

# Exploring an Issue through **Multiple Voices**

(A Tri-C Common Reading Program Assignment)

Total Points Possible: \_\_\_\_\_

Due: \_\_\_\_\_

## Required Reading:

*The Postmortal*, pages 1 - 72

## Background:

This assignment asks you to “try on” a particular style – one which Magary utilizes at various junctures, especially in the first half of his novel. To examine this technique, refer to pages 70-72 of *The Postmortal*. At this juncture, the reader experiences a critical incident through the reactions of seven different individuals and/or groups:

- *The Atlantic*
- Bob Mendel
- Farrell’s dad
- Allan Atkins
- Choosedearth.org
- Farrell’s sister
- Joe Weiss (NBC)

Please re-read pages 70 – 72 now, to better understand the assignment which follows.

## Assignment:

In a brief journal entry (which you’ll post to the Discussion Board on Blackboard), use Magary’s technique of drawing from multiple perspectives to explore a controversial topic.

First, select a current event and summarize the incident in 4-6 sentences. Then, piece together a collage of various reactions to that event. In other words, compile quotes from five different people, entities or groups whose comments reflect diverse vantage points on the event. (Each quote should be 1-4 sentences in length).

For this journal entry, you do NOT need to offer commentary on the quotes. Just provide a preliminary framework of the issue (a few sentences in length) and then present the five quotes.

- Remember, you’ll want to use an *actual* current event (not a fictitious event).
- After posting your own entry, respond to any three (3) of your classmates’ Discussion Board posts. As you do, comment on the incident described and reflect upon one or two of the quotes.
- Please refer to the next page for examples.

Original Discussion Board Post: \_\_\_ points (minimum length: 250 words)

Three Response Posts: 3 @ \_\_\_ points each = \_\_\_ points (minimum length per response: 50 words)

## EXAMPLE 1

You might, for example, provide a brief synopsis of “Deflategate” – the circumstances spurring recent allegations that New England Patriots quarterback Tom Brady was aware of (or even coordinated) efforts to deflate footballs prior to the A.F.C championship game against the Indianapolis Colts.

After capturing the essence of “Deflategate” in few sentences, you would then string together actual quotes from five individuals (or groups). You might, for example, compile brief quotes from:

- Tom Brady (quarterback, New England Patriots)
- Bill Belichick (coach, New England Patriots)
- Roger Goodall (NFL Commissioner)
- Chuck Pagano (coach, Indianapolis Colts)
- Jackie MacMullan (ESPN Senior Writer)

## EXAMPLE 2

Or, you might explore various individuals’ (or agencies’) reactions to Eric Garner’s death. You would, once again, start by providing a brief synopsis (4-6 sentences) of the incident.

Sample event summary:

On July 1, 2014, Eric Garner died on a Staten Island street after being stopped by New York City police officers for allegedly selling untaxed cigarettes. After declaring his innocence, Garner was brought to the ground and held in what some have described as a “chokehold,” despite Garner’s numerous attempts to convince officers he could not breathe. Garner’s death was recorded on a bystander’s cell phone. The resulting video of his arrest and death went viral and have contributed to an ongoing national conversation about race and law enforcement.

After that brief synopsis, you would compile quotes from five individuals, organizations or groups – quotes describing their various reactions to the event. You might, for example, include quotes from the following:

- The New York City Medical Examiner who ruled Garner’s death a homicide
- The grand jury who declined to indict Officer Pantaleo
- A few lines from the Department of Justice’s federal investigation into the incident
- Officer Pantaleo’s statement that he never meant to harm Garner
- Reverend Al Sharpton
- Josh Voorhees (Senior writer for *Slate Magazine*, who published the article entitled “Of Course It Happened Again: Why no one should be surprised NYPD officer Daniel Pantaleo wasn’t indicted in the chokehold death of Eric Garner”)
- Attorney General Eric Holder regarding the federal civil rights investigation into Garner’s death