

**Questions on excerpt, Barbara Ehrenreich - *Nickel and Dimed***

**Homework for Thurs. 10/8: Write about Ques. 1, 5 and one other (about a page)**

1. Barbara Ehrenreich presents herself differently to “go underground” as a low wage worker to discover what it is like to live on a sparse income and to work in jobs such as waitressing and cleaning hotels. To what extent is her approach ethical? Would you consider using this approach yourself as a writer?
2. Barbara Ehrenreich in “Nickel and Dimed...” uses the metaphor of a “parallel universe” to describe the world of low wage work. How well does this metaphor work?
3. How well does Ehrenreich capture the world of waitressing? How does her sense of self change and remain the same in her new role? How would you describe her voice as a writer? Are there any paragraphs or sentences that seem particularly powerful?
4. In what ways does her experience of low-wage work compare with yours (if you’ve held low-wage positions)?
5. How well does Ehrenreich use outside research to provide a larger context for her personal narrative? In what ways do the footnotes add to the text? What would it be like if the footnotes were included in the body of the essay? What would it be like if the footnoted material was not included in the piece?

MIT OpenCourseWare  
<http://ocw.mit.edu>

21W.011 Writing and Rhetoric: Rhetoric and Contemporary Issues  
Fall 2015

For information about citing these materials or our Terms of Use, visit: <http://ocw.mit.edu/terms>.