

## Syllabus---Part 1

### Required Texts: (Both of them are in the LaGuardia Bookstore.)

1. Thurgood Marshall, Warrior at the Bar, Rebel on the Bench by Michael D. Davis and Hunter R. Clark. I describe this book below.
3. Keys for Writers by Ann Raimos. Published by Houghton Mifflin. This book shows you the mechanics of the research paper such as parenthetical documentation and bibliographies.

Our major topic this semester is youth in the past and present, and the problems that American youth face. I am interested in how our children and teenagers develop their aspirations for the future. In other words, how do children develop their ideas or images of what they will become in the future. In addition to reading assignments in our books, there will be a number of articles distributed in class about youth and American society.

Why are we reading about Thurgood Marshall, if our main topic is youth? Marshall, as you may remember, was the first Afro-American on the Supreme Court, our highest court which decides if local legal decisions comply with our constitution. As you read to page 46 which you will need to do to write essay 1, you will see the role of Marshall's parents in his life. Think about his parents. Were they active or passive? Did their own educations and interests influence his education and interests? What did you learn about his peer group during his teenage years? Was his teenage peer group or his parents the major influence when he was a teenager?

I think that we can use this biography as a starting point for discussing and writing about a number of issues: parents and peer groups, socialization in general, politics and civil rights, the obstacles of the past--the racism of the Jim Crow period, the obstacles youth face in this country today, how politics and ecology influence our aspirations, etc.

Essay One--the rough draft is due on January 13; the final draft is due on January 15. In this essay please compare how Marshall's parents and grandparents raised him and what they expected of him, with the actions of parents in New York City today. You might write about the difficulties of raising children in both eras. In which era, Baltimore of the 1920's with its Jim Crow laws, or in New York City today, is the job of parenting more difficult? Why?

My goal is to compare parenting in the past and the present and in this way compare society in the past and present. We will use Thurgood Marshall and his parents as an example of the past.

1. You could start with a general introduction such as this:  
Parents of every generation face challenges. Parent have many responsibilities to their children. They have to\_\_\_\_\_. Several more sentences.  
We will write this introduction in class on Wednesday.
2. Then a transition: One example of successful parenting is the life of Thurgood Marshall--a famous Supreme Court justice.
3. Then go into the past--explain how Marshall's parents raised him with quotes from the book. Please use at least one long or short quote from the book to back up your ideas about Marshall and please cite the page. We will review MLA citations in class on Wednesday.
4. Another transition to get to the present.
5. Then your opinions on parenting in the present.

## BUDDY BOYS

Wilson Arena

Mr. McCabe 2-A2

Buddy Boys is a very interesting book. It shows how cops nowadays deal with society. We think that cops are all about helping society from crime, robbers, ect., but the truth is that cops are robbing people just as well. There are selling and taking drugs from the streets and making negotiations with dealers.

Certain cops need to be stopped and be put behind bars. The cops' main spot was located at the streets of Brooklyn, where all the drugs were located. They would run the streets by making drug dealers pay them off weekly for the return of not being turned in. Cops will also bust into a dealer's apartment, and take all their money and drugs away and sell them back to the dealers for double the amount.

They were so into making more money, that they decided to make there own little organization of cops , called "Buddy Boys," which they were able to reach each other through the radio with out any one tracing them down whenever they made a raid.

Buddy Boys is a very terrific book, which I recomend to others to read and enjoy and learn more about cops in New York and how they deal with today's society.

Carlisle Gustave

FL 102-53

Jim McCabe

2/5/96. 8/13/96

How did McCall transform himself  
whilst in prison.

I feel proud when I read stories where young  
black prison inmates have turned their lives around  
while serving a prison sentence. Makes me wanna holler  
by Nathan McCall provides that sentiment. Of course, there  
are several defining moments and events which account  
for the transformations, each, vary from individual to  
individual. In the case of McCall, one of the factors  
which fueled his decision to turn over a new leaf  
was the positive influence of the "progressive" elements

within his prison camp. Two names readily come to mind.

"Mo Battle" and "Jim." No other factor was more significant than McCall's decision to educate himself by reading up on ~~philosophy or philosophers~~ <sup>2k</sup> black history, and philosophies. These factors all helped McCall to better understand the past, the present, and most importantly himself.

There is little doubt in my mind that the philosophical teachings of Mo Battle and Jim were the sort of inspirational parental guidance which McCall lacked during his adolescence years. At an early age, McCall had been exposed to the harsh street life of Cavalier Manor, and his only mentors were uneducated neighborhood youths who lured him into a life of armed robbery,

drug use, gang fights, and gang bangs; the "stereotypical" lifestyle of young blacks, struggling to survive in our racist society

As McCall recalls, "I sat there and thought about all the fuck-up things going on in the world, and in my life... I felt lost, alone and out of place. My life was going down the drain, and I saw it happening and seemed unable to do a damn thing to stop it" (126).  
good, short, direct sentence!

Mo Battle's influence came in first. After noting that young

McCall had potential, and <sup>that</sup> he was probably a victim of

bad company, Mo Battle taught McCall about the fundamentals

of life, basic principles which Mo Battle thought McCall

were probably aware of, but had not had the guts to

execute. Using the game of chess, he explained that a

person comes out a winner if he plans the course

of his life, and thinks ahead before he acts. Mo Battle also taught ~~about~~ the consequences of life, and how a person ought to weight potential effects of his action before he acts, because he virtually has no control on the outcome of his actions. Perhaps, forced by the pressures of The brutal world of prison, McCall found solace from what Mo Battle had to say. As

McCall noted:

I'd never look at life like that. I had seldom weighed the consequences of anything until after I'd done it. I'd do something crazy and then brace myself for ~~the~~ outcome, whatever it happened to be. I had no control over the outcome and no control over my life. When I thought about it, that was a helluva stupid way to live. (1948)

While Mo Battle's teachings addressed <sup>or life's</sup> life fundamentals,

Jim tackled the issue of black power, and the important

of learning about black history. Jim lectured heavily on

the racial war between blacks and whites, the intellectual

competence of blacks, and how whites are constantly

undermining the contributions of blacks, moral standards

of blacks and whites, and in general, the many mis-

conceptions surrounding the black race. Although McCall

did not have a formal high school education, he had not

been exposed to "black philosophies," and was virtually

aware of the many indoctrinations and myths that have

plagued the black race. Suddenly, to McCall, being

black was to be proud, and that blacks had every

right to develop in the "white mainstream." As McCall

recalls:

I reflect on these and other myth that may have influenced my thinking as a child, and I realised that Malcolm X, Chicago, Jim and so many other cats were right: Black people had been systematically brainwashed... Without realising it, we'd been taught to hate ourselves and love white people and it was causing us to self destruct. (1999)

This was a situation which McCall would chose not to let occur. He braved to beat the odds, and to prove the racist pundits wrong. He refused to be yet another doomed black youth.

Perhaps, McCall's biggest inspiration for change came from reading up on black history, and becoming familiar with the struggles of blacks in our society.

Initial inspiration came from the novel "Native Son"  
underline the ~~books~~ books

which vividly brought McCall into touch with his own racial fears, anger and hopelessness. Other inspirational materials which brought McCall to reality included, "As a man thinketh" which dealt with the powers of active thinking, the autobiography of "Malcolm X," which demonstrated how a person can pull himself together after going to prison, and "Natural Psychology and human Transformation" which helped McCall to view himself in a different light. McCall now realized that despite the racial friction blacks encounter working in our society, blacks had to take care of their own destiny. They had to learn to survive the odds, and to play the "Whites" at their own game. According to McCall:

When I first started reading, studying, and reflecting on the information I got from books, I had no idea where it all might lead. Really, it didn't matter. I was hungry for change and so excited by the sense of awakening I glimpsed on the horizon that the one thing that mattered was that I made a start. (159+)

It is ironic how many of us fail to reel up on black history, and philosophies, yet this is the same tool which can often bail us out of our inferior complex, a condition which we often suffer whilst struggling in racism. I can't help but wonder what McCall's life would have been, had he been versed in black philosophy during his <sup>good point</sup> adolescence years. Indeed, I can't help but wonder how many of us would have turned out, if we were lectured in black philosophies during our high school years.

over