

## English 1, Topics for Paper #3

For this paper you'll write 3-4 pages, which is to say, 750-1000 words, double-spaced, with proper MLA header, citations, and Works Cited. (For more information on MLA see <http://www.dianahacker.com/resdoc/humanities/english.html>.)

### Paper Timetable:

- Thursday, 2/16: Bring to class the refinement of one of the questions below along with your brainstorming and major claims.  
Tuesday, 2/21: Rough draft that we will workshop in groups.  
Thursday, 2/23: Final draft due.

### Possible Paper topics:

- 1) In the penultimate paragraph of Amy Tan's "Mother Tongue," she talks about her audience, about the readers of her writings. "I . . . decided I should envision a reader for the stories I would write. And the reader I decided upon was my mother, because these were stories about mothers" (57). She lists four "Englishes." How do these Englishes relate to her title, "Mother Tongue." Do these four seem to be the right number? Why? Pick someone in your life who is an important audience for your thoughts, perhaps for your writing? Does Tan's English model work for you? If yes, why? If not, how would you change it?
- 2) Both Tan and Rodriguez devote considerable attention to the language they use with their mothers. Compare and contrast their views. As they learn more about how they communicate with their mothers, how does their maturing understandings compare? Describe the languages ("Englishes") you use with a maternal figure in your life, relating your experience to Tan's and Rodriguez's ideas. How have your "Englishes" changed as you've matured?
- 3) Rodriguez states that because he ". . . wrongly imagined that English was intrinsically a public language and Spanish was intrinsically private," he "easily noted the difference between classroom language and the language at home" (Aria 260). What are the characteristics of his concept of public and private languages? What impact did his misunderstanding have on his school and home life? What was the turning point in his understanding? How has your sense of private and public changed as you've matured?
- 4) Rodriguez feels that bilingual education is a bad idea. "It is not possible for a child, any child, ever to use his family's language in school" (Aria 256). What does he mean by this? How does he support his claim? Do you agree or disagree with him? Why? Remembering your first day of school, how would you have felt if you had walked into a room in which no one understood you, including your teacher?
- 5) . . . Additional questions will be added as we discuss the articles by Rich, Kozol and Gardner.

In the following I've listed all of the works we've read or will read before this paper is due, so of course you should only include those that you actually cite in your paper.

### WORKS CITED

Bloom, Lynn Z., Louise Z. Smith, and Ning Yu, eds. *The Brief Arlington Reader: Canons and Contexts*.

Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2004.

Gardner, Howard. "Who Owns Intelligence?" Bloom 319-331.

Hoggart, Richard. "The Uses of Literacy." Bloom 273-275.

*New York Times*. "Ending the Bilingual Double-Talk." Bloom 275-277.

"Paz, Octavio. "The Labyrinth of Solitude." 268-271.

Rodriguez, Richard. "Aria: A Memoir of Bilingual Childhood." Bloom 255-265.

---. "'I Am This Man': Writing a Memoir Defines a 'Self' within a Cultural Tradition." Bloom 266.

---. "Interview (1994)." Bloom 266-267.

---. "Interview (1999)." Bloom 279-280.

---. "Slouching towards Los Angeles." Bloom 267-268.

Rich, Adrienne. "Taking Women Students Seriously." Bloom 300-307.

Tan, Amy. "Mother Tongue." Bloom 55-58.

Villarreal, José Antonio. "Pocho." Bloom 271-273.

Zweig, Paul. "The Child of Two Cultures." Bloom 277-279.