

Name: _____ Per: _____

Unit 5: Race Matters

AP Language and Composition

Mon 2/12

- Intro to Race Matters unit
- Watch "I Have a Dream" and mark text <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=smEqnnkIFy8>
- Compare rhetorical analysis of this speech to "Letter from Birmingham Jail"
- Read "[Just Walk on By](#)" by Brent Staples.
- RA intro: "In paragraphs 1-5 of "Just Walk on By," Staples describes his experience of being stereotyped on the basis of sex and race. Write an essay analyzing the rhetorical strategies he uses to achieve his purpose." (150-200 words)

HW: Notebook check prep; Finish "Just Walk on By" reading and RA intro

Wed 2/14

- Notebook check #5
- Watch "[Racist Coffee](#)." What is the *argument* being made in the video?
- Discuss "Just Walk on By" discussion questions [*Absent? Type responses to any 4*]
- **RA Intro Due**
- "Just Walk on By" Practice [AP multiple-choice quiz](#)
- Read/[listen](#) to "Taboo" by Geoffrey Nunberg, annotate and SOAPStone
- Argument Intro: Type an intro including a thesis statement for an argument paper in which you agree, disagree, or qualify Nunberg's article. This should be a college-level introduction to what could be an incredible paper (150-200 words).

HW: Finish "Taboo." Type argument essay introduction.

Fri 2/16

- Transcript reviews
 - A2 F-M
 - A4 N-Z
 - Turn in "Taboo" work before going
- **Argument introduction due**--sharing and critiquing
- Read, mark, and SOAPStone "Notes of a Native Speaker" by Eric Liu
- Discussion: How do we assimilate? Answer questions.
- Create a short poem in the style of Liu's "Ways in which I am _____" (consider a different race, gender, religion, culture, etc.) 20-30 lines

HW: TYPE your "Ways in which I am _____" poem

Wed 2/21

- Read, mark, and SOAPStone article: "[War against Black Men](#)"
- **Argument Intro:** Type an introduction to an AP argument essay that defends, challenges, or qualifies Lee Habeeb's quotation: "*Fathers matter. And though it is possible for a young man to get along without a father, it is difficult for young men to get along in fatherless communities, or in fatherless cities*" (150-200 words).

HW: Type argument introduction

Fri 2/23

- Watch: "[Substitute Teacher](#)"; what does this have to say about race?
- **Argument introduction** sharing and critiquing
- Sign up for Socratic Seminar topic
- Watch *Seinfeld* clip. What does this have to say about race issues?
- Share "Ways in which I am _____" poems

Tues 2/27

- Discuss Black Minstrelsy in America
- PowerPoint presentation of examples
- Discuss "Progress" cartoon and complete questions
- *Bamboozled* clip
- Is Black minstrelsy alive? Yellow minstrelsy? Brown minstrelsy? White minstrelsy? Examples?
- Watch [Sweet Brown](#) and other examples

HW: You must have a TYPED argument prepared that addresses your Socratic Seminar topic, along with the major point and quoted sources. This will resemble an outline of sorts.

Thurs 3/1

- Socratic Seminar
 - **Essential Question #1:** "What is the state of race relations today in America?" Use evidence from any of the pieces we studied this unit.
 - **Essential Question #2:** "How is race portrayed in television, movies, and music today?" Use evidence from any of the pieces we studied this unit.

Tues 3/6

- New unit on *The Great Gatsby* and the Synthesis essay

Dates to Know:

Friday, 4/27: 1200-1630

Full AP Language practice test (60 multiple-choice, three FROs, 4 hours). This is mandatory, as it is our semester two exam. Please make all necessary preparations now.

Wednesday, 5/16: 0700-1200

AP Language exam. Arrive a 0700 for breakfast in the IC

Notebook and Supply Check

You'll need the following for our notebook check **Wed 2/14**. You need ALL the pieces to receive credit. No partial credit offered on this. You need two tabs labeled with the following:

LA Handouts:

- Unit guide 5 (on top)
- Unit guide 4
- Rhetorical Terms Packet
- Writing an Introductory Paragraph in Four Parts (mrcoia.com)
- "Letter from Birmingham Jail" (from mrcoia.com)
- "Good Country People" short story (from mrcoia.com)
- "Salvation" (unit 2, p. 7-8)
- "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" sermon (unit guide 2)
- "I Know Why a Caged Bird Cannot Read" (mrcoia.com)
- "Superman and Me" Reading
- SOAPS handout (unit guide 1 p. 13)
- AP Scam readings
- Syntax Organizer (unit 2, p. 13-15)
- "Composing Rhetorically" chapter 3 of Writing America
- Essay Graphic Organizer for Rhetorical Analysis (unit 2, p.5)
- RA: Answering the Big Central Question (unit 3, p.5)
- Whitman and Emerson readings (unit 3, p. 6-9)
- *Past Argument Essay Prompts* (unit 4, p. 13-14)
- How Do I Format My Paper? (unit 1, p. 3-4)
- Class Rules sheet, initialed

LA Classwork:

Notes from lectures, presentations, mini-lessons. Remember you should be taking notes each class period. You will also have at least 25 sheets of loose-leaf paper.

CCRS Unit Objectives:

CCR.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.1

Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

CCR.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.4

Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

CCR.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.6

Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

CCR.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.R.9

Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

CCR.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.1

Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCR.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.L.1

Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

Name: _____ Date: _____ Per: _____

“I Have a Dream” by the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. Aug. 28, 1963

I am happy to join with you today in what will go down in history as the greatest demonstration for freedom in the history of our nation. Five score years ago, a great American, in whose symbolic shadow we stand signed the Emancipation Proclamation. This momentous decree came as a great beacon light of hope to millions of Negro slaves who had been seared in the flames of withering injustice. It came as a joyous daybreak to end the long night of captivity.

But one hundred years later, we must face the tragic fact that the Negro is still not free. One hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination. One hundred years later, the Negro lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity. One hundred years later, the Negro is still languishing in the corners of American society and finds himself an exile in his own land. So we have come here today to dramatize an appalling condition.

In a sense we have come to our nation's capital to cash a check. When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir. This note was a promise that all men would be guaranteed the inalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

It is obvious today that America has defaulted on this promissory note insofar as her citizens of color are concerned. Instead of honoring this sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad check which has come back marked "insufficient funds." But we refuse to believe that the bank of justice is bankrupt. We refuse to believe that there are insufficient funds in the great vaults of opportunity of this nation. So we have come to cash this check -- a check that will give us upon demand the riches of freedom and the security of justice. We have also come to this hallowed spot to remind America of the fierce urgency of now. This is no time to engage in the luxury of cooling off or to take the tranquilizing drug of gradualism. Now is the time to rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit path of racial justice. Now is the time to open the doors of opportunity to all of God's children. Now is the time to lift our nation from the quicksands of racial injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood. It would be fatal for the nation to overlook the urgency of the moment and to underestimate the determination of the Negro. This sweltering summer of the Negro's legitimate discontent will not pass until there is an invigorating autumn of freedom and equality. Nineteen sixty-three is not an end, but a beginning. Those who hope that the Negro needed to blow off steam and will now be content will have a rude awakening if the nation returns to business as usual. There will be neither rest nor tranquility in America until the Negro is granted his citizenship rights. The whirlwinds of revolt will continue to shake the foundations of our nation until the bright day of justice emerges. But there is something that I must say to my people who stand on the warm threshold which leads into the palace of justice. In the process of gaining our rightful place we must not be guilty of wrongful deeds. Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred.

We must forever conduct our struggle on the high plane of dignity and discipline. We must not allow our creative protest to degenerate into physical violence. Again and again we must rise to the majestic heights of meeting physical force with soul force. The marvelous new militancy which has engulfed the Negro community must not lead us to distrust of all white people, for many of our white brothers, as evidenced by their presence here today, have come to realize that their destiny is tied up with our destiny and their freedom is inextricably bound to our freedom. We cannot walk alone.

And as we walk, we must make the pledge that we shall march ahead. We cannot turn back. There are those who are asking the devotees of civil rights, "When will you be satisfied?" We can never be satisfied as long as our bodies, heavy with the fatigue of travel, cannot gain lodging in the motels of the highways and the hotels of the cities. We cannot be satisfied as long as the Negro's basic mobility is from a smaller ghetto to a larger one. We can never be satisfied as long as a Negro in Mississippi cannot vote and a Negro in New York believes he has nothing for which

to vote. No, no, we are not satisfied, and we will not be satisfied until justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream.

I am not unmindful that some of you have come here out of great trials and tribulations. Some of you have come fresh from narrow cells. Some of you have come from areas where your quest for freedom left you battered by the storms of persecution and staggered by the winds of police brutality. You have been the veterans of creative suffering. Continue to work with the faith that unearned suffering is redemptive.

Go back to Mississippi, go back to Alabama, go back to Georgia, go back to Louisiana, go back to the slums and ghettos of our northern cities, knowing that somehow this situation can and will be changed. Let us not wallow in the valley of despair.

I say to you today, my friends, that in spite of the difficulties and frustrations of the moment, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream. I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal." I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at a table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a desert state, sweltering with the heat of injustice and oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice. I have a dream that my four children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character. I have a dream today.

I have a dream that one day the state of Alabama, whose governor's lips are presently dripping with the words of interposition and nullification, will be transformed into a situation where little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls and walk together as sisters and brothers. I have a dream today.

I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.

This is our hope. This is the faith with which I return to the South. With this faith we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. With this faith we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day. This will be the day when all of God's children will be able to sing with a new meaning, "My country, 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing. Land where my fathers died, land of the pilgrim's pride, from every mountainside, let freedom ring."

And if America is to be a great nation this must become true. So let freedom ring from the prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire. Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York. Let freedom ring from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania!

Let freedom ring from the snowcapped Rockies of Colorado!

Let freedom ring from the curvaceous slopes of California!

But not only that; let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia!

Let freedom ring from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee!

Let freedom ring from every hill and molehill of Mississippi. From every mountainside, let freedom ring.

And when this happens, when we allow freedom to ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual, "Free at last! free at last! thank God Almighty, we are free at last!"

“Notes of a Native Speaker” by Eric Liu

Here are some of the ways you could say I am "white":

I listen to National Public Radio.
I wear khaki Dockers.
I own brown suede bucks.
I eat gourmet greens.
I have few close friends "of color."
I married a white woman.
I am a child of the suburbs.
I furnish my condo a la Crate & Barrel.
I vacation in charming bed-and-breakfasts.
I have never once been the victim of blatant discrimination.
I am a member of several exclusive institutions.
I have been in the inner sanctums of political power.
I have been there as something other than an attendant.
I have the ambition to return.
I am a producer of the culture.
I expect my voice to be heard.
I speak flawless, unaccented English.
I subscribe to *Foreign Affairs*.
I do not mind when editorialists write in the first person plural.
I do not mind how white television casts are.
I am not too ethnic.
I am wary of minority militants.
I consider myself neither in exile nor in opposition.
I am considered "a credit to my race."



(2) I never asked to be white. I am not literally white. That is, I do not have white skin or white ancestors. I have yellow skin and yellow ancestors, hundreds of generations of them. But like so many other Asian Americans of the second generation, I find myself now the bearer of a strange new status: white, by acclamation. Thus it is that I have been described as an "honorary white," by other whites, and as a "banana," by other Asians. Both the honorific and the epithet take as a given this idea: To the extent that I have moved away from the periphery and toward the center of American life, I have become white inside. Some are born white, others achieve whiteness, still others have whiteness thrust upon them. This, supposedly, is what it means to assimilate.

(3) There was a time when assimilation did quite strictly mean whitening. In fact, well into the first half of this century, mimicry of the stylized standards of the WASP gentry was the proper, dominant, perhaps even sole method of ensuring that your origins would not be held against you. You "made it" in society not only by putting on airs of anglitude, but also by assiduously bleaching out the marks of a darker, dirtier past. And this bargain, stifling as it was, was open to European immigrants almost exclusively; to blacks, only on the passing occasion; to Asians, hardly at all.

(4) Times have changed, and I suppose you could call it progress that a Chinaman, too, may now aspire to whiteness. But precisely because the times have changed, that aspiration -- and the imputation of the aspiration -- now seems astonishingly outmoded. The meaning of "American" has undergone a revolution in the 29 years I have been alive, a revolution of color, class and culture. Yet the vocabulary of "assimilation" has remained fixed all this time: fixed in whiteness, which is still our metonym for power; and fixed in shame, which is what the colored are expected to feel for embracing the power.

(5) I have assimilated. I am of the mainstream. In many ways I fit the psychological profile of the so-called banana: imitative, impressionable, rootless, eager to please. As I will admit in this essay, I have at times gone to great lengths to downplay my difference, the better to penetrate the "establishment" of the moment. Yet I'm not sure that what I

did was so cut and dried as "becoming white." I plead guilty to certain charges: achieving, learning the ways of the upper middle class, distancing myself from radicals of any hue. But having confessed, I still do not know my crime.

(6) To be an accused banana is to stand at the ill-fated intersection of class and race. And because class is the only thing Americans have more trouble talking about than race, a minority's climb up the social ladder is often willfully misnamed and wrongly portrayed. There is usually, in the portrayal, a strong whiff of betrayal: The assimilationist is a traitor to his kind, to his class, to his own family. He cannot gain the world without losing his soul. To be sure, something is lost in any migration, whether from place to place or from class to class. But something is gained as well. And the result is always more complicated than the monochrome language of "whiteness" and "authenticity" would suggest.

(7) My own assimilation began long before I was born. It began with my parents, who came here with an appetite for Western ways already whetted by films and books and music and, in my mother's case, by a father who'd been to the West. My parents, who traded Chinese formality for the more relaxed stance of this country. Who made their way by hard work and quiet adaptation. Who fashioned a comfortable life in a quiet development in a second-tier suburb. Who, unlike your "typical" Chinese parents, were not pushy, status-obsessed, rigid, disciplined or prepared. Who were haphazard about passing down ancestral traditions and "lessons" to their children. Who did pass down, however, the sense that their children were entitled to mix or match, as they saw fit, whatever aspects of whatever cultures they encountered.

(8) I was raised, in short, to assimilate, to claim this place as mine. I don't mean that my parents told me to act like an American. That's partly the point: They didn't tell me to do anything except to be a good boy. They trusted I would find my way, and I did, following their example and navigating by the lights of the culture that encircled me like a dome. As a function of my parents' own half-conscious, half-finished acculturation, I grew up feeling that my life was Book II of an ongoing saga. Or that I was running the second leg of a relay race. Slap! I was out of the womb and sprinting, baton in hand. Gradually more sure of my stride, my breathing, the feel of the track beneath me. Eyes forward, never backward.

(9) Today, nearly seven years after my father's death and two years after my marriage into a large white family, it is as if I have come round a bend and realized that I am no longer sure where I am running or why. My sprint slows to a trot. I scan the unfamiliar vista that is opening up. I am somewhere else now, somewhere far from the China that yielded my mother and father; far, as well, from the modest horizons I knew as a boy. I look at my limbs and realize I am no longer that boy; my gait and grasp exceed his by an order of magnitude. Now I want desperately to see my face, to see what time has marked and what it has erased. But I can find no mirror except the people who surround me. And they are mainly pale, powerful.

(10) How did I end up here, in what seems the very seat of whiteness, gazing from the promontory of social privilege? How did I cover so much ground so quickly? What was it, in my blind journey, that I felt I should leave behind? And what did I leave behind? This, the jettisoning of one mode of life to send another aloft, is not only the immigrant's tale; it is the son's tale, too. By coming to America, my parents made themselves into citizens of a new country. By traveling the trajectory of an assimilationist, so did I.

"Notes of a Native Speaker" by Eric Liu

1. What is the purpose of the list that opens Liu's essay? Is it humorous? Is it meant to be? How does it engage the reader?
2. How would you describe Liu's attitude toward being "white, by acclamation" in paragraph 2?
3. What is his definition of "assimilation" as it develops in the next few paragraphs?
4. In paragraphs 7-10, Liu describes himself as being at a particular crisis point, or at least a time of transition. How has he arrived at that point?

“Taboo”

Geoff Nunberg

"Fresh Air" commentary, Dec. 9, 2003

It was one of those political correctness stories the media are always dining out on. A white employee at the University of Virginia Medical Center was talking with some co-workers about the names of football teams, and remarked that having a team named the Redskins was as derogatory to Indians as having a team called Niggers would be to blacks. His use of *nigger* was enough to provoke some of the staff to organize a protest. The university president called the employee's remark "unfortunate," "offensive" and "insulting." And Julian Bond, who's now a history professor at the University, demanded that the employee apologize and that he be required to take sensitivity training.

It's hard to find any word to describe that reaction short of obtuse. After all, the employee had only mentioned the word *nigger* as an example of an unacceptable racial epithet. But there was also something disingenuous about the way critics ridiculed the episode as another example of political correctness run amok, as if it revealed the fatuity of all our concerns about offending ethnic sensitivities. The fact is that nowadays a word like *nigger* has acquired a kind of incantatory power that even the most benign intentions can't entirely bleach away.

I remember something that happened one day last spring when I was talking to an undergraduate linguistics class about the origins and use of racial epithets. That's clearly as neutral and clinical a context as anyone could imagine. But when I pronounced the word *nigger*, one black student raised his eyebrows. "You sure you're not getting any secret satisfaction out of being able to say that word?" I told him maybe a little defensively that I was just mentioning the word, not using it. But the fact is that I had felt a complicated twinge when I said the word. I recalled making an effort to say it as offhandedly as possible, without betraying my unease with a telltale pause or change in pitch. It was the same feeling that I have when I have to mention a four-letter word in the course of making some recondite point about English syllable structure. I know that linguists have a dispensation to say those words, but it doesn't entirely dispel the sense of transgression.

That's what it means to say a word like *nigger* is taboo. It has become an incantation that evokes all the ugly violence of racial hatred, in exactly the same way that dirty words are contaminated by the things they refer to, with a taint that bleeds through any quotation marks you put around them.

Of course for us *taboo* is a secular and ironic word -- when we talk about "taboo subjects" or "taboo words," it's usually to make light of other people's uptight squeamishness. But in the Melanesian and Polynesian cultures that we originally borrowed the word from, it signified what Sir James Frazer described in *The Golden Bough* as "contagious magic." If a dead body was taboo, then so was the man whose shadow fell on it, and the utensils he touched and the meals he prepared with them -- and so was his name. Each of them became dangerous to other people and to itself. That's exactly the sense of taboo that attaches to what we call "dirty words" -- the sense

that a name can be contaminated by the thing it's connected to. It's no different from the beliefs of the Polynesians, except that when we hold them, we don't describe them as superstitions.

Taboos are always a guide to the deepest fears and inhibitions of a culture. We have no memory of the sacral power that a reference to God's wounds or God's blood could conjure up in Shakespeare's time. And we find it amusing to imagine the horror that Henry James would feel if he could have seen an episode of "The Sopranos." But then James would be puzzled at our age's almost physical aversion to ethnic epithets, to the point where some people are uncomfortable when they have to read *Huckleberry Finn* or a Flannery O'Connor short story. Not that James was the sort of person who would have used *nigger* in his own speech. But he would have avoided it because it was vulgar, not because it was foul.

The shift is implicit in the way people talk about "the N-word," with the same coy formula that parents adopt when they want to upbraid their children for using forbidden language without actually having to pronounce the words themselves. And that may have been what was behind that recent story about the Louisiana second-grader who was sent home for using a bad word when he told a classmate that his mother was gay.

If those reports are true, of course, the teacher was even more stupefyingly clueless than the people who got worked up over the remark made by that unfortunate University of Virginia employee. To believe that *gay* is a bad word isn't just misinformed -- it implies that homosexuality might be so abhorrent that its very name could be impure, so that it becomes something literally unspeakable. But as demented as that misapprehension is, I suspect it wouldn't have occurred to that teacher thirty years ago, before the notion of magical taboo was extended to words like these.

That's the trouble with sacralizing these epithets -- it risks turning attitudes like racism and homophobia into guilty pleasures. Taboos always confirm the dark power of the ideas they suppress. Describing *nigger* as "the N-word" doesn't just mark it as something we're not supposed to say in public -- it also ensures that it will have an intriguingly transgressive force when we say it in private. Not that anyone should ever mention the word for any reason without a sense of its considerable power, but it doesn't deserve the awe that a taboo implies. Let it lie in the sun to rot.

<http://people.ischool.berkeley.edu/~nunberg/taboo.html>

Listen to this here: <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=1539100>

“Just Walk on By: Black Men and Public Space” by Brent Staples

Brent Staples (b. 1951) earned his Ph.D. in psychology from the University of Chicago and went on to become a journalist. The following essay originally appeared in Ms. Magazine in 1986, under the title, “Just Walk on By.” Staples revised it slightly for publication in Harper’s a year later under the present title. As you read, think about why this piece might be appropriate for a publication intended primarily for women.

My first victim was a white woman, well dressed, probably in her early

twenties. I came upon her late one evening on a deserted street in Hyde Park, a relatively affluent neighborhood in an otherwise mean, impoverished section of Chicago. As I swung onto the avenue behind her, there seemed to be a discreet, uninflamatory distance between us. Not so. She cast back a worried glance. To her, the youngish black man – a broad six feet two inches with a beard and billowing hair, both hands shoved into the pockets of a bulky military jacket – seemed menacingly close. After a few more quick glimpses, she picked up her pace and was soon running in earnest. Within seconds she disappeared into a cross street.

(2)That was more than a decade ago. I was twenty-two years old, a graduate student newly arrived at the University of Chicago. It was in the echo of that terrified woman’s footfalls that I first began to know the unwieldy inheritance I’d come into – the ability to alter public space in ugly ways. It was clear that she thought herself the quarry of a mugger, a rapist, or worse. Suffering a bout of insomnia, however, I was stalking sleep, not defenseless wayfarers. As a softy who is scarcely able to take a knife to a raw chicken – let alone hold one to a person’s throat – I was surprised, embarrassed, and dismayed all at once. Her flight made me feel like an accomplice in tyranny. It also made it clear that I was indistinguishable from the muggers who occasionally seeped into the area from the surrounding ghetto. That first encounter, and those that followed, signified that a vast, unnerving gulf lay between nighttime pedestrians – particularly women – and me. And soon I gathered that being perceived as dangerous is a hazard in itself. I only needed to turn a corner into a dicey situation, or crowd some frightened, armed person in a foyer somewhere, or make an errant move after being pulled over by a policeman. Where fear and weapons meet – and they often do in urban America – there is always the possibility of death.

(3)In that first year, my first away from my hometown, I was to become thoroughly familiar with the language of fear. At dark, shadowy intersections, I could cross in front of a car stopped at a traffic light and elicit the thunk, thunk, thunk of the driver – black, white, male, or female – hammering down the door locks. On less traveled streets after dark, I grew accustomed to but never comfortable with people crossing to the other side of the street rather than pass me. Then there were the standard unpleasanties with policemen, doormen, bouncers, cabdrivers, and others whose business it is to screen out troublesome individuals before there is any nastiness.

(4)I moved to New York nearly two years ago, and I have remained an avid night walker. In central Manhattan, the near-constant crowd cover minimizes tense one-one-one street encounters. Elsewhere, in Soho, for example, where sidewalks are narrow and tightly spaced buildings shut out the sky – things can get very taut indeed.

(5)After dark, on the warrenlike streets of Brooklyn where I live, I often see women who fear the worst from me. They seem to have set their faces on neutral, and with their purse straps strung across their chests bandolier-style, they forge ahead as though bracing themselves against being tackled. I understand, of course, that the danger they perceive is not a hallucination. Women are particularly vulnerable to street violence, and young black men are drastically overrepresented among the perpetrators of that violence. Yet these truths are no solace against the kind of alienation that comes of being ever the suspect, a fearsome entity with whom pedestrians avoid making eye contact.

(6)It is not altogether clear to me how I reached the ripe old age of twenty-two without being conscious of the lethality nighttime pedestrians attributed to me. Perhaps it was because in Chester, Pennsylvania, the small, angry industrial town where I came of age in the 1960's, I was scarcely noticeable against the backdrop of gang warfare, street knifings, and murders. I grew up one of the good boys, had perhaps a half-dozen fist fights. In retrospect, my shyness of combat has clear sources.

(7)As a boy, I saw countless tough guys locked away; I have since buried several too. There were babies, really – a teenage cousin, a brother of twenty-two, a childhood friend in his mid-twenties – all gone down in episodes of bravado played out on the streets. I came to doubt the virtues of intimidation early on. I chose, perhaps unconsciously, to remain a shadow – timid, but a survivor.

(8)The fearsomeness mistakenly attributed to me in public places often has a perilous flavor. The most frightening of these confusions occurred in the late 1970's and early 1980's, when I worked as a journalist in Chicago. One day, rushing into the office of a magazine I was writing for with a deadline story in hand, I was mistaken as a burglar. The office manager called security and, with an ad hoc posse, pursued me through the labyrinthine halls, nearly to my editor's door. I had no way of proving who I was. I could only move briskly toward the company of someone who knew me.

(9)Another time I was on assignment for a local paper and killing time before an interview. I entered a jewelry store on a city's affluent Near North Side. The proprietor excused herself and returned with an enormous red Doberman Pinscher straining at the end of a leash. She stood, the dog extended toward me, silent to my questions, her eyes bulging nearly out of her head. I took a cursory look around, nodded, and bade her goodnight.

(10)Relatively speaking, however, I never fared as badly as another black male journalist. He went to nearby Waukegan, Illinois, a couple of summers ago to work on a story about a murderer who was born there. Mistaking the reporter for the killer, police officers hauled him from his car at gunpoint and but for his press credentials, would probably have tried to book him. Such episodes are not uncommon. Black men trade tales like this all the time.

(11)Over the years, I learned to smother the rage I felt at so often being taken for a criminal. Not to do so would surely have led to madness. I now take precautions to make myself less threatening. I move about with care, particularly late in the evening. I give a wide berth to nervous people on subway platforms during the wee hours, particularly when I have exchanged business clothes for jeans. If I happen to be entering a building behind some people who appear skittish, I may walk by, letting them clear the lobby before I return, so as not to seem to be following them. I have been calm and extremely congenial on those rare occasions when I've been pulled over by the police.

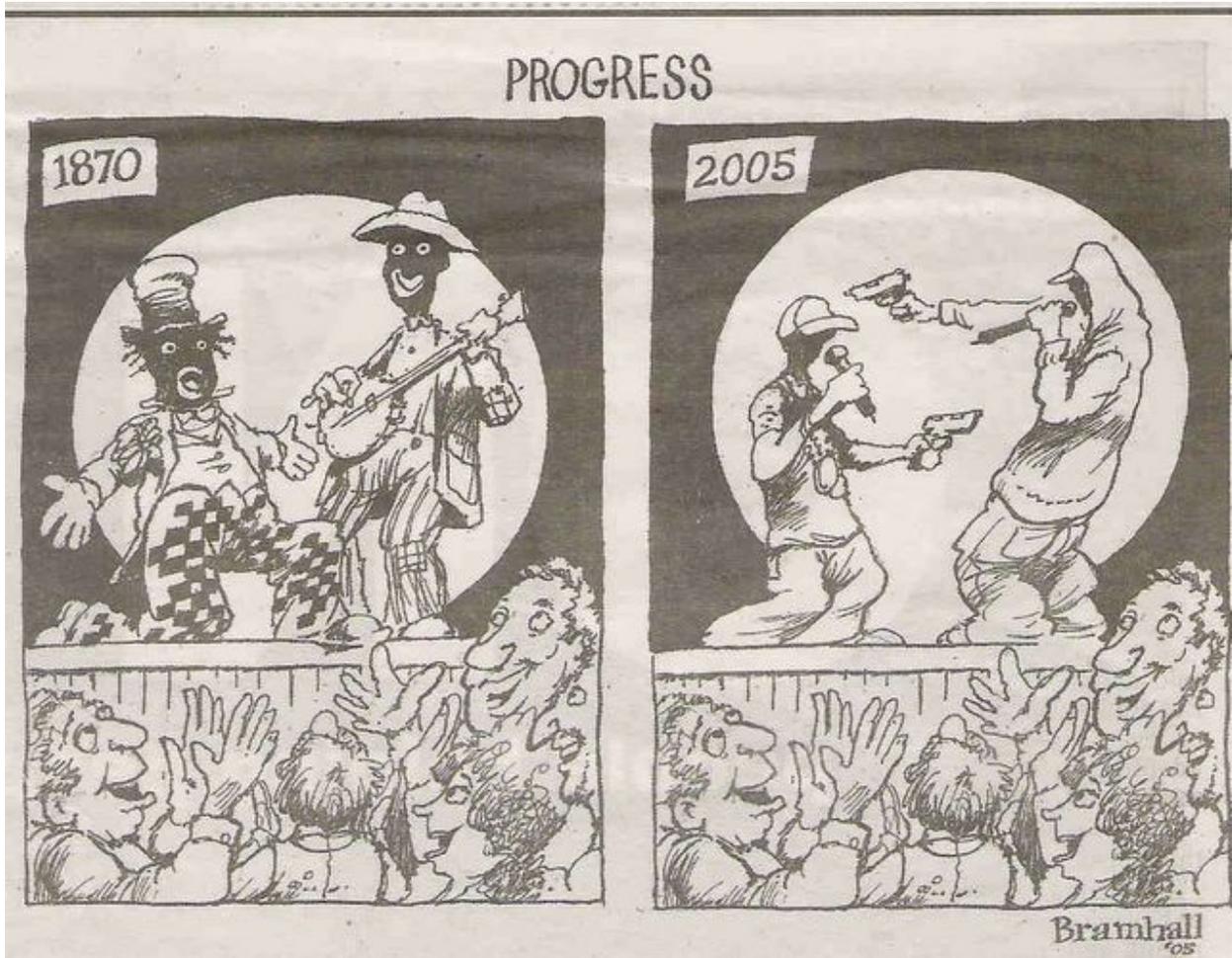
(12) And, on late-evening constitutionals I employ what has proved to be an excellent tension-reducing measure: I whistle melodies from Beethoven and Vivaldi and the more popular classical composers. Even steely New Yorkers hunching toward nighttime destinations seem to relax, and occasionally they even join in the tune. Virtually everybody seems to sense that a mugger wouldn't be warbling bright, sunny selections from Vivaldi's Four Seasons. It is my equivalent of the cowbell that hikers wear when they know they are in bear country.

Discussion Questions: "Just Walk on By: Black Men and Public Space" by Brent Staples

1. What is the effect of the opening paragraph on the reader? Does Staples draw you in or distance you?
2. Staples structures his essay around personal experiences. Why does he include so many? Does each have a specific purpose, or could one or more have been excluded? (Note the changes in time period, his age, and place.)
3. In paragraph 4, he writes, "I understand, of course, that the danger they [women] perceive is not a hallucination." What is the purpose of this statement?
4. Paragraphs 7, 8, 9, and 11 all end with a similar sentence. What is the similarity? What is the effect of this parallelism?
5. Why does Staples juxtapose seemingly formal language (such as "errant move," "wee hours," and "constitutional") with informal expressions (such as "dicey")?
6. What does Staples mean by his final sentence: "It is my equivalent of the cowbell that hikers wear when they know they are in bear country"? Does this statement change the terms of the "hunter and hunted" he has established in the essay?
7. What examples of irony do you find throughout the essay?

Name: _____ Per: _____

"Progress"



What is the message of this comic?

Defense of the message:

Critique of the message:

NATIONAL REVIEW

The War Against Black Men

Chicago's murder statistics tell a story of young black males without fathers and at risk.
By Lee Habeeb — January 17, 2013

The date was January 12, 2013. You probably didn't hear about this tragedy involving guns and two teenage boys. But this was the headline in the *Chicago Tribune*: "Boys, 14 and 15, killed in separate shootings Friday." You didn't hear about it because such events aren't news in Chicago. They're ordinary daily occurrences. As we continue to hear calls for ever-tightening gun laws from the Obama administration, and from states such as New York, it is worth thinking about those headlines in Chicago. And in inner cities all around America, places where strict gun laws are already in place. Places where the weapon of choice isn't an AR-15 but a semiautomatic handgun — the same kind of weapon most Americans use reasonably, and safely, to secure their most precious assets: their loved ones and their property.

So let's go back to that wretched January 12 story from Chicago, President Obama's hometown. The murdered 14-year-old had a name, Rey Durante. He was gunned down by two shooters while standing on the porch of his Humboldt Park home. The two men opened fire, according to news accounts, near midnight, striking him multiple times in the chest.

When paramedics arrived on the scene, he was lying just inside his home, bleeding from several bullet wounds. He died there. Police found blood all over the front steps and more than half a dozen shell casings on the sidewalk. He would have turned 15 in a few days, his stepmother told reporters.

On the sidewalk near the crime scene, a local paper reported, the father of one of the boy's friends cried as he paced near a group of teenagers. When a neighbor asked him what had happened, his response was simple — and heartbreaking.

"A little boy just got murdered," he said.

Earlier that same day, a 15-year-old boy named Victor Vega was approached by a gunman in the Chicago neighborhood known as Little Village. The gunman shouted a gang slogan and then opened fire, striking the 15-year-old in the torso. Vega was taken to Mount Sinai Hospital, where he was pronounced dead at 7:19 P.M., according to the office of the Cook County medical examiner.

Both shootings were gang-related, police suspected.

Twenty children and six adults were killed in Newtown, Conn., last month, and the media quickly, and justifiably, descended to tell the tragic story. In the first few weeks of January in Chicago, 25 people have already been murdered. Most were young black and Hispanic men, murdered by other young black and Hispanic men.

In Chicago, it's Newtown every month. But the media haven't converged on Chicago this month.

You don't know the names of those kids and adults gunned down in Chicago this January, all by handguns. But the *Chicago Tribune*'s RedEye website tracks the Chicago body count since January 1: Gregory Bady, 28; Damian Barnes, 22; Marcus Wallace, 23; Tyrone Soleberry, 39;

Brian Cross, 34; John Taylor, 23; Darville Brown, 24; Tyshawn Blanton, 31; Marcus Turner, 19; Lavonshay Cooper, 22; David Bartzmark, 25; Michael Kozel, 57; Ulysses Gissendanner, 19; Kevin Jemison, 29; Myron Brown, 30; Devanta Grisson, 19; Octavius Lamb, 20.

You don't know the names of the other 530 young people, most of them minorities, who were killed in Chicago between 2008 and January 2012 either. You don't know their names, and the national media haven't parked their media trucks in Chicago, because the liberal narrative does not offer easy answers to the problems haunting Chicago.

You don't know their names because the real racism that exists in the media is this: A young black male's life is not worth reporting when it is taken by another black male.

You don't know the names because the media don't or can't blame the deaths in Chicago on a weapon like the AR-15, or on the NRA.

You don't know their names because the media aren't interested in getting at the real cause of much of the senseless gun violence in America: fatherlessness.

About 20,000 people live in my hometown of Oxford, Miss., and there are probably twice as many guns. Folks own handguns, shotguns, rifles, and all kinds of weapons I've never even heard of. But I can't remember the last murder story in the local paper.

That's because my town has lots of guns, but lots of fathers, too.

Chicago doesn't have a gun problem; it has a father problem.

Gun control isn't the problem on Chicago's streets; self-control is.

When young men don't have fathers, they don't learn to control their masculine impulses. They don't have fathers to teach them how to channel their masculine impulses in productive ways.

When young men don't have fathers, those men will seek out masculine love — masculine acceptance — where they can find it. Often, they find it in gangs.

In my little town, if some boys tried to form a gang and do violence on our streets, the fathers wouldn't bother calling the sheriff. Those boys would face a gang of fathers hell bent on establishing order in our community. And if that meant using physical force, so be it.

Back in 2005, William Raspberry, the late *Washington Post* columnist and no conservative, wrote "The Elephant's Tale," a column on inner-city black fatherlessness.

It turns out that, some years before, game managers in South Africa had had a problem with an elephant herd at Kruger National Park. It was growing beyond the park's ability to sustain it. The experts came up with what they thought was a brilliant two-phase solution: They moved some of the herd to the Pilanesberg game park and killed off some of the elephants that were too big to transport.

But that decision had ramifications. Years later, some of young males started attacking Pilanesberg's herd of white rhinos, an endangered species.

Raspberry described the problem, and the solution:

The elephants used their trunks to throw sticks at the rhinos, chased them over long hours and great distances and stomped to death a tenth of the herd — all for no discernible reason.

Park managers decided they had no choice but to kill some of the worst juvenile offenders. They had killed five of them when someone came up with another bright idea: Bring in some of the mature males from Kruger and hope that the bigger, stronger males could bring the adolescents under control.

To the delight of the park officials, it worked. The big bulls, quickly establishing the natural hierarchy, became the dominant sexual partners of the females, and the reduction in sexual activity among the juveniles lowered soaring testosterone levels and reduced their violent behavior.

The new discipline, it turned out, was not just a matter of size intimidation. The young bulls actually started following the Big Daddies around, yielding to their authority and learning from them proper elephant conduct. The assaults on the white rhinos ended abruptly.

Fathers matter. And though it is possible for a young man to get along without a father, it is difficult for young men to get along in fatherless communities, or in fatherless cities.

So why don't the media focus on the epidemic of fatherlessness in our inner cities and on the tragic consequences for boys? The mostly white liberal editors and gatekeepers of the mainstream media would never admit that liberal policies of the 1960s have had disastrous consequences. They won't admit that government can't replace the essential role that marriage and family plays in raising, disciplining, and loving children.

Those same white liberal editors also assume that such stories won't draw ratings or readers, especially not from a white majority insulated from the problems of inner-city life.

And that assumption may be correct.

In a column last year in the *Wall Street Journal*, Juan Williams cited a comprehensive study by the Justice Department in 2005 on the subject that he said should have been a "clarion call" for the black community and the nation at large.

Almost one half of the nation's murder victims that year were black, and a majority of them were between the ages of 17 and 29. Black people accounted for 13 percent of the U.S. population in 2005. Yet they were the victims of 49 percent of all murders, and 93 percent of black murder victims were killed by other black people.

That's right. Almost half of murder victims in the entire country are black males and, all too often, young black males. And nine out of ten of those young black men were killed by other young black men.

So much for the war on women, a narrative the media sold relentlessly in the run-up to the November election. The real war in America is on men, and black men in particular.

Men need fathers, and need them desperately, but the out-of-wedlock birth rate in black America is 75 percent.

Fewer than half of young black men graduate from high school, and for far too many black boys public schools are jails before they get to real jails. Young men staring down such bleak prospects are young men without hope. And young men without hope can do desperate, senseless things.

That we are still not properly talking about this all-too-real race problem in America is a failure of imagination and conscience.

That the media have spent so little time on the body count in Chicago and other inner cities in this country is sheer malpractice.

Yes, the senseless murder of those children in Newtown was a tragedy of epic proportions, and our prayers should go out to every affected family and to all of their loved ones.

But white kids in suburbia are not getting gunned down with regularity. White suburban kids live, for the most part, on safe streets, free of gangs and drug dealers.

White suburban kids go to public schools that work, and work because having two parents matters when it comes to schools and the culture of schools.

The nation is still grieving the loss of those innocents in Newtown, and a nation continues to lift that community up with our prayers.

But while you are praying for the families in Newtown, say a prayer for all of the thousands of young black Americans whose lives were cut short by street violence. Say a prayer for the faceless, voiceless victims we never hear or read about or see on TV.

Say a prayer for all of those young black men without fathers.

And with the out-of-wedlock birth rate recently passing the 40 percent mark for all Americans, say a prayer for all of those young American men without dads.

Because they'll need them.

— *Lee Habeeb is vice president of content at Salem Radio Network.*

Argument Intro: Type an introduction to an AP argument essay that defends, challenges, or qualifies Lee Habeeb's quotation: *"Fathers matter. And though it is possible for a young man to get along without a father, it is difficult for young men to get along in fatherless communities, or in fatherless cities"* (150-200 words).

Socratic Seminar Grading Criteria

Total _____/20

Race Matters Unit

- Essential Question #1: "What is the state of race relations today in America?" Use evidence from any of the pieces we studied this unit.
- Essential Question #2: "How is race portrayed in television, movies, and music today?" Use evidence from any of the pieces we studied this unit.

Name of Speaker (who is the student you are grading?): _____

Name of Evaluator (that's you!): _____

A. Number of comments

0	1	2	3	4	5
Doesn't speak	1 comment	2 comments	3 comments	4 comments	5 comments

B. Quality of comments *(earning a 0-2 on above rubric limits this category to a 0-3)*

0	1	2	3	4	5
Doesn't speak	repeats other comments		original ideas		original, deep comments

C. Addresses essential question and stays to the text

0	1	2	3	4	5
Never	once or twice		Often		Insightful and thought-provoking

D. Discussion Etiquette *(listens to others, allows others to speak, avoids dominating and cutting others off)*

0	1	2	3	4	5
Not engaged/slouching	Listening only	Appears only mildly interested in discussion			actively engaged and good part

How would you describe and explain what you saw from the Speaker's performance in this activity? What impressed you? What needed more work?

Start _____

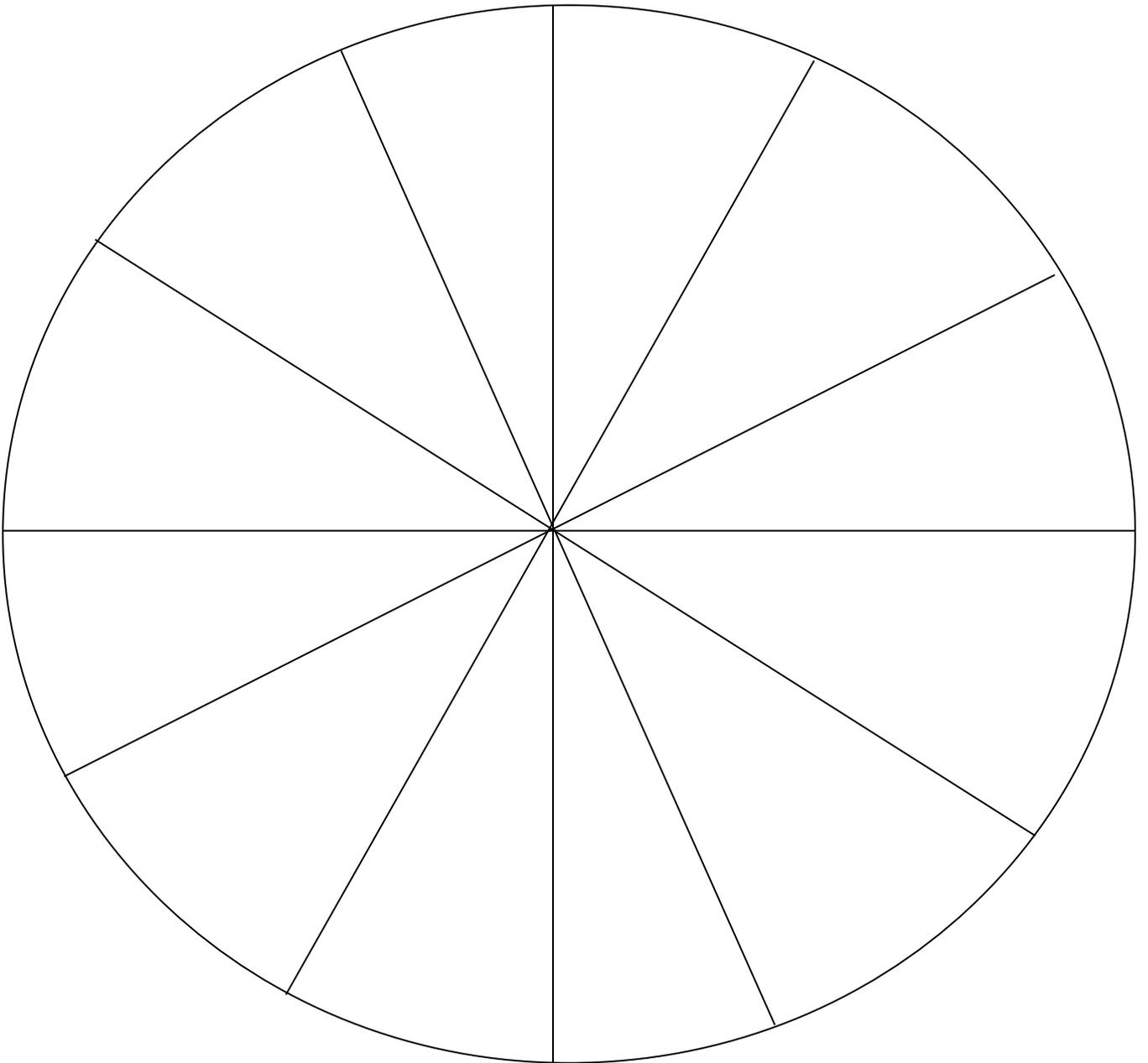
Stop _____

Continue _____

Socratic Seminar Circle

Evaluator's Name: _____

Put student names on the outside of each wedge to represent the circle. Tick off each time a person speaks, and jot down important comments. While you will take notes on all students, your focus will be on your partner.



Additional Comments