



## Master of one's domain: Home Rule & Colonialism HON 201A: Prompts for writing response #5

### Instructions:

1. Format: 2 pages; 12-point type; double line-spaced
2. Deadline: Thursday, Feb. 28

Here are the prompts:

### Mitchell's Home Rule

To what extent, if any, does happiness or the good life require restraint of “instinctive” behavior? All 21<sup>st</sup>-century humans seem to accept and, more than that, to take “rightful pride” in our capacity for “moral” behavior. We seem to believe that a “greater good” may come from moral restraint for the individual and for those around us. How does this square with the popularity of, for example, *The Simpsons* or the *Jackass* series of films, of sex tours to Thailand, etc.? Advertising, too, would seem to celebrate an “un-restrained,” hedonistic approach to Happiness. What do you think?

Write an analysis of the out-dated or anachronistic quality of the “seven deadly sins” from our culture’s current point of view — as seen in one or more TV shows, motion pictures or in contemporary advertising. Do these media promote the “destruction of moral restraint,” and is that “bad?” If it is, how so?

Is a good life a thoughtful life? Mitchell argues that it is, and that a thoughtful life is an educated life, one that is spent discerning Reason from rubbish, good from lesser, better from worse. Education creates the capacity for self-government, to be King of one’s own home land. Is, then, a good life the same thing as an educated life (or a life of true or real education)? (145)

True education, or philosophy to Mitchell, has power only within, as an arbiter of what comes in from the outside and as a defense from what comes in from the outside, like popular culture and mass mediated messages (advertising). Do you find this to be true? (146)

In the first four paragraphs of this chapter, Mitchell offers a “simple” definition of what education ought to be as well as a definition that is more commonly accepted. What is he getting at with these definitions?

In paragraph 12, Mitchell comments that “we” have not gone to the moon nor have “we” grasped the atom’s inner secrets. Some have, but “we” have not.

Sloppy thinking, even more sloppy use of language, “allows” us to “think” of our “selves” as advanced, better than, more knowledgeable than, even “wiser” than our ancient ancestors. What insights are here? What do we “see?” What is the relationship between self, education, and a good life hinted at here?

## **Colonialism**

Mitchell’s chapter 10 on Colonialism may be the most intellectually challenging essay we have read thus far. It is dense with ideas. The first 19 paragraphs, perhaps the whole essay, depend on “retrieving” the core idea of the 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph. What is that core idea?

Paragraphs 22-25 (22 beginning “Here in my kingdom...”) are central ideas to this chapter and to the concept of self-government. In turn, Mitchell argues that self-government is essential if one is to have a “good life.” Can you explain (or, to remember Booth, “retrieve his intent on”) why he asserts that “conscience” as it is normally understood and used may not be a good counselor, helping one to make “better” choices?