

Homework #6

Due for class Th 9/30

1) READ the following three pieces on inventive men:

- “The Undiscovered World of Thomas Edison,” by Kathleen McAuliffe. This article, originally published in the *Atlantic* magazine, describes what historians are learning about Edison’s ways of thinking and working from the massive Edison archive.
- Malcolm Gladwell’s *New Yorker* profile of one of the inventors of television, “The Televisionary.” (This piece is a review of two recent biographies of Farnsworth.) Gladwell frequently writes on science and consumer culture topics for the magazine; he also wrote the recent best-seller *The Tipping Point*.

You can download this article from Gladwell’s website:

<http://www.gladwell.com>

Click on *New Yorker* articles and scroll down till you find it—it’s not too far down: May 27, 2002.

- Chapter 8 (“Stinks and Bangs”) from Oliver Sacks’s memoir, *Uncle Tungsten*. (Note ch. 7 is optional.) Sacks is a neurologist who has published widely on unusual brain disorders in works such as *Awakenings* and *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat*. His childhood was spent in England, amid an extended family of doctors and chemists. “Uncle Tungsten” was an uncle who had a factory that made lightbulbs and who encouraged Sacks’s interest in chemistry.

We will discuss these works in class. As you read you’ll notice common themes such as childhood, education, failure, what fosters creativity, collaboration, the romance and mystery of science & invention. Think also about whether or not you think there’s such a thing as a “creative temperament.”

2) JOURNALS: How are they going? I will collect journals from some of you next class.