

My Fellow Scholars,

With about a week and a half left in "school," I'd like to be able to tell you I've taught you everything I know. Most years I might be able to come close to that, but I'm still grieving our lost classroom time together this spring. I've been reading your Sophomore Syntheses, and you will receive feedback on yours before the official end of school, and you will also get feedback on all post-SS assignments. This email contains your second of two asynchronous assignments for this week, and I will also post it on the Canvas syllabus page. We will have a Zoom meeting next week, and I'll ask you then to express your hopes and fears going into the summer and into next school year.

I know I'm not the first to say this, but my hope is that the national uprising against persistent, systemic racism will lead--immediately and sustainably--to real justice and real policy change, that it's not just a movement. This was a theme in many of the reflections you wrote, as were worries of hypocrisy and inauthenticity in people's participation in the movement. I will be ashamed if my own words are not tied to sustained action, and I want you all to hold me--and each other--accountable. Some of your reflections have reminded me that my work as a teacher is meaningless if my teaching priorities are not true to my values, reflective of society's needs, and clear to students. When my sophomores study *Of Mice and Men* next year, the first discussion we have, not the second or third, will be about the book's portrayals of race and racism. When we read *The Bluest Eye*, the primary focus will be on the psychological, emotional and physical impacts of racial and gender inequalities inside and outside the book; and the way this book teaches us how to write our own fiction will come second. I also want to find ways to celebrate racial and ethnic diversity through its cultural manifestations--food, music, etc; when I was in school this was done in social studies classes and special events, but I'd like to see it across the curriculum in classrooms like my own. These are just a few examples of the changes I am going to make.

Please complete one of the following, and share or email me your work by 11:59pm Friday.

- a) Complete any of the choices from earlier this week that you did not already.
- b) Write another reflection on your feelings and thoughts about the injustice in our society right now and/or the national and local responses. What are your hopes and fears?
- c) If you started work on a 10-minute play, continue by writing another page or two (but it's not too late to start one if you haven't yet).
- d) Irony in *Streetcar*: I introduced *Streetcar* to you by praising its use of irony, and if this category of inquiry interests you, you can follow through with it here. Below are 7 examples of irony in the play. Choose 5 of them, and for each one you choose, explain why it's ironic and which kind--Situational (opposite happens of what should), Verbal (discrepancy between what is said and meant), or Dramatic (audience knows something that a character on stage does not). You may need to reread some parts of the play. Two or three sentences for each should suffice.

1. Stella's name means "star."

2. It is Mitch who tears off the paper lantern to look at Blanche in the light.
3. Stanley overhears the conversation between Blanche and Stella in which Blanche calls him an animal. He joins the women without saying anything about what he has heard.
4. Blanche's song about the paper moon and make believe.
5. Blanche is bathing when Stanley arrives with information about her past.
6. Blanche's statement, "Whoever you are—I have always depended on the kindness of strangers."
7. Blanche leaves the apartment on the arm of the doctor.

Best,  
A. Bennett