

## 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

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### From Text<sup>1</sup>

**alienation:** The state of being withdrawn or isolated from the objective world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

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

## GRE Words<sup>2</sup>

**Exculpate:** To free from blame or guilt

**Extirpate:** Root out, destroy

**Insouciance:** Careless unconcern; indifference

**Minatory:** Menacing, threatening

**Probity:** Goodness, integrity

## III. Bibliography<sup>3</sup>

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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.

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

<sup>3</sup> For the sake of brevity, the sources of sources are not listed in the bibliography.