

SOURCE PACKET IV: INTERPRETING IMPERFECT INFORMATION

We will use the following source to continue our lesson on how all documents—including supposedly objective academic works—must be considered in light of the context in which they were written. As you read the following sources, please jot down your impressions—anything you find striking, interesting, confusing, or otherwise worth your attention—in the margins or in a separate notebook.

Source: "Fierce and Unnatural Cruelty": Cortés and the Conquest of Mexico

Please see attached packet.

II. Vocabulary

From Text¹

alienation: The state of being withdrawn or isolated from the objective world

atomistic: Consisting of many separate, often disparate elements, as in “an atomistic culture”

augury: An omen, token, or indication

bequeath: To hand down; pass on

consummation: An ultimate goal or end; a fulfillment

credulity: Willingness to believe or trust too readily, esp. without proper evidence; gullibility

daisy chain: A series of interconnected or related things or events

dappled: Having spots of a different shade, tone, or color from the background; mottled

delict: A misdemeanor; offense

denouement: The outcome or resolution of a doubtful series of occurrences

desacralization: to remove the aura of sacredness, holiness, or sanctity from; secularize

discrepancy: An instance of difference or inconsistency

effete: Depleted of vitality, force, or effectiveness; exhausted; effeminate or feminine

elide: To suppress; omit; ignore; pass over

founder (verb): To become wrecked; fail utterly

incorrigibility: Firmly fixed; not easily changed; unable to be corrected

incredulity: Inability or unwillingness to believe; doubt; skepticism

insidious: Intended to entrap or beguile; stealthily treacherous or deceitful

jubilant: Showing great joy, satisfaction, or triumph; rejoicing; exultant

morale: Emotional or mental condition; one’s degree of cheerfulness, confidence, and zeal

mystification: to perplex (a person) by playing upon the person's credulity; bewilder purposely

obdurate: Unmoved by persuasion, pity, or tender feelings; stubborn; unyielding

paradox: A seemingly contradictory statement that may nonetheless be true: *the paradox that standing is more tiring than walking*

precarious: Exposed to or involving danger; dangerous; perilous; risky; uncertain; unstable; insecure

predilection: A tendency to think favorably of something in particular; partiality; preference

protocols: A code of correct conduct; e.g., “safety protocols,” “academic protocol”

scapegoat (noun): One that is made to bear the blame of others.

scapegoat (verb): To blame someone, as in “to scapegoat a friend for the theft.”

vicissitudes: Changes or variations occurring in the course of something, e.g., “the vicissitudes of time”

¹ “Dictionary.com,” Dictionary.com, LLC, <http://dictionary.reference.com/>.

GRE Words²

Exculpate: To free from blame or guilt

Extirpate: Root out, destroy

Insouciance: Careless unconcern; indifference

Minatory: Menacing, threatening

Probity: Goodness, integrity

III. Bibliography³

Chapman, Michael. *The Historian's Companion*. Reading, MA: Trebarwyth Press, 2008.

Clendinnen, Inga. "Fierce and unnatural cruelty: Cortés and the conquest of Mexico." "The New World," special issue, in *Representations* 33 (Winter 1991): 65-100.

"Dictionary.com." Dictionary.com, LLC. <http://dictionary.reference.com/>. Accessed August 30, 2009.

² Michael Chapman, *The Historian's Companion* (Reading, MA: Trebarwyth Press, 2008).

³ For the sake of brevity, the sources of sources are not listed in the bibliography.