

AP Seminar - Summer Reading Assignment 2022-2023 - Edison Township

There are two parts to the AP Seminar Summer Reading Assignment. Please read the directions for each and complete each part thoroughly.

PART A

Directions: Read the article below, “Where We Are Shapes Who We Are” by Adam Alter, and then respond to the following three questions. Clearly label and separate each answer.

1. Identify the author’s argument, main idea, or thesis. (3-4 sentences)
2. Explain the author’s line of reasoning by identifying the claims used to build the argument and the connections between them. (2-4 paragraphs)
3. Evaluate the effectiveness of the evidence the author uses to support the claims made in the argument. (2-3 paragraphs)

Where We Are Shapes Who We Are

By Adam Alter
June 14, 2013

IN the early 1970s, a team of researchers dropped hundreds of stamped, addressed letters near college dorms along the East Coast and recorded how many lost letters found their way to a mailbox. The researchers counted each posted letter as a small act of charity and discovered that students in some of the dorms were more generous than others.

Nearly all of the letters dropped near uncrowded dorms — residences where comparatively few students lived on each floor — reached their intended recipients. In contrast, only about 6 in 10 of the letters dropped near crowded dorms completed the journey.

Apparently, the students in high-density housing, where everyone was packed close together, felt less connected to their college mates and this apparently dampened their generosity.

Later, when the researchers asked a different collection of students to imagine how they might have responded had they come across a lost letter, 95 percent of them said they would have posted it regardless of where they were living.

Most people, in fact, think of themselves as generous. In self-assessment studies, people generally see themselves as kind, friendly and honest, too. We imagine that these traits are a set of enduring attributes that sum up who we really are. But in truth, we’re more like chameleons who instinctively and unintentionally change how we behave based on our surroundings.

AP Seminar - Summer Reading Assignment 2022-2023 - Edison Township

Consider another experiment, conducted in 2000. A team of contractors in Glasgow, Scotland, installed a series of blue lights in prominent locations citywide. The lights were designed to make unsightly districts of the city more attractive, but after a few months the city's crime statisticians noticed a striking trend: crime rates declined in the locations that were bathed in blue.

The lights, which mimicked those atop police cars, seemed to imply that the police were watching. In 2005, police in Nara Prefecture, Japan, installed blue lights at crime hot spots and got a similar result: the overall crime rate fell. When others tried the approach, they found that littering and suicide attempts also declined beneath the blue glow.

Theories abound on why the blue lights might deter crime: perhaps because their bright and attention-grabbing incandescence makes shadowy niches feel more open and exposed — or, quite the opposite, that they have a mysterious calming effect. But even subtler interventions seem to have similar consequences.

For example, people behave more honestly in locations that give them the sense they're being watched. A group of psychologists at Newcastle University in northeast England found that university workers were far more likely to pay for tea and coffee in a small kitchen when the honor-system collection box sat directly below a price list featuring an image of a pair of eyes, versus one with flowers. The researchers alternated the pictures of eyes and flowers each week during their 10-week experiment, using eyes from both men and women, to make sure that no single image affected the outcome. In every week featuring the eyes, the "honesty box" ended up with more money.

That study inspired police in West Midlands, England, to place large posters featuring a pair of eyes around town — which, at least according to anecdotal reports, led to a reduction in crime.

Mirrors have the same effect and are arguably even more powerful, because they compel us to peer, metaphorically, into our own souls.

Other environmental cues shape our actions because they subtly license us to behave badly. According to the heavily debated broken windows theory, people who are otherwise well behaved are more likely to commit crimes in neighborhoods with broken windows, which suggests that the area's residents don't care enough to maintain their property.

The theory's authors, James Q. Wilson and George L. Kelling, hypothesized in a 1982 article for *The Atlantic Monthly* that if the broken windows in a building were not repaired, people were more likely to break additional windows in the structure. And that, in turn, would only encourage more vandalism.

The same goes for a sidewalk with litter. The more litter there is, the more accumulates. Eventually,

AP Seminar - Summer Reading Assignment 2022-2023 - Edison Township

people start discarding bags of trash from takeout restaurants there, and this soon leads to more crime in the neglected area.

SINCE 1982, when Professors Wilson and Kelling proposed their theory, the littering example has received plenty of experimental support. In one study, social psychologists placed paper fliers on 139 cars in a large hospital parking lot and watched to see what the car owners would do with them.

Again, the environment appeared to shape the response. When drivers emerged from the hospital to find a parking lot littered with scattered fliers, candy wrappers and coffee cups (arranged by the researchers, of course), nearly half of them removed the fliers from their cars and left them on the ground. In contrast, when the researchers swept the parking lot clean before the drivers returned, only 1 in 10 dropped the flier.

Unwittingly, the drivers adopted the behavior that seemed most appropriate given their understanding of the area's prevailing norms.

These studies tell us something profound, and perhaps a bit disturbing, about what makes us who we are: there isn't a single version of "you" and "me." Though we're all anchored to our own distinct personalities, contextual cues sometimes drag us so far from those anchors that it's difficult to know who we really are — or at least what we're likely to do in a given circumstance.

It's comforting to believe that there's an essential version of each of us — that good people behave well, bad people behave badly, and those tendencies reside within us.

But the growing evidence suggests that, on some level, who we are — litterbug or good citizen, for example — changes from moment to moment, depending on where we happen to be.

These environmental cues can shape and reshape us as quickly as we walk from one part of the city to another.

Published in: 8/29/2020 Opinion | Where We Are Shapes Who We Are - The New York Times

AP Seminar - Summer Reading Assignment 2022-2023 - Edison Township

PART B

Directions: Read the following four sources (A, B, C, and D) carefully, focusing on a theme or issue that connects them and the different perspectives each represents. Then, write a logically organized, well-reasoned, and well-written argument that presents your own perspective on the theme or issue you identified. You must incorporate at least two of the sources provided and link the claims in your argument to supporting evidence. In your response, you can refer to the sources as Source A, Source B, or by the author’s name.
(Essay should be 5 paragraphs in length)

Source A: From the 2021 U.S. Presidential Inauguration Poem: “The Hill We Climb” by Amanda Gorman

Source B: From the essay: “Mother Tongue” by Amy Tan

Source C: Presented by *CBS Sports* - 2021 National Football League Superbowl Video “Invisible No More: Evolution of the Black Athlete in the NFL” narrated by Viola Davis

Source D: From *New York Times*: “For Diversity Leaders in the Arts, Getting Hired Is Just the First Step” by Robin Pogrebin

AP Seminar - Summer Reading Assignment 2022-2023 - Edison Township

Source A: From the 2021 U.S. Presidential Inauguration Poem: "The Hill We Climb"
By Amanda Gorman

When day comes we ask ourselves,
where can we find light in this never-ending
shade?
The loss we carry,
a sea we must wade
We've braved the belly of the beast
We've learned that quiet isn't always peace
And the norms and notions
of what just is
Isn't always just-ice
And yet the dawn is ours
before we knew it
Somehow we do it
Somehow we've weathered and witnessed
a nation that isn't broken
but simply unfinished
We the successors of a country and a time
Where a skinny Black girl
descended from slaves and raised by a single
mother
can dream of becoming president
only to find herself reciting for one
And yes we are far from polished
far from pristine
but that doesn't mean we are
striving to form a union that is perfect
We are striving to forge a union with purpose
To compose a country committed to all cultures,
colors, characters and
conditions of man
And so we lift our gazes not to what stands
between us
but what stands before us
We close the divide because we know, to put our
future first,
we must first put our differences aside
We lay down our arms
so we can reach out our arms
to one another
We seek harm to none and harmony for all

Let the globe, if nothing else, say this is true:
That even as we grieved, we grew
That even as we hurt, we hoped
That even as we tired, we tried
That we'll forever be tied together, victorious
Not because we will never again know defeat
but because we will never again sow division
Scripture tells us to envision
that everyone shall sit under their own vine and
fig tree
And no one shall make them afraid
If we're to live up to our own time
Then victory won't lie in the blade
But in all the bridges we've made
That is the promise to glade
The hill we climb
If only we dare
It's because being American is more than a pride
we inherit,
it's the past we step into
and how we repair it
We've seen a force that would shatter our nation
rather than share it
Would destroy our country if it meant delaying
democracy
And this effort very nearly succeeded
But while democracy can be periodically
delayed
it can never be permanently defeated
In this truth
in this faith we trust
For while we have our eyes on the future
history has its eyes on us
This is the era of just redemption
We feared at its inception
We did not feel prepared to be the heirs
of such a terrifying hour
but within it we found the power
to author a new chapter
To offer hope and laughter to ourselves
So while once we asked,
how could we possibly prevail over catastrophe?
Now we assert
How could catastrophe possibly prevail over us?

AP Seminar - Summer Reading Assignment 2022-2023 - Edison Township

We will not march back to what was
but move to what shall be
A country that is bruised but whole,
benevolent but bold,
fierce and free
We will not be turned around
or interrupted by intimidation
because we know our inaction and inertia
will be the inheritance of the next generation
Our blunders become their burdens
But one thing is certain:
If we merge mercy with might,
and might with right,
then love becomes our legacy
and change our children's birthright
So let us leave behind a country
better than the one we were left with
Every breath from my bronze-pounded chest,
we will raise this wounded world into a
wondrous one
We will rise from the gold-limbed hills of the
west,
we will rise from the windswept northeast
where our forefathers first realized revolution
We will rise from the lake-rimmed cities of the
midwestern states,
we will rise from the sunbaked south
We will rebuild, reconcile and recover
and every known nook of our nation and
every corner called our country,
our people diverse and beautiful will emerge,
battered and beautiful
When day comes we step out of the shade,
aflame and unafraid
The new dawn blooms as we free it
For there is always light,
if only we're brave enough to see it
If only we're brave enough to be it

AP Seminar - Summer Reading Assignment 2022-2023 - Edison Township

Source B

From the essay "Mother Tongue"

By Amy Tan

I am not a scholar of English or literature. I cannot give you much more than personal opinions on the English language and its variations in this country or others.

I am a writer. And by that definition, I am someone who has always loved language. I am fascinated by language in daily life. I spend a great deal of my time thinking about the power of language -- the way it can evoke an emotion, a visual image, a complex idea, or a simple truth. Language is the tool of my trade. And I use them all -- all the Englishes I grew up with.

Recently, I was made keenly aware of the different Englishes I do use. I was giving a talk to a large group of people, the same talk I had already given to half a dozen other groups. The nature of the talk was about my writing, my life, and my book, *The Joy Luck Club*. The talk was going along well enough, until I remembered one major difference that made the whole talk sound wrong. My mother was in the room. And it was perhaps the first time she had heard me give a lengthy speech, using the kind of English I have never used with her. I was saying things like, "The intersection of memory upon imagination" and "There is an aspect of my fiction that relates to thus-and-thus"--a speech filled with carefully wrought grammatical phrases, burdened, it suddenly seemed to me, with nominalized forms, past perfect tenses, conditional phrases, all the forms of standard English that I had learned in school and through books, the forms of English I did not use at home with my mother.

Just last week, I was walking down the street with my mother, and I again found myself conscious of the English I was using, the English I do use with her. We were talking about the price of new and used furniture and I heard myself saying this: "Not waste money that way." My husband was with us as well, and he didn't notice any switch in my English. And then I realized why. It's because over the twenty years we've been together I've often used that same kind of English with him, and sometimes he even uses it with me. It has become our language of intimacy, a different sort of English that relates to family talk, the language I grew up with.

So you'll have some idea of what this family talk I heard sounds like, I'll quote what my mother said during a recent conversation which I videotaped and then transcribed. During this conversation, my mother was talking about a political gangster in Shanghai who had the same last name as her family's, Du, and how the gangster in his early years wanted to be adopted by her family, which was rich by comparison. Later, the gangster became more powerful, far richer than my mother's family, and one day showed up at my mother's wedding to pay his respects. Here's what she said in part: "Du Yusong having business like fruit stand. Like off the street kind. He is Du like Du Zong -- but not Tsung-ming Island people. The local people call putong, the river east side, he belong to that side local people. That man want to ask Du Zong father take him in like become own family. Du Zong father wasn't look down on him, but didn't take seriously, until that man big like become a mafia. Now important person, very hard to inviting him. Chinese way, came only to show respect, don't stay for dinner. Respect for making big celebration, he shows up. Mean gives lots of respect. Chinese custom. Chinese social life that way. If too

AP Seminar - Summer Reading Assignment 2022-2023 - Edison Township

important won't have to stay too long. He come to my wedding. I didn't see, I heard it. I gone to boy's side, they have YMCA dinner. Chinese age I was nineteen."

You should know that my mother's expressive command of English belies how much she actually understands. She reads the Forbes report, listens to Wall Street Week, converses daily with her stockbroker, reads all of Shirley MacLaine's books with ease--all kinds of things I can't begin to understand. Yet some of my friends tell me they understand 50 percent of what my mother says. Some say they understand 80 to 90 percent. Some say they understand none of it, as if she were speaking pure Chinese. But to me, my mother's English is perfectly clear, perfectly natural. It's my mother tongue. Her language, as I hear it, is vivid, direct, full of observation and imagery. That was the language that helped shape the way I saw things, expressed things, made sense of the world.

Lately, I've been giving more thought to the kind of English my mother speaks. Like others, I have described it to people as "broken" or "fractured" English. But I wince when I say that. It has always bothered me that I can think of no way to describe it other than "broken," as if it were damaged and needed to be fixed, as if it lacked a certain wholeness and soundness. I've heard other terms used, "limited English," for example. But they seem just as bad, as if everything is limited, including people's perceptions of the limited English speaker.

I know this for a fact, because when I was growing up, my mother's "limited" English limited my perception of her. I was ashamed of her English. I believed that her English reflected the quality of what she had to say. That is, because she expressed them imperfectly her thoughts were imperfect. And I had plenty of empirical evidence to support me: the fact that people in department stores, at banks, and at restaurants did not take her seriously, did not give her good service, pretended not to understand her, or even acted as if they did not hear her.

My mother has long realized the limitations of her English as well. When I was fifteen, she used to have me call people on the phone to pretend I was she. In this guise, I was forced to ask for information or even to complain and yell at people who had been rude to her. One time it was a call to her stockbroker in New York. She had cashed out her small portfolio and it just so happened we were going to go to New York the next week, our very first trip outside California. I had to get on the phone and say in an adolescent voice that was not very convincing, "This is Mrs. Tan."

And my mother was standing in the back whispering loudly, "Why he don't send me check, already two weeks late. So mad he lie to me, losing me money.

And then I said in perfect English, "Yes, I'm getting rather concerned. You had agreed to send the check two weeks ago, but it hasn't arrived."

Then she began to talk more loudly. "What he want, I come to New York tell him front of his boss, you cheating me?" And I was trying to calm her down, make her be quiet, while telling the stockbroker, "I can't tolerate any more excuses. If I don't receive the check immediately, I am going to have to speak to your manager when I'm in New York next week." And sure enough, the following week there we were in

AP Seminar - Summer Reading Assignment 2022-2023 - Edison Township

front of this astonished stockbroker, and I was sitting there red-faced and quiet, and my mother, the real Mrs. Tan, was shouting at his boss in her impeccable broken English.

We used a similar routine just five days ago, for a situation that was far less humorous. My mother had gone to the hospital for an appointment, to find out about a benign brain tumor a CAT scan had revealed a month ago. She said she had spoken very good English, her best English, no mistakes. Still, she said, the hospital did not apologize when they said they had lost the CAT scan and she had come for nothing. She said they did not seem to have any sympathy when she told them she was anxious to know the exact diagnosis, since her husband and son had both died of brain tumors. She said they would not give her any more information until the next time and she would have to make another appointment for that. So she said she would not leave until the doctor called her daughter. She wouldn't budge. And when the doctor finally called her daughter, me, who spoke in perfect English -- lo and behold -- we had assurances the CAT scan would be found, promises that a conference call on Monday would be held, and apologies for any suffering my mother had gone through for a most regrettable mistake.

I think my mother's English almost had an effect on limiting my possibilities in life as well. Sociologists and linguists probably will tell you that a person's developing language skills are more influenced by peers. But I do think that the language spoken in the family, especially in immigrant families which are more insular, plays a large role in shaping the language of the child. And I believe that it affected my results on achievement tests, I.Q. tests, and the SAT. While my English skills were never judged as poor, compared to math, English could not be considered my strong suit. In grade school I did moderately well, getting perhaps B's, sometimes B-pluses, in English and scoring perhaps in the sixtieth or seventieth percentile on achievement tests. But those scores were not good enough to override the opinion that my true abilities lay in math and science, because in those areas I achieved A's and scored in the ninetieth percentile or higher.

This was understandable. Math is precise; there is only one correct answer. Whereas, for me at least, the answers on English tests were always a judgment call, a matter of opinion and personal experience. Those tests were constructed around items like fill-in-the-blank sentence completion, such as, "Even though Tom was, Mary thought he was --." And the correct answer always seemed to be the most bland combinations of thoughts, for example, "Even though Tom was shy, Mary thought he was charming:" with the grammatical structure "even though" limiting the correct answer to some sort of semantic opposites, so you wouldn't get answers like, "Even though Tom was foolish, Mary thought he was ridiculous:" Well, according to my mother, there were very few limitations as to what Tom could have been and what Mary might have thought of him. So I never did well on tests like that.

The same was true with word analogies, pairs of words in which you were supposed to find some sort of logical, semantic relationship -- for example, "Sunset is to nightfall as is to ." And here you would be presented with a list of four possible pairs, one of which showed the same kind of relationship: red is to stoplight, bus is to arrival, chills is to fever, yawn is to boring: Well, I could never think that way. I knew what the tests were asking, but I could not block out of my mind the images already created by the first pair, "sunset is to nightfall"--and I would see a burst of colors against a darkening sky, the moon rising, the lowering of a curtain of stars. And all the other pairs of words --red, bus, stoplight, boring--just threw up a mass of confusing images, making it impossible for me to sort out something as logical as saying: "A

AP Seminar - Summer Reading Assignment 2022-2023 - Edison Township

sunset precedes nightfall" is the same as "a chill precedes a fever." The only way I would have gotten that answer right would have been to imagine an associative situation, for example, my being disobedient and staying out past sunset, catching a chill at night, which turns into feverish pneumonia as punishment, which indeed did happen to me.

I have been thinking about all this lately, about my mother's English, about achievement tests. Because lately I've been asked, as a writer, why there are not more Asian Americans represented in American literature. Why are there few Asian Americans enrolled in creative writing programs? Why do so many Chinese students go into engineering! Well, these are broad sociological questions I can't begin to answer. But I have noticed in surveys -- in fact, just last week -- that Asian students, as a whole, always do significantly better on math achievement tests than in English. And this makes me think that there are other Asian-American students whose English spoken in the home might also be described as "broken" or "limited." And perhaps they also have teachers who are steering them away from writing and into math and science, which is what happened to me.

Fortunately, I happen to be rebellious in nature and enjoy the challenge of disproving assumptions made about me. I became an English major my first year in college, after being enrolled as pre-med. I started writing nonfiction as a freelancer the week after I was told by my former boss that writing was my worst skill and I should hone my talents toward account management.

But it wasn't until 1985 that I finally began to write fiction. And at first I wrote using what I thought to be wittily crafted sentences, sentences that would finally prove I had mastery over the English language. Here's an example from the first draft of a story that later made its way into *The Joy Luck Club*, but without this line: "That was my mental quandary in its nascent state." A terrible line, which I can barely pronounce.

Fortunately, for reasons I won't get into today, I later decided I should envision a reader for the stories I would write. And the reader I decided upon was my mother, because these were stories about mothers. So with this reader in mind -- and in fact she did read my early drafts--I began to write stories using all the Englishes I grew up with: the English I spoke to my mother, which for lack of a better term might be described as "simple"; the English she used with me, which for lack of a better term might be described as "broken"; my translation of her Chinese, which could certainly be described as "watered down"; and what I imagined to be her translation of her Chinese if she could speak in perfect English, her internal language, and for that I sought to preserve the essence, but neither an English nor a Chinese structure. I wanted to capture what language ability tests can never reveal: her intent, her passion, her imagery, the rhythms of her speech and the nature of her thoughts.

Apart from what any critic had to say about my writing, I knew I had succeeded where it counted when my mother finished reading my book and gave me her verdict: "So easy to read."

AP Seminar - Summer Reading Assignment 2022-2023 - Edison Township

Source C: Presented by *CBS Sports* - 2021 National Football League Superbowl Video
“Invisible No More: Evolution of the Black Athlete in the NFL” narrated by Viola Davis

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SFGPvaKrEog>

AP Seminar - Summer Reading Assignment 2022-2023 - Edison Township

Source D: From *New York Times* article “For Diversity Leaders in the Arts, Getting Hired Is Just the First Step”

By Robin Pogrebin

Growing up in a working class family in Lawrence, Mass., Rosa Rodriguez-Williams said “museums were not part of my experience.”

It is this outsider understanding that Rodriguez-Williams, who is Puerto Rican, said she brings to her new position as the first senior director of belonging and inclusion at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, where she aims to reach “folks who felt sort of like I felt.”

Amid a heightened sense of urgency amid the rise of the Black Lives Matter movement and in the wake of the killing of George Floyd, cultural institutions around the country are hiring their own diversity officers to increase the number of people of color on the staff and board, broaden their programming and address a widely acknowledged pattern of systemic racism.

“We no longer have to persuade each other that we should be doing this at the expense of something else,” said Daniel H. Weiss, the president and chief executive of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, which recently appointed Lavita McMath Turner, an assistant dean at the City University of New York, as its first chief diversity officer.

“Now is the time for us here in our own little world to address these issues,” Weiss added, “which have been plaguing our nation for more than two centuries.”

Lavita McMath Turner, the new chief diversity officer at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, said “equity and inclusion are everyone’s responsibility.”

At the same time, experts warn, longstanding challenges remain — antiracism goals that are hard to measure; finding funds to pay for these efforts; and assuming that the hiring of one dedicated advocate means the work is done.

“The principles of diversity, equity and inclusion are everyone’s responsibility,” said Ms. McMath Turner, adding that she did not feel the burden “to single-handedly change the Met’s 150-year history.”

The new generation of executives are coming in with a range of titles — the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles hired Russell Davis as “chief of human resources, equity and engagement”; the Art Institute of Chicago is searching for a “senior vice president of people and culture” — but they have a broad mandate that ranges from recruiting more trustees of color to changing the internal culture.

“She is an agent for institutional transformation,” Dorothy M. Kosinski, the director of the Phillips Collection in Washington, said of Makeba Clay, the museum’s first chief diversity officer, who previously worked on similar efforts at the Smithsonian and the College of Southern Maryland. “She is leading us on a profound journey of introspection, change, accountability.”

AP Seminar - Summer Reading Assignment 2022-2023 - Edison Township

That Clay was brought on board two years ago speaks to how these issues have been building at cultural institutions, though many say the process has been too slow.

The Los Angeles Philharmonic in July established a diversity, equity and inclusion task force, which includes members of the board, orchestra and staff. Its Resident Fellows program, started in 2018, is now preparing symphonic musicians from underrepresented populations for positions in major professional orchestras.

In some cases it has taken internal investigations to hasten concrete reforms. After seventh graders and a teacher said they had been subjected to racist remarks by staff and other visitors at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston during a 2019 field trip, the institution apologized, studied the group's three-hour visit on security footage and interviewed dozens of people who interacted with the students.

After completing this investigation, the museum publicly committed to “changing protocols and procedures for frontline staff and guards, articulating our expectations for visitor, staff and volunteer behavior, and enhancing ongoing training for all staff and volunteers.”

“Until there is some sunlight that shines on these moments,” said Makeeba McCreary, the MFA's chief of learning and community engagement, “it's really easy to act like they don't happen.”

In October, the museum also announced that Edward E. Greene had been promoted to president of the board — the first African-American person to hold that position in the MFA's 150-year history.

“Who's in the room influences who is on the wall,” said Greene, who is part of a new coalition of Black trustees seeking to make their art museums more diverse. “And we are working hard to ensure that broader voices are at the table — specifically Black and brown voices, which have largely been ignored.”

Edward E. Greene, president of the Board of Trustees at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. “Who's in the room influences who is on the wall,” he said.

The events of the past summer raised consciousness to a new level and accelerated diversity efforts. At the Met in June, staff members in a letter urged the museum's leadership to acknowledge “what we see as the expression of a deeply rooted logic of white supremacy and culture of systemic racism at our institution.”

That same month, at the Guggenheim Museum, a letter signed “The Curatorial Department” demanded wholesale changes to “an inequitable work environment.”

The Guggenheim has just chosen Naomi Beckwith, a veteran senior curator at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, who is Black, to succeed its longtime chief curator, Nancy Spector, who is white. “This is not the first time in history that museums have been pushed to think more critically about the artists they show and who they hire,” said Beckwith, who, starting in June, becomes deputy director and chief curator. “The difference this time is you are seeing people of color coming into leadership positions.”

Last July, the Met issued a list of 13 commitments, including, “Hire a Chief Diversity Officer within four months.”

AP Seminar - Summer Reading Assignment 2022-2023 - Edison Township

“Our goal in the first year is by next summer to have accomplished most of those goals,” Mr. Weiss said.

To be sure, there are those who question the sincerity of these efforts in much the same way they criticized as inadequate the statements that cultural organizations put out in the wake of George Floyd’s killing.

“I’ve been doing this work for over 22 years,” said Rodriguez-Williams of the MFA, “and I can honestly tell you that is literally always the question that I ask myself: ‘Is this performative or is this real?’”

She and other diversity officers say the answer will come from changes both quantifiable and subjective: increasing the number of people of color on staffs and boards; providing paid internships for people of color; making visitors of color feel like they belong.

Cultural leaders say they are well aware that diversity efforts could be viewed as tokenism or a passing trend. “You build credibility through your progress and that’s why we created that list of commitments,” Weiss said. “If we’re doing them, then we’re moving the institution in the right direction, and if we’re not doing them, then we should be replaced.”

McCreary, who in 2018 became the first person of color on the MFA’s leadership team, said institutions need to evaluate managers based on clear criteria. When managers argue they can’t find candidates of color, for example, organizations should say, “you don’t get to hire anybody until you find someone, or you don’t get a merit increase,” McCreary said. “We have to have consequences.”

In the past, relying on a new hire might have checked the box on diversity efforts. Now, institutions are insisting on the involvement of the full staff. “I see the entire organization as my team,” said Clay, who is working on setting benchmarks for progress at the Phillips. “Hiring me is the first step of you all saying, ‘We’re ready to roll up our sleeves together.’”

Strapped nonprofit cultural organizations have had difficulty raising the funds to pay for dedicated diversity officers, especially when the pandemic’s economic toll has forced layoffs and furloughs. Now they have recognized the importance of raising money specifically to hire these specialists (the Phillips Collection’s chief diversity officer position, for example, was funded by the Sherman Fairchild Foundation).

“People realize there needs to be a professional,” said Sarah James, who specializes in cultural executive searches at the firm Phillips Oppenheim. “They’re finding the money for it.”

What will make these hires more meaningful, experts say, is if diversity officers are overseen by institutions’ top managers, not just the human resources department. “If it does not come from the top, it’s not going to work,” said Nancy Huckaba, a vice president at EFL Associates, an executive search firm.

Above all, experts agree, arts executives need to keep hammering away at entrenched institutional inequities — and holding themselves accountable. “It’s about intentionality and purpose,” said Greene, “and having the perseverance to keep pushing it — one trustee, one employee at a time.”