Writing One Common Final Practice

DIRECTIONS: Carefully re-read the passages handed out to you on your previous Writing 1 class and the essay topic below. Respond to the topic by writing an essay that is coherent and specifically developed.

You will have an hour and a half to complete your essay. You may underline and make marginal notes as you read. Plan your essay before you begin writing. Allow time to review and proofread your essay and to make any revisions or corrections you wish.

Your essay will be evaluated using the “Scoring Guide for the Common Final” which is attached to back of this paper. Also, you will be expected to develop your central idea (thesis); express yourself clearly (not lose your reader); and use the conventions of standard written English (use good grammar and syntax).

ESSAY TOPIC: According to Paul Rudnick, being a rebel today means, “I’m sexy and unreliable, and I want your money.” Do you agree or disagree with Rudnick’s opinion of contemporary rebels? Do you think that it is still possible to be a rebel in today’s society? Write your essay in response to these two questions; be sure that you develop your essay by discussing specific examples drawn from Rudnick’s piece, your own experience, your observations of others, or any of the reading that you have ever done.

INTRODUCTION TO PAUL RUDNICK

A mainstay of New York theater since the early 1980s, the openly gay Paul Rudnick has become a latter-day Dorothy Parker, animating plays, screenplays, novels and a column in PREMIERE magazine (under the pseudonym Libby Gelman-Waxner) with his subversive wit. Soon after graduating from Yale, his off-Broadway debut, “Poor Little Lambs” (1982, starring Kevin Bacon and Bronson Pinchot), received mixed notices but attracted Hollywood attention, although ultimately languishing in developmental limbo before the rights reverted to Rudnick.

In the early 90s, Rudnick’s Hollywood career took off. He provided uncredited script doctoring for the comedy hit “The Addams Family” (1991), his first collaboration with producer Scott Rudin, who generously attributed the film’s success to Rudnick’s contributions. “Sister Act” (1992), written in 1987 as a bawdy showcase for Bette Midler, was his first produced screenplay, but after Disney watered it down into a vehicle for Whoopi Goldberg, he decided that the finished product was no longer his work and reluctantly agreed on the pseudonym Joseph Howard after the studio nixed “screenplay by Goofy”. Rudnick finally received screen credit for the far superior sequel “Addams Family Values” (1993), the first time mainstream audiences could appreciate his trademark sensibility in uncompromised form.

After Rudnick helped Rudin out with some uncredited script doctoring on Hugh Wilson’s “The First Wives Club” (1996), the pair teamed again on Frank Oz’s “In & Out” (1997), Rudnick’s original screenplay loosely inspired by Tom Hank’s Oscar acceptance speech mentioning the homosexuality of his high school drama teacher. The “what if” scenario had an award-winning actor (Matt Dillon) “outing” his former teacher (Kevin Kline) just days away from the latter’s wedding day. Though the teacher initially denies he is gay, he comes to accept his homosexuality (his swishy ways and passion for Barbra Streisand), thanks in part to a kiss from an entertainment reporter (Tom Selleck).

Despite his screen success, Rudnick has refused to go Hollywood and continued to live in Greenwich Village and write for the stage.