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Covering the Transgender Community: How Newsrooms Are Moving Beyond the "Coming Out" Story to Report Crucial Transgender Issues

SARA MORRISON

In March of 2014, Jorge Rivas, Fusion's national affairs correspondent, was working on a story about undocumented immigrants when he heard about a transgender woman being held in a men's detention center. "She was stuck in a detention center surrounded by men, often experiencing the same type of harassment she was fleeing in the first place," Rivas says.

Rivas told investigative reporter Cristina Costantini, his co-writer on the story, what he'd heard. It sounded familiar. Their colleague, Kristofer Ríos, recently told Costantini he had heard

similar things about transgender detainees during his own immigration reporting. The three teamed up for a six-month investigation into the treatment of transgender people in Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention centers. “Why Did the U.S. Lock Up These Women With Men?” was the headline. The story received an award for outstanding digital journalism from GLAAD (formerly the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation), and, in June of 2015, ICE announced it would implement new guidelines for transgender detainees.

This past year has been a watershed for media coverage of transgender issues. In 2014, ESPN’s Grantland [a blog] was sharply criticized for a piece that outed a transgender woman and may have contributed to her suicide, while talk show hosts Katie Couric and Piers Morgan were derided for insensitivity toward transgender guests on their respective programs.

In 2015, in contrast, ABC News produced a deeply researched, widely praised educational special in which Caitlyn Jenner came out as transgender. The Washington Post profiled a transgender woman who until recently had been out of work and homeless. In a story focused on a transgender man who is Muslim, the Los Angeles Times looked at conflicts between an individual’s religion and gender identity. And in a series of editorials the New York Times called for changes in the treatment of transgender people and invited the transgender community to tell its own stories on the Times website. In May,

VIDA: Women in Literary Arts announced that it would include statistics on the number of articles written by LBTQI (lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex) writers and writers with disabilities in its next annual VIDA Count of bylines in literary publications.

Transgender people—models, actors, musicians, authors, athletes, a former Army soldier serving time for espionage—have increasingly entered the public consciousness. With this increased visibility has come increased media coverage. Kris Hayashi, executive director of the Transgender Law Center in the San Francisco Bay Area, remembers how when he came out as transgender in the late 1990s there was very little to be found in the mainstream media about people like him. Now, he says, the transgender community is covered with a frequency that was "unimaginable" even three years ago.

Says Meredith Talusan, who in 2015 became BuzzFeed's first openly transgender staff writer and covers transgender issues for the website, "Now, it's actually possible to gain knowledge about trans issues from mainstream media sources. More of those sources have been willing to respect the ways in which trans people want to be addressed and portrayed, though there's still a lot to be done."

Despite this progress, the general population still knows relatively little about the transgender community. In a recent survey by the Human Rights Campaign (HRC), the largest LGBT

civil rights organization in the U.S., only 22 percent of respondents said they knew a transgender person. This lack of knowledge, combined with the rapid rise in visibility for transgender people, has created unique challenges for newsrooms. Very few newsrooms have any openly transgender staffers.

How do journalists cover a community, which has been for so long maligned and voiceless, in ways that are considerate of that community's needs as well as those of readers, some of whom need basic concepts explained? Most coverage to date has tended to focus on one transgender person's pre-transition life and gender reassignment surgery, while rarely reporting on the wider transgender community. Stories have also often used terminology and pronouns that were objectionable to the transgender person. Reporters writing about the transgender community, for which violence and discrimination are major concerns, have to educate themselves about terminology and spend extra time building the rapport that can lead to nuanced coverage.

That was certainly the case with the Fusion investigation of transgender detainees in federal immigration facilities. Rivas and his Fusion colleagues needed to talk to transgender people, some of whom were victims of sexual assault, whose shaky immigration statuses landed them in ICE detention centers. Any of these three factors on its own could make a source wary of going public. In addition, the Fusion reporters needed people

who were willing to tell their stories on camera. Apart from the reporting challenges, Rivas says, the team wondered how much readers who weren't transgender would care about their subjects, members of a long-stigmatized community.

Before Rivas could meet with Barbra Perez, a transgender detainee featured in his Fusion piece, he met with Olga Tomchin, whose work at the Transgender Law Center focused on advocating for transgender people in immigration detention. The process of developing a relationship with a source or a source's representative wasn't different from any other story except for one thing: Tomchin asked if Rivas was going to film any of the transgender sources putting on makeup. Tomchin explained that this **trope** in coverage of transgender women is widely considered a superficial demonstration of femaleness to which **cisgender** women are rarely subjected. Rivas hadn't intended to shoot that kind of footage, but learning that it was considered a cliché was "a lesson" for him. "We do try very hard to avoid putting our clients in situations where they feel exploited by media or that their story was manipulated," says Jill Marcellus, senior communications manager at the Transgender Law Center.

trope
here, a recurring theme. In discussions of rhetoric, the term often refers to a figurative or metaphorical use of language. (See the discussion of tropes in Chapter 13 on style.)

More and more reporters are educating themselves on how to adequately cover transgender people. Couric and Morgan drew

criticism for lines of questioning perceived as insensitive. Both Couric, who interviewed actress **Laverne Cox** and model **Carmen Carrera**, and Morgan, who interviewed writer **Janet Mock**, asked about their guests' genitals, questions many transgender individuals and advocates regard as an invasion of privacy. "People ask trans people all the time, 'So, have you had the surgery?' " says Dawn Ennis, a news editor at the Advocate, the oldest LGBT-interest magazine in the U.S., who is transgender. "People are curious about it because it's so unusual, but it really is a violation of people's privacy to ask those questions."

Laverne Cox
American actress best known for her role as Sophia Burset in the Netflix series *Orange Is the New Black*, for which she received a Primetime Emmy Award nomination. She later received a Daytime Emmy Award for *Laverne Cox Presents: The T Word*.

Carmen Carrera (1965–)
American media personality who has appeared on *RuPaul's Drag Race* and, on occasion, called him out on what she considers to be transphobic remarks or behaviors.

Janet Mock (1983–)
American writer, TV host, and transgender activist. Her first book, *Redefining Realness*, became a bestseller.

Couric responded to the subsequent backlash by inviting Cox back on her ABC show to discuss what she had done wrong, saying she'd now have to hold up her show as an example of how not to report on transgender people. Morgan invited Mock back on his show for a contentious interview in which he demanded to know why he'd been "viciously abused" on social

media by the transgender community after he said he had shown support for transgender people by promoting Mock's book and calling her a woman.

After the Fusion reporters won the trust of Tomchin, the Transgender Law Center representative, they had to win the trust of the women they wanted to profile. Johanna Vasquez's story was probably the hardest to tell. After being brutally sexually assaulted in her native El Salvador, she fled to America. But she was beaten by her male cellmate in an ICE detention center and then locked in solitary confinement for seven months because guards didn't know where else to put her. Rivas and Costantini say they met with her several times without a camera or even a notebook so they could establish the level of trust Vasquez needed to tell her story.

The Fusion team also needed data to show the scope of the problem. While a Government Accountability Office report stated that from October 2009 to May 2013, three of the 15 victims in cases of "substantiated allegation of sexual abuse" in ICE detention were transgender, ICE told the journalists it didn't have a count of the total transgender detainee population.

Costantini consulted with the Williams Institute at the UCLA School of Law, a think tank that researches LGBT law, public policy, and demographics, and has produced transgender population estimates. The Williams Institute's oft-cited number puts America's transgender population at nearly 700,000, but

this is largely based on surveys from two states: Massachusetts and California. Gender identity is rarely included on official forms from which this kind of data is usually drawn.

Determining statistics on violence perpetrated against transgender people—a very real concern in the community, especially for women of color—is similarly difficult. Most states don't require that crimes based on gender identity be reported as hate crimes, and the police may simply report victims as whatever sex and the gender identity that traditionally accompanies it is on their legal IDs, which may not be accurate. This is also a problem when it comes to reporting on violence against transgender people; journalists may rely on police reports that refer to the pre-transition gender expression of the victim. "There's still a ton of misgendering, often of victims of violence, which is particularly awful," says BuzzFeed's Talusan.

GLAAD has recommendations for how the media should cover transgender victims of violence, including referring to them by the name and pronouns consistent with how they identified at the time of the incident, and refraining from **salacious** and unnecessary details about the victim's appearance or gender identity. "In major cities, we've seen a lot of growth in terms of media understanding and ability to think beyond just what the plain old police report says," according to the Advocate's Ennis.

salacious
exhibiting irrelevant or inappropriate interest in matters related to sex.

A big uptick in stories about transgender people occurred after April 2015, when **Caitlyn Jenner** came out as transgender in a two-hour special on ABC's "20/20." ABC News producer Sean Dooley says the show was a unique opportunity not just to tell Jenner's story, but also to educate a largely uninformed television audience, some of whom wouldn't normally watch a special about a transgender person but watched this one because of Jenner's fame as an Olympic athlete or reality show star.

Caitlyn Jenner (1949–)
a retired gold-medal Olympic decathlete who later became an American television and film personality.

Dooley says ABC News spoke with several advocacy groups and experts, including GLAAD and the National Center for Transgender Equality, to prepare for the special. Susan Stryker, an associate professor of gender and women's studies at the University of Arizona and director of the school's Institute for LGBT Studies, says she was on the phone with producers three times a week for about a month.

That effort was evident when the special aired. Host Diane Sawyer didn't just use Jenner's chosen pronoun, she also noted that she was doing so and explained why. Allowing transgender people to decide which pronouns should be used in referring to them is an important issue for the transgender community. This was especially important as, at the time, Jenner's pronoun preference was male, which could potentially lead people to

think it's acceptable to refer to all transgender women with male pronouns. And Sawyer didn't just ask which surgical steps Jenner might take in her transition, she also noted that it was Jenner's choice to discuss this, and that, generally, asking a transgender person about their genitals is inappropriate.

The special was largely well received—and watched by about 17 million people that night, more than twice as many people as usually watch the network in that time slot. Many transgender advocates, worried that a profile of a reality show star on mainstream television would be sensationalist and exploitative, applauded the program.

A couple months later, Vanity Fair ran a cover story about Jenner. While the release of the cover broke Vanity Fair's single-day online traffic record with 9 million unique visitors, Buzz Bissinger's accompanying profile was criticized for his use of male pronouns when referring to her pre-transition, which GLAAD's media guide says should be avoided. Transgender advocacy groups recommend referring to a transgender person by their post-transition name and pronoun, even when describing the person pre-transition. Stryker compares it to writing about **Malcolm X**; though he was born Malcolm Little, journalists rarely call him that when writing about him as a child.

Malcolm X (1925–1965)

African American Muslim and human rights activist who was highly critical of white racism in American society. He converted to the Nation of Islam and took the family name X while in prison in the late 1940s, noting of his birth name, Little, that "the white slavemaster . . .

had imposed [it] upon [his] paternal forebears." After his travels to the Arab world in 1964, including making the hajj, or Muslim pilgrimage to Saudi Arabia, he took the name el-Hajj Malik el-Shabbaz, forsaking the Nation of Islam for Sunni Islam and emphasized black self-determination and pan-Africanism.

As a contrast to Jenner's story, Washington Post feature writer Monica Hesse profiled Sara Simone, a transgender woman in her 50s a few years into her transition who was, until very recently, unemployed and homeless.

Sarah L. Voisin/The Washington Post/Getty Images

Sara Simone hugs a friend who provided shelter when she was homeless.

According to the National Transgender Discrimination survey, carried out in 2011 by the National Center for Transgender Equality and the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (now

known as the National LGBTQ Task Force), 15 percent of transgender people and gender-nonconforming people surveyed said they earned less than $10,000 annually, compared with just 4 percent of the general population. Transgender people are also twice as likely as the general population to be unemployed, and one in five said they had experienced homelessness at some point in their lives because of their gender identity.

Simone was willing to share details about her financial troubles for the profile. She was not willing to share her birth name, however.

While Hesse and her editor, Post senior editor at large Ann Gerhart, needed to know Simone's birth name for fact-checking purposes—verifying that she served in the armed forces, for instance—they saw no need to include it in the story. "One of the ways we looked at it was, this is her legal name now," Hesse says. "When we write about women who have taken on their husband's names and those are their legal names, do we then make sure to include their maiden names? No, we don't do that."

Similarly, they didn't see a need to dwell on Simone's life before her transition. This was a story about Simone's life now. At the same time, Gerhart says, Simone had lived as a man for five decades: "Journalistically, I had questions about how she dealt with that. What are the ways you can reconcile the person who

you had been and who you are relieved you aren't anymore, and integrate that into your experience now?" A chance encounter at Simone's workplace gave the story insight into those questions.

Simone worked at a nonprofit that helped homeless veterans. While meeting with one of those veterans, she noticed that he'd been stationed in the same place as Simone around the same time. Simone faced a decision. She could tell him about her own service, possibly helping her bond with the client. But that would mean revealing that she served under another name, opening her up to harassment for being transgender. Fear of harassment and violence from people who discover Simone is transgender is a recurring theme in the story. In the end, Simone didn't reveal her military service to the veteran.

Simone's fears are well grounded. Transgender women, especially women of color, are often targets of violence. A 2015 report from the HRC and the Trans People of Color Coalition, which advocates for transgender people of color, estimates that transgender women are 4.3 times more likely than **cisgender** women to be the victim of a homicide, and half of all transgender people will be sexually assaulted in their lifetimes. As of this past November, at least 21 transgender people—a majority of whom were transgender women of color—had been murdered in 2015.

cisgender
relating to someone whose sense of gender identity corresponds to the sex they were

assigned at birth (Latin *cis-* "same side as" + *gender*); the complement of *transgender*.

"It's a real clear crisis that's happening, but it's not a new crisis," says the Transgender Law Center's Kris Hayashi. While some outlets have covered this issue, he says, it hasn't gotten anywhere near the attention that Jenner has. Stryker, the University of Arizona professor, says it's important for the media to remember that the transgender community is diverse, and not everyone in it will have the same experience. The progress that has been made may be beneficial to some, mostly white people of means, but not necessarily all, especially transgender women of color or people living in poverty.

Simone's comments on social media are also quoted throughout the Post story, something Hesse and Gerhart say was crucial since it allowed them to let Simone talk about herself and her experience unprompted. In a video post in which she describes an abusive past relationship, Simone says, "This man tried to destroy me, but he didn't destroy me." "I am very, very lovable," she writes in another update. "I am not a loser. I am lovable."

Simone friended Hesse on Facebook, which gave Hesse unexpected insight into her own reporting process. In the beginning, Simone would often say things on Facebook that she apparently didn't yet feel comfortable saying to Hesse. "Every time I would go home, she would post on Facebook an analysis of how she thought I had done that day," Hesse recalls. "What questions I had asked that she thought were stupid, or what she was afraid I wasn't getting. It was really interesting to see your

reporting reviewed in real time that way."

It also gave Hesse a measure of how much her subject grew to trust her over the week they spent together. As time went on, the things Simone said on Facebook began to match what she told Hesse. To help foster a trusting relationship with Simone, Hesse had sent her a few articles she had written, including a profile of an agender (someone who doesn't identify as male or female) teenager. She didn't take any notes on the first day. By the end of the week Hesse spent following Simone to work, to her home, and even going out with friends, Simone trusted Hesse enough that she let Hesse meet her brother, someone she'd initially been reluctant to include in the story. Hesse thought the brother was necessary to the story because she felt she needed another scene of Simone interacting with someone who knew her well, and who was the closest family member Simone had at the time.

Unlike Hesse, Los Angeles Times reporter Garrett Therolf wasn't looking to write a story about a transgender person when he covered the Los Angeles Pride parade in June 2015. But then he met Alex Bergeron, who was there as one of three winners of the Colin Higgins Youth Courage Award, given out by the Colin Higgins Foundation to LGBTQ people under 21 who advocate for their community. Therolf and Bergeron got to talking, and Bergeron mentioned struggling to reconcile being transgender with being Muslim, a subject Therolf had not seen covered before. Therolf had never written about transgender issues, but

he had spent time reporting in Iraq and Egypt and was familiar with that region's conservative views toward LGBT people.

Don Bartletti/Los Angeles Times

Alex Bergeron struggles to reconcile being transgender and Muslim, an issue explored in a Los Angeles Times *story.*

Therolf found an expert on transgender issues and Islam in Emory University professor Scott Siraj al-Haqq Kugle, who has written multiple books about the subject of LGBT issues and Islam. "He helped me to realize how lonely it can be for folks trying to find their way and just how very nascent this movement [of LGBT Muslims] still is," Therolf says. "And he helped me understand the theological underpinnings for the work that is just beginning."

Therolf wrote in his story that in America "mosques tend to be conservative, and visits to the local imam or mosque committee

chairman usually draw stern **rebukes** for LGBTQ Muslims."

rebuke
sharp criticism or disapproval.

Therolf was unsure whether he made the right call when it came to the pronouns he used for Bergeron. Bergeron's preferred pronoun is "they," because, as Therolf's article explains, Bergeron sees gender identity as a spectrum, rather than a binary. People who prefer gender-neutral singular pronouns, then, must either use invented terms like "ze" or the plural pronoun "they" as a singular. Both options are potentially confusing to reporters and readers who aren't used to seeing them.

Therolf got permission from the copy desk to use "they" and wrote a draft of the story, but ultimately he found it was too confusing to use a plural pronoun for an individual. "It is technically ungrammatical and it can be quite cumbersome and distracting for readers in a news story," Therolf says. "I don't know if we made the right call by reverting back to 'he,' but I will point out that Alex himself uses 'he' pronouns most of his day and so do the people around him." The Transgender Law Center, in its "Trans Youth" guide to reporting on transgender and gender-nonconforming young people, notes that many in that community use "they" as a pronoun.

Henry Fuhrmann, an assistant managing editor who oversees the Los Angeles Times copy desk, says Therolf's decision to use

“he” instead of “they” this time should not indicate that’s what the paper will do if the issue comes up again. “We’ll consider then what we think will work best for the story and its intended audience,” Fuhrmann says. “We’ll need to balance sensitivity to a subject against the risk of confusing readers.” Therolf says he thinks that as the concept of using “they” as a singular gender-neutral pronoun becomes more prevalent, it’ll be less confusing to readers.

In just the few months since Therolf’s story was published, both the New York Times and the Washington Post have used new gender-neutral terms. At the beginning of December, Post copy editor Bill Walsh sent out a memo stating that “they” could be used as a pronoun for people who did not identify as male or female. In late November, the New York Times used “Mx.” as an honorific—to much notice.

FBI

Kristin Beck, a transgender former Navy SEAL, shares images from her past during a talk at an FBI office in Clarksburg, West Virginia.

In the spring of 2015, the New York Times ramped up its coverage of the transgender community, launching a series of editorials, "Transgender Today," focusing on relevant policy issues. "A lot of people were paying attention to transgender people in a way that we hadn't really seen in the past," says editorial board member Ernesto Londoño. "We thought that we would do a public service by outlining some of the policy issues, some of the unresolved issues that are hugely important for this community—that, for a lot of people, are a matter of life and death."

More than 20 people—from developers to designers to photographers to editorial writers—helped get the series off the ground. Londoño had written about a transgender person before, but some members of the team had not. "It was an education for a lot of us," Londoño says. Much of that education took place in the early stages of the project, when the team spent a lot of time discussing what was sensitive and what wasn't, not just in the writing, but also in photography and design choices. This, says Transgender Law Center's Marcellus, is an important but often overlooked component in coverage. A reporter can be extremely knowledgeable about the correct terminology, but an article can be completely undermined if it's accompanied by an insensitive photo caption or headline.

For the series, Londoño says advocacy groups were helpful in identifying issues the transgender community faced and providing necessary historical context and case law. There's

also a significant contribution from transgender people, in their own words and images. “We thought it would be very important to find a way to let transgender people tell their own stories and be their own advocates,” Londoño says.

To do this, the paper created a “storywall” for the series, allowing readers to submit their own experiences in text, photo, or video form, or a combination of all three. Brynn Tannehill’s video starts with the former Navy pilot describing when she realized she wanted to fly planes, and how she ultimately had to make a choice between her military career and coming out as transgender. Jesse writes about how he came out as transgender and began his transition while working as an educator in Louisiana—and how his students and co-workers have been largely supportive. Scott writes about being fired from his job at a software company in the San Francisco Bay Area after co-workers found out he was a transgender man. Katherine Bradford writes about being transgender and a parent, and sometimes explaining this to her children’s new friends or their parents.

Londoño wasn’t sure how eager transgender people would be to share their stories so publicly. He says the paper hoped for 50 stories by the end of the year. It got 40 by the end of the first day.

“One of the things that struck me when we started getting submissions was a lot of them were from veterans and people

who talked about how hard it had been to wrestle with their gender identity and their career in the military," Londoño says. "A lot of those people were discharged or saw no option but to leave the service. Those voices, I think, were very valuable for me and for us as we set out to make the case for a new policy in the military that allowed open transgender service."

That editorial was published in June, and Londoño, who worked on the article with the LBGT organization Service Members, Partners, Allies for Respect and Tolerance for All, which specializes in military issues, says it's the one of which he's most proud. In July, the U.S. Department of Defense announced that it was working on new policies that would allow transgender people to serve openly in the military.

Reporting on the transgender community has come a long way in a very short time, but transgender individuals and advocates say there is still much work to be done. Among other things, BuzzFeed's Talusan would like to see more stories about transgender people that aren't just about their gender identity, stories where being transgender is not a subject's defining characteristic.

"I would just like to see stories about what trans people are doing with their lives and in many ways not focusing on their transgender-ness unless it's relevant somehow," says the University of Arizona's Stryker. "I think we're just getting to that point."

Transgender Terminology

Covering the transgender community involves a specific vocabulary, from pronoun usage to medical descriptions. A glossary:

Cisgender Used by some to describe people who are not transgender. Cis- is a Latin prefix meaning “on the same side as,” and is therefore an antonym of trans-.

Gender dysphoria The American Psychiatric Association’s description of the condition in which the sex someone is assigned at birth does not match their gender identity. Some transgender advocates believe a medical diagnosis is necessary for health insurance that covers treatments recommended for transgender people.

Gender expression External manifestations of gender, expressed through names, pronouns, clothing, haircut, behavior, voice, or body characteristics. Typically, transgender people seek to make their gender expression align with their gender identity, rather than the sex they were assigned at birth.

Gender identity The internal, deeply held sense of one’s gender. For transgender people, their own internal gender identity does not match the sex they were assigned at birth.

Gender-nonconforming Used to describe those whose gender expression is different from conventional

expectations of masculinity and femininity.

Genderqueer Used by some who experience their gender identity and/or gender expression as falling outside the categories of male and female.

Pronouns The Associated Press style guide says to refer to an individual by their preferred gendered pronoun, or, if it's not possible to ask for a preference, the pronoun that is most consistent with an individual's gender expression. Many major publications follow this rule but the usage of gender-neutral pronouns—the singular "they" or new terms such as "ze" or "xe"—varies and is changing rapidly. The Washington Post recently announced that it would allow the singular "they," while the New York Times recently allowed the honorific "Mx.," although standards editor Philip Corbett wrote that the paper doesn't have a set rule on gender-neutral terms and has avoided using "nontraditional" pronouns. BuzzFeed, on the other hand, says it will use any preferred pronoun, possibly accompanied by a short explainer if the term is less familiar.

Sex reassignment surgery (SRS) Refers to doctor-supervised surgical interventions, which not all transgender people choose, or can afford, to undergo. Also known as gender reassignment surgery or gender affirming surgery.

Transgender An umbrella term, often abbreviated as "trans," for people whose gender identity and/or gender expression differs from what is typically associated with the sex they were assigned at birth. A transgender man is

someone whose assigned sex at birth was female but identifies and lives as a man. A transgender woman is someone whose assigned sex at birth was male but identifies and lives as a female.

Transition Altering one's birth sex is a complex process that occurs over a long period of time and may include medical and legal steps, using a different name and new pronouns, dressing differently, hormone therapy, and surgery.

—GLAAD's "Media Guide on Transgender Terminology"

RESPOND●

1. As this selection makes clear, the last few years have seen a great deal of public discussion about transgender issues, and part of this discussion has included a focus on language and on various forms of negative stereotyping. What specific observations related to language and various forms of stereotyping does Morrison make? How many of these were new to you? Why, do you think?
2. As explained in the headnote, Morrison clearly positions competent journalists as learners, that is, they understand and appreciate that throughout their careers, as they cover various communities, they will need to learn about those communities in order to avoid representing them in terms of inaccurate and offensive stereotypes. Where do you see evidence of Morrison's positioning? In short, where do we see journalists learning specific information about the transgender community, how to interact with transgender individuals, and how to avoid

stereotyping?

3. Chapter 14 discusses visual rhetoric and the roles that images can play in supporting an argument. How do the images that are part of this selection contribute to the selection's overall argument? Do they pass the test of avoiding negative stereotyping? Why or why not?
4. **THINKING CRITICALLY** In a profound sense, this selection focuses on undoing stereotypes, that is, in finding ways to fight against stereotypes of a group by avoiding one-dimensional representations of them, a topic touched on in the introduction to this chapter. How does Morrison achieve this goal without directly criticizing or blaming her colleagues? In your opinion, is this a more effective strategy than other options Morrison might have had? Why or why not?
5. Choose a group that you are part of that you believe is unfairly stereotyped on at least some occasions or in some contexts. **Write an essay** in which you explain to outgroup members (those who do not belong to the group) how you understand your group to be negatively stereotyped and how they might avoid repeating such stereotypes when commenting on your group. While your essay could take many forms, it will likely have aspects of definitional, evaluative, and proposal arguments, treated in Chapters 9, 10, and 12, respectively.