

Teacher's Example *Writing in the Works* Homework Eight

Homework Eight

Research professional reviews of your nonfiction book to prepare for the second essay/book review. I suggest taking brief notes in **response** style. I've also lifted possible passages in full or in selected chunks that I may **quote** later. Using the OCC Library Databases Academic One File and General Reference Center Gold I simply copied and pasted material directly from the articles into my own electronic notes. (Be careful with quotations!)

In an electronic world, copy and paste **Works Cited listings** directly off Oakland Community College Library Databases, too. If you use any other pathway to sources, you will need to create Works Cited listings. Consult an MLA reference such as *Keys for Writers* for the details about citing a specific kind of source. Keep track of all sources. If a source is not quoted or paraphrased or consulted for a piece, do not include it on your Works Cited page.

In a short amount of time, I found 6 sources on 2 OCC Library Databases using the search terms:

Brinkley + "Rosa Parks"

"Two kinds of heroism; Simone Weil and Rosa Parks." The Economist (US) (July 21, 2001): NA. General Reference Center Gold. Gale. Oakland Community College. 26 Sept. 2009
<<http://find.galegroup.com/gtx/start.do?prodId=GRGM>>.

(no commentary-no good, just an announcement of publication and brief summary)

"ROSA PARKS." Publishers Weekly 247.22 (May 29, 2000): 61. General Reference Center Gold. Gale. Oakland Community College. 26 Sept. 2009
<<http://find.galegroup.com/gtx/start.do?prodId=GRGM>>

This is the entire article, copies and pasted from the database. I can highlight key passages now that I may want to quote or paraphrase later.

"In the second volume to date of the popular Penguin Lives series to be devoted to a woman (remarkably, only four of the projected 26 subjects will be female), historian Brinkley shreds several key myths surrounding Rosa Parks, the African-American woman who became "the Mother of the Civil Rights Movement" at the age of 42, when she boldly defied Jim Crow laws by refusing to give up her seat to a white rider on a segregated bus in 1955. The act catalyzed the historic 381-day Montgomery bus boycott and stirred the nation's conscience. Yet Parks has a more complex personality than is suggested by her shy, soft-spoken public persona, Brinkley reveals. Despite a humble, fatherless childhood in rural Alabama, she quickly distinguished herself as a tireless worker with the local NAACP, devoting her energies to area youth groups, recording the problems of victims of hate crimes and participating in the organization's major state conferences. Brinkley (The Unfinished Presidency, etc.) pinpoints the origins of Parks's

strength and strong social commitment as he details the legalized segregation that tainted every aspect of Southern life. His short, compelling scenes rivet the reader, although some merely expand on previously disclosed events, such as the wave of jealousy and backbiting among Parks's peers, her resurgence in Detroit politics as an aide to Representative John Conyers and the savage beating and robbery that almost took her life in 1994. Like several books in this series, Brinkley's tribute to Parks succeeds not because of an abundance of fresh revelations but because of its wealth of insight and rich portraiture." This review appreciates Brinkley's enthusiastic style.

Anderson, Michael P. "Parks, Rosa." *Biography* 24.1 (Wntr 2001): 351. *Academic OneFile*. Gale. Oakland Community College. 26 Sept. 2009
<<http://find.galegroup.com/gtx/start.do?prodId=AONE>>.

Here, I've copied and pasted one quote I might want to use.

"[T]he Montgomery bus boycott has been the subject of several memoirs and scholarly works, and Brinkley, a conscientious researcher, does a more than adequate job of retelling the familiar story. He also interviewed Parks, and several other veterans of the civil rights movement; though he frequently pads the narrative, he can also deliver the telling anecdote."

Commentary cuts on Brinkley's enthusiasm, which others have done (Slate.com).

Hodari, Askhari. "Rosa Parks." *Black Issues Book Review* 3.1 (Jan 2001): 56. *Academic OneFile*. Gale. Oakland Community College. 26 Sept. 2009
<<http://find.galegroup.com/gtx/start.do?prodId=AONE>>.

"Brinkley succeeds in giving a competent chronological treatment of Parks' history, and in making appropriate arguments for Parks as an activist before and beyond December 1, 1955. However, Brinkley hurries through Parks' childhood and later life with a few chapters and anecdotes. He often undermines his own efforts by placing heavy written emphasis on the Montgomery Bus Boycott, the Civil Rights Movement and on Martin Luther King, Jr."

The writer is demanding. This question has no answer. Brinkley is well aware of this eternal tension.

"Readers may still wonder if Parks refused to stand for overtly political reasons (an all white jury had just acquitted two of the suspected murderers of Emmett Till) or simply because she was physically tired that December day?"

"Since Brinkley has chosen to tie much of Parks' life back to December 1955, this book does not satisfactorily stretch the legacy of Parks beyond what many readers already know. Consequently,

readers are left to wonder about other controversies, joys and challenges in her long, important life. While historically sound, on a personal level this biography, unlike the woman, often disappoints.”

It seems to me Brinkley got as deep into the woman as anyone. And what about the fact that no one else (from the black community or elsewhere) has stepped forward to write a better book?

"Sitting tight for civil rights; Politics." Sunday Times (London, England) (March 4, 2001): 43. Academic OneFile. Gale. Oakland Community College. 27 Sept. 2009 <<http://find.galegroup.com/gtx/start.do?prodId=AONE>>.

This longer article is the deepest, but still problematic. Brings up female angle and adds its own questionable commentary.

“Other experiences were less reassuring. Brinkley is quite open about the fact that Parks felt slighted at the great 1963 march on Washington when women somehow seemed left out of King's "dream". (Strangely, this did not stop her lending her support to Louis Farrakhan's own even more sexist "million-man march to the US Congress" in Washington more than 30 years later).”

I did not notice this idea. I'll have to reread and see what I think.

“There is, indeed, some suggestion in the text, although the author is too polite to make it explicit, that by then Parks had grown a bit odd. She was a warm admirer of Malcolm X and Brinkley writes openly of his "black nationalist philosophy" being "the one she would embrace as the civil rights struggle intensified in the 1960s". Possibly, it was as well she never quite made it to being more than an icon. The determined, respectful woman who started the blaze that did away with the Jim Crow laws of the South possessed, as her later conduct was to show, some fairly fiery instincts within herself as well.”

What does this mean? Best for women to keep quiet if their views are controversial?

"Analysis: Douglas Brinkley, author and commentator, discusses his new book, 'Rosa Parks'.(12:00 Noon-1:00 PM)(Broadcast transcript)." Weekend Edition Sunday (Sept 3, 2000): NA. Academic OneFile. Gale. Oakland Community College. 27 Sept. 2009 <<http://find.galegroup.com/gtx/start.do?prodId=AONE>>.

Here's an interview with Brinkley. Some parts I lifted and highlighted.

“ . . .And, you know, she always was humiliated about the notion of being arrested, because Rosa Parks was a law-abiding person. In fact, when she got arrested, the saying all over Montgomery was, 'Boy, they arrested the wrong woman now,' because Rosa Parks was the kind of woman that would make

chicken soup for you when you were sick or, you know, baby-sit if need be. She was a community grassroots activist who just wanted to see the young people, in particular, the black young people in Montgomery, be treated fairly. And she always had her rage under control. She never lost her temper, I found out. And I think that's what everybody I talked to always talks about how even keeled Rosa Parks was and is. And that comes from a bit of serenity of her soul. She once said to me, 'You know, James Baldwin, you know, always talked about rage being at the key to understanding African-American life.' She said, 'Love is what the key is.' And I think she was able to live that in the same way Dr. King did and it's what makes both Parks and King such enduring universal figures. They've always put love over rage.

talked to many people in Montgomery, and Blake is known for being a particularly bigoted character.

Love and faith. A Feminist and a lady. Steadfast and strong. Brinkley's book speaks louder than the criticism against it. Context (where are the stories about women?) is largely missing in the reviews but not in Brinkley's book.