Name: \_\_\_Gage Farmer\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Writing Project IE: Part 5 of 5 (40 points) // Chapters 32-End of *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks***

**Short Essay Answers (6-8 sentences/each) (10 points each)**

1. In chapter 32, Deborah and Zakariyaa visit Christopher Langauer’s lab and see their mother’s cells for the first time. How is their interaction with Langauer different from the previous interactions the family has had with representatives of Johns Hopkins? Why do you think it is so different?

In this interaction with Christoph, the family is treated with much more respect and dignity than they had been previously. Before, the family had been treated as second class, and Hopkins representatives would never be willing to give them the full story to whatever was being discussed. Especially with Henrietta some 50 years ago, those at Hopkins were almost willing to scam her out of her right to life itself, by not explaining what exactly was going on. Even once the family had began trying to contact Hopkins for money or information, it was found that Hopkins didn’t seem to want to comply.This time however, Christoph was treating Deborah and Zakariyaa with respect, dignity, and was being as kind as he would be as if they were his own family. It’s difficult to say why exactly this is, as it could be due to the individual person, the importance that the family had developed to science, or even how racial relations had developed over time, amongst many things.

1. Describe Crownsville and what happened there in detail. Use dates if you can.

Crownsville was an insane asylum for black people, which opened in 1910 and was in service until 2004. In the time Elsie was here, this hospital was one of the worst possible places for any human to be, with unbearable conditions, overcrowded living, riots, and unconsented testing on patients. It was very likely that Elsie was one of the epileptics which had brain imaging done on her called “Pneumoencephalography”, which involved drilling a hole in the patient’s skull, filling it with oxygen, and capturing an x-ray of the brain. This resulted in immense pain for the next 2 to 3 months, with things such as headaches, vomiting, seizures, and dizziness. Alongside these things which took place at Crownsville, there was an implication that perhaps some patients were killed to slow down the overcrowding. While not confirmed, the implications come from the article that was introduced, as well as the description of the picture of Elsie. It appeared that she had been beaten and strangled, and her head was being twisted to one side, perhaps in order to get it visible by the camera. She was crying, screaming, and looked awful in that her face was swollen and bruised. Also, her cause of death was said to be from “self-induced vomiting by thrusting fingers down her throat for six months prior to death” (p. 199) While it is entirely possible that she had done this on her own, with the current reputation of Crownsville, it is more likely that they had done something similar to her, in order to free up space in the asylum.

1. What is the significance of the scene with Rebecca, Deborah, and cousin Gary, aka “Gary the Disciple”? Why do you think he is in the book? What kind of impact does he have on both Rebecca and Deborah?

This scene was intended to show how Deborah was in so much distress after finding out how tragic the death of her mother was, and the life of her sister was. It also came to show how her cousin Gary was very important towards helping with her mental health, as this is exactly what he does in this chapter. The significance of Gary in this book is to tell about how Deborah released the burden of these cells, and became much less distraught from it all. What Gary did was come to her supposedly as the Lord, and hug her while singing and saying how she needs to let go of the distress of these cells. It did end up working, and Deborah seemed much calmer about the whole situation. Meanwhile, Rebecca just sat along and watched, until the end where Gary pointed to her and said to the Lord for him to life the burden of the cells, and pass it on to Miss Rebecca.

1. This is a story with many layers. Though it’s not told chronologically, it is divided into three sections. Discuss the significance of the titles given to each part: Life, Death, and Immortality. How would the story have been different if it were told chronologically?

The significance of these layers in the story are to put it in a much more story like format for the reader. What this does is put the reader in a position where they are able to learn important information before reading about things that involve prior knowledge. Had it been written in chronological order, the reader would not quite understand the importance of things such as how important the cells would come to be in the future, far beyond the death of Henrietta. It would also be much different in that we would know everything about the life and death of Henrietta and Elsie before we knew anything at all about how the family members developed, and grew to interact with Rebecca. Overall, the story being built upon the layers it is, is much better for the reader as it puts the important pieces of the puzzle in before the conclusion to the mystery.