological experiments.
  - **Compare and contrast.** This type of persuasive essay involves identifying similarities and differences between two arguments, events, ideas, or objects. However, simply pointing out similarities and differences is not enough. A good compare-and-contrast essay shows how the similarities and differences point to an interesting idea.
  - **Cause and effect.** In this type of persuasive essay, you should identify possible causes or effects of an event. However, these causes and effects must serve as evidence for a broader argument for your essay to be persuasive. As you think about causes and effects, look for patterns and try to identify causes or effects that have been overlooked by other writers.

RESEARCH PAPER

- Goal: to present the reader with a new, original way of looking at a concept, but with a broader scope than a persuasive essay offers.
- In addition to analyzing primary sources, a research paper provides context for its argument by summarizing and commenting on **secondary sources,** which are other people's analyses of primary sources.
- Not a summary of many people's ideas. Instead, a research paper should evaluate those ideas and either propose a new argument or develop an existing one.

PERSONAL ESSAY

- Goal: to persuade the reader of the validity of a single main idea through the discussion of personal experience. Often the main idea is the experience of a realization or decision.
- Like the other types of essays, a personal essay is argumentative. Explain how your experiences relate to your main idea, just as you explain how your evidence relates to your thesis in a persuasive essay or research paper.

STRUCTURING AN ARGUMENT

Writing an essay or term paper is faster and easier if you plan what you are going to say before you begin writing. Brainstorming topics, drafting argumentative statements, and outlining your ideas are effective ways of preparing to write.

FINDING A TOPIC

Sometimes teachers will ask you to choose your own topic or to choose from a list of general topics. Although such assignments can be confusing, there are some specific ways that you can come up with ideas for a topic.

REVISIT YOUR SOURCES

- Look for passages that stand out because they are confusing, unusual, paradoxical, or interesting to you personally.
- Take careful notes on a few such passages, underlining key words, circling interesting ideas, and writing your own comments in the margin.

READ SECONDARY SOURCES AND LECTURE NOTES

These can be valuable ways to spark ideas.

- Try to remember what parts of a lecture you found most interesting.
- Look up what other people have said about the source that you are writing about.
- If you disagree with what someone else has to say, think about why.

UNDERSTANDING THE ASSIGNMENT

Assignments commonly ask multiple questions about a single topic. These questions can be overwhelming, but there are a few specific strategies for understanding what you are expected to do. Your assignment might look something like this:

> *Discuss the idea of justice in Mark Twain's* Huckleberry Finn. *Which characters wrong other characters? How do social or political institutions create their own version of justice in the novel? In the end, is the novel optimistic or pessimistic about the possibility of justice?*

Identify key words. By picking out the most important ideas in the question, you can begin to think about the evidence you will use in your essay. In this assignment, the phrases "idea of justice," and "version of justice," and "possibility of justice" all suggest that there are different ways to define "justice" in *Huckleberry Finn.*

DEVELOPING AN ARGUMENT

Brainstorm each part of the assignment. Address the question that the assignment asks. Taking a moment to think about the separate questions right away makes it easier to come up with an argument for your essay. In the question about *Huckleberry Finn,* there are three specific questions that must be answered throughout the paper. Take a moment to **jot down your recollections.**

1. Characters wrong other characters:
   - Pap locks Huck inside the house. (Chapter VI)
   - The townspeople chain Jim inside a shed. (Chapter XLI)
2. Social and political institutions, and their versions of justice:
   - The Law: The new judge gives Pap custody of Huck even though Pap is an abusiv father. The law values familial bonds over the best interest of individuals. (Chapte IV)
   - Pre-Civil War southern society: Even though Jim has been freed in the will of hi former owner, he is unable to assert his rights as a free citizen. The novel portray the South as paying more attention to race than to legal status.

- In this assignment, the final question—"In the end, is the novel optimistic or pessi mistic about the possibility of justice?"—is in fact a **hidden key** to your statement o argument. Based on your initial brainstorming, you should be able to come up with a broad idea of how to make an argument about that question. If you've taken the time to think about the versions of justice of *Huckleberry's Finn*'s characters and institutions, you can support a statement about the novel's optimism or pessimism with concrete evidence.
- **Look for patterns.** Identify unusual patterns in your observations about a text o event. As you read through your list of evidence, **look for ideas that contradic each other, change, or aren't fully explained.** You might find that a particular write assumes that there were only three causes leading to a war, when you can identify a fourth. When writing about literature, a symbol's meaning might change or contradict itself in a poem, or a character might change his or her attitude toward an idea.

SEARCHING FOR EVIDENCE

Now is the time to skim through the text again to **find specific quotations and any other examples you may have missed.** Depending on the scope of your assignment, you may also want to consult historical or critical research. Focus on evidence that relates to your topic and strikes you as interesting, confusing, or astute. Think about how each piece of evidence supports or contradicts your topic.

- **Take notes.** It's a good idea to note each piece of evidence that may be relevant to your essay. List the source and page number, and make sure it's clear whether what you are noting is a direct quotation, a close paraphrase, or your own interpretation or analysis. You should pick one of the **three systems of notation:**
  - **Notecards** can be helpful because the cards can be shuffled around, put into piles, or discarded as your paper develops. Put one piece of evidence on each card.
  - A **word processor file** is also convenient, because you can cut a note from one place and paste it somewhere else, including into your outline.
  - A **plain old notebook** is sometimes a good option because you have plenty of space to work out your ideas. When using a notebook, it is important to think ahead of time how you want to organize your notes: By source? By chapter? By topic?

DEVELOPING A THESIS STATEMENT

A thesis statement notifies your reader of your original idea regarding a topic. While your general argument may be something like, "Twain takes a pessimistic approach to the concept of justice," your thesis statement gives your **original argument** about a topic. It should not be obvious or vague. A thesis must be controversial and arguable; it should be possible for someone to come up with a reasonable argument contradicting your own.

SOME POSSIBLE THESIS STATEMENTS

Weak: *"Characters in* Huckleberry Finn *have differing views on justice. Some believe that their society is fair and just, while others believe that societal change is necessary."*

- The statement is obvious because it does not say anything about the novel that wouldn't be immediately clear after reading it.

Strong: *"Although Mark Twain uses the relationship between Huck and Jim to suggest that a society can be equally just to all of its racial groups, by describing Jim as an superstitious, passive character, Twain perpetuates racial stereotypes."*

- The statement is arguable because it is possible to interpret Jim's passiveness and superstition as appreciation for his natural landscape rather than as a racial stereotype.
- It is complex because it shows how an idea in the novel contradicts itself.

Weak: *"The Civil War was caused by social, economic, and political disagreements in the North and South."*

- The statement is vague because it does not explain which specific disagreements.
- It is not controversial because it would be impossible to claim that these kinds of developments did not cause the Civil War.

Strong: *"Disagreement between the North and South over tariffs and states' rights was a more significant cause of the Civil War than opposing views about slavery."*

- The statement makes a controversial claim because many people believe that slavery was a more important factor in causing the Civil War.
- It clearly identifies specific economic and political factors.

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- Transitional words help your reader understand the way that you are developing your main idea by indicating contrast, providing an example, explaining results, or establishing a sequence.
- **Common transitional phrases** are "furthermore," "in contrast," "for example," "as a result," and "soon after."

EXAMPLE OF AN EFFECTIVE BODY PARAGRAPH

Disagreements between the North and South regarding cotton tariffs created a divisive political atmosphere which was instrumental in causing states to consider seceding. Vice President John Calhoun proposed that individual states had the right to nullify specific acts of Congress in order to protect the welfare of the state against the federal government. The emergence of Calhoun's theory of nullification demonstrates that the South's desperate concern that the North was wielding power to damage the South's economy influenced the southern states to begin considering separation from the North. In short, the economic issue of cotton export, separate from moral concerns over slavery, marks the initial split between North and South.

1. Topic sentence states argument which relates to thesis statement
2. Specific evidence supports claim of topic sentence
3. Analysis relates evidence to topic sentence
4. Concluding sentence conveys broader significance of the paragraph's argument and evidence

TRANSITIONS BETWEEN PARAGRAPHS

- Just as the ideas within the paragraph should come in a logical sequence, so should the paragraphs themselves.
- Each paragraph should explicitly relate to the preceding and following paragraph.
- Phrases like "also important," "in addition," or "we should also note that" are weak because they don't explain the relationship between ideas in consecutive paragraphs.
- **Example:** In a paper on *Huckleberry Finn,* you might need to transition from a paragraph about Pa's attitude toward Jim to a paragraph about the townspeople's attitude toward Jim.
  - The transition "The townspeople's prejudice against black people is also important" is weak because the relationship it shows between the two ideas is obvious.
  - The transition "While Pa's racism is based in ignorance and stupidity, the townspeople's racism is calculated and thought out" is stronger because it evaluates the link between the two ideas.

CONCLUDING PARAGRAPH

A conclusion should explain the significance of your thesis statement in a larger context. Although a conclusion should provide a sense of closure, it should not make broad generalizations that imply you have supplied an absolute solution to the problem your paper addresses.

TECHNIQUES FOR CONCLUDING

- One of the most effective ways to provide a sense of closure is to **cite a relevant quotation** from the text you are working with and to explain how **to interpret that quotation using your argument.**
- Another technique is to explain a term that you bring up in your thesis statement.
- Ending your paper by showing that your argument can be applied to a related topic reiterates the relevance of your ideas.

EXAMPLE OF A STRONG CONCLUDING PARAGRAPH

In 1876, after the end of the Civil War, Confederate General Robert Hunter asked, "Had the South permitted her property, her constitutional rights and her liberties to be surreptitiously taken from her without resistance and made no moan, would she not have lost her honor with them?" Understanding that southern honor included more than simply an attachment to the idea of slavery can make understanding the reasons that the Civil War occurred easier. In referring to "her constitutional rights and her liberties," Hunter does refer to the institution of slavery. But he also refers to the pride of economic productivity, which seemed so threatened by the economic policies of the North. An absolute understanding of what caused the Civil War is unattainable, but identifying the ways that various causes interacted with each other is an ongoing project.

1. Incorporates quotation that relates to essay's thesis
2. Explains how an idea from that quotation, "honor," can be understood differently after reading that author's essay
3. Suggests areas for further discussion

PLAGIARISM

If you do not use citations to indicate which ideas you got from someone else, you are effectively claiming those ideas as your own, whether you mean to or not. Stealing an idea is called plagiarism, and it is a serious offense. Most colleges and high schools have very strict policies against plagiarism.

DEFINING PLAGIARISM

When most people think of plagiarism, they imagine turning in borrowed term papers, copying paragraphs out of books or off of the Internet, or reading another student's work during an exam. While these activities constitute plagiarism, there are other forms of plagiarism as well.

- Even if an idea is not copied word for word, if the idea is distinctive or unusual, it needs to be cited.
- If an author invents a term or uses it in a specific way, that author must be credited. Even following the same structure of another person's argument can be considered plagiarism if the ideas and conclusions are similar.

Much plagiarism is committed by students who do not even know they are cheating. When there is very little time to finish a paper, it is easy to be careless about indicating where your ideas come from and citing improperly.

COPYING AN ARGUMENT

This kind of plagiarism does not quote word for word without citing, but claims an idea that has been taken from another source as an original one. For example, if the original passage reads,

> *"Wild contrasts, such as the implicit comparison between the rough, earthy craftsmen and the delicate, graceful fairies, dominate* A Midsummer Night's Dream. *Puck's capricious spirit, magical fancy, fun-loving humor, and lovely, evocative language illustrate many of these contrasts within his own character. Puck could be seen as the paradoxical center of the play."*

The following is plagiarism:

> *"Puck's clever way of speaking and sprightly manner illustrate some of the dramatic contrasts that dominate* A Midsummer Night's Dream, *including the contrast between the vulgar craftsman and the dainty fairies."*

The paragraph is careful not to exactly duplicate the language of the original, but it still takes the exact same idea and presents it as the author's own: that Puck's character itself illustrates the contrasts present in Shakespeare's play.

COPYING AN IDEA

Single ideas, as well as entire arguments, must be attributed to their sources. The statement "By observing the contrasts in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and comparing them to Puck's role in the play, we find that Puck is in many ways the play's paradoxical center" plagiarizes the idea that Puck embodies the contrasts of the play. However, the statement "Although the SparkNote on *A Midsummer Night's Dream* argues that Puck is the 'paradoxical center' of the play, his character actually undermines the contrasts that the rest of the play creates" is not plagiarism. This statement distinguishes between the author's original idea and the source's original idea.

COPYING VERBATIM

It is plagiarism to copy words verbatim. The statement "The rough, earthy craftsmen contrast Puck's capricious spirit" plagiarizes the SparkNote on *A Midsummer Night's Dream.*

COPYING INFORMATION

Factual information, unless it is well known, must be cited. The statement "In 1999 France prosecuted 78 people who were accused of homicide" would be plagiarism if a source were not cited. However, the statement "France does not use a death penalty as punishment" is not plagiarism, since the information is commonly known.

DECEPTIVE QUOTING

Taking words or phrases out of context so that they say something different than what they say in the original text is plagiarism. If the original reads, "The movie was so bad that I sunk into extraordinary depths of despair!" citing the source as saying simply "Extraordinary . . . !" is plagiarism.

TECHNIQUES FOR SUCCESSFUL EDITING

The goal of editing is to improve your paper as much as possible in as little time as possible. The highest priority of editing is to make sure that ideas are clear, persuasive, and logically linked. Some techniques for editing efficiently:

1. RE-READ THE ASSIGNMENT

Make sure that you have addressed every part of the question, and that your thesis statement does not simply reword the assignment.

2. LOOK FOR A CLEAR THESIS STATEMENT

You should be able to underline your thesis statement, which should almost always be the final sentence of your initial paragraph. Your thesis is the main argument that you present and prove in your paper.

3. IDENTIFY TOPIC SENTENCES

One way to quickly make your argument stronger is to rewrite topic sentences so that they clearly support the thesis statement. Even if the rest of your paragraph is slightly off-topic, relevant topic sentences can make your paper seem coherent.

4. USE THE ACTIVE VOICE

The active voice names the performer of an action and is more persuasive. Passive: "Alex was kicked in the face." Active: "Ron kicked Alex in the face."

5. CHECK SPELLING AND GRAMMAR

Computer spell-checking misses many, many mistakes. Read your paper, looking for spelling, subject-verb agreement, long sentences, and long paragraphs.

6. LET YOUR ESSAY SIT

Putting your essay away for several days without reading it allows you to revisit your writing with fresh insights and a more distanced critical eye.

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"IF YOU STEAL FROM ONE AUTHOR, IT'S PLAGIARISM; IF YOU STEAL FROM MANY, IT'S RESEARCH." WILSON MIZNER

A STRONG COMPARE-AND-CONTRAST THESIS STATEMENT

"The Old Testament characters Moses and Joshua are virtual shadows of each other, performing similar functions and leading the Israelites in a similar manner. But the lesser degree of the miracles that Joshua performs can be seen as an effective literary technique for promoting the idea that Moses was greater than any Old Testament prophet to follow him."

This is a good thesis statement because it uses the differences between the two characters to point to a broader idea, identifying a literary technique in the Bible.

DEFINE A MOTIVE OR PURPOSE FOR WRITING

Teachers and professors read papers because they have to. But a good paper should be interesting to a broader audience. When you express your motive, you **indicate why you are writing your paper.** The motive is not the argument itself, but the reason that your argument should be interesting to your reader. Motives can take into account what other critics have written, common perceptions of an event, or historical context. Some examples of motives:

- *"Many critics see the relationship between Huck and Jim as fair and harmonious, but closer examination of the novel reveals that this is not the case."*
- *"It is easy to assume that the main cause of the Civil War was disagreement over slavery, since the outcome of that war had such dramatic effects on the institution of slavery."*
- *"When it was released, the movie* Clueless *was disregarded by many people as juvenile and silly, but the film has been appearing more and more frequently on college reading lists."*

PLANNING YOUR PAPER

Once you know your argument, thesis, and motive, you may want to go ahead and write your thesis paragraph (see below). Otherwise, you should begin to organize your evidence and observations. Grouping your evidence into categories can often lead to a strategy for organizing your paper. Some kinds of categories:

CONTENT-BASED

Often, your topic itself will suggest categories for your evidence.

- In a paper on the Civil War, you might group evidence according to the different kinds of disputes that were occurring between the North and the South.
- In a paper on *Huckleberry Finn,* you might categorize your argument by the social, political, and familial institutions that establish differing versions of justice.

ARGUMENT-BASED

Instead of using categories suggested by your topic, you can use categories that are suggested by your argument. This technique usually leads to more argumentative papers.

- In a paper on the Civil War, your categories might include common misperceptions involving the cause of the war, reasons for those misperceptions, and causes of the war that are usually overlooked.
- In a paper on *Huckleberry Finn,* your categories might be ways in which Twain portrays Jim and Huck's relationship as an oasis of tolerance, ways in which that portrayal fails, and reasons for the failure.

OUTLINE

Planning the steps of your argument before you write your essay can prevent you from getting stuck or not knowing where to go next. An outline is like a map of your argument; it should show the sequence of your ideas and argument. The first part of your outline should include your motive and your thesis statement. You should also write down the subcategories of your argument and note the evidence that you plan to use.

WRITING THE PAPER

THESIS PARAGRAPH

The first paragraph of the paper is the most important, and probably the most difficult to write, as it describes the focus of your argument and your reason for making it. If you know what your argument is before you write your first paragraph, you will feel like you have something to say and be less nervous about staring at a blank screen.

BACKGROUND MATERIAL AND CONTEXT

Completely summarizing the subject matter relating to your argument can be time-consuming and tiresome to read. Assume that your reader is well-educated and can understand an argument about a book or event that he or she is unfamiliar with. **Give only the most relevant background information** in your first paragraph.

STATE YOUR MOTIVE AND THESIS

Your introductory paragraph should tell your reader why your paper is relevant. The thesis statement is traditionally made in the final sentences of the introductory paragraph.

EXAMPLE OF A STRONG THESIS PARAGRAPH

Almost as soon as the Civil War ended, Americans began searching for a way to understand the reasons for the extremely bitter conflict. Even today, debate over the causes of the war is heavily influenced by strong feelings and personal bias. Because the years leading up to the war were characterized by growing conflicts over a series of political and economic disagreements between the northern and southern states, it is difficult to isolate individual causes of the war. It is easy to assume that the main cause of the war was disagreement over slavery, since the outcome of the war had such dramatic effects on the institution of slavery. But disagreement between the North and South over tariffs and states' rights was a more significant cause of the Civil War than were opposing views about slavery.

1. Relays background information that is concise and clearly related to the main argument
2. Author explains motive for writing by showing how his argument relates to contemporary discussion of war
3. Thesis statement makes an unusual claim about the topic

PERSONAL ESSAYS

Like the thesis paragraph of a persuasive essay, the introductory paragraph of a personal essay makes a claim, explains a motive for writing, and gives relevant background information. In a personal essay, the claim, or thesis, often involves a life change or a newly acquired perspective. The motive of a personal essay establishes the significance of the main claim, and the background information often takes the form of a short anecdote.

EXAMPLE OF A PERSONAL ESSAY INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPH

On the day I was supposed to receive my grade for the first paper I wrote in my English literature class, my teacher announced that he had written comments on the class's papers, but had not yet written letter grades. He said he believed we were better writers than our papers showed, and invited us to meet individually with him as we continued to work on our drafts. At first, his statement struck me as a sly tactic to get us to write multiple drafts of a paper, but as I read over his comments, I understood that his concern was sincere. In many ways, he had taken my paper more seriously than I myself had; he asked detailed questions about ideas he found unclear and he suggested further reading. His attention to detail and careful thought introduced me to what it might mean to be a teacher. His commitment to making me a better writer was heartfelt and went beyond the punishment or reward of grades. His personal commitment to improving our writing inspired me to eventually become a teacher, a profession I hadn't previously considered.

1. Establishes subject and background of essay with personal anecdote
2. Explains process of changing point of view
3. Relates anecdote and revelation to claim, or thesis

BODY PARAGRAPHS

You develop your argument in the body paragraphs of your paper. Some standardized assignments, such as AP tests, expect that there will be three body paragraphs between your thesis paragraph and your conclusion. For most essays, however, you should use as many paragraphs as you need to express your ideas effectively. Each paragraph should develop a single, specific component of your argument. A paragraph should not explore two separate ideas unless it explicitly tells why they are related to each other.

TOPIC SENTENCES

- Each paragraph should begin with a sentence that develops your thesis statement.
- Topic sentences should introduce new information that **confirms or complicates the argument** that you state in the first paragraph.

EVIDENCE AND ANALYSIS

- Within the paragraph, you should use specific evidence to support the idea stated in your topic sentence.
- Evidence can include passages from a fictional text, historical events, statistics, or arguments that other people have made about your topic.
- Analysis sentences explain why this evidence supports the argument that you are making.

TRANSITIONS WITHIN PARAGRAPHS

- The ideas in your body paragraph should come in a logical sequence. This sequence can explain, complicate, or develop the idea of the topic sentence.

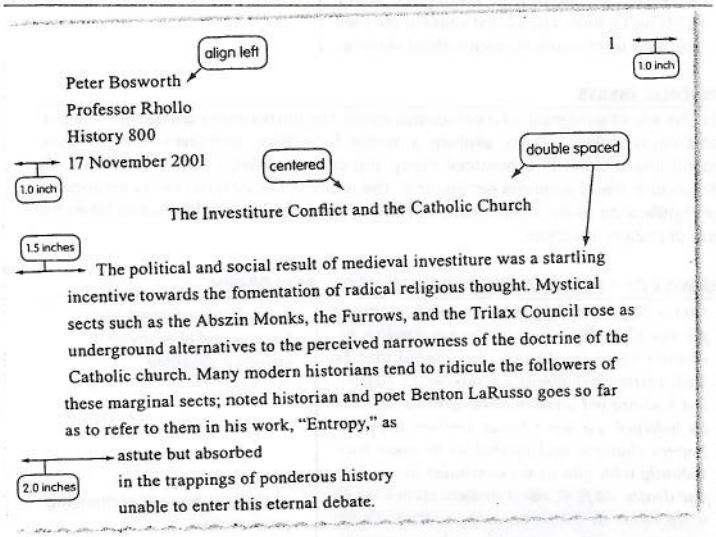
FORMATTING, CITATIONS, AND EDITING

If your instructors have their own rules for citations and formatting, follow them. However, the following guidelines, based on the citation rules of the Modern Language Association, are standard for most situations.

BASIC FORMATTING RULES

- **Standard paper:** 8.5 inches x 11 inches
- **Font:** 12-point Times New Roman
- **Double space**
- **One-inch margins** on all sides
- **Paragraphs indented** 0.5 inch from the left margin
- **Block quotations indented** 1 inch from the left margin
- **Page numbers:** Number the first page. On all subsequent pages, place your last name before the page number (Garcia 12). Put the page numbers in the upper right-hand corner of the page, 0.5 inches from the top
- **The heading** should include your name, your instructor's name, the course name, and the date. Double space the heading.
- **Title:** You do not need a separate title page. Center the title and place it one double-space below the heading. Capitalize all principal words; do not underline or italicize. Double space titles longer than one line.

EXAMPLE OF HEADING AND TITLE



CITING QUOTATIONS

- **Three lines of text or fewer:** include in the text, surrounded by double quotation marks.
- **Three lines of text or more:** indent 1 inch from the left margin of the text; omit quotation marks.
- **Three lines of poetry or fewer:** include in the text, using solidi (/) to indicate line breaks.
- **Three lines of poetry or more:** offset as you would more than three lines of text (see rules above). Include line breaks. Do not use slashes to indicate line breaks.
- **To indicate errors in the original text:** use [*sic*], italicized and bracketed.
  Example: "Stephen Kin [*sic*] has written many horror novels."
- **To indicate an omission:** use an ellipsis (three periods in a row with spaces between them). If the omission is of the end of a sentence or more than one sentence, add a period to the ellipsis.
- **To insert or change material:** place the inserted or changed material between brackets.

CITING IN TEXT

For every quotation or reference in the text of your paper, indicate the author and page number of the work you are referencing in a parenthetical note immediately following the reference. The final quotation mark comes before the first parenthesis, and the sentence's punctuation comes after the final parenthesis. If you do not directly quote the author, but still reference his or her ideas, these rules apply. For information on when you need to include a reference, see the section on plagiarism.

- **Works by one author:** in parentheses, after the quote, include the author's last name and the page number. If the author is named in the text of the paper, include the page number but not the author's name.
  Example: It has been said that "all men may be created equal, but not all men live equally well" (Howard 421).
  Example: Finton Howard firmly insists that "all men may be created equal, but not all men live equally well" (421).

- **Works by two or three authors:** Include each author's name in the parentheses, separated by "and."
  Example: "A man who knows where the fish eat may soon eat fish himself" (Rogers and Llewellyn 15).

- **Works by more than three authors:** Either list every author in the parenthetical note, in the same order in which they appear in the Works Cited section, or list only the first author, followed by "et al."
  Example: The Platonic theory of forms had nothing to do with Plato, and "probably would have been entirely unfamiliar to him during his life" (Cheng et al. 301).

- **Two or more works by the same author:** Include a short version of the work's title in the parenthetical note, separated from the author's name with a comma.
  Example: In her theory of representation, on the other hand, she is less interested in notions of beauty than in notions of "linguistic accuracy" (Martin, *Language* 143).

- **Poems and verse dramas:** Cite act, scene, and line numbers, separated by periods. Do not cite page numbers. Use Arabic numerals. When poems are not divided into acts or scenes, cite only line numbers.
  Example: (Shakespeare, *Hamlet* 1.23.218–219)
  Example: (Keats 14–16) or (Keats lines 14–16)
  When poems are offset in block quotes (more than three lines), include the parenthetical citation to the right of the last line of the quote. If it doesn't fit, include it on the next line, aligned with the right margin of the page.

WORKS CITED

The Works Cited section should follow the end of your paper. The purpose of this section is to make it possible for your readers to identify and consult the sources that you use to make your argument.

BASIC RULES:

- Include every work cited in your paper in the Works Cited section.
- Place the Works Cited section at the end of the paper, starting on a separate page.
- Single space entries, leaving an additional space between entries.
- Center the words "Works Cited" one inch below the top of the page.
- Place the first line of each entry flush with the left margin of the page. Indent each subsequent line of each entry 0.5 inches from the left margin.
- Alphabetize the entries by author's last name. For works with no listed author, alphabetize by title.
  Example:
  Henderson, Jonathan. *Processes of Consciousness Encoded in Semiotic Sign-Sequences: A Political Approach*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1987.

- **Books with one, two, or three authors:** Authors' names, title (italicized), city of publication (include state abbreviations for smaller cities), publisher, and date.
  Example:
  Watson, Michael, and Samantha Willis. *Chemistry and Chemists*. New York: Random House, 1982.

- **Books with more than three authors:** You may use "et al." after the first author's name.
  Example:
  Kramer, Devin, et al. *Microwave Cooking and You*. Boston: Chef's Press, 1992.

- **Books with authors and editors or translators:** Include the name of the editor or translator after the title, abbreviating "editor" to "Ed." and "translator" to "Trans."
  Example:
  Eliot, George. *Middlemarch*. Ed. Phillippa Howitzer. New York: Overlook Press, 1981.

- **Two or more works by the same author:** Sort alphabetically by title. For every entry after the first, replace the author's name with three em-dashes.
  Example:
  Kelley, Randolph. *My Time in Eden*. Los Angeles: El Dorado Press, 1990.
  ———. *You Can So Go Home Again*. Los Angeles: El Dorado Press, 1972.

- **Journal articles:** Authors' names, title of article (in quotes), journal title (italicized), date or volume and issue number, and page numbers.
  Example:
  Satchel, Marcus. "Shakespeare's Women." *Shakespearean Times* 26.7 (1982): 34–41.

- **Websites:** Complete URL and, if available, author information, title information, date text was posted, date site was accessed, and company or organization information.
  Example:
  Berry, Brandon. "Dodgers Strike Out on New Stadium Deal." *ESPN.com*. 17 December 2001. 20 December 2001. <http://www.espn.com/berry121701.html.>

- **Articles in an encyclopedia or reference book:** Author's name, title of the article, title of the work, and publication information (including number of volumes).
  Example:
  Ellerbe, Hyman. "Abraham Lincoln." *Encyclopedia of Political Leaders*. Ed. Lavar O'Denby. 4 vols. New York: Random House, 1977.

- **If no author is given,** alphabetize by article title.
  Example:
  "Prolegomena." *The Oxford English Dictionary*. 2nd ed. 1989.